

Abstraction Is the Ultimate Solution for Finding Meaning in the Mundane

What's poppin', people? It's Dante.

Currently photographing the clouds here along Penn's Landing in Philadelphia.
Check out the beautiful sun up above.

Yeah, when in doubt, I return to Penn's Landing and photograph the clouds.

I enjoy visiting those locations where there's a horizon and an ability for me to look out towards the sky.

You know, living in urban cities, we're surrounded by skyscrapers that are extremely tall, and I believe sometimes limit our perspective.

And so I like to shift my perspective by visiting these locations where I can seek a view. You know, this landscape, this vista.

I mean, just look out at that bridge. Look up at the sky.

And when I'm in doubt and I don't know what to photograph, I simply look up and I photograph the clouds.

Finding Meaning in the Mundane

The thought of the day is:

Abstraction through photography is the ultimate solution for finding meaning in the mundane.

You know, it's very difficult these days to go out and to find something interesting to say with your photography.

But if you reshape the way that you engage with the medium through creating something from nothing, you can then find infinite potential to **return to day one each day**.

And what I mean by returning to day one each day is returning to that state where everything is fresh and new, and you find infinite novelty around you.

This is something I believe can be difficult to achieve because as you walk the street, you see the same things.

You notice things with these sort of patterns where everything becomes sort of mundane, you could say. Boring, uninteresting, or not worth photographing.

But when you reframe the way that you look at things to *what it could be*, where you're abstracting reality, where you're looking at life and elevating it to a new height, where you're trying to essentially use the world as your canvas, everything changes.

Use the world around you as this sort of place where there's infinite potential and possibility.

Then you can start to thrive and cultivate this sense of inner curiosity.

The World Becomes Otherworldly

I can look at the light glimmering upon this beautiful river and find a surprise by the way that the light shines.

It almost looks like I'm peering into a galaxy.

You know, when you look down at this thing, it can become otherworldly.

When you look at the patterns of the leaves and you look at all the intricacies, whether they're details and textures in the ground with the bricks or the beautiful clouds up above, all of these sort of surfaces can become something that inspires you to click the shutter and to create.

Even these birds flying can become something.

Ricoh GR IV Monochrome and High-Contrast Black and White

On a very technical and practical level, the way that I create these days is with a compact **Ricoh GR IV Monochrome**, using the high-contrast black-and-white settings baked into the camera and cranking it all the way to the maximum.

What this does is eliminate all friction and decision fatigue when it comes to post-processing and camera settings.

I believe this is what gives me the ability to **create effortlessly**.

And when I enter this state where I'm photographing and not thinking, I start to realize the infinite potential that's right before my eyes.

I start to look at the shapes and the textures, and I start to elevate these things.

And you know what happens through the use of high-contrast black-and-white photography?

You're instantly abstracting reality.

You're instantly saying that I am not looking at life as reality. I am not looking at life as it is, but I'm depicting reality—what it could be—through my subjective, personal interpretation of the world.

Through that way of engaging with the day, and through that way of engaging with the medium and with your personal photography, you will start to thrive again.

Photography as a Reset

It could become a reset too.

This doesn't have to be something you endlessly do.

However, I find that ever since adopting this way of working, I can't unsee the infinite possibility that lies within the mundane.

And it's just so exciting to me because anywhere I am in the world, any surface that I glance upon, any time of the day, I find something new to say.

I find a new way to play this game of returning to the mundane.

And to me, this is the ultimate challenge of the photographer: to find something out there in the world each day and to find a reason to cultivate that sense of curiosity about life.

By giving myself these technical creative constraints, it's unlocking this new pathway in my brain that is giving me this ability to almost look beyond the veil of reality and to see things anew each day, from day one.

Return to Day One Each Day

To me, this is why I'm eternally grateful for photography.

Photography puts me in this state where everything is interesting, and I find so much meaning and rich joy in my everyday experiences.

Alone under the sun.

Looking out at the clouds.

Watching the boat move by.

Listening to the birds chirping.

Basically just immersing myself in the mundane, in the present moment, and finding infinite wonder around me.

Abstraction is the ultimate solution for finding meaning in the mundane in photography.

And yeah, with that being said, thanks for watching, and I will see you in the next video.

Peace.