Flux Archive 024 — Photography Is a Pretty Good Lie

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

Welcome to today's Flux Archive session number 24, where I share with you some thoughts about my photography.

Here we have some images made from the months of March to May of 2025.

As you can see, we're going to start peering into some of the work here through my Flux Zine series.

Flux

Flux is essentially an open-source chronological photography publishing system where you upload 36 photographs to my generator, and it automatically chronologically sequences and timestamps the work.

Here we have the first frame that I made as the Wanamaker Building in Philadelphia was closing down.

As the building was closing down, people were clearing out with everything, including mannequins.

I started to visit this location at the Wanamaker Building sometime around 2023, and I would go there every single day. I just found the building to be fascinating and beautiful, and there was a live organ performance every single day.

To see this building close down was really sad to me.

This is a frame that I made on that day as people were clearing out all of the items inside, including mannequins. This mannequin is seated inside of a bus stop.

Photography Gives You Back a Surprise

One thought that I have is that a lot of the time, what you photograph, you're looking at in reality. You're looking at a mannequin and a bus stop.

But then when you photograph something, a lot of the time **you get back a surprise in the frame.**

For me, that surprise is the crushed shadows, the exposed highlights, and the way that this mannequin is seeded with ambiguity and mystery.

That, to me, is why I absolutely love photography.

As much as I'm looking at humanity, I'm also interested in the ambiguity and the mystery that arises in a frame due to the way that light and life are out of our control.

The fact that street photography requires this sort of surrender to control, I think that's what excites me most.

It's the unpredictability, the spontaneity, both in life and in the way that light simply interacts with the surface of my camera's sensor.

Those two different qualities about photography, I really, really appreciate.

I'm looking at people. I'm looking at gestures and the bustling traffic as people exit from the building, but I'm also curious about the way that light renders upon that scene.

The way that this silhouette appears in the artificial light is intriguing to me.

This tender moment between this child and the father here, holding each other's hands, is a beautiful, tender moment that's full of emotional quality.

But then through the qualities of light itself, I can create more mystery and ambiguity by crushing those shadows and exposing for what's in the light.

High-Contrast Black and White

High-contrast black and white, I find, is an exciting way to explore the medium of photography because it provides me with infinite possibility.

It feels like photography becomes unrepeatable, and it's due to the way that I return to the essence of the medium being *light*.

Simply photographing flowers within my greenhouse here in the city became a part of my journey where I'm practicing this art of seeing something in these mundane objects, in these mundane plants, and extracting from those environments through the way that I'm using and wielding light itself.

You can see here we have this plant on the left-hand side next to this hand that I photographed on the right-hand side.

I'm interested in all living things.

I'm interested in botanicals. I'm interested in human beings.

At the center of my practice is life itself.

I find that the duty of the photographer is ultimately to be out there in the world, on the front lines of life.

Through the medium of photography and through embracing the streets, I'm seeking to champion humanity, to champion all living things and life itself.

The Mystery of the Mundane

The other aspect of the medium, beyond life itself and beyond exploring humanity, is the mystery of the mundane.

The mystery of the medium excites me, and it all ties back to light.

One of the things I would do in the mornings when waiting for the bus, when it was extremely low light, was watch the cars driving towards me.

I would see the little balls of light appear from the artificial lights on the front of the cars.

I would knock my camera out of focus purposely into macro mode and photograph the cars as they were coming towards me to create these abstract shapes of little balls of light across the frame.

I would also use the reflective surface of the rainy street to create more ambiguity and these strange effects with the qualities of light.

As much as I'm looking at people, once again, I want you to know that I'm really interested, at the end of the day, in **light itself** and how the medium can provide these kinds of surprises.

Photography as Memory

Here we have some photographs made during my brother's wedding.

That's my brother Julian. That's my mother Maria. And these are some of my brother's oldest friends that I grew up with since childhood, when I was five years old.

Flipping through this work in this sort of chronological sequence is very meaningful to me.

To relive these memories in sequence and time.

That's another reason why I enjoy stamping these photographs in time.

There's something about an image, right?

Here we have this chain across this pole that is an image that can stand on its own in a way where this child laying in the park has no real sense of time or space.

You can see maybe spring is coming, but there isn't anything that really defines this moment within time.

I think there is a power to that with photography, where you can look at a photograph and it's timeless in a way.

Why I Timestamp My Photographs

But I enjoy the act of timestamping the photographs and saying that *this happened at this time*.

Having this output on copy paper, these sort of imperfect qualities, to me, I'm trying to solidify that this was a moment that I experienced imperfectly, stumbling through life.

That's why the chronological timestamp is important for me.

It's to go even deeper into the sense that these photographs are real moments.

> *These photographs are real moments. This happened in space and time.*

That's a reason why I'm timestamping things.

I want it to be authentic in a way where this modern world of AI and artificial intelligence, and all these kinds of images that are being generated with fake metadata and things, are something I'm trying to maybe combat against through this system of extracting my real metadata and then placing it on the page.

Basically, I'm sharing with you that this is a real moment.

That this happened in space and time.

Photography Is a Pretty Good Lie

But despite that, you can extract these moments from time and create another world.

You can look at these moments, see the timestamp, and recognize that it's a fact.

But it's also a pretty good lie.

I like playing along that fine line between truth and false.

Maybe these kinds of images, through the use of light and shadow play, can evoke that sort of mystery that I seek in my photography.

As much as I'm curious about the visual diary and stamping things chronologically in time, there's also something about the mystery of the medium.

These kinds of photos excite me.

These very personal kinds of photos. A coworker, a coworker's hand, just getting extremely close.

I think getting extremely close to the subject is a really powerful way to make a photograph more impactful.

Highlighting the details of the leaves here in the light.

And then photographing this protest here, just stumbling through my city.

I'm not really seeking out novelty.

I'm kind of just walking around, experiencing my life.

Sometimes I stumble across these things, not seeking them out at all.

The Sublime

Maybe after all, with this kind of work, the quality I'm trying to evoke is *the sublime*.

That feeling.

That awe-inspiring feeling that you can't really describe with words.

The photographs, I'm trying to sort of describe things not just as facts, but also as a feeling.

> *A feeling that you can't really express with words.*

As I sit here and commentate, those are the thoughts of the day.

Here's the contact sheet at the back.

If you want to create your own Flux issue, you can visit the generator at flux.dantesisofo.com/generator. You can upload 36 photographs. If I enjoy the photographs, I'll add them to the catalog, print them out, and do my own little YouTube flip-through commentary of your work.

Otherwise, if you want to join the Flux Discord server community, just click the Join button on the YouTube channel and you'll receive a link to join that server.

With that being said, thank you for watching, and I'll see you soon.

Peace.