Flux Archive 026 — The Mystery of the Mundane

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

In today's video, we have Flux Archive Session Number 26, and today we're looking at some photographs that I made around the months of July to October of 2025.

And so, yeah, let's just talk about the work.

Today's topic is **the mystery of the mundane**.

Look at this leaf suspended by a spider web in the forest and this cicada shell.

There's something extremely magical about the mundane nature of life, and I think that as photographers, sometimes we get too caught up with novelty seeking.

Going to an exotic location, finding an interesting character to photograph, looking for an impactful moment, looking for something, hunting, striving.

> ***But what if you just slow down?***

Slow Down

What if you just slow down and look around at the mundane nature of life and find the mystery within the mundane qualities of life?

The light peering through the clouds.

The children playing at an amusement park.

There is something there, but I think it requires your presence and actually being there at the moment that you click the shutter.

Today I want to talk about slowing down.

Slowing your physical body down on a practical level when walking the streets.

I like to walk 75% slower than everyone around me, and the reason being is because then, when I see this child running towards me, grabbing the clothing of her mother, I'm ready to click the shutter.

If I'm running fast and trying to go past, I'm never going to be able to freeze this moment.

But because I'm slowing down, I'm observant.

I'm ready.

I'm prepared.

It's very easy for me to instinctively respond and freeze that moment.

And it's because I'm slowing down.

I'm extremely present and observing everything in my town from this state where it feels like time doesn't exist.

It's because I'm slowing my body down.

A Meditative State of Seeing

When you're in this sort of meditative state of slowly walking and observing, there's such a rich mystery to the mundane nature of life.

And the qualities that can emerge from your photography can sometimes give you that feeling back.

It can be a simple glance from a stranger through a reflective window.

The embrace of a couple.

The children playing upon the boardwalk.

The mystery of the mundane lies everywhere around me, whether I'm looking at moments between people or natural things.

While you're looking, feeling, and observing closely in the moment and slowing your body down, there are always going to be some little surprises that arise in the frames.

Like the gesture of a face.

Your Eyes Don't Have a Shutter Speed

When you're making a picture, you're using a shutter speed.

You're using a camera.

You're using technology to freeze these moments.

And I think it's important to remind ourselves as photographers that **our eyes don't have a shutter speed**.

Our eyes aren't seeing the same way that our camera sees.

> ***Our eyes don't have a shutter speed. Our eyes aren't seeing the same way that our camera sees.***

That simple thought alone can hopefully reshape the way that you think about how you engage with the medium and with life generally.

Then you can recognize the mystery that lies within the mundane around you.

The qualities of light.

The way that it reflects upon a cross on top of a church.

Across a scattered wall.

They're there.

They appear.

They're all around us.

But it requires us to slow down and observe these things.

To notice these moments.

Heighten Your Senses

I think the first step is slowing down your physical body.

Then your senses are heightened.

You're ready.

You're prepared.

You're observing deeply.

You're curious about life.

When photographing, remember that you're using a camera.

The camera is interpreting light.

The camera is freezing the moment when things are just right.

And you can't necessarily control everything.

The Camera Sees Things You Don’t

When I made this photograph, I was photographing the gesture of the hand here, outstretched across this newspaper stand.

I had no idea that this child was emerging from the background.

Seriously.

When I made this picture, I was clicking the shutter because of this gesture.

That was what triggered me to click the shutter.

I saw a gesture.

Boom.

I went to click the shutter.

Then when I looked back at the photograph, I noticed that this small Amish boy was peering around the corner.

I didn’t see that with my naked eye.

My camera has a fast shutter speed.

My camera is at 1/500th of a second and froze this moment as I threw the camera in the direction of this gesture.

I didn’t necessarily control that.

The camera saw that.

And this is just a simple reminder of that fact.

Maybe that fact, maybe that idea, can spark something within you to look at life maybe like a camera.

Think more about how the camera is looking at life, not necessarily how you're personally looking at life.

Remember that you're using the camera to interpret life.

How the Camera Interprets Life

Maybe that will help you think more about how life and light and the mundane nature of everything around us can become extraordinary through the way that the camera is interpreting things.

This man emerging from the alleyway—I remember making this frame too.

It was just such a quick thing.

I'm walking by, but I'm walking slowly.

And as he's emerging, you just shift your body and click the shutter.

It's just this very instinctive response when seeing something.

I think because I slow my body down physically, I'm able to recognize when to click the shutter and have that instinct to photograph something.

Infinite Mystery

There really is, to me, such infinite mystery that lies within the mundane nature of life.

I use photography as a way for me to evoke that mystery.

To evoke that quality.

To chip away at life and all of its complexities.

When I photographed this horse during the Puerto Rican Day Parade, I noticed the shadow play.

I noticed the way the light cast upon this horse, and now the horse appears to be a zebra.

Think about the way that light and life are out of our control and how the camera is interpreting life.

The camera is interpreting light.

The camera has a shutter speed.

So think about how the camera sees.

Maybe that question will help you remind yourself of the mystery of life.

Beyond What the Naked Eye Sees

Stop thinking about the fact.

Stop thinking about the character.

Stop thinking about the gesture.

Stop thinking about this moment in time in reality.

> ***Start thinking about how you can use photography to uncover the mystery of life beyond the veil of what your naked eye sees.***

Through camera technology, the mundane can become extraordinary.

And so that's the thought of the day about the mystery of the mundane.

Flux

Here we have the final 36 frames on the contact sheet.

If you'd like to create your own Flux issue, you can visit the generator in the description at flux.dantesisofo.com/generator.

All you have to do is upload 36 monochrome photographs.

It will read the timestamps, preserve the chronological order, and generate a PDF.

You can print the PDF out at home, or you can submit it to me.

If I enjoy the work, I'll add it to the Flux catalog and potentially create a video commentary flip-through of your work.

I'd love to see what you submit to me and appreciate all submissions.

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

And yeah, with that being said, thanks for watching, and I will see you soon.

Peace.