

I Shot ONLY 36 Macro Photos with the Ricoh GR IV (Then Made a Zine)

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

Today I'm here in South Philadelphia outside of John's Water Ice. Got myself some green apple, and I'm giving myself the ultimate challenge.

I'm going to make **only 36 photographs** using the Ricoh GR's **macro mode** in **high-contrast black and white**.

The goal?

Come home and turn those 36 photographs into a complete zine.

So let's hit the streets.

The Rules

Today's setup is intentionally simple.

- Program Mode
- Macro Mode
- High Contrast Black & White
- Small JPEG
- 36 frames only

That's it.

The only thing I touch throughout the walk is the **exposure compensation**.

I love this challenge because it forces me to slow down and think differently about the world around me.

Instead of searching for subjects, I start searching for **textures, details, reflections, and surfaces.**

When you slow down enough, you realize there's beauty hiding everywhere.

Beauty Exists in the Mundane

Only two frames in, and already I'm noticing things I would normally walk straight past.

Macro photography changes the relationship between you and the world.

Instead of asking:

"What should I photograph?"

You begin asking:

"What happens if I get really close?"

That question alone completely changes your photography.

Abstraction as a Creative Tool

I'm shooting **small JPEGs** with **High Contrast Black & White** cranked all the way up.

I absolutely love this look because abstraction becomes the solution.

Instead of documenting reality...

I'm creating new worlds from ordinary objects.

By crushing the shadows and exposing for the highlights, familiar objects stop looking familiar.

I'm not photographing things for what they are. I'm photographing them because I'm curious what they'll become as photographs.

That surprise is what keeps me coming back.

Why I Love the Ricoh GR

One of the best things about using a Ricoh GR—or any compact camera—is the physicality of it.

I don't have to raise the camera to my eye.

I can simply drop low...

Hold the camera inches away from a surface...

Click the shutter...

...and discover something my naked eye never noticed.

The camera becomes an extension of my own vision.

Curiosity Creates Photographs

We stumble across this hilarious old Shrek newspaper dispenser.

There's an old Eminem CD inside.

Shrek III.

Philadelphia Untamed Film Festival posters.

It's this weird little world hidden in plain sight.

Moments like this remind me that photography isn't about waiting for extraordinary scenes.

It's about bringing curiosity into ordinary ones.

Photograph Your Backyard

This is why I love this practice.

It doesn't require traveling.

It doesn't require New York.

It doesn't require Tokyo.

It simply requires paying attention.

Everything around you already contains enough visual information to build an entire body of work.

You just have to notice it.

Flow State

Only two blocks into the walk...

I'm already fourteen photographs deep.

That's what constraints do.

The goal isn't making masterpieces.

The goal is staying in motion.

The goal is remaining inside the flow state.

Once you stop worrying about perfection...

You simply keep photographing.

Macro Changed My Photography

For years I photographed people.

Travel.

Stories.

Street life.

But slowing down inside my own hometown and paying attention to tiny details completely transformed my practice.

Now I find inspiration everywhere.

That's exactly why I wanted to share this challenge.

Hopefully it encourages you to start seeing your own neighborhood differently.

Build Your Own Zine

If you'd like to participate, you can join the **Flux Discord** community where everyone shares work, receives feedback, and participates in these creative challenges together.

You can also use the **Flux Generator** to automatically turn your own 36 photographs into a printable zine.

Upload your images...

Generate the PDF...

Print.

Fold.

Staple.

Done.

Playing with Exposure

The only camera setting I continuously adjust is exposure compensation.

Sometimes I'm shooting **+1.7 EV**.

Sometimes **-0.3 EV**.

I'm not chasing technical perfection.

I'm chasing atmosphere.

By intentionally blowing highlights or crushing shadows, I'm able to push reality further into abstraction.

Slow Down

I stop to photograph flowers.

Rust.

Tape peeling off walls.

A tiny bee.

Posters ripped from brick.

Infrastructure beneath my feet.

These are moments most people never notice.

Attention is the real currency of the universe.

Photography simply teaches us how to spend it better.

The Final Frames

By the time I reach the Italian Market, I only have a handful of photographs remaining.

One final flower.

Frame 36.

Challenge complete.

Thirty minutes.

Thirty-six photographs.

Time to head home.

My Complete Ricoh GR Workflow

Back in the studio, here's exactly how I build every zine.

Step One — Import

I remove the micro SD card.

Plug it directly into the iPad using a USB-C SD reader.

I use Apple's built-in Photos app.

No Lightroom.

No editing software.

Just import the 36 JPEGs.

Because they're small JPEG files, everything imports almost instantly.

Step Two — Minor Adjustments

I rarely edit.

Occasionally I'll reduce exposure slightly if large areas become pure white.

Otherwise...

The files stay exactly as they came out of the camera.

Step Three — Generate the Zine

Inside the Flux Generator...

I upload all 36 photographs.

Add the issue title.

Add my name.

Press **Generate Issue PDF**.

The system automatically:

- sequences every photograph
- extracts metadata
- timestamps every frame
- creates captions
- builds the contact sheet
- generates the printable PDF

No manual layout required.

Everything happens automatically.

Printing

I'm printing everything on regular office paper using a Brother printer.

Nothing fancy.

Just standard 20 lb copy paper.

The aesthetic is intentionally bureaucratic.

Simple materials.

Technical presentation.

Poetic photographs.

Assembly

Once printed...

I stack the pages.

Staple the spine.

Fold every spread using a bone folder.

The final pages contain:

- the complete contact sheet
- the shooting manifest
- timestamps
- sequence information

Then everything gets stored inside a simple manila folder.

Sometimes I label them using a Brother label maker or FoMimo thermal labels.

Again...

Simple.

Functional.

Beautiful.

Why Constraints Matter

The biggest lesson from today's challenge isn't macro photography.

It's creative constraints.

One camera.

One mode.

One aesthetic.

Thirty-six frames.

A deadline.

Removing choices gives your creativity room to breathe.

Instead of wondering what to do...

You simply begin doing.

That momentum becomes the artwork.

Infinite Potential

The next time you head outside...

Don't only photograph people.

Don't only look at eye level.

Look down.

Look closer.

Photograph the wall.

Photograph rust.

Photograph tape.

Photograph leaves.

Photograph reflections.

Everything around you is photographable.

It simply requires curiosity.

By getting closer, I discover other worlds hidden inside this one.

Give yourself this challenge.

Thirty-six frames.

Macro mode.

One hour.

See what happens.

If you enjoyed this challenge, try it yourself.

Generate your own zine using the Flux Generator and submit it.

Sometimes I feature your work here on the channel.

I'd love to see what you make.

Thanks so much for watching.

Peace.