

Flux Archive 014 — The Flux System: Photography as Memory

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

Welcome to this week's Flux Archive, session number 14, where I look at some of the photographs that I made along my black-and-white journey.

Today we're looking at photographs I made in December of 2023. This is pretty early on in my journey.

Here we have a Flux issue, which is stored in a blank manila folder with a label that I place on the outside and a barcode that you can scan to access the digital files.

This is a system that I wanted to chat about today.

It's the **Flux system** and essentially why I love looking at my photography this way.

What Is the Flux System?

Each issue comes with a title. I have a canonical naming convention as Flux underscore with a number, and then underneath are the dates that the photographs were made and my photographer name, Dante Sisofo.

Every single photograph in these issues is sequenced chronologically.

Flux is essentially an open-source chronological photography publishing system where **36 photographs become one complete issue.**

The system generates:

- A PDF publication
- A contact sheet
- A metadata manifest document
- A printable issue

The method is extremely simple.

You set your camera up with a small JPEG workflow using high-contrast monochrome. The purpose is to essentially eliminate processing, eliminate workflow friction, and maximize speed.

Then, when it comes to coming home and culling through the photographs, you're supposed to cull the photographs quickly and select 36 pictures without overanalyzing.

Finally, you can upload the photographs to my Flux Generator, where the system automatically reads the timestamps of each photograph, preserves the chronological order, generates derivatives and files that are uploaded to a website page, creates metadata, generates a contact sheet and issue number, creates the issue PDF, and compresses everything for sharing online in a ZIP file.

The output is a downloadable issue PDF.

The structure is extremely simple, with chronologically sequenced photo pages, a 6×6 contact sheet, a metadata manifest, and a printable PDF.

All of the photographs remain in chronological order.

36 Photographs, Like a Roll of Film

At the back, you can see the manifest document and the contact sheet.

It's an homage to **36 shots on one roll of 35mm film.**

There's always a barcode that you can scan to access the digital files, download the PDF yourself, or even download all of the original JPEG files.

The system is generated automatically using a system I created with AI, which reads the timestamps, sequences everything chronologically, and builds the complete PDF without any work or hassle.

There's no manual layout.

Everything is laid out on the grid automatically.

Print It Cheaply

The last step is to simply print the issue with double-sided paper.

We're printing the work on 8.5 × 11 office paper using cheap materials.

You stack the pages, align the edges, and staple them on the staple marks. There are two exposed staple marks on each cover.

Then you simply distribute.

Print the work. Store the work in manila folders. Archive and repeat.

On the protocol page, we have a barcode that you can scan to access the Flux Generator and create your own issue.

The first image is always presented on the right-hand side, followed by a blank page on the left.

At the bottom right, you have the time the photograph was made alongside the date and the name of the photographer.

At the top right, we have the issue number alongside the sequence number of the photograph.

So this is 1 of 36.

All the photographs are presented as diptychs across the spread. We're taking advantage of all the paper and all the space.

Embrace Imperfection

I really enjoy looking at the work this way and embracing imperfection openly.

One of the things that happens with the highlights is that sometimes clipping will occur.

Because I'm printing on cheap monochrome paper, there are these clippings that occur on the page.

But what I realized is that if I'm able to flip through work like this that has so many imperfections and still enjoy looking at the work and enjoy the act of printing on this kind of paper, I feel extremely liberated.

I'm no longer dependent on making something perfect.

I openly embrace these kinds of imperfections.

The digital artifacts become a post-digital aesthetic where I'm developing this workflow using automatic things such as processing in the camera, small JPEG compact-camera workflows, no post-processing, and then finally the output on cheap paper that we can find inside any office in the city.

I'm adopting the aesthetics of bureaucracy and essentially timestamping everything with the date.

There's this connection that I'm finding between the digital workflow and the physical cheap materials.

It has this sort of post-digital aesthetic where it almost feels like film.

The Aesthetics of Bureaucracy

There's something about the speed and simplicity of using everything automatically where you don't really have to do anything.

You just drag and drop your photos and print them out on the fastest, cheapest printer possible.

The printer reveals imperfections like streaks along the page and embraces the aesthetics of bureaucracy that you find within cities and these different kinds of LaserJet printers.

You'll see people walking around the city with manila folders in their hands.

I think it's interesting to adopt that sort of workflow, like you're a city office worker in bureaucracy, but then put this artistic imagery, this poetry, this personal touch on humanity that we display through street photography inside of it.

Photography as Memory

The act of reliving the photographs chronologically becomes like reliving a personal diary or a memory.

I think the aesthetic qualities of black-and-white photography and the imperfections of the paper also evoke that within the imagery.

I treat photography as memory, as a way for me to preserve time and space through the photographs that I make.

The act of chronologically timestamping everything is a huge part of the process.

My favorite way of looking through my own photography is seeing the sequence through chronology and retracing my steps as the moments unfolded.

That's really my thought for today about this system I'm developing.

Open Source Photography

I really enjoy the fact that the work itself is open source as well.

All of these images can be found on the website associated with each issue and can be printed out and shared endlessly because the file size is extremely small.

It's transferable and downloadable.

Everything is packaged in a ZIP file or available on my Flux Archive website.

You can explore the photographs yourself on a timeline, and you can actually make your own zine out of any of my photographs by adding images to a cart feature and having the Flux system make the zine automatically.

I'm trying to create new systems and new ways of sharing work and preserving work using automatic settings from the camera, to the processing, to finally the actual physical materials.

When it comes to creating the zine, all of that is automatic too.

The only thing I'm responsible for is going out, making photos, making selections, and uploading the photos.

Then I can instantly create my own book at home that I can enjoy as this personal visual diary of my day.

And then I can stock them up as I move through my life and simply move on to the next one.

This Is My Final Output

This is my final output.

This is like my roll of film.

These are my 36 photographs from December 9th to December 10th.

We just looked at two days of photography from 2023.

That's what we were looking through.

If you want to make your own Flux issue, you can visit the Flux Generator. Simply upload 36 pictures and submit them directly to me.

If I enjoy the work, I'll add them to the catalog and potentially review them here on my YouTube channel.

With that being said, thank you for watching today's video.

I'll see you soon.