

Flux Archive 015 — Photography as Subconscious Expression

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

Welcome to Flux Archive Session Number 15, where we look at some of the photographs that I made along my black-and-white photography journey.

Here we have Flux Volume 15, photographs made from December to January of 2023 to 2024.

Photography and the Subconscious

I was looking through this work, and when I looked at the contact sheet, I was pretty surprised.

The first frame is a photograph of a gesture of a hand, and it mimics the final photograph of the zine, which is a photograph of a real hand pointing towards the city.

As I was going through the work, I noticed the repetition of some gestures of hands and some themes that just emerged naturally throughout the work.

It reminds me of the power of photography, photographing loosely, and photographing intuitively from instinct—and how that can sometimes have your subconscious mind become conscious through the photographs you make.

When you photograph freely and loosely, and then you start going through the photographs, you start to discover who you are.

You start to discover that sort of genuine perspective and feeling that you have towards life through the photographs that you select.

When I select my photographs, I select them very instinctively. I don't really contemplate them too much.

I put them through my Flux Zine Issue Generator, which automatically, chronologically timestamps everything and sequences them in time.

There's something special about photographing from instinct, selecting the photographs from instinct, and then allowing the chips to fall as they may in these sequences.

There's something special about me *not* making the decision to pair a photograph of a hand next to a photograph of reflected light from a building.

I'm allowing the story—allowing my own sort of subconscious stumblings through life—to be displayed in the photography.

Going Beyond the Photograph as Fact

I think what I'm ultimately seeking is to evoke an emotional quality through my imagery.

I'm seeking to go beyond the obvious image of a thing as fact to maybe, through a sequence of images, describe a feeling that I have about life.

There are some techniques that I use to achieve more peculiar kinds of frames.

For example, I'll photograph a reflected beam of light from a building and use my Ricoh GR in a weird way where I can use the exposure compensation to overexpose and create that kind of halation effect.

One of the things that I do very intuitively when I'm walking is, if I see a reflected beam of light, I'll expose for the shadow area by moving my camera, half pressing and locking in the exposure in the shadow area, moving the camera back up to the reflected surface, and then clicking the shutter.

So I'm basically quickly adjusting the exposure by holding a half press in the shadow area, looking up towards the light, and then clicking the shutter.

It creates that effect.

That's just a weird, peculiar way that I photograph using AV mode, automatic mode, and lately multi-segment metering mode.

Always Ready, Always Watching

I'm always ready to click the shutter.

Always aware.

Always watching people, watching movement, looking at textures on the walls.

As we go through this work, we go from tattered textures to newspapers on the ground, discarded objects, and qualities of light.

Flags moving in the wind are things that trigger me these days.

I'm not only looking to photograph those moments of people and gestures. I'm looking at textures. I'm looking at windows, posters, and everything in between as potential content for my photography.

Once again, it's because I'm seeking to evoke a feeling of what it's like to stumble through the world.

I don't find that locking myself into only photographing people is going to help me achieve that output.

I'm open to the birds in flight. I'm looking at the geese in the river. I'm using my camera as a way for me to explore the world.

***I'm not going to limit myself these days. I'm really exploring my inner spirit.
I'm trying to explore how I feel about the world.***

Photography becomes a very pure way to express yourself.

Photography as Expression

I find that the expressive nature of using the medium is a really powerful way to go about photography, as opposed to simply only documentary.

I've been traveling the world and using the camera as a way for me to explore humanity and document the world as fact.

But lately, I'm using it as a way for me to simply explore my own inner curiosity.

I think this way of working becomes much more liberating and much more enjoyable for me personally because I'm no longer dependent on finding something extravagant or interesting in my practice.

Instead, I'm using the images I create as a representation of how I feel about the day.

Finding Patterns in the Mundane

There's this photograph of my hand inserted against the hand of a sculpture next to Polyphemus, the Cyclops from *The Odyssey*.

Once again, the repeated gesture of the hands—even my own hand included—is kind of interesting.

I'm photographing a lot of discarded objects and strange patterns of wires.

When you shoot with the high-contrast workflow, these very mundane scenes become otherworldly simply because the superfluous details of the background can be easily crushed into black, illuminating the textures in the foreground.

It becomes a surprise.

We go from a spread of clustered wires and a discarded object to a discarded envelope and a cluster of birds in flight.

There's something extremely delightful about the minimalist deep black space and the highlight area revealing what's important in the frame.

It almost feels like these little birds are sending a message, and we have this envelope on the left.

But I don't plan any of these juxtapositions or pairings.

Photographing Serendipity

That, to me, is one of the things I love about this Flux system.

We go out there and we photograph serendipity.

I go out there and photograph this cluster of birds, and unknowingly I receive this surprise with the alignment of everything.

I didn't really plan this.

I can't really control this.

All I'm really in control of is **being there and photographing**.

I looked down from a view in Penn's Landing that is no longer there—it was destroyed—and looked down towards the water. I underexposed my camera by one or two stops and made the photograph to crush out the river and expose for the highlights.

I really enjoy the image and the abstract nature of the birds in flight.

That simple pattern is intriguing to me.

Photography, Family, and Memory

Then there's an early morning photograph I made of the clock tower at City Hall next to a picture I made of a picture of my ancestors who came over to Philadelphia from Italy.

There's something about this pairing that's interesting to me.

You have this tower of City Hall that's been standing there for over a century next to this picture of my ancestors coming from Italy.

Then there's my grandfather in another frame, some water moving from Penn's Landing.

I'm exploring my own life through the medium.

How I feel about life.

My family history.

My hometown, where I was born and raised here in Philly.

While I'm using the external world to explore my photography—photographing strangers and photographing life on the street—my underlying motive is to explore my own personal feeling about the world around me.

Relinquishing Control

There's a strange frame of a child being carried upside down in Reading Terminal. Then we have this tunnel.

And finally, there's an image of my mother during the Mummers Parade.

She was pointing out towards these balloons that were flying while all the activities were happening below. We have some ice skaters at the bottom, the tower of City Hall, and William Penn.

A very iconic scene of Philadelphia.

Then we reach the final contact sheet.

Once again, the final frame is that gesture of the hand.

And when we return to the beginning of the zine, we have that gesture of the hand again.

That's just a nice little surprise from relinquishing control of sequencing and what you're photographing, and then reliving those photographs and looking back at things.

It's exciting to see what aligns and what is juxtaposed against each other across the spreads.

I really enjoy this idea of removing control and allowing the chips to fall as they may.

That's the Flux system.

You go out there, photograph instinctively, and let life reveal the sequence afterward.

If you enjoyed this video, you can make your own Flux Issue using the Flux Issue Generator. Upload 36 pictures and submit them directly to me. If I enjoy the work, I'll print out the work, review it here on the YouTube channel, and add it to the public catalog.

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

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

I'll see you soon.

Peace.