

Flux Archive 017 — Light and Gesture: The Essence of Photography

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

Welcome to Flux Archive Session Number 17, where we look at some of the photographs I made along my black-and-white photography journey.

Here we're looking at photographs made from March to April of 2024.

Without further ado, let's jump right into the work.

The Flux Protocol

Every Flux Issue starts with a protocol page, which describes how the Flux Issues are made.

Essentially, you can create your own zine at home using my Flux Generator. You upload 36 pictures, and it will automatically chronologically timestamp and sequence the work as it was made.

You can see each photograph has a caption with the time, date, your name, and a sequence number on the top right.

The first frame I made here was in Miami along Hollywood Beach's bay.

This is a photograph I made of my mother's hand as she was talking on the phone. I simply made this intimate close-up photograph, I believe using the Ricoh GR IIIX at the time, photographing with the 40mm and isolating that hand against the beautiful water, sky, and horizon line.

I'm really treating photography as a visual diary.

These moments I made when visiting, I believe, my brother for the first time in his new home in Miami.

Here we have a photograph I made the first day I found myself in his home. You can see myself in the photo. You can see my brother in the photo. You can see my mother in the photo.

The photography that I'm making is personal to me.

The Surprise of Reflections

I'm using the balcony and the reflected surface of the window through that sliding door to create this strange effect where I'm framing my brother Julian within the area where my camera is located and showcasing my face at the top of the frame.

There's that repeated gesture of his hand and my hand, my mother coming through, and the trees in the background.

The surprise of photographing through a reflective surface is incredibly intriguing.

Here we have a photograph I made in, I believe, Brickell. I don't know exactly if it's Brickell. It's that fancy area where there are lots of malls and shops.

I'm just isolating some subjects in that shaft of light in the downtown Miami area.

Light Is the Essence of Photography

Maybe a good topic to think about today is **gesture and light**, and the simplicity of using light in your photography.

Light is the essence of the medium itself.

Phos meaning light.

Graphe meaning writing or drawing.

We're drawing with light with our photography. We're writing with light.

By wielding light, you can find that there is infinite potential to photograph things simply due to the way the light itself interacts with surfaces.

Whether they're discarded objects like bricks or a car moving by, light can transform the ordinary.

When this car came moving by, I only had a split fraction of a second to respond. I moved my camera quickly and photographed from the hip because I had that instinct, that pull to photograph this interesting subject.

It was an interesting car, but the way the light interacts with the vehicle elevates that normal vehicle to something a little bit more intriguing.

It adds mystery and ambiguity with the shadow area and exposed highlights.

Light itself can elevate a mundane scene to something more extraordinary.

Let Light Guide You

Whether I'm photographing buildings popping up along the Schuylkill River or sculptures throughout my city, I'm finding the use of light itself to sometimes be the thing that makes the photograph interesting.

We have scenes with lots of deep black areas in the shadows and simple elements exposed in the highlights.

There's a person sleeping under a blanket on a bench in Rittenhouse Square, isolated from the rest of the park. The lighting adds drama and mystery to the frame.

Then the way light casts upon the gravestones and illuminates the cross creates a powerful spread from left to right, using this subject almost like a ghost and photographing this empty gravestone.

Light itself guides me.

Whether it's a cloudy day or a sunny day, I'm still thinking about the way light interacts with things.

Really, I find light to be my primary interest a lot of the time when I'm out shooting.

It really is light itself.

I hope you can see that through these images.

Look at the way I'm looking at the sun peering beyond the clouds and the way that line casts towards the horizon.

Look at the way the light reflects off the river and onto this stick.

I'm simply looking at light.

Looking at Light and Life

Of course, I'm looking at life too.

I'm curious about gesture. I'm curious about how things occur on the street and the way people interact with public spaces.

But once again, I'm looking at light.

I'm looking at the clouds up above as a mystery to me.

By photographing the light and the clouds, I'm returning to that essence of the medium of drawing with light.

I'm looking up at the clouds and creating this sort of sketch of the clouds, separating that scene from the background.

I'm looking at the mannequin in the mall and photographing the eyes revealed in relationship to the silhouette.

I'm using the light and the shadow area to create that geometric shape of the figure moving by.

Intentional Composition, Unintentional Sequence

There are decisions that I make intentionally with the way that I compose things.

I'll photograph through a reflective surface, through glass, using the reflected light from a window and waiting for a subject to walk by.

This can create a composition from foreground to background and add a sense of depth to the frame.

However, what's *not* intentional is the way that sequencing works in these zines.

Everything is done chronologically.

That becomes intriguing when we have patterns and gestures emerging between two photographs that I never intentionally paired together.

The Power of Ambiguity

One photograph was made during the eclipse.

You can see the woman in the background actually has the glasses to view the eclipse.

The eclipse itself wasn't interesting to me.

Photographing people with glasses looking at the thing doesn't really intrigue me.

What intrigues me is **ambiguity** and making a frame that adds a little bit more mystery.

I was simply curious about this gesture.

But the surprise of this subject being activated in the top left-hand corner of the frame really makes the photograph.

That small detail of the face being revealed is something I couldn't predict.

It's something I couldn't make happen intentionally.

Similarly, I was interested in this baby in another frame. I photographed the simple scene of the baby, but I couldn't necessarily control that gesture occurring in the background.

I simply had the instinct to click the shutter at that moment.

Light and Gesture Are All You Need

Light and gesture are really all you need.

You don't need much to start practicing your photography.

You don't need to go anywhere exciting.

I can photograph the river and the clouds or a sculpture in my hometown and still find that I can create images with impact simply because light is the essence of the medium.

Think about light and how you can use light.

Think about gesture and how gesture elevates a scene from something mundane to something extraordinary.

You Really Can't Make This Shit Up

Here we have the frame of the zine, the most impactful frame I made, of this boy playing with a toy gun against this advertisement upon the wall behind him.

You really can't make this shit up.

This frame becomes interesting because of that combination of the advertisement and the reality of the hand.

The gun itself looks extremely realistic, and there's a power to the emotion of the face smiling in relationship to the scary, violent nature of the gun and the small hand of the boy.

You really just can't make this shit up.

You walk around, and life sometimes just gives you these surprises.

Making Photography Personal

Here we have a spread of me and my mother.

This is a self-portrait that I made, and you can see my hair cast upon the area with the shadow.

I didn't see that when I made the photograph.

But when I look back at the photo and see the way the light interacts with my face and the shadow play, it gives me that extra level of surprise.

Once again, it's using light.

I'm using light and simple gestures like me closing my eyes.

Then we have artificial light and my mother looking up towards that source of light.

I'm making very personal imagery of myself and my mother across the spread.

Engaging With Strangers

Here we have two photographs I made of strangers.

In both of these scenes, I interacted with the subject.

I went up to this man with his hook and said, "Yo, that's a cool hook. Can I make a photo?"

I photographed that hook on his hand.

The areas in the shadows were crushed, and you can see it almost looks like his watch is floating.

Then I interacted with another man alongside the Penn's Landing river.

It was his birthday.

I remember trying to make a frame of him in a more interesting way than just making a basic portrait.

I used the shadow area cast upon his face to create this look that almost makes him have an eye patch like a pirate.

It's kind of interesting in relationship to the hook of the man on the left-hand side.

Again, these relationships weren't planned.

They emerged through the sequence.

Returning to Nature

I love hiking through the woods here in Philadelphia.

We have so many green spaces.

I'm photographing the markings humans leave behind on the trees—etching hearts, etching their initials, and sort of etching their love within the trees.

Then I'm simply photographing the trees themselves.

But once again, I'm looking at the light and the way it interacts with everything.

Let the Photograph Speak for Itself

Here we have this man who was down on Market Street.

He had his hands behind his back. He had a Bible and some cigarettes, and he was asking to be arrested.

I don't know what he did, but he was repenting and just lying there.

I have no idea why.

And I don't know that it really matters.

Sometimes the photograph itself speaks for itself.

Then there's this simple streak of the plane moving.

It was just a weird scene.

I can't really even describe it with words.

Sometimes you don't have to.

Light and Gesture

This is a pretty special Flux Issue for me.

And if there's one thing to take away from it, it's this:

Light and gesture. It's all you really need.

Hit the tunnels of City Hall.

Look at the way you can interact with light, people, and gesture.

Create something out there.

That's pretty much it for this zine.

If you want to create your own Flux Issue, click the link in the description for the Flux Generator and upload 36 pictures.

You can download and print out your own work or submit it directly to me, where I'll potentially review the work here on this YouTube channel and do a flip-through commentary of your work.

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

Once again, thanks for watching.

I'll see you soon.

Peace.