Living with the Ricoh GR

A Frictionless Daily Photography System

By Dante Sisofo



Introduction



What’s poppin, people? It’s Dante.

This book is about friction. Not just in photography—but as a way of living.

I’ve been walking with the same camera every single day for years, slipping it into my front right pocket and stepping into the world. From quiet sunrise streets in Philadelphia to wandering Tokyo with no plan, I’ve come to realize that photography has nothing to do with gear. It has everything to do with removing what gets in the way of you creating.

Friction is the enemy. Too many lenses. Too many files. Too many decisions. Living With the Ricoh GR is about subtraction. One camera. One aesthetic. One file type. One daily rhythm. That’s it. It’s not about being fancy. It’s not about overthinking. You’ve got to remove the noise before you can enter the flow.

Table of Contents

PART I — FRICTION

1. The Only Goal: Never Stop
2. Why Photographers Burn Out
3. Thinking Is the Friction
4. Freedom Through Subtraction

PART II — THE INSTALL

5. The Closed System
6. The One Camera Commitment
7. The Exact Ricoh GR Setup
8. High Contrast Black & White
9. The Small JPEG Discipline
10. Remove All Technical Friction

PART III — DAILY INTEGRATION

11. Kill the Hunter
12. Photograph When Nothing Is Happening
13. Build a Walking Route
14. Live First. Photograph Through It.
15. Publish Chronologically

PART IV — INSTINCT OVER INTELLECT

16. Composition Is Physical
17. Shoot From the Gut
18. Enter the Flow State
19. Light and Shadow as Subject

PART V — STYLE IS INEVITABLE

20. Stop Searching for Style
21. The Snapshot Reveals the Subconscious
22. Repetition Compounds Identity
23. Detach From Contemporary Noise

PART VI — THE SYSTEM IN MOTION

24. Flow Begins Immediately
25. Solving Chaos With Constraint
26. Gesture Over Spectacle
27. Shoot More. Think Less.
28. Instant Workflow

PART VII — THE BOOK AS PROOF

29. Follow Along - Build the Book
30. 14,000 → 680 → 45
31. Editing Without Emotion
32. Chronology Over Concept
33. Pairing and Flow
34. Designing the 5x8 Trade Book
35. Order the Prototype
36. The Book Changes Nothing

CONCLUSION

The 30-Day Commitment

Resources

The Only Goal

Most photographers think the goal is to get better.

It’s not.

The goal is to never stop.

You don’t need more inspiration.
You don’t need another lens.
You don’t need better presets.

You need a system.

Because without a system, you rely on mood.
Without a system, you rely on motivation.
Without a system, you stop.

Living With the Ricoh GR installs inevitability.

One camera.
One aesthetic.
One file type.
One daily rhythm.

Remove friction.

Creation becomes automatic.

Why Photographers Burn Out

Photographers don’t burn out because they lack talent. They burn out because the process is heavy — too many lenses, too many cameras, too many presets, too many files sitting untouched on hard drives. RAW backlog. Editing paralysis. Waiting for something interesting to happen.

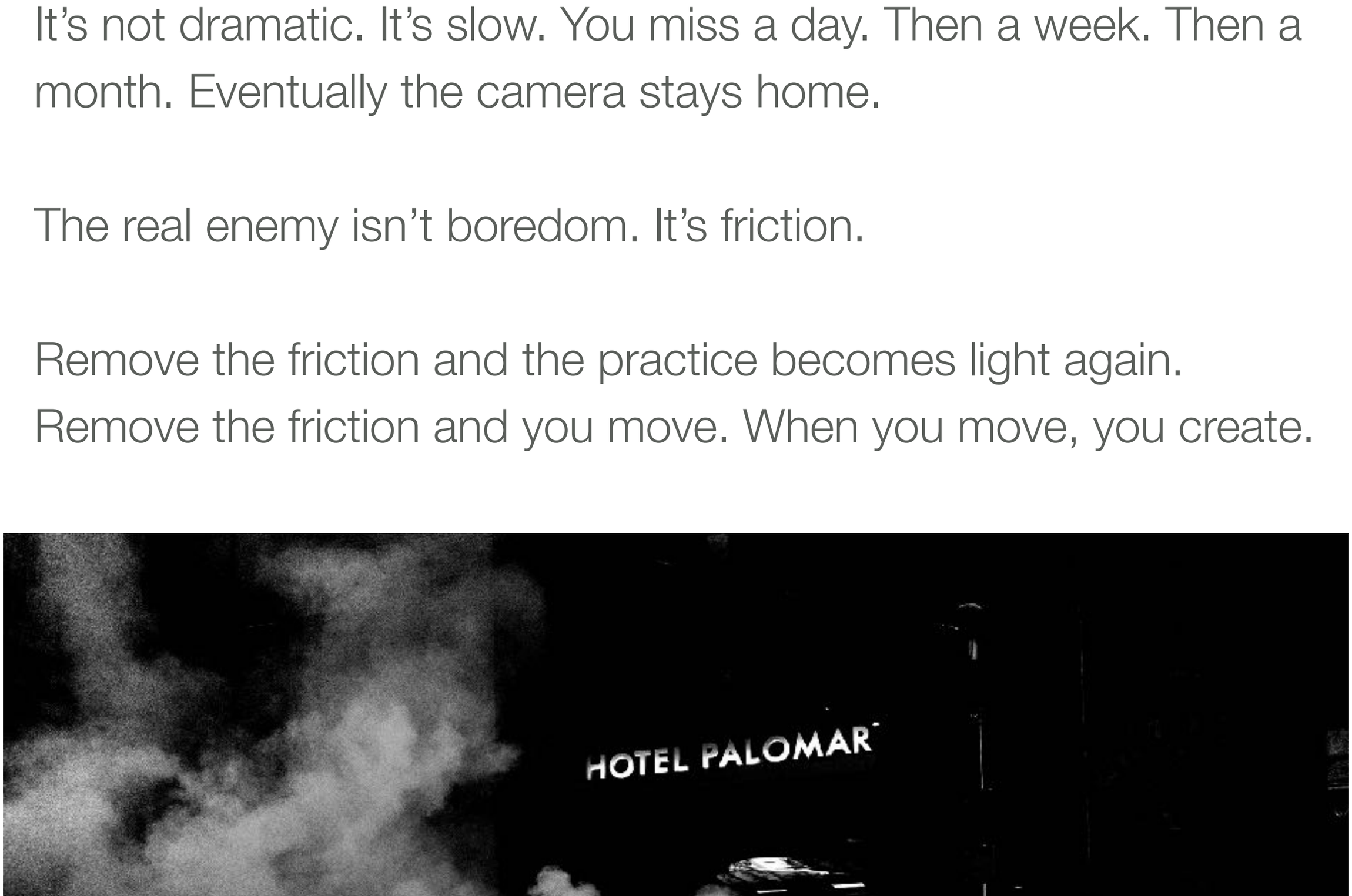
All of it creates friction.

Friction creates hesitation. You start thinking instead of shooting. Reviewing instead of creating. Waiting instead of walking. Unlimited choice leads to decision fatigue, which leads to stagnation — and eventually quitting.

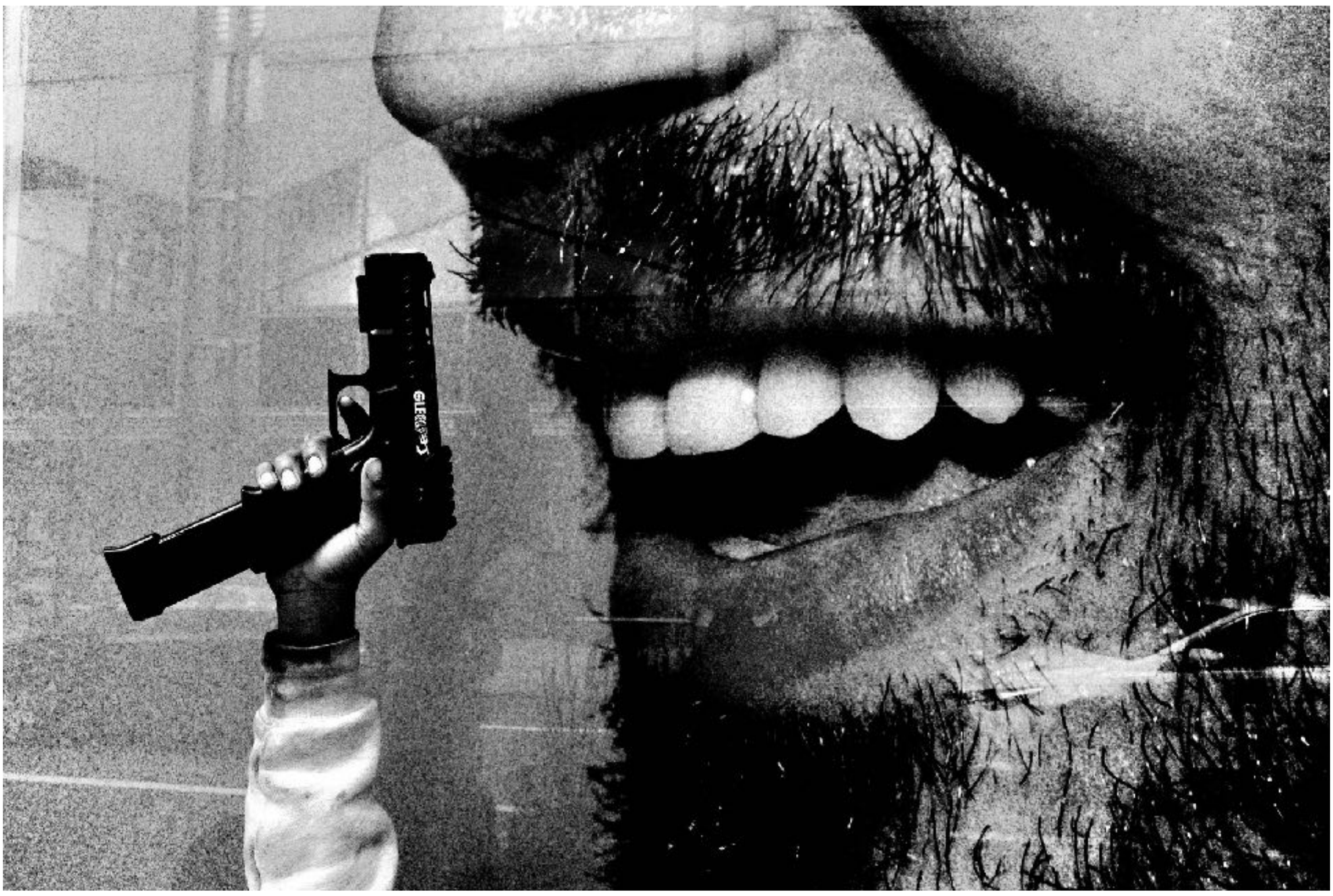
It’s not dramatic. It’s slow. You miss a day. Then a week. Then a month. Eventually the camera stays home.

The real enemy isn’t boredom. It’s friction.

Remove the friction and the practice becomes light again. Remove the friction and you move. When you move, you create.



Thinking Is the Friction



The problem isn’t that you don’t know enough. The problem is that you’re thinking too much. You think about composition, settings, whether the photo is “good,” how it will perform, how it compares. All that thinking creates distance between you and the moment.

Photography is physical. It’s movement, position, timing. The longer you hesitate, the further the moment drifts away. When you overthink, you freeze. When you freeze, you miss. Miss enough times and you stop trusting yourself.

Flow doesn’t come from adding knowledge. It comes from subtracting decisions. Remove the extra choices. Remove the internal debate. Remove the performance. Point. Move. Shoot.

The less you think, the more you see.

Freedom Through Subtraction

Freedom isn’t found in more options. It’s found in fewer decisions.

Every extra lens, every extra file type, every extra setting feels like possibility. In reality, it’s hesitation. The more choices you have, the more mental noise you carry. And noise kills rhythm.

Constraint is not limitation. It’s clarity. When you remove the excess, what remains is instinct. When you remove alternatives, you stop negotiating. When you stop negotiating, you move.

Subtraction sharpens attention. It simplifies behavior. It makes repetition possible.

Freedom is the elimination of choice.

Remove enough, and photography becomes automatic.



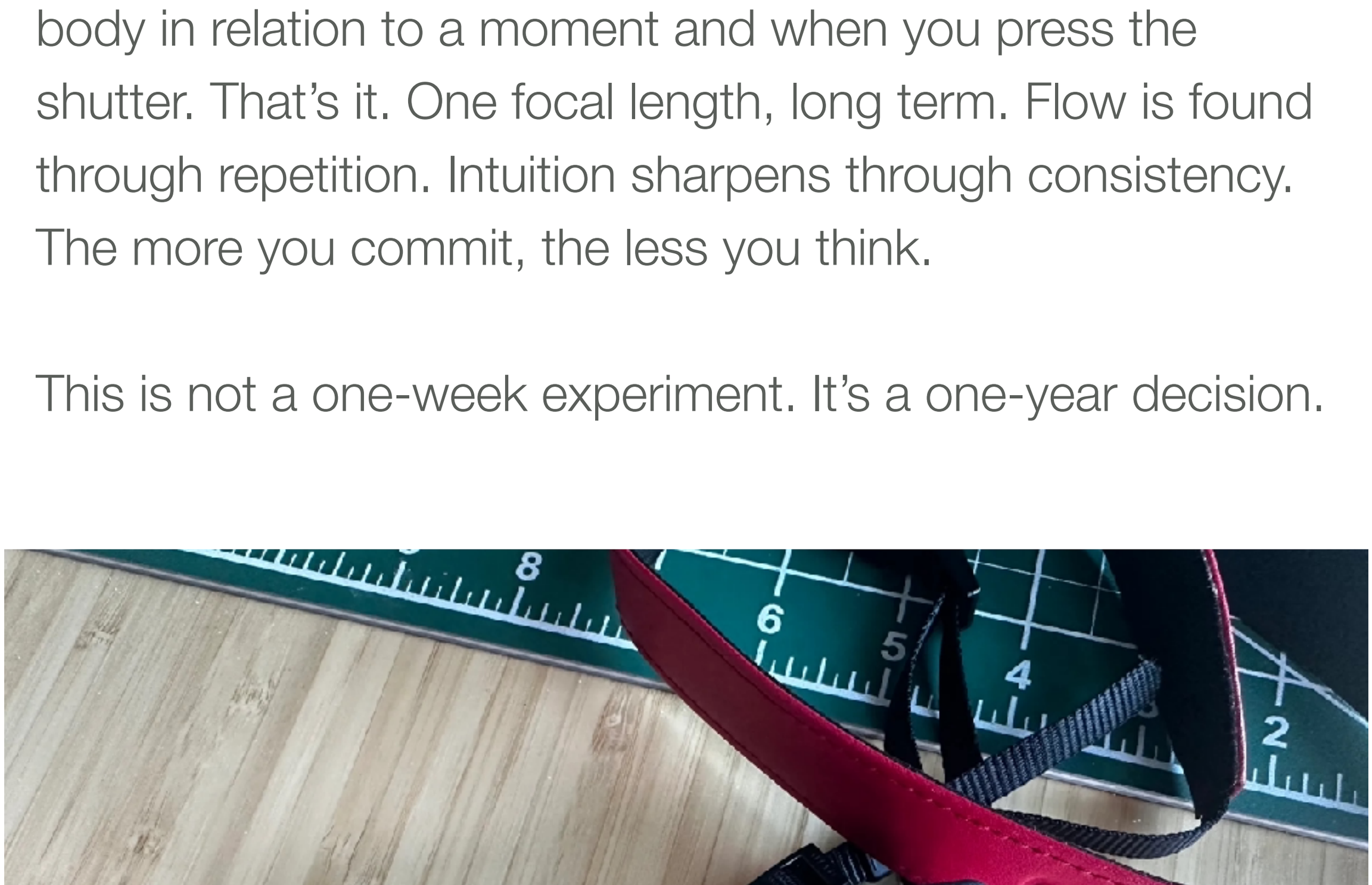
The One Camera Commitment

Focal length doesn’t matter. Commitment does. Switching cameras interrupts intuition. Switching lenses resets your distance to the world. Every change forces you to recalibrate, and recalibration kills instinct.

When you carry the same camera every single day, your body adapts. You stop thinking about framing. You stop guessing distance. You stop hesitating. The Ricoh GR becomes an extension of your eye. It lives in your front right pocket. No bag. No ceremony. No production.

Street photography is simple. It’s where you place your body in relation to a moment and when you press the shutter. That’s it. One focal length, long term. Flow is found through repetition. Intuition sharpens through consistency. The more you commit, the less you think.

This is not a one-week experiment. It’s a one-year decision.



The Exact Ricoh GR Setup



The goal is to remove technical friction before you leave the house. You don’t want to be on the street diving into menus. You want to raise the camera, press the shutter, and move on.

AV mode. f/8. Snap focus at 2 meters. Auto ISO. Exposure compensation as your only adjustment. Let the camera handle the rest. You are there to respond, not to calculate.

JPEG only. No RAW. No RAW + JPEG. Small file size. Fast import. Fast backup. Fast publishing. Big files create hesitation. Small files create rhythm.

High contrast black and white. Bake the look in. Crush the shadows. Expose for the highlights. What you see is what you get. No fixing it later. No tweaking in Lightroom. Set it once. Forget it.

The less you touch the camera, the more present you stay. Dial it in. Lock it down. Stop negotiating. Watch my full camera settings video here: https://videopress.com/v/2MJNUojC

Shooting Mode

AV (Aperture Priority)
f/8

Focus

Snap Focus: 2 meters
Full Press Snap: Off
AF Assist Light: Off

Fn Button: Snap

Toggle between Single Point and Snap.

When in Snap:
1 meter to infinity is sharp.









Exposure





Metering: Multi-segment

ISO: Auto

160 — 25,600

Minimum shutter: 1/500

Control exposure with one thing only:

Exposure Compensation.

Do not touch aperture.

Do not touch ISO.

Do not touch shutter speed.

File Format

JPEG ONLY

3:2

Small size

No RAW.

No RAW + JPEG.

Small files create speed.

Speed creates rhythm.







High Contrast Black & White

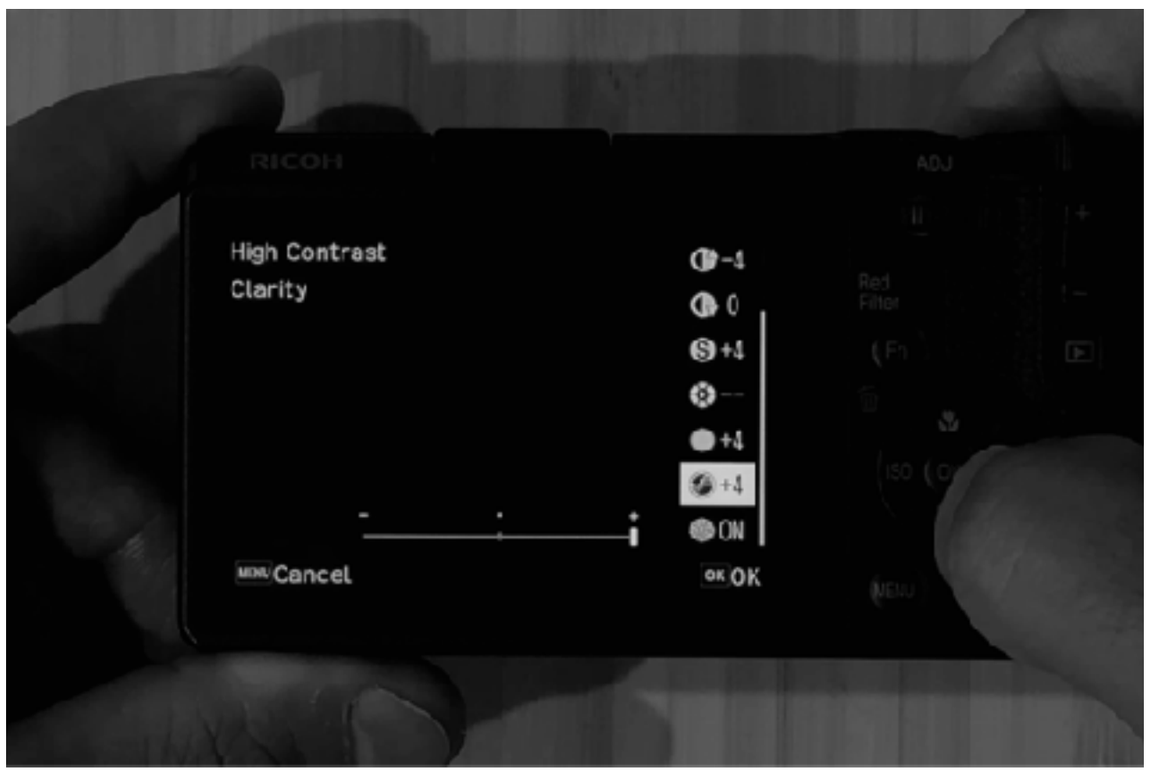
Image Control:
High Contrast B&W



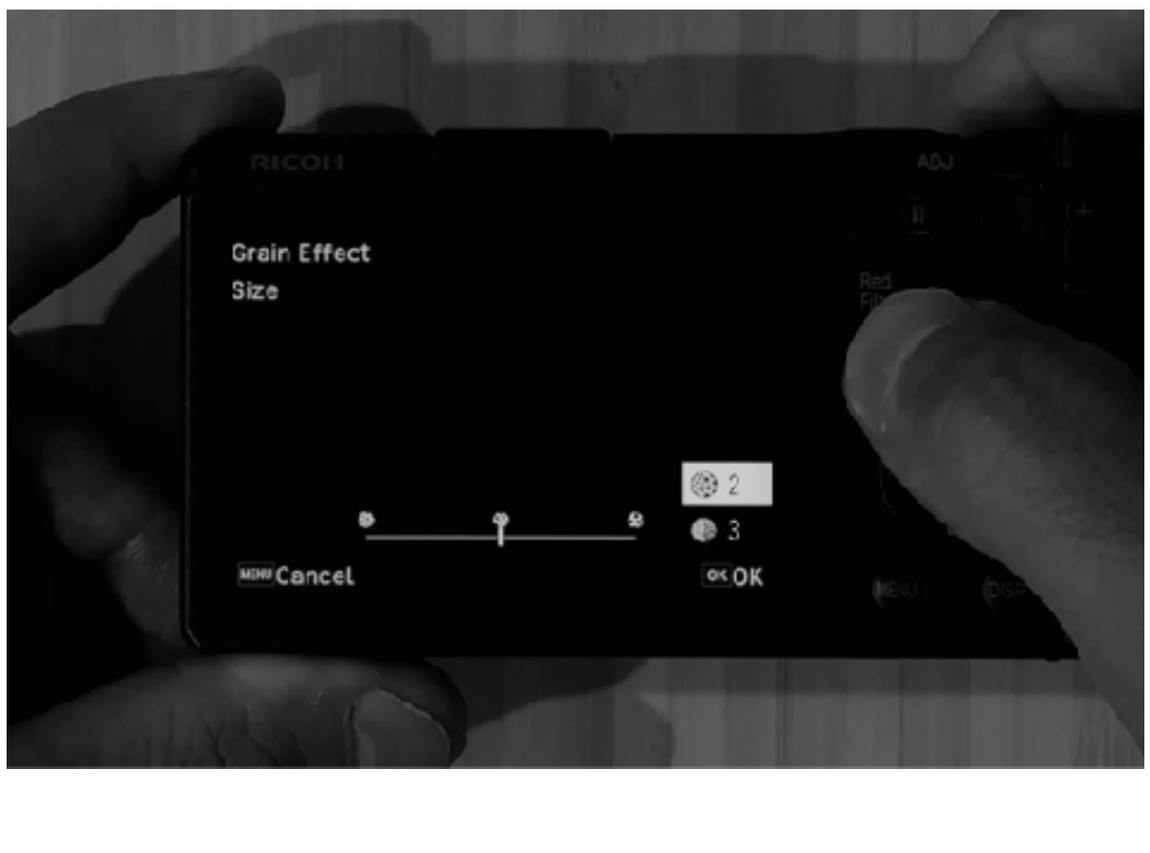
High/Low Key: -2
Contrast: +4
Highlight: -4
Shadow: 0
Sharpness: +4
Shading: +4
Clarity: +4
Grain: On (Size 2)

Everything is baked in.
No fixing in post.









Buttons & Display

Custom 1: Snap Distance

Custom 2–5: Off

Fn: Snap

Movie Button: Crop

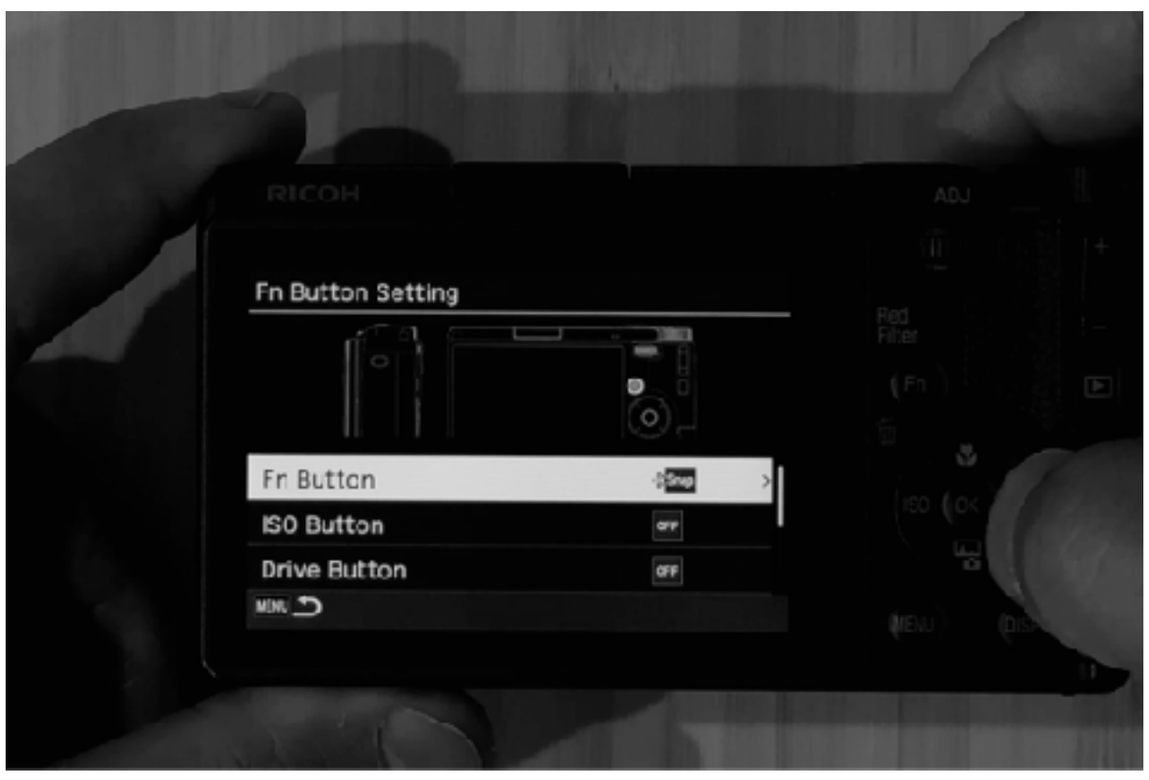
Touch AF: Off

Guide Display: Off

4x4 Grid





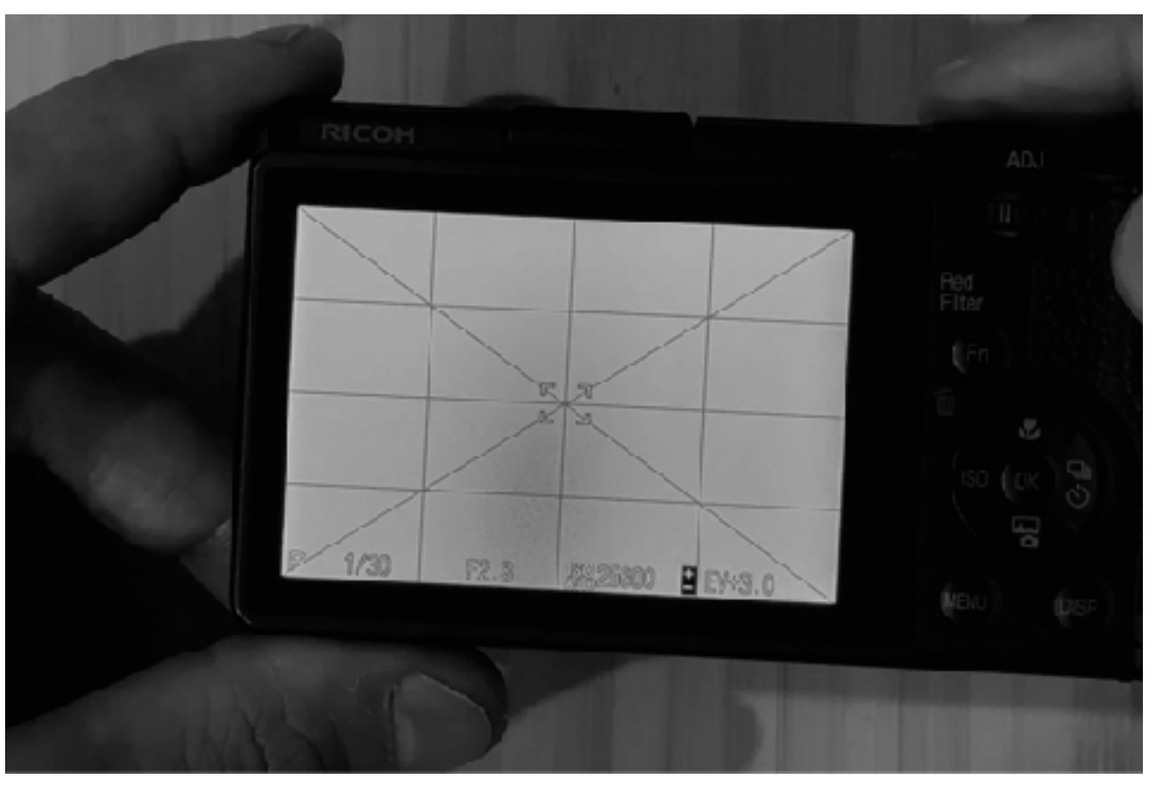












System Installed

- AV mode
- f/8
- Snap 2m
- Auto ISO
- JPEG only
- High Contrast B&W baked in
- Minimal screen

On the street:

Raise camera.

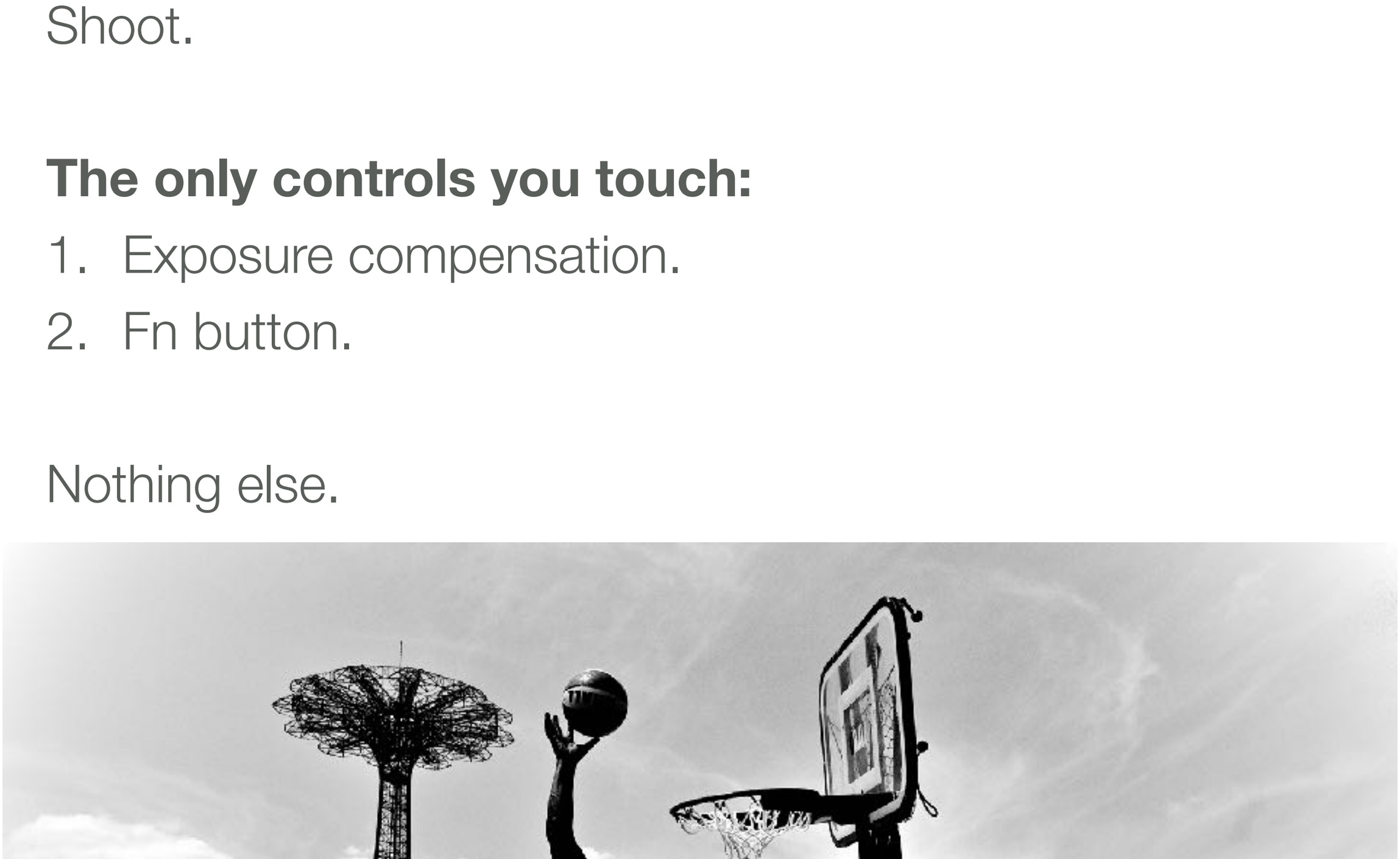
Point.

Shoot.

The only controls you touch:

1. Exposure compensation.
2. Fn button.

Nothing else.



High Contrast Black & White



This isn’t about taste. It’s about reduction.

When you remove color, you remove noise. When you crush the shadows and expose for the highlights, light becomes the subject. Shape becomes the language.

Abstraction is the solution to the mundane. You don’t need dramatic events. You don’t need a new city. You need to see differently.

High contrast simplifies reality. It isolates gesture. It separates figure from ground. It turns chaos into form.

And when it’s baked into the file, there’s no second guessing. No fixing it later. What you see is what you get.

Light. Shadow. Timing.

Nothing else.

The Small JPEG Discipline

Speed is everything.

Large files create hesitation. RAW creates backlog. Backlog creates avoidance. Avoidance kills momentum.

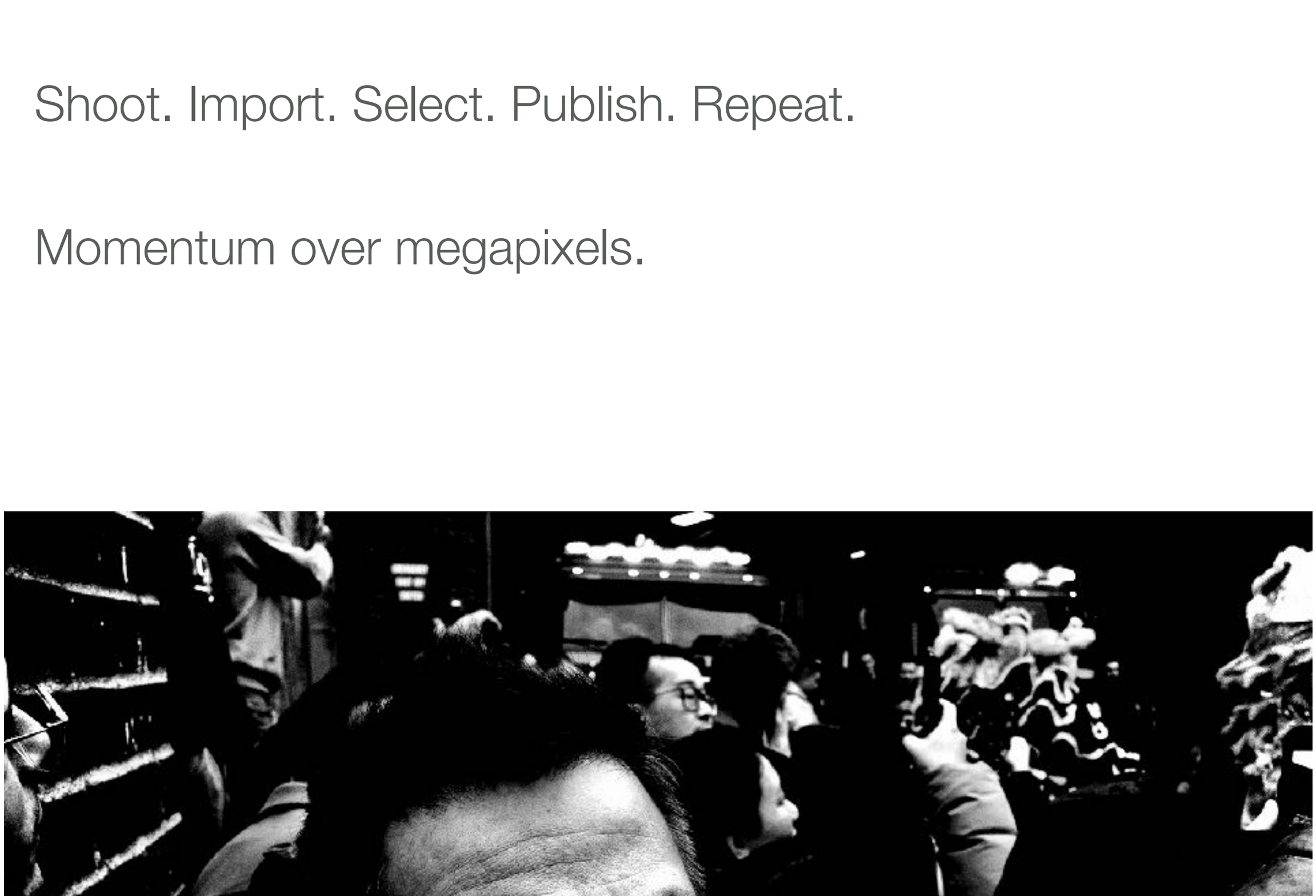
Small JPEGs create rhythm. They import instantly. They back up instantly. They publish instantly.

Photography happens in the street — not on a hard drive.

When the file is final, you move on. No tweaking. No revisiting. No obsessing over yesterday.

Shoot. Import. Select. Publish. Repeat.

Momentum over megapixels.



Remove All Technical Friction



You should not be thinking about your camera on the street.

No menu diving. No adjusting settings. No debating exposure. The camera is already configured.

The only controls you touch are exposure compensation and the Snap toggle.

Everything else is locked.

The less you touch the camera, the more present you stay.

The more present you stay, the sharper your instinct becomes.

Dial it in before you leave home.

Once you step outside, it’s just you and the moment.

Kill the Hunter

Most photographers are hunters. They go out looking for the decisive moment, the rare gesture, the dramatic light. They walk fast. They chase. They wait for something interesting to happen.

Hunting burns you out.

When you depend on novelty, you become outcome obsessed. If nothing spectacular appears, you feel like the day was wasted. That pressure kills rhythm.

You are not in control of what happens on the street. You are only in control of showing up.

Slow down. Let life move toward you. Walk the same streets. Photograph when nothing is happening.

The mundane is the game.

When you stop hunting, you start noticing. When you stop waiting, you start shooting. When you detach from the outcome, the rhythm returns.

Your job is not to find great photographs.

Your job is to keep moving.

Photograph When Nothing Is Happening

Most of life is ordinary. People moving from point A to point B. Familiar corners. Empty sidewalks. If you need fireworks, you will burn out.

The mundane is infinite.

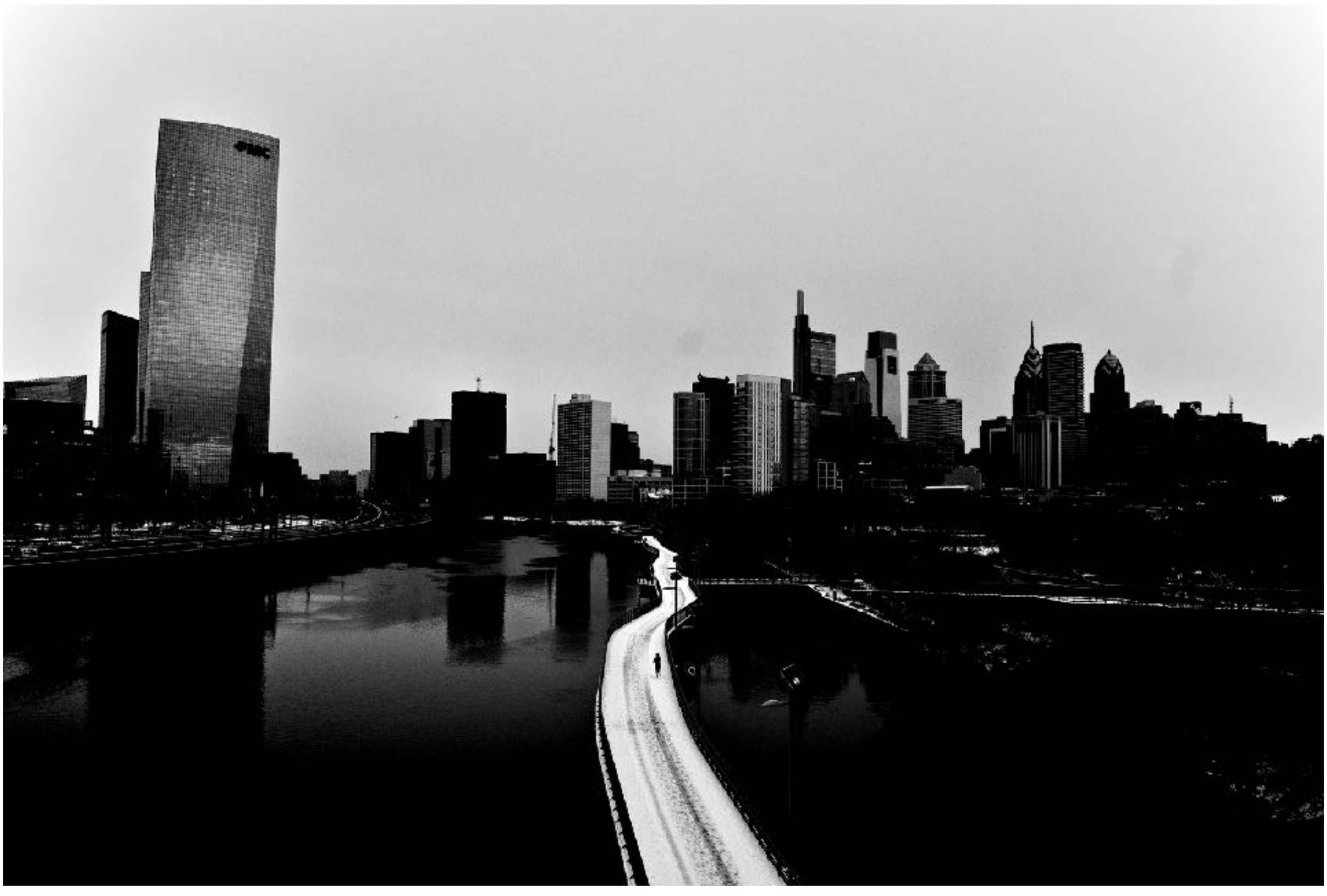
When you stop asking “Is this interesting?”, everything becomes photographable. A shadow across a wall. A passing gesture. Light hitting a surface you’ve walked past a hundred times.

You don’t need events. You need sensitivity.

Walk the same route. Slow down. Let boredom dissolve. Return to the same streets day after day and you’ll start seeing patterns — light shifts, gestures repeat, small details surface.

You will never make the same photograph twice.

Nothing spectacular needs to happen. You just need to be there.



Build a Walking Route



Consistency sharpens instinct.

Walk the same route daily. The same blocks. The same corners. The same stretch of light. Repetition removes hesitation. You stop searching for where to go and start focusing on how to see.

When you return to the same streets, patterns reveal themselves. You learn when the light hits a wall. You learn when foot traffic peaks. You learn where to stand.

Constraint creates familiarity. Familiarity builds confidence. Confidence reduces thinking.

You don’t need a new city.

You need to walk more.

Live First. Photograph Through It.

Photography is not something you schedule. It’s something you carry.

When you separate photography from your life, friction creeps in. You wait for free time. You wait for the “right” conditions. You create excuses.

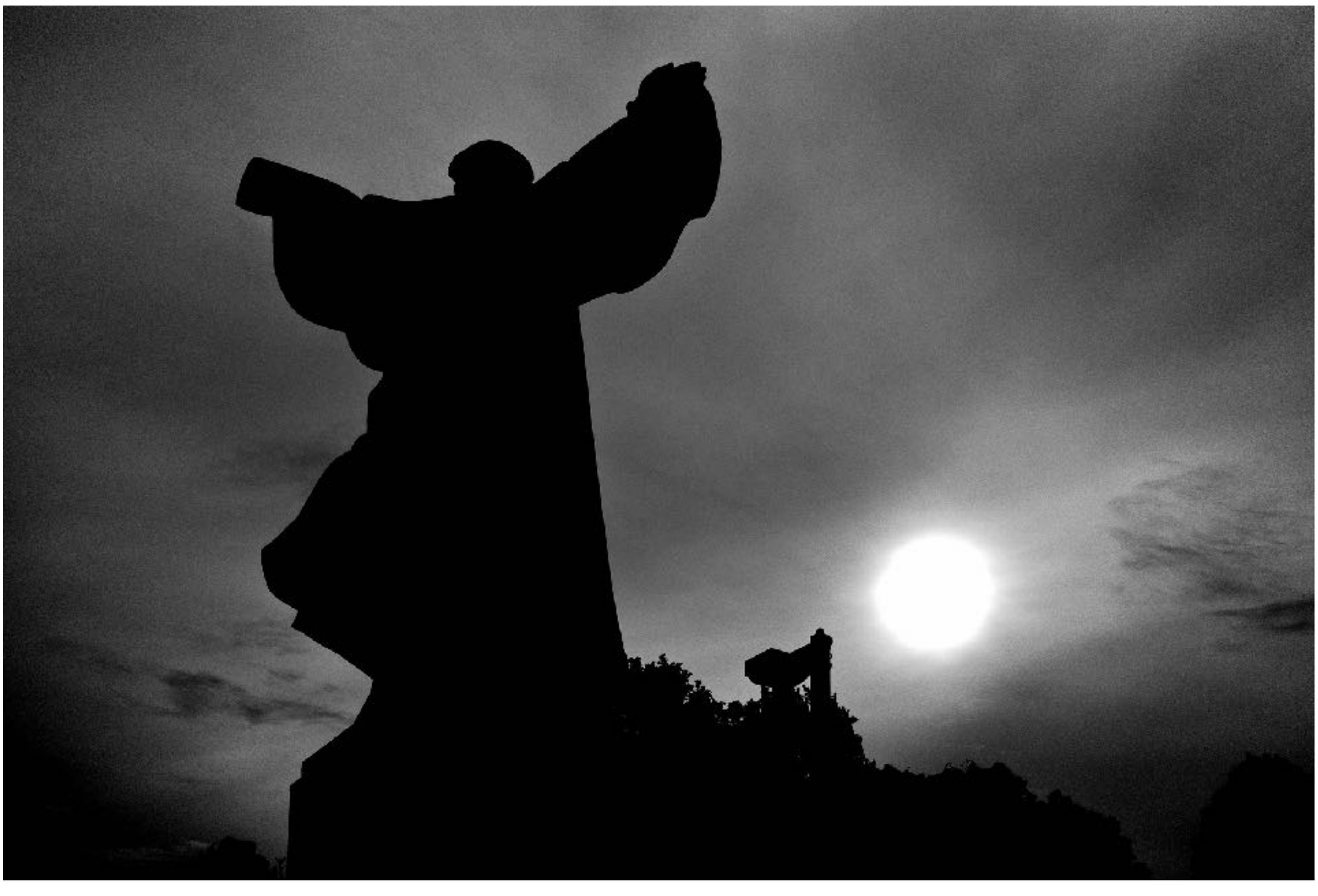
Bring the camera into your everyday rhythm. Morning walks. Commutes. Lunch breaks. Errands. Let life be the project.

You are not out there hunting stories. You are living — and photographing through it.

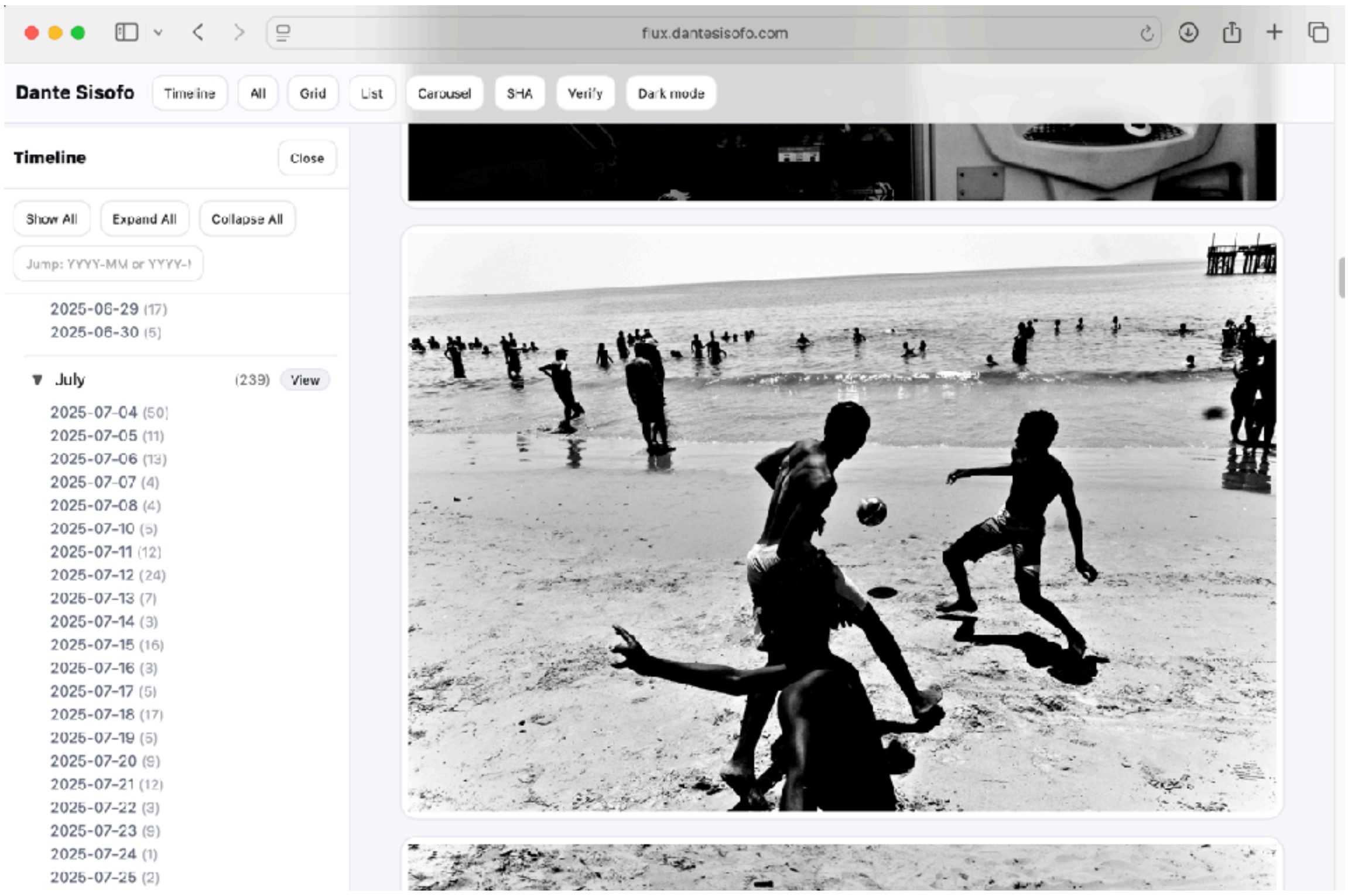
The camera is a companion, not a production.

When photography becomes inseparable from life, there are no gaps. No excuses. No pressure.

Just movement.



Publish Chronologically



Backlog creates anxiety. Anxiety creates avoidance.

If you let files pile up, you start carrying yesterday into today. You review instead of shoot. You curate instead of create.

Publish by the date.

Year. Month. Day.

No reordering. No over-sequencing. No perfection theater.

When you publish daily, you reset daily. The archive breathes. The pressure disappears. You move forward instead of backward.

The goal is momentum, not perfection.

Shoot. Import. Select. Publish. Repeat.

Composition Is Physical

Composition is not theory. It’s position.

Where you stand in relation to the moment determines everything. Move left. Move right. Drop low. Step forward. Step back. The frame changes instantly.

You do not control the world. You control your body.

Stop thinking about rules. Stop analyzing grids. Stop intellectualizing balance. Solve the frame with your feet.

Photography starts with your legs.

When you move, layers shift. Backgrounds separate. Gestures align. The image reveals itself through position, not thought.

Presence is more powerful than theory.



Composition Example

Here's an example.

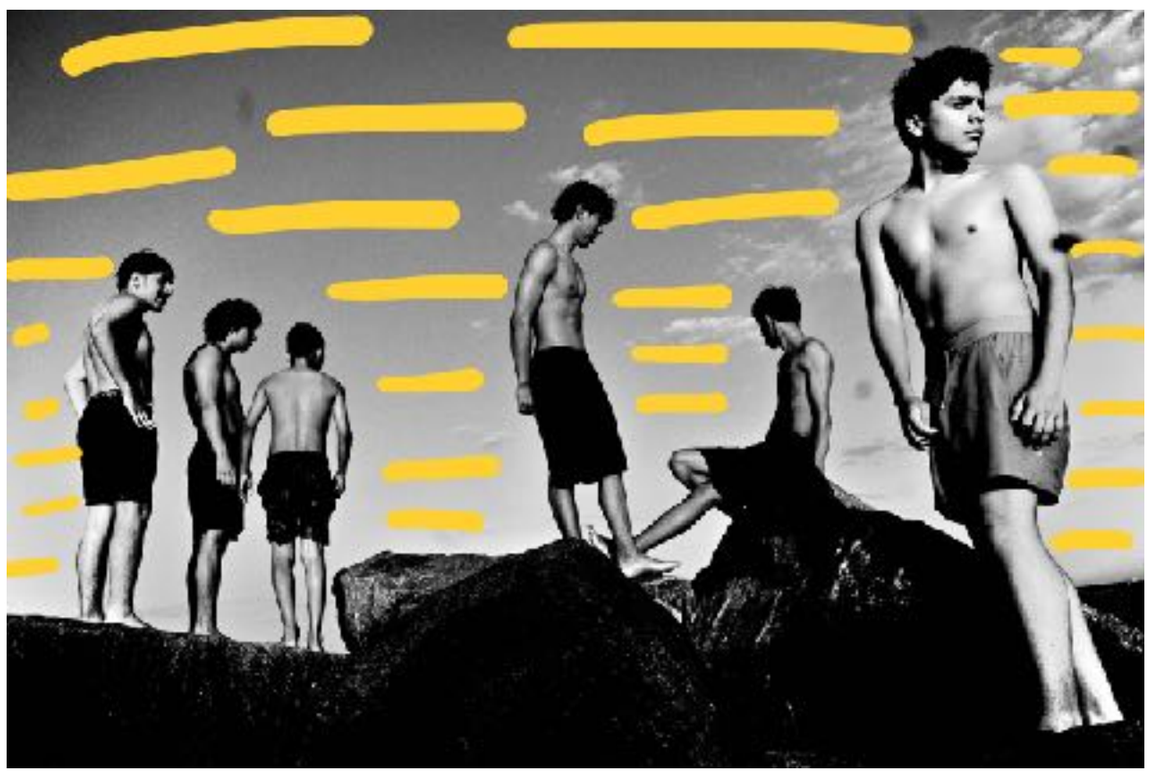
At Coney Island, I saw boys playing on the rocks. The frame only worked because I dropped low. That single physical movement separated them from the background and gave the sky clean negative space.

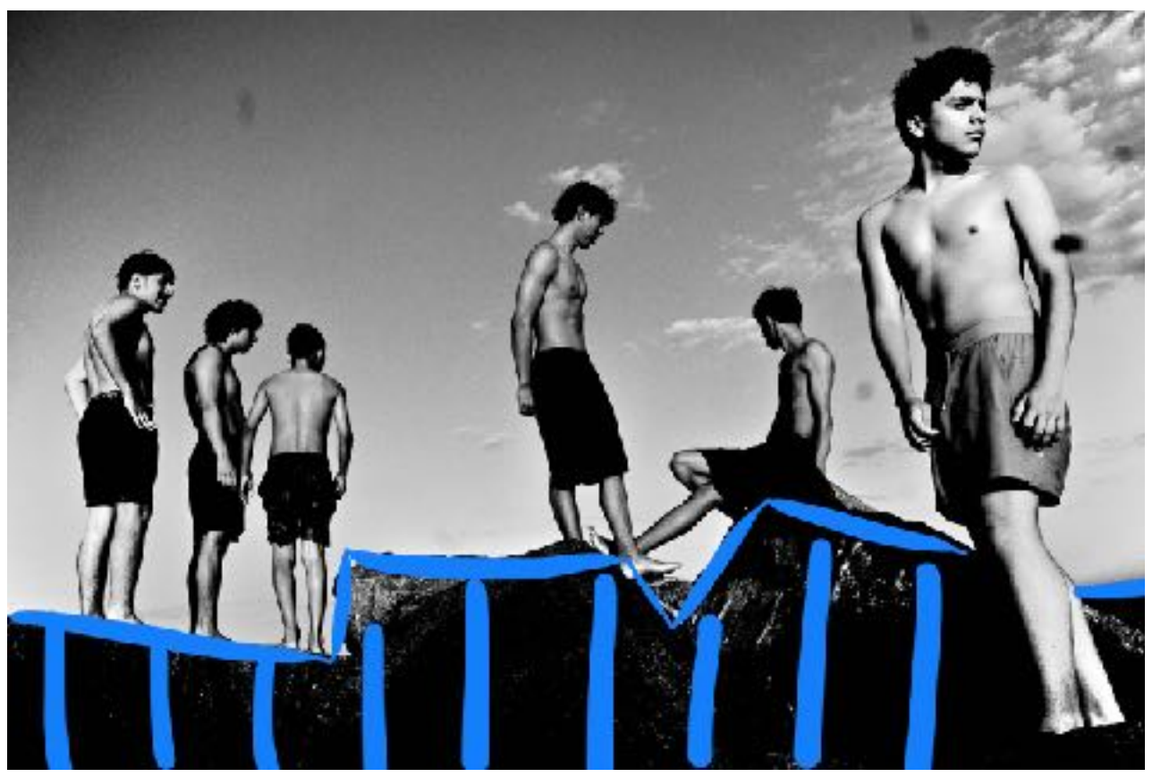
Foreground: rocks.
Middle ground: bodies.
Background: sky.

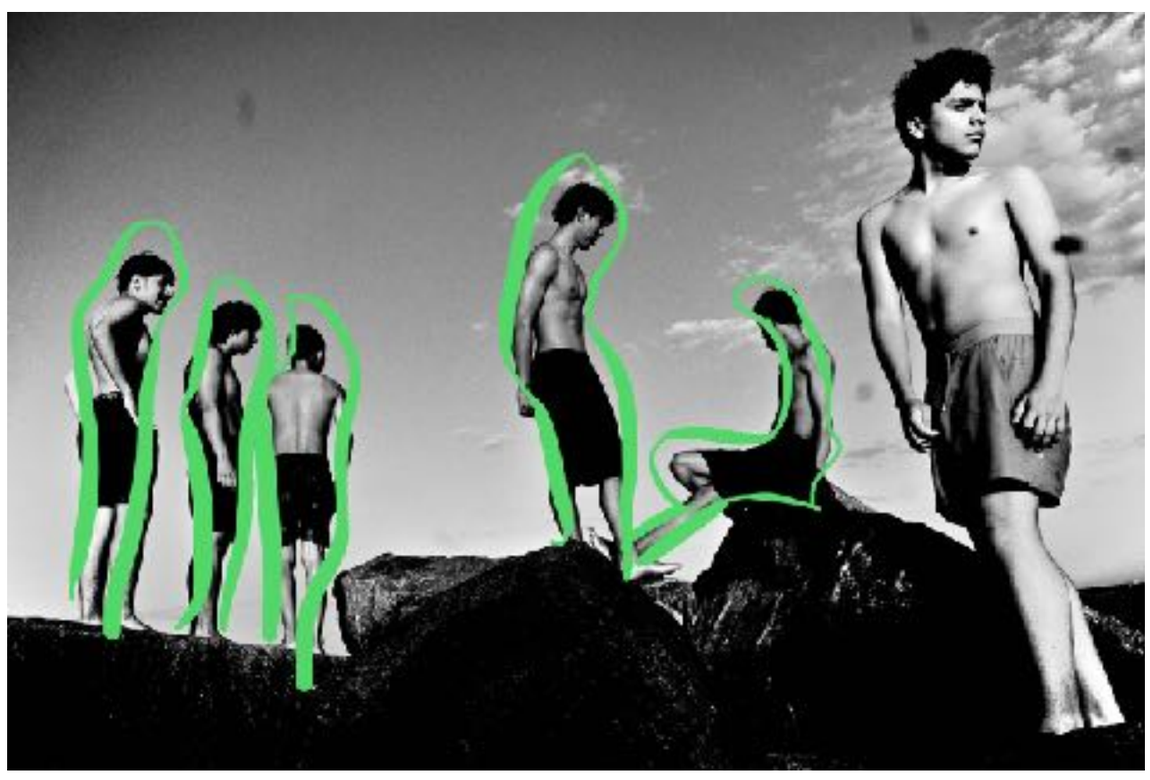
When one boy turned his head, I clicked.

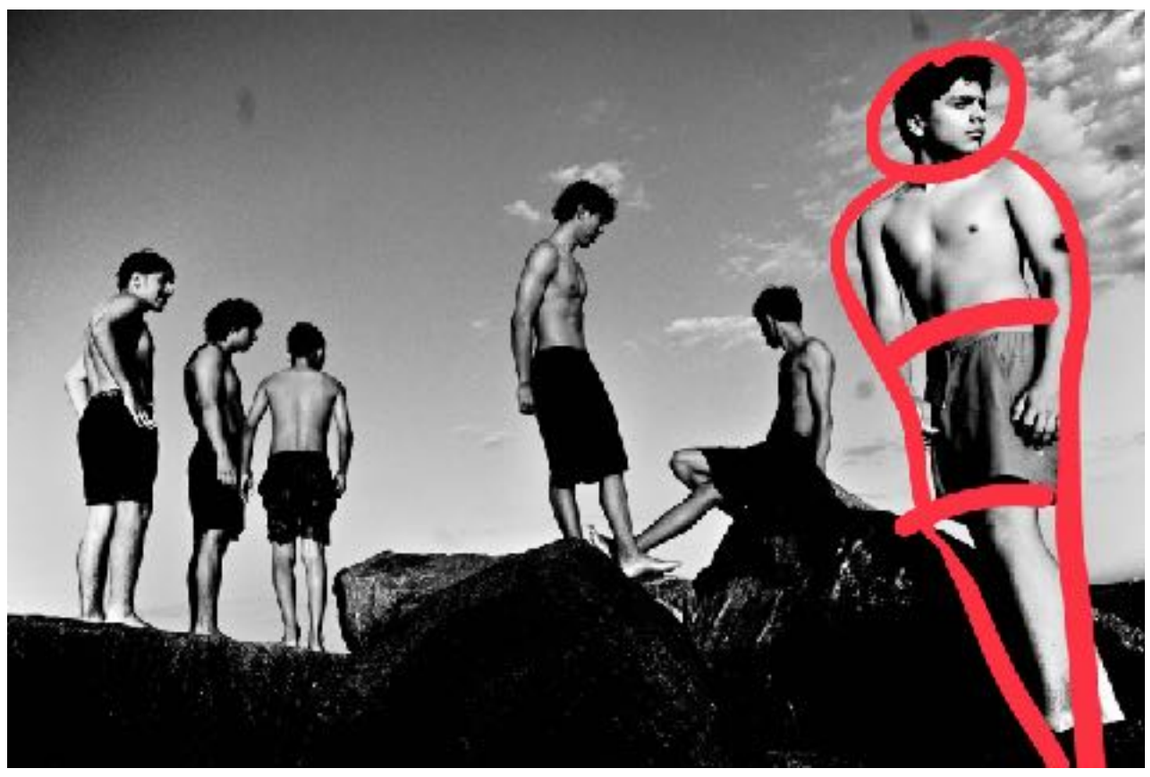
The composition wasn't planned. It was solved with my feet.

That's the work.









Shoot From the Gut



Your instinct is faster than your intellect.

The moment you start constructing the photograph in your head, you’re already late. The body sees before the mind explains.

Raise the camera. If it pulls you, press the shutter. Don’t negotiate. Don’t analyze whether it’s good. Evaluate later.

Style lives in that split second. The silent internal yes. The pull in your gut that makes you click.

When you remove technical friction and eliminate excess decisions, instinct becomes clear. The camera disappears. What remains is response.

Shoot first. Think later.

That’s how you enter flow.

Enter the Flow State

Flow is not forced. It emerges when friction disappears.

When the camera is simple, when the route is familiar, when the decisions are reduced, the mind quiets. You stop performing. You stop proving. You start responding.

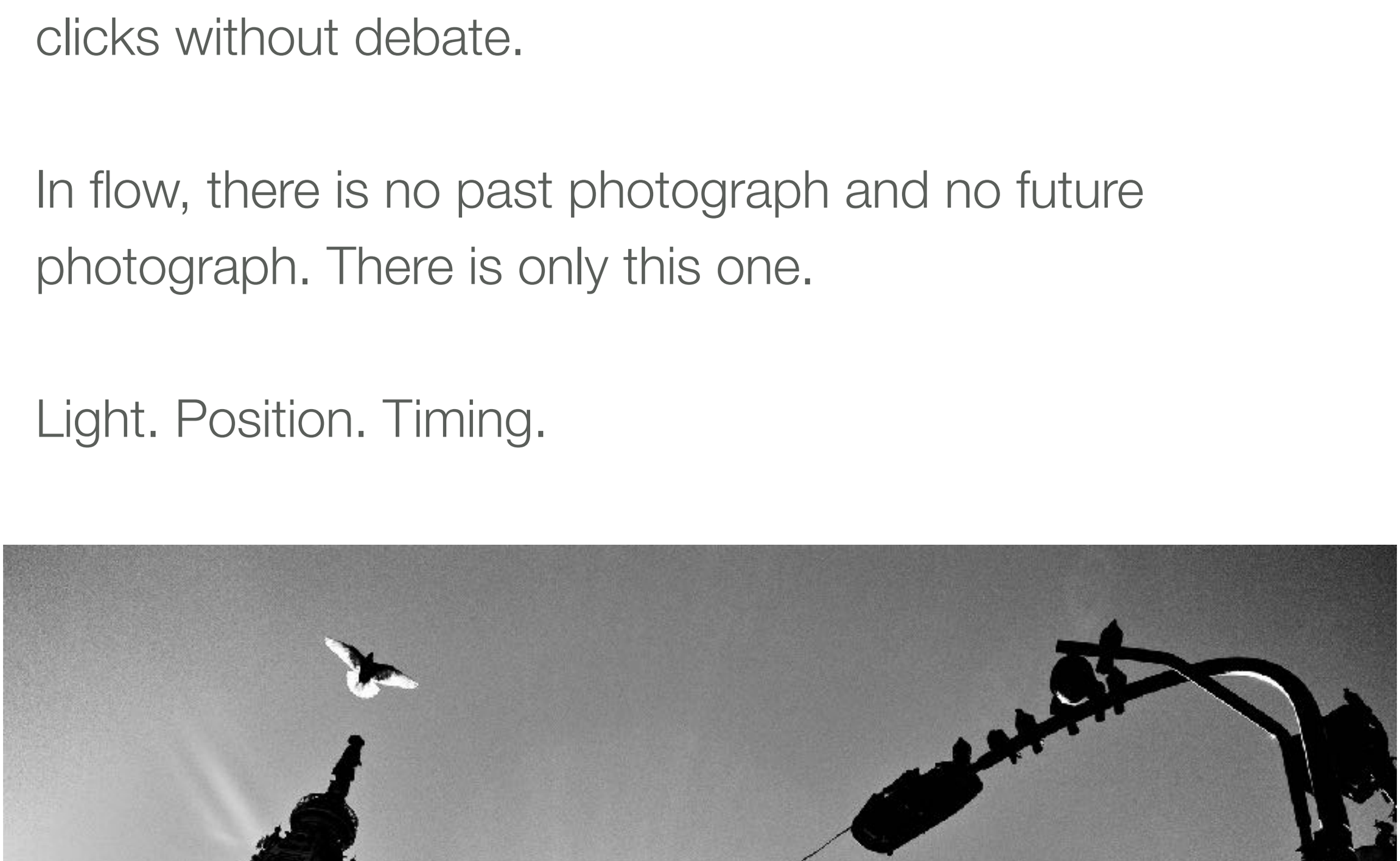
Flow happens when you forget yourself.

No phone. No distraction. No comparison. Just walking, watching, waiting without tension.

You move slowly. Life moves toward you. The shutter clicks without debate.

In flow, there is no past photograph and no future photograph. There is only this one.

Light. Position. Timing.



Light and Shadow as Subject



Photography is writing with light.

Strip everything else away and that’s what remains.

When you use high contrast black and white, light becomes form. Shadow becomes structure. The world reduces to shape, gesture, and separation.

Look for transition zones — where light meets shadow. Stand there. Wait. Let people move through it.

Expose for the highlights. Let the shadows fall away.

You are not documenting reality as it is. You are isolating what it could be.

Light. Shadow. Timing.

That’s the entire game.

Stop Searching for Style

Style is not something you find. It’s what remains when you stop looking.

The moment you chase it, you lose it. You start performing. You start comparing. You start shaping your work around what you think it should be.

Style anxiety comes from looking outward.

Disconnect.

Create more. Consume less.

When you walk daily, shoot instinctively, and remove friction, patterns emerge. You begin to notice what pulls you. What you gravitate toward. What you repeat without trying.

That repetition is your voice.

Style is not constructed.

It surfaces.

The Snapshot Reveals the Subconscious

When you shoot from the gut, you bypass performance.

The snapshot is direct. Immediate. Unfiltered. There is no time to construct meaning. There is only response.

And in that response, your subconscious surfaces.

Every book you've read. Every place you've walked. Every conversation you've had. It all lives beneath awareness. When you press the shutter instinctively, it rises into the frame.

You are not inventing a style.

You are revealing it.

The more you remove friction, the more visible it becomes. When the camera disappears, what remains is your way of seeing. That's your voice.



Repetition Compounds Identity



You don’t find your style in a single photograph. You find it with lots of time on the street.

Walk the same streets. Shoot the same light. Carry the same camera. Day after day, frame after frame, something begins to surface. Patterns appear. Preferences repeat. Tendencies reveal themselves.

You start noticing what you’re drawn to. Certain gestures. Certain shapes. Certain shadows. Not because you planned it — but because it’s how you see.

Repetition removes randomness. What remains is identity.

The longer you stay committed, the clearer it becomes. Not through effort. Not through searching. Through time.

Frame by frame. Day by day.

Style becomes inevitable.

Detach From Contemporary Noise

Comparison kills instinct.

The more you consume, the more you distort your own perception. Feeds, trends, contests, opinions — they all pull you outward. They make you question what you naturally see.

Style cannot surface in noise.

Create more than you consume. Walk alone. Turn the phone off. Stop performing for an invisible audience.

You don’t need validation. You need repetition.

When you detach from contemporary noise, you start hearing yourself again. Your pulls become clearer. Your instincts sharpen.

You are not here to compete.



Flow Begins Immediately

This is not theory.

We will now look at this workflow in a new city, 48 hours in NYC. No preparation. System installed.

The camera is in my pocket before I arrive. I’m photographing from the train window. There is no warm-up. No “start shooting.” I’m already in it.

Snap Focus — 1 meter.
f/16.
Multi-segment metering.
Exposure compensation ready.
High contrast black and white.
Small JPEG.

Set once. Never touched again.

I’m not hunting. I’m not looking for anything specific. I’m not chasing spectacle. I’m walking slowly. Open. Sensitive.

When the system is installed, thought disappears. There are no technical decisions to make. No hesitation.

I step into the city and begin.

Flow doesn’t build.

It’s immediate.

Because friction is gone.

Just Start Shooting







Solving Chaos With Constraint

Times Square. Chinese New Year. Faces everywhere. Movement everywhere. When everything is happening at once, nothing stands out. Most photographers widen the frame and chase the spectacle. I subtract.

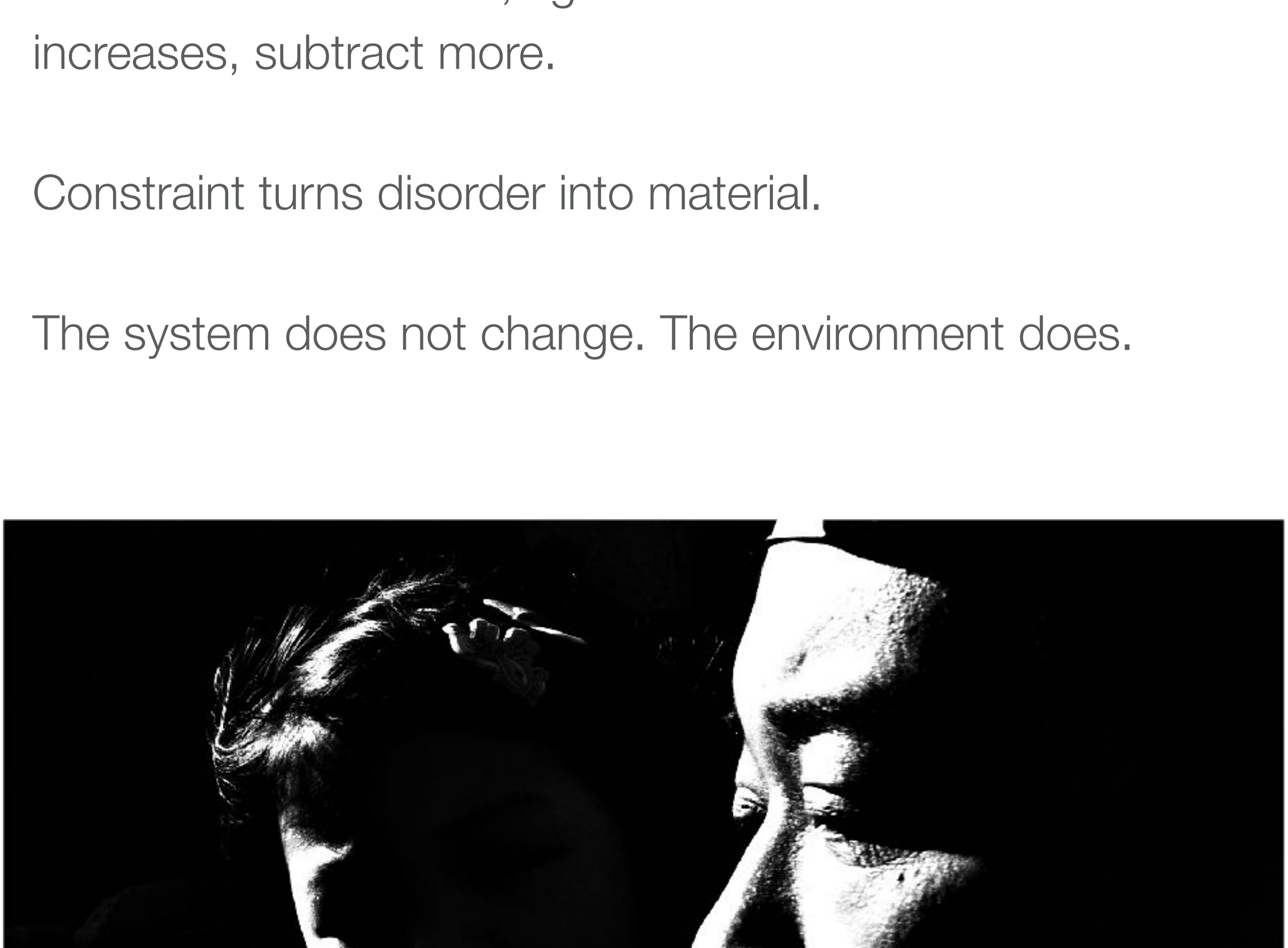
50mm crop. Underexpose -2. Expose for highlights and let the shadows fall to black. The crowd collapses. The frame tightens. A single face enters a pocket of light and the rest disappears.

I’m not photographing the event. I’m extracting a gesture.

When chaos increases, tighten the frame. When noise increases, subtract more.

Constraint turns disorder into material.

The system does not change. The environment does.



Gesture Over Spectacle



Chaos tempts you to photograph everything. The parade. The crowd. The obvious moment. But spectacle is surface.

Gesture is substance.

A hand entering a coat. A pair of eyes in shadow. Hair catching light against a dark facade. These small movements carry more weight than the entire scene.

When you isolate a gesture, the noise falls away. You don’t need the whole story. You need a fragment charged with tension.

I’m not documenting the event. I’m extracting something from it. A single movement. A single expression. A moment of stillness inside motion.

The spectacle is loud. Gesture is quiet. Quiet lasts longer.

Look for Details





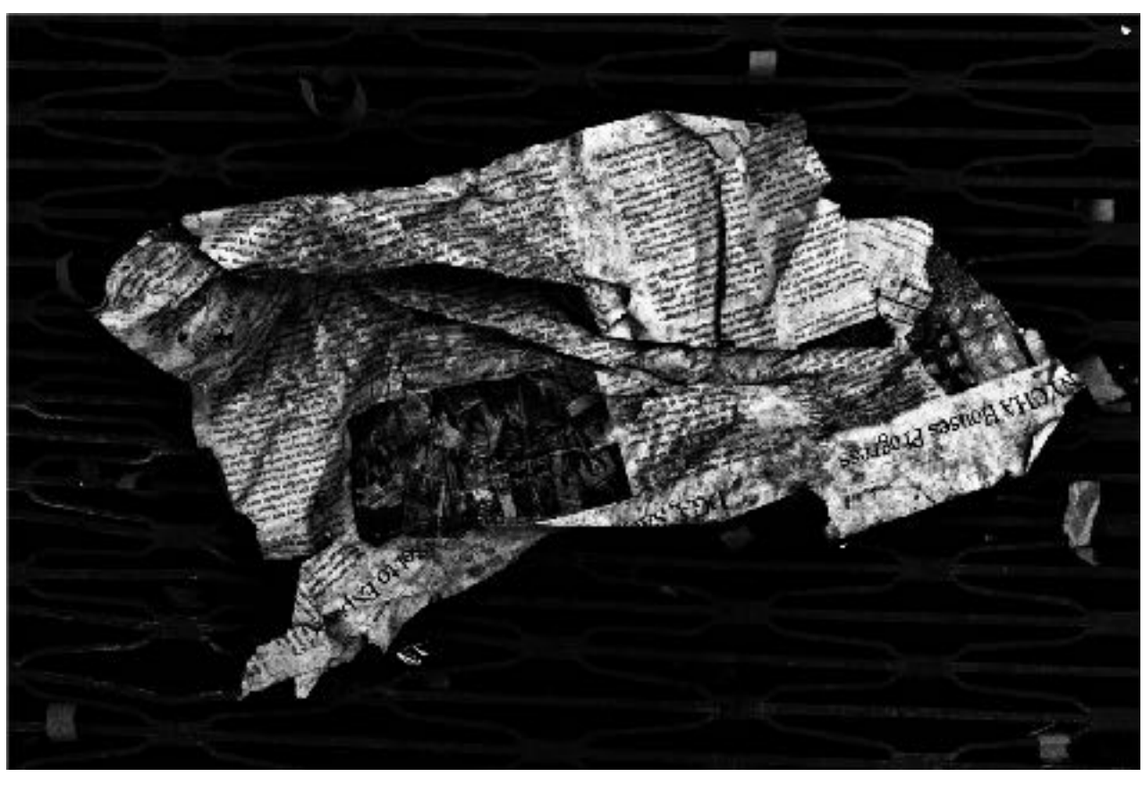








Shoot with Macro Mode





Shoot More. Think Less.

Hesitation kills flow.

Most photographers ration frames. They wait for certainty. They try to decide if the moment is worth it before pressing the shutter.

I shoot through the scene.

If something unfolds, I click. Again. And again. And again. Volume removes doubt. The first frames are conscious. After that, the mind quiets and the body takes over.

Day one: 1,400 frames. Day two: 900 frames. No fear of quantity. Quantity sharpens instinct. Instinct removes hesitation.

The more you click, the less you think. Flow deepens through repetition.



Instant Workflow



The system doesn’t end on the street.

Back at the hotel, I import immediately. Cull immediately. Backup immediately. Publish immediately. No RAW. No backlog. No files lingering for weeks.

Creation → Selection → Release. Same day.

By the time I leave the city, the work is already processed. No mental residue. No unfinished business.

Speed protects momentum. Momentum protects flow.

Forty-eight hours can produce a body of work. Not because the city is special, but because the system removes delay.

The environment changes. The workflow does not. Stack days. Move forward.

Follow Along — Build the Book



At this point, you understand the full system.

Walk → Edit → Sequence → Print.

Now it’s time to execute.

I’ve created a full step-by-step tutorial showing exactly how I use Adobe InDesign with the Blurb plugin to build the final 5×8 trade book.

From installing the plugin, to using the template, to dragging and dropping images, to uploading and publishing the final book.

Watch the video and follow along. Do not overthink it. Just build the book. That’s the final step.

Watch the full video here: https://video.wordpress.com/v/lasq4NU5

14,000 → 680 → 45

I came home with 17,800 frames from 13 days of shooting in Tokyo.

The goal is to produce volume. You want to shoot more than less. Editing comes later.

The system is designed to reduce.

You don’t come home and try to go through everything at once. You build a system that simplifies the process over time.

Through daily culling, I was left with around 650 photographs.

From there, I go through a final cull:

650 → 247 → 194 → 112 → 82 → ~50

Each pass is faster. More instinctive. Less thinking.

You’re not trying to find the best photos.
You’re removing what doesn’t hold weight.

And what remains becomes the book.

The Book Workflow

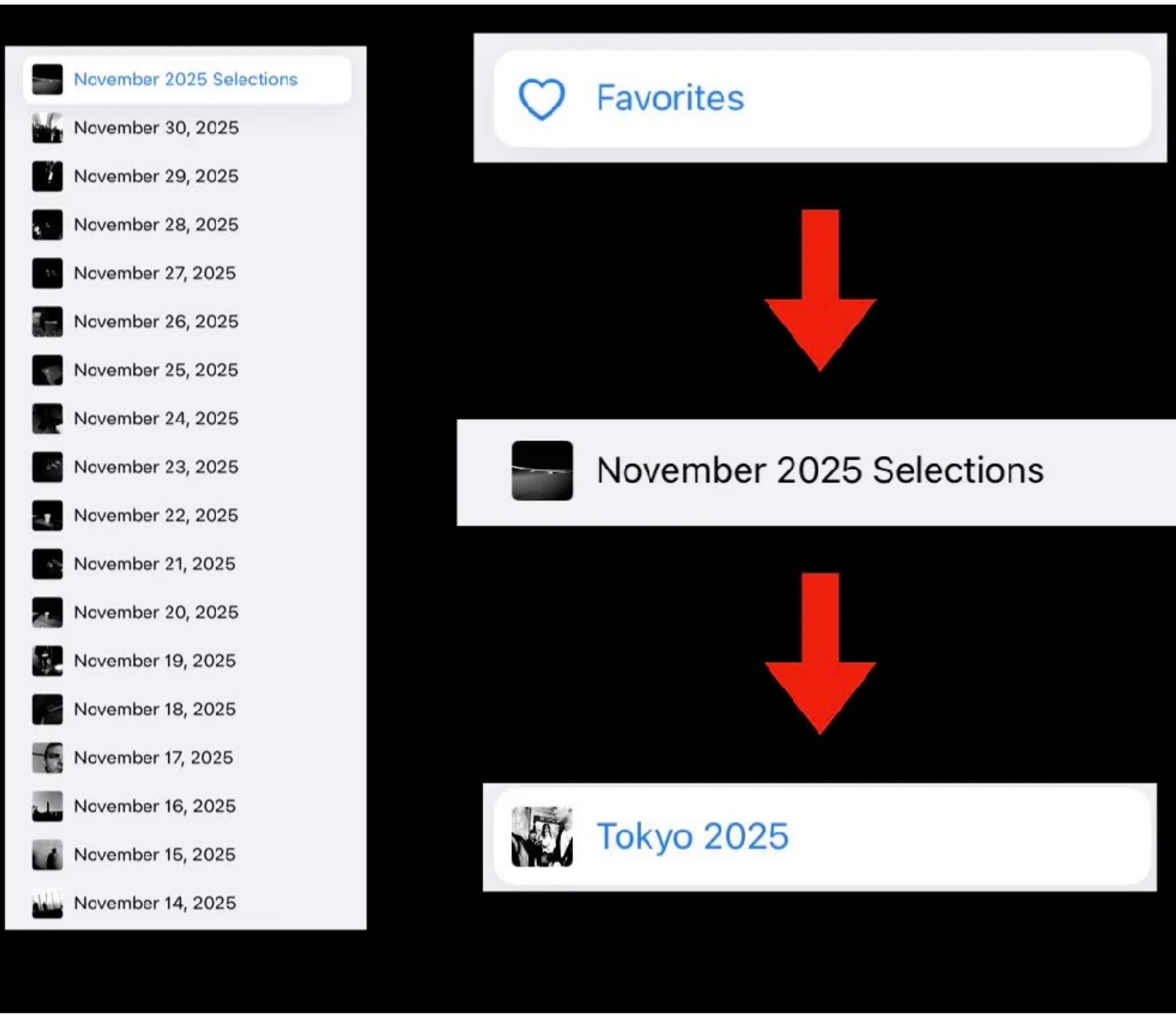
This is the exact system I use to go from photographs to a finished 5×8 trade book.

Keep it simple. Move quickly.

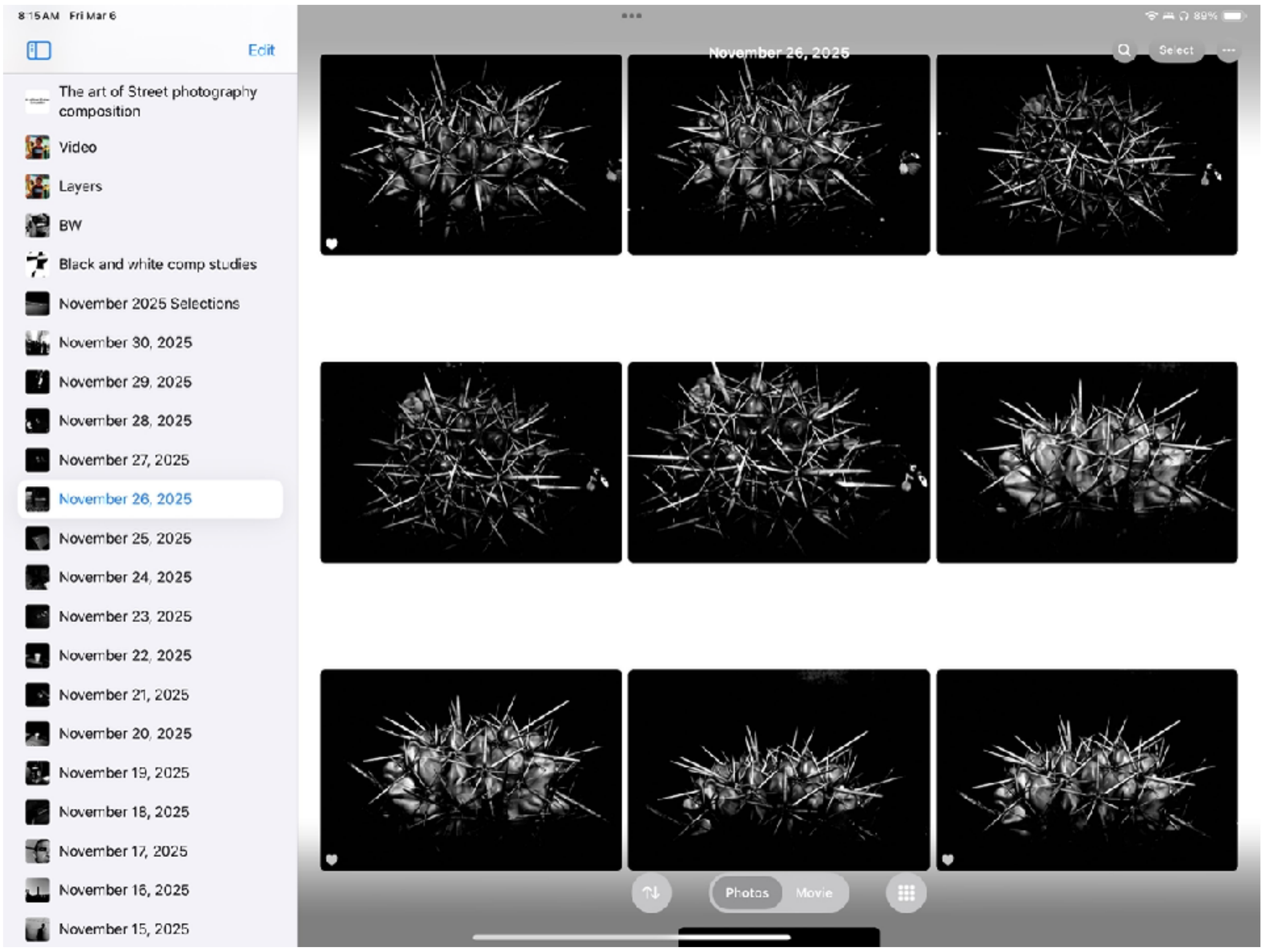
Daily Culling (Photos App)

1. Import using USB-C SD reader
2. Create folder by day
3. Favorite images immediately
4. Move stronger images into monthly folder
5. Move final selects into project folder

Repeat daily.



Cull Using 3x3 Thumbnails



When I’m going through my photos, I use the 3×3 grid view.

It almost looks like a contact sheet.

I’m not zooming in. I’m not overanalyzing. I’m just looking at the images quickly, all together, and seeing what stands out immediately.

I tap the photo, hit favorite, and move on.

Very simple. Very intuitive.

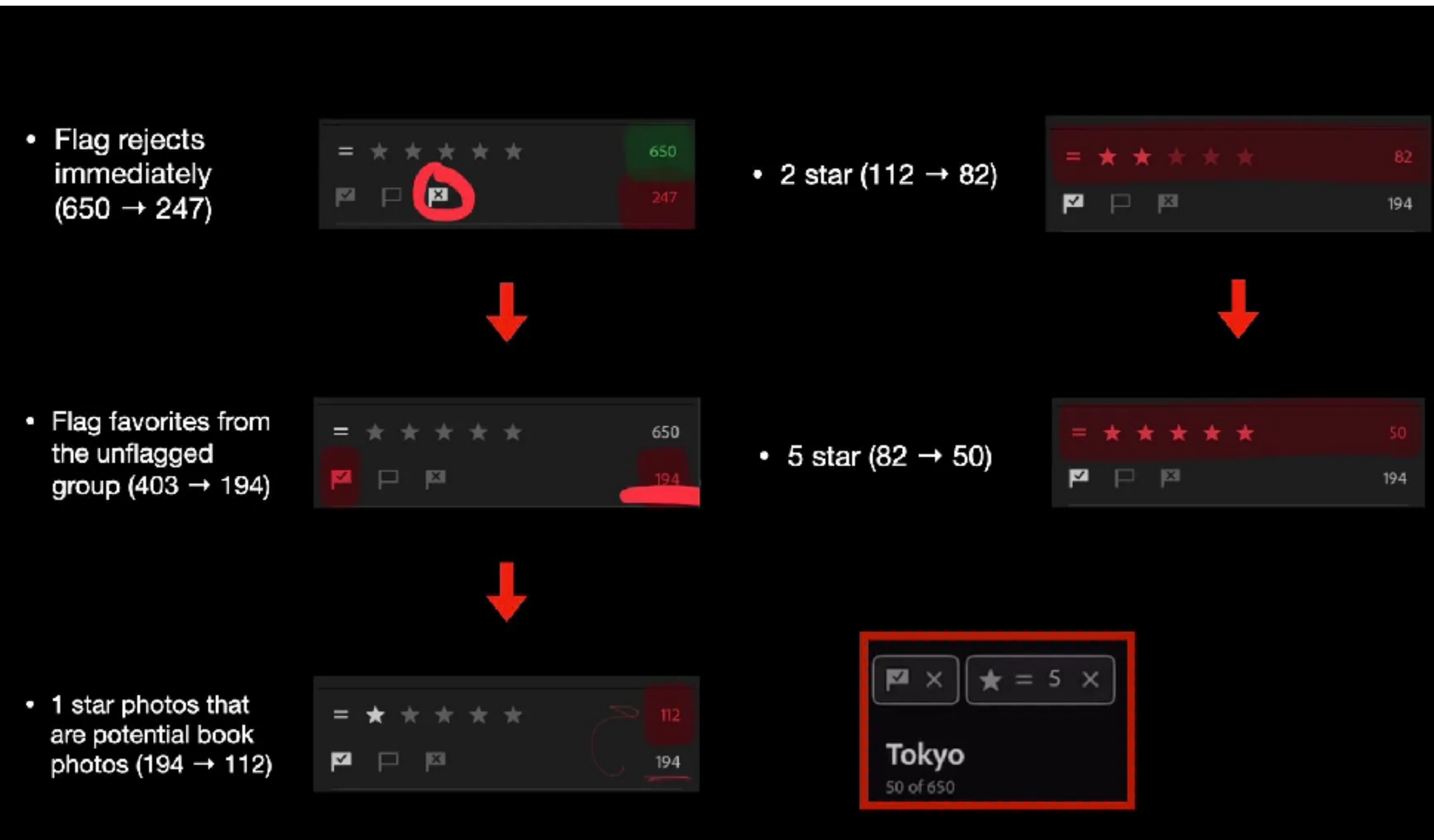
A keeper photo should hit at this size.

If it doesn’t have impact in the 3×3 grid, it’s probably not strong enough.

I should be able to glance at it and feel something instantly.

If I have to zoom in, if I have to think about it, if I have to con

Final Edit (Lightroom)



Import final folder (~600 images)

Swipe down → reject

Swipe up → flag

Then reduce:

Flagged → 1-star

1-star → 2-star

2-star → 5-star (final selects)

Move quickly. Don’t think too much.

Editing Without Emotion

When I’m culling, I don’t think too much.

I move quickly.

I swipe down to reject immediately. If it doesn’t hit, it’s gone.

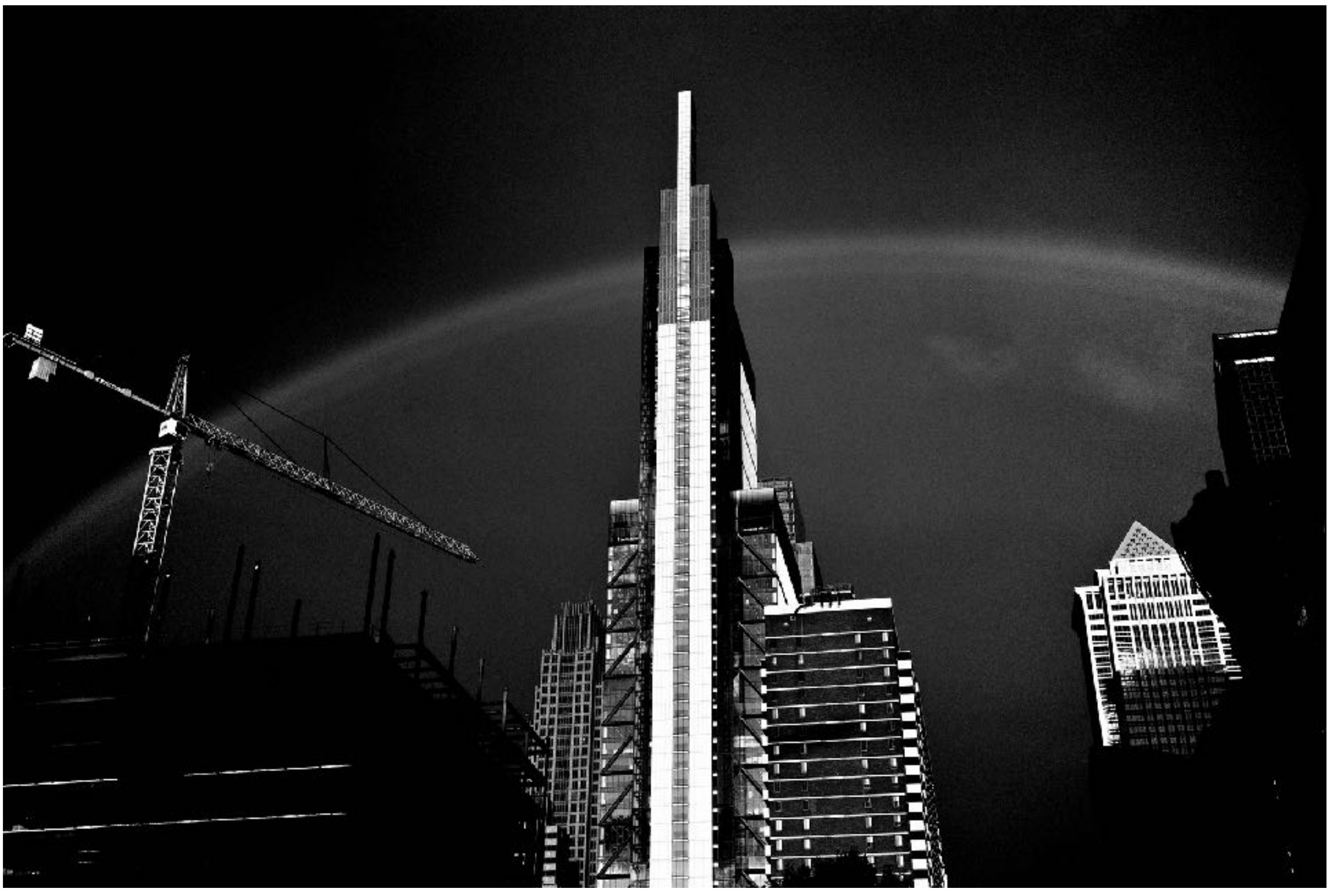
You can’t be emotional about the work.

Most of the photographs are not strong enough. That’s just the reality.

You’re not attached to what you made.
You’re focused on what remains.

The goal is to reduce the work drastically so you can start to see clearly.

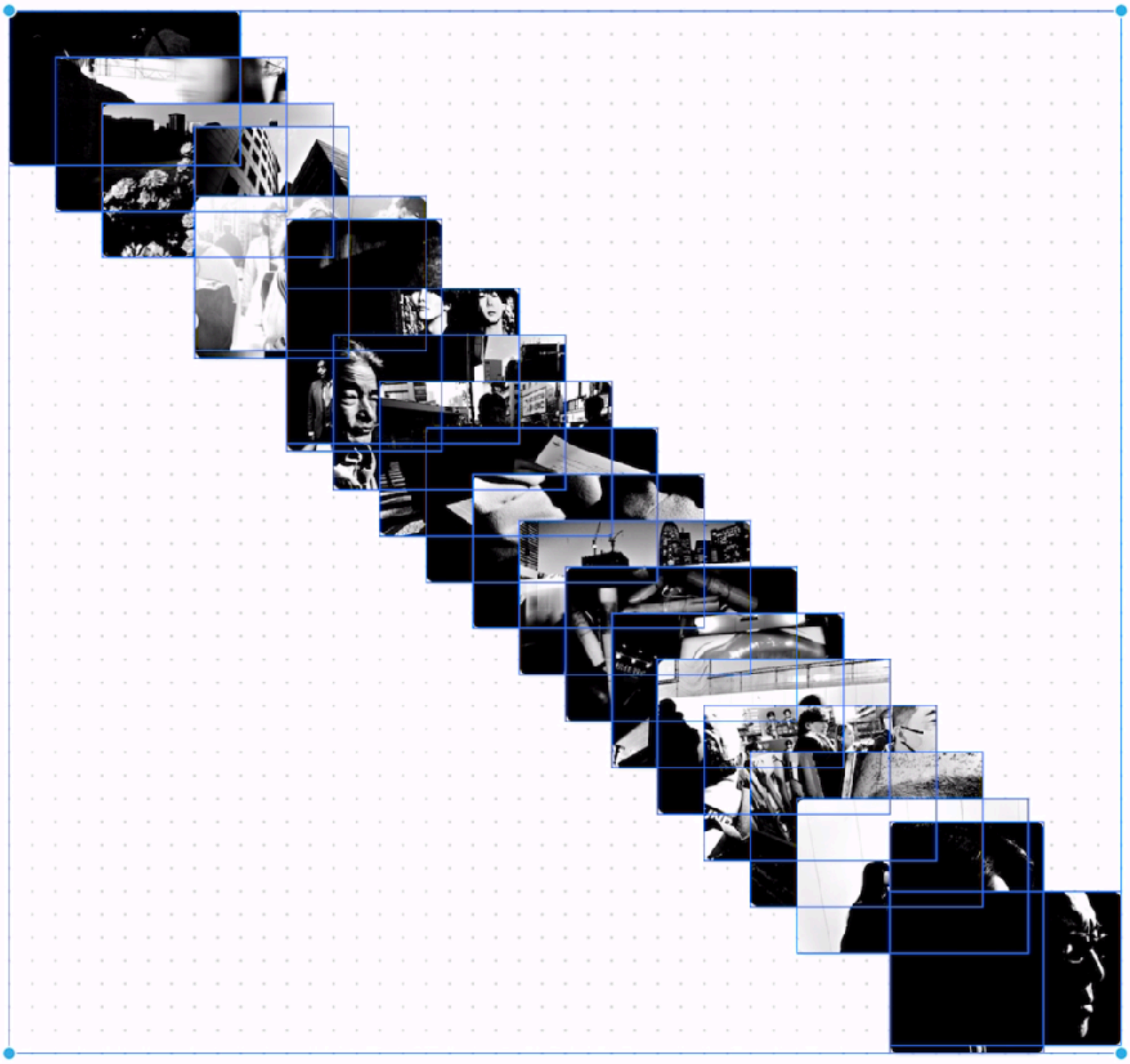
Fast decisions. Trust your instinct. Move on.



Sequencing (Freeform)

1. Import final selects
2. Lay out in chronological order
3. Start pairing images
4. Build flow

Screenshot final layout.



Chronology Over Concept

I start with chronology.

I import the photos into Freeform and lay everything out in the order that it was made.

No concept. No theme. No preconceived idea.

The walk becomes the structure.

I simply place the photographs in sequence and let the journey appear naturally.

It’s kind of interesting—there was no plan, no idea going into Tokyo.

But when you look at the work in order, something starts to emerge.

The story is already there. You just have to see it.

Pairing and Flow

As I’m laying out the work, I start pairing images.

I look at what works next to each other.

What feels right visually.

Some images sit alone. Some images become pairs.
Some become spreads.

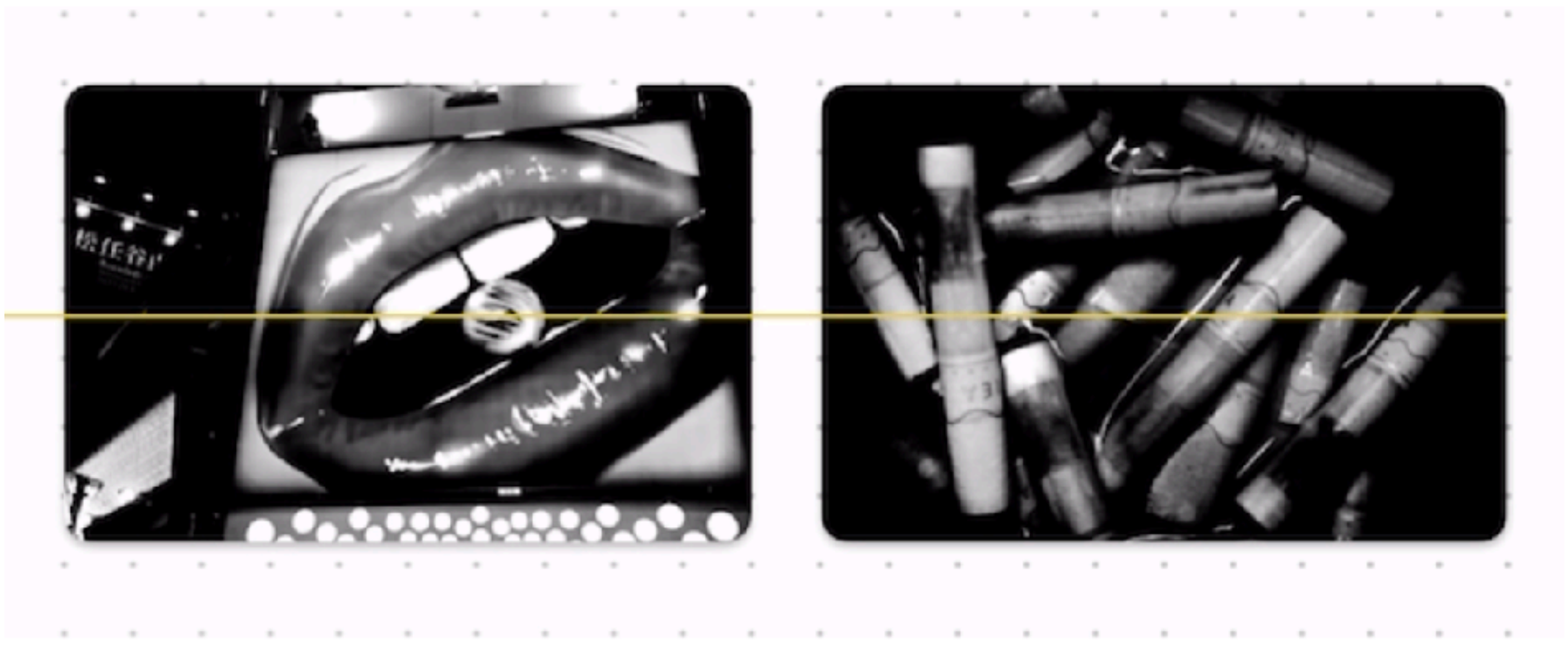
You start to see relationships:

Faces. Light. Details. Movement.

You’re building flow.

The sequence starts to move. One image leads into the next.

And slowly, the work begins to take on life.



Designing the 5×8 Trade Book



The design is extremely simple. No distractions. Just the photographs.

I use Blurb’s 5×8 paperback trade book.

Black and white paper. Matte cover. Around 100 pages. It cost me about $8.

That’s it. The simplicity is the point.

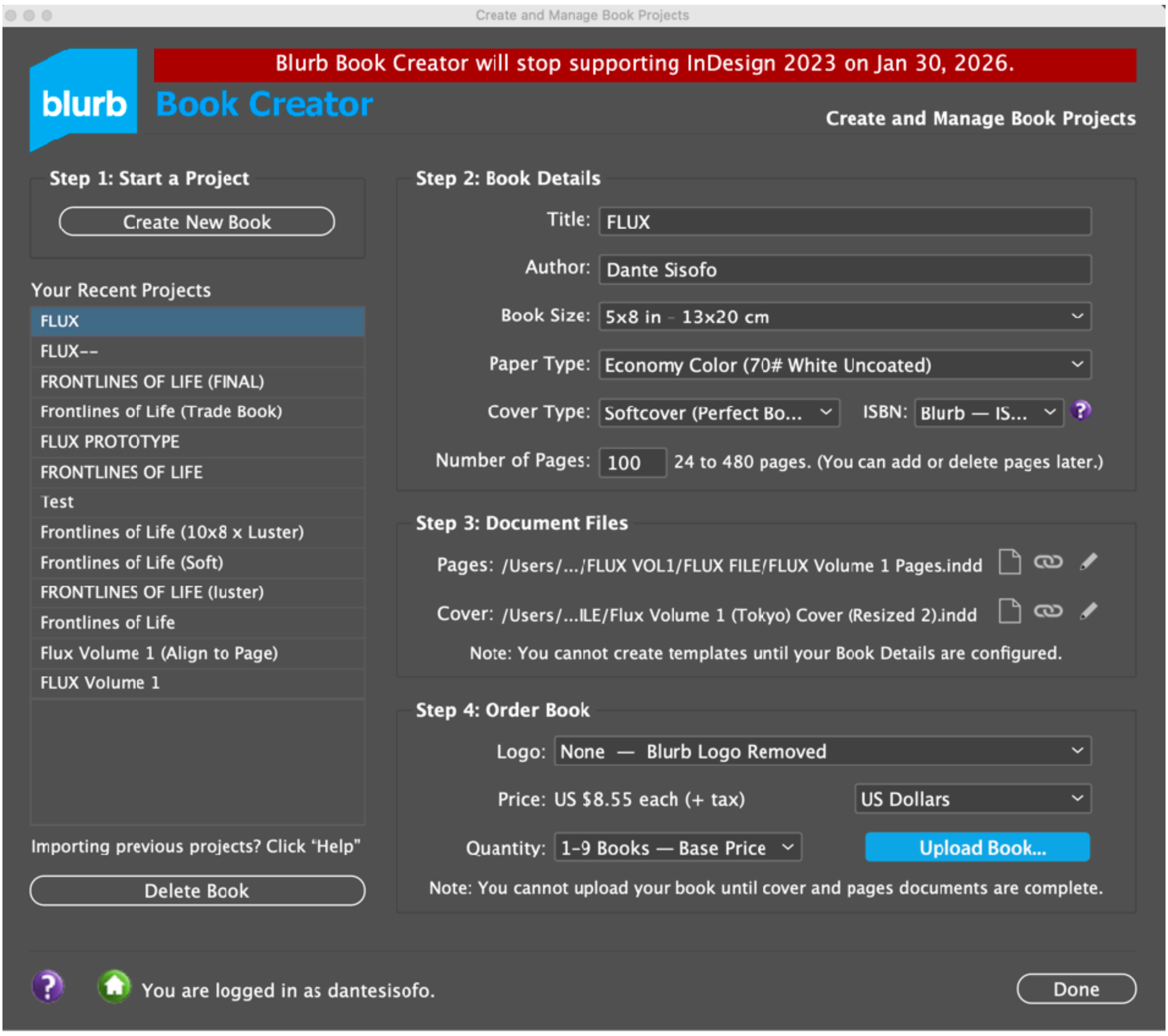
You’re not over-designing. You’re not adding unnecessary elements.

You’re just placing the work and letting it speak.

The format is small, intimate, and direct.

It matches the way the photographs were made.

InDesign + Blurb



1. Download InDesign
2. Install Blurb plugin
3. Download My Pages Template
4. Downlolad My Cover Template
5. Use 5×8 trade book
6. Black & white paper
7. ~100 pages
8. Open template
9. Drag and drop images
10. Fill frame proportionally

Keep it simple.

Order the Prototype

The first version is not the final book. I make a prototype.

I upload directly from InDesign to Blurb and order it. Then I hold it.

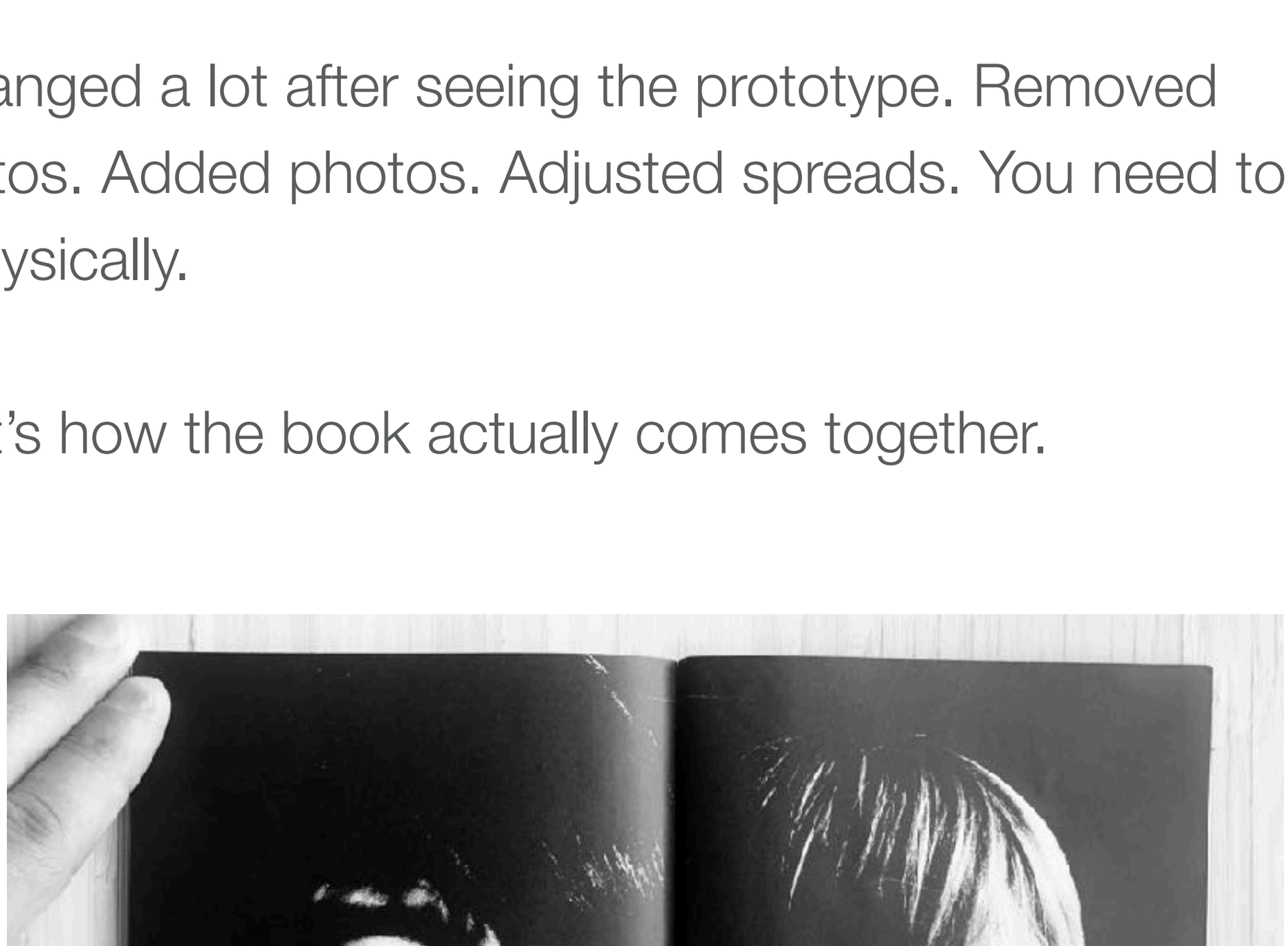
That’s when you really see the work.

You notice everything:

Sequencing issues.
Spacing.
Images that don’t belong.

I changed a lot after seeing the prototype. Removed photos. Added photos. Adjusted spreads. You need to see it physically.

That’s how the book actually comes together.



The Book Changes Nothing

At the end, we walk, we photograph, we edit, we sequence, and we print.

And then we go out and do it again.

That’s the system.

Making the book doesn’t change anything.

It just proves that the system works.

You don’t need years to make a book.

You can spend 13 days somewhere. You can spend a weekend.

The power is in the simplicity.

You strip everything down. You shoot daily. You edit daily.

And over time, the work compounds.

The book is just the result.

The real thing is the process.

The 30-Day Commitment

This is where it starts. Not tomorrow. Not when you feel ready. Now

For the next 30 days: Carry the camera. Every day. No exceptions.

Walk. Photograph your life. Not what you think is interesting. What’s in front of you.

Come home. Cull the work. Remove what doesn’t matter.

Repeat. Again tomorrow. And the next day. And the next.

No backlog. No overthinking. No waiting.

You are not hunting. You are living. And photographing through it.

Most days will feel ordinary. Good. That’s the point.

Trust the repetition. Trust the process. Trust time.

At the end of 30 days: You will have a body of work. You will have a book.

Not from inspiration. From showing up.

Walk. Shoot. Repeat. For 30 days.

And see what happens.

Resources

- Living With the Ricoh GR: A Frictionless Daily Photography System (Course page)
- The Flux Community
- My Ricoh GR Camera Settings

Downloads:

- Download InDesign
- Install Blurb plugin
- Download My Pages Template
- Downlolad My Cover Template

The Flux Photography Archive:

Over 13,000 photographs made using this exact system:

https://flux.dantesisofo.com/