Why I Keep My Photography Simple

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

Today I'm gonna share with you some thoughts about **why I keep my photography simple from the ground up.**

From the camera I use with the Ricoh GR IV Monochrome to the fact that it can slip in my front right pocket. I use the Lululemon License to Train shorts, zipper pocket. You just put it in your pocket and go, right?

I shoot with a monochrome camera, so I'm removing the decision of color or black and white.

I've got a fixed focal length at 28mm, so I don't need to make any decisions on which camera or lens to choose.

I use automatic settings with the post-processing baked within the small JPEG file that I use, shooting with high-contrast black and white. And I crank the contrast sliders to the absolute maximum to go even further with simplicity.

Stripping Photography Down to Its Purest Form

My theory is I've basically stripped photography down to its simplest, purest form, which is **light and shadow and clicking a button.**

If you look at the word photography, it just means drawing with light.

And I find that by shooting with high-contrast black and white and removing all friction, I can essentially go back to the roots of the medium, which is simply drawing with light.

By simplifying the whole practice technically and creatively, and giving myself these constraints, I basically just thrive as a human being beyond myself as the photographer.

I think that's ultimately why I've decided to simplify.

I want to simply live my life. I don't want to have to be a photographer.

I think being a photographer can sometimes become this whole identity shift where you have a project to work on, you've got to make a book or do something specific like show your work to others, or just take it kind of seriously.

By simplifying everything and removing that pressure of performance and that pressure of decisions, I can then just simply play freely and express myself creatively through the way that I engage with my everyday life.

Simplifying the Entire Workflow

I've simplified the technical aspects of my workflow from the camera all the way to the selections using an iPad Pro.

I simply use a USB-C to SD card reader. I plug it into the Photos app and drag and drop my photos.

They're small JPEGs, so they take up literally almost no space. They're like four-megabyte files.

I cull through the photos, and then I've created a full system that archives my work digitally and physically without any fuss.

I've created this full Flux system. You can check out my website and click on the Flux tab, and you'll see my archive chronologically sequenced by time, day, and date.

You can essentially go through any year, month, and day and look at the photographs that I've made.

Automating the Archive

I've set up a system where every new 36 photos that I upload to my personal website archive automatically creates a project page with a PDF document that chronologically sequences every photograph with timestamps, captions, and a title page.

There's a contact sheet, a manifest document, and a barcode that scans to the actual project page.

All of the photos are zipped in a ZIP file, the original JPEGs are there, and there's a unique URL for those 36 frames.

And **the whole system is automated.**

I don't have to use software to create my own work. I simply drag and drop my photos, and that's it.

A full website page is generated.

A full printable, open-source zine is generated.

And I can print it out at home with ease using a monochrome LaserJet printer and cheap copy paper from the office, from Staples.

I'm using these cheap materials and storing everything in manila folders and simply stapling the work shut. Just printing on double-sided paper, and I move on.

Everything Is Automatic

I'm in this place right now in my practice where everything is automatic, everything is effortless, everything is easy.

I don't really have to do anything.

All I need to do is live my life.

All I need to do is go out there and photograph what I find, embrace the moment, and put in the actual work itself, which is walking and photographing.

All the shit that's happening on the back end is automated for me.

I'm not sitting around in software.

I'm not sitting around processing photos.

I'm not sitting around with external hard drives scratching my head.

I literally come home, instantly cull through my photos because it takes me five minutes, upload them, and instantly create a zine.

I can make a full body of work and a full book that prints out and is shareable to anyone online instantly in a single day—in a few hours, really.

And I think that is so beautiful.

I Just Want to Be Outside Making

It's like I'm fulfilling my own personal curiosities. I'm fulfilling my own self and bringing myself joy through making things more simple.

By removing all the fuss and complications, I can then find myself simply out there making.

And that's where I want to be.

I just want to be outside exploring and walking endlessly.

I don't want to have to worry about anything in terms of the technical aspects of photography.

By simplifying my process, I can now just focus on working.

And yeah, it's really beautiful.

There is something about high-contrast black-and-white photography that just renders beautifully on this cheap kind of paper with a monochrome printer.

It's just so effortless, and it makes it so that there is no decision to make.

I don't need to think. I just shoot. I just do. I come home, print it out, and move.

It's just a nice feeling to lift that whole burden from the practice completely.

Seeing the World Differently

Because I've stripped everything down to light, shadow, black and white, and high contrast, the way that I look at the world is radically different.

The way that I see life is radically new each day.

And it's simply due to the way in which I think about how light is rendering upon my monochrome sensor and the way that I can go beyond reality through photography.

I'm not worried about the external world being interesting.

I know that I can create something because **everything is photographable.**

I'm simply curious about how life will look photographed at the end of the day.

The Power of Monochrome

There really is a power to simplifying the practice back to monochrome because then you can simply scratch your curiosity and that itch of the fact that whatever it is you're photographing is going to look radically different in the photograph.

It’s such a simple thought.

When you shoot black and white, you’re obviously abstracting reality.

Because of that, it naturally increases my curiosity to go back out there, keep practicing, come home, and look at the work.

This simplification of my process has completely transformed my life, and I feel so much happier as a photographer and a human being.

I just wanted to share that because it’s extremely powerful.

Try the Flux System

If you want to use my Flux system, you can visit the generator tab at:

flux.dantesissifo.com/generator

Upload 36 photos and instantly create your own PDF that you can print out at home.

And if you want to submit the work to me to add to the catalog, or for me to print out, look through, and review on this YouTube channel, the only constraint is **monochrome only.**

Upload 36 monochrome photos.

If I like the work, I’ll do a flip-through video and highlight the work on my YouTube channel.

Love to see what you guys are making.

Enjoy the system.

And yeah, that’s pretty much everything I have to say today.

Thanks for watching.

Peace.