

QUIB A

ERIO

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THE PERFECT DEVICES?

Once you have the perfect tablet, laptop, phone (weighs practically nothing, infinitely thin), with constant high-speed internet access, then what?

LAPTOP

No matter how perfect your laptop is (if it weighed half a pound, had maximum specs and speed), and was infinitely thin, it cannot fold into your front pocket.

Laptop: good when stationary (standing or sitting), but not good when "on the go".

Also, the "friction" of taking it out of your bag and unfolding it. Not good for jotting down quick thoughts.

Assuming your laptop weighed less than a pound, or even less than a quarter of a pound, you would probably always have it with you in your bag.

And where do you want to take your laptop to? A coffee shop?

Laptop: optimal for writing, blogging quickly, looking through photos and processing/editing/uploading them.



TABLET

Optimal for reading e-books in bed, for standing and computing, for making sketches and illustrations (ProCreate) or calligraphy (Zen Brush 2).

Optimal for looking at photos when standing. A minimalist approach to computing

PHONE

Smartphone: optimal for jotting down notes when "on the go". Good for reading e-books 'on the go'. Good for doing some short writing when 'on the go'.

ON THE GO VS STATIONARY

The question is this:

How much of your life is 'on the go' versus stationary?

Then the philosophical question:

Should we always be 'on the go'? How many hours in the day should we be moving around and on the go, versus stationary at home, at the office, or in a coffee shop?





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NEED VS ARTIFICIAL SCARCITY

To be minimalist in modern-day capitalist America is artificial.

To be minimalist and simple in Cuba is easy; there are no other options.

NECESSITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

What drives me in entrepreneurship:

Need.

For example, I started my blog out of a need, hunger, and necessity to 'fill the gap' of the lack of information on the internet how to do

street photography, technique, approach, etc. Thus to create all the information I did was 'effortless' -- because there was a need for it!

Also, my hunger to become self-employed was my hunger for freedom. This drove my hustle. Now that I have my freedom, I don't have the same "hustle" as I did before. Because perhaps I have new needs -- needs for more beauty, more beautiful aesthetics, deeper thoughts, a stronger physical body, and more self-centered needs.

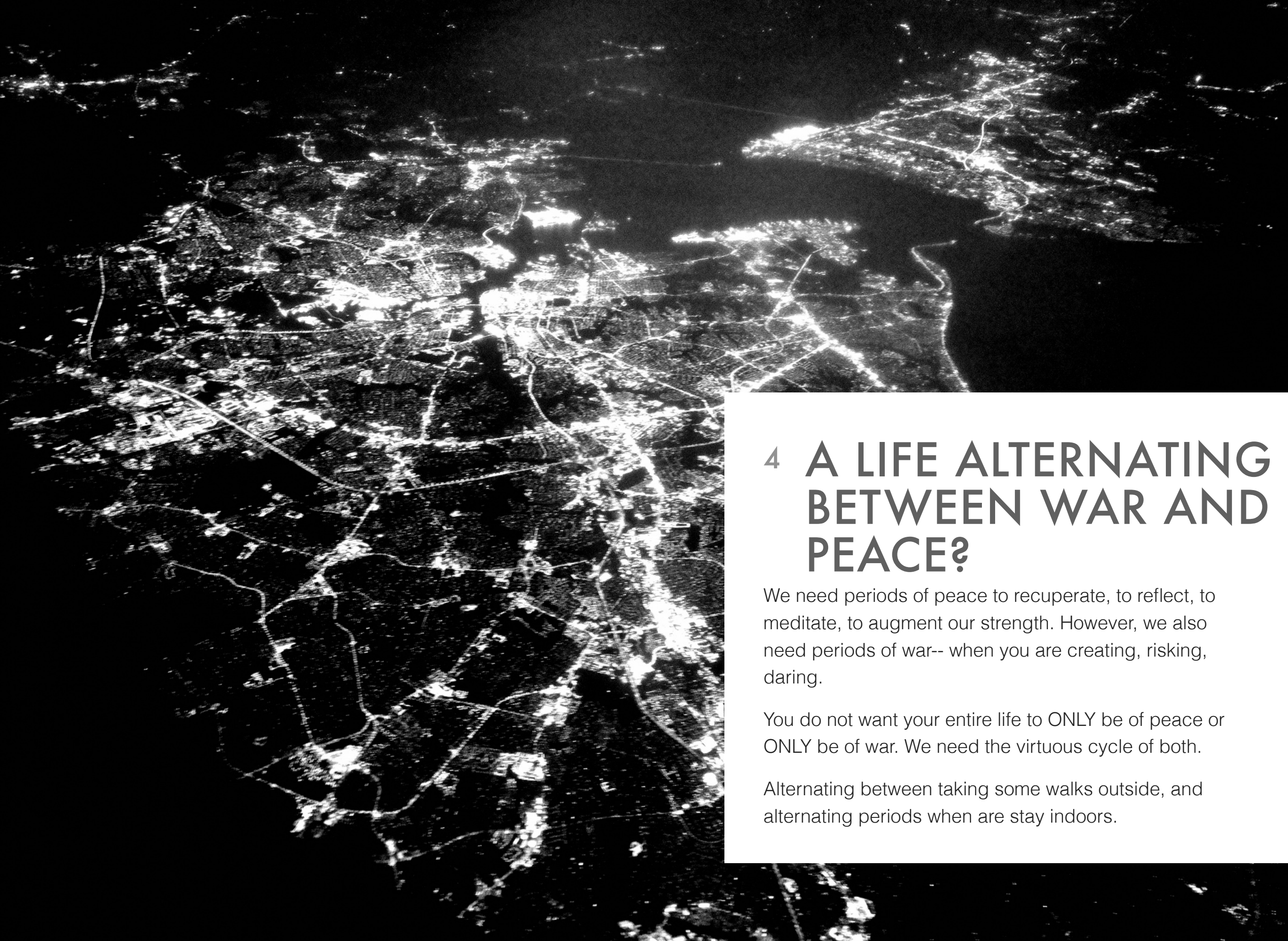


LIVING BEYOND A BASIC LIFE

Thought:

To live a basic life is so simple and predictable. Why not strive to make our life a fun experiment -- to do things differently; to innovate, to discover new modes of expression, creation, exertion, and art?





4 A LIFE ALTERNATING BETWEEN WAR AND PEACE?

We need periods of peace to recuperate, to reflect, to meditate, to augment our strength. However, we also need periods of war-- when you are creating, risking, daring.

You do not want your entire life to ONLY be of peace or ONLY be of war. We need the virtuous cycle of both.

Alternating between taking some walks outside, and alternating periods when are stay indoors.



WHAT DO WE REALLY WANT?

Some further thoughts while here in Cuba:

Many of us seem to desire a 'life of ease and tranquility'. No worries, concerns, or stresses. It seems that Cubans got that under control. The government gives the citizens free healthcare and free education. My general sense the last few days has been that most people aren't stressed. They are pretty "chill" and "zen". Everyone takes their time, walks slowly, and has no problem waiting in line. They enjoy chatting with their friends and other locals, and don't really seem very angry about anything.

However on the other hand, it seems that most of them would prefer having more economic freedom, economic opportunities, and choices. There is a huge hunger for economic goods. The young kids all want Nike and Adidas shoes, and the new "ghetto" malls which are popping up in Havana are PACKED with locals. The stores have massive queues inside them, even though there may only be 3 different types of items for sale.

So it seems that we humans desire more economic freedoms in terms of having the ability or option to procure more things, get better goods, presumably for better prices.



FOOD

It is more difficult to get a wide array of food in Havana, but nobody really seems "starving" or even malnourished. In fact, I am surprised to see that there are many obese locals on the island (I presume this is caused by high consumption of sugary drinks. It seems even locals prefer to have a Coca-Cola, fruit juice, or a soda with every meal). And it also seems socio-economic:

Richer people tend to be fatter, the (very) poor tend to be quite slender.

With more economic prosperity, we seem to consume more sugary goods (sodas), more deserts and pastries, and other high-sugar and high simple carb foods. So the irony is this:

The richer people get, the fatter they get, and the fatter people get, the healthier they get (worse life expectancy, etc).

So if getting richer leads to worse health outcomes, is getting richer something which is truly to be desired?



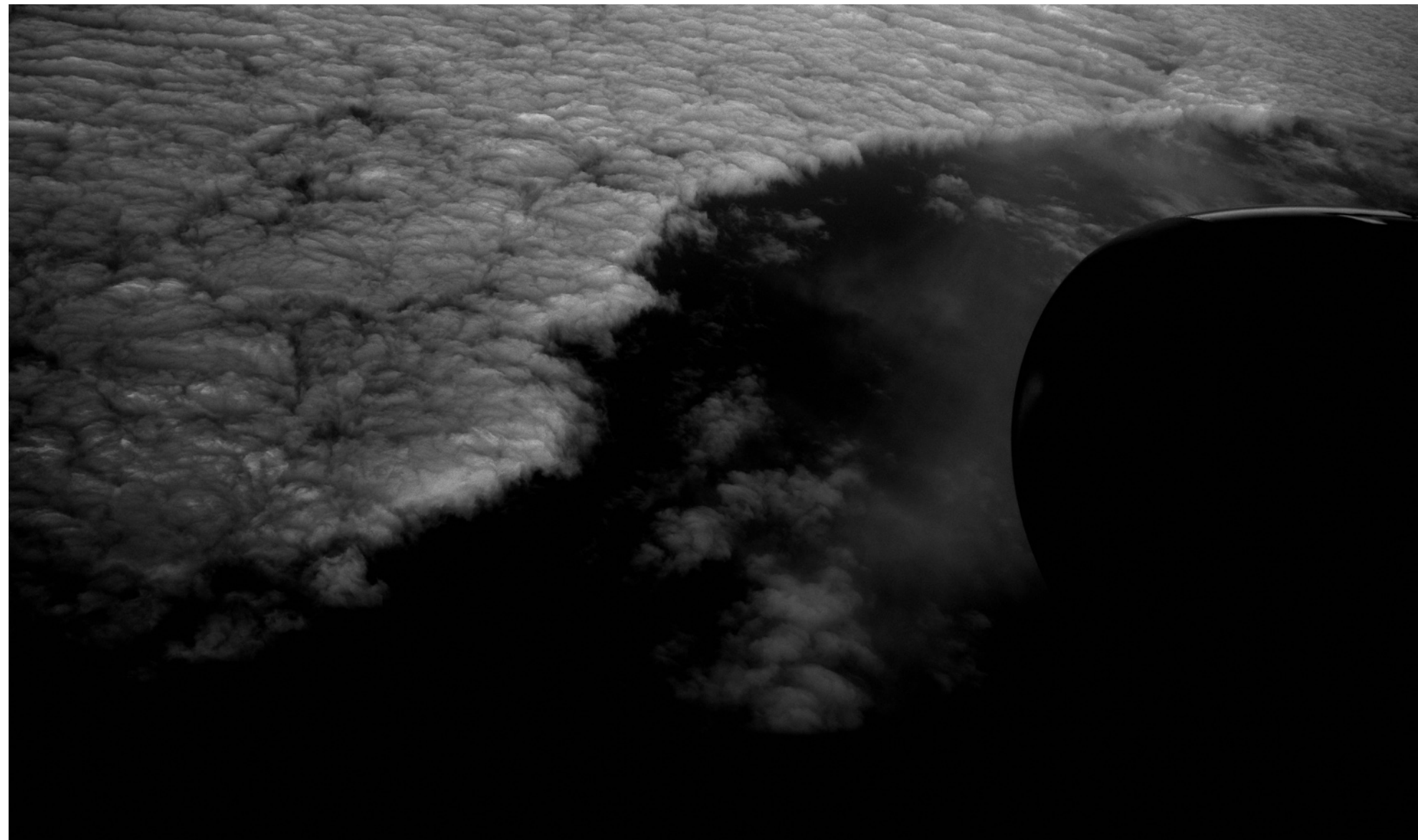
CONSUMER GOODS

The curse of capitalism: we are punished with choices. There is a trillion quadrillion choices we gotta make-- these 'micro decisions' we always must make takes its toll on us. More distraction and less focus on what is truly meaningful to us (which I assume is artistic creation).

Now that I think about it, there are only a few consumer goods which have truly improved my life for the better (in terms of augmenting my

creativity, augmenting my physical strength, augmenting my mind, etc). Let me share them:

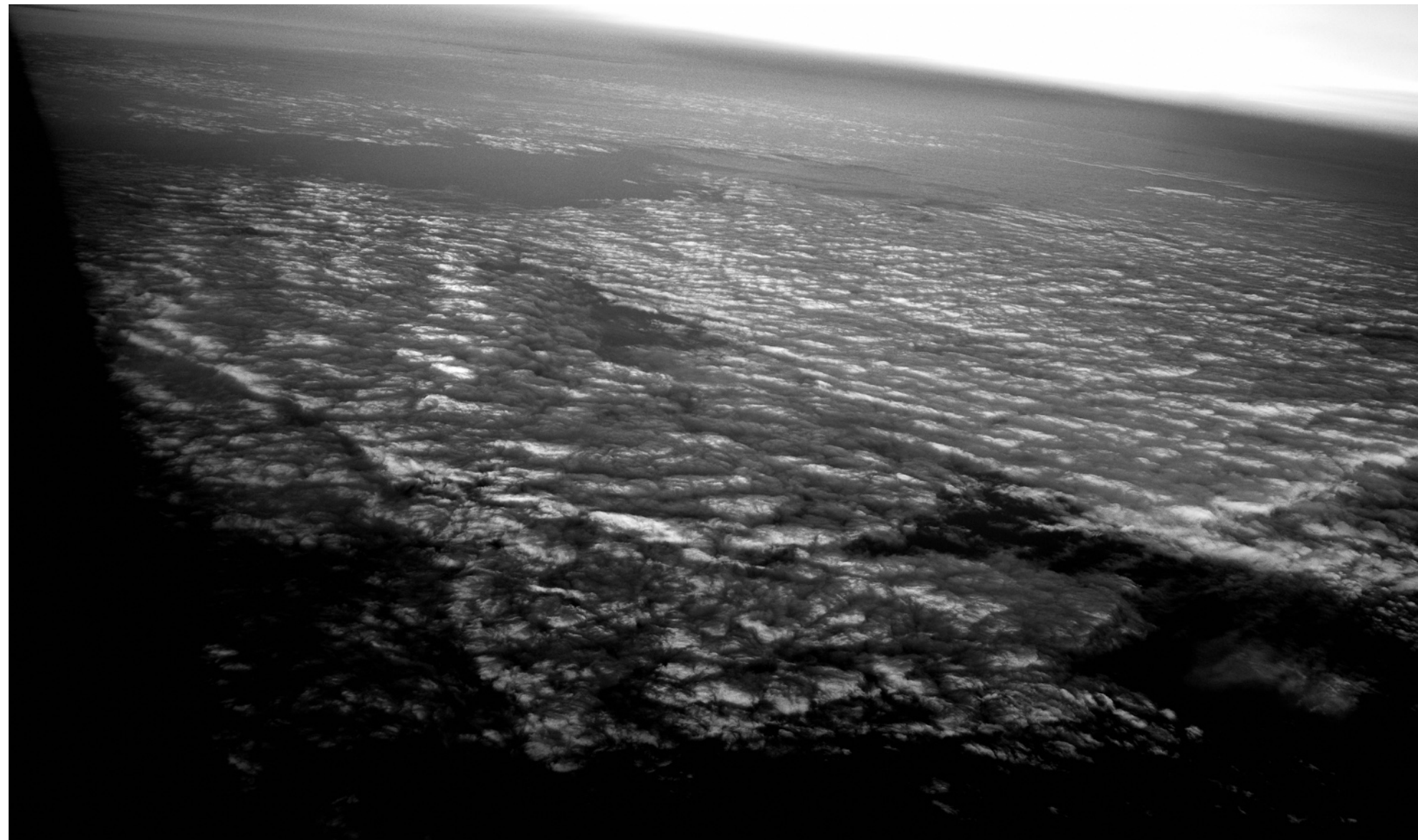
1. Merino wool: This is the fabric of the gods. My black merino wool t-shirt (Outlier.NYC) is my most favored body-armor and everyday cuirass. It has simplified my life 1000x. I seriously own only two of these (thanks to Kevin who gifted them to me for my birthday) and they are the ultimate. Even when traveling, I only bring one t-shirt (the one I wear on my back) and no spare. I can wash it in the shower at night, wring it, then hang-dry it, and by the morning it is dry. The t-shirt is warm when it is cold, and cool when it is hot. It



doesn't smell (even if you go several days without washing it), it doesn't absorb much sweat, and has the perfect fit (I wear medium). This alongside merino wool leggings is perfect. I will never wear cotton again. And I feel bad for individuals who have never (or who never will) have the opportunity to purchase or own this type of clothing. **Thus one upside of free trade and capitalism: access to more epic goods, which can simplify and improve our lives.** Now I no longer go shopping for t-shirts of any kind. **By owning simply 1 of the best damn t-shirt on planet earth, it is one less thing I must worry and think about.** Similar to Steve Jobs' notion of wearing the

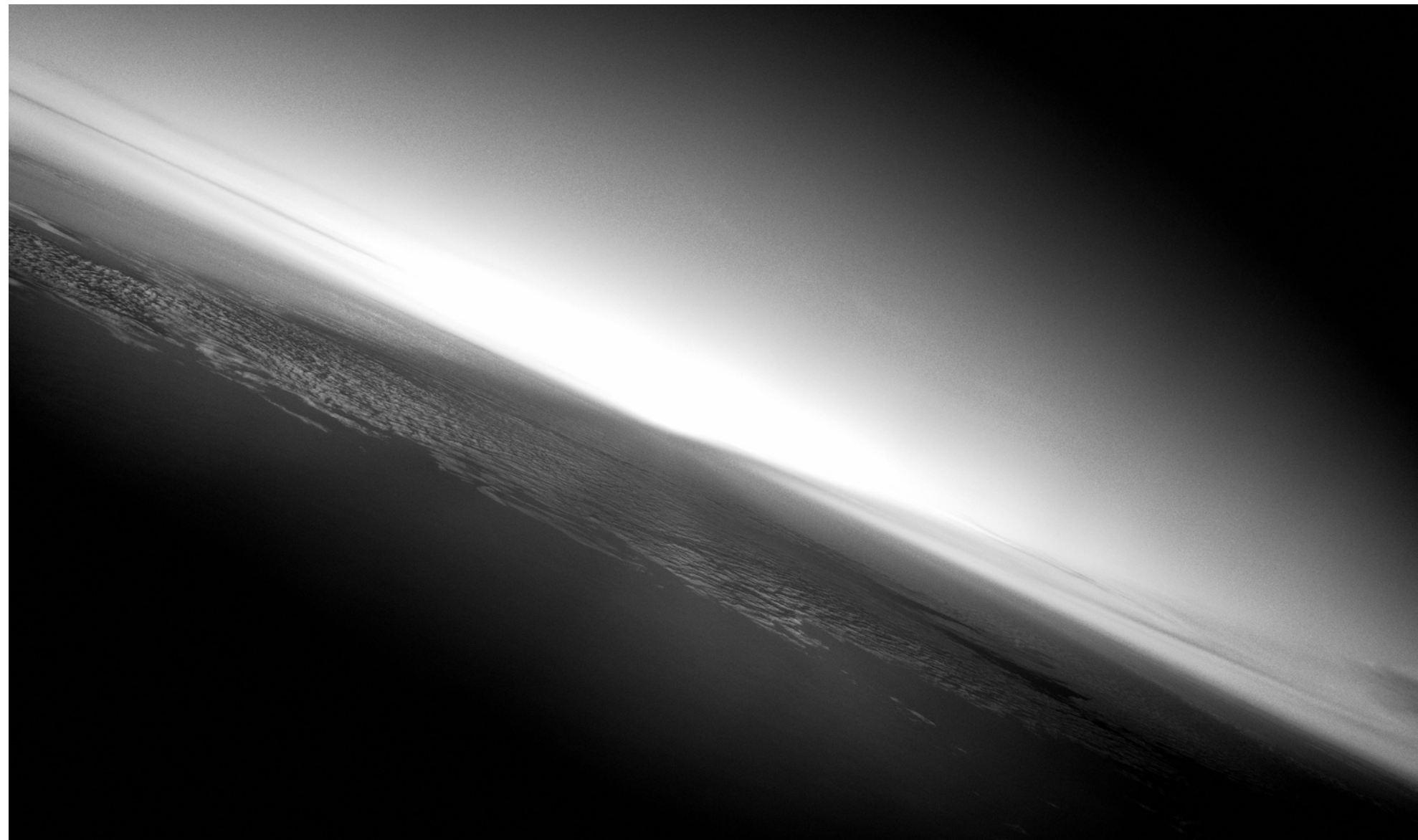
same outfit or uniform every single day. Less brainpower used on thinking about clothing, more focus and concentration on working on my art, and thinking more 'turbo thoughts' on philosophical topics which actually interest me.

2. The internet: My thought is that it is better to have a society of 99 million cell phone addicted people playing candy crush all day long with 1 million people using the internet in a meaningful way, instead of not having internet access. Even if .01% of the population figured out a meaningful way to use the internet, the internet is a "net positive" for society. My philosophy is starting to become more and more



this: **if even 1 individual is empowered, who ends up becoming a great individual who empowers the rest of society, the thing/innovation/opportunity is worth it.** And this is my prediction: the future will become this bifurcation of society into two (general) castes: 1) social media slaves, and 2) the future masters of technology and the internet (tech elite). The social media slaves will do all the tapping and Amazon-box packing for us, while the rich will do things like "go hiking", read, make art, and do other things of the body or mind.

3. In a developed capitalist economy, it seems that **having fewer choices (but a better curated selection of stuff) is the new luxury.** For example, I love going to a store (with few options), but I know that all the options are good ones. The stress of going to a Walmart, Target, even Amazon is the stress with having to choose 1 selection amongst thousands, and always the feeling in the back of your head that you made the wrong decision.



RATIONS

Ration: in Latin, it comes from the notion of a 'ratio' (ratio[n]). In Cuba, the notion of rations and the notion of rationing is abundant. Why? It ain't easy to get stuff. So if I drink coffee at home, I don't drink it all at once, because I know it has to last me for a few days. Thus, I increase my green tea consumption (to ensure I won't run out of coffee tomorrow or the day after).

In America, the problem is this:

We don't need to ration anything, because there is no need.

For example, I can buy 10 trillion pounds of coffee at the grocery store for very cheap. Thus I have no qualms about drinking 5-10 cups of coffee a day, because I know in the back of my mind that I can always buy more, and drink more. I am not limited by economic scarcity, nor am I restricted by economic means (as I have money in my bank account which can pay for more).



THE UPSIDE OF RATIONING

An interesting thing:

Bottled water is hard to come by in Cuba, thus, I have become inventive in terms of how to drink more water/fluids.

In my [very nice] Airbnb, we have a coffee machine. I have been brewing hot water and hot green tea constantly; just to keep my fluid intake up. Far easier than going out and constantly trying to hunt down more bottled water.

Another thing: food is hard to come by in Havana. There are many restaurants and cafes, but often with a long wait. Thus, whenever I am served a meal, I appreciate the food 100x more. And I eat with more enthusiasm and gusto, even though food back in the states might taste 'objectively better', **I probably have a superior dining experience in Havana, because I appreciate the food more.**

Perhaps with less, we appreciate more.

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DO WE REALLY WANT A SIMPLE AND TRANQUIL LIFE?

Do we really want a simple and tranquil life?

No. Too boring. We want more adventures, things which test our abilities, strengths. We want to explore more. Nobody likes the idea of a limit or limitation, unless perhaps self-imposed.

So why is it that it seems everyone (and all philosophers in the past) desire otium, peace, and tranquility? All of Buddhist and Zen thought revolves around this. It seems the goal is:

I want to live the rest of my life in perfect peace, calm, tranquility, with the least amount of toil, bother, pain, and disturbances.

So our goal is to become a tranquil cow for the rest of our lives?
So we want to be sedated or tranquilized for the rest of our life?

A CYCLE BETWEEN WAR AND PEACE?

In a lot of writings, a lot of philosophers talk about "living a tranquil life in the countryside" versus the "stressful and chaotic life in the city". But perhaps the answer is:

Cycle between tranquility (country life) and chaos (city life).

Too much peace makes us fat, soft, and weak. Too much war makes us too hard, lean, and strong.



For us modern Americans, it seems our primary weakness is the hyper-abundance of comfort, ease, and peace. I doubt any Americans in my and this generation will ever know about lack, rationing, difficulty, or hardship. My generation will only know about boredom, over-consumption of media, obesity, distraction, and lack of purpose and meaning in life.

USE OUR LIFE TO ACHIEVE GREAT THINGS

My thought:

We need a certain dose of peace, tranquility, and lack of external concerns IN ORDER to focus on creating and making great things.

What do we consider a great work? Depends on you. It can be a great photograph, a great photo series, a great art work -- any art work.

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HOW TO BECOME LEGENDARY

How to go legend:

WHAT DOES LEGENDARY MEAN?

Legend -- 'legere' in Latin (to be read).

To become a legend:

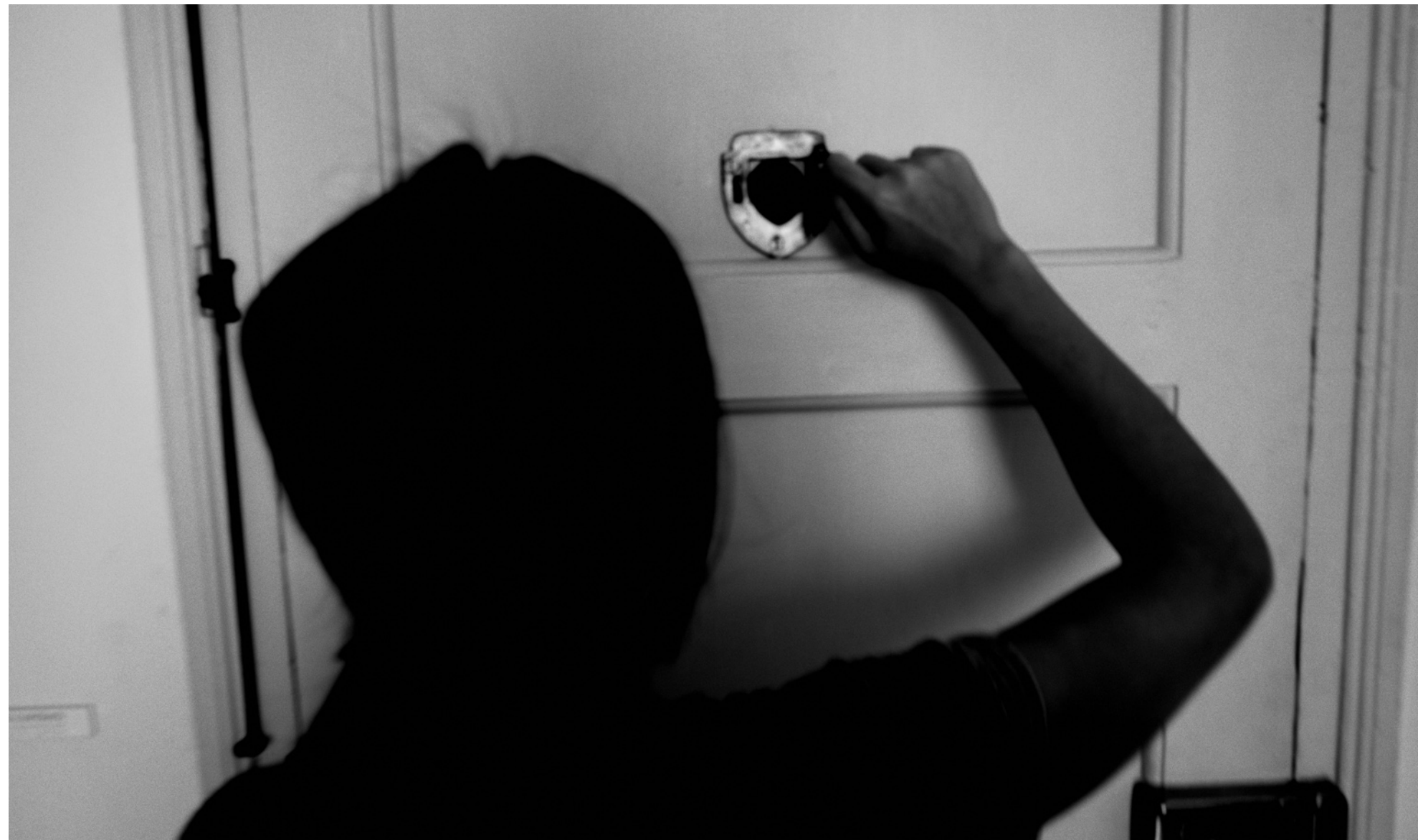
Will future generations write about you and read you?

WHAT WILL CONTINUE TO BE READ, WHAT WILL NO LONGER BE READ?

It is difficult to know what will last, but easier to know what will NOT last.

Things that don't last:

1. Works which are created out of compromise.
2. Works which are created for money.



3. Works which deal too much with the present day moment (most politics, news, technology). We must think whether our works would have had impact to individuals 300 years ago and can impact individuals 300 years from now.

IT ISN'T TECHNOLOGY FOR THE SAKE OF TECHNOLOGY

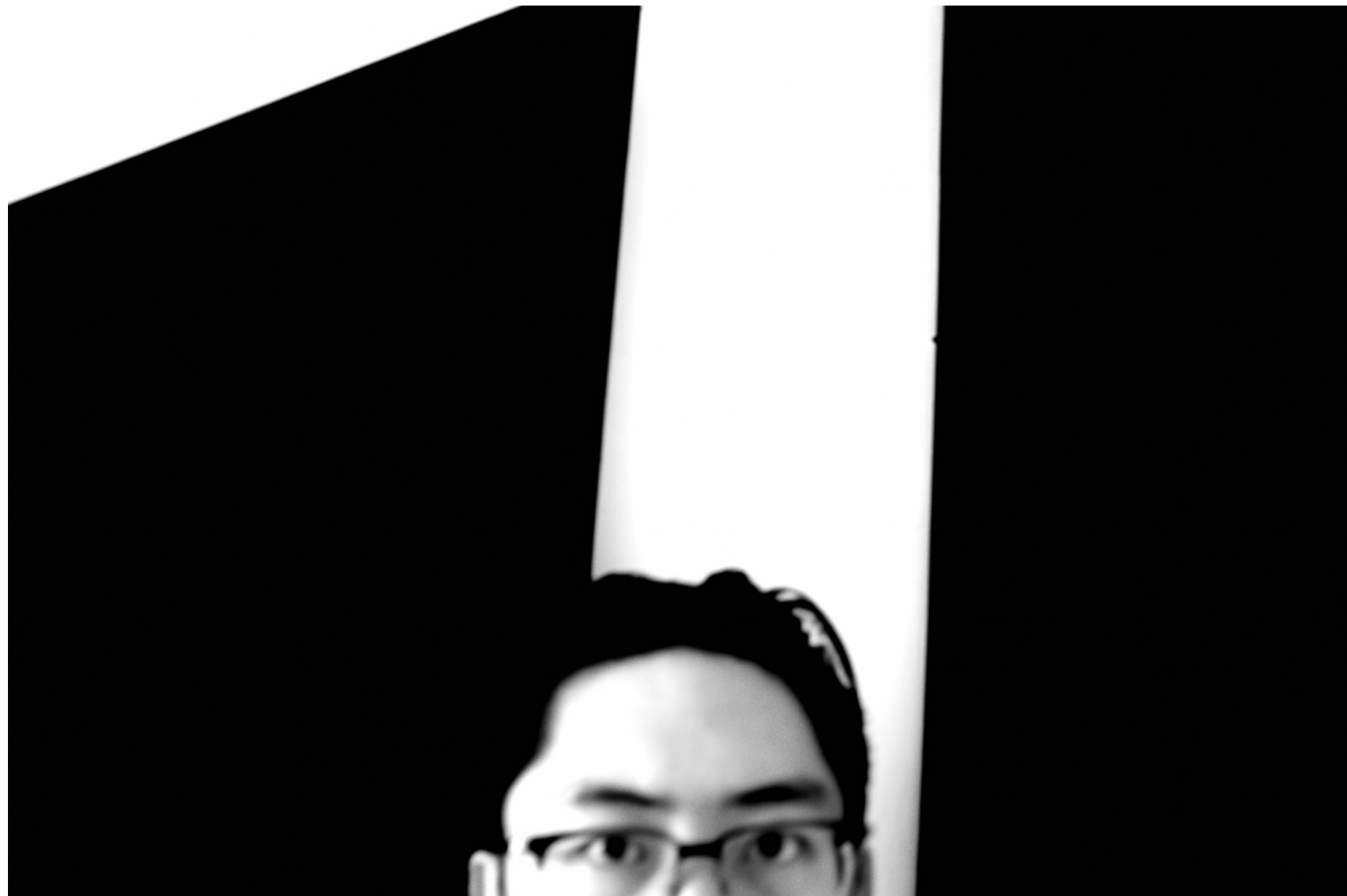
As photographers, we need technology in order to make images. And what kind of images are we trying to create? We are trying to create GREAT images. Great art works which could have had the

ability to motivate and move individuals from 300 years ago, and will still have impact 300 years from now.

WHAT ARE IMPACTFUL IMAGES?

Photos from 100+ years ago which are still interesting and meaningful:

Photos of human beings.



I look at old architecture photos of the past (Eugene Atget and the streets of Paris), and I don't care so much. But seeing individuals from the past-- this interests me.

What photos will people 300 years from now be interested in? Still common things like war, peace, love, anger, etc. Street photography as a genre and concept *is* the ultimate form of photography; and will continue to thrive whether we live on cities on the moon or Mars, and beyond.

For us photographers, **street photography is the future!**

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HYPER HUMAN

What does it mean to become hyper-human, and for what?

HYPER: ABOVE

Hyper: ABOVE human. The next generation, the next evolution of man?

My goal: my personal life as an experiment to become hyper-human myself.

To self-direct evolution in one generation, then train my future children to continue the chain and legacy?

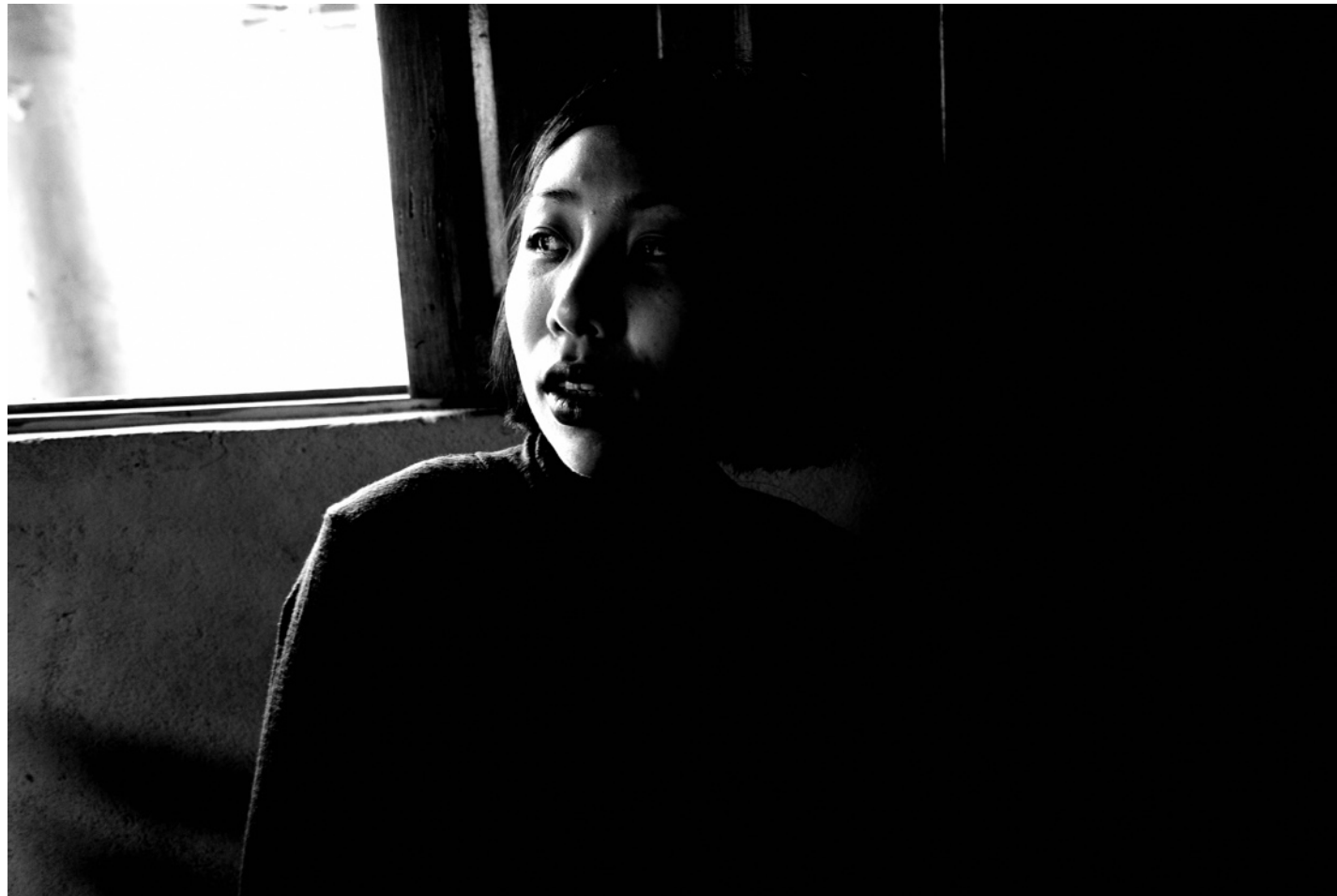
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AUGMENTING CREATIVE POWER AND FORCE



Never stop augmenting and adding creative expressive force.

1. Expanding your different modes and types/styles of artistic expression.

2. Increase the FORCE, concentration, or the intensity of your artistic expression and power.

3. Invent, discover, or use new tools which increase the total creative output you can make.

4. Continue to augment your following. Don't aim for pure numbers -- better to have fewer followers who are insanely loyal than to have many followers who are lukewarm towards you.

HOW MANY TOOLS DO WE NEED?

A thought while watching the Mandalorian:

Mando has many many types of guns in his arsenal, and has many different types of weapons on his body armor. He uses different weapons according to the job at hand.

For example, he will use his hand blaster for close-range combat, and his larger blaster/rifle for long-range and other melee attacks.

Similar with John Wick: his gun of choice is typically his normal pistol. But in other situations, he will take out the big guns.

JUST ONE DEVICE OR TOOL TO RULE THEM ALL?

I think ultimately the way we approach our tools, devices and things are highly aesthetic. For example, I do like the notion of a lone samurai warrior with his one trusty katana sword.



Also in highly practical terms, I HATE heavy. When I am out and about shooting photos all day, or while traveling, adding more weight is a positively NEGATIVE experience. The more weight is on my neck or my back, I feel MORE MISERABLE. And my lesson about cameras:

*If I have the option of a lighter but "worse" camera, or a heavier but "better" camera, **I will always opt for the lighter camera.***

For example, I love the Leica M camera, but I still prefer the RICOH GR camera. Why? It is insanely lightweight; which means I walk further with less fatigue, shoot more, and **the more I shoot the happier I am!**

INCREASING YOUR POWER AND FORCES OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

I believe our soul is a ball of energy and power. And our desire as artists is to EX+FORCE or expel as much of this creative power out into the embodied world.

You can express your creative power via writing, poetry, conversation, video, film, cinema, dance, photography, illustrations, sculpture, etc. I believe that all forms of artistic expression are equal to one another. The better question is:

Depending on what situation do I desire to use artistic tool x, y, z?

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DON'T CRITIQUE HUMAN NATURE

For the entire history of humanity, we have vilified the passions. Almost every religion and mode of moral/ethical philosophical thought is:

The natural human passions are evil. The virtuous thing is to become less "natural". We must renounce all of our passions. The apex of virtue is supreme logic, rationality, and reasoning.

What if instead of trying to fight against the passions and instead of trying to extinguish the passions, we could learn new ways to channel, harness, and direct these great passions to our benefit?

TAME AND DOMESTICATE THE PASSIONS

Many animals in their natural state is dangerous to man. But man has been able to domesticate animals, and turn the animals into our (useful) slaves. This seems quite smart.

In the Mandalorian, they tame the ugly animals to become obedient long-range animals. What if in the future we could tame eagles and lions to do our service? ---

WE DON'T NEED A SAVIOR OR A DOCTOR TO 'FIX' US.



There is nothing wrong or defective about us humans. All our our passions, emotions, etc are the greatest source of our intelligence. The goal:

Do not extinguish your passions and emotions. Instead channel them to do your service!

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PHOTO GRAPH

PHOTO GRAPH

Grab your artistic staff and lead. Make your own artistic creed.
Follow it until it bleeds.

Chroma or monochrome-- it don't matter, only your visual sense
knows.

Shoot with freedom and levity. Shoot higher. More tones, more col-
ors, more shapes. You can flip and flop; pancake.

You're on a visual date with the future. Will you shoot ahead, or be
left behind? Don't go 9, go 10!

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THE UPSIDE OF DISSATISFACTION

To not longer be satisfied or pleased with your old work as a benefit to the artist: this gives us the motivation to make NEW photos and art-works which impress us!



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NEW AESTHETICS

THE SEARCH FOR NEW AND EXOTIC TASTES

We don't want higher image quality, nor more megapixels. What we truly desire is a stronger spice, a stronger aesthetic, to please our visual palette even more.





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CONQUER COMPOSITION



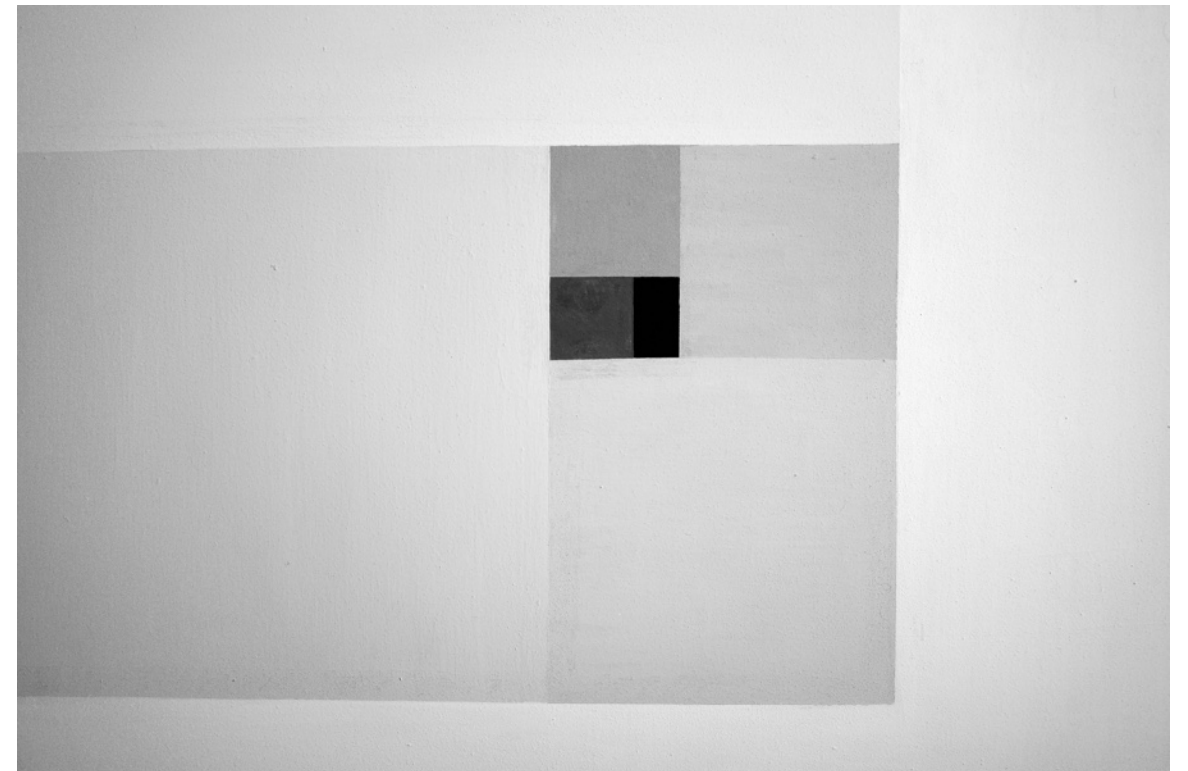
What is composition? Taking embodied reality and re-moulding it according to your own desires.

The joy of the photographer: to transfigure embodied reality into a new way, with the constraint of two-dimensional reality and the one-eyed lens (the camera).

HOW CAN WE JUMP OVER CARTIER-BRESSON?

To jump over Cartier-Bresson is to realize:

The ultimate goal of photography isn't composition. Composition is instead a bridge towards a further and more noble goal.



PHOTOGRAPHIC FITNESS

What makes a great photographer? Not just their compositional and technical skills. No -- their physical strength, prowess, and the suppleness in their legs.

The skillful photographer is curious, can walk long distances with little fatigue, or can quickly sprint to capture a photograph.

The great photographer as someone with little or no fear. The desire to make a great photograph is more important than the chance of upsetting the subject.

The great photographer needing strong legs, much muscle, little body fat, and a diet high in meat.

To improve our photography -- what if we first focused on improving the fitness and strength of our body?



LIFE WITHOUT PAIN ISN'T A LIFE WORTH

Us moderns: we desire a life devoid of pain. We want to root out all pain, suffering, and distress.

But my thought:

Pain is what makes life worthwhile.

For example:

1. The pain of hunger is what makes the taste of food so great!
2. The pain of exhaustion and tiredness is what makes sweet sleep and sweet coffee/caffeine so worth it.
3. The pain of social distress and argumentation is what makes social harmony so beautiful.
4. The pain of rejection is what makes success and acceptance worth it.
5. The pain of our childhood is what makes our life more interesting, noble, and epic. A life without pain and suffering is essentially a boring life. Imagine watching a film with no pain and suffering and overcoming in the main character!



INNOVATION BASED ON NEED

A thought while here in Cuba:

Much of what we consider "ingenious innovation" is actually based on need.

What I mean is this:

You cannot "force" innovation without having need.

Thus perhaps the takeaway is this:

Don't force innovation. It will happen when need be. If it doesn't happen, it ain't necessary.



LIVE YOUR LIFE AS IF YOU WERE TO LIVE FOREVER

I am quite confident that I will live to be 120-140 years old in excellent health. My secret? No texting-while-driving, no riding a bicycle or electric scooter in a city, no smoking, intermittent fasting, no sugars, cold showers, and other forms of physical exertion and exercise.

Why live as if you were to live forever? Some thoughts:

THINKING LONG-TERM.

Nietzsche once said "Durability is one the supreme goods on earth" which means-- create art works, things, ideas, thoughts, and technologies which are durable -- which last for a long time! Like Horace said: "Make a monument more enduring than bronze."

Being here in Havana-- I am very impressed how American cars from the 1950's are still running on the road! The Cubans have been able to extend the durability of these cars through ingenuity, retrofitting old Toyota engines to these old Chrysler cars, etc.

Also, it makes me think more about technological things in terms of durability:

If you had to buy something, and no longer had access to buying new stuff-- how many years of productivity could you squeeze out of it?



For example let us say I am in the states and I knew I would move to Cuba for 10 years, without having access to Amazon prime, Apple products, or any other products. What would I buy, invest, and bring, to last me 10+ years? Or 20 years? Or 30 years? Or 50+ years?



WHY DON'T WE LIKE TO PLAN LONG-TERM?

Perhaps it has to do with the culture you were raised in, or your personal history or narrative.

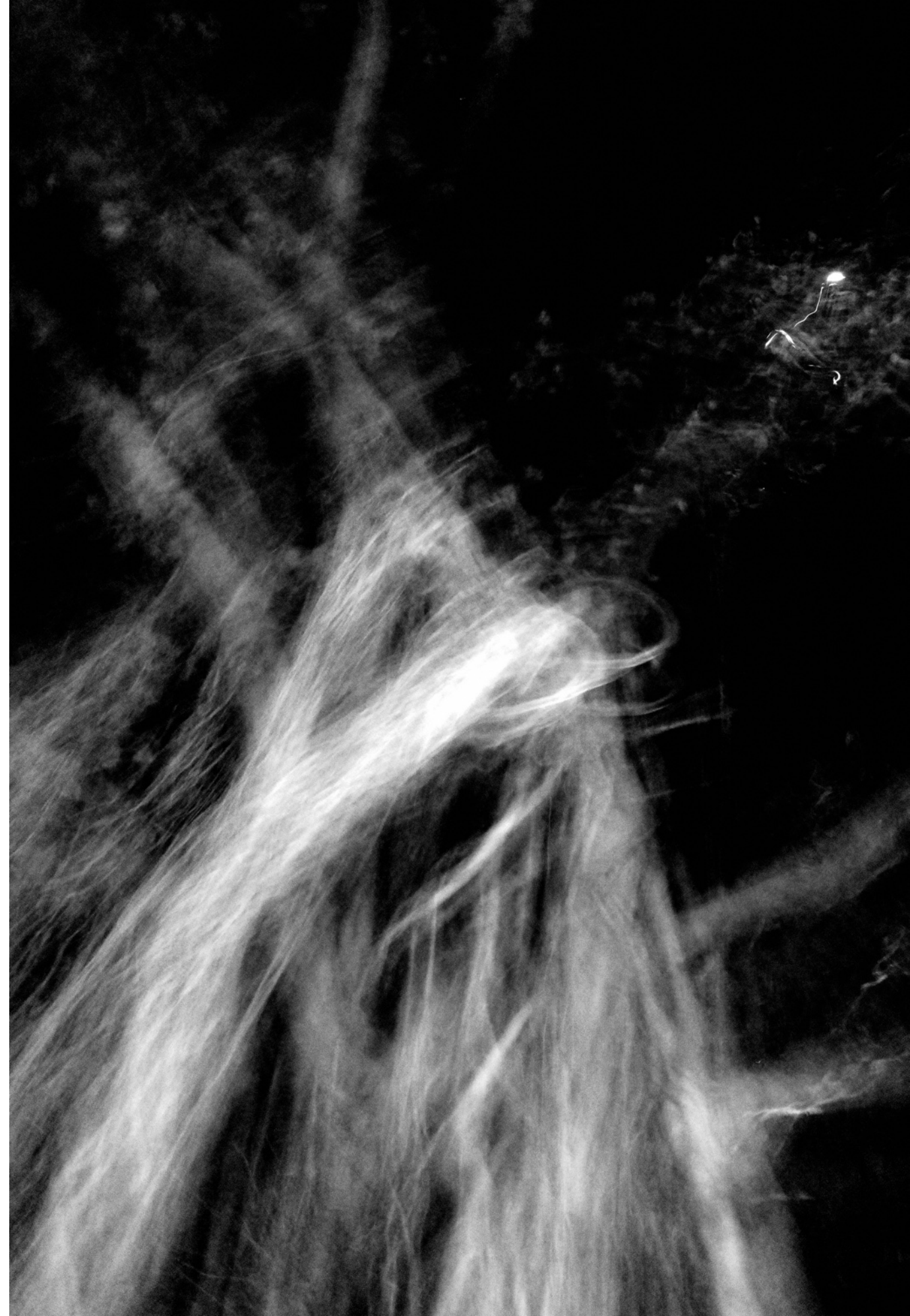
For example, I grew up in extremely uncertain times. My dad was a chronic gambler with our rent money, so every month I remember my mom telling me that we might be homeless. So essentially my attitude towards money was this:

Tomorrow is uncertain, thus I should spend my money as quickly today as possible.

Therefore, I didn't have the ability or belief in "saving" or thinking about tomorrow. Tomorrow was uncertain, today was certain. Therefore at a young money, I blew on my money on clothes, my car, going out, etc. It wasn't until I met and married Cindy when I learned the ethos of saving money (Cindy learned the ethos of saving saving money from her mom).

Lesson:

Think about the culture we are raised in, and how we were raised by our parents. This will dictate our belief in the future.



FLESH-FORWARD

More faith in the flesh (body) than the "mind".

According to this:

Anything which is beneficial and empowering to our flesh (body) is good. Anything which weakens our flesh is bad.

For example:

1. Cold showers as good: Strengthen our bodies (hormesis)
2. Walking a lot (instead of driving) is best: It strengthens our bodies.
3. Intermittent fasting is good: Better for our bodily metabolic and biological functioning.
4. Not eating sugar and simple carbs is good: Better for our metabolism.
5. Eating much meat is beneficial: Meat as the supreme source of nutrition for our flesh. In simple terms: eating flesh is best for our flesh.
6. Sleep above everything: The sleep is the ultimate form of recuperation for the flesh. To sleep much and well is more important than money. Also very good to take naps.



WHEN IS 'INDULGING THE FLESH' BAD?

Having sex is good for us. Having unprotected sex with strangers is bad -- as we can get a sexually transmitted infection or disease.

Eating pastries is bad: even though we might get a momentary hormonal pleasure from it, ultimately it will cause us to gain excess adipose tissue (fat) which is bad for us.

