

What is the role of the camera in the age of AI?

So a fun random essay and thought that I had, this morning biking, or maybe it was in hot yoga?

So the big thought is, what is the role of the camera in the age of AI ChatGPT, AI generated images and videos etc.

So you no longer need to waste \$10,000 on a Leica M/Q camera anymore --> and already what I am noticing is that, perhaps Leica is actually having a difficult time selling their cameras, ... they're kind of pumping up their marketing efforts, but, I think there is a huge tectonic shift, an insanely massive paradigm shift.

Reality

So the truth is, being in reality embodied reality is awesome. You cannot experience the energy of crossing a Shibuya crossing in Japan, witnessing the insane marvels of Angkor wat in Cambodia, the fun of riding in a tuktuk, trying out new food in new places, or even spending a night inside a capsule hotel in Tokyo?

To experience?

So I think I still believe the general idea that investing in experiences is by far the most critical thing. Therefore at this point, really truly deeply, the camera doesn't matter anymore. Currently speaking, the best camera for you to get is still some compact digital camera that could ideally fit in your front pocket, any RICOH GR variant is best.

A world post-iPhone

So I kind of feel bad for all those people who branded themselves as iPhone photographers, frankly speaking there's not a bright future for that anymore.

I think the issue is, and I'm still kind of shocked, it really does feel like AI came out out of nowhere. Even myself who was a hard-core ChatGPT early user,... even playing around with GROK,,, the video generation, or image to video etc.... it still always kind of blows my mind.

Media

So I think the first thing that is actually insanely empowering about these tools to generate your own pictures videos images etc.... Is, you're no longer the slave of these entertainment mega corporations, which are feeding you all the same pink chicken McNugget sludge.

For example, if you're in a position in which you could create your own picture media images videos, even erotica --> , you're actually in a good field. Why? Once again you are not the passive recipient of these things but you could direct your own future.

Which one

So this is my honest thought:

Don't really bother with Gemini, I think it's a waste of time. Apparently it's really good if you're like a coder, but beyond that, I would just kind of ignore it.

Grok is kind of the most interesting one because, it's mostly uncensored, which means, you have more free freedom. ChatGPT is annoying because, it is like a nanny AI... There is a lot that it will not let you do.

Which is the best

The truth is, ChatGPT is number one. I do not envision a future in which Grok or Gemini catches up.

Like just observe,, nowadays when you're in public, you must always see somebody with a ChatGPT tab open on their browser. Even internationally you see everyone using ChatGPT on their phones.

also, just look at the kids, 12-year-old kids, middle schoolers high schoolers, they're all obviously just using ChatGPT.

So what's the future of education?

OK now that Seneca is five years old in transitional kindergarten, I'm just looking into the future, first thoughts:

First, never ever ever ever want to pay a dime for his higher education, either he gets some sort of full ride, and does it for fun and self entertainment, rather than an "investment".

Obviously there's going to be jobs, in the future that requires some sort of physical skills but because, we are all in on bitcoin, I don't even think that he's going to need to get a job or work into the future, so the future for him is just going to be autotelic, his best point to pursue his passions whether it be building cities of the future with electric hovering trains or Waymos or whatever.

For art and creativity

So I think the first thought is, photography and street photography is just entertaining and fun! I mean I guess you could just be like traveling around Southeast Asia, and generating images on your iPhone as you go, **I think the joy of**

photography is the immediacy. For example, you could take like 1000 photos in like half a second, but ChatGPT AI, image and video generation will always be slower.

For what

Another observation, especially because we are starting to see the shift of AI generated stuff, and it is AI's who are commenting and following it, I'm starting to feel like the Internet no longer has humans on it.

So then, question is if you no longer are stuck in this myopic vision of just posting photos to get followers and likes, then what?

Then, it truly does become autotelic and this becomes scary for people... like, like let me told you that 100% of Instagram for now all just bots,... would you still upload photos to Instagram to get some sort of social validation on your photos?

I still then, I think there is a joy of making photography Social. Like for example if you have a small exhibit print out some photos, have some like-minded photographers meet in person, share their passion for photography and art etc.

So ironically enough, I still think there is a good future for photography workshops in person assuming you want to have a novel meaningful experience, and also travel.

Feedback AI's

So it looks like I'm kind of on a roll with these ChatGPT bots.

First up, Seneca, which is an AI bot which just gives you honest feedback critique and judges your photos. Obviously it's not true but it's kind of interesting. Try it out.

For the human experience upload your photos to arsbeta.com

Next frontiers

so another big idea I have is, what's interesting is, and the magic of inserting your photos into Grok, and animating the pictures.

What kind of blows your mind is, when you animate a photo and you bring it to life, it changes everything. It seriously is like magic.

Do you care, does it matter?

And then we enter into a world in which, we're kind of at a thrilling intersection where, all the stuff that you create and generate, ultimately it should entertain **you**.

And therefore media becomes a lot more personal, imagine media pictures videos content information, creative ideas thoughts etc..... it stays local and just with you.

And **honestly at this point with AI... There is no more any utility to become famous.**

And another funny thought, now that we have bitcoin, if you just want to monetize, and bitcoin is like the ultimate money on the planet, you just invest in bitcoin.

so now what

Then ultimately it comes down to philosophy:

1. Why make photos?
2. For whom?
3. Do you even need validation or feedback or critique anymore?
4. Towards what ends?

Explore more of these interesting advances in [my upcoming online zoom AI PHOTO workshop](#):

AI PHOTOGRAPHY CREATIVITY WORKSHOP (online, ZOOM, Feb 21st, 2026 from 9am-11am PACIFIC California LA time) (Secure your spot, 199 USD here>) – NEW!

Travel in 2026

Where will you go next? details coming soon:

- Phnom Penh Cambodia, June 26,27,28 (2026)
- Hong Kong, July 25-26, (2026)
- TOKYO, AUGUST 8-9, (2026)

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Now what

So what I say is, social skills are the future. Try out my ChatGPT social skills bot.

My vision of the future is more practical. Life in the future is gonna be more similar than this similar, we're just going to have more self driving cars, we will also still be using iPhones,... but the biggest shift is, we will all just be using a lot more AI.

And the happiness question is Social. Social and physical. I think this is why doing hot yoga is so fun, because you have the physical aspect and also the social aspect. Also the gym.

I think one of the up sides of doing hot yoga, is, you're essentially forced for an hour to not use your phone. Whereas if you're at the gym, very easy to get distracted.

And then, my thought is... The future which will not be able to be replaced is going to be social skills, social skills coaching, and also fitness?

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