

PHOTOGRAPHY DIRECTION - CASE STUDY

The Last Hour

Twelve days. One light.

A body of work on the streets of Queens — and the direction that makes twelve frames from twelve days read as one walk.

SCOPE Direction · shooting · selection · grade

RULE If the light is wrong, don't shoot

KIT Sony A7R V · FE 16-35mm f/2.8 GM

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Photography direction - lolimari.com



OLD SAN JUAN - THE SAME HOUR, ANOTHER CITY

The Last Hour

OVERVIEW

This is my own photography — a body of work made on the streets of Queens, shot on a Sony A7R V with a 16–35mm GM. It is here as a case study in photography direction rather than as a gallery: what matters is not the individual frames but the rules that hold them together.

CHALLENGE

A photograph is easy. A body of work is hard, because it has to cohere across days, blocks, seasons and weather — and most photographers try to solve that in the edit. By then it's too late. Coherence has to be decided before the shutter, or you are just sorting through luck.

STRATEGIC THINKING

I direct my own work the way I'd direct someone else's: by deciding in advance what I will not photograph. A body of work is a set of refusals. Three of them do all the work here — one on light, one on subject, one on people — and everything that survives them belongs to the series automatically.

The direction

THE DIRECTION

A body of work is a set of refusals

A photograph is easy. A body of work is hard, because it has to cohere across days, blocks and weather. I direct it the way I'd direct a shoot: by deciding, in advance, what I will not photograph.

01 Shoot the last hour, or don't shoot

One narrow window of low sun. It is the constraint that does the work — twelve frames made on twelve different days share a single light, so the grid reads as one afternoon.



02 Every frame needs something growing

Botanical against built. A vine on a fire escape, a tree against brick, a leaf in a window. The plant is the subject; the architecture is the ground it argues with.



03 No protagonists

People pass through, they don't pose. The street is the sitter. The moment a person becomes the subject, the series becomes about them instead of the place.



THE RULES - HELD

THE CONTACT SHEET

The contact sheet

THE CONTACT SHEET

Twelve frames, one afternoon

Made across twelve separate days in Queens. Because the light rule never moved, the sheet coheres as though it were a single walk.



ROW 1 / EDIT

Kill anything that only works
because it is pretty.

Keep the frames that argue with
each other — a hard corner next
to a soft leaf.

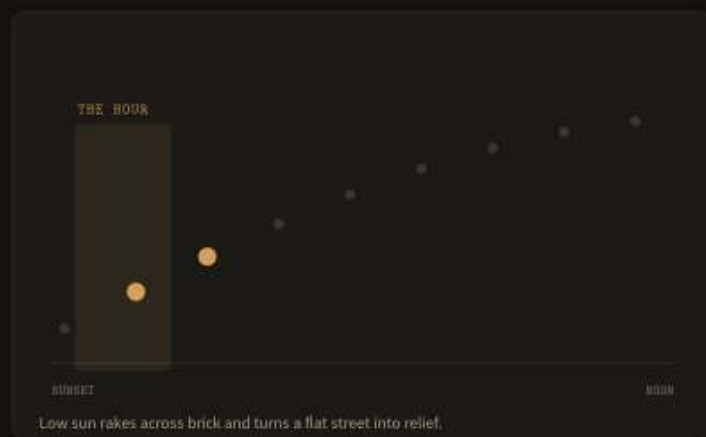
Four is a series. Twelve is a
folder.

THE TECHNICAL SPINE

The technical spine

THE TECHNICAL SPINE

One hour, one exposure, one lens



THE KIT

BODY	Sony A7R V
LENS	FE 16–35mm f/2.8 GM
APERTURE	f/5.6 — depth over bokeh
ISO	Base 100, always
FILE	Uncropped 61 MP RAW

Wide, stopped down, at base ISO. Nothing here is a look — it is a discipline that keeps the frames comparable, so the series holds together instead of each picture performing on its own.

THE MOTIF

The motif

THE MOTIF

Botanical against built

The recurring argument of the series: something alive, pressed against something that was poured.



A tree holds the corner

FRAME 03



Green in a doorway

FRAME 07



The block, softened

FRAME 10



A leaf against glass

FRAME 12

IF THERE IS NOTHING GROWING IN IT, IT IS NOT IN THE SERIES

The direction travels

THE DIRECTION TRAVELS

One direction, three commissions

The same three rules govern work that looks nothing alike. That is the test of a direction: it should survive a change of subject.



Street — Queens

The series. Low sun, botanical, no protagonists.



Panoramic — coast

Same hour, same lens, same refusal to crop.
The horizon replaces the block.



Directed — weddings

People became the subject, so rule three inverts — but the light rule never does.

A direction you can only apply to one subject is a style. A direction that survives the subject changing is a point of view.

— which is the only thing a client is actually hiring.

OUTCOMES & REFLECTION

The outcome

FINAL SOLUTION

A contact sheet that coheres, and a direction that then travels. The same three rules govern work that looks nothing alike: the Queens street series, coastal panoramic work, and directed wedding commissions. On the weddings, rule three inverts — people become the subject — but the light rule never does.

RESULTS

The series holds. More usefully, the direction is portable: it survives a change of subject, a change of client and a change of city — the same hour of light carries an Old San Juan street as readily as a Queens block.

LESSONS LEARNED

A direction you can only apply to one subject is a style. A direction that survives the subject changing is a point of view — and a point of view is the only thing a client is actually hiring. The edit is where authorship happens: four is a series, twelve is a folder.

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