

Proposal: Bathroom

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I want to continue taking pictures of people in bathrooms for this class. I think I had some success with this project in the previous class, and I hope to build on the experiences I' learned. I still find the idea for this series to be original and creative, and there there is still more to do.

Ideas and Themes, Revisited

When we think of words such as "intimate," "personal," or "vulnerable," we often imagine romantic or attractive scenes. However, bathrooms are also all those those things: they are intimate spaces because they are small, they are personal because we crave privacy when we're using them, and we are at out most vulnerable in a bathroom because we are often exposed and naked.



"Adam and Coryn in Their Bathroom"

A consistent theme in most of my series is finding absurdity and incongruity. The incongruity of portraits in bathrooms will come from exploring the aspects of a bathroom we are most unwilling to share.

One of my goals in the early work on this series was to be less reliant on absurdity and humor, as it was starting to become a crutch. However, there was another flaw I found: the subjects were not interacting with the background in a meaningful way. In other words, scene itself was incidental and the photo could be done anywhere else. To fix this problem, I intend to have the subjects interact with their environment more: using the the sink, using the the bathtub, washing their hands or shaving.

The theme I failed to explore fully was to make viewers be honest with confronting the discomfort we find in bathrooms. Since the idea of photoshoots in bathrooms is so strange, the pictures should play into those feelings. I'm not yet sure how I can show this theme.

Technical Considerations, Again

Shooting this entire series on medium format slide film has worked and I plan on continue with it. It was possible to make large prints, although the very narrow dynamic range has made getting good exposures difficult. Slide film is only daylight balance, but I have not found that to be problem with any lighting condition so far. During the last class, I learned how to developed slide film at home, so it's much cheaper to process rolls. I've only shot using Provia but I plan on trying Velvia for the next part of this series.



"Chau in Her Bathroom, with Tom"

To keep coherency and consistency, I plan to continue framing with a single-point perspective, which means the plane of the camera is always parallel to the horizon or wall in the background. As much as possible, the elements in the photo were aligned to the center and converging lines appeared frequently. I think this composition style will be useful in a bathroom as it will remind the viewer of the four walls of a small enclosed space.

Presentation

16 inches square with white window mat in a black metal frame will still be the ideal for showing the photos. This is most traditional way to present photos and is often seen in galleries. I think the comparison between a familiar display but with unusual subject matter will highlight how strange it is to make portraits in bathrooms.



“Megan in Her Bathroom”

The photos will continue to be squares, so it will be easier for the viewer to compare one photo to another. After trying several paper formats, I still think semi-glossy paper is the best choice, as that will be the best way to show off the tiles and sinks and bathtubs and mirrors found in bathrooms.

Artist Inspiration

One of my favorite photographers is Pete Turner. His work is distinctive because he reduced the elements of a photo down color and composition. The shapes themselves often become abstract forms, such that the subject of the objects in the photo is less important than its color and relationship to the background. I really want to be able achieve this things in my photographs. First let the background become so important that it is inseparable from the subject. Second, let colors be a dominant feature..



“Sand Dune and Tree” - Pete Turner (1995)