

# Proposal: Bathroom

By Jimmy Ha

PHT 298 Fall 2018

Takashima Aya

I want to take pictures of people in bathrooms. I'm always trying to find an original idea for a series; I think this one is quite creative.

## Ideas and Themes

When we think of words such as "intimate," "personal," or "vulnerable," we often imagine romantic or attractive scenes. However, bathrooms are also all 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 our most vulnerable in a bathroom because we are often exposed and naked.



"Alan and Kristin 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. (Unfortunately, an unforeseen problem has arisen - many people have declined requests to be photographed in their own bathroom, or any bathroom. The reactions I received have been embarrassment and lack of understanding. People have said, "Why do you want to photograph me in my bathroom? It's so gross in there.")

I think it will be interesting to explore that sense of discomfort that people have in their own bathrooms when there is somebody else present with them. Who would invite someone else to share their bathroom? This project is going to be so strange.

It's been pointed out to me that many of my pictures rely heavily on absurdist humor, and I am starting to think that I use that as a crutch. An idea is explored just a little using humor, but is never fully explored because it is not treated with seriousness. Therefore, in order to get out of my comfort zone, I think I will try to make make my photos as serious as possible. By eliminating humor from my photos, perhaps I will be able to make viewers be honest with confronting the discomfort we find in bathrooms.

## Technical Considerations

I plan on doing this entire series on medium format film. It is a medium I am comfortable working in, and it provides the opportunity to make very large prints if I choose to. Lately, I've been experimenting with slide film I like the colors a lot more than negative film and there is much less struggle trying to get the colors to be balanced correctly.



"Megan in Her Bathroom"

Trying to shoot slide film in bathrooms mean there is very little available light. Tripods are definitely necessary. As for lighting, I think artificial light will be unavoidable. Because slide film is balanced for daylight, I will have to rely on gels on flashes to get the appropriate lighting. I may experiment with different gels, perhaps to get a fluorescent green or yellow incandescent white balance in the photos.

During the work I did on the Renaissance series, I used a particular framing known as 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

I haven't yet considered what size to print the photos, but I think 16 inches square with white window mat in a black metal frame will probably be the final result. 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.



"Tonnie in Her Bathroom, with Rena"

I am certain that I want all photos to printed as squares. This will encourage the viewer to compare one photo to another. I am also fairly certain that I will print the photos on glossy or semi-glossy paper, as that will be the best way to show of the tiles and sinks and bathtubs and mirrors found in bathrooms.