

Artist Statement!

By Jimmy Ha!

Absurdity is the theme that unifies the pictures in my project. Everything in these photos builds towards making them ridiculous. I aim for absurdity because I want the viewer to spend energy making sense of things. My measure of success is whether the conclusions that the viewer draws are the ones I intended them to find.

The compositional principles behind all my pictures are from the Renaissance. I picked this period on purpose because despite it being an easily recognized Western art movement (for most viewers), many of the internalized ideas we have today about what makes a good painting have advanced far beyond that time.

Converging lines and orthogonal shapes form a clearly-defined single point perspective. Figures are clearly outlined, well-illuminated, and separated from each other. Their relationships are always in linear planes. Any knowledge the viewer needs is contained within the frame of the picture. The overall effect is a sense of stability, as there is nothing in dynamic motion.

The absurdity occurs when comparing the stability of the composition to the elements themselves. People are wearing clothes they should not wear. They pose in ways that defy expectations. They have little relationship to their environment. They might as well be lifeless statues.

Outside of the context of the photos, I also wanted to embrace the medium: color photography. I chose to use film because it gives a color palette which invokes a dated impression. Its imperfections and grain echo the fading of old paintings. The photos themselves are often very cluttered so I've chosen a dominating color element to help draw focus.

I want viewers to look at these photos and say to themselves, "these pictures have all the things that a good picture would have, and yet they just seem off." Did it make you smile?

I made some pictures! I hope you like them.

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