

Project

## Contemplation and the Everyday: A Mural in a Public Bathroom

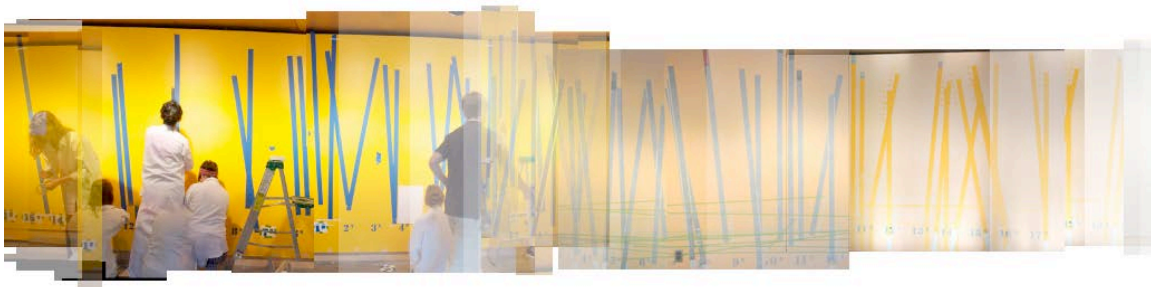
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This abstract, vibrantly colored wall painting celebrates the contemplative and poetic potentials of the public bathroom. Using vivid hues and shapes that mirror the functional and tactile elements in a small bathroom—grab-bars, faucets, soap and towel dispensers—this project seeks to awaken our appreciation of the modest and everyday public bathroom, which the Japanese writer Junichiro Tanizaki has called “a place of spiritual repose.”

This mural also pays homage to the work of the people who clean and maintain public spaces such as bathrooms. It was named after Daisy Walker, the woman who cleans this particular bathroom. The mural’s overlapping fields of geometric shapes emulate Ms. Walker’s gestures—for instance, the swinging of her mop handle—and suggests their peculiar musicality. Other painted elements echo the shapes of useful objects in the room. To highlight the process of transformation, I chose colors that complement one another and that shift slightly in hue, as light conditions change. At the same time, I kept parts of the walls unpainted as a memory of what the room had been before the painting.

“The parlor may have its charms,” Tanizaki writes in his book *In Praise of Shadows*, “but no words can describe that sensation [one feels] as one sits in the dim light [of a Japanese bathroom], basking in the faint glow reflected from the shoji, lost in meditation or gazing out at the garden.”<sup>1</sup>



Extension of Bathroom Mural into a Public Hallway  
(Photomontage: author)

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<sup>1</sup> Junichiro Tanizaki (translated by Thomas J. Harper and Edward G Seidensticker), *In Praise of Shadows* (Stony Creek, CT: Leete’s Island Books, Inc., 1977)



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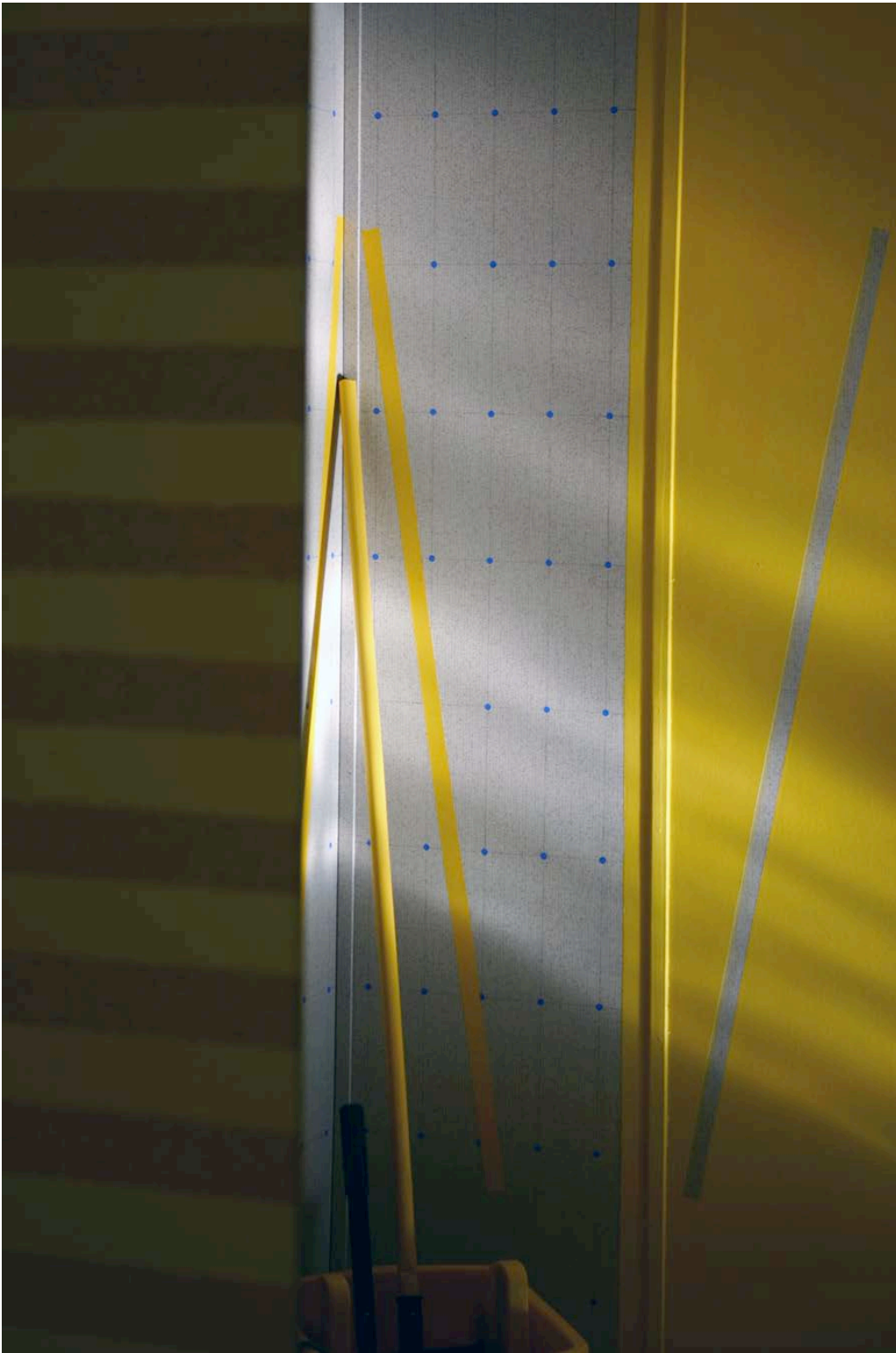
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Extension of Bathroom Mural into a Public Hallway  
(design: author; execution: students & author)



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