

Paprika! Vol. 13
Bulletin 01

December 4, 2025

Issue Editor
Jessica Kong

Graphic Designer
Charitssa Stone

Editor-in-Chief
Julia Edwards

Managing Editor
Taesha Aurora

Chief News Editor
Yanbo Li

Assistant News Editors
Tony Salem Musleh
Majdi Alkarute
Maggie Holm
Marusya Bakhrameeva
Shreshtha Goyal
Layna Chen
Jaime Solares Carmona
Tian Hsu

Features Editor
Tomas Altobello

Copy Editor
Peter Xu

**Engagement
Coordinator**
Melos Shtaloja

Events Coordinator
Mercuri Lam

Publishers
Logan Rubasch
Eva Crutan

Archivists
Angelo Marzocchi
Eleanor Ding

GD Coordinators
Izza Alyssa
Camille Gwise

Faculty Advisor
Christopher Hawthorne

Editor's Statement

For as long as I can remember, I have struggled with gastrointestinal issues. My sensitive stomach has meant that the fear of a spontaneous bathroom trip is constantly on my mind. Sometimes, it is a cold drink that does the trick or consuming too much caffeine on an empty stomach. But most of the time, it is the crippling anxiety that comes with an important interview or presentation, a big exam, or even just the thought of raising my hand to answer a question in class. It is in these moments that I feel the most out

of control and helpless, at the mercy of my own body.

While I aim to break down the stigma around this universal experience from a mental health standpoint, how we discuss, design, and prioritize access to bathrooms is also a political and social issue. Bathrooms are an unavoidable pillar of our daily experiences, but often, their importance and design are overlooked, treated as afterthoughts rather than opportunities for inclusive design. Critical dialogue and reflection between designers and users, espe-

cially across a spectrum of gender, disability, and age, are deeply necessary for progress and change to happen.

My hope for this bulletin is to create a safe and welcoming space for people to share their private experiences in very public places — unspoken understandings and common struggles. In curating it, I have encountered some incredibly honest, compassionate, and intimate stories. I feel truly honored that so many have shared their perspectives here.

And for you, dear reader, I hope these words will connect with you in some way or invite you to see the world a little differently. I hope the informal, impromptu, and candid conversations I have had the pleasure of experiencing will continue outside the bounds of the bulletin and into our day-to-day lives going forward.

Love,
jess

Stranger in the stall!

Zach Sundborg

Some might say my bathroom is forgettable. Chipped checkerboard tiles meet an off-white wainscoted wall abruptly, and without composure. It has cracks, stains and faint smells of the last tenant's cigarettes. Some might notice the hole in the ceiling where the fan used to be, and the newer hole next to it. Stodgy, they might say.

But for me, my bathroom is my safe space. In my otherwise unpredictable life as a wheelchair user, it is my guardian—constant, consistent, devoid of barriers. It's there for me when I most need it. Beyond its two-inch white cased door lies a world of unequal negotiations: a broken record reverberating doors too narrow, sinks too high, stranger in the stall and strangers who stare.

Just past its peel-and-stick veneer vanity is a daily routine of required calculations: Where is the nearest accessible stall? Will the handle lock? Can I get in? Can I get there on time? In that uncertainty, my own bathroom becomes something larger than its off-white, wainscoted walls. Maybe it's my friend that listens, an ally, a partner in crime—a space systematically curated not to test my limits, but to affirm them.

Some might say my bathroom is forgettable, but for me, it is my most cherished space.

Unruly
Ana Sevilla

On September 22, 2025, in a video posted on X, Texas Governor Greg Abbott described the Bathroom Bill as "signing a law banning men in women's restrooms," calling it "just common sense." Yet this law enforces a form of self-surveillance in which individuals must monitor their own bodies and gender presentation, turning private acts such as excreting bodily fluids into potential forms of scrutiny and violence.

Managed by legal codes, architecture has historically played a key role in disciplining bodies and buildings. But the filth, the grime, the graffiti, and the misuse—which architecture readily omits—testify against erasure and trace power leaks. It is within these leaks that the bathroom becomes a crucial site of resistance. How might making the bathroom legible resist the absorption into the hegemonic systems that regulate our bodies? Can redrawing its surface through acts of scanning, distortion, and re-representation move toward a more just, even if a more unruly, architecture?

A series of 3D LiDAR scans of bathrooms across Houston, Texas, deals with architecture's mediated relationship to bodies, ecosystems, supply chains, and institutions. Subtly manipulated and marred by the scan's own faults—which sometimes obfuscate reflections into doubles—the work destabilizes constructed binaries. By revealing how technologies of representation both surveil and subvert, it embraces the anxieties these entanglements produce and suggests dissidence as a possible form of liberation.



View series of 3D LiDAR scans on <https://unruly.parts>

My Favourite Loo

Lilac Courtauld

My daily ritual down to my favourite loo: through three doors, two locks, four flights of stairs into a room filled with the sound of footsteps from the street above. A room underground yet not silent, never silent. A room so alone but so connecting—you can hear voices but no one knows you're there. Heaven.

Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, UK

Celestial Digestion

Ciel Fu

Before every presentation, my stomach tightens, as if gravity has found me early. I used to think anxiety lived in my head, circling like restless thoughts, but it begins lower—an orbit forming quietly in the gut.

When I lie beneath the night sky, the pull shifts. The sky stretches wide enough to hold it. Under the stars, the same gravity that knots my stomach begins to release, as if the body remembers it is part of a larger system: small, but still in motion.

Bathrooms and observatories are built for these moments of pause. One is tiled and echoing, the other domed and infinite, yet both are spaces where gravity feels bearable again. In their stillness, the orbit steadies.

If anxiety is gravity, then perhaps design—of space, of self—is how we learn to orbit more gently. Somewhere between the bathroom and the stars, the universe settles quietly inside us.

Honesty Before Drawing

Aysel Aziz

It begins in the gut
before the mind catches up
a slow undoing that arrives after reviews.
A sinking,
not of failure,
but of not becoming.

It isn't the critique,
but the body's recognition
of something missing,
something that exists just beyond
the edge of the drawing.

After the review, I sat at Yale Cabaret,
watching A Spider Learns to Dance.
The Spider was told his dance was not honest,
and therefore not profound.

And I thought
maybe that's what happens to us,
to our work, to our drawings.
Maybe the stomach revolts
when the design withholds its truth.
Maybe the gut feels the dishonesty
long before the line does.

That Saturday,
instead of lying on my soft carpeted floor
staring at the ceiling,
I dragged myself back to the studio.
Paper. Clay. Scissors. Hands.
I began cutting, molding
listening, finally, to myself.

And suddenly I said it aloud:
I love color.

So I painted the roof bright yellow,
the ceiling red,
the columns black.
For the first time in a month,
I felt the return
as if the body exhaled.

To be honest meant to risk being ridiculed,
to hear them call it the Yellow Thing,
knowing that yellow
was the only truthful choice.

Body in Vignettes

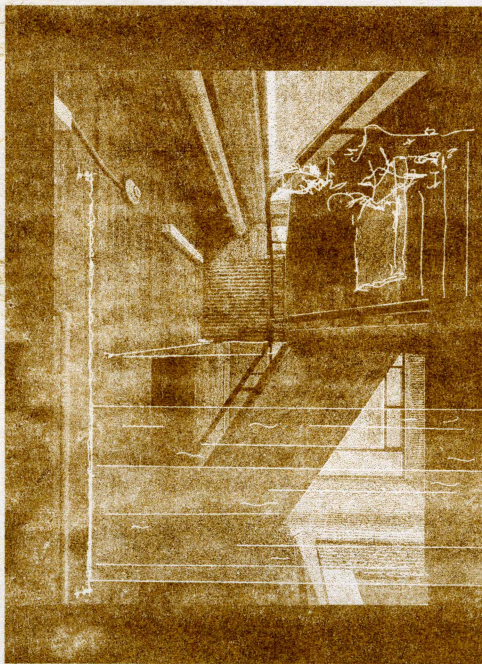
Gaia Saravan

I.
Tremors on the inside bring what's hidden into the limelight, against the granite not visible to the others because of this enclosure. There is comfort behind these full-height bathroom doors. These are the bathrooms I crave. Thank you, Met Museum.

II.
I propose the antithesis of ADA: the anxiety booth. A mundane stall for the more panic-prone. Minimal space, high ceilings, no door gaps between, over, under, through. Warmth in the insulation. Dimly lit. 1 stall inside a 15 stall restroom: nobody is waiting behind the partition.

III.
It is Saturday in New Jersey. There are wolves in the hall outside—prey behavior. Lavatory down the long hall to the right. This place was meant to be occupied.

IV.
We found the Mamava Pod unlocked for the first time today. Inside was 1 seat with a small cubby shelf fit into the corner, painted with soft clouds on the pod's shell, a glazed skylight filtering light. I guess what I mean is simple.



Are Accessible Toilets Always Accessible?

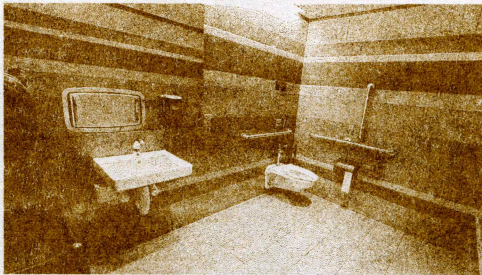
Logan Gillingham

Dealing with mobility issues for the past decade, I have experienced many accessible bathrooms across the continent. Most are horribly designed, non-code compliant, and have the weakest attempts at being even slightly accessible. I have seen grab bars 5 feet from the toilet, stalls merely three feet wide, toilet paper dispensers one foot off the ground (YSOA 6th floor bathroom), and too often, a complete lack of accessible bathrooms in public spaces.

With hopes of creating a bathroom design guide, my younger sister and I have begun documenting and critiquing accessible bathrooms every time we visit a new place. We inspect everything from bathroom doors (height, weight, handles, direction, lock mechanism), grab bar and toilet paper locations (height, proximity to toilet, potential obstructions), to spatial arrangements (distance between toilet and other fixtures, turning radius, reach for soap/paper towels, location of accessible bathroom).

Next time you visit a public bathroom, take a look at the accessible stall, and ask yourself "how is this bathroom failing (or succeeding) at being accessible for people with disabilities/mobility issues?"

Yale Peabody Museum



Quick Critique: Garbage is directly beneath paper towels and obstructs access to exit; emergency pull string is tied up (unusable); bathroom door is very heavy and the door handle must be twisted to open.

Sub-Basement Sanctuary

Alexander Poff

I begin my nightly pilgrimage,
past shop windows and forgotten models,
seeking that sub-basement sanctuary
where two locks guard my dignity.

Alone, I shed my burdens—
architectural and intestinal.
In my refuge—my oasis—
time pauses, stress dissolves,
and my bowels draft their own manifesto,
backed by a choir gurgling hymns.
Atop the throne of porcelain peace,
my insides proclaim their resistance
to the studio's merciless churn.

Plumbing the Political

Connor Liskey

In the introduction to *Purity and Danger*, a seminal treatise on dirt and morality, social anthropologist Mary Douglas makes a striking claim:

In chasing dirt, in papering, decorating, tidying, we are not governed by anxiety to escape disease, but are positively re-ordering our environment, making it conform to an idea. There is nothing fearful or unreasoning in our dirt-avoidance: it is a creative movement, an attempt to relate form to function, to make unity of existence. If this is so with our separating, tidying and purifying, we should interpret primitive purification and prophylaxis in the same light.¹

For Douglas, the stakes of our hygienic practices transcend the body. Ethics—not biology—is the domain of dirt. To be unclean, after all, is to be more than grubby; it is, instead, to be dangerous. Bathrooms are, thus, fraught spaces—even for moderns. Whether dirty or clean, public or private, these are spaces which architecture must approach with caution. In the bathroom, after all, much is at stake. Amid urinals, sinks, stalls and mirrors, social order is consecrated and sometimes transgressed. Perhaps this is why Douglas channels Louis Sullivan's famous dictum, which always contained an element of wish fulfillment. Form and function, cleanliness and godliness—wouldn't that be nice?

¹ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (Routledge, London:1966), 3.

Sensory Rooms as Emotional Infrastructure

Lanna Yang

During our Advanced Studio on baseball stadiums, we discovered a small yet revealing space—the Sensory Room—a private refuge for emotional decompression within the most public architectures. These rooms, now appearing in stadiums, airports, and museums, show that architecture must address not only physical needs but also psychological ones. I began to realize that emotional well-being should be treated as a public right—designed, regulated, and spatially recognized like restrooms. In that case, buildings such as Rudolph Hall could integrate such rooms to pause and reset—spaces of softness, light, and tactility that acknowledge vulnerability as part of collective life rather than something to be hidden. After all, even in the most public architectures, we still need a place to be alone with ourselves—a quiet space to cry.

Where Then Shall We Go?: On Public Bathroom Impermanency and Maintenance

Vivian Wang

Clustered along the edge of the New Haven Green are rows of portable restrooms, installed as the city's temporary solution to a long-standing systemic problem. As structures of basic function, they offer neither comfort nor durability: cramped enclosures of thin plastic panels with a small sink and toilet do little to fend off the cold at night. Even their basic utility is overshadowed by deteriorating conditions, which reinforce a stigma of filth and neglect. Yet these barely tended, almost unusable bathrooms remain one of the few public facilities accessible for the unhoused. Locationally and materially impermanent, these structures are implemented to temporarily manage—rather than resolve—the persistent realities of an unjust system. Such is the central rallying point for activist groups such as U-ACT, which used tents and tarps as makeshift housing and gathering sites, and created cardboard protest signs to assert the presence and demands of the unhoused. Though only a temporary refuge, the encampments on the Green became a cooperative space that addressed the needs of many through the collective labor of students and activists, who together formed mutual aid networks for food, emergency supplies, and community support.

The portable bathrooms on the Green therefore compels architects to consider both the lessons and limits of design. Architecture can dignify the spaces we inhabit and recognize the bodies and needs that shape them. But dignity requires ongoing maintenance after design. A bathroom, then, is fundamentally an issue of housing and class justice, of community reinvestment and structural change. It demands something from all of us, not only as architects but as people accountable to one another.

living with crohn's / and I dread having to use the bathroom in public Catherine Chattergoon

ten years time
living with the disease
maybe it doesn't get easier
I still carry the scars and self-defeat with me
but I know I am more than what I lack
a fragment of the health I used to have
a gut filled with fire
but the inflammation means I am back in my body
and I feel every sensitive corner of myself and the world
every symptom is a song
the pain has no end
but my heart has grown to welcome it in
I am more human than I ever have been and
I am more whole
against all odds, all logic
I hold hope of who I am and who I will become
and for a public bathroom design that feels more in touch with our humanity

public life and private struggles

the frustration and flares

maybe using the bathroom will always be a source of fear

I have learned what it means to sit with stillness inside the stall

and what it means to be vulnerable with the world as witness

it is an urgent and constant journey of finding a public bathroom

seeking a place of comfort

having to hold myself

in the public unknown

but the world may not be ready to hear

the public bathroom does not always feel comfortable to use

and maybe one day the world will welcome change in the places we share, too

I feel anxious and alone

yet in the gaps of the stall I feel open

I hold hope for all of us