

Ask the Artsperts by Kristine Meek and Juliana Meek Harmon-Meek Gallery, Naples, FL

Art in the Bathroom

Dear Artsperts:

What type of art is okay to put in a bathroom? Is there anything I need to worry about regarding humidity and condensation?

Signed,
Bathroom Art

Dear Potty Problem,

Being daughters of art dealers we were surrounded by art in every room of the house, and yes, that included the bathroom. The bathroom is a place to have some fun with your art. It's a place, like your bedroom, where you can hang what you enjoy most and what makes you happiest. Think about all the time you spend in your bathroom getting ready each day; why not surround yourself with some art that brightens your day?

Other ideas for art in your bathroom include showing a little of your cheeky side. For many years my parents had a painting inside of an antique medicine chest in the guest powder room. If anyone dared to look inside the medicine cabinet they would see a litho-crayon drawing of a person holding a sign with an expletive. They had a lot of fun hearing guests laughing in the powder room. Unfortunately their new condo guest bathrooms couldn't accommodate that antique medicine cabinet!

In a house that my sister and I shared for awhile, we had a drawing in our powder room that was done in Paris in 1927 by Adolf Dehn. It looks like an innocent street scene with a nicely dressed lady walking by boutique shops. But in the middle of this classy Parisian street are men's legs visible under a stall that says "Public Toilet".

Regarding humidity and condensation, those are valid concerns and the best way to avoid these issues is to have the works framed well, with archival quality matting that separates the image from the glass and with a well-sealed back. If your works are old or were framed decades ago, you may need to keep an eye on the backing to make sure the seams have not separated in order to keep the work air-tight, keeping moisture out.

Another tip is to put bumper pads in the lower corners of the frame to separate the work from the wall to allow for airflow behind the work if the bathroom has high humidity and poor ventilation. It's also a good idea to run the ventilation fan in the bathroom while showering and to keep the door to the bathroom open after to allow the moisture-rich air to escape. We also recommend you use UV-Plexiglas because unlike glass it is non-porous and will further protect the painting from condensation.

So whether you hang in your bathroom a watercolor of a waterfall, a drawing of a nude, or a lithograph print that makes you smile, if it is protected by UV-Plexiglas and framed carefully, it will be fine. Of course sculpture is also a great addition to any large bathroom.

Sincerely,
The Artsperts



The master bathroom of our parents' house with sculptures by Lorrie Goulet (wood sculpture of woman) and Milton Hebard (bronze sculpture of Italian Vespa (1958) riders and bathtub).



Close up of "Bathtub Box" by Milton Hebard (1917-2015), Bronze, 5 1/4" x 13 1/4", 1963.



In larger homes that have a ladies dressing area off of the master bath, a popular choice is one of Richard Segalman's "studio series" works. His studio is filled with clothing for his models and as such these works tend to resemble closets. To the left is "White Nightgown" by Richard Segalman, oil on canvas, 15" x 13", 2017

below is "Paris" by Adolf Dehn (1895-1968), ink, 12"x 16" 1927. The work depicts a sophisticated Paris street with an occupied public toilet in the center. Art with humor is always a great fit for the bathroom.

