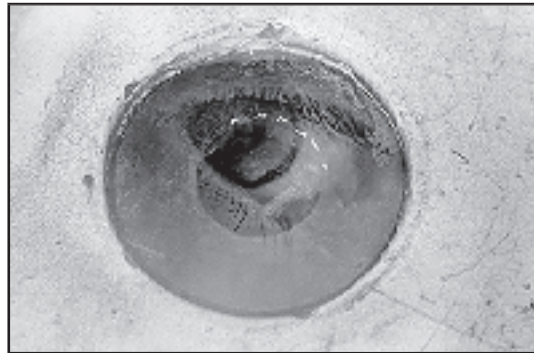


We're all psycho

Psychoanalysis looks into the most famous shower scene in cinematic history.

Lucinda Catchlove

Probably everyone in the Western world, and many beyond, have experienced the peculiarly cinematic memory, or moment, that occurs in the shower. We are standing as the hot, pounding stream of water pours soothingly over our tired body, when suddenly the shower curtain flutters. Our contentment dissipates as a startled fear edgily settles in. We hum nervously, as we turn our back to the wall. We search for a distraction from our unease that makes us feel foolish and fearful. Until finally, we pull the curtain aside to be faced by.... the horribly ludicrous nature of our own fear. But then again, what if we hadn't checked....



Who's watching who? Untitled Detail from *Psychoanalysis*.

Like the archetypal thing that lurks under a child's bed, Alfred Hitchcock's movie *Psycho* triggers a panic that resides within the psyches of the more sensitive among us for

most of our lives. Having seen *Psycho*, one is unsure whether the seed of fear was planted by Hitchcock, or if he just

added the water that was needed for it to flourish.

The shower scene in *Psycho* is probably one of the most famous moments in cinematic history. As such, it has entered the public psyche in such a way that it has become a universal memory, as well as a common fear. *Psychoanalysis*, an installation by Montreal photographer Chuck Samuels and Toronto composer Bill Parsons, does exactly what its title describes. It analyzes the *Psycho* shower scene by recreating its famous elements with other actors, other victims, and voyeurs.

Psychoanalysis consists of a series of black and white photographs that roughly recreate the infamous *Psycho* scene. Walking past the photographs triggers a recording of the screeching, stabbing soundtrack from the film, along with the phrase "You should see it from *this* side." Samuels and Parsons peel back, while simultaneously accumulating, layer upon layer of voyeurism.

The photographer gazes at the killer through the aperture of the camera, while the killer spies on his victim through a little, round hole in the wall. The victim returns our gaze and, as we return the victim's gaze, we

realize we are in the same position in the circle of voyeurism as the killer. Ultimately, we are forced into the uncomfortable position of being voyeurs unsure of our intent, questioning the focus of our gaze.

The element that carries the viewer away from the horror that comes with this realization is the fact that the models are not icons, as the actors in *Psycho* have become. *Psychoanalysis* tackles what the artists consider "one of the most misogynist moments in the history of cinema," by using actor/models of all ages, sexes, and races. By so depicting both victims and voyeurs, the artists challenge the dynamic created by Hitchcock's psychotic transvestite killer and objectified female victim.

The seven frames contain four large-scale photos and three collections of twenty-five small photographs that show the models in various configurations within the *Psycho* scenario. The first large-scale photo depicts the voyeur and the aperture for his spying, the second is of a victim screaming. And the final large-scale photograph in the series depicts a man (the artist?) with his hand clasped over his mouth in shock.

The lambs are far from silent in *Psychoanalysis* — they are us and we are them. The watchers are the watched, and the stills from the movie of our fears resounds within our collective consciousness. ♦

Psychoanalysis
at Vox to Apr. 21