

*A taste
of a
Latina's
new
Life*



“This project consisted of illustrating the portrait that had been produced through Seminar classes. Paired with a student from the class, the objective was to convey not only the personality and character of the person but also the environment he lives into.

As a Fashion Major, I wanted my portrait to be visually inspired by the layout of magazines. It was also important for me not to include Gaby in the portrait, at least not directly. Giving a certain anonymity to the project could allow for an interesting perspective by focusing on the environment rather than the person itself. The materialistic aspect of the work could also be an idea to explore, the focus on objects could as well be very representative when it comes to defining a person.”

“Living by the magnificent and renowned Opera Garnier, she has already managed to fully integrate herself into the busy Parisian lifestyle, which does not happen at all ease. Surprisingly, the rude conduct and stressful behaviour of French people has not yet had an impact on her invigorated personality.

With an important attachment to nature, it was obvious that the garden facing the living room would add a certain charm to her apartment. Favorising calm and quiet places, the area was a perfect fit to what she was looking for in terms of housing, especially in a country she knows nothing about. Now, the interior further corresponds to this ambiance; she has mentioned how the neutral colors of the walls emphasize the peacefulness of the place, “these colors in contrast with the wooden floor calm me down, it greatly reminds me of home which I adore”. The large open space that the single room provides, gives an impression of a relaxing atmosphere throughout the house itself. However, as for being a studio and therefore having a large room which also includes a separate bedroom, the lack of privacy definitely has to be something that seems to bother her and could have a negative impact on the long term, which is totally understandable.

When it comes to the decoration of the house, it resembles the general atmosphere it reflects, neutral and cool toned. The walls are slightly embellished with modern paintings, which relate to the impressive architecture of the buildings in Paris - known for their unique and detailed ornaments enriching the extraordinary historical culture of this country. With no real sense of distinctive smell in the place, a singular odor from the cooking that takes place in the kitchen may be felt at times during the day. The many hotels and restaurants in the area also bring fresh and delicate essences to the cozy comfort of her home.

Despite the lack of privacy mentioned previously, she gives great importance to the distinction between the working and socializing space. The space the main room provided allows her to work on the sofa for extra comfort. As for being a real Latina, a note of reggaeton in the background is indispensable when it comes to implied concentration. Regarding her origins and culture, this type of music allows her to travel back home as well as help her integrate herself into this new environment. Being an open-minded person, the notion of respect towards other is primordial. Her maniac and perfectionist side makes her care about simple but little details that can change many things for the people around her. For instance, the sofa being white, has been covered with a “plaid” not to damage or dirty the provided furniture. Her precaution towards what does not fully belong to her is greatly appreciated by all - the caring aspect of her personality allows people around her to build strong trust relationships, which seems to be is rather pleasing.

Her independence on a daily basis gives her the opportunity to experience life in a different way, in comparison to when she lived in Panama. Due to her easily stressed personality, it is fundamental for her to go out everyday and walk through calm, vivid and nature-heavy places such as the Tuileries gardens. The feeling of loneliness did not seem to bother her, but on the contrary, felt like it was a positive aspect of the life she is living today. The appeasement these places bring allows her to take into consideration the reality of where she is heading to, it gives her the chance to organize her thoughts and ideas in such a way that she has control over all she does. Furthermore, she takes into great consideration the socializing part of her new lifestyle, as she explained, “there has to be time for everything”. She is extremely grateful to have many of her friends and family coming to visit her here at times, as it allows her to reclaim some of the things that count for her on a daily perspective back in her precious home country and culture, in Panama.

Her incorporation of luxury items was a fascinating and striking detail that naturally allowed the full integration of this Latina into what she could eventually claim to be her new home. Each valuable - going from the Louis Vuitton purse on the table in the living room, the Yves Saint Laurent heels near the window or even the Hermes scarf delicately placed on the back of the chair near the mirror - have a great sentimental value and meaning, especially because they all relate, in some way, to her mother. She revealed “my mom and I love to have unique accessories in our wardrobe, however, we always want to same things so we have to try and find a compromise so that both of us can get a piece which the other will also like - as shoe sizes differ for example.”.



“After observing the appartement and area where Gaby lives, I thought that the best way for this portrait to look simplistic, and again have a magazine touch, would be to let her be herself. Letting her do what she wanted and pretending that I was not here would be the most effective technique in order to get effective photographs.

The many photographs taken reflected a girl living her Parisian life in an average size appartement at the very heart of a city which is Paris., which was especially the effect I was looking for through this portrait.

The black and white effect, added through Photoshop later on, gave a sense of glamour to the photographs. It also acted as a distraction from the many objects that could be found around the place. This effect creates a focus point to the actions and expressions of Gaby, especially with the amazing lighting that we were lucky to have on that day.”

“The next step was to now concentrate on the environment instead of Gaby. I asked her to display some of her favourite objects on a flat surface she felt comfortable with. Like the fashionista that she is, she took out some of her best pairs of heels, bags and scarves, from famous Couture Houses of course.

The variety of objects placed on the bed, not only in terms of shape but also when it came to the colors, allowed me to play with Photoshop effects once again. In comparison to the previous step illustrating Gaby as a person, I wanted this part to focus on the objects she gives importance to. Everything but the objects displayed was given a black and white effect, in order for those to stand out and be noticed.



“As previously mentioned, the idea of introducing the concepts of anonymity and materialism into the project was an eventual possibility in order to give a varied perspective to my work. The exploration of anonymity was done through the first part of the photographic process of this portrait.

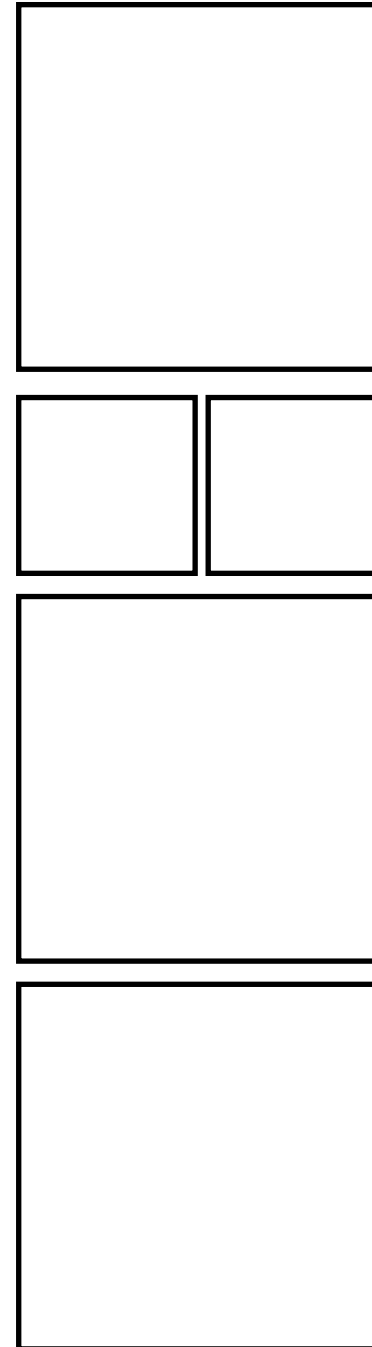
Although Gaby is still present in the some of the photographs, her face is barely recognizable or hides herself from the camera using either objects or her hands. The fact that she remains physically existent in the photographs gives the portrait a certain presence and attitude, which involuntarily related to her personality as described in my written portrait.”

Display of the piece

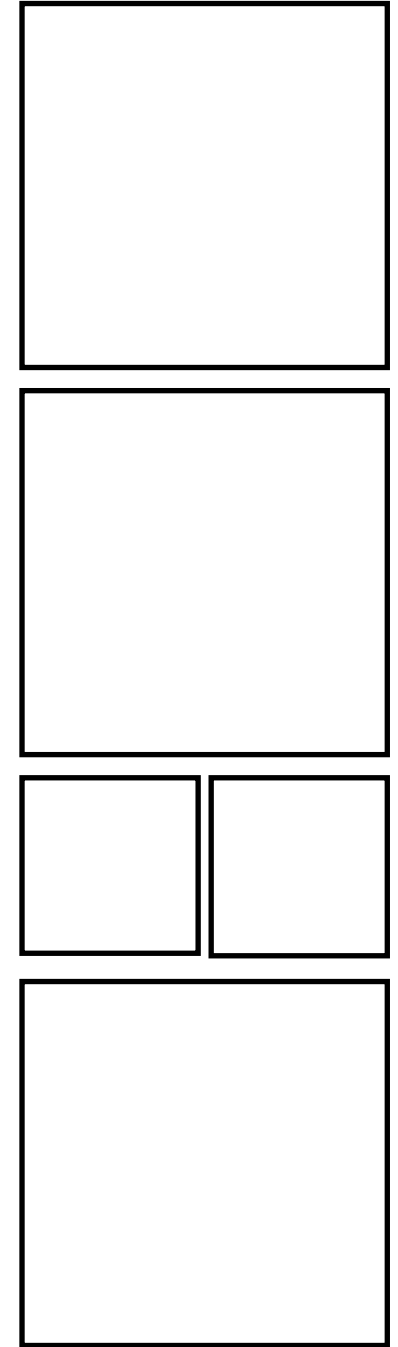
“The final piece produced included photographs from both the section focusing on the portrayal of Gaby and her anonymity and the objects she loves. The mixture between the black and white photographs and those with color gave contrast and dimension to the piece as a whole, which is primarily a formal element of magazine in order to stand out.

When it comes to the disposition of the photographs, a plain background was primordial in order for all the details and colors to be highlighted. I also wanted the photographs to have different sizes, for some details to come out more than the others - in order for the anonymity and characterisation of Gaby to be dominant on the piece.

The final display was chosen between the ones that are presented on the right (Display 1 and 2). They were then printed on a large piece of quality paper, again for all the details to emerge and catch the eye.”



Display 1



Display 2

“**T**his project has allowed me to explore a new manner of how portraiture can be done. Giving my environmental portrait a magazine-like aspect has brought up my analytical skills through paying attention to details, typography and how pages are layed out.

Giving a go at exploring the visual aspects of magazines and articles is a solid base when it comes to designing visual or scriptural pieces of work. I am certain that elements of this project will help me into the future, and allow for the further development of my capacities.”