

Mariah Langlois - Artist Statement

I grew up in Mt. Kisco, New York, and since my father is a Chilean immigrant and most of my extended family lives in Chile, I focused my honors project in Santiago, Chile.

To develop background information on the architecture of housing, I spent the first semester of my honors project researching the geographic, social, and political history of Chile, specifically Santiago and its districts. In addition to documents, I interviewed family and friends from Chile in order to get a sense of the collective memory of the city. Through my research, I discovered historical patterns in society that were manifested through architecture, primarily through housing and gate typologies.

This semester, I have carried my research forward by exploring the design potentials of threshold systems while asking myself, *how does architectural design impact the perceived meaning of enclosures?* While developing the design grammar for threshold systems, I was struck by one feature in particular- permeability. The visual permeability of an enclosure around a home has a direct impact on the perception of the house and the people who dwell there. I wanted to explore this concept by creating enclosures that, rather than conceal, expose. To do so, I designed an enclosure in the form of a glass box. The glass box opposes the impervious and shrouded standard of gate-wall systems in Santiago.

I used my previously defined housing typologies and circumambient glass walls to produce a “cast” for this narrative in the form of two-point perspective exterior views and deliberate interior views. This diptych exposes the intimate relationship between a home and its enclosure and the possible perceptions. Some views are rendered heroic while others are subdued, asking the viewer to question their perception of enclosures. These delicate watercolors battle the impression of hostility typically associated with gates, walls, and urban architecture.