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"A Girl and Her Room"

Rania Matar
Massachusetts College of Art and Design

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"A Girl and Her Room"

Cover Page Footnote

Photos courtesy of the artist and Carroll and Sons Gallery, Boston

“A Girl and her Room”

Rania Matar

As a mother of teenage daughters I watch their passage from girlhood into adulthood, fascinated with the transformation taking place, the adult personality shaping up and a self-consciousness now replacing the carefree world they had known and lived in so far. I started photographing them and their girlfriends, and quickly realized that they were very aware of each other's presence, and that their being in a group affected very much whom they were portraying to the world. From there, emerged the idea of photographing each girl by herself. I originally asked the girls to choose where they wanted to be photographed. After a number of them chose their bedrooms, I realized that was the nexus of a project. The room was a metaphor, an extension of the girl, but also the girl seemed to be part of the room, to fit in, just like everything else in the room.

While I started this work with my daughters and their friends, and with daughters of my friends, I eventually moved away from only photographing girls that I knew well. I enjoyed discovering new girls and building with them a photographer/model relationship with no expectation or holding back from either of us. It allowed me to meet girls from all different backgrounds and different worlds. I always spent time with each girl, so she was comfortable with me and eventually the photography session became a beautiful and intimate collaboration. I was discovering a person on the cusp on becoming an adult, but desperately holding on to the child she barely outgrew, a person on the edge between two worlds, trying to come to terms with this transitional time in her life and adjust to the person she is turning into. Posters of rock stars, political leaders or top models were displayed above a bed covered with stuffed animals; mirrors were an important part of the room, a reflection of the girls' image to the world; personal objects, photos, clothes everywhere, chaotic jumbles of pink and black make-up and just stuff, seemed to give a sense of security and warmth to the room like a womb within the outside world.

I initially started this work focusing on teenage girls in the United States and eventually expanded the project to include girls from the two worlds I am most familiar with, the two worlds I experienced myself as a teen and a young twenty year old: the United States and the Middle East. This is how this project became very personal to me. I became fascinated with the similar issues girls at that age face, regardless of culture, religion and background, as they learn to deal with all the pressures that arise as they become consciously aware of the surrounding world wherever this may be. Being with those young women in the privacy of their world gave me a unique peek into their private lives and their real selves. They sense that I am not judging them and become an active part of the project. The beauty and strength, the aspirations and dreams of these young women from different backgrounds, different worlds are deeply moving. I have tried to be the invisible mirror of those qualities.

"A Girl and her Room"
by Rania Matar, Photographer



Shannon, Boston, 2010
Image 1 of 24

"A Girl and her Room"
by Rania Matar, Photographer



Elise, Boston, 2010
Image 2 of 24

"A Girl and her Room"
by Rania Matar, Photographer



Anna, Winchester MA, 2009
Image 3 of 24

"A Girl and her Room"
by Rania Matar, Photographer



Christella, Rebieh Lebanon, 2010
Image 4 of 24

"A Girl and her Room"
by Rania Matar, Photographer



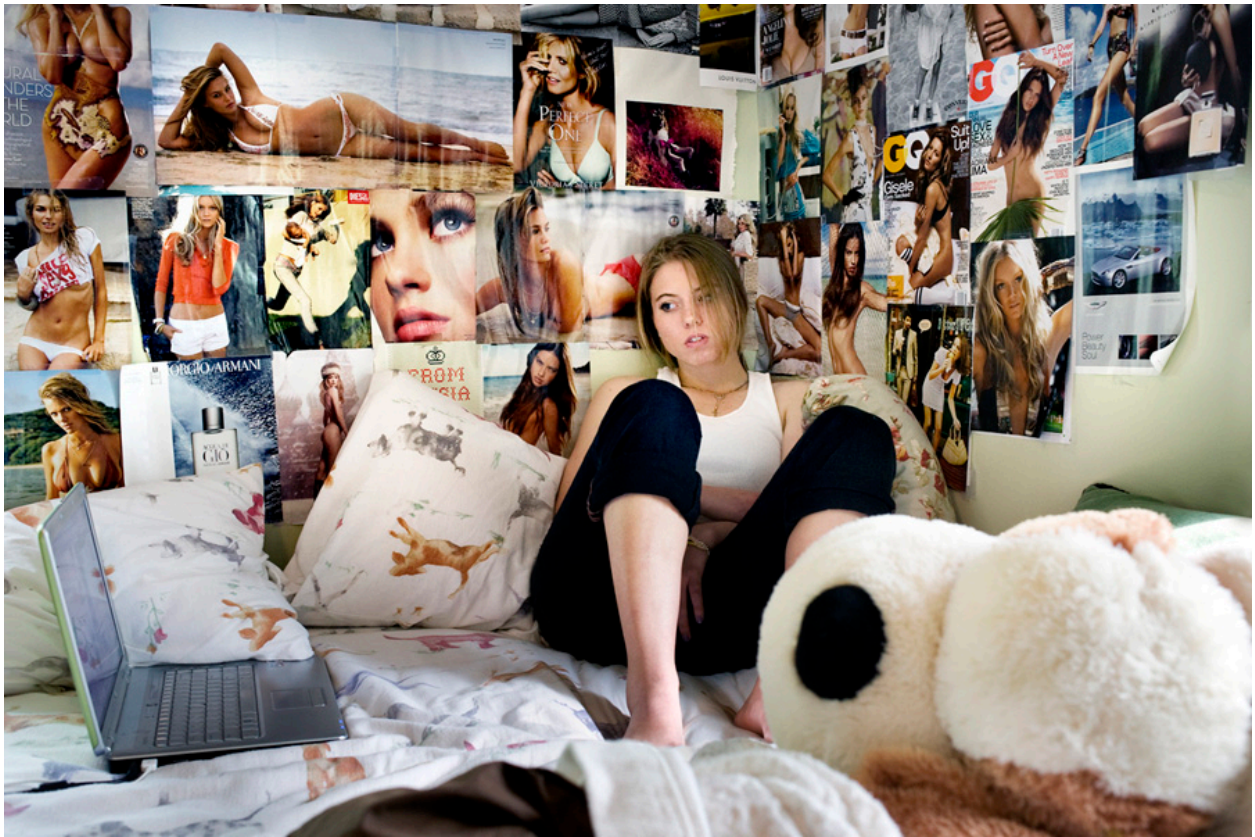
Kristal, Boston, 2009
Image 5 of 24

"A Girl and her Room"
by Rania Matar, Photographer



Georgina, Roxbury MA, 2010
Image 6 of 24

"A Girl and her Room"
by Rania Matar, Photographer



Siena, Brookline MA, 2009

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by Rania Matar, Photographer



Hailey, Exeter NH, 2010
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"A Girl and her Room"
by Rania Matar, Photographer



Becca, Brookline MA, 2009
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Danielle, Boston, 2010
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by Rania Matar, Photographer



Madison Chloe, Cornwall NY, 2010
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by Rania Matar, Photographer



Raissa, Medford MA, 2009

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"A Girl and her Room"
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Rocio, Dorchester MA, 2010
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by Rania Matar, Photographer



Amber, Dorchester MA, 2010
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"A Girl and her Room"
by Rania Matar, Photographer



Jess, Boston, 2010
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"A Girl and her Room"
by Rania Matar, Photographer



Becca G., Winchester MA, 2010
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"A Girl and her Room"
by Rania Matar, Photographer



Devin, Winchester MA, 2009
Image 18 of 24

"A Girl and her Room"
by Rania Matar, Photographer



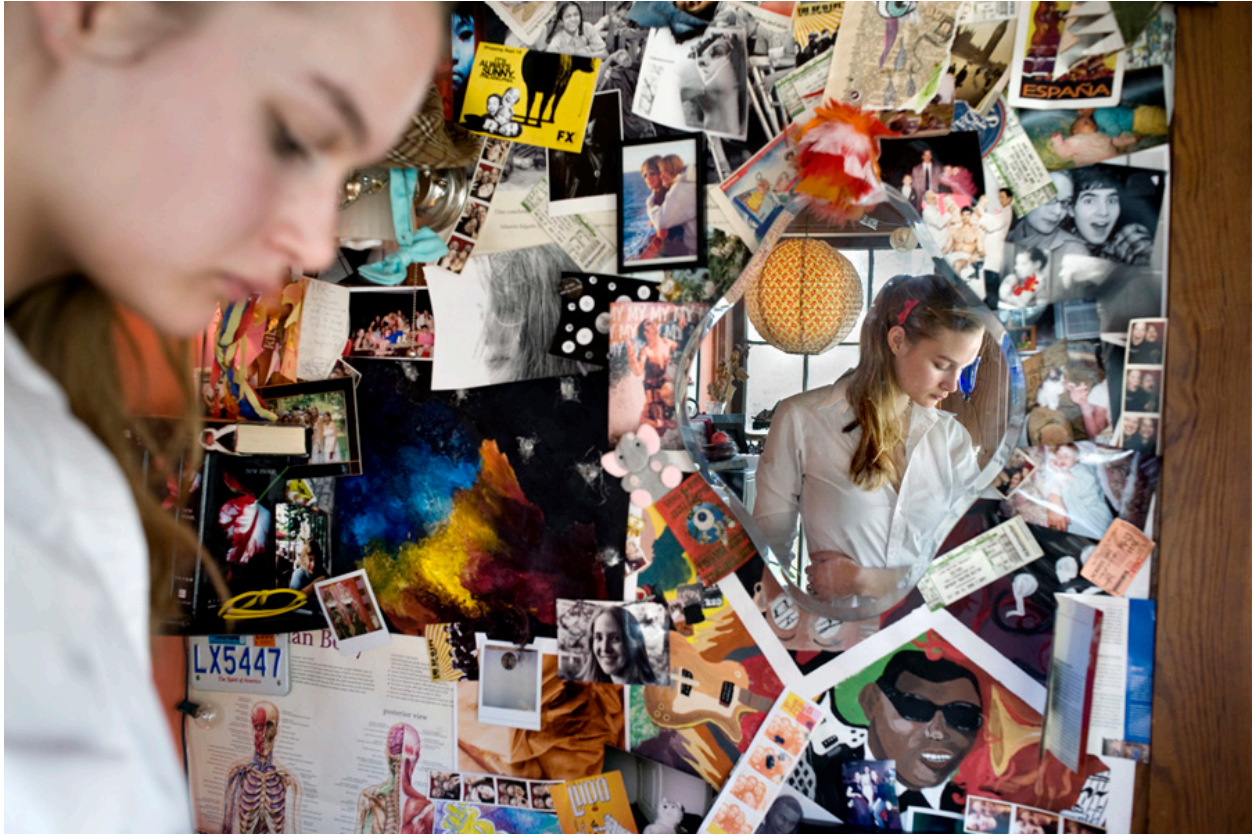
Stephanie, Beirut Lebanon, 2010
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"A Girl and her Room"
by Rania Matar, Photographer



Nohad, Bourj El Barajneh Refugee Camp, Beirut, 2010
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"A Girl and her Room"
by Rania Matar, Photographer



Brianna, Winchester MA, 2009
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"A Girl and her Room"
by Rania Matar, Photographer



Lilly, Brookline MA, 2009
Image 22 of 24

"A Girl and her Room"
by Rania Matar, Photographer



Reem, Doha Heights, Lebanon, 2010
Image 23 of 24

"A Girl and her Room"
by Rania Matar, Photographer



Emma, Brookline MA, 2009
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