

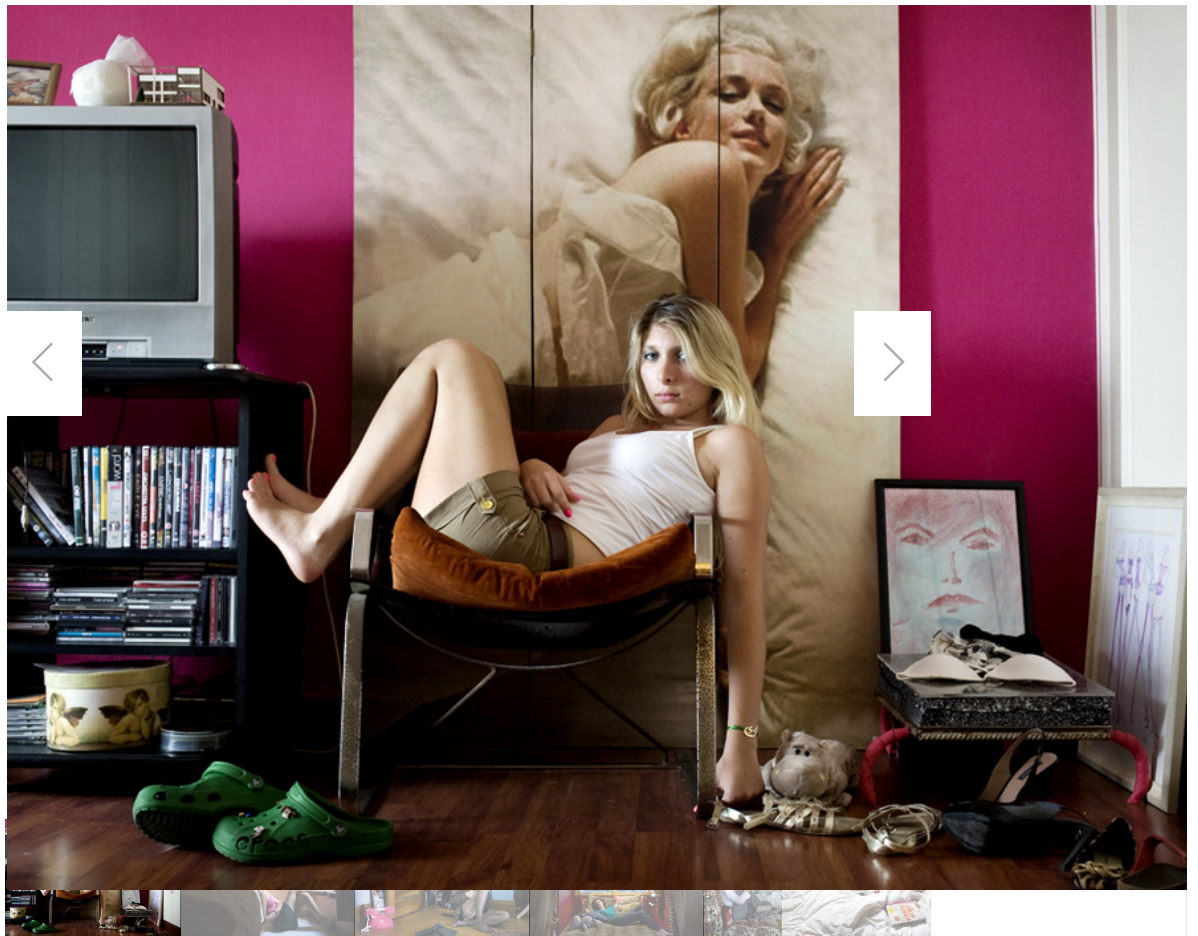


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## A Girl and Her Room

SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS BY RANIA MATAR



*Please hover over image for title. All images courtesy of Rania Matar/INSTITUTE.*

In *A Girl and Her Room*, photographer Rania Matar presents young women in the United States and the Middle East within the context of their most personal spaces, their bedrooms. Like much of her work, the series is inspired by her own children—at the time she was making these images, her eldest daughter was a teenager. It also connects to her work as an educator. She currently teaches at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, and in 2009 and 2010 she lead photography workshops for teenage girls in Lebanon refugee camps. Some of the participants in those workshops appear in *A Girl and Her Room*.

“It was powerful that they experienced both sides of the camera,” Matar says. “It is always great for a photographer to experience being on the other side of the camera and to get a sense of how vulnerable it feels.” Holding the camera, being the image-maker, can be a role of power, but Matar engages the women in her photographs in a collaborative process. They choose how to arrange and present themselves, some gazing directly at the viewer, so that even as the subject of a photograph, each girl is also the artist of her own image.

Negotiating that image, experimenting with how to present oneself in the world, is something young women of every culture experience. “I want to emphasize the universality, what is the same between the girls in the US and the Middle East,” Matar says. “Each of these girls is thinking about her future, whatever and wherever this may be, about what is expected of her as woman. Maybe in some instances the surroundings are different but at the core, we are all the same.”