



Juliette 11, Beirut 2012 © Rania Matar

EXHIBITION

Boston: Rania Matar, Girls In Between



"L'Enfant-Femme" (the Child-Woman) are portraits of young teens and pre-teens, and how they interact with the camera. The only instruction I give the girls is not to smile and I allow them to fall into their poses as they wish. My aim is to capture alternatively the angst, the self-confidence or lack thereof, the body language, the sense of self and the developing sense of sexuality and womanhood girls that age experience.

For some, even though they are not smiling, one can see their sense of selfhood and the almost sensual pleasure in being photographed and in engaging the camera, while others are almost defiant in the way only teens know how to, and others still are more separate from the camera, show more angst and are more self-conscious. Those are all emotions girls of that age alternatively experience as they start being aware of who they are, of their changing bodies, their beauty, their womanhood, but also of the world around them and the standards of beauty and attitudes they think they need to emulate. They are, however, also still young girls who fluctuate between being the child they still are and the young woman they are beginning to turn into. Are they (and are we meant to see them as) little girls, teenagers, or young women?

I am photographing girls in the US where I live and in Lebanon where I am originally from. The two locations are not meant to be a comparison, on the contrary the lines blur quickly. Regardless of place, background and religion, girls that age everywhere seem united by similar feelings, aspirations and attitudes.