

Adolescence

We are pathetic. We are stars.

We are either sad and sickly or we are glamorous and new.

We walk in and the choices race through my head.

Sad and sickly? Or glamorous and new?

Sad/sickly or glamorous/new? Sad/sickly?

Glamorous/new?

We are unusual and tragic and alive.

We walk into the throng of parents and children.

We are disadvantaged but young and virile. We walk the halls
and the playground, and we are taller, we radiate.

We are orphans. As orphans, we are celebrities.

We are foreign exchange people,

from a place where there are still orphans.

Russia? Romania? Somewhere raw and exotic.

We are the bright new stars born of a screaming black hole,
the nascent suns burst from the darkness,

from the grasping void of space that folds and swallows

- a darkness that would devour anyone not as strong as we.

We are oddities, sideshows, talk show subjects.

We capture everyone's imagination.

Dave Eggers

A heartbreaking work of staggering genius.

Simon & Schuster, 2000

Adolescence

During adolescence the child is detached from his own familiar context and goes in search of his own identity and independence. A strong primordial energy begins to move inside. The change is impetuous and invests the physical appearance, the way of dressing, the music to listen to, the friends to choose, the experiences to live, obsessions, passions and liturgies to follow and how to deal with strong emotions in a personal way.

The teenager, until he is an adult, will move in low defined social boundaries where exploration and discovery are still possible, roles are not well defined and the sense of freedom is dangerously palpable. The tension between action, destruction, hope and vision generates an extreme desire for emancipation, irreverence, energy and madness. A strange emotional fluctuation through a mysterious sexual identity, undefined and continuously changing, which manifests itself in an unpredictable, elusive, evasive way.

Adolescence, subject of nostalgia, denigration or envy, is confined in an atypical social limbo, whose protagonists are not fully considered as subjects of having rights. Teenagers and young people are carefully studied and pampered by the consumer society as preferential models and future, omnivorous consumers.

An ephemeral and fleeting state of being looks for another expressive language and desecrating new codes, self-destructive, anxious and vital. A mixture of impulsive and restless resources. This highlights the transient state of their existence and forms the basis of their impending future. Adolescents appear and disappear like shining planets, mysterious and moody.

Landscape Stories

LANDSCAPE STORIES
Adolescence

Rania Matar

A Girl and Her Room

As a mother of teenage daughters I watch their passage from girlhood into adulthood, fascinated with the transformation taking place, the adult personality taking shape and a gradual self-consciousness replacing the carefree world they had known and lived in so far. I started photographing them and their girlfriends, and quickly realized how aware they were of each other's presence, and how much the group affected the identity they were portraying to the world. From this recognition the idea of photographing each girl alone, by herself, emerged. In the beginning I asked the girls to choose where they wanted to be photographed. A number of them chose their bedrooms, and it was then 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 material and emotional space. 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 young woman: 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 conscious and 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 inner selves. They sensed that I was not judging them and became an active part of the project. Their frankness and generosity in sharing access was a privilege that they have extended to me but also to all the viewers of this work. The beauty and strength, the aspirations and dreams of these young women are deeply moving and I have tried to be the invisible mirror of those qualities here. My deepest hope is for each of them to achieve the fullness of her promise.



© courtesy of Rania Matar from the project "A girl and her room"



© courtesy of Rania Matar from the project "A girl and her room"

Landscape Stories | Adolescence Photographers

Andreas Weinand (Germany) – www.andreasweinand.de
Mark Steinmetz (U.S.A.) – www.marksteinmetz.net
Frank Rothe (Germany) – www.frankrothe.com
Vikky Wilkes (U.S.A.) – www.vikkywilkes.com
Jocelyn Lee (U.S.A.) – www.jocelynlee.com
Zoltán Jókay (Germany) – www.zoltanjokay.de/portfolio
Robin Bowman (U.S.A.) – www.theamericanteenager.com
Lydia Panas (U.S.A.) – www.lydiapanas.com
Laura Pannack (U.K.) – www.laurapannack.com
Francesco Neri (Italy) – <http://www.documentaryplatform.com/wp/?portfolio=nove>
Peter Yankowsky (U.S.A.) – www.peteryankowsky.com
Michelle Sank (South Africa) – www.michellesank.com
Deanna Templeton (U.S.A.) – deannatempleton.blogspot.it
Jona Frank (U.S.A.) – www.jonafrank.com
Martine Fougeron (France) – www.martinefougeron.com
Greg Miller (U.S.A.) – www.gregmiller.com
Amy Touchette (U.S.A.) – www.amytouchette.com
Paul Kranzler (Austria) – www.paulkranzler.com
Nigel Shafran (U.K.) – www.nigelshafran.com
Daniel Gentelev (Russia) – www.cargocollective.com/danielgentelev
Glen Erler (U.S.A.) – www.glenerler.com
Heidi de Gier (Netherlands) – www.heididegier.nl
Raimond Wouda (Netherlands) – www.raimondwouda.com
Alessandra Dragoni (Italy) – www.dragoni.eu
Rania Matar (Lebanon) – www.raniamatar.com
Ellie Brown (U.S.A.) – www.elliebrown.com
Nathalie Mohadjer (Germany) – www.nathaliemohadjer.com
Andrew Miksys (U.S.A.) – www.andrewmiksys.com

TEENS For Ever

With the fall of social utopia and the avant-garde art movement, the result of the 1980's post-modern movement and the triumph of capitalist simulation (Jean Baudrillard), a new image of youth is born. Counterculture was disappearing, new music trends like Grunge were appearing, iconic film making and new art galleries were gaining international recognition, and there was no longer an "underground movement," as understood in the political sense of the 1970's. The new movement began with commercial applications: David Sims's photographs of Kate Moss for Calvin Klein ads; Madonna's book, 'Sex' shot by Steven Meisel; and work by new photographers in the early 1990's, such as Terry Richardson, Wolfgang Tillmans and Mario Sorrenti. New aesthetic models were developing, affirming a new image of youth. Gus Van Sant's films, such as "Elephant," "My Own Private Idaho" and "Last Days" remain of great importance. The world of young people and music is described in an all-devouring way. With 'Paranoid Park', released in 2005, the director explores the world of skateboarders and youth violence in American society. The film depicts the inner journey, the stream of consciousness of a sixteen-year old in the grip of guilt for the manslaughter of a railway porter. A film from 2003 reveals the dark side of adolescence, without filters or hypocrisy. "Thirteen" is a realistic American drama, directed and written by Catherine Hardwicke and starring Holly Hunter and Evan Rachel Wood. The autobiographical film, inspired by the life of two teens, ages 12 and 13, focuses on such controversial subjects as drug and alcohol abuse and the sexual behaviour of minors, including self-mutilation. The same icons idolized in the world of fashion and entertainment are consecrated in the art world. Marc Quinn, member of the group Young British Artists, produces 'Sphinx,' a sculpture depicting the forever teenager Kate Moss. The sculpture shows Moss in a yoga position with her ankles and arms wrapped behind her ears. The project culminates with an exhibit at the Mary Boone Gallery in New York and the acquisition of the work as part of the permanent collection at Folketeateret in Oslo.

Inevitable imagery of teens includes: Richard Kern's alternative Lolitas; Lise Sarfati's ethereal adolescents; an unedited Dash Snow on the piece 'Purple' created by Terry Richardson; Snow's 'Nephew of Andy Warhol'; and Sarah Lucas's work 'Bitch' (composed of a table, t-shirt, melons and vacuum-packed smoked fish) in which she merges tabloid culture with the economy of the ready-made. Like photographers Nan Goldin, Larry Clark and Ryan McGinley, Dash Snow depicts scenes of sex, drug use and violence in his photographs, documenting the decadent life of a group of young artists in New York.

Camilla Boemio

About Landscape Stories

Created in 2010, Landscape Stories is an independent and free online magazine dedicated to the presentation of stories and photographic work.

Our aim is to connect more deeply a growing number of readers with fine art contemporary photography.

Our goal is to bring together a collection of photographers from around the globe and to present their work to a wider audience.

We encourage photographers to offer their vision of the world relating to a certain topic and their different interpretation of this artistic discipline as much as possible different in terms of subjects, concepts, styles and techniques.

Enjoy, listen and share your dreams...

Landscape Stories is founded and directed by
Gianpaolo Arena, Andrea Gaio and Claudio Bettio

www.landscapistories.net