

Images of girls on the road to womanhood

By Joanne Ciccarello

Photographer Rania Matar's third publication, *L'Enfant-Femme*, celebrates girlhood in transition. She is a gifted portraitist; her oeuvre is girls and women. Having moved to the United States from Lebanon to flee civil war in 1984, Matar, a trained architect, began photographing her own children. In return trips home, she documented the diversity of Middle Eastern women's lives. Today she works in both countries to reveal the essential female self from childhood to womanhood irrespective of cultural differences.

The images are thoughtful, compelling, and honest. Matar captures individuality and universality in every frame, allowing each girl to engage the camera as she sees fit. Her only request: that they do not smile. The result is a complex range of emotions. The journey toward womanhood, with its expectations, demands, and hopes, is difficult to express. Yet Matar captures the essence of the struggle. Each girl is a chrysalis – in the process of becoming.

Alia stands in front of a metal door and concrete wall painted as red as her tank top and plaid pants. Leaning with her right hip jutting out, she tilts her head to the side. Her dark eyes are as large

as those of the Tweety Bird character emblazoned on her shirt. Her expression is soft, slightly quizzical. Background fan-shaped décor encircles her black hair like a flamenco dancer's *peineta*. With her dangling earrings, she exudes a free spirit, ready to take wing. Yet on another page, Grace bites her nails and crosses her legs, slightly slouching forward. Sarah stands at the top of a staircase, looking self-possessed in black flats and a summer smock.

Matar's award-winning photography is straightforward. Her attention to detail is subtle and so graceful that leafing through the pages is like observing a ballet. The light is soft, the colors vivid, the compositions formal yet intricate.

Matar solidified her international reputation with her second book, "A Girl and Her Room," a remarkable study of girls' self-expression. In "L'Enfant-Femme," she de-emphasizes the background. We face these girls directly. That is Matar's genius – the ability to express femaleness without restriction or expectation.

■ Joanne Ciccarello is a former Monitor photo editor and an adjunct professor of photojournalism at Emerson College and Northeastern University.



ALIA, AGE 9, APPEARS IN A PORTRAIT FROM THE BOOK 'L'ENFANT-FEMME,' WITH PHOTOGRAPHS BY RANIA MATAR.

THESE PHOTOS CAPTURE GIRLS ACROSS CULTURES AND IN VARIOUS STAGES.

IMAGES FROM NOTED PHOTOGRAPHERS CELEBRATE THE ART OF CYCLING.



A MEMBER OF THE BELGIAN TEAM EATS LUNCH WITH HIS TEAMMATES DURING THE 1939 TOUR DE FRANCE.

ROBERT CAPA

Cycling as a window into Europe's soul

By Alfredo Sosa

For Europeans, cycling is more than a sport; it is human drama. It is heroes and villains fighting for glory in the public eye.

Bicycle racing has long been a huge part of French culture. In fact, the premier race in the world, the Tour de France, was created by a French newspaper mogul to bump up circulation in 1903. So, it is only fitting that Magnum, one of the greatest photojournalism agencies of its time, has paid tribute to this sport. Guy

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Eggleston: His photos retain their mystery

THESE IMAGES TEASE WITH HALF-TOLD STORIES.

By Ann Hermes

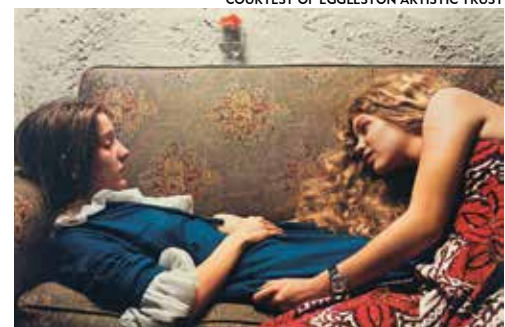
The surreal images of American photographer William Eggleston are likely to leave viewers unsatisfied, and that is a high compliment. Working mostly in the South in the 1960s and '70s, Eggleston captures images that often seem like movie stills from a film you've never seen. His compositions of mundane objects and faces will leave you trying to piece together a story that will never be fully clear. For the information they include and the lack thereof, the images in *William Eggleston Portraits* beg to be scrutinized and revisited.

Even the title and premise of the book is a little unsatisfying. Viewers are primed to look at a collection of portraits that reveal something of the subject or photographer. But traditional poses and compositions are thrown out; subjects are caught in the middle of an incomplete action against a backdrop that leaves few clues. Though it's difficult to

gain any real insights into either the subject or photographer, these "portraits" are intimate and unguarded.

In one of the more memorable images in the book, two young women in colorful dresses recline with a sense of familiarity. A bright, fresh flower set in a glass juxtaposes the drab floral pattern on the couch. The young woman on the right leans toward the one on the left, to console? To whisper a secret? There's no conclusion to be reached, but Eggleston's photographs keep you looking and guessing.

■ Ann Hermes is a Monitor staff photographer.



KAREN CHATHAM (L.) WITH THE ARTIST'S COUSIN, LESA ALDRIDGE, IN MEMPHIS, TENN.

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Andrews, editor of *Magnum Cycling*, mined the agency's archives to find images linked to cycling.

The most satisfying thing for me about this book is to see the work of two of Magnum's founding members – and giants of the social documentary milieu – Robert Capa and Henri Cartier-Bresson. In the case of Capa, considered the greatest conflict photographer of his generation, his images of the 1939 Tour de France predate the creation of Magnum in 1947. Fresh from his stint covering the Spanish Civil War, Capa captures the excitement at the edges of the race itself, the energy of the competition.

Cartier-Bresson tackles the world of cycling at the six-day races at the Vélodrome d'Hiver in Paris in 1957. True to his photographic nature,

Cartier-Bresson barely focuses on the race. Instead, he seems fascinated with the social dynamics of the attendees.

The next generation of Magnum members such as Guy Le Querrec, John Vink, and Harry Gruyaert focus their lenses more on the racers themselves. These images are about grit and effort.

This book – which is as much about cycling as it is about photography – is perfect for someone like me, a cycling fan and a photography buff. "Magnum Cycling" opens a great window into the 20th-century history of the sport, covering not only the Tour de France, but also velodromes, cyclocross, and the infamous Lance Armstrong.

■ Alfredo Sosa is the Monitor's photo director.

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND EDWYNN HOUK GALLERY, NEW YORK AND ZURICH



A LIFE-SIZE PHOTO OF AN ELEPHANT IS DISPLAYED IN AN INDUSTRIAL WASTELAND. NICK BRANDT/WASTELAND WITH ELEPHANT, 2015/ARCHIVAL PIGMENT PRINT/© NICK BRANDT.

A wildlife advocate asks: Where do the cheetahs play?

A PHOTOGRAPHER'S IMAGES REMIND US OF THE DANGERS FACING WILDLIFE.

By Melanie Stetson Freeman

The best wildlife photographers capture images of exotic creatures that go beyond documentation to become art. Nick Brandt is one such photographer. His books are filled with stunning images of cheetahs, lions, elephants – the large beasts of East Africa – in all their glory, printed in powerful high-contrast black and white. They are portraits, devoid of place. The reader can admire the gorilla, safe in the confines of its photo frame. But Brandt's point is that they are not safe.

A talented and passionate advocate for wildlife and wild places, Brandt has spent his career educating people about the destruction of animal habitats and the loss of these irreplaceable beings facing extinction. His latest book, *Inherit the Dust*, makes his case in a brilliant way. Brandt made life-size prints of his animals and placed them in trash dumps and cities, places where the natural world has been altered by development and destruction. The king of beasts, his mane blowing in the breeze, looks out over a rock quarry, his natural habitat a wasteland. Two rhinos face a railroad track. A giraffe stands with its back to a factory.

The juxtapositions are startling. We are face to face with the destruction of something precious. We are impelled to realize that where we sit now, animals used to live. Brandt reminds us that it's not too late to stop the environmental degradation of what remains of the places these gazelles, big cats, and primates call home. We can change course, saving what remains so African children aren't someday sitting where the leopard and zebra once roamed.

■ Melanie Stetson Freeman is a Monitor staff photographer.