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A girl and her room: From a pregnant teen in Massachusetts to a Beirut refugee, one photographer's intimate portraits shed light on a private world

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An award-winning photographer has revealed an insight into the lives of teenage girls from two disparate worlds, the U.S. and Lebanon, through intimate portraits taken in their bedrooms.

The subjects of Rania Matar's new book, *A Girl and Her Room*, vary from a pregnant 17-year-old in Massachusetts to a girl who calls a Beirut refugee camp home.

From chaotic clutter and paint-chipped walls to poster-covered doors, the images show the similar issues, values and desires that young women face regardless of culture, religion, and background.



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A Girl and Her Room: 17-year-old Rocío, from Dorchester, Massachusetts is pregnant with a baby boy and is photographed for the book posing in front of her adolescent paraphernalia



© Rania Matar/Umbrage Editions

Opposite worlds: Hiba, pictured in the Beirut refugee camp, quit school and is engaged to be married, saying she would rather be a wife than work

Many of the photos from Lebanon were taken in refugee camps, and though there are obvious differences, there are also striking similarities.

Siena, 16, from Brookline, Massachusetts, is photographed sitting on her bed surrounded by a wall covered in images of famous swimsuit and lingerie models - such as Bar Refaeli in a skimpy bikini, Heidi Klum in a Victoria's Secret ad and Gisele Bundchen posing in men's briefs.

While the provocative images clash with her animal-printed bed sheets and the stuffed toy on her bed, she said: 'The models on my wall are the people I strive to look like.'



Girl interrupted: Siena, 16, from Brookline, Massachusetts, is photographed surrounded by a wall of famous swimsuit and lingerie models, who are women she strives to look like



Pop idols: A girl named Amal, at Shatila Palestinian refugee camp in Beirut wears a hijab and a Hannah Montana T-shirt, and wishes she could look like the child star

The girls in Lebanon may not have any overtly sexualised images stuck to their walls, however one image shows a girl named Amal, at Shatila Palestinian refugee camp in Beirut.

She wears a hijab as well as a Hannah Montana T-shirt, and stands in front of her bedroom door which is covered in Selena Gomez stickers.

Amal said: 'I LOVE Hanna Montana and Selena Gomez. ... I love that they are pretty and successful and that they dress nice. I wish I looked like them and I hope I can be famous some day.'



Teenage profiles: Karla from Cambridge, Massachusetts is photographed surrounded by her clothes and trinkets



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Clean minimalism: Reem from Doha, Lebanon is pictured lying on her clutter-free bed

This juxtaposition obscures the lines between Massachusetts and the Middle East, and Ms Matar believes the girls themselves are similar in both countries.

'People tend to look at the differences, but for me it was really about the similarities,' she said. 'This is Lebanon, and nobody would guess that.'

'Where a girl in the U.S. dyes her hair pink, a girl in Lebanon wears a veil - but [the expression] comes from the same place,' she told [The Daily Beast](#).

Another girl, Althea, from Boston is pictured wearing a feminine white lace dress in her brightly coloured green room, which is decorated with world maps and famous landscape prints.



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Lebanese contrast: Christilla from Rabieh in Lebanon sits in her pink room in front of a Marilyn Monroe poster, which could easily be mistaken for an American bedroom



© Rania Matar/Umbrage Editions

It's a man's world: Althea from Boston, who is pictured wearing a feminine white lace dress, said her inspirations are great men like Frank Lloyd Wright, Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi

She said: 'My inspirations are Frank Lloyd Wright, Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi. My gender won't hold me back. Great women have changed the world, but these men represent all I want to be.'

In stark contrast, however, Hiba seen in her sparse room, which has floral curtains, within the Beirut refugee camp.

She said: 'I stopped going to school to learn hairdressing. I don't want to work. I am engaged to get married. I said yes and I will learn to love him. He is nice to me. I will get veiled when I get married.'

Mara, photographed in her graffitied room in Boston wearing a Hello Kitty T-shirt said: 'It is hard to be a teenager, it is, but it's also hard to be a child and it's hard to be an adult and it's hard to be elderly, but we all make it through.'



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Lebanon lives: Lubna from Beirut is photographed in her room which shows traditional Arab interiors sharing space with Western influences



© Rania Matar/Umbrage Editions

Clothes-clutter: Emma from Brookline, Massachusetts, lies in a pile of her scattered wardrobe



Style secrets: Anna from Winchester, Massachusetts features in the book, which shows how a girl's identity can spill into material worlds

Ms Matar, who was born and raised in Lebanon, and moved to the U.S. in 1983, explained that her images celebrate girls no matter where they live.

By photographing girls from both America and Lebanon, Ms Matar illustrates questions about girls growing up and becoming women, and how a person's inherent identity can spill seamlessly into material worlds.

'This is their private space where they can be themselves,' she said.

All images courtesy of *A Girl and Her Room*, by Rania Matar/Umbrage Editions © Rania Matar

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[The Daily Beast: A Girl and Her Room Exhibit: Photos by Rania Matar](#)