

## A Girl and Her Room

Photography by Rania Matar

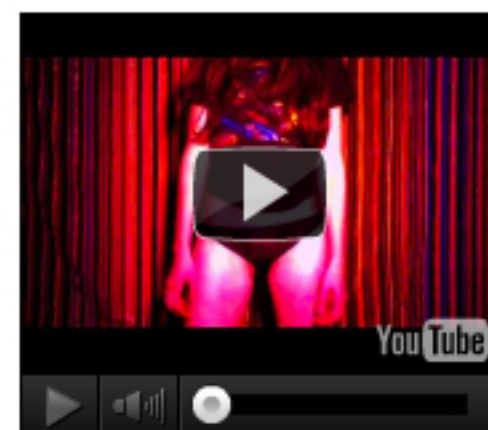
Words by Ryan Michael Commins



To a teenage girl no space is more sacred than her bedroom. The room becomes an extension of who she is at that time. A fully functional visualization of her hopes, fears and desires fun-tacked to the walls. What struck me most looking at *A Girl and Her Room* is just how much these rooms tell you about the girl occupying it. The details allowing for an impromptu short story to take place, shaped by your own memories. The cluttered walls of the busy-minded, inside-joke scrawled and adorned in collage stand in contrast to the thoughtful blankness of a wall painted the perfect color behind an alphabetized stack of books. There are no photographs in which the girl doesn't seem to perfectly fit in the room. They must work together because these are two symbiotic beings living in coexistence. As the girl evolves, so goes the room. *A Girl and Her Room* is a candid vivisection of that process in book form.



### On YouTube



### In This Issue

[WC LOVES](#)[Features](#)[Arts](#)[WC Gallery](#)[Fashion](#)[Community](#)[Home](#)[Music](#)

### READ THE BLOG

[PRINT ISSUE OUT NOW](#)

### Support The Cause!

Support Working Class.

[Donate](#)



It all started for photographer Rania Matar with a pretty common desire. She wanted to photograph her daughters and their friends, documenting the transition from childhood into the turbulence of those teen years. At first photographing them in groups, she immediately ran into a problem. They were all so aware of each other that their behavior wasn't genuine and it was impossible to capture the natural moments she was after. After deciding to shoot them individually, she asked the girls where they would want to be photographed and a few of them mentioned their bedrooms. This is when it clicked for Matar. She had found a way to capture the elusive girl in her most natural of environments, the location suddenly just as much a part of the portraits as the freckles on her face. In pursuing this newfound inspiration, she branched out further from her own daughters and their friends. She went on to document complete strangers in the two places where she went through her own tumultuous metamorphosis, the Middle East and the United States.



The contrast between the two places gives a the viewer a deliberate sense of economic inequality and a broad cultural divide. Underneath many of the photos there are quotes from the girls themselves. These sentences are mostly homegrown slices of inspiration or a declaration of what is most important to them. Most of them are very dramatic — these are teenage girls. The quotes are an interesting addition to what is essentially a photo study on the most mysterious of all creatures. These girls are all just learning who they are. We are given a glimpse into their glass bubble and are offered an opportunity to decide who we think they are. It's interesting to see pieces of who you believe they will ultimately be, shine through, while other aspects of the image are no more part of them as a person than their baby teeth were. You get a smash-and-grab sense of their whole lives. Their past, present and future. Their parents and friends, their idols and loves. It's easy to forget that as trivial as a teenagers trials may seem from one who has already passed through the fire, when you are the one in it, these things are all deadly serious.

[Click here to get more information on the book.](#)



Post Published: 01 April 2012

Author: Marcel Dagenais

Found in section: Features

**Tags:** a girl and her room, Book, Rania Matar, Ryan Michael Commins, Umbrage Editions

**Previous Topic:** Girl Talk with  
Britt Lower

**Next Topic:** RECRUIT