

RANIA MATAR (LEBANESE/AMERICAN; BORN 1964)
***L'ENFANT FEMME (A PORTFOLIO OF 13 PHOTOGRAPHS)*, 2015**
 C-PRINTS, TUFTS UNIVERSITY PERMANENT COLLECTION: PURCHASE



A PORTFOLIO OF 13 PHOTOGRAPHS BY BROOKLINE-BASED ARTIST RANIA MATAR FROM HER *L'ENFANT-FEMME* PROJECT AND BOOK (FORTHCOMING IN SPRING 2016 FROM DAMIANI EDITORE) WERE ACCESSIONED TO THE PERMANENT ART COLLECTION IN 2015. MATAR, WHO IS ORIGINALLY FROM BEIRUT, LEBANON, VISITS THE MIDDLE EAST REGULARLY. NINE OF THE PORTRAITS IN THE PORTFOLIO WERE MADE THERE BETWEEN 2011 AND 2013; THE REST ARE OF SUBJECTS LIVING IN BROOKLINE AND WATERTOWN. FOR THIS PROJECT, MATAR PHOTOGRAPHED GIRLS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 8 AND 13, ON THE CUSP OF BECOMING YOUNG WOMEN.

Matar says "my aim is to focus on our common humanity. [This project] is about being a girl, growing up, coming to terms with womanhood, femininity, and one's own identity in the fullest sense of the term—all universal milestones in a young girl's life, no matter where she is from."

Noted youth author Lois Lowry, who contributed an essay to Matar's book, writes that "I think these girls have been schooled, as I was, by an age-old culture that teaches them to practice desirability... Whatever the decade, or century, it is the same longing to be alluring in some not-fully-understood way... Freud pointed it out: that this is a time for forgetting traumatic past stuff, in order to move forward. What does the child who has grown up in a refugee camp have to put behind her? Is it the same, ever—can it be—as the things that may inhabit the soul of the girl with the canopied bed? We can't know. Those are their secrets."

Selections from Rania Matar's *Forgotten People* series were featured at Tufts in the fall of 2008 in the exhibition "Contrapuntal Lines: Rania Matar and Buthina Abu Milhem."

RANIA MATAR, CLARA, 8, BEIRUT, LEBANON, 2012, IMAGE COURTESY AND COPYRIGHT OF THE ARTIST