

Rania Matar (born 1964) uses portraiture to examine the nature of female identity in girlhood, adolescence, and middle age in the United States and Lebanon. Her photographs address her subjects' identities, but also reflect her own experiences as an American woman of Palestinian origin, born and raised in Lebanon.

Schooled in art and architecture but not photography, Matar began photographing her children when she became a parent. The tragedy of 9/11 led her to focus on using the medium to tell others' stories. "It seemed that the world had become divided into Them/Us," she recalled. "I wanted to tell a different story of the Middle East." Additional motivation came in 2002 from her first visit to a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, where she felt a strong and immediate connection with the women, especially the mothers.

There are four series on view here, created between 2009 and 2014: *L'Esprit-femme*, *Becoming, A Girl and Her Room*, and *Unspoken Conversations*. Each contains examples from both cultures, but the location of each photograph is not always evident. That fact reflects the influence of Western culture on the Middle East, but also the artist's desire to focus on "the commonalities that make us human, to emphasize underlying similarities rather than apparent differences across cultures." Matar says one of her main goals is to "ultimately find beauty in our shared humanity."

In Her Image: Photographs by Rania Matar was organized by the Akron Center Museum of Contemporary Art. The Cleveland Museum of Art is supported in part by Cuyahoga County residents through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture. The Ohio Arts Council helped fund this exhibition with state tax dollars to support economic growth, educational excellence, and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans.



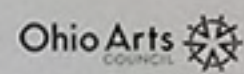
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In Her Image: Photographs by Rania Matar was organized by the Amon Carter Museum of American Art.

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Don't Forget the Kids in the
City
by the Bay
2011
Mixed Media
100 x 100 cm







Two women on stairs
2011
100% cotton
100% cotton



Two women in hijabs
2011
100% cotton
100% cotton



Two women in dresses
2011
100% cotton
100% cotton



One woman in a white hijab
2011
100% cotton
100% cotton







1. "The Room" (2010)



2. "The Room" (2010)



3. "The Room" (2010)



4. "The Room" (2010)









Small text label below the first photograph.



Small text label below the second photograph.



Small text label below the third photograph.



Small text label below the fourth photograph.





Three Women
2018
Mixed Media
60 x 80 cm
Edition 1/10



Two Women
2018
Mixed Media
60 x 80 cm
Edition 1/10



Two Women
2018
Mixed Media
60 x 80 cm
Edition 1/10









IN HER IMAGE: PHOTOGRAPHS BY RANIA MATAR

