

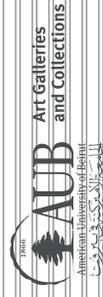
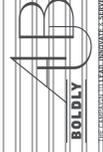
**AUB-Byblos Bank Art Gallery,
Ada Dodge Hall**

GALLERY HOURS

**Tuesday – Saturday (12:00 – 6:00 pm)
Beirut, Lebanon
Tel: +(961) 1 350 000 Ext: 4345
www.aub.edu.lb/art_galleries**

WALAWALAWA

The photographs of Rania Matar



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Director AUB Art Galleries and Collections

Rico Franses

AN IMAGE AND HER WOMAN



Siena, Brookline, Massachusetts, 2009 (A Girl and Her Room).

As a Lebanese/Palestinian-born American woman and mother, my cross-cultural experiences inform my art. I have dedicated my work to exploring issues of personal and collective identity through photographs of female adolescence and womanhood – both in the United States where I live and the Middle East where I am from – in an effort to focus on notions of identity and individuality, within the context of the underlying universality of these experiences.

I am interested in what it means to be a girl and a woman today, in a world that poses endless questions on girls and women of all backgrounds. My work is personal and autobiographical, always inspired by my daughters as

I watch them grow up and transform from little girls to beautiful young women. An Image and Her Woman comprises work from many projects that have been following girls' transformations through the years, creating a narrative that traces the contours of a woman's identity from pre-puberty to middle age. Although most of the images picture different individuals, together they show a shared humanity in their collective display of temporal progression through a woman's life, addressing themes of family, cultural identity, and growing up.

This exhibition includes work from five series. "L'Enfant-Femme" focuses on the prepubescent girl and her relationship to the camera. "Becoming" portrays some of the same girls photographed a few years apart. "A Girl and Her Room" depicts teen-aged girls in their bedrooms surrounded by the material artifacts that form a critical part of their emergent identities as women. Finally, "SHE" – a work in progress – is a series of photographs made in collaboration with young women in the larger environment they find themselves in after they leave home. This includes the more global and complicated backdrop that now constitutes their lives in transition.



Stephanie, Beirut, Lebanon, 2010 (A Girl and Her Room).

There is also one photograph from Unspoken Conversations, a project about mothers and daughters.

My work addresses the states of 'Becoming' – puberty, growing up, growing old, vulnerability, strength, imperfection, beauty, femininity, texture – all in the context of the relationships to our specific physical environment and universal humanity. The process is about collaboration and empowerment. I strive to reveal the raw beauty of the young women I photograph, their identity, their individuality, and their physicality. I attempt to see beyond the 'selfie' attitude they might want to portray or the Instagram feed they have curated. I am photographing them the way I, a woman and a mother, see them, beautiful just as they are, with no 'filter'.

By making intimate portraits of women in the United States and in the Middle East – and while still looking to uncover the individuality of each woman who poses before me, I focus on our essence, our physicality and the commonalities that make us human – ultimately highlighting how female subjectivity develops in parallel forms across cultural lines.

– Rania Matar