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

AND HER

WOMAN

The photographs of Rania Matar

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Acknowledgements
AUB Art Galleries and Collections is grateful to the artist for her help in mounting this exhibition. All pictures are courtesy of the artist and Galerie Tanit, Beirut.

Director AUB Art Galleries and Collections
Rico Franses
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.

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