

Press release
For immediate release

the mosaic rooms



Rania Matar

A Girl and her Room

1 July – 23 July 2011

The Mosaic Rooms, 226 Cromwell Road, London, SW5 0SW

Arab-American photographer Rania Matar brings her award-winning series of images, *A Girl and her Room*, to the UK for the first time in an exhibition opening at the Mosaic Rooms on 1 July 2011. The exhibition runs as part of the Shubbak festival, a London-wide celebration of contemporary Arab culture taking place throughout the month of July.

A Girl and her Room features stunningly intimate photographic portraits of teenage girls in their most personal space, their bedroom. It grew out of Matar's fascination, as the mother of a teenage girl, with the way her own daughter was transforming before her eyes. She began by photographing her daughter and her friends, but soon realised they were very conscious of the way they behaved and were perceived when together. From there emerged the idea of photographing each girl alone in her personal space, where she would give a more honest representation of her personality.

Matar took as her subjects teenage girls from the two worlds she experienced herself as a teen and a young twenty year old, making this project very personal: the United States and the Middle East. She became fascinated with how girls face similar issues at that age, regardless of culture, religion and background, as they learn to deal with the pressures that arise as they become consciously aware of the surrounding world, wherever this may be.

Matar comments: "In my images I hope to portray the chasm between childhood and adulthood and the young women straddling it, sometimes as rebels, sometimes as young ladies aware of their newfound sexuality and very

often still as children. Being with those young women in the privacy of their world gave me a unique peek into their private lives and their real selves. They sense that I am not judging them, that I am not there to make them someone they are not, and the photography session ends up being a beautiful collaboration. The girls completely understand the project and I follow their leads."

Born and raised in Lebanon, Rania Matar moved to America in 1984 where she studied art and architecture at Cornell University. She later studied photography at the New England School of Photography and at the Maine Photographic Workshops in Mexico with Magnum photographer, Constantine Manos. In addition to working as a full-time photographer and teacher of documentary photography at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, she also teaches photography in the summers to teenage girls in Lebanon's refugee camps. *A Girl and her Room* is Matar's second show at The Mosaic Rooms.

Rania Matar will also give a talk at the Mosaic Rooms on Saturday 2 July 2011 at 12pm.

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Notes to editors

- Images are available via Colman Getty
- Rania Matar is available for interview via Colman Getty. She will be in London from 29 June - 2 July 2011
- Entry to the exhibition is free
- The Mosaic Rooms are open from 11am – 6pm Monday to Friday and from 11am to 4pm on Saturday
- The Mosaic Rooms, a leading independent arts space in west London, deliver a high quality, contemporary, progressive cultural programme from the Middle East and internationally. They are managed by the A.M. Qattan Foundation, a UK charity dedicated to the support of culture and education in Palestine and the Arab world. The Foundation's London office, headed by one of its trustees, Omar Al-Qattan, is responsible for the Mosaic Rooms' programme. The Rooms are part of the Culture and Arts Programme of the A.M. Qattan Foundation
- The Mosaic Rooms is situated on the corner of the Cromwell Road and Earl's Court Road in Kensington, London, a short walk from Earl's Court Underground Station and Exhibition Centre
- For further information about The Mosaic Rooms and the A.M. Qattan Foundation visit www.mosaicrooms.org

- For more information on the Shubbak Festival, visit <http://www.london.gov.uk/shubbak>