

Being Inbetween

Carolyn Mendelsohn



Touring Information

Being Inbetween

Made over a period of 6 years, *Being Inbetween* is a series of powerful photographic portraits of girls aged between ten and twelve, exploring the complex transition between childhood and young adulthood. With many portraits never before exhibited, this is the most extensive exhibition of the series to date.

Driven by personal experience, award-winning photographer Carolyn Mendelsohn has worked collaboratively with 90 girls who are in the midst of navigating this complex, and potentially defining, period in their lives. Too often the target of relentless marketing campaigns and victims of social media pressures, girls at this age are often placed into an amorphous group described as 'tweens'. Through her photography and accompanying interviews, Mendelsohn allows each girl an opportunity to reclaim their identity, encouraging a dialogue on ambitions and aspirations, hopes and fears.

The girls are both creative participants and collaborators. Invited by Mendelsohn to select their own clothing and stance for the portrait, each girl's features and gestures are recorded against the same grey hand-painted backdrop. In these three-quarter length portraits, each girl looks directly into the camera. This careful and measured photographic approach bestows the girls with authority, granting them a certain power held within their gaze.

Featuring girls from a spectrum of cultural and ethnic backgrounds; disabled girls as well as able-bodied; and girls from a range of socio-economic circumstances, *Being Inbetween* offers an inclusive insight into this generation of girls. A personal narrative accompanies each photograph, with Mendelsohn asking the same set of questions to each of her collaborators: What is your full name? How

old are you?, followed by more in-depth and emotionally charged questions: What do you love? What is your ambition? What do you really dislike? What are your hopes for the future?

The responses are wide ranging, personal and refreshingly direct. Wearing a t-shirt emblazoned with the slogan INFLUENCER, 11 year old Ruby proclaims that her ambition is to 'help others be more self confident about themselves', while 11 year old Becca affirms that one day she will ride a rollercoaster at an amusement park in her wheelchair.

When asking about their fears and concerns, Mendelsohn noted a change in responses, reflecting wider issues in society and anchoring the project to a specific moment in time. Responses recorded in 2014 encompassed worries about hunger, homelessness, loss, and war. Throughout 2019, the girls more frequently referenced the world and environment as a source of anxiety. In her final portrait of the series taken in February 2020, Mendelsohn met Lottie, who shared her growing fears over, the then widely underestimated, Coronavirus.

Taken as a whole, the portraits offer a highly personal insight into the dreams, desires, hopes and fears of this group of unique individuals, with each girl the author of her own look and artist of her own image.

"These are the inbetween girls; amazing, fearless, fearful, brave, funny, and smart individuals, getting ready to take on the world."

Carolyn Mendelsohn



Betsy, aged 11

"I love spending time with my family because they are really funny. My advice to girls my age going to secondary school is to be yourself, and don't let other people take over your life, because it can make your life miserable. Stick up for yourself and stick up for people who others are being mean to."



Amelia, aged 12

"My family is really important to me; they help me through problems and decisions. I fear losing people that are really close to me. When I am older I want to be a doctor - a paediatrician, and my ambition is to carry on dancing even when I am an adult."



Mabel, aged 10

"I fear that one day we will all be the same, that people will get an idea of how we should live and how we should act, and how we should look, and everyone will be afraid to be different."

Amaira, aged 12

"When I am an adult I would like to succeed more in my drawing, but as a career I would want to be a lawyer. I really want to change the world, so every one gets a chance, everyone is equal and no-one is left out and judged by their skin colour or race.

My ambition is to gain equality, give everyone a chance to be who they are and to show themselves.

I have had this dream since I was two or three, it is still in my head: I have always wanted to become a fairy, I have always wanted wings. To just fly and teleport or just become invisible and hide and be a secret. I wanted to have just beautiful wings."





Becca, aged 11

"When I am an adult, I want to be a racing car driver, a scientist and a singer. Also I want to get a job where I can look after and raise big cats, like lions and tigers. My dream is to walk like my sister so I can run with her and go where she can go. If I could walk, that is what I want, to go where my sister goes, so I can go in the hard bits and follow her. My wish is to walk."



Alice, aged 10

"I used to aspire to be a teacher, but now I want to be a vet. I dislike it when people are mean to other people, because it is really hard to go through."



Lottie, aged 11

"I enjoy reading mysteries and things like that, and I like writing about mythical things. I love animals and nature I like big cats and snakes but also bugs and insects. I would like to be a zookeeper or a vet or a writer when I am older.

I hope the world doesn't die, that we stop destroying the world. We have got to stop cutting down trees as well to make homes and stay warm. I am scared that the sea level is rising and I also worry about the Coronavirus."

Kiara, aged 10

"I love my family, my friends, my education and my art.

I like learning things even if I have already learnt them. All my education is leading up to the job I want to do when I am older. When I am an adult I want to be a surgeon, I just want to help people get better.

I hate discrimination and stereotypes, racism for definite, and anything that is bad in the world to be honest. I hate the fact that our planet is being ruined.

I see a future for the planet, and I don't, because some people in this day and age are ruining the planet, by littering, pollution, stuff like that. So I see a future if we stop doing these things, but nobody will listen to one small voice so we need lots of people to stop it."





Alice, aged 11

"I have Craniosynostosis. When I was a baby the bones in my head had already fused together. When I was 6 months I had to have an operation when the doctors had to pull apart my bones.

My ambition is to become a really famous author and do shows, and help other children to feel that they are not alone."



Heavens, aged 10

"I love being adventurous, creative and drawing. I hate being bossed around. I would really love to be a doctor and I wish nobody died in the world."



Gowri, aged 12

"I really love my dancing; it's one of my passions. It makes me feel elated, all happy and bouncy. It makes me feel like I can do anything. When I am an adult I want to be a cardiac surgeon because the heart really interests me."

Stephanie, aged 11

"I love to dance and I love acting because you get to express how you feel; I feel free. I am not afraid to say what I have to say, I am not a shy person. My dream is to have a big house, a loving family and loads of pets – mostly dogs.

I wish that there was no evil in the world and we were all nice to everyone, and everyone had a voice in the world, and no one would be put down or anything."



Exhibition Content

Artworks

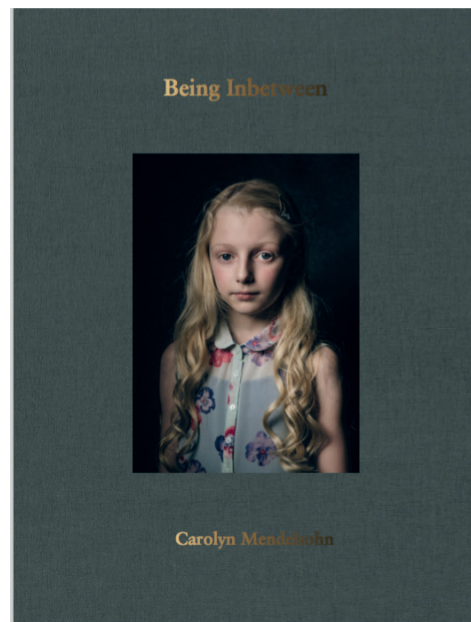
- 48 colour photographs drymounted on dibond 36 x 23"
- Slideshow film featuring all 90 portraits from the series, to be shown alongside printed artwork.
- An accompanying soundtrack composed by Graham Coatman featuring the voices of the girls who have been interviewed for the project.

Interpretation

- Artwork for captions for each image
- Artwork for introduction panel and information sheet (venue to produce in their preferred format to suit their space)
- Artwork for exhibition guide featuring extended captions
- Artist information questionnaire, and links to further resources
- A selection of contextual and recommended books
- Gallery trail for 5-12 year-olds (venue to adapt to their own context)
- Two films, *Meet the Artist*, featuring Carolyn Mendelsohn, and *Girl Power*, featuring interviews with three girls from the series. Venue to supply own AV equipment.

Education

- Advice from Impressions' Education team for school engagement workshops, including visual literacy and creative writing sessions.
- Carolyn Mendelsohn is an excellent speaker and can deliver artist talks and professional development workshops (by direct negotiation with venue)



Publication

A full colour hardback publication is available to stock in your bookshop. RRP £28.

The book is published by Bluecoat Press, supported by Impressions Gallery, and will be available from December 2020.

The publication features a foreword by Zelda Cheatle and essay by Anne McNeill.

Marketing and Press

- Text for venue to produce press release
- Six hi-res press images

Space required

Approximately 60 - 80 linear metres. We can help advise on adapting the show to suit your space.

What the hire fee covers

This exhibition will be launched at Impressions Gallery in January 2021 and will be available to hire from Spring 2021.

For further details on content, get in touch via touring@impressions-gallery.com

Your touring fee of £3,000+VAT includes:

- Loan of exhibition and all artworks for up to 12 weeks at your venue, plus additional time for installation and take-down. Please note that the images featured in this proposal are indicative, and may vary from final content.
- Artist fee.
- Digital copies of exhibition interpretation to use and reproduce, including information sheets, exhibition guides, and family activities.
- Media pack with high resolution rights-cleared digital images and press release for your own press campaign.
- Support from the Curator and Impressions' team, with advice on curatorial and technical matters to help you plan the exhibition.
- Support from Impressions' Learning Manager to advise on creative workshop ideas.

Touring venues will cover the following:

- Two-way transport of the exhibition and insurance in transit and in situ.
- Exhibition installation.
- Travel and accommodation (if required) for the Curator to attend layout day.
- Fabrication of interpretation, such as wall vinyls and info sheets.
- AV equipment to present video work.
- Exhibition launch (if applicable) and costs for the Curator and artist to attend from within the UK.
- Your education and learning programme, and any engagement activities involving the artist (if applicable), artist fee to be negotiated directly.
- Press and marketing for your own venue.

About Carolyn Mendelsohn

Carolyn Mendelsohn is a photographer, and filmmaker who has lived and worked across the UK. Her passion is making personal work, based on the lives of individuals and their stories.

Her work has been exhibited internationally, with solo exhibitions across the UK and in Barcelona, as well as being part of group exhibitions including *(re)Framing Our Identity* as part of Bolonga Art City, and the national tour of the Royal Photographic Society's International Print Exhibition in 2017 and 2018.

Mendelsohn's work has been published by *The Guardian*, *The Sunday Times*, *La Monde*, and *BJP*, and has been described as "A legacy project that is a representative portrait of our time" (RPS Journal) and "An antidote to the body image pressure girls tend to pick up on at this age." (Huffington Post).

Mendelsohn was awarded the BJP Portrait of Britain in 2017 and 2019 as well as winning Gold in The Royal Photographic Society International Print exhibition 2017/18. In 2018 she was shortlisted for the International Women Photographers Award and nominated for the RPS 100 Heroines. In 2020, Mendelsohn was named winner of the Portrait Series category for the 15th Julia Margaret Cameron Awards and was a winner of the Single Image Award for Open Wall Arles, by British Journal of Photography and Galerie Huit.

About Anne McNeill, Curator

Anne McNeill is an experienced and well respected curator, with over 25 years experience. Exhibitions include *Facing the Front*, unseen wartime fashion photographs by Lee Miller (1998), *Seven Years* (2004) seminal exhibition by Trish Morrissey *Cockroach Diaries & other stories* (2010), first retrospective of Anna Fox's work, shortlisted for the Deutsche Börse Prize, *Lost Languages & other voices*, major survey of Joy Gregory a key artist emerging from the Black British photography movement on the 1980s. *Beyond the Border* (2014) group exhibition of one of the most significant shows of new Scottish photography in a generation.

Anne is regularly invited to judge international awards, such as the W. Eugene Smith Memorial Grant, New York, 2015, and the Krasna Krausz Book Awards 2019. She is the editor of numerous publications on photography and currently writing a response to Autograph ABP's commission of Joy Gregory's work exploring self-care during Covid.

"Being Inbetween is a significant and inclusive portrait of our times. If these ninety young girls are 'permitted' to be who they are and what they want to be, then society and humanity will be their safe in their hands."

Anne McNeill, Curator

About Impressions Gallery

Impressions Gallery is a charity that helps people understand the world through photography.

Based in Bradford, Impressions Gallery works internationally to bring the best of contemporary photography to wide and culturally diverse audiences. Since opening in 1972, as one of the first photography galleries in Europe, we have been at the forefront of photographic practice, making us an influential UK venue for photography.

We support ground-breaking, new and mid-career artists to resource and develop artistic talent through world class, confident exhibitions that explore timely and relevant issues in society, identity, and politics.

Our national and international touring exhibitions programme means that more people have the opportunity to experience great photography, wherever they may be.

We have worked with a variety of partners from museums and arts centres to heritage sites and international festivals. With curatorial and technical expertise, marketing and interpretation templates, and photographers' fees inclusive in exhibition hires, we aim to make the touring process as easy as possible.

Impressions Gallery is funded by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation and supported by Bradford Metropolitan District Council.

Contact

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