



20 SEP 2013

TEEN TRIBE

A photo exhibition by Martine Fougeron, now on view at the Hermès gallery in New York

Above: "Nicolas Napping" by Martine Fougeron, 2006

Last night's trip to the fourth floor gallery at Hermès's New York flagship store was to welcome Martine Fougeron's photo exhibition, "Teen Tribe." Curated by Cory Jacobs (of the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès), the project is like "a diary of her life," tracking her French American sons' journey through adolescence. The eight-part series includes 23 photographs of her sons and their friends (the tribe) dating back to 2005, most of which were intentionally shot in intimate settings like her home in New York City, or during vacations to the South of France.

Aside from adolescence, there's a second journey to note—it's that of the artist herself as she discovers the challenges that come along with mothering her two teenage sons. "When I started the project I didn't realize how much my eldest son, Nicolas, was very hateful towards me," Fougeron explains. "When you see that through a photograph, you see something much more focused. I realized that there was hate in his eyes, whereas my younger son Adrien—he is just one year younger—wanted to pose and be a beautiful model, and be with his mother. Photographing them helped me to intensely and subjectively get into their minds. Objectivity—that's the aesthetic judgement. It really helped me to understand them better and we are much closer than if I hadn't done that project."

There isn't one single photograph that won't cause you to reminisce about your own coming of age; each image is riddled with angst, young love, or the desire to become one's own. There's "Nicolas Napping" shown above, "Nicolas Resisting" in his Lycée Français school uniform, and one of our favorites: "Adrien's Catcher," where he sits reading *The Catcher in the Rye* on the subway.

"I was brought up with three sisters and I was fascinated by watching my sons growing up," Fougeron recalls. "It's a very different process for a young girl. With my son Nicolas, his coming of age was very abrupt. He grew ten inches and his voice changed. My youngest son stayed a young boy until he was sixteen. I was fascinated by that. I got hooked and continued taking photos of them." Her next exhibition will be a window into Adrien and Nicolas's college years and beyond.

In the meantime, "Martine Fougeron: Teen Tribe" is on exhibition from September 20th through November 8th at Hermès on 691 Madison Avenue, New York. Later this year, look for the published version of "Teen Tribe, A World With Two Sons" that will include the photographs currently on exhibition at Hermès.