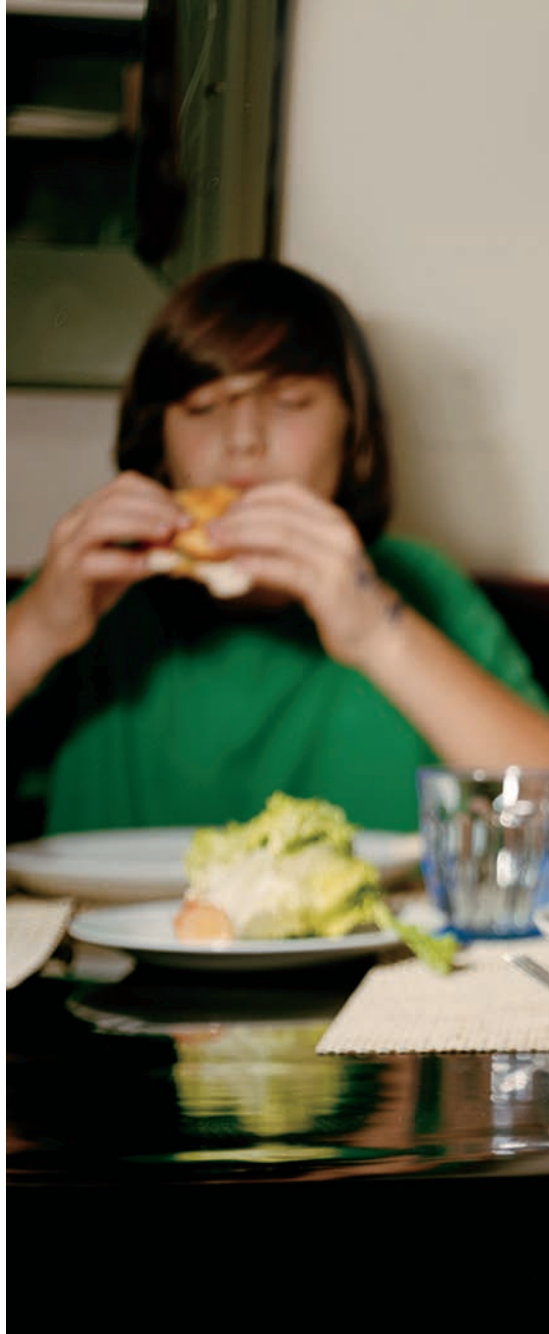


## Martine Fougeron

By Elisabeth Biondi

Little did Martine Fougeron know, when she began photographing her sons, Nicolas and Adrien, 15 years ago, that it would become a long-term project. When she began taking pictures of her sons – now 28 and 27 years old – they were teenagers. Fougeron, who was born in Paris, had left her job as creative director of International Flavors and Fragrances (IFF) in New York and enrolled at the International Center of Photography (ICP) in 2005. For her thesis project, she submitted a series of intimate portraits of her then-teenaged boys. But though she graduated from ICP, her commitment to photographing her sons continued.

Fougeron structured her long-term project like chapters in a book – the boys' early teenage years, tribal life with their friends, early adolescence at home in New York, summers in France, and finally college and work. In these chapters, she explores their daily lives and their personalities as individuals and as social beings. She achieves a fine balance between intuition and objectivity, intimate formality and relaxed spontaneity, capturing her sons' body language and the nuances of changing relationships, with each other and





Martine Fougeron, *Adrien and Nicolas Dining*, 2005. All images courtesy the artist



Martine Fougeron, *Nicolas and Hannah*, 2017

with friends and girlfriends. In one affectionate photograph, for example, Adrien is stretched out languorously on the grass, eyes closed; his girlfriend sits next to him, her bare legs across his torso. It is a beautifully observed, sensuous picture. Collectively, her photographs become a visual narrative based on her sons' evolving lives.

Her color portraits often contain contrasting qualities. They are carefully lit and composed but they are also lively and of the moment. Fougeron says that she thinks of

color and shape first, lighting the images cinematically. She cites Vermeer's paintings of domestic life as well as Larry Sultan's photographs of his parents as inspirations, and she is fond of quoting Matisse: "But isn't love at the origin of all creation?" Her love for her sons is the underlying thread connecting all of these fine psychological portraits. Her book *Nicolas & Adrien* has just been published by Steidl, but she already has her sights set on the next chapter – their lives with their own families and their own adult responsibilities. Stay tuned.



Martine Fougeron, *Adrien in Mamy Jackie's Dining Room*, 2011



*Martine Fougerson, Adrien and Nicolas in their Basement Studio at Home, 2015*





Martine Fougerson, *Adrien on Blue Couch*, 2006