

THE PICTURE | THE STORY

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My extended family has a “house” we’ve visited every summer since childhood that used to be an old-one room country schoolhouse. It sits alone on a scenic hilltop in southwest Missouri. When we were kids, we spent much of our summer break here. We’d run around outside most of the time we were here, but in the afternoons, when it’d get too hot to play outside, we’d go inside the schoolhouse and lounge around on the old musty furniture, under the peeling lead paint windows, and do nothing, in a “summer vacation” kind of way. Years later, when I saw the Spanish painting, *The Artist’s Children*, by Mariano Fortuny, I immediately thought about my summers as a child and lying around in the old schoolhouse with the green walls, and decided to do a portrait of my nieces in that same green room. I wanted to document one of those “down time” moments between the chaos that makes summer feel like summer.