

PRESS RELEASE

Emma Talbot
The Age/L'Età

23 October 2022 – 19 February 2023 | Extended until 9 July 2023



Emma Talbot (b. 1969), winner of the eighth edition of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women, after a premiere at Whitechapel Gallery in London (30 June – 4 September 2022) will be presenting a new body of work, adapted to the different space, at Collezione Maramotti, which is acquiring the works on view.

The Age/L'Età comprises animation, free-hanging painted silk panels, three-dimensional work and drawings. The new work explores themes of representation and ageing, power and governance, and attitudes towards nature. For the Max Mara Art Prize for Women, Talbot imagines a future environment where humankind encounters the disastrous consequences of late capitalism and must look towards more ancient and holistic ways of crafting and belonging – that rethink ancient power structures and celebrate the natural world – in order to survive.

The exhibition is the result of a bespoke six-month Italian residency, organised by Collezione Maramotti. Following receipt of the prestigious biannual prize in 2020, Talbot travelled through Reggio Emilia, Catania and Rome, researching textile craftsmanship, permaculture, classical mythology and exploring the myriad historic sites and institutions that inform the new body of work. *The Age/L'Età* takes Gustav Klimt's painting *Three Ages of Woman* (1905), which Talbot had the opportunity to see first-hand during her residency, as its starting point. Klimt depicts an elderly woman holding her head in an expression of apparent

shame. In her new work, Talbot reimagines this elderly figure as a woman with agency.

Talbot taught herself animation during lockdown when she was unable to go to her studio and a twelve-chapter animation, in which Talbot's protagonist must overcome a series of trials similar to The Twelve Labours of Hercules, is central to the exhibition. During her residency in Rome, Talbot investigated their depictions on ancient Etruscan ceramics, powerful conveyors of classical mythology, with Valentino Nizzo, Director of the Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia. Rather than overcoming the trials through destruction, theft, deceit and murder (as did Hercules), the protagonist employs productive, care-centred and practical solutions, inspired by the twelve principles of permaculture, a practice which offers an ethical, sustainable way of living with the land. Through her modern-day trials, the protagonist has the potential to reconstruct contemporary society, countering prevalent negative attitudes to ageing, power and the climate crisis. Also on display is a selection of Talbot's original drawings for the animations.

The Age/L'Età also features two large-scale hanging silk works, hand-painted to depict near-future volatile landscapes of ruins and volcanic terrain which the central figure explores and inhabits. As with much of her work, Talbot has inscribed the silk with text addressing the themes of the show and invites viewers to question their own perceptions head-on. The subject matter of the silk works is informed by Talbot's trips across Sicily, where she explored the volcanic landscape, ancient ruins, and studied the principles of permaculture at the Casa di Paglia Felcerossa. On the occasion of a collateral visit to Como, where she learnt about practices of silk recycling with Mantero Seta, the first Italian company to produce 100% recycled silk. Talbot's incorporation of recycled fabrics and use of sustainable resources within her practice imbues the work with questions about life cycles, renewal and agelessness.

The final element of *The Age/L'Età* is a physical manifestation of the central elderly figure, in the form of a life-size sculpture made from stuffed soft fabrics. Materials designed by the artist in collaboration with Imax Max Mara's knitwear division were used to create the figure's thick elderly outer skin, which resembles wrinkles and armour. Inspired by depictions of Hercules and scenes found on ancient Etruscan pottery, Talbot's figure reaches towards the centre of a portal or net, produced by the artist in collaboration with Modateca Deanna, one of the most important Italian knitwear archives, through which she appears to approach a new world, alternative energies and a new way of being.

The Max Mara Art Prize for Women is a collaboration between Whitechapel Gallery, Max Mara and Collezione Maramotti and has been awarded in alternate years since 2005 to support UK-based female-identifying artists who have not previously had a solo survey exhibition. Known for launching the careers of artists, it is the only visual art prize of its kind in the UK. The previous winners of the prize are Helen Cammock, Emma Hart, Corin Sworn, Laure Prouvost, Andrea Büttner, Hannah Rickards and Margaret Salmon. The judging panel for the eighth Max Mara Art Prize for Women was chaired by Iwona Blazwick OBE, outgoing Director of the Whitechapel Gallery, joined by a panel of art world experts comprising gallerist Florence Ingleby, artist Chantal Joffe, collector Fatima Maleki and art critic Hettie Judah.

The exhibition is accompanied by a book and a short documentary about Talbot's experience during her six-month Italian residency.

Talbot has also been selected for *The Milk of Dreams* at the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, curated by Cecilia Alemani, which is on until 27 November 2022.

Private view by invitation: 22 October 2022 at 6.00pm, with the artist present.

Free admission during the opening hours of the permanent collection.

23 October 2022: 2.30 pm – 6.30 pm

27 October 2022 – 19 February 2023 | Extended until 9 July 2023

Thursday and Friday, 2.30 pm – 6.30 pm

Saturday and Sunday, 10.30 am – 6.30 pm

Closed: 1 November, 25–26 December, 1 and 6 January

Info

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Notes to editors:

- Emma Talbot (b. 1969, Stourbridge) lives and works in London. She studied at the Birmingham Institute of Art & Design and Royal College of Art. Working in drawing, painting, animation and sculpture Talbot often articulates internal narratives as visual poems or associative ruminations, based on her own experience, memories and psychological projections. Incorporating her own writing and references to other literary and poetic sources, Talbot's work considers complex issues such as feminist theory and storytelling; ecopolitics and the natural world; and pertinent questions regarding our shifting relationships to technology, language and communication. Her work is currently on show in *The Milk of Dreams* at the 59th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, curated by Cecilia Alemani. Recent solo exhibitions include: *When Screens Break Eastside Projects*, Birmingham (2020); *Ghost Calls*, DCA, Dundee (2020); *Ghost Calls and Meditations*, Kunsthau Pasquart, Biel (2021); *Sounders of The Depths*, GEM Kunstmuseum, The Hague, Netherlands (2019-20); *Emma/Ursula*, Petra Rinck Galerie Dusseldorf (2020); ArtNight 2019 commission: *Your Own Authority*, William Morris Gallery; *21st Century Sleepwalk*, Caustic Coastal and Salford Lad's Club, Salford (2018); *Woman-Snake-Bird*, Galerie Onrust, Amsterdam (2018); *Open Thoughts*, Neuer Aachener Kunstverein (2017); *The World Blown Apart*, Galerie Onrust, Amsterdam (2017); *Stained With Marks Of Love*, Arcadia Missa, New York (2017). Her work is held in the collections of Guerlain, British Council Collection, Arts Council Collection, City of Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, David Roberts Collection, Saatchi Collection, University of the Arts London, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, Fries Museum NL, Arnhem Museum NL, KRC Collection NL, AkzoNobel NL.

- The Max Mara Art Prize for Women, in collaboration with Whitechapel Gallery is a biannual award established in 2005. It is the only visual art prize for women in the UK and aims to promote and nurture female artists, enabling them to develop their potential with the gift of time and space. The prize is open to women artists living and working in the United Kingdom who have not previously had a major solo survey exhibition. The partners of the prize are Max Mara, Whitechapel Gallery and Collezione Maramotti who collaborate on each phase of the prize. For each edition a jury, chaired by Whitechapel Gallery Director Iwona Blazwick, and including a gallerist, critic, artist and collector, agree on a shortlist of artists before the winner is decided based on the artists' proposals. The winner is awarded a six-month Italian residency tailored to fit the artist and her winning proposal for the Prize. During the residency, which is organised by Collezione Maramotti, the artist has the opportunity to realise an ambitious new project which is presented in major solo exhibitions at the Whitechapel Gallery in London and at Collezione Maramotti in Reggio Emilia, Italy, which then acquires it. The Max Mara Art Prize for Women was awarded the British Council Arts & Business International Award in 2007 and has enabled winning artists to take major steps in their careers.

- Previous winners of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women are:

- Helen Cammock (2017 – 19) – Cammock (b. 1970) presented a film, a series of vinyl cut prints, a screenprinted frieze and an artist's book interweaving women's stories of loss and resilience with seventeenth-century Baroque music

by female composers, exploring the concept of lament in women's lives across histories and geographies in her exhibition *Che si può fare*. Since winning the Max Mara Art Prize for Women she was awarded the Turner Prize 2019 together with Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Oscar Murillo and Tai Shani.

- Emma Hart (2015 – 17) – Hart's (b.1974) large-scale installation *Mamma Mia!* (2016) consists of a family of large ceramic heads, whose interior space is filled with vivid patterns, designed and hand-painted by Hart after researching the designs and practice of the Italian tradition of maiolica pottery. This project represents the culmination of an investigation into pattern, from visual patterns to patterns of psychological behaviour.

- Corin Sworn (2013 – 15) – Sworn (b.1976) created a work drawing from the Commedia dell'Arte improvised plays originating in 16th century Italy, where they continue to be of great cultural importance. Her installation titled *Silent Sticks* consists in a dramatic stage set with props, costumes, sound and video elements. She was awarded the Leverhulme Prize 2015 which recognises the achievement of outstanding researchers whose work has already attracted international recognition and whose future career is exceptionally promising.

- Laure Prouvost (2011 – 13) – Prouvost (b.1978) created an ambitious large-scale installation for her Max Mara Art Prize exhibition *Farfromwords*, inspired by the aesthetic and sensuous pleasures of Italy and plays on the historic idea of visiting the Mediterranean for inspiration. In 2013 she was awarded the Turner Prize. Her project *Deep See Blue Surrounding You* was presented in the French pavilion at the 2019 Venice Biennale.

- Andrea Büttner (2009 – 11) – Büttner's (b.1972) *The Poverty of Riches* explored the intersection of religion, art and the condition of the artist in the contemporary world. Including woodcuts, cloths, photographs and objects she transformed the exhibition space into a space of contemplation. Part of her project was included in the Whitechapel Gallery's landmark exhibition *Adventures of the Black Square* in 2015.

- Hannah Rickards (2007 – 09) – The prize enabled Rickards (b. 1979) to realise *No, there was no red.*, an ambitious two-screen film she had been researching before winning the Prize. She was also awarded the Leverhulme Prize in 2015 and had a major exhibition at Modern Art Oxford in 2014.

- Margaret Salmon (2005 – 07) – Salmon (b. 1975) travelled to Italy and created *Ninna Nanna*, a triptych of black and white films exploring themes of motherhood. She went on to exhibit at the Venice Biennale in 2007.

- The Max Mara Fashion Group was founded in 1951 by Achille Maramotti and is now run by the next generation. It is one of the largest women's ready-to-wear companies in the world, with more than 2,500 stores in more than 100 different countries. www.maxmara.com

- Collezione Maramotti is a private contemporary art collection which opened to visitors in 2007; it is located in the historical headquarters of the Max Mara company in Reggio Emilia. It includes a permanent exhibition of more than 200 works from 1950 to 2019, while regularly presenting new projects and commissions from international mid-career and emergent artists. www.collezioneMaramotti.org

- For over a century the Whitechapel Gallery has premiered world-class artists from modern masters to contemporaries. The Gallery is renowned for showcasing emerging and established female artists and has presented major solo exhibitions of Barbara Hepworth (1955), Eva Hesse (1979), Frida Kahlo (1982), Nan Goldin (2002), Sophie Calle (2009), Gillian Wearing (2012) and Sarah Lucas (2013). The Gallery is a touchstone for modern and contemporary art internationally, plays a central role in London's cultural landscape and is pivotal to the continued growth of the world's most vibrant contemporary art quarter. www.whitechapelgallery.org