

Emma Talbot A Journey You Take Alone

Curated by

Dr. Nadia Ismail

Opening

Friday, 01.12.2023, 7 pm, Kunsthalle Giessen

Duration

02.12.2023–28.04.2024

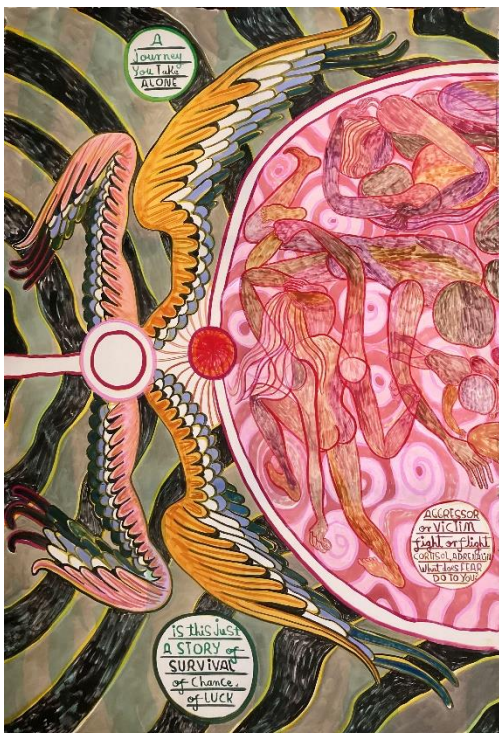


Fig.: Emma Talbot, The Human Experience (Your Birth), Detail, 2023, Courtesy the artist + Galerie Onrust + Petra Rinck Galerie

Press event

Wednesday, 29.11.2023, 11 am

The artist will be present.

The exhibition **A Journey You Take Alone** at Kunsthalle Gießen with work by British artist Emma Talbot (*1969 Stourbridge, lives in London) focuses on birth and death – the beginning and end of human life. Talbot's work is closely connected to her own experiences and memories and deals with themes of love, grief, age and transience. Her drawings, which are often executed on silk or other textiles, form narrative sequences that, despite their personal perspective, can be placed in a broader social context. They explore human existence from a female point of view. In doing so, gender inequality and power structures as well as our relationship to nature, technology and language come to the fore. From her emotions, her pain and her dreams, Emma Talbot develops inner lyrical landscapes that she ties together with social realities and theories drawn from literature, philosophy, psychology and feminist science. The artist subtly creates visual worlds that are shaped by a profound social critique and condensed into a narrative web.

Organic patterns and forms proliferate time and again in Talbot's concise drawings and animations that are populated by faceless, largely female figures, creating a sense of permanent growth, fluidity and becoming. The spatial constellations that in part take on a cosmic quality appear detached, without time or place. Not only her large silk works but also her animations are characterised by vibrant psychedelic colours, in which text, figuration and exuberant ornamentation combine to create a shimmering fabric that transcends classical categorisations such as illustrative, abstract or naturalistic. A striking feature is her pictorial lettering consisting of her own texts, quotations from songs and classical and contemporary literature. These take on equal status to the delicately drawn creatures that wander through the finely crafted ornamental work as recurring protagonists. Simultaneously, the figures serve as a projection for the viewer to not only imply the artist's experiences, but to explore their own feelings in the face of intense questions.

Talbot's works are distinguished by their sensuality and the impression of a particular immediacy and intimacy. The artist exploits the potential of drawing as a direct medium of expression that promises to convey inner experiences and emotions. In this respect, drawing can be seen as the root of Talbot's interdisciplinary oeuvre. Even the three-dimensional objects – mysterious, enigmatic creatures with opulent snake-like bodies presented on experimental tables – can also be understood as spatial drawings and render Talbot's characteristic visual language tangible, consistently interspersed with questions and statements about human existence.

Talbot, with her interdisciplinary works, transforms the Kunsthalle Gießen into a human life cycle and makes visible the close connection and coexistence of life and death. She devotes as much space to dying as to living and manages to depict the beauty and elegance of mourning without any theatrics. Two large-scale silk works, *The Human Experience (Your Birth)* and *The Human Experience (Your Death)*, stand opposite one another in the exhibition, epitomising the inseparability of birth and death. Between them, Talbot presents her installation work *Your Birth: The Epic Historical Moment You Can't Remember*, in which the female process of giving birth is illustrated. The raised platform both celebrates and showcases childbirth. For instance, one of the protagonists takes a photo of herself using a selfie stick, indulging in self-staging. Talbot seems to be alluding to the constant scrutiny and judgement of the role of mother and to how childbirth is a solitary act. The exhibition title *A Journey You Take Alone* further emphasises how, both at the beginning and the end of life, people are confronted with being alone.

The solo show at the Kunsthalle Gießen presents the audience with Talbot's multi-faceted oeuvre, which addresses universal themes of human experience. The artist creates a world of her own, an immersive and fascinating artistic universe that invites the viewer to delve into it.

Emma Talbot is winner of the 8th Max Mara Art Prize for Women and was included in *The Milk of Dreams* at the Venice Biennale in 2022. Her work has been exhibited at Whitechapel, London; Collezione Maramotti, Italy; Beiqiu Museum, China; Victoria Miro, London; Eastside Projects, Birmingham; Kunsthaus Centre D'Art Pasquart, Switzerland; Arcadia Missa, New York; KM21, The Hague, Netherlands; Turner Contemporary, Margate; The Freud Museum; London; Lisson Gallery, London; Galerie Onrust, Amsterdam; Petra Rinck Galerie, Düsseldorf; Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Germany and Tate St.Ives, England. Talbot studied at Birmingham Institute of Art & Design and Royal College of Art in London

Special thanks to

Galerie Petra Rinck, Dusseldorf

Galerie Onrust, Amsterdam

Morgenstern & Wildegans



Fig.: Emma Talbot, The Human Experience (Your Birth), Detail, 2023, Courtesy The Artist + Galerie Onrust + Petra Rinck Galerie

Visitor information

You can find further information about the opening, our accompanying programme including schedules of events as well as access information online at:

www.kunsthalle-giessen.de | www.giessen.de

Accompanying programme

Guided tour by the curator Dr. Nadia Ismail

Thu, 08.02.2024, 6 pm
(in German language)

Art education in individual conversations

Every Sat, 2 – 4 pm (except 23.12. + 30.12.2023 + 30.03.2024)
(English on request)

Guided tour

Sun, 17.12.2023 + 21.01. + 18.02. + 17.03. + 28.04.2024, 3 – 4 pm
(in German language)

Further information

www.kunsthalle-giessen.de