

collezionem̄aramotti

Press Release

Max Mara, Collezione Maramotti and Whitechapel Gallery are pleased to announce that **Emma Talbot** (b. 1969, UK), winner of the 8th Max Mara Art Prize for Women, has completed her bespoke six-month residency in Italy. The new artworks produced during this period will be shown in an exhibition slated to open at Whitechapel Gallery, London, on 30 June 2022 and at the Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, on 23 October 2022.

This prestigious prize supports UK-based female artists who have not previously had a major solo show. Awarded in alternate years since 2005, it is the only visual art prize of its kind in the UK. The prize provides the winner an opportunity to develop her artistic career through a fully-funded, bespoke Italian residency, culminating in a solo exhibition featuring a new body of work to be shown first at Whitechapel Gallery and then at Collezione Maramotti.

Due to the pandemic, Talbot's residency could not be organised in 2020 as initially planned, but instead took place from June to December 2021. It allowed the artist to spend time in Reggio Emilia, Catania and Rome, researching classical mythology, textile craftsmanship, permaculture and exploring the myriad historic sites and institutions that will inform her final work.

Emma Talbot, who has subsequently been invited to participate in the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, curated by Cecilia Alemani, said: *“Based in Reggio Emilia, Sicily and Rome over a six-month period, the residency was fantastic, generous and life-changing for me and my practice. I absolutely loved the expansive experience of evolving my particular project through first-hand research; at museums, archaeological sites, archives, textile companies, permaculture sites and specialist fabricators across the length and breadth of the country. The input of expert mentors and professional contacts who guided my specific research and the support of partners who hosted me during my stay, gave invaluable depth and insight, widening my understandings. I made really meaningful connections with people I met, which made the residency such a beautiful and explorative unfolding story. With a wealth of research material gathered over the six months to draw on, I am really excited to now formulate my findings into artworks and to have the space and time to do so. My project focuses on the trials of Hercules, imagined as thought experiments re-performed by an elderly woman, to interrogate contemporary issues of power, control, sustainability and possible futures.”*

Textiles are central to Talbot's work, and her stay in Reggio Emilia offered her a unique opportunity to acquire new production skills. In Reggio Emilia she explored Modateca Deanna, an extraordinary historical fashion archive focused on knitwear. She worked with local craftspeople to learn *intarsia* and jacquard knitting, techniques that are used to create patterns with multiple colours, which she will be employing in her final work. During her stay at the Modateca, she also held regular training sessions with high-level professionals, visited local textile companies and enjoyed access to the Max Mara historic archives.

Sonia Veroni, CEO and co-founder of Modateca Deanna, said: *“I’ve found it particularly stimulating to work with the artist Emma Talbot. Emma’s residency in Reggio Emilia gave her the chance to learn knitting techniques, get to know the area, and apply local materials and technologies with a creative approach. And her unique vision gave us the chance to discover a new side to knits, an artistic, innovative one, born out of Emma’s enormous creativity and sensitivity. My heartfelt thanks go to Collezione Maramotti for making us part of this wonderful, enthralling adventure, a real opportunity for dialogue with an extraordinary artist.”*

In Catania, Sicily, Talbot spent time with the artist Rosario Sorbello, exploring layers of history, visiting ancient archaeological sites and the volcanic terrain to inform a depiction of landscape is set to feature in her final work.

Rosario Sorbello, who oversaw Talbot’s stay in Sicily, commented: *“I think that this time in Sicily offered Emma Talbot all kinds of inspiration stemming from the nature, art and history of the island. I feel confident that these experiences, along with the rest of her residency in Italy, were a unique, valuable opportunity serving the development of the overall project, which draws on a wide range of elements linked to the Italian landscape and culture.”*

Talbot also learned about permaculture, a practice strongly present in Sicilian agriculture, which offers an ethical, sustainable way of living with the land. To learn more about this approach first-hand, she was hosted by Casa di Paglia Felcerossa, a local farm on the slopes of Mount Etna.

Tiziana Cicero, owner of Casa di Paglia Felcerossa (Sant’Alfio, Catania), said: *“Having Emma as our guest was a lush experience, full of warmth and beauty. It was wonderful to take part in a rich, profound dialogue about womanhood, about the world, about permaculture, about processing experiences, about life, which went beyond our own starting points and geographic backgrounds.”*

In the final stage of the residency, Talbot was hosted in Rome for two months by the British School, where she had access to a studio and the many other facilities of this prestigious institute. Over the course of her research, she could count on the aid of the British School tutors, focusing particularly on Herculean myths and spending time at the National Etruscan Museum of Villa Giulia. Its Director, Valentino Nizzo, served as her guide to the designs of Etruscan ceramics, which are powerful conveyors of classical mythology. While in Rome, Talbot visited museums and archaeological sites to gain a deeper familiarity with the landscape of classical Italy.

Valentino Nizzo, Director of Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, described: *“As one of the specialized mentors for the MMAP8 residency, I had the experience of looking at the past and at mythology through the eyes of an exceptional contemporary artist, Emma Talbot. It was a voyage through Italian cultural heritage guided by the iconography of Hercules, tracing how these images have evolved and been ideologically manipulated over the course of history in the East, in Greek culture, through the Etruscan and Roman world, and up to our time. The goal is to bring them into the present, to become a subject of and tool for reflection. This fascinating process gave me the privilege, on more than one occasion, of seeing the perspective and sensations of a contemporary artist from up close. It was a unique opportunity to get an inside view of the remarkable creative process leading to the development of a new artwork, and has significantly enriched my experience of analysing ancient art.”*

Talbot’s winning proposal for the Max Mara Art Prize for Women questions deeply rooted positions of power, governance, attitudes to nature and representations of women through an acutely personal lens. It takes as a starting point Gustav Klimt’s painting *Three Ages of Woman* (1905), which portrays a naked elderly woman standing with her head bowed as if in shame. The painting is housed at the Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna in Rome and Talbot had the opportunity to see it first-hand during her residency. In her work for the prize, Talbot invests this figure with agency, presenting her with a series of challenges. These modern-day Labours of

Hercules suggest that the older woman is someone with the potential to rebuild our society, countering the usual negative attitudes towards ageing.

Talbot's final project as winner of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women will take the shape of an immersive installation: a three-dimensional figure of the elderly heroine stands alone in a volatile postapocalyptic world where technology has been wiped out. In the background, a long silk painting – made with fabric from Mantero, based in Como: the first Italian company to produce 100% recycled silk – depicts the Italian landscape that Talbot saw during her travels in Sicily and Rome.

The project is to be entirely realised in Italy, relying on the valuable expertise of Modateca Deanna and of Imax, the manufacturing division of the legendary Italian fashion house Max Mara, which is helping to produce the new body of artworks that will be presented at both Whitechapel Gallery and Collezione Maramotti.

The artworks that will be shown at La Biennale di Venezia are also produced in Italy, in collaboration with Imax and with the invaluable support of Max Mara.

A short documentary about Talbot's experience during her six-month Italian residency will be released in the coming months.

Exhibition dates:

Whitechapel Gallery, London
30 June – 4 September 2022

Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia
23 October 2022 – 19 February 2023

Notes to Editors

- Emma Talbot was announced as the eighth winner of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women at a ceremony held at Whitechapel Gallery, London, in March 2020. She was chosen from a shortlist including Allison Katz, Katie Schwab, Tai Shani and Hanna Tulikki, by a panel of art-world experts comprising gallerist Florence Ingleby, artist Chantal Joffe, collector Fatima Maleki and art critic Hettie Judah, chaired by Whitechapel Gallery Director Iwona Blazwick.
- Emma Talbot studied at the Birmingham Institute of Art & Design and Royal College of Art. Emma Talbot has been invited to the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia curated by Cecilia Alemani. Recent solo exhibitions include: *When Screens Break* Eastside Projects, Birmingham (2020); *Ghost Calls*, DCA, Dundee (2020); *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; *Do You See Yourself Projected?*, Mirth Marvel and Maud, London E17; *21st Century Sleepwalk*, Caustic Coastal and Salford Lad's Club, Salford (2018); *Woman-Snake-Bird*, Galerie Onrust, Amsterdam (2018); *Emma Talbot*, Nicolas Krupp Gallery (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, Paris, Arts Council Collection, British 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. Each year 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 screen-printed 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 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 Buttner (2009 – 11)** – Buttner's *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 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 travelled to Italy and created 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 2500 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 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

- Modateca Deanna is a historical archive in Reggio Emilia that preserves the know-how of the Miss Deanna knitwear manufacturer. In its fifty-year history, driven by the talent and commitment of founder Deanna Ferretti Veroni, this company has produced collections for the world's most prominent designers. Its archive is in constant expansion, thanks to the ongoing research and acquisitions carried out by Deanna and by Modateca Director Sonia Veroni. Modateca Deanna invests in training new generations of fashion designers, while promoting Italian supply chain know-how, through the Master's in Creative Knitwear Design, developed in collaboration with the Accademia Costume e Moda.

Press Information

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