

## DOMOBAAL

Clare Linton interviews Emma Talbot at the Curwen Studio at Worton Hall Studios to find out more about her life and work.



CL *A Walled Garden* has three colour variations (each an edition of 50), is the ability to vary colour and create alternatives the reason you chose to make them as prints?

ET Yes, I was keen to make use of the possibilities print offers that other media don't, so the idea of different colour options was really exciting. I also like the qualities of the ink used for screen prints and it was great to include iridescent, luminous and pearlised colour.

CL How important is printmaking to you?

ET I find the processes of printmaking really suitable for my work. The different qualities that can be achieved add a great deal of interest for me, in terms of how my images are realised. Printmaking offers so many possibilities and variations, it has opened my work up even further.

CL Pattern is a central feature of these works - in this case of foliage and flora that relates to the text - where did that idea come from?

ET I've been looking a lot at pattern in textiles and Persian carpets and the meanings attached to the motifs. In particular, I was interested in images of the tree of life and walled gardens. I like the way image and pattern are combined and references they have to life experience, growing, developing and changing. I drew the pattern out by hand from looking a very old Indian woodblock print, (adding the colour separation) and then repeated it as a complex background - like something growing wildly.

CL Your figures are often featureless, what is the significance of that?

ET I'm often trying to capture the way I think visually, remembering scenes and scenarios I have actually experienced or imagined (in ideation based on reading or anecdote or by dreaming). Often, in the mind's eye, the features of the figure are far less important than gesture or details of place and setting and so this is what I concentrate on.

The scenarios I depict are not exclusively unique to me, they are part of the contemporary experience of being alive. I like the idea that the figures, being faceless, could be anyone, like a well-known role which is played by different actors. When we speak of our private lives, we often find a common understanding and I like the fact that something personal can become more universal and easily read by others.

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CL Is a story being told in *A Walled Garden*?

ET I was thinking about an Indian miniature I'd seen with the image of a woman longing for her lover. There is never a linear story in the work, but there is a narrative idea, about the way we open up when we're in love. There's a psychological reference that walls can be broken down, things grow.

CL Text features in these pieces and your work generally, could you tell us a little about the appeal of merging word and image?

ET There is little difference between writing and making images for me, both convey messages and ideas. The text is painted just as much as the words and I like to combine both without a sense of hierarchy.

CL Do you use your own words or quotes?

ET Both - my work is a space where all different things can come together, my own voice and my voice reading others.

CL How would you sum up what you are trying to achieve as an artist?

ET I'm trying to articulate what it's like to be me, alive today. I'm trying to capture the kinds of thoughts that are in my head.

CL What do you take inspiration from?

ET Japanese Prints, Indian and Persian miniatures, Textiles, handcrafts, woven carpets, song lyrics and writers such as Helene Cixous, Anais Nin, Paul Ricoeur and Pablo Neruda.

CL Which artists do you most admire?

ET Sassetta, Thomas Hirschhorn, Harun Farocki, Henri Rousseau, Louise Bourgeois.

CL Did you always want to be an artist?

ET Yes, always.

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*A Walled Garden* was printed by Catherine Ade at the Curwen Studio.

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