

ROGER MALBERT

drawing people

THE HUMAN FIGURE IN CONTEMPORARY ART



Thames & Hudson

Emma Talbot's watercolour drawings have the unselfconscious intimacy of a personal journal, with private thoughts, memories and imaginings recorded in a looping girlish hand, as though intended to be seen by no one but herself. There is a consistency to her style that allows her to incorporate whichever phenomena happen to occur to her – mundane details and emotionally charged moments – and translate them fluently into her own visual language. One has the sense of seeing a world through Talbot's eyes, exactly as she experienced it. Her subdued palette of secondary colours filters and unifies the imagery, suggesting that these are scenes recalled from across a void of time rather than an immediate, diaristic recapitulation of the day's events.

In fact, each frame of Talbot's loosely assembled narratives illustrates a scene recalled from her past. They are drawn spontaneously, without preparatory sketches, thus becoming exercises in the power of recollection. She includes a plethora of local detail – the Victorian bricks and tiles, the period lampshades, wallpaper and bedspreads, handbags, sweaters and coats – that together evoke a distinctly British atmosphere of claustrophobia and constraint. The space is tightly enclosed and the heavy dark lines suggest an underlying shadow of menace or loneliness.



(this page, top) *First Day Birmingham*, 2013
Watercolour on paper
24 × 30 cm (9 ½ × 11 ¾ in.)

(this page, below) *Leaving Harrow*, 2012
Watercolour on paper
24 × 30 cm (9 ½ × 11 ¾ in.)

(opposite, top) *Midnight Running Under*, 2013
Watercolour on paper
24 × 30 cm (9 ½ × 11 ¾ in.)

(opposite, centre) *Candlewick*, 2012
Watercolour on paper
24 × 30 cm (9 ½ × 11 ¾ in.)

(opposite, below) *Novel Olivetti Flower of Strood*, 2013
Watercolour on paper
24 × 30 cm (9 ½ × 11 ¾ in.)





(this page, top) *Writing*, 2011
Watercolour on paper
24 × 30 cm (9 ½ × 11 ¾ in.)

(this page, centre) *The House the Black Book Hoovers*, 2013
Watercolour on paper
24 × 30 cm (9 ½ × 11 ¾ in.)

(this page, bottom) *Lovers*, 2010
Watercolour on paper
24 × 30 cm (9 ½ × 11 ¾ in.)

(opposite, top) *Second Hand*, 2011
Watercolour on paper
24 × 30 cm (9 ½ × 11 ¾ in.)

(opposite, centre) *The Hill (Flower of Strood)*, 2013
Watercolour on paper
24 × 30 cm (9 ½ × 11 ¾ in.)

(opposite, below) *Wedding Ring*, 2011
Watercolour on paper
24 × 30 cm (9 ½ × 11 ¾ in.)

