

# **'The Birds'**

## **'Los pájaros'**

*"Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind  
cannot bear very much reality."*

TS Eliot, in *Burnt Norton* ( No. 1 of 'Four Quartets' )

The series **'the birds'** refers to a tradition of portraiture in which the expression of human emotions is more important than the identity of the person depicted. Identities become irrelevant in such portraiture, and especially in these works given the disconcerting fact that the faces are inverted and bleeding.

A simple transformation performed in these images—turning faces upside down—generates a jarring result. For the inversion challenges the paradigm of a portrait; it's disorienting, unexpected, almost hallucinatory. This sort of compositional 'disturbance' has the power to make the portrait into something unfamiliar, even uncanny (which not what we usually associate with a 'likeness').

As a whole, the drawings are based on the story of *Isabel*—a girl who suffers from a peculiar disease. Every time she feels excessive emotions, she can't contain them in herself and releases them uncontrollably through her pores...very strange.

In effect, **the drawings** meditate on Isabel's circumstances and, in general, on our thin and fragile human condition. They **represent a way of expressing how humans feel emotions within the limited space of our bodies. In some cases, like in Isabel's, the feelings are so strong—so much—that they cannot be contained inside and overflow** in the objective form of blood.

The viewer is invited to rethink concepts of portraiture, transformation, and even the materiality of human condition; as well as universal themes like the overwhelming emotions of love, loneliness, and desire. Perhaps you, who are observing and reflecting on the portraits, can now FEEL some sympathy for Isabel, inevitably bleeding for a kiss or the touch of the one she desires. In the end, she could be any human, suffering from an unavoidable fate.

**Will she survive her teens?**

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