

Marlborough

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PAULA REGO: HUMAN CARGO

Marlborough Chelsea
April 17-May 17, 2008

The Directors of Marlborough Gallery announce that an exhibition of new drawings by the renowned figurative artist Paula Rego will open at Marlborough Chelsea, 545 West 25 Street, on April 17 and will continue through May 17, 2008. This exhibition follows a retrospective of her work at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, which is currently on view at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC through May 25, 2008.

Julius Purcell, writing recently in *The Financial Times*, commented that "Rego is a master of traditional media, yet her work has as much contemporary resonance as that of her peers." She has been called an "Iberian magic realist," (*The Washington Post*) and is recognized for the searing narratives, not easily defined, that drive her work. Rego has said, "We interpret the world through stories... everybody makes in their own way sense of things, but if you have stories it helps." Inspired by dark fairytales, classic and modern literature, her own childhood and the political and social realities of today, Rego creates mesmerizing, passionate tableaux that explore the struggles between women and men, parents and children, the powerful and the powerless.

Rego's exhibition will feature twenty large drawings, most in graphite and conte pencil, and two monumental triptychs, *Human Cargo*, 2007-2008 (conte pencil, conte and ink wash on paper), and *The Fisherman*, 2005 (pastel on board). The former, along with a series of drawings, *Honour I*, *Honour II* and *Honour III* (all dated 2007, 54 x 40 1/8 in., 137 x 102 cm), refer to recent events publicized in the British news: the crime of human trafficking and an "honor" killing in which a father murdered his daughter to "defend" his family's "honor". Other works include *Muses Resting*, *The Young Poet*, *Discarded Muses* and *Five Generations of Muses* (all 2007), in which Rego depicts women of various ages and types: in these pictures, one can surmise that the Muses have sufficiently fulfilled their inspirational roles to "Art."

Notably starker than Rego's lushly rendered and colorful pastels of the last fourteen years, these new drawings are equally the result of the artist's use of props, handmade "dolls" (both human and animal) and environments in which live models interact with those that are fabricated, providing a physicality to Rego's imagination and a compositional foundation for her work. A number of these elements, artifacts of the studio process, will be included in Rego's exhibition at Marlborough Chelsea.

Born in Portugal in 1935, Rego was educated in her native country and in England and began her studies at the Slade School of Fine Art, London, in 1952 at the age of 17. With her husband, English painter Victor Willing, she lived in Portugal from 1957 to 1963, and then traveled between the two countries until her permanent settlement in London in 1975. A participant in hundreds of solo and group exhibitions, Rego is a recipient of numerous honorary doctorates, including those from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland; Rhode Island School of Design, Providence; The London Institute and Oxford University. She is a recipient of the Grã Cruz da Ordem de Sant'Iago da Espada presented by the President of Portugal. In 1990, Rego was appointed the first Associate Artist of The National Gallery, London.

Rego's work can be found in many public institutions, including the British Museum, London, England; Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; National Gallery, London; National Portrait Gallery, London; Tate Gallery, London; Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, England and the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven.

Phaidon books will release a new color monograph, *Paula Rego: Behind the Scenes*, on the artist and her studio this spring. In 1994 Rego took on her own studio in Camden, north London. The space and freedom that this allowed her had a dramatic effect not only on her final works but also on her preparations, models, method and technique. This new book features many unseen and personal photographs of the artist at work and sheds new light on some of her best-known paintings.

An illustrated color catalogue with a text by Marco Livingstone, art historian and curator of the artist's retrospective currently on view at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC, will be available at the time of the exhibition.

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