

CELIA PAUL

26 Years of Portraiture with
Studio Prints, 1985-2011

9 June - 14 July 2023

Private View:

8 June 2023 | 6:00-8:00pm

Press Release

For further information, please contact:

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Marlborough Graphics is delighted to present *Celia Paul: 26 Years of Portraiture with Studio Prints*. The exhibition celebrates Celia Paul's long-time collaboration with master printmakers Studio Prints and the intimate portrait etchings that she produced with them until 2011. The exhibited etchings depict a small group of frequent sitters such as Paul's mother, her sisters and friends. These tender portrayals bear a quiet resilience, capturing her subjects in contemplation, sleeping or in moments of togetherness.

The exhibition traces the development of Paul's prints from her first hard-ground etching, *Pregnant Girl* (conceived in 1985 and published in 1991) to the soft-ground etchings that characterised her later work. It was Marc Balakjian of Studio Prints who first showed Celia Paul a soft-ground etching by James Abbott McNeill Whistler. As she recounts: 'The Whistler image was quietly mysterious, it glowed. This was the effect I was after.'

Soft-ground etchings differ from hard-ground in that the image is drawn onto tracing paper placed on a plate prepared with a soft etching ground. The pencil marks are transferred to the plate giving the final print an effect similar to that of a crayon drawing, thus creating a more atmospheric image.

Celia Paul credits Balakjian's wife and collaborator Dorothea Wight for having 'a natural intuition for producing the glow I desired'. She worked with Wight until 2011 with *Five Sisters* marking their final print together.

Celia Paul was born in 1959 in Trivandrum, India, where she lived until 1965 when her parents returned to England. From 1976 to 1981, she studied at Slade School of Fine Art, London.



Celia Paul, *Five Sisters*, 2011, soft ground etching, edition of 15

Major solo exhibitions include *Celia Paul: Memory and Desire*, Victoria Miro, London, May (2022); *Celia Paul*, curated by Hilton Als, at Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut (2018) touring to The Huntington, San Marino, California (2019); *Gwen John and Celia Paul: Painters in Parallel*, Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (2012-13); *Celia Paul Paintings and Works on Paper*, The Grave's Art Gallery, Sheffield (2005) and *Celia Paul: Stillness - Paintings and Etchings 1990-2004*, Abbot Hall Art Gallery & Museum, Kendal (2004).

She has participated in group exhibitions including *All Too Human: Bacon, Freud and a Century of Painting Life*, Tate Britain, London, (2018); *Recent acquisitions: Arcimboldo to Kitaj*, British Museum, London (2013); *Self-Consciousness*, curated by Peter Doig and Hilton Als, VeneKlasen/Werner Gallery, Berlin (2010); *The School of London: Bacon to Bevan*, Musée Maillol, Paris (1998) and *British Figurative Painting of the 20th Century*, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (1992).

Her work is held in several major collections including Abbot Hall Art Gallery & Museum, Kendal; British Museum, London; Carlsberg Foundation, Copenhagen; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; Metropolitan Museum, New York; Morgan Library, New York; National Portrait Gallery, London; New Hall Art Collection, Murray Edwards College, Cambridge; Saatchi Collection, London; Victoria & Albert Museum, London and the Yale Center for British Art, Connecticut.

The catalogue *Celia Paul: 26 Years of Portraiture with Studio Prints* will accompany the exhibition.

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Monday - Friday 10:00-5:30
Saturday 10:00-4:00

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