

Paula Rego: *Story Line*

Exhibition: 16 April–23 May 2026

16 Wharf Road, London N1 7RW



Paula Rego
Study for the Artist in her Studio, 1993
Pencil on paper
36.5 x 29.5 cm
14 3/8 x 11 5/8 in
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Victoria Miro is delighted to present a major exhibition of drawings and works on paper by Paula Rego (1935–2022). The most comprehensive exhibition of Rego’s drawings to date, *Story Line* features works from the 1950s until the artist’s death, shining new light on Rego’s evolving use of line in media from pen and ink to pastel, conté, charcoal and pencil, and how it was driven by her unique approach to storytelling throughout her life. The exhibition is accompanied by a new publication featuring writing by the artist’s son, Nick Willing.

‘When you write your story... invention comes when you do a drawing. As you are drawing something, it very often turns into something else, and you can go with it. It develops in a completely different way, it’s organic and it’s done with the hand. The hand makes it change and so on.’ – Paula Rego, *The White Review*, 2011

Paula Rego considered herself first and foremost a ‘drawrer’, as she put it. From political protest to personal introspection, activism to domestic power games, subversive humour to challenging family relationships, it was through drawing that she understood herself and the world around her, discovering ways of expressing complex ideas through a single image. As Nick Willing comments, ‘A Rego drawing is never just one thing, but many feelings working together to reveal the truth. They not only helped her understand the world but can also help us understand it too.’

Driven by her distinctive approach to storytelling, this exhibition demonstrates how Rego adapted her line to emphasise the emotional nuance of the stories she told, and how her drawing techniques also reflected her interior emotional narrative. The works reveal the unique development of an artist whose visual storytelling, drawn from a wide variety of sources, spoke directly to us about the essential human traits of desire, loss, violence and power

The works on show vary from intimate drawings which have never been exhibited before to studies for some of Rego's most recognisable paintings. These are accompanied by notes, letters, sketchbooks, photographs and other archival material from throughout Rego's life – among myriad rarities is a drawing Rego made when she was nine years old of her grandmother, while the exhibition concludes with drawings she made as a grandmother of her own grandchildren.

About the artist

Dame Paula Rego RA was born in 1935 in Lisbon, Portugal. She died in London on 8 June 2022. The largest and most comprehensive retrospective of Rego's work to date was held at Tate Britain in 2021 and travelled to Kunstmuseum Den Haag, The Netherlands (2021–2022), and Museo Picasso Málaga, Spain (2022). Works by the artist featured in the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, *The Milk of Dreams*, curated by Cecilia Alemani (2022). Paula Rego: *Dance Among Thorns*, the first large-scale exhibition of Rego's work in the Nordic region, will be on view at the Munch Museum, Oslo, Norway, 24 April–2 August 2026.

Recent major solo exhibitions include Paula Rego: *The Personal and The Political*, Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany (2025); Paula Rego and Adriana Varejão: *Between Your Teeth*, Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon, Portugal (2025); Paula Rego: *Power Games*, Kunstmuseum, Basel, Switzerland (2025); Paula Rego: *Manifesto*, Casa das Histórias Paula Rego, Cascais, Portugal (2024); Paula Rego: *Crivelli's Garden*, The National Gallery, London, UK (2023); Paula Rego: *The Story of Stories*, Pera Museum, Istanbul, Turkey (2023); Paula Rego: *Subversive Stories*, featuring prints from across her career, at Arnolfini, Bristol, UK (2022); Paula Rego: *Literary Inspirations* at Petersfield Museum, Hampshire, UK (2022); *Power Games*, Museum De Reede, Antwerp, Belgium (2021), and Paula Rego: *Obedience and Defiance*, curated by Catherine Lampert, which travelled from MK Gallery, Milton Keynes to the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh in 2019–20 and was on view at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin 2020–2021.

Her work is in the collections of numerous museums including the British Museum, Tate, National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery, London, UK; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, MoMA, The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, USA; The Art Institute of Chicago, USA and the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, USA.

In 2010, Rego was made a Dame of the British Empire for services to the Arts in the Queen's Birthday Honours and was awarded the prestigious Grã-Cruz da Ordem de Sant'Iago da Espada from the President of Portugal in 2004. Rego received several Honorary Doctorates from universities including the University of St. Andrews (1999), University of East Anglia (1999), Rhode Island School of Design (2000), The London Institute (2002), Oxford University (2005), Roehampton University (2005), Faculdade de Belas-Artes at the University of Lisbon (2011), and the University of Cambridge (2015). She was the recipient of many awards such as the Honors Medal of the city of Lisbon, Portugal (2016), the Maria Isabel Barreno prize (2017), Portuguese Government's Medal of Cultural Merit (2019) and the Lifetime Achievement Award from Harper's Bazaar (2019).

For further press information please contact:

Victoria Miro Gabrielle Leung | Content and Communications Manager | gabrielle@victoria-miro.com | +44 (0)7375 789535

Rees & Co Fiona Russell | fiona.russell@reesandco.com | +44 (0)7917 130 801