Galerie Lelong

13, rue de Téhéran
38, avenue Matignon
75008 Paris

+33 1 45 63 13 19
info@galerie-lelong.com
galerie-lelong.com

Paula Rego

Drawing from Life

May 21st – July 11th, 2026

38 avenue Matignon
75008 Paris

Life Room III (red), 2005
Lithograph, stage proof hand-colored by the artist, 76 × 56.6 cm
© The Estate of Paula Rego. Courtesy Ostrich Arts Ltd, Cristea Roberts Gallery and Galerie Lelong

This new Paula Rego exhibition at Galerie Lelong focuses on an intense three-year period (2005–2007) which the artist spent in her London studio, devoting herself almost exclusively to drawing and lithography. Having just turned 70, she appreciated the immediacy of these two mediums, which enabled her to explore darker and more complex themes than ever before.

Paula Rego was an avid reader, particularly of novels, tales and legends. She had previously drawn inspiration from *Jane Eyre*, *Peter Pan*, and others. The *Prince Pig* series offers an incisive exploration of the moral of *The King of Pigs*, a sixteenth-century tale by the Venetian writer Straparola. The pig, an anthropomorphic figure which is omnipresent in her work, was her favourite animal; it reminded her of the one her grandparents had raised during her childhood in Portugal, which she had become attached to, and which was one day put to death.

Another reference present in some of the works on display is Paula Rego's connection with the playwright Martin McDonagh, especially his play *The Pillowman* and a series of unpublished short stories he gave her to read. These narratives became a means for her to freely express her own story, excavating childhood memories and an inner world filled with contradictions, conflicts and personal crises. This gave rise to works such as *Shakespeare's Room*, *Scarecrow*, *Turtle Hands*…

Drawing from Life is Paula Rego's third exhibition at Galerie Lelong. We would like to thank Nick Willing, the artist's son, and the Cristea Roberts Gallery (London), who have made this exhibition possible.

Photo © Nick Willing

Paula Rego was born in Lisbon in 1935 and died in London in 2022. Having fled Salazar's totalitarian regime in 1951 to study art in the United Kingdom, she found herself immersed in the stimulating atmosphere of the English art scene of the time. She was the only female artist in the London School, alongside figures such as Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud, Frank Auerbach and Leon Kossoff.

In 2018, a major exhibition was dedicated to her at the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris, *The Cruel Stories of Paula Rego*. A major retrospective is being presented at the Munchmuseet in Oslo from April 24th.

Her work is featured in numerous collections, including those of the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; the Metropolitan Museum, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the British Museum, London, UK; the National Gallery, London; and the Tate Modern, London.

PRESS RELATIONS
FOUCHARD FILIPPI COMMUNICATIONS
Philippe Fouchard-Filippi
Tel: +33 1 53 28 87 53 / +33 6 60 21 11 94 / phff@fouchardfilippi.com
www.fouchardfilippi.com
presse@galerie-lelong.com

@galerielelongparis