

## Paula Rego-Printmaker

Paula Rego is one of the most celebrated and, I would suggest, problematic artists currently working in Britain. She has continually renewed her practice, which has included the cut, paste and painted collages of the 1950s and 60s, the animal pictures of the 80s which developed into the more grounded grand compositions, the large pastels through to the present obsessive fixation with working directly from the observed experience, in order to delve into her imagination. While many contemporary artists, especially women, have embraced new media and processes to discover a personal visual language, Rego has steadfastly engaged herself within the complexities of traditional practice, seeking to take on the challenge of painting. Parallel to this, she has produced a profound body of work as a printmaker, the subject of this retrospective, in which once again she works within established modes of practice, in her case predominantly intaglio and more recently lithography. Her prints shadow the changes and innovations within her practice as a painter, while always retaining an exploration of the very special qualities of light and dark that is particular to the medium. Her pressing concern is to tell a story, everything else is subordinate to this end.

*In her Graphic work, as in her painting, Rego is a great storyteller who both persuasively and subversively seizes you at the first encounter, and then keeps a relentless grip on your mind and senses until she has finished her complex, infinitely subtle and reverberating tales* (Tom Rosenthal) <sup>i</sup>

There are two central pillars to an understanding of Paula Rego the artist. Firstly that she is pre eminently a draughtswoman of extraordinary range, both stylistically and emotionally, and secondly that she is the quintessential storyteller. Together, these two attributes make printmaking a highly appropriate medium within which to explore her fertile and often dark imagination.

She is, I believe, one of those rare creators whose body of work produced through printmaking extends and deepens our understanding of the artist's personality. It is impossible to evaluate Rego's art without a serious and due consideration of her prints. This exhibition provides the first opportunity to see this body of work together as a whole. They include the rarely seen early experiments made in the 1950's, the now familiar etchings of the *Nursery Rhymes* and *Peter Pan* and the lithographs of *Jane Eyre*. The exhibition would not have been possible without the thorough research by Tom Rosenthal, which resulted in the sumptuous publication of *Paula Rego, The Complete Graphic Work* in 2003. This book documents all her prints to date, provides a valuable commentary and points to the changing role that print has played within her oeuvre.

If Paula Rego is a storyteller then she herself is also the centre of a life story that has the ingredients of an opera libretto. Her story is well documented in the monograph by John McEwen, which details her childhood in Portugal, her studies at the Slade, her marriage to the painter Victor Willing, and her life in London. Her work openly draws on her own

childhood experiences, her relationships, responsibilities and family life with all its complexities. Vic Willing more specifically defines her concerns as being, 'domination and rebellion, suffocation and escape'. Her childhood in Portugal was a mixture of upper middle class privilege (her father an engineer and anglophile) and the company of servants. The Portugal she grew up in was under the dictatorship of Salazar, a country held in tension and somewhat isolated from the rest of Europe.

She attended an English school in Portugal before being sent to a finishing school in Kent. From there she went on to study at the Slade under William Coldstream in the company of students who were to become leading figures in the British art scene; Craigie Aitchison, Michael Andrews, Euan Uglow and her future husband Victor Willing. John McEwen's monogram on Rego as a rich source for further study.<sup>ii</sup> But while Rego has lived in London continuously since 1976 the landscapes and places in her work recall her childhood in Portugal. For Rego her work is a way of revisiting, re ordering and perhaps reclaiming this birthplace.

It is also her childhood that provides clues to the roots of her graphic art; a solitary childhood with her appetite for stories fed by her grandparents and aunts who would tell her stories recalled from memory, *Blanco y negro* (a publication full of tales told through drawings presented in a bold comic style), the tradition of painted Portuguese tiles, the illustrations of amongst others, Cruickshank, Dore and Gillray and the discovery later on of Dubuffet, outsider art and of course Goya. This mixture of high and low culture, paintings, illustrations, stories and storytellers form the background from which Rego's printmaking has grown.

Storytelling places the emphasis on the narrator who can reinvent the story afresh for each telling. In this oral tradition, meaning is not fixed in the manner of the written text, but reframed each time, often in direct response to the listener. In her work and with particular reference to her prints, Rego, recalling and revisiting her childhood, takes on the role of the narrator herself. She invents her own stories, freely interprets existing ones and delights in the telling and retelling.

Rego had her first introduction to printmaking in 1954 from Anthony Gross who taught etching at the Slade. Gross was celebrated as the master of the etched and engraved line and in her early experiments, his influence is evident, in particular in the linear composition of *The Bull Fight*. There first prints, while remaining in most cases unresolved as images, already point to a pleasure in the medium and an understanding of the delicacy of line possible through etching. Later on she was introduced to the technique of aquatint by Bartolomeu dos Santos, the Portuguese etcher. She explores this process in the small prints *Two Monkeys* and *The Nightmare*, bringing a solidity and degree of resolution to these images.

In 1982 Rego worked with Alan Cox on three large format lithographs, which refer to the *Red Monkey* paintings she had completed, and point forward to the Operas. They are ambitious works but something of the delicacy and clarity that she was able to achieve in the paintings had been lost. Colour lithography requires a separate drawing for each

colour and it is possible that considering the speed and directness of her painting at this stage, this process was simply be too slow and indirect. When she returned to lithography almost twenty years later, her approach was dramatically different. Whereas these earlier lithographs were worked on as paintings using brush and lithographic ink, the later prints would explore the drawn mark, using lithographic pencils and crayons to extend her vocabulary of drawing.

It was not until 1987 that Paula re engaged with printmaking and began a sustained commitment that has continued to the present. Edward Totah Gallery staged an exhibition of her acrylic paintings, *Girls & Dogs*, for which she approached me to work with her on a set of related etchings. This followed *The Young Predators*, an etching she had made with me at the Culford Press a few months earlier for a portfolio for the Royal College of Art.

In the making of the *Girl & Dog* series she established her *modus operandi*, which has remained unchanged since. Firstly, she would publish her own work, providing her with the freedom to explore and take risks, independent of external pressures. Secondly, the initial stages of all the series of prints would be the subject of secrecy, close to the contract of the confessional. Secrets would be exchanged and entrusted, thereby creating a climate conducive for risk taking, invention and occasional failure, secrecy itself being one of the predominant themes in her work. Thirdly, she would deploy a direct form of printmaking where she is physically involved and maintains control.

I had established the Culford Press with my wife, the painter Charlotte Hodes, in 1985 in a small room adjacent to the kitchen in our terraced house in Hackney. It was cramped, crudely equipped and set up primarily to publish our own work, but it provided an informal, secret location, which matched Rego's requirements.

The procedure for working on *Girls & Dogs* was straightforward. I would prepare a number of plates, just off square, with smoked hard ground, providing a black matt surface through which Paula could draw. Paula would work on the plates in her studio, initially drawing onto the wax with gouache, before drawing through the wax with an etching needle. She would then bring the plates round, (accompanied always by an abundance of croissants and pastries) to begin etching. The drawing at this stage would be linear and stark. The quality of the line would then be determined by the length of time in the acid, the longer in the acid, the darker the line. I would pull trial proofs so that she could see the image, now reversed through the printing process and make decisions on how to progress. It should be said that I was relatively inexperienced at working with another artist and that patience was required as we both had to learn to work together while I also had to sharpen up my technical skills. At this stage we didn't have access to an aquatint box so all the aquatints were hand shaken through a variety of scrim and old tights, providing a range from very fine through to course aquatints. The *Girls & Dog* etchings have a particular raw quality, in many cases foul biting was embraced as an addition to surface and texture, and aquatints applied with a bold sense of decision-making.

*Night Stories*, the most complex of the series shows Paula's ability to paint with aquatint while also demonstrating her extraordinary range within drawing, which makes this image bristle with visceral experience. The Totah exhibition was a critical and commercial success with considerable interest in the way printmaking could act as a counterpoint to her painting. Following this exhibition, Paula joined Marlborough Fine Art and it is significant that her first solo show with her new gallery would be *The Nursery Rhymes* in 1989.

*Rego has always identified with the least, not the mighty, taken from the child's eye view, and counted herself amongst the commonplace and the disregarded, by the side of the beast, not the beauty. But she has also confronted, even celebrated, the powers emanating from this quarter: hers are not simplistic tales of victims and oppressors at all, but constantly surprise the viewer with unexpected reversals. Her sympathy with naïveté, her love of its double character, its weakness and its force, led her to nursery rhymes as a new source for her imagery.'* (Mariner Warner)<sup>iii</sup>

The Nursery Rhyme etchings immediately established Rego as one of the foremost graphic artists of her generation. The prints were made after an intense period of painting, resulting in a major retrospective at the Guilbenkian Foundation, Lisbon and the critical and popular success of her solo exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery. It also tragically coincided with the death of her husband Victor Willing after a long struggle with multiple sclerosis.

*The Nursery Rhymes* represented a project that Rego had had in mind for some while but held back until the time and conditions were right. Her position as an artist with Marlborough now gave her the support necessary to promote and distribute such an ambitious project, but even so, the first few months of working on the project were conducted in secret, until it became obvious that the work was going well and that it had a momentum that was unstoppable. Prior to starting *The Nursery Rhymes*, Rego had completed *The Dance*, (purchased by the Tate Gallery). This was a very complex painting not only for its scale, 213x274cms, her largest painting to date, but also for the emotional content in the wake of her husband's death. To begin on a series of small etchings seemed to provide the release of a wealth of stories, held in abeyance while resolving *The Dance*. The outpouring of these images, 35 in total, made within a period of 4-5 months was at times, almost terrifying.

*'Rego finds printmaking extremely satisfying, not only as an antidote to painting, but as a means by which images may flow thick and fast from her mind.'* (Fiona Bradley)<sup>iv</sup>

Rego decided on two formats, one just off square 21x22.5cms and the other a vertical 32x21cms. Once again, plates were prepared with hardground and delivered to her studio. From the outset Paula wanted to make each print different. While *The Nursery Rhymes* portfolio can obviously be seen as a suite, they are each in fact self-contained miniature paintings, completely resolved within their own terms. This is a characteristic of all Rego's etchings. While many artists use printmaking to develop their drawings or to make small versions of their paintings, Rego's prints are unique stories made through

etching and aquatint and with the exception of the *Abortion* prints, which I will discuss later, do not exist in any other form. In virtually all cases, the print would begin with a drawing through the hard ground wax.

*Familiar with English Nursery Rhymes from her own childhood, the artist found them a rich sources of inspiration, images for each rhyme either existing already in her mind, or coming to her on waking, having read a rhyme before going to sleep in the hope of finding inspiration in the night.*” (Fiona Bradley)<sup>v</sup>

In this series, Rego was concerned to have a clear outline which would provide the framework onto which she could paint the aquatint. The prints look as if they had been made effortlessly, but it is worth remembering the difficulties presented to the artist when using aquatint. Firstly the artist has to work backwards from light to dark, stopping out the areas of tone, beginning with the areas that are to remain white. Some of these prints have upward of 10 tonal gradations, where the final areas of the plate left exposed to the acid for the longest time, print back. To orchestrate these subtle tonal gradations, each day I would prepare a test strip to gauge accurately the length of time in the acid needed to achieve each tone. Rego would often be working on up to four plates simultaneously, so careful notes had to be kept of what stage each plate was at. To a hidden observer, the studio would resemble a scene from Disney’s *Sorcerer’s Apprentice*, with plates being juggled and controlled panic all round.

In terms of the control of tone, *Polly Put the Kettle On* is a masterwork. The bare linear drawing provides the framework onto which the tonal solidity of the print is built, while details like the plates on the dresser are realised with great economy through a few deft brush strokes. But she also creates an impression of colour; the dark uniforms of the little soldiers against the white aprons of the disproportionably large young girls conjure up the impression of rich deep colour. Paula, commenting on the print is disarmingly pragmatic. *I remember not knowing what to do next and I was sitting there at this table where there was one of Carmen’s dolls; so I just started by drawing the doll and that turned into the big girl. The other girl’s face is a sort of self-portrait, which I did from the mirror to see how the shadows fell.*<sup>vi</sup>

In *Little Miss Muffet 1*, the hand shaken aquatint becomes a starry sky, in contrast to the flatter acquaints that described the spider and Miss Muffet caught together in the moonlight. There are overtones of David Cronenberg’s film *The Fly* (1986) where the daring scientist gradually transmutes into an insect and of course Kafka’s *Metamorphosis*. Rego said, *I haven’t read Freud but this is what he says apparently that spiders are mother figures, not letting you get away. So I made it with lots of grabbing arms and hairy, sticky bits-horrible.*<sup>vii</sup>

While the intention for Rego is to resolve each of the prints instantly, this was rarely the case in practice. Occasionally a print would come together ‘at one sitting’ but one of the great strengths of Rego as a printmaker is her tenacity to do whatever is necessarily to produce the required image. In this respect, she would have no hesitation in reworking a plate, which to others might look very beautiful, if the image and consequently the story

weren't clear. The print and indeed the niceties of printmaking, clean lines, rich aquatints, were always subordinate to the desire to make an image, which carries the story. This tenacity is most evident in *Sing a Song a Sixpence*; the overall drawn composition was established early on and the plate was subsequently re-aquatinted on numerous occasions, going round the houses to try to find a resolution. Finally, on the verge of abandoning the plate, the aquatints were polished down, leaving behind a ghost image onto which the three central figures and the foreground were again re-aquatinted and it seemed to work. It was important for Rego that there were 24 blackbirds actually in the print, although the one flying the highest seems to have undergone a transformation into a dove. A further strength in these prints is the way that although many rely on dark shadows, the shadows are never used to conceal. She is very aware that the mystery in an image is in what the viewer can see. This is nowhere more apparent than in *The Encampment*, a large format print made immediately after the Nursery Rhymes, which while presenting a scene of stories under a night sky, allows everything to be seen. *The Nursery Rhymes* were greeted with immediate popular and critical success and since 1989 have been exhibited throughout the world, bringing new audiences to her work.

In 1994, she produced a further five prints for the publication of the Folio Society edition of the Nursery Rhymes. These included, *Rub a dub-dub*, a particularly rich and atmospheric print featuring three old men being attended to by three women, the clues to the identity of the men provided by a still life on the table with a loaf of bread, a candlestick and a very dead chicken. In contrast the two prints for *Old Mother Hubbard* suggest sheets of drawings, reminiscent of her *Opera* paintings, rather than representing a single coherent space.

Success also brings expectations and there was now an audience eager to see how this series could be matched. In the meantime Rego was appointed the first Associate Artist at the National Gallery London and only made a few individual prints over the next two years. Rego finds working on individual prints quite difficult since there is not the head of steam that is produced when working on a group or series. Working on a number of plates also gives scope for a range of decision making, while still maintaining a momentum; if in doubt, some images can be placed on hold, while other can be progressed. Working on a single print can be a slow process with long gaps for etching and proofing, and can slow down the decision making to the point when concentration is lost. This was very apparent in the making of *The Wild Duck*, a commission for the Contemporary Arts Society. This etching had more profound changes than almost any of her etchings with the plate being reworked on numerous occasions. It was interesting however that as the print changed, so did the emotional and dramatic focus, resting eventually on the young girl sitting on the man's lap. The curtain and shadowy figures were added later with aquatint, as was the silhouette, reminiscent of Alfred Hitchcock. In the end it is a very successful print and compelling image, that belies the struggle of its making.

In 1991, following an invitation from the Folio Society, she began working on a set of prints on the theme of Peter Pan. David Case, Director of Marlborough Graphics suggested to her that she should consider using colour, an idea that she embraced.

However, neither Rego or I had any experience of coloured etching so this was a learning curve that at times was somewhat precarious. It is perhaps significant that Rego still wanted to continue to work with me in the cramped conditions at Culford Press. Her position and reputation as an artist has grown immeasurably since *The Nursery Rhymes* but we had established a very good working relationship and indeed a deep friendship.

*The Nursery Rhymes* contained some handcoloured prints, watercoloured in the tradition of hand-tinted prints in addition to some, printed chine colle, onto coloured Japanese tissue, but these gave little guidance about how to proceed with multiplate coloured etchings. Months were spent on experiments to find a way that would enable Rego to keep a grasp of the overall image and prevent the technical issues inhibiting the development of the images. The resolution to the problem was to have a key plate with the bulk of the drawn information printed in one colour, working additional plates with stencilled areas of aquatint, that could hold additional patches of colour, accurate registration being essential.

Having resolved how to work the colour technically, the second problem was to make the colour work emotionally with the images. *Children Flying* was the first print to be resolved and set the mood for the whole series. Through proofing, the colour was gradually reduced enabling the drawing to register and also ensure the prints had an expansive quality, that belies their actual size. Size and scale are very distinct. Rego is masterful at creating a monumental image within her prints. *Wendy and Hook* is a good example, Hook has to bow in order to stay within the plate making him seem awkward and ungainly, while Wendy is disproportionately small. The print also contrasts Hook with his elaborate baroque outline, as apposed to Wendy's sealed simple demeanour. Hook is showing all his cards, his sword, his hook, his elaborate wig, while Wendy meanwhile keeps her secrets hidden. The colour in this print is particularly refined, slightly musty and a sense of former, faded glory. Rego's economy of colour is further beautifully illustrated in *Mermaid drowning Wendy* where black becomes the colour of the sea at night and the faintest cold blue tint of Wendy's nightdress adds to the pathos of the overall scene.

*Neverland*, Rego's apocalyptic vision was the most complex of the whole series, with once again black as colour playing the dominant role, supported by two additional plates with sixteen colours in all. *Peter Pan* also presented Paula with a very different proposition from the *Nursery Rhymes*. Whereas nursery rhymes come from an oral tradition, ditties memorised and repeated until their original meaning is lost, *Peter Pan* comes from a written, albeit theatrical tradition. Rego asked a friend, himself a seafarer, to read her the salient parts of the play, thereby immediately disconnecting it from the original and receiving the story through the telling.

Rego's studio practice was undergoing a further transformation, which would impact on her approach to printmaking. For years she had been working with Lila, her model for years, as preparation and studies for compositions but increasing the obsession of working direction from an observed situation grew and became her mundus operandi. This became obvious in the *Dog Women* series of large pastels made directly from studio

set up. The studio began to change and resemble a theatrical costume and props store, while elaborate stages were established, furnished with extraordinary props, stuffed animals etc. So when in 2000 she embarked on the series in response to *Pendle Witches*, a set of poems of Blake Morrison, her requirements for print had changed. The plates were larger overall than the majority of her previous prints and the images were drawn directly from observation in the studio. There is a much greater emphasis on drawing in these etchings, particularly in terms of the way the line is no longer tied to the outline but enters the form to describe volume. While a number of the images place the figure within a landscape, these function like theatrical backdrops to the drama and even in *Whinny Moor*, the most atmospheric, the space depicted is never deep. The function of landscape in Rego's work is to determine a place remembered, rather than as a space to explore.

*Pendle Witches* is characterised by an emphasis on grounding the figures. Their contact with the ground is emphasised, connecting the figures with the earth and the gravitational forces acting upon the protagonists. While many of the prints use aquatint very simply, often to differentiate background from the figure as in *Pendle Witches*, in *Flood* Rego produces one of her finest prints with a full orchestration of tone, conjuring up the tragic, if not absurd, image of a woman in a bath in a storm tossed sea. The range of surfaces and textures in this print are quite remarkable, fur, metal, flesh, scales, water, held together by the boldness of the design and an unwavering command of tone.

*The Children's Crusade* followed, a project that Rego had been intrigued by for many years. This beautiful series of prints is often overlooked but show the directness that she was able to bring to her graphic work.

*Paula Rego's etchings are wonderfully poised between these two ways of seeing the Children's Crusade. She doesn't shirk the horror; hanging, crucifixion, execution and torture are part of her story. But she doesn't lose sight of innocence, either, no matter how complex its nature.'* (Blake Morrison)<sup>viii</sup>

The stark images of *Voices* rely totally on her ability to fix a pose and confront the viewer. In *Lost Girl*, she makes one of her rare drypoints, drawn directly from Frankie Rossi, the NEW director of graphics at Marlborough. A number of the prints were handcoloured, in some cases quite expressively as a counterpoint to the etched line. Charlotte Hodes handcoloured the prints, faithfully following the master copy by Rego along with detailed colour notes and instructions.

In 2000, in response to a forthcoming referendum in Portugal on abortion, Rego made a series of prints for the first time from images already resolved in paintings. This is rare in her overall output for, as I have already said, while a number of her prints reference paintings, they were never transcriptions. The *Abortion* series was different and came from a compulsion to act politically and use print to gain a wider audience for her argument. As a consequence these prints were raw, drawn directly, the urgent cross-hatching creating a bleak interior landscape in which the girls endure alone. The basic props of furniture serve to highlight the sense of isolation and abandonment while the expressive power of her drawing is ideal for the incised line of etching, where the line is bitten by the acid into the metal. They make for uncomfortable viewing, and while a



comparison with Goya was often made with *the Nursery Rhymes*, it is in this series that she really takes on his mantle and presents with compassion, and understanding, a view of the human condition at its most elemental.

Rego is always a political artist insofar as she seeks to challenge the status quo, and overturn existing hierarchies but in the *Abortion* series, one can sense the anger and a voice demanding to be heard. It is easy to forget the rich tradition within printmaking of political discourse, including Hogarth and Daumier and more recently Kentridge. Prints can get out in the world quicker than painting, find their way into places that painting cannot and as a process that allows for multiple and therefore cheaper copies, reach a wider audience. These are essential ingredients if you want to effect change. In the introduction to the exhibition of these prints in Lisbon, Jorge Molder writes *The next moment of the artist's work does not follow any particular story: it accompanies or, better denounces a condition. Another word might have been employed because, in human things, 'condition' suggests a permanent state. But Paula Rego works, in this nameless moment, precisely on this permanence of things, of things that could and should change, and yet do not.*<sup>ix</sup>

Rego's career has been characterised by her need to set up fresh challenges both for herself and her audience. The measure of her as an artist is the manner in which she drives herself forward, putting herself under pressure to extend her visual language and continually renew herself. Although, as I mentioned earlier, Rego had worked on some lithographs in 1982 with Alan Cox, and later with Michael Taylor, she didn't really engage with the media until 2001. In retrospect this is strange since lithography is the natural process for the draughtsman. Of all the printmaking processes, it is most like direct drawing, since the artist can draw with crayons, pencils and ink, and the tonal variation and nuance of mark is controlled primarily by the artist at the moment of drawing rather than, through the etching as in intaglio. Also, while in etching, the artist uses a needle to draw through a wax ground on metal, a very different experience to drawing on paper, in lithography the very similarity to drawing conceals the subtle difference. The artist has to be aware that he or she is actually drawing with the grease content of the material and that tonalities need to be built up subtly in order to avoid an area merely printing a dead black. Also, while in etching the embossed edge of the plate asserts the parameters of the print, in lithography the edge must be defined by the artist. Furthermore, the scale of mark is radically different between the two mediums, etching offering a range beginning with the finest hairline, while in lithography it begins with something closer to the width of a pencil mark, (although the artist can work into areas of black with a needle to create fine white incised lines). -These can seem minor differences but they represent a major adjustment on behalf of the artist, if they are to exploit the rich possibilities a new medium offers. It is also important, particularly for Rego, to establish a relationship with the printer that goes beyond the merely professional and engages in a sense of common purpose. Stanley Jones was the ideal collaborator, having not only been at the Slade with her as a student, but is widely regarded as the lithographer responsible for the modern development of lithography as a medium for artists in the UK.

At the Curwen Studio Jones had developed in the past very close relationships with the artists he had worked with, notably Ceri Richards and Henry Moore and he immediately established a sensitive rapport with Rego. One of Jones's great strengths as a collaborator is his ability to begin with what artists want and not impose a preconceived idea of what they might need. While lithography can easily become a complicated process, it has been important for Rego that it is kept as direct as possible and under Jones's direction she was able, after initial trials, to work fluently with this new medium.

She worked on over 25 lithographs on the theme of *Jane Eyre* at the Curwen Studio between 2001-2002, drawing on stones, plates, specially made transfer paper, and film. There is an immediate difference between these lithographs and her etchings; not only in terms of the increased scale, the largest being the triptych *Getting Ready for the Ball* which measures 82x180cms but also in the way they reference the mark making of her pastels and the directness of her drawing. Jones notes "that pastel and lithographic crayon have a parallel quality, a similar feel, so the stones that we prepared for her were medium fine in order to further connect with this experience of pastel on paper".<sup>x</sup> In the series, *The Guardians*, she made drawings in her studio onto transfer paper with lithographic chalks, which were then transferred onto lithographic plates. They demonstrate Rego's enthusiasm for drawing and her ability to orchestrate the tonal range, possible in lithography. *Mr Rochester*, features her close friend Anthony Rudolf who is cast in the role of Rochester, sitting astride a fibreglass horse rented from BBC props, in an ironic play on power and wealth. The undrawn areas give this print a sense of air and sky, while also highlighting the drawn areas which define the figure, horse, dog and tree. *Crumpled*, *Jane Eyre* and *Up the Tree*, continue a long running preoccupation with the expressive power of skirts as containers of secrets. These beautiful prints show the spontaneity of her drawing and how observation informs and enriches her imaginative vision. In the series, *The Sensuality of the Stone*, Rego works directly on the litho stones at the Curwen Studio. These are more inventive compositions, worked on from preparatory drawings and has a softness, which is associated with stone lithography. In these prints, one can sense Rego responding to the surface of the stone as well as its organic shape as she feels her way to define the edge of the drawing. Rego is an impatient artist and lithography by its nature can be a slow process. In order to offset this and avoid wasting time she worked on a number of plates as well as having stones to work directly on in the studio, to fill some of those gaps. Furthermore as Jones comments "She really got under the skin of working with grained film, a method we developed in the studio, which is a quick way for the artist to see the image resolved in terms of plate and press, a contraction of the usual time necessary in lithography".<sup>xi</sup> In addition, this process is ideal for the accurate rendering of washes, which Rego clearly exploits in the liquidity of the drawing in *Bertha*.

Black is the dominant colour in all the lithographs, the colour of the master drawing that governs the image while the additional colour is added (as in her handcoloured etchings) as tint, to differentiate areas and to lead the viewer around the image. In the print, *Come to Me*, while the master drawing is still black, the blue of the dress and the full-bodied burnt sienna of the background provide an emphatic emotional note which gives the strident lithograph an expressionist quality.

Whether is it through etching or lithography, Rego's prints are a vital element in her overall vocabulary. She uses print to lead her audience to the childhood illustrations and stories that have informed her work. But, printmaking also has a function to make an image reproducible without any loss of quality or scale, each print in the edition being a faithful copy of the matrix. Paula as a storyteller needs an audience and printmaking provides her with a means for distributing her ideas throughout the world, and making her vision accessible to a wider audience. There is a generosity in these prints and an understanding of the power of the printed image. They are not minor works but complete images resolved through the manner of their making.

Professor Paul Coldwell

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<sup>1</sup> Rosenthal T.G 2003 *Paula Rego: The complete graphic works* London, Thames and Hudson 2003

<sup>1</sup> McEwen, J. 1992 *Paula Rego* London, Phaidon

<sup>1</sup> Warner, M. 1994 *Paula Rego Nursery Rhymes* London, The Folio Society

<sup>1</sup> Bradley, F. 1997 *Paula Rego* London, Tate Gallery Publishing

<sup>1</sup> Bradley, F. 1997 *Paula Rego* London, Tate Gallery Publishing

<sup>1</sup> Rego, P. 1990 in McEwen, J. *Paula Rego: The Nursery Rhymes* London, South Bank Centre

<sup>1</sup> Rego, P. 1990 in McEwen, J. *Paula Rego: The Nursery Rhymes* London, South Bank Centre

<sup>1</sup> Morrison, B. 1990 *The Children's Crusade* London, Enitharmon Press

<sup>1</sup> Molder, J. 1999 *Paula Rego Untitled* Lisbon, Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian

<sup>1</sup> Stanley Jones in conversation with Paul Coldwell, Cambridge, 2004

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Further information on his work can be found on

[www.icfar.co.uk/artists/paulcoldwell](http://www.icfar.co.uk/artists/paulcoldwell)

[www.chelsea.arts.ac.uk/17209.htm](http://www.chelsea.arts.ac.uk/17209.htm)

[www.dam.org/coldwell/](http://www.dam.org/coldwell/)

[www.camberwell.arts.ac.uk/15550.htm](http://www.camberwell.arts.ac.uk/15550.htm)

[www.arts.ac.uk/research/digitalsurface/](http://www.arts.ac.uk/research/digitalsurface/)

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