**Paula Rego**

**Visions of English Literature**

Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery

18 October 2025 – 18 January 2026

|  |
| --- |
|  |
|  | A painting of a person in a cart  AI-generated content may be incorrect. |

“We interpret the world through stories... everybody makes in their own way sense of things, but if you have stories it helps.” Paula Rego

An exhibition of the internationally renowned Portuguese-British artist Paula Rego (1935 - 2022) will open at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery this October. Presented by Hayward Gallery Touring, ***Paula Rego: Visions of English Literature*** will showcase the artist’s remarkable printmaking practice, taking a deep look into the literary influences that have inspired Rego’s works.

One of the great printmakers and storytellers of our time, Paula Rego drew inspiration from a vast range of sources - from traditional folklore and fairy tales, to literary classics and nursery rhymes. ***Paula Rego: Visions of English Literature*** will present three of the artist’s most ambitious and profound series of works in printmaking: *Nursery Rhymes*, *Peter Pan* and *Jane Eyre*, made across a decade of the artist’s life. Each series will be accompanied by a variety of personal items from the artist, many of which have rarely been publicly displayed. Preparatory sketches, etching plates and Rego’s very own childhood copy of *Peter Pan*will offer audiences an intimate portrayal of the artist's lifelong fascination with literature and insight into how the artist transformed this material into startlingly original and unexpected pictures.

From menacing oversized creatures etched into life from children’s nursery rhymes such as *Little Miss Muffet*and *Three Blind Mice,* to the almost hallucinatory depictions of Neverland from *Peter Pan* and the tumultuous relationships based on power that characterise *Jane Eyre,* Rego's work tells stories that combine fantasy and imagination with innocence and cruelty. They explore the complexities of life and the experience of women in particular, in all its strangeness and mystery. ***Paula Rego: Visions of English Literature*** aims to spark new ways of seeing the world from audiences in relation to these seemingly familiar, age-old stories.

The exhibition coincides with the launch of a new monograph on Rego, published by Hayward Gallery Publishing. This treasure of a book is the first to focus in detail on Rego's literary sources. It features essays by Marco Livingstone, Rosanna McLaughlin and Marina Warner that offer audiences an intimate portrayal of the artist’s lifelong fascination with literature, and an insight into how the artist transformed this material into startlingly original, rebellious and unexpected images.

Hayward Gallery Touring is the UK’s largest contemporary art organisation producing exhibitions that tour Britain. As part of the Southbank Centre, an engine of creativity for the nation’s artists and audiences, Hayward Gallery Touring is passionate about the important role that cultural institutions play in providing access to the arts. ***Paula Rego: Visions of English Literature***will bring a unique cultural experience to new audiences up and down the UK, providing an opportunity to step into the world and mind of one of the most important figurative artists of her generation.

**Brian Cass, Senior Curator, Hayward Gallery Touring**,says:

“Throughout her life, Paula Rego used printmaking as a central tool of her art. Taking inspiration from literature, she connected with stories in very personal ways, using them to articulate the conditions of her own life and draw her desires, dreams, fears, and traumas into sequences of remarkable pictures.

Hayward Gallery Touring had the honour of working with Paula Rego on a small travelling show in the 1990s. We are absolutely delighted to continue this relationship 35 years later, and by collaborating with a range of exhibition partners, celebrate her unique art and vision with audiences across the UK.”

**Councillor Margaret Dewsbury, Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships, Norfolk County Council**, says:

“Paula Rego is one of the most important artists of our times and I am delighted that we are hosting this exhibition of her printmaking at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery. These playful and thought-provoking works provide an engaging and accessible introduction to her always fascinating oeuvre.” **Lisa Newby,** **Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery**, says:

“This exhibition is a wonderful opportunity to explore the fusion of imaginative storytelling and exceptional printmaking skills in Paula Rego's work. It has been fantastic to work with Hayward Gallery Touring to bring Rego's evocative prints to Norwich."

**Paula Rego’s Estate,** says:

“Life with Paula was filled with stories, humour and mischief and she always seemed to have her own, surprising twist on the books she read. She often said that she had the most fun making the prints for these series because the stories were already laid out for her, but there’s no question that she made them her own. We’d like to thank Hayward Gallery Touring for mounting this exhibition.”

***Paula Rego: Visions of English Literature*** will be a long-standing touring exhibition, taking residency at further locations following its presentation at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery. A Hayward Gallery Touring exhibition. It has been developed with the support of Paula Rego’s Estate.

**-ENDS-**

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**Image Credit**

●      *The Neverland*, 1992,Coloured etching and aquatint, Paper and Image: 57.3 x 71.4 cm - 22 1/2 x 28 1/8 in, Edition of 50.© Ostrich Arts Ltd | Paula Rego Estate. Courtesy Ostrich Arts Ltd and Cristea Roberts Gallery.

**Paula Rego Image Terms and Conditions**

* The permission may only be used as requested.
* The image must be accompanied by the full caption and credit lines provided.
* The image must be reproduced in full colour and should not be altered, cropped or overwritten with text in any way.
* Please use the full image plus a margin of white around the image so that the image looks like the print.
* Should you wish to use the images for publicity or marketing purposes, beyond those already agreed, separate permission must be sought from the artist via Cristea Roberts Gallery.

***Paula Rego: Visions of English Literature***

162pp, hardback, with ribbon and foldout

Essays by Marco Livingstone, Rosanna McLaughlin and Marina Warner

Foreword by Brian Cass

Designed by Wolfe Hall

RRP £25; special exhibition price £17

**About Hayward Gallery Touring**

Hayward Gallery Touring is the UK’s largest contemporary art organisation producing touring exhibitions. Based at Southbank Centre, Hayward Gallery Touring works with a range of artists, curators, designers and writers to develop curatorial projects and ambitious exhibitions that are often beyond the scope of a single institution.

Hayward Gallery Touring’s programme includes the British Art Show - the largest and most significant exhibition of contemporary art produced in the UK - as well as thematic group shows and monographic exhibitions created for venues including museums, galleries, art centres, libraries, schools, hospitals and other unexpected partners and places.

Hayward Gallery Touring exhibitions are seen by up to half a million people in over 45 cities and towns each year.

**About the Southbank Centre**

The Southbank Centre is the UK’s largest multi-arts centre and engages the most diverse audiences of any performing arts organisation in the UK. Our biggest venue, the Royal Festival Hall (2,700 seats) is the lasting legacy of the 1951 Festival of Britain and the ambition and values of that project – that arts, ideas, innovation and culture can heal communities and should be available and accessible to everyone – are still our guiding principles today. The Southbank Centre is uniquely able to offer a wide-ranging, inclusive and world-class artistic programme spanning contemporary visual arts, music, dance, performance, literature, comedy and spoken word across the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, the Hayward Gallery and our free spaces. We are also home to the National Poetry Library, the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) and six resident orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Philharmonia Orchestra).

[www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/)

**About Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery**

One of the city’s most famous landmarks, Norwich Castle’s mighty stone keep was built by the Normans as a royal palace over 900 years ago and spent at least 500 years as the county prison.  
  
Today the Castle site – which sits atop the largest man-made motte in England – incorporates both the medieval keep (recently reopened following a major redevelopment) and a museum and art gallery housed in the converted buildings of the Victorian-era prison. The museum is home to some of the most outstanding collections of fine and decorative arts, archaeology and natural history, not only in the region, but the country. The Castle’s special exhibition galleries host an ambitious programme of changing exhibitions.

Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery is part of Norfolk Museums Service (NMS), a multi-award-winning service comprising ten museums and a study centre across the county. NMS is a partnership between Norfolk County Council and Norfolk's district councils, funded through council tax, earned income and grants. NMS is regarded as one of the leading museum services in the UK: since April 2018 it has been an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) tasked with providing leadership to the sector.

NMS has also received major investment across a number of projects and sites from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, including a major grant for the *Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn*project to transform Norwich Castle’s Norman Keep, which opened in 2025.

[www.norwichcastle.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.norwichcastle.norfolk.gov.uk/)