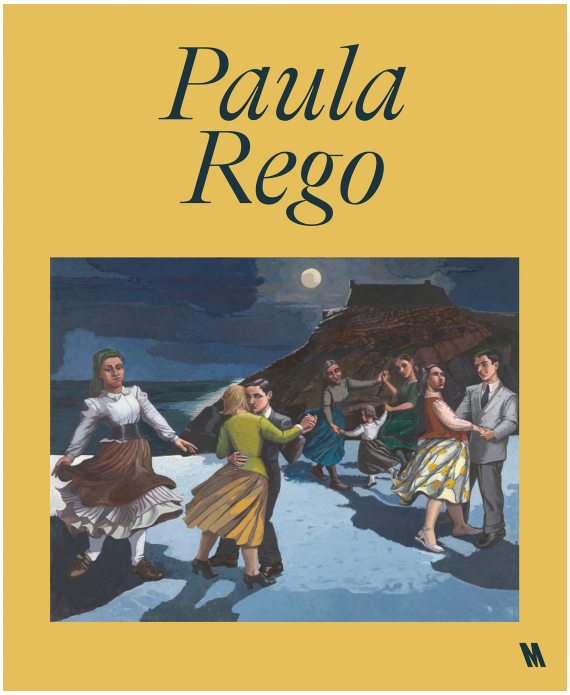
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Paula Rego – Dance Among Thorns

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Edited by Heidi Bale Amundsen

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- Showcases Paula Rego's fiercely political, fantastical depictions of gender, the body and power across her long career
- Situates Rego's work against Portuguese dictatorship and contemporary global threats to women's bodily autonomy
- Offers the most comprehensive presentation of the exhibition at the MUNCH Museum, Oslo.*Paula Rego – Dance Among Thorns*, with all works reproduced. The exhibition runs from 24th April to 2nd August, 2026
- Highlights Paula Rego's inspiration from Edvard Munch's art for the first time, revealing visual and thematic affinities between their works
- Paints an intense, nuanced portrait of an artist who never stopped challenging aesthetic norms and political oppression

British Portuguese Paula Rego (1935–2022) carved out her place in international art history with a self-possessed, uncompromising expression and a burning commitment to fighting oppression and lack of freedom. She grew up in Portugal under António de Oliveira Salazar's dictatorship, which imposed strong constraints, especially on women's freedom, and throughout her long career Rego dissected the relationship between gender, the body and power in a dark, fantastical visual language. At a time when authoritarian forces are on the rise across the world and women's right to control their own bodies is under pressure, her images feel more relevant than ever. The exhibition*Paula Rego – Dance Among Thorns* presents Rego's powerful and unsettling body of work in its full breadth. The catalog includes all works on display and a collection of new texts by the exhibition's curator Kari J. Brandtzæg as well as by Catarina Alfaro, Isabel Freire and Jennifer Higgie. Together, they sketch an intense and nuanced portrait of an artist who never ceased to challenge – whether aesthetically or politically.

Catarina Alfaro is a researcher and curator with a master's degree in museology and cultural heritage from Universidade Nova de Lisboa (2009). Between 2001 and 2010 she collaborated with the Modern Art Centre of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon on a catalogue raisonné of Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso's oeuvre, and several exhibitions. From 2011 to 2014 Alfaro was chief curator at Casa das Histórias Paula Rego in Cascais before taking up her current position as coordinator for programming and conservation.

Kari J. Brandtzæg is a senior curator at the Munch Museum, and holds a master's degree on Russian art at the turn of the last century and a PhD on Henrik Sørensen and interwar tendency art (University of Oslo, 2024). Since joining the Munch Museum in 2015, Brandtzæg has curated several significant exhibitions, including*Tracey Emin / Edvard Munch: The Loneliness of the Soul (2021)*, and *Vanessa Baird: Go Down with Me (2024)*.

Isabel Freire is a researcher, journalist and secondary school teacher with a philosophy degree from NOVA FCSH and a PhD in sociology from ICS-ULisboa. Her work focuses on the history of sexuality, women's history, women's associations and feminisms in twentieth-century Portugal. Her latest book*Compassos Feministas: Associações Federadas no Conselho das Mulheres Portuguesas* (1914–1947) (2023), won the Maria Lamas Prize for Studies on Women, Gender and Equality in 2024.

Jennifer Higgie is an Australian writer who lives in London, and previously the editor of*frieze* magazine. Her novel *Bedlam* (Bloomsbury) will be released in the UK and US in July 2026. Her recent books include *The Other Side: A Journey into Women, Art and the Spirit World* (Bloomsbury, 2023) and *The Mirror and the Palette: Revolution, Rebellion and Resilience: 500 Years of Women's Self-Portraits* (Simon & Schuster, 2021).







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