

## Chantal Joffe: *Pastels*

**Private View 5.30 – 7.30pm, Saturday 14 April 2018**

Exhibition 14 April – 19 May 2018

**Victoria Miro Venice**, Il Capricorno, San Marco 1994, 30124 Venice, Italy



**Chantal Joffe**, *Self-Portrait*, 2015  
Pastel on paper  
47.6 x 37.8 x 3.8 cm / 18 3/4 x 14 7/8 x 1 1/2 in  
© the artist

**Victoria Miro is delighted to present an exhibition of new and recent pastels by Chantal Joffe. This is the first exhibition by the artist comprising solely of pastel works on paper. It marks a return to Venice for Joffe who, between 1999 and 2011, exhibited four times at Galleria Il Capricorno.**

‘When you change the medium, you change everything.’ – Chantal Joffe

Chantal Joffe brings a combination of insight and integrity, as well as psychological and emotional force, to the genre of figurative art. In these recent works, the sense of mobile immediacy that distinguishes Joffe’s paintings is intensified. Focusing on relatives, friends and herself in scenes of leisure and domestic life, she brings images robustly to life using sticks of coloured pastel on fine-toothed paper.

While drawing has always been integral to Joffe’s practice, the medium of pastel offers a number of unique challenges and opportunities. Joffe has described the absorbing, as well as the highly physical experience of the work’s making, the thickly applied pastel accumulating with a luminous purity that is markedly different from the act of painting and the ways in which oil behaves on canvas or board. ‘You can get a kind of brutality with pastel that you can’t with paint,’ Joffe explains. ‘With paint there’s always an extension of your arm and brush. Whereas pastel is so primitive. You can’t draw hard enough.’

This highly visceral process of laying down line, form and colour serves to condense an always palpable sense of connection between artist and subject in Joffe’s work. Conveying both the physicality of her engagement and the movement of the human bodies she portrays, these works build upon complex narratives about perception and representation. Ostensibly depicting scenes from everyday life – a windswept walk along beach, the artist’s daughter, dancing, sewing or putting on a shoe – the works in this exhibition alert us to the endless nuance of bodily expression and the myriad ways in which we reveal ourselves and communicate emotion, such as happiness, sadness, confidence, doubt or even distraction, consciously or not. Ideas of interiority and exteriority, intimacy and self-disclosure, are further explored in series of naked self-portraits, in which the artist’s unflinching scrutiny is directed towards herself.

A sideways glance, a body turning away from the viewer, an arm or leg jutting out of the frame... Such askance viewpoints characterise work driven not only by observation but, as the artist has said, an attempt to sense 'how people are.' Like the subjects she portrays, Joffe's art catches us off-guard. Defined by its clarity, honesty and empathetic warmth it is attuned to our awareness as both observers and observed beings, apparently simple yet always questioning, complex and emotionally rich.

Born in 1969, **Chantal Joffe** lives and works in London. She holds an MA from the Royal College of Art and was awarded the Royal Academy Wollaston Prize in 2006. Joffe has exhibited nationally and internationally at institutional venues including the National Museum of Iceland, Reykjavik (2016); National Portrait Gallery, London (2015); Jewish Museum, New York (2015); Jerwood Gallery, Hastings (2015); Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy (2014 – 2015); Saatchi Gallery, London (2013 – 2014); MODEM, Hungary (2012); Mackintosh Museum, Glasgow (2012); Turner Contemporary, Margate (2011); Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, New York (2009); University of the Arts, London (2007); MIMA Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (2007); Royal Academy of Arts, London (2005); Galleri KB, Oslo (2005) and Bloomberg Space, London (2004). Joffe's work has been featured in the recent exhibitions *ISelf Collection: The End of Love* at the Whitechapel Gallery, London (2017); *Hope and Hazard: A Comedy of Eros*, curated by Eric Fischl, at Hall Art Foundation, Reading, Vermont (2017); and in the current exhibition *From Life* at the Royal Academy of Arts, London (until 11 March 2018).

An exhibition of recent works by the artist, titled *Personal Feeling is the Main Thing*, will be on display at The Lowry, Salford (19 May – 2 September 2018). The exhibition will include a number of works by the German artist Paula Modersohn-Becker (1876 – 1907), whose paintings of women and children are an enduring influence on Joffe.

Joffe will create a major new public work for the Elizabeth line station at Whitechapel. Titled *A Sunday Afternoon in Whitechapel*, the work will be on view when the Crossrail station opens in December 2018. *Art Capital: Art for the Elizabeth line*, which brings together unseen material by all the artists contributing to the Crossrail Art Programme, will be on display at the Whitechapel Gallery (13 March – 6 May 2018).

**For further press information please contact:**

**Victoria Miro**

Kathy Stephenson | Director of Communications | [kathy@victoria-miro.com](mailto:kathy@victoria-miro.com) | +44 (0) 20 7549 0422

**Rees & Company**

Alice Evans | [alice@reesandco.com](mailto:alice@reesandco.com) | + 44 (0) 75 1547 5411 | +44 (0) 20 3137 8776