

Victoria Miro

The Sky was Blue the Sea was Blue and the Boy was Blue

Exhibition 24 February–31 March 2021

Victoria Miro on Vortic



Paula Rego, *The Sky was Blue the Sea was Blue and the Boy was Blue*, 2017
Pastel on paper on aluminium
160 x 120 cm
63 x 47 1/4 in
© Paula Rego
Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro

Milton Avery, Jules de Balincourt, Ali Banisadr, NS Harsha, Secundino Hernández, Ilse D'Hollander, Chantal Joffe, Isaac Julien, Idris Khan, John Kørner, Chris Ofili, Celia Paul, Grayson Perry, Howardena Pindell, Tal R, Paula Rego, Do Ho Suh, Sarah Sze, Flora Yukhnovich.

Titled after an eponymous 2017 work by Paula Rego, *The Sky was Blue the Sea was Blue and the Boy was Blue* presents blue works by nineteen Victoria Miro artists and explores the colour's broad symbolic and conceptual associations through a range of media. The exhibition looks at artists working with blue not merely as a colour, but as an essential element to the work's meaning and interpretation, as a compositional device, or to suggest a particular mood or atmosphere.

The exhibition includes new works by Jules de Balincourt, Ali Banisadr, Idris Khan, NS Harsha, Secundino Hernández, Chris Ofili and Flora Yukhnovich, and key examples by Milton Avery, Ilse D'Hollander, Chantal Joffe, John Kørner, Isaac Julien, Celia Paul, Grayson Perry, Howardena Pindell, Tal R, Paula Rego, Do Ho Suh and Sarah Sze.

From the earliest uses of lapis lazuli in Ancient Egypt, through the Renaissance when the semi-precious stone was used to create ultramarine, a colour so venerated it was reserved to represent the Virgin and denote her heavenly robes, to Picasso's Blue Period and Yves Klein's patented IKB, blue has occupied a special place in visual culture. Used to signify both the emotional and elemental, worlds of mind and weather, harmony and sadness, blue's complex and shifting associations culturally are equalled by its elusive qualities in the natural world. Ancient languages did not have a word for blue. The blue we perceive in nature is rarely a pigment but a reflection of light. Water absorbs the longer wavelengths of red and other colours, while the shorter wavelength of blue scatters to give the sea its blue appearance. The oxygen and nitrogen molecules in our atmosphere scatter blue wavelengths when sunlight passes through it – presenting us with a blue sky. These everyday illusions account in part for the enduring metaphorical and emotional power of blue and its enigmatic place among the colours, even today.

Each of the artists featured in the exhibition employs the hue in distinctive ways; some conceptually, some emotionally, and some – as with Rego, whose work is inspired by a fateful tale by Hélia Correia in which a little boy believes his father is the sea – to tell a story. Together, the works exhibited all evoke our enduring fascination with blue – as mood, possibility, paradox, or as a reminder of the mystery of perception itself.

The exhibition is presented exclusively online and on Vortic, the leading extended reality (XR) platform for the art world.

The Sky was Blue the Sea was Blue and the Boy was Blue is live from 1pm on 24 February, Victoria Miro on Vortic.

For further press information please contact:

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