

Press Release

Victoria Miro

Chantal Joffe

24 June – 2 August 2008

Private view, Tuesday 24 June, 6 – 8pm

Victoria Miro Gallery is pleased to announce a series of new paintings by British artist Chantal Joffe.

Although well known for her expressive paintings of predominantly female figures this exhibition will include an eclectic and wide-ranging group of subjects across two distinct bodies of new work. In the main gallery, Joffe continues to work on the very large scale perfectly suited to her painterly assault on the canvas. Characterised by a fluid style and deliberate distortion of scale and form, these oversized paintings possess a distinct psychological and emotional force.

Much of Joffe's earlier work has been predicated on the "visible signage of the fashionable, especially the fashion photograph, and the fashion photograph's microsecond relations with ideas of human – female – social and sexual signalings". Hoping to find something new behind the fashion image, Joffe recently was given privileged access to personally photograph catwalk models backstage at Paris Fashion Week. She likened this to a modern day equivalent of Degas entering the world of the Royal Ballet, describing: *(in) Degas you get an extreme physicality: bending backs and cropped legs. In one sense what I saw backstage was like that perhaps, but it was also something completely other. You are plunged into thinking about the sort of girls who model and what was happening to them socially.* The nuanced facial expressions and body language of the resulting group of intimately scaled paintings – *Backstage* (2007-2008) – conveys the unexpected vulnerability the artist encountered observing these models.

Above all, Joffe's paintings reveal a sincere command of human emotion. Discussing her work in the accompanying exhibition catalogue, writer Neal Brown concludes: *Joffe has a 'disorder' in the sense that, working within the often anti-intuitive context of contemporary art, she not only seeks the truth of human emotions, but does so with unfashionable compassion and humanity. Diligently, thoughtfully, she attends to the one thing that is of most visual interest to human beings and their visual artists: the face – or, perhaps we should say, to the emotions and feelings as the face reveals and expresses them.*

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Chantal Joffe (b. 1969) has a BA from Glasgow School of Art and an MA from the Royal College of Art. She was awarded the Woollaston Prize at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition in 2006. Joffe has exhibited internationally including solo shows at Galerie Jennifer Flay in Paris, Monica de Cardenas in Milan and Il Capricorno in Venice. Group exhibitions include *...same as it ever was Painting at Chelsea 1990 – 2007*, University of the Arts, London; *DRAW*, MIMA Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art *The Wonderful Fund on Tour*, Le Musee de Marrakech, Morocco, 2005, *London Calling*, Galleri KB, Oslo, 2005, and Bloomberg Space, London, 2004.

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open Tuesday to Saturday
10am to 6pm, admission free
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tubes, Old Street and Angel