Dame Paul REGO RA

*Inês de Castro, 2014*

Oil on canvas, 122 x 145 cm

Painted by the artist, Honorary Fellow, for the College’s 60th anniversary

Reflecting Rego’s Portuguese background, in which traditional tales featured strongly, this painting is of a famous episode in Portuguese history. *Inês de Castro* (1325-1355) was a Portuguese noblewoman who was a maid in the court of Pedro the Crown Prince of Portugal. Pedro fell in love with her and they had several illegitimate children. Because of the increasing influence of Inês’ Castilian family on the court, King Alfonso had her murdered. When Pedro ascended to the throne of Portugal on his father’s death in 1357, he announced that he had secretly married Inês who was therefore the rightful queen. Legend has it that Pedro then exhumed her body, dressed her in stately robes, and required the whole court to swear allegiance to their queen by kissing the hem of her garment. The painting shows King Pedro with the exhumed body of his lover. *Inês de Castro* was buried at the Monastery of Alcobaça where Pedro was also buried when he died in 1367.

Rego painted *Inês de Castro* as a sister piece to the Hambling work; she chose to echo the pale, dusky pink and mimic the position of the central figure in the Hambling work in the character kneeling on the left. The figure of Inês allows for a replication of the diagonal composition, providing a point of focus in both the works: the dead body and the gun. The theme of one is war whilst the other is enduring love, both violent and alluring.

*The tomb of Inês de Castro at the Monastery of Alcobaça, Portugal*