

### Press release

14 March 2011



Marlene Dumas

## Marlene Dumas is being awarded The Rolf Schock Prize in The Visual Arts

Marlene Dumas is being awarded the Rolf Schock Prize in the Visual Arts for “her unique ability to depict human vulnerability and greatness, in painted works that do not shrink from showing adversity. With empathy and critical discernment, she brings issues of race, ethnocentrism, gender and sexuality to the fore”.

Marlene Dumas was born in South Africa and is now resident in Holland. She made her debut as an artist in 1977 and now has an extensive exhibition track record, with venues including the Tate Gallery in London, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Venice Biennale and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The Rolf Schock Prizes are triennial and are awarded in the fields of logic and philosophy, mathematics, the visual arts and musical arts. The prize amount is SEK 500,000 per category (USD 75,000), making a total of SEK 2 million. The prizes are awarded by The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, The Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts and The Royal Swedish Academy of Music. The award ceremony will take place in Stockholm on 2 November 2011.

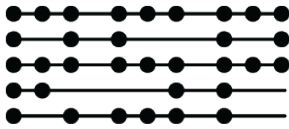
Professor Hilary Putnam has been awarded the Rolf Schock Prize in Logic and Philosophy, which is announced in a separate press release. The prizes in mathematics and music will be announced on 21 March.

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## Marlene Dumas – Visual Arts

“for her unique ability to depict human vulnerability and greatness, in painted works that do not shrink from showing adversity. With empathy and critical discernment, she brings issues of race, ethnocentrism, gender and sexuality to the fore”

The starting point for **Marlene Dumas** is invariably a photographic model. Heads and bodies appeared in her work in 1984, when she abruptly departed from abstract collages interspersed with text. She could be classified as a member of the neoexpressionist generation of painters like Francesco Clemente and Georg Baselitz, but did not emerge in the international art scene until somewhat later. Her debut took place at an art gallery in Amsterdam, Galerie Paul Andriess, which still displays her works.

The models for her paintings consist of thousands of Polaroid photographs and images torn out of newspapers and magazines. Even as a child, she was captivated by reproduced images. Humankind is her focus; but she does not merely replicate the human image. Her rendering of the model is denser, simpler and composed with swift, summary gestures. Watercolours and oils are her means of expression and, over the years, the harmonies of her palette have become increasingly strict, refined and pared down. What fascinates her and provides her range of motifs is life brought to a head, on the brink of death. There, she explores the boundaries and the body, using the paintbrush as an inquisitive eye. The photographic models can be transformed and serve as the basis of her ocular assault, without the person being exposed in a literal sense. It has been said that death has long been her theme. Bodies and grieving are conjured up in ways that are expressive, sexual and charged with latent violence. Dumas herself writes, and prefers to pre-empt the critics, with comments on her own painting.

**Marlene Dumas** was born in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1953 and grew up on the family vineyard just outside the city. In 1976, after completing her studies for a BA in Visual Arts at the University of Cape Town, she moved to Amsterdam where she still lives and works. In 1976–78 she studied at the Dutch, artist-run Ateliers '63 in Haarlem and then at the Institute of Psychology, University of Amsterdam. She made her debut as an artist in 1977 and now has an extensive exhibition track record, with venues including the Tate Gallery, London (1996); the Centre Pompidou, Paris (2001); the Saatchi Collection's The Triumph of Painting; the Venice Biennale (2005); and the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2009).

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