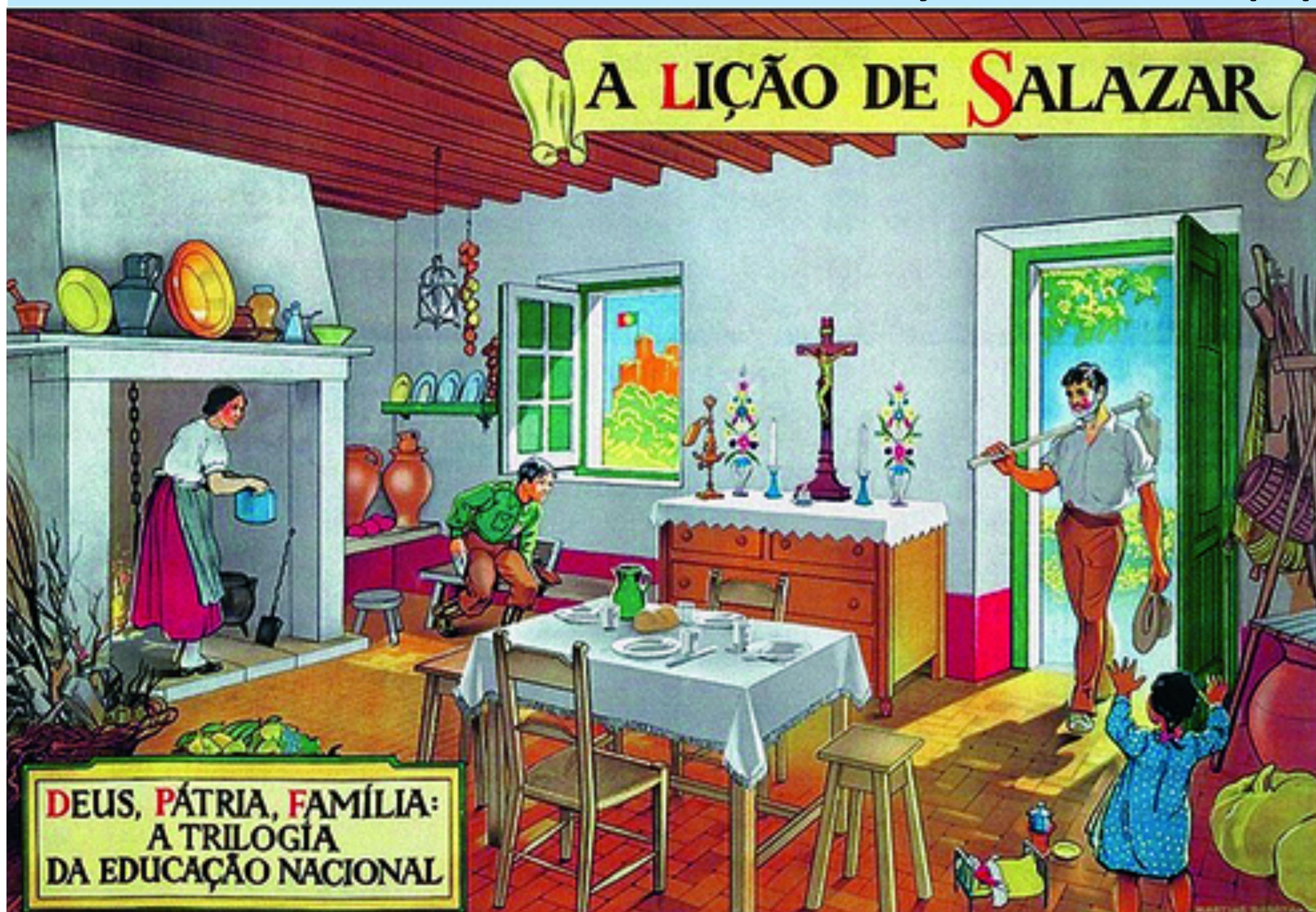


Myths Undone: Manifestations of Motherhood in Post-Dictatorship Portuguese Art and Literature

Franklin Nelson

Background

- *Estado Novo*, right-wing regime, influenced by and in touch with Catholicism (Concordat), ruled Portugal from 1933-1974. António de Oliveira **Salazar** served as Prime Minister for most of that time, profoundly impacting all of society
- Establishment of strict gender codes; **women** were to be **mothers** (like **Virgin Mary**) and responsible for the **domestic sphere**; ‘**Deus, Pátria, Família**’ was the regime’s motto
 - 25th April 1974 – ‘**Revolução dos Cravos**’ brings down the dictatorship and ushers in a **new democratic era**
- A wave of **women writers and artists** start to publish and exhibit their work in the post-Revolution years; their work is **critically acclaimed** and **popular** with the public

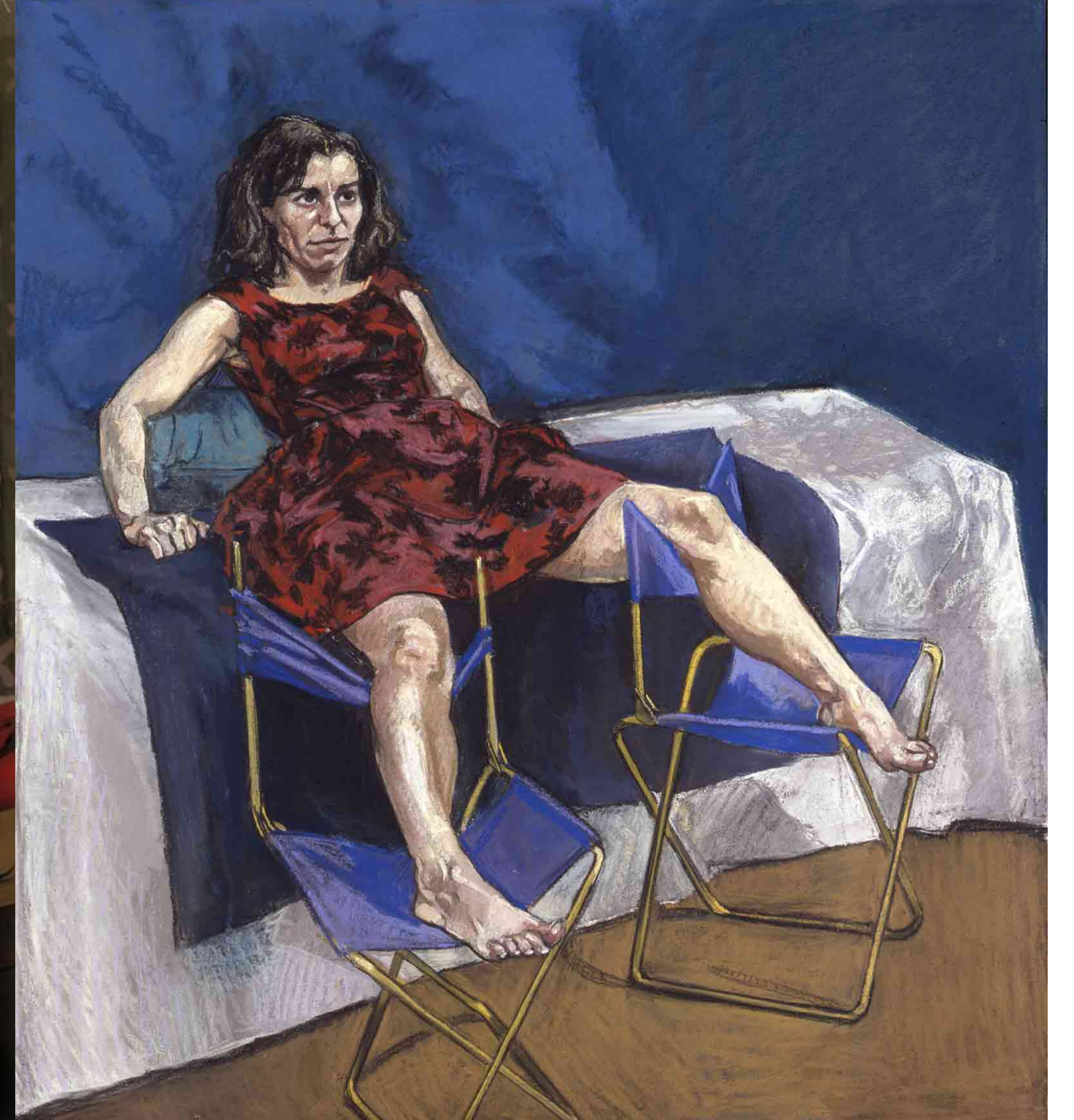


Lídia Jorge

- Born in the Algarve in 1946
- Studied at Lisbon University, later spent time in Portugal’s African colonies
- Published first novel in 1980 – has since written many more, examining recent Portuguese history
- Arguably the most successful woman writer of her generation – winner of (inter)national prizes

Paula Rego

- Born in Lisbon in 1935
- Studied at Slade School of Art in London, exhibited alongside the London Group in 1960s
- Has since exhibited across Asia, Europe, North and South America; appointed DBE in 2010
- Most successful Portuguese artist of 20th/21st Cs



Manifestations of Motherhood

- **Three areas** of investigation – mothers and daughters, motherhood in society and motherhood in the Colonial Wars
 - **Mothers and daughters** – mothers inflict **violence** done to them by their own mothers on their daughters; the **stepmother** is a key figure onto which is projected **bad feeling** between biological mother and daughter – *Snow White Plays with her Father’s Trophies* (left)
 - **Motherhood in society** – **condemnation of Salazar’s myths of maternity** (derived from Virgin Mary’s impossible example); recasting womanhood (**abortion**) and **undermining patriarchal and heteronormative frameworks**; (shades of **blue** – the Virgin Mary’s colour – are **significant** – *Untitled series (Untitled No.5, right)*
- **Motherhood in the Colonial Wars** – motherhood shown by both Jorge and Rego to be **disrupted** (stillbirths, death of infants) and **discounted** (misogyny); life cycle is **profoundly disturbed** by the violence of the Wars, a sign that the **dictatorship’s time is up** – *Life Cycle of the Virgin Mary*