

MARTA  
**CZOK** FONDAZIONE

**EX\_PATRIA**

**Marta Czok**

Curated by Jacek Ludwig Scarso



Welcome to the Golden City, Marta Czok 2023

# Curatorial Notes

In response to the theme of the Sixtieth Venice Art Biennale "Foreigners Everywhere", Fondazione Marta Czok presents EX\_PATRIA, under the patronage of the Polish Embassy in Rome: a collection of recent and historical works by Marta Czok, from the Eighties to the present day, which reflect on the construction of the concept of homeland and the ideologies that make this concept ambiguous. On the one hand, the idea of homeland conforms with the need to call a place "home" and to feel that such a home is designed to protect rights and ensure an adequate standard of living. On the other hand, the construction of this concept involves the identification of "borders", the physical and metaphorical barriers that reinforce the imaginary distinction of Self and Other.

Migration, political asylum, xenophobia and nationalist populism relate to this principle, reinforcing its symbolic meaning and the lived experience of those directly affected by this. In these works, we find a gap between those who need to leave their countries and those who have the power to determine their destiny. The politics of war, transnational bureaucracies, the impact of a global economy blur into one another, making those who remain in limbo even more vulnerable : without a place, without rights, without a home.



Ci Risiamo / Here we go again, Marta Czok 2023



Marta Czok's work develops hand in hand with her "stateless" identity: born in Lebanon in 1947, Marta Czok comes from a family of Polish political refugees: her Mother's family, at the beginning of the War, resided in the city of Ostrog, now part of present-day Ukraine, and was deported to Siberia, before rejoining the Polish army and the Allies. In the horrors of World War II, her family was subjected to prison camps, forced labour and the Katyn massacre, where 25,000 officers and members of the Polish intelligentsia, including her grandfather Stanislaw Zurakowski, were shot by the Soviets.

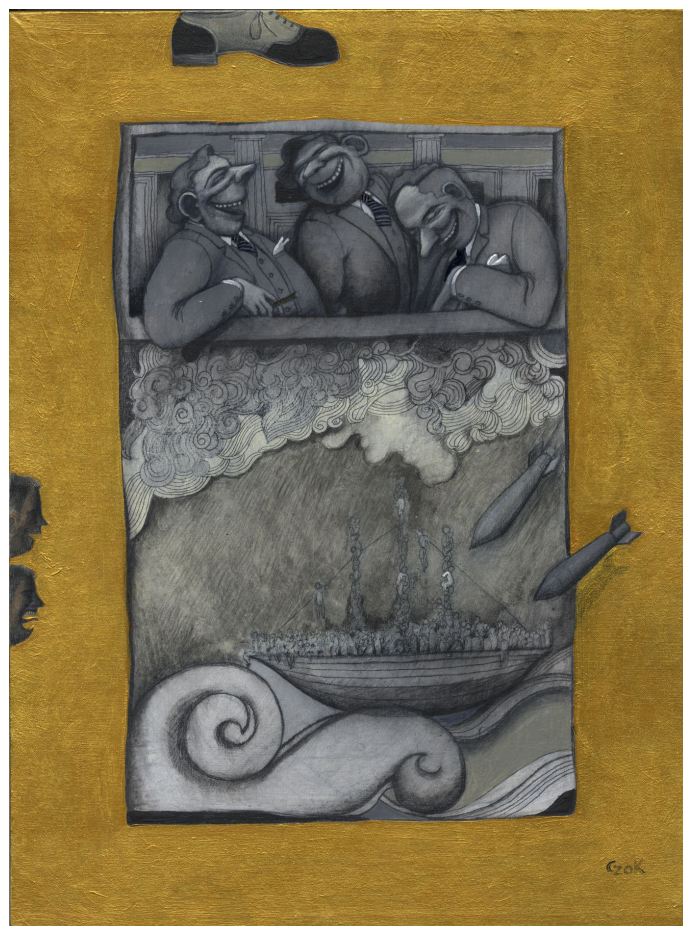
During and after the war, her family was in the Middle East: in Iran, in Lebanon, in Palestine, then back to Lebanon, before arriving in Egypt. Their hoped-for return to Poland, however, was not possible and they found political asylum in London, where they started again as landless and where Czok grew up, until she moved to Italy in the Seventies.

Marta Czok's childhood was marked by these events, because the impact of the war continued in the stories told by her family, in the precariousness of a start to life as a refugee, in the fear of further deportations and new conflicts that could arise at any moment.

***Jacek Ludwig Scarso, 2024***

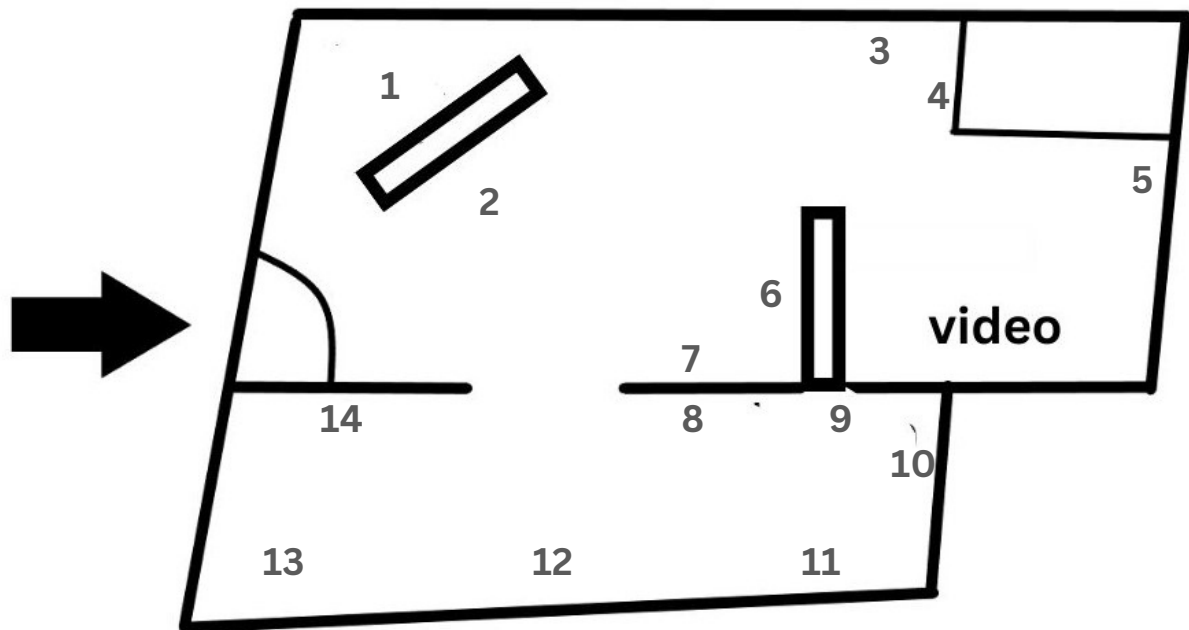


Bastion, Marta Czok 2023



A Merry Day, Marta Czok 2023

# Artworks on display



1. *Il Teutone Rotolante*, oil and graphite on canvas, 1991
2. *Perfect World*, acrylic on canvas, 2023
3. *Emigrazione*, oil on canvas, 1988
4. *Waiting on the Banks of the River*, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 2024
5. *No comment*, oil and graphite on canvas, 1996
6. *Bastion*, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 2023
7. *The Veto Boys*, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 2024
8. *Alice in Wonderland*, oil and graphite on canvas, 1996
9. *The Incredible Lightness of War*, oil and graphite on canvas, 1996
10. *A Merry Day*, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 2023
11. *Naughty*, oil and graphite on canvas, 1996
12. *Welcome to the Golden City*, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 2023
13. *Emigranti*, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 2007
14. *Ci Risiamo / Here we go again*, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 2023





## Marta Czok

British of Polish origins and based in Italy, Marta Czok was born in Beirut (Lebanon) in 1947. The following year, her family moved to London as political refugees. She lived there until 1974, completing her studies at St Martin's School of Art and taking part for several years in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition.

Over the past forty years, she has exhibited her works worldwide, with collaborations such as the "Alitalia per l'Arte" project, the Albemarle Gallery in London and the French Embassy to the Holy See. In 2008, the Polish national television TV Polonia dedicated a documentary to her, in which the relationship between her work and the Second World War was highlighted.

Among her most recent exhibitions, several deserve a special mention, including Icons&Idols, a multimedia show held in 2013 at Museo MACRO in Rome; the retrospective exhibition at Castello di Calatabiano, organised by Museo MACS in Catania, 2014; her show Mother Rome at Museo Carlo Bilotti in Rome in 2016; her solo exhibition at the Italian Institute of Culture in Warsaw, which was held in 2017; the exhibition Baroque Intrusions at Museo del Barocco al Palazzo Chigi di Ariccia, Rome in 2018; her retrospective show O Nas at Konstanciński Dom Kultury Hugonówka in Poland in 2023.

Marta Czok has worked on several touring shows, including the one dedicated to Children of War and of the Shoah at Palazzo Ferrajoli (Rome), Museo Civico di Albano and Palazzo Antico Ghetto (Padua) and About Us, an exhibition on the theme of humanity, at Palazzo dei Papi (Viterbo), Palazzo Zuckermann (Padua) and Palazzo Zenobio (Venice). In Poland, since 2020, the show To Nazywasz Sztuka? has toured first in Warsaw at the Museum of Caricature, and then in Lublin at the Centrum Spotkania Kultur, with future destinations to be announced.

With Fondazione Marta Czok, she presented the exhibitions The Rise and Fall of the Ideal City (in collaboration with Urban Visions Film Festival and TAKFLIX), Fabbrica, De Innocentia at the Vicolo Valdina Complex at the Italian Chamber of Deputies (under the patronage of the Polish Embassy in Rome and the Presidency of the Commission for Culture, Science, Education), and the upcoming exhibitions EX\_PATRIA (also under the patronage of the Polish Embassy in Rome) and Urbe, at Palazzo Montecitorio in Rome.

Marta Czok lives and works in Castel Gandolfo (Rome), Italy. Her works can be found in public and private collections worldwide.



# Jacek Ludwig Scarso

Jacek Ludwig Scarso (PhD) works as a curator and academic based in London. Since being awarded a PhD in Interdisciplinary Arts, he has worked on numerous international collaborations, including the Tate Modern in London, the British Council in Hong Kong, Galerie Weissraum in Kyoto, Pratt Institute in New York, and RMIT in Melbourne. In London, he directs the Master's Degree in Public Art and Performative Practices at London Metropolitan University, where he is Deputy Director of the Research Centre CREATURE (Creative Arts, Cultures and Engagement). He is Associate Researcher at Museo Spazio Pubblico in Bologna, Senior Advisor for City Space Architecture and Trustee of The Line, the first dedicated public art walk in London. Since 2013, he has been collaborating with Marta Czok at MACRO Museum in Rome and is now Senior Curator at Fondazione Marta Czok in Rome and Venice.

## The Foundation

Fondazione Marta Czok, based in Rome and Venice, is a non-profit organisation (NGO) dedicated to the creation of artistic and cultural projects in Italy and internationally. It is recognised by the National Register of the Third Sector (Italy) and features an international team of experts from across different sectors, collaborating in the production of artistic, cultural and social engagement programmes, according to the objectives stipulated in our Mission Statement.

Our curatorial vision originates in the work of Marta Czok (British artist, born in Lebanon from Polish refugees, now based in Italy), drawing on its themes of social commentary and the experience of migration, also promoting new collaborations with artists and curators worldwide. Our Foundation is a proud member of World Art Foundations and our Venice space is in the official list of venues approved by Biennale di Venezia.



CEO: **Valter Scarso**

Senior Curator: **Jacek Ludwig Scarso**

Associate Curators: **Anna Marazuela**

**Kim, Uros Gorgone**

Advisors: **Luisa Bravo, Cesare Biasini**

**Selvaggi, Sarah Carrington**

Collection Associate: **Beatrice Boban**

Cultural Collaborators: **Mae Shummo,**

**Marina Moreno, Jaquelyn Jubert,**

**Joseph Robson, Barbara Codogno**

International Relations: **Jonathan**

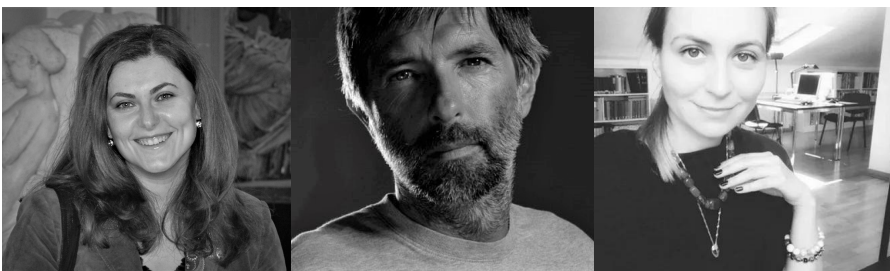
**Thomson**

Technical Collaborators: **Lucia Miarelli,**

**Domenico Drogheo,**

**Giulio Maggiore, Francesca Costantini,**

**Renato Morbiato**





# Latest Projects

## De Innocentia at the Italian Parliament

As an ongoing collaboration with the Italian Houses of Representatives and the Polish Embassy in Rome, we created an exhibition at Palazzo di Vicolo Valdina in 2024.

## Raffaello visita le Carceri di Salerno

We supported an innovative social art project, recently presented in London, where a tapestry by Raffaello was exhibited inside prisons, as a social engagement initiative.

## The Rise and Fall of the Ideal City, Venice

Our opening exhibition at our Venice Project Space coincided with the Biennale Architettura and was widely disseminated by the national press.

## CREATURE - Research Partnership, London

Our Foundation works in conjunction with CREATURE, Research Centre in Creative Arts, Cultures and Engagement at London Metropolitan University.

## Collaboration with TAKFLIX, Ukraine

TAKFLIX, Ukraine's leading collection of Ukrainian cinema collaborated with us in a special exhibit curated by Anna Marazuela Kim.

## Malta Art & Design (MAD 2023)

We supported the launch of MAD 2023 in Malta, contributing to its publication on crossovers between technology, art and design.

## Erasmus+ project Iasi, Romania

In an international partnership with George Enescu National University of the Arts, we created a project drawing on Biennale Architettura.

## O Nas, Konstanciski Dom Kultury, Poland

In the historic Villa Hugonówka, this exhibition, curated by Henryka Milczanowska, focused on historical commentary in the works of Marta Czok.



# Partners for EX\_PATRIA



Ambasciata di Polonia  
a Roma



LONDON  
METROPOLITAN  
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exibart

## Contacts

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For information about purchasing works by Marta Czok  
[store.martaczok.com](http://store.martaczok.com)

# MARTA CZOK STORE

