MARTA CZOK
ARCHĪVUM VR Edition

In collaborazione con Anise Gallery and AVR London
A cura di Jacek Ludwig Scarso

Dopo la recente scomparsa di Marta Czok nel febbraio di quest'anno, la Fondazione Marta Czok è orgogliosa di presentare la prima mostra dopo la sua morte, con la premiere internazionale di una collaborazione in VR con Anise Gallery e AVR London. In risposta alla Biennale di Architettura 2025, questa selezione di opere presenta il paesaggio urbano come simbolo chiave nella critica sociale e politica di Czok e utilizza la realtà virtuale per dar vita a tutto questo, reimmaginando il trittico del 1989 'L'Altra Metà / The Other Half'.

AVR LONDON

ANISE GALLERY

MARTA CZOK FONDAZIONE

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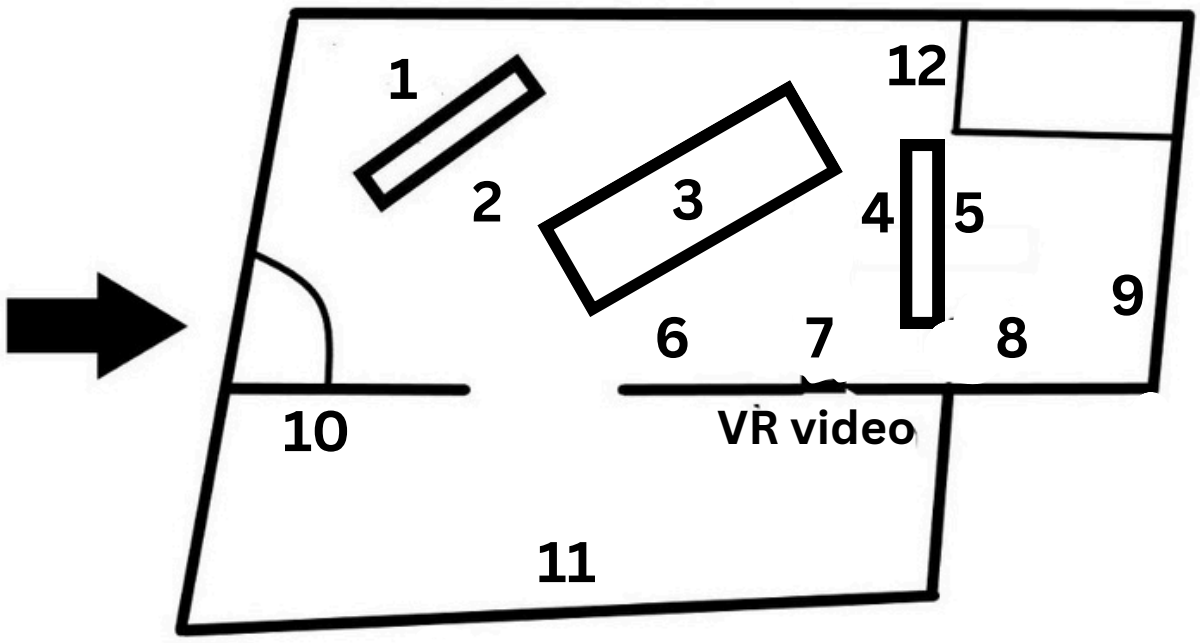

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Curatorial Notes

In this the exhibition, urban utopias and dystopias are combined in Czok's pungent political critique across the decades: at the mercy of market forces and social hierarchies, our environments, both urban and natural, have never been more fragile. Her cynical perspective is balanced by her trademark wit, which provides playful humour in her depiction of the world and its inhabitants.

The show also marks a further step in the umbrella project ARCHĪVUM: now more than ever, the Foundation aims to create an exhaustive archive of Czok's work. Beyond the process of cataloguing and documenting her oeuvre, this is based on exploring innovative ways in which her work may continue to be reinterpreted and reimagined for posterity. New technologies, such as VR, may provide a lens to experience her artworks and continue to expand her audiences.

The partnership with Anise Gallery and AVR London is fundamental in this sense: it originates in an ongoing collaboration between Jacek Ludwig Scarso (Senior Curator, Fondazione Marta Czok), Jacquelyn Jubert (Director of Anise Gallery) and Joseph Robson (Director of AVR London), which has included previous projects at Tate Modern, London Art Fair and London Festival of Architecture amongst others. This collaboration will continue to be featured in our forthcoming projects internationally.

Marta Czok, *Flight*

Marta Czok, *Mr Money*

MARTA CZOK

British of Polish origins and based in Italy, Marta Czok (1947-2025) was born in Beirut (Lebanon). 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), Fabrica, De Innocentia at Palazzo Valdina at the Chamber of Deputies (under the patronage of the Polish Embassy in Rome and the Presidency of the Commission for Culture, Science, Education), and the exhibitions EX_PATRIA (also under the patronage of the Polish Embassy in Rome and selected by Contemporary Lynx Magazine as one of the best events during Biennale Arte 2024) and URBE, at Palazzo Montecitorio of the Italian Parliament, where she was the first contemporary artist to be exhibited in the Galleria dei Busti.

Marta Czok died on February 6, 2025 in her studio in Castel Gandolfo (Rome), while she was working on her last canvas. The Foundation will now continue to pursue her mission: to create a deep dialogue between art and society, through its historical archive and future retrospectives, in parallel with collaborative projects with artists, curators and institutions around the world.

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.

Anise Gallery

Founded in 2012 by Jacquelyn Jubert and Joseph Robson, Anise Gallery is a contemporary art gallery in London with a strong focus towards the architectural aesthetic. Working in a wide range of media, the gallery presents an exciting and diverse programme of exhibitions, events and talks that relate back to architecture, technology and the built environment.

anise.gallery

AVR London

Established in 2006 by Joseph Robson, AVR London is a collective of artists, architects and researchers. AVR London have created thousands of images for architects and developers, specialising in illustrative CGI, virtual reality and verified planning views.

avr.london

The Foundation

The Marta Czok Foundation, with exhibition spaces in Rome and Venice and a studio in the United Kingdom, fosters artistic and cultural projects in Italy and abroad, with particular attention to the dissemination and study of Marta Czok's artistic work. The Foundation includes a Museum dedicated to the Permanent Collection of the Artist's historical works in Castel Gandolfo (Rome) and a Project Space in Venice (Rialto). It is an organization recognized by the Single National Register of the Third Sector in Italy and a member of the international network World Art Foundations. Its Venice base is recognized in the list of spaces that can be used for the official exhibitions of the Venice Biennale. Our curatorial line originates from the themes addressed by the Marta Czok Collection (British artist, Italian by adoption, born in Lebanon to Polish refugees), in particular in the social commentary and the experience of migration.

CEO: **Valter Scarso**
Senior Curator: **Jacek Ludwig Scarso**
Associate Curators: **Luisa Bravo, Henryka Milczanowska, Uros Gorgone, Georgiana Ionescu**
Advisors: **Cesare Biasini Selvaggi, Sarah Carrington, Slawka Scarso**
Public Engagement: **Marina Moreno**
Cultural Collaborators: **Mae Shummo, Elisabetta Zerial, Jaquelyn Jubert, Joseph Robson, Barbara Codogno**
PR: **Cristina Gatti**
International Relations: **Jonathan Thomson**
Technical Collaborators: **Lucia Miarelli, Domenico Drogheo, Giulio Maggiore, Francesca Costantini, Renato Morbiato**

Interview on Exibart Magazine: ‘From painting to virtual reality, the new life of Marta Czok’s artworks’

The Marta Czok Foundation presents, at its headquarters in Venice, the first exhibition after the recent death of Marta Czok, which took place in February of this year. The result of a collaboration with the Anise Gallery in London and the AVR London collective, the project will also come to life through virtual reality technologies. Curator Jacek Ludwig Scarso, the director of Anise Gallery, Jacquelyn Jubert, and the director of AVR London, Joseph Robson, tell us about it.

Jacek, what does this exhibition represent at a time like this for the Foundation?

"The death of Marta Czok has not only brought mourning to the art world, but, inevitably, enormous pain for the Foundation, which started with her family. As her son, at the curatorship of programming since 2021 working from London, the complexity of the moment lies in dealing with personal trauma but also with the need to carry out her artistic mission and social message. Already last year we began a new work with my great collaborators Jacquelyn (Anise Gallery) and Joseph (AVR London) to explore in virtual reality how a work by Marta Czok, the triptych The Other Half of 1989, a work I grew up with and which encapsulates my Mother's unique way of carrying out a social critique of war in a detailed and typically ironic narrative, can be reinterpreted into an immersive experience. Giving new life to Marta Czok's historical paintings is, at this time, particularly significant and symbolic."

Jacquelyn, how did the collaboration between Anise Gallery, AVR London and, through Jacek, the Marta Czok Foundation come about?

"This is the sixth time that we have collaborated with Jacek, and later with the Marta Czok Foundation, for exhibitions and events. Starting with our gallery in South East London, we have continued to present immersive VR-inspired 'interactions' at the Tate Modern, the London Art Fair and now Venice. Each experience exceeded all expectations. Jacek's vision has always been instrumental in ensuring that the work we do together pushes boundaries, opens minds, and instigates conversation. It is an honour to have been able to participate in this wonderful exhibition by Marta Czok in such a short time. Her paintings inspired us to create a beautiful VR journey that we hope will offer viewers a playful yet insightful reinterpretation of his work."

Joseph, according to the perspective of AVR London, which has been developing virtual reality collaborations with contemporary artists for years, what are the opportunities that this type of technology affords?

"The opportunity for virtual reality to take control of the visual and auditory senses allows the viewer to be fully transported into an immersive world. This world can directly represent the artwork or offer a new interpretation within a unique narrative or spatial experience. The accessibility of artworks and experience is expanded to allow for appreciation and interaction outside the boundaries of place or time: wherever there is a headset and internet connection, the artwork can exist and inspire. For artists who use virtual reality, the limitations of physical space, objects, materials and light are eliminated, allowing for new creative freedom."

Jacek, together with the virtual experience, what will this exhibition contain and where does the title ARCHĪVUM – VR Edition come from?

«ARCHĪVUM – VR Edition is a large project that we are developing in parallel with the process of archiving Marta Czok's work. Rather than seeing the concept of the archive as a simple cataloguing of this artist's work, we are interested in experimenting with this process in line with innovations in the field of contemporary archiving, which emphasize the tangibility and interactivity of the concept of the archive: a concept that I am also developing in my academic research at London Metropolitan University, where I direct the CREATURE Research Centre (Creative Arts, Cultures and Engagement). This exhibition is therefore a new step in this mission: reflecting on the programming of the 2025 Architecture Biennale, we have selected a series of works by Marta Czok that focus on the urban landscape, which has always been a recurring metaphor to communicate a denunciation of social injustices and the fragility of an environment that is increasingly vulnerable to the actions of human beings. However, there is no lack of humour, typical of my Mother, which balanced her biting criticism».

What do you think Marta Czok would say about this exhibition and in particular about the virtual reality collaboration?

"As we developed the concept for the virtual experience with Joseph and Jacquelyn from London, I was constantly updating my mother on the process, sharing new details and choosing together the type of soundscore that would best match her work. Marta Czok was fascinated by being able to immerse herself in a 360-degree work: the theatrical character that we chose to give, with Joseph and Jacquelyn, to this interpretation in VR, where the painting becomes a sort of scenic set, has also inspired some of her latest works. I believe, and feel, that she would be very proud of the result of this collaboration, as much as we are."

Redazione Exibart, April 2025.

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