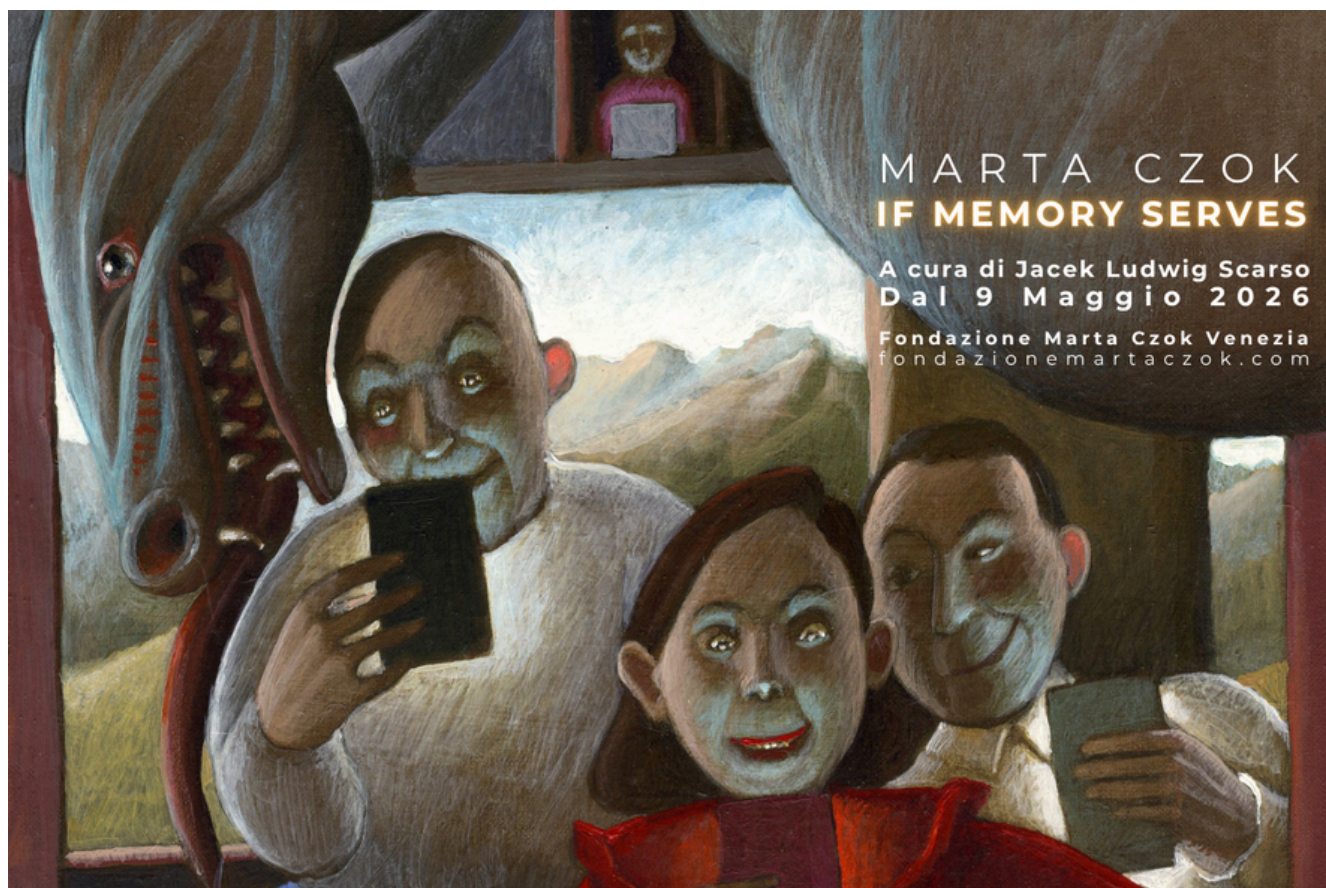


MARTA CZOK

If Memory Serves

Curated by Jacek Ludwig Scarso



MARTA CZOK
IF MEMORY SERVES

A cura di Jacek Ludwig Scarso
Dal 9 Maggio 2026

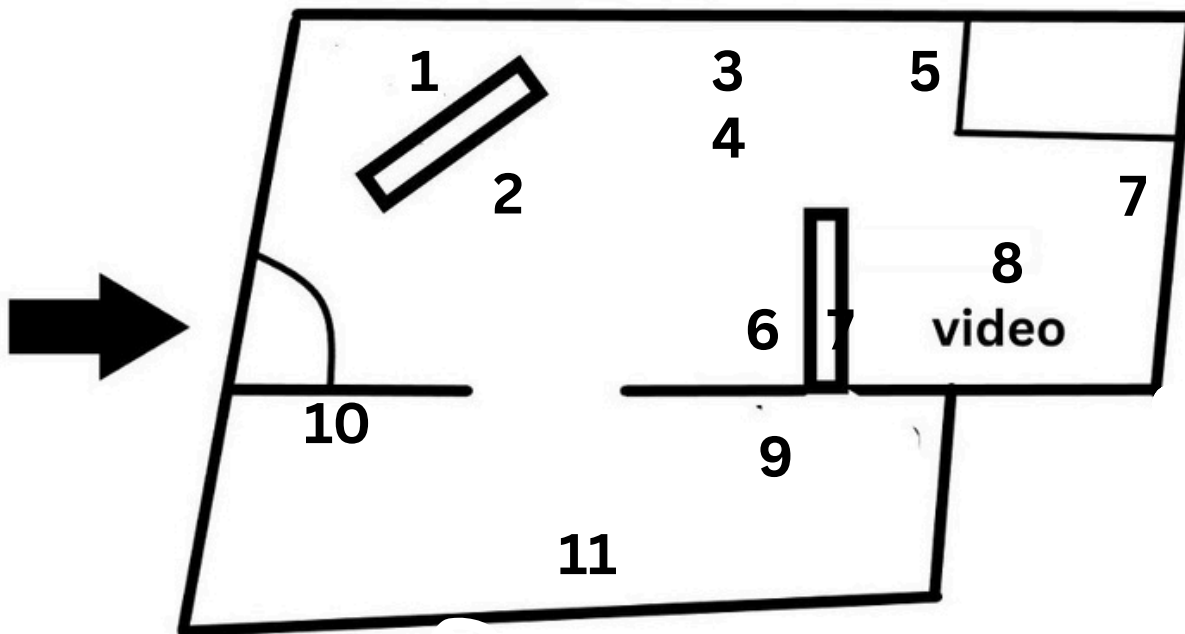
Fondazione Marta Czok Venezia
fondazionemartaczok.com

Presented in conjunction with the 61st Biennale dell'Arte di Venezia, this exhibition offers a playful yet deliberately ambiguous reflection on Marta Czok (1947-2025) and her imagination. A selection of paintings and drawings guides the viewer through a sequence of contrasting scenes and narratives – hallmarks of her richly layered visual language. The exhibition is accompanied by a short film by Carlotta Domenici de Luca, commissioned shortly after Czok's passing, which offers an intimate glimpse into the artist's studio, preserved exactly as she left it.



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1. Marta Czok, *Framed woman with a ring*, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 98x88cm, 2008-2010
2. Marta Czok, *Hulajnoga*, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 90x60cm, 2014
3. Marta Czok, *Red Queen*, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 30x30cm, 2019
4. Marta Czok, *Girls*, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 30x30cm, 2005
5. Marta Czok, *Photo of the cat*, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 40x30cm, 2023
6. Marta Czok, *Photo of the cat III*, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 30x75cm, 2024
7. Marta Czok, *Big Cake*, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 80x80cm 2003-2006
8. Marta Czok Studio, video filmed by Carlotta Domenici De Luca
9. Marta Czok, Works on Paper
10. Marta Czok, *Travelling Children II*, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 90x40cm, 2002-2003
11. Marta Czok, *Spanish Gold*, oil a graphite on canvas, 120x200cm, 2004

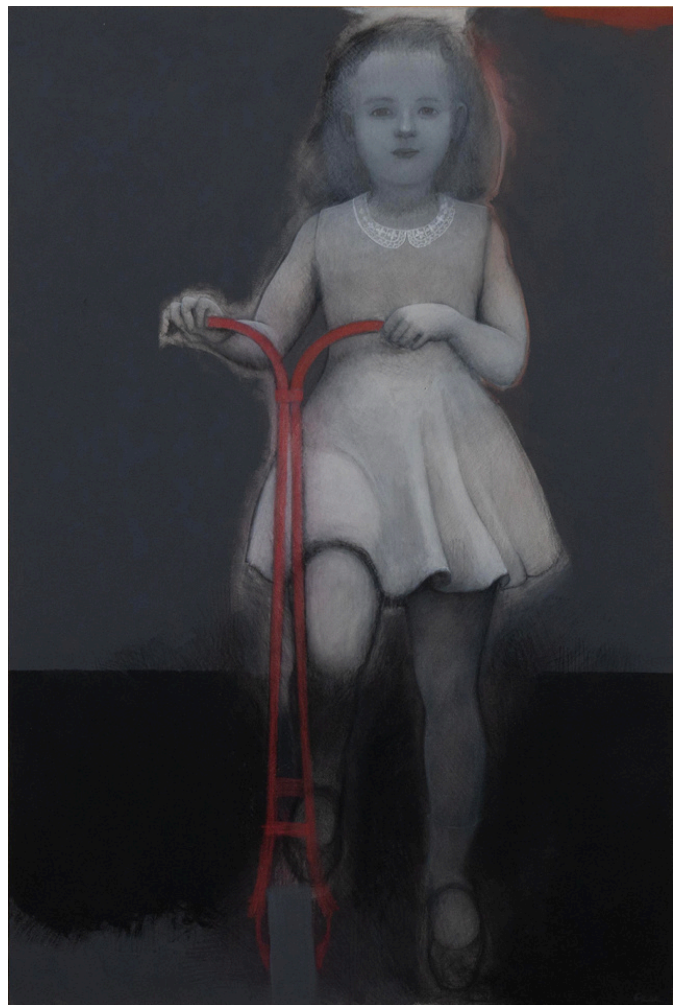
Curatorial Notes

In 2025, Marta Czok passed away at the height of her artistic production. Her creative output remained tireless, oscillating between dystopian visions of an increasingly fragile world and vivid depictions of everyday life.

This tension – between the ordinary and the consequential, the domestic and the global – stands as one of the defining characteristics of Czok’s artistic legacy. Her view of the world embraced both a deep appreciation for the mundane and a restless, often turbulent engagement with current affairs. Yet, rather than dividing her work into the “light” and the “serious,” a tragicomic sensibility permeates her entire oeuvre.

Czok’s figures are never one-dimensional. Children at play possess the same psychological depth as adults, often revealing an even greater emotional complexity through the apparent simplicity of their gaze. By contrast, figures of power are frequently rendered as caricatures, exposed in their inadequacy and their often pitiful hunger for control.

The notion of Memory is invoked here as both homage and provocation. While we remember an extraordinary artist, we are also reminded of her own persistent call: to engage with the past, to scrutinise the present in all its complexity, and to imagine – and strive towards – a better future.





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, 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. Framed within the umbrella project Marta Czok ARCHIVUM, the legacy of Czok's work has seen a range of new projects, including collaborations with Anise Gallery, AVR London, Istituto Italiano di Cultura in Krakow and Imaging for Humanities at Universita' di Urbino. A new dedicated venue in Rome will soon be opened in conjunction with Exibart.

Jacek Ludwig Scarso



Dr 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. He is Reader in Art and Performance at London Metropolitan University, where he is Deputy Director of CREATURE (Research Centre in Creative Arts, Cultures and Engagement), leads the MA Public Art & Performative Practices and is University Teaching Fellow. He is a Member of the Executive Board at City Space Architecture, Research Associate for Museo Spazio Pubblico in Bologna, Member of the British Art Network and Trustee of The Line, London's first dedicated public art walk.

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.



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