

MÁRTA JAKOBOVITS JUST SILENCE

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*Liszt Institute London - Hungarian Cultural Centre,
in collaboration with
Elizabeth Xi Bauer Gallery*

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EXB
ELIZABETH XI BAUER

Just Silence – Csak a csönd – Doar Tăcerea

Márta Jakobovits, Romanian-Hungarian artist and full member of the Hungarian Academy of Arts, has recently had major exhibitions at the Museum of the Cris County in Oradea, the Transylvanian Art Centre in Sfântu Gheorghe, the National Museum of Contemporary Art (MNAC) in Bucharest and Elizabeth Xi Bauer Gallery in London. From the previous venues, it is clear that we are presenting here at the Liszt Institute London - Hungarian Cultural Centre an exhibition by an artist whose ars poetica of experiencing existence, finding balance and the need to show the wonder of life are equally valid for both domestic and international audiences. Márta Jakobovits is at once a relevant and gripping visual artist in Transylvania and London, which can be explained on the one hand by her meditative and autonomous creative attitude, her attention to materials, her artistic forms of expression based on nature's formal world and natural materials, the ancient meta-language hides the possibility of insight for all recipients, because the origins of her works go back to a communal age even older than antiquity, to the beginning of the common history of mankind.

On the other hand, when thinking about Márta Jakobovits' success, her work as an artist-educator and organiser is worth emphasising, because without her pedagogical dedication, openness and curiosity for interactive encounters with the public, our exhibition would not have been possible. I would like to thank Márta Jakobovits and Elizabeth Xi Bauer Gallery for their willingness to share materials from previous exhibitions - here and at home - with us. I hope our current exhibition marks the beginning of a practice in which we can look forward to working with Elizabeth Xi Bauer Gallery in the future to showcase contemporary Hungarian artists together at the Hungarian Cultural Centre in London.

Botond Zákonyi,
director, Liszt Institute - Hungarian Cultural Centre London

Marta Jakobovits – A Celebration of Ceramics

Elizabeth Xi Bauer is thrilled to present *Just Silence*, a captivating solo exhibition featuring the work of Marta Jakobovits, in collaboration with the Liszt Institute.

It is an honour to be part of the inaugural exhibition in their beautifully renovated space. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Liszt Institute for their unwavering commitment to supporting Hungarian art and artists, creating such an inspiring environment for creativity.

Marta Jakobovits' work mirrors her own determined pursuit to explore the depths of ceramics, uncovering hidden treasures within the medium and guiding us through her journey of discovery. We are grateful to Marta for her incredible work and passion. Her practice goes beyond the personal—it is a reflection of her broader mission to make art accessible to all, and her growing community, both locally and internationally, is a testament to this vision.

We invite everyone who visits to immerse themselves in this exhibition and hope that it leaves a lasting impression, offering something meaningful to carry with them for a lifetime.

Marta Jakobovits' work delves deeply into the expansive world of ceramic techniques—casting, modelling, firing, and glazing—transforming each process into an avenue for experimentation and discovery. With an intricate focus on shape, colour, and texture, Jakobovits has crafted a personal library of creations, almost like a lifelong journal in clay. Her approach also considers the reciprocal influence between her chemical choices and the resulting physical forms, adding yet another layer to her richly detailed artistic journey.

Jakobovits' installations create a unique visual dialogue with natural elements—stones, leaves, tree bark, and even found objects. Fascinated by their parallels, she continuously learns from these organic forms, seeking to capture their timeless histories and hidden potential. The artist blends her forms with nature, making them one and the same—after all, weren't they always? We are all made from the earth.

For Marta Jakobovits, planning, investigation, process, and discovery are inseparable and essential elements of her work. Her practice is essentially a continuous retrospective, where she revisits and reviews her experiences, drawing on past knowledge, connecting ideas, and building upon each technique she has mastered.

The artist revisits her archive to learn from her past, experiments and creates in the present, and envisions the future with all its vibrant possibilities. Each piece she crafts is a step forward, informed by her evolving exploration and deep commitment to her mission.

Edward Sheldrick,
artistic director, Elizabeth Xi Bauer Gallery, London

Márta Jakobovits on the threshold between reality and fiction

Since the 1960s, postmodernism has appeared in all areas of the visual arts. In the case of ceramics, this has meant both a desire for autonomy and a rediscovery of the values of the past. This approach is very well represented by the practice of Márta Jakobovits, who by the 1980s had moved away from porcelain, utilitarian ceramics and the technique of throwing, and had become a proponent of handbuilding ceramics. She started working with clay containing chamotte, while raku became her favourite technique, and she was constantly experimenting with new glazes to create ever richer surfaces and textures. She developed a distinctive language and style, building ensembles and installations. She often took her ceramics out into nature, embedding them in stones, sand, or watercourses. These actions could be called specific performances of nature art, which she always documented. However, the artworks can best be seen by the general public in white cube spaces, so the artist thought outside the box and started bringing nature into the exhibition space. From then on, each ceramic piece was displayed on a surface covered with sand, pebbles, and stones, trying to blend in with the pseudo-natural environment. Jakobovits' compositions always balance on the threshold between reality and fiction. They are closely linked to real, natural shapes and colours, yet they are not simple copies of natural formations. Their forms are born from a mixture of conscious and unconscious gestures. Shaped by hand and with simple tools, often interspersed with marks, these abstract ceramics, 'painted' with painterly glazes, draw on two main sources; on the one hand, from nature, from its most insignificant fragments, because they are inspired by pebbles and stones, and on the other hand, from the small and not the most significant objects of cultural history that most museum visitors pass by - small Sumerian clay tablets with writing, small Anatolian ceramic sculptures. Her installations sometimes evoke the still life genre, such as fruit bowls, and other times look like 3D landscapes, such as groups of objects that often evoke architectural associations.

Jakobovits has an astonishing ability to simplify forms, while always asserting her individual style, and to imbue her objects with a magical power, with their varied colours, whether earthy or turquoise, that awaken in the viewer a strong desire to touch them, to feel them, to take the smaller ones in their hands and to feel the material's radiance through their fingers.

Jakobovits' ceramics are often used to create installations that form a circle, which always remind me of fairy rings (in French *ronds de sorcières*) that are typical of certain mushrooms. According to medieval lore, witches and fairies danced in circles at night, and mushrooms grew around them. Could this be the source of the witch or fairy powers of Jakobovits' ceramic circles?

Katalin T. Nagy,
art historian

Marta Jakobovits: Prayers in Clay

Marta Jakobovits regards art as a form of prayer. In this state of complete silence and communion with the self and the Creator, the artist's hands begin to clasp the clay. As if casting a spell, she gently touches the inert slabs with the tips of her fingers. Each inhalation dictates the rhythm of the fingers, and each exhalation translates into a new fold. There is a gentle harmony and synchronicity between Marta's being and the clay. When she questions, the material responds. When she pauses to listen, the clay echoes her thoughts. Always surprising and unique in their colour range and shape, her ceramics seem to be objects invested with magical properties.

Marta Jakobovits' ceramics are a lesson on touch and introspection. Even a simple, instinctive touch is enough to allow for the deepest secrets of the material to come to the surface. When the fingers fold, Marta's soul unfolds. Hers is iridescent and often veers towards turquoise. Like a gentle nodding of the head, each pleat is about acceptance- of what is inside the self and how that carries over to the outside world. Each layer of coating acts like a portal into the past, the present and the future. The kiln mediates between these fragile transitions and determines the intensity with which these layers intersect with each other. Vibrant, smooth and reflective surfaces mingle with matte, rocky and opaque areas. Always curious about each other and never overpowering, the different pieces echo each other's patterns and nuances with grace and discretion.

Marta Jakobovits' ceramics capture the essence of things. While she feels inspired by the effortlessness of works by artists such as Constantin Brâncuși, Henry Moore, Lucie Rie, Hans Coper and Regina Heinz, she has developed her own way of distilling the forms. She allows her ceramics to be shaped by earth, water, fire, air and spirit into organic forms. They develop naturally into pseudo-fruits and pseudo-stones which she then places within the natural environment. Like pilgrims on a sacred route, turquoise glazes follow the winding course of a sandy dune. This process of mimesis and metamorphosis is reciprocal. Nature always gifts the artist with a leaf, a stone or a piece of tree bark the same colours and textures as her ceramic pieces. Side by side and always in symbiosis, both nature and artworks thus acquire an unexpected new radiance.

Dr Laura-Maria Popoviciu,
London-based art historian, curator and researcher

About Elizabeth Xi Bauer

Founded in 2015, Elizabeth Xi Bauer began as an innovative online platform accompanied by pop-up exhibitions. In 2021, as the UK was exiting lockdown restrictions, the gallery took on the challenge to open a permanent space in South-East London. Since then, as well as an exhibition programme, Elizabeth Xi Bauer has collaborated on projects with international institutions, curators, and artists across various cities, such as São Paulo, Amsterdam, Brussels, and Lisbon.

In 2025, to mark its tenth anniversary, Elizabeth Xi Bauer opened a second gallery space in London's vibrant Exmouth Market, in Clerkenwell. Expanding from its original home in Deptford, this new location furthered the gallery's mission to foster cutting-edge contemporary art and support both emerging and established artists on a global stage.

Elizabeth Xi Bauer Deptford offers a residency programme, for both national and international artists to develop their practice. The studio offers artists the opportunity to work in proximity to where their art will later be exhibited, giving them creative freedom to experiment with new materials and ideas.

About the Liszt Institute - Hungarian Cultural Centre

Dedicated to enhancing knowledge and appreciation of Hungarian culture, the Hungarian Cultural Centre organises and supports a wide spectrum of innovative programmes to promote Hungarian art and artists in the UK. Our mission is to familiarise local audiences with all the treasures of Hungary, and to highlight the values that Hungary owes to other cultures, and in turn to emphasise Hungary's key bridging role in intercultural relations and cultural diplomacy.

Being loyal to all the former achievements, yet responding to the challenges of recent times, we work to contribute to the proper image of Hungary while offering a full experience of Hungarian classical and contemporary art. We are proud to be part of the large network of 26 Liszt Institutes worldwide, with our main focus being the UK audience and community.

The Centre regularly works in collaboration with British cultural institutions such as the Southbank Centre, the Royal Academy of Arts, the Barbican Centre and the Royal Festival Hall among many others. The Centre has also been a member of EUNIC London, the network of the cultural institutes from the member states of the European Union in London, since its beginning in 2007, which provides us wonderful opportunities for further international cooperation.

*Just Silence,
Spiritual Silence and Contemplation,
Silence among the clouds,
Silence of living existence.
The need for inner spiritual balance,
Trying to fix up a point in the Universe.
To believe in the Incredible.
To believe that life is a Miracle.
To believe that the good and the slag are in balance
within us.
That's all!*



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