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ARRIVING, LEAVING

Julia Platt

18.09–31.10.2026

PRZYJEŻDŻAM, WYJEŻDŻAM

In her latest painting series, Julia Platt confronts her past and the difficult passage into adulthood, shaped by her mother's long, incurable illness. Being caught in loops of time, attached to the same objects from the past and returning to them again and again, no longer brings comfort; instead, it gives rise to anxiety and exhaustion. The artist tries to break free from the trap of memory through formal devices borrowed from the old masters and through a poignant exploration of different textures.

In "The Thaw," a soft child's blanket appears, its surface already slightly worn and pilled. Set against it is the artist's face, reflected in a mirror and captured with an almost incidental, distinctly cool detachment. The picture-within-a-picture device employed by the painter in another work strips the blanket of its softness and, along with it, of its sentimental and intimate character. It is transformed instead into a heavy, soiled curtain—a fragment of an image pushed into a corner, serving merely as the backdrop for a new one.

The atmosphere of the series, in which one of the central motifs is the rose—a symbol of sudden death and misfortune—does not immediately evoke unease. It recalls the set of a film adaptation of Maria Krüger's "The Hour of the Crimson Rose," 1960. Yet contemporary, uncanny elements, such as a faience child's shoe with a child's portrait inserted into it, make the air grow heavy. We become witnesses to a therapy unfolding over time, empathetic companions in the process of mourning.



Julia Platt
I Never Liked Roses, 2026
oil on canvas, 90 x 110 cm

Transience, longing for the past, and the desire to hold on to fleeting moments are recurring themes in Julia Platt's work. In "I Never Liked Roses," which opens the series, the artist places some of her most precious childhood objects alongside favourite symbols drawn from Renaissance and Mannerist painting. A fading lily, extending into the light around a small faience shoe containing a photograph of the artist as a baby — a christening keepsake — symbolizes innocence and carefree childhood. A solitary rose suggests the unpredictability and capriciousness of fate. The artist also plays with the idea of a "painting within a painting" by placing her own work "The Thaw" in the background.



Julia Platt
July, 2026
oil on canvas, 50 x 70 cm

In the tradition of vanitas painting, the peony symbolizes the contrast between wealth and splendour on the one hand, and transience and impermanence on the other. After arriving for her residency in Bielefeld, the artist placed the bouquet she had received low to the ground, beside an old radiator. Unpacked boxes can be seen in the background. The artist's own presence is suggested only by a pink glow in the upper left corner of the painting, like a thumb partly covering the lens of a camera or phone.



Julia Platt
Untitled (After David Bailly), 2026
oil on canvas, 65 x 50 cm

The work was inspired by David Bailly's "Self-Portrait with Vanitas Still Life" of 1651. Yet the two compositions have little in common. Platt draws on a single motif: the soap bubble, a symbol of carefree childhood that lasts only for a moment. In her painting, the bubble takes on a more material form — a yellow glass sphere found in an antique shop in Bielefeld, where she was staying as an artist-in-residence. The painting also includes several other objects from the same shop, including a postcard showing a solitary woman on a zip line. From her first day there, the artist makes the unfamiliar space feel like home by surrounding herself with objects that once belonged to other people. Objects have always given her a sense of security.



Julia Platt
As If Alive, 2026
oil on canvas, 81 x 100 cm

The beautiful roses in "As If Alive" contrast with the hostile, dug-up surroundings of the house where the artist lives, marking the boundary of the safety of home. The work refers to Gerhard Richter's well-known "Roses" of 1994, with which Richter continued his search for the ideal image.



Julia Platt
The Thaw, 2026
oil on canvas, 50 x 60 cm

The artist includes a shell in the painting — a private and deeply personal symbol of home, and a talisman she takes with her whenever she moves. Placed on the balcony on the first day in a new home, it becomes a guardian of domestic peace. The work is also a self-ironic reference to Velázquez's "The Rokeby Venus," dating from around 1650.



Julia Platt
Arriving, Leaving, 2026
oil on canvas, 70 x 90 cm

The setting for the work that gives the entire series its title is "Ryszard's house", the family home where the father of the twins, Julia and Ewa, lives. The table holds objects that have long since found a home there. In the lower right corner, part of a teddy bear can be seen — a beloved childhood toy of the twins' mother, given to her by her own father. The painting seems filled with the scent of autumn. For the artist, this season evokes both the joyful beginning of the school year and the promise of something new, as well as the trauma of her mother's premature death.



Julia Platt
First Communion, 2026
oil on canvas, 50 x 65 cm



Julia Platt
A Hot Day, 2026
oil on canvas, 50 x 70 cm



Julia Platt
A Walk, 2026
oil on canvas, 70 x 90 cm

The settings for all three paintings come from the same park, which seemed to the artist almost “ideal”. The heat of the day brought back a memory of the happiest day in the lives of Julia and her twin sister, Ewa: their First Communion. On that day, the whole family came together despite its conflicts. Their mother cried with emotion because her daughters were now grown up, while their father, a sailor, returned home dressed smartly for the occasion. There was only one more such family gathering — at the funeral of Julia and Ewa’s mother. In these paintings, glass takes the place of a mirror. It is something in which we can see our own reflection, but only in a distorted, unreliable form. Like idealised childhood memories that we deliberately choose not to confront with reality.

Julia Platt (b. 1997) is a visual artist and painter, a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, where she studied in the studio of Prof. Andrzej Rysiński. She received her MFA with distinction in 2022. She is a recipient of the Wojciech Fangor Award for Students, granted for outstanding achievements in painting, and a scholarship holder of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage. She was a resident at Artists Unlimited in Bielefeld (May–August 2026). She lives and works in Warsaw.

Her artistic practice grows out of attentive observation of her immediate surroundings and the experience of inhabiting them on a daily basis. The starting point for her paintings is what is familiar and recurrent — the spaces in which she lives and works. Until recently, her everyday life unfolded primarily between Warsaw and her family home in northern Poland.



Julia Platt
Post-Holiday, 2025
oil on canvas, 50 x 70 cm

Julia Platt's exhibition during Warsaw Gallery Weekend 2026 is accompanied by "The Play" (pl. Zabawa), a solo performance by Janka Komorowska-Majkowska, written and directed by Ewa Platt. Together with her twin sister Julia, Ewa returns to selected memories from their childhood. This return is not an attempt to reconstruct the past, but rather to evoke an experience that, for years, remained closely associated with a sense of safety.

The performance takes as its starting point the simple forms of childhood play— hide-and-seek, tag. They are revisited as though they had never truly ended. At the same time, one sentence keeps resurfacing in the background: "Don't cry, don't cry, it's only a game." Repeated like a mantra, it gradually reveals the ambiguity of memory and the tension between the experience of childhood and the way it is understood in retrospect.

Ewa Platt (b. 1997) is a theatre director and a graduate of the Directing programme at the Aleksander Zelwerowicz National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw. She has directed productions created and presented internationally, including in Paris and Albuquerque. As an assistant director, she worked with Luk Perceval at the Thalia Theater in Hamburg. She made her directing debut in 2024 with Sarah Kane's "Blasted," produced at the Collegium Nobilium Theatre.

In October 2024, she directed Lars von Trier's "Breaking the Waves" at the Powszechny Theatre in Warsaw. The monodrama "Clean Girl," directed by Platt, received the main prize at the 2024 Monofest Festival at Teatr Szwalnia and at the 2025 Monopolis Festival in Łódź. She is a recipient of the New Yorick Award and the Journalists' Award at the 2025 International Shakespeare Festival for William Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew," produced at the Jan Kochanowski Theatre in Opole. In 2026, she directed "Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead," based on the novel by Olga Tokarczuk, at the National Theatre in Warsaw.

Janka Komorowska-Majkowska (b. 1999) is an actress. She is a graduate of the Aleksander Zelwerowicz National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw. During her studies, she appeared in productions including Euripides' "Hippolytus" and "The Restless" by Leo Lipski, directed by Ewa Platt. Her graduation production was "True Norwegian Black Metal," directed by Marcin Liber.

She performed in a staged reading of "Paraskewa" by Olga Maciupa, presented as part of the 2025 Dramaturgy Award organized by the Witold Gombrowicz Municipal Theatre in Gdynia. She is also a co-creator and actress in "A Patriotic and Literary Evening with Miron Białoszewski's Theatricalities," based on Białoszewski's "Kici Koci" Cabaret and "A Memoir of the Warsaw Uprising," presented at Prześwit in Warsaw.

Script of "The Play"

Translated by: Michał Biela