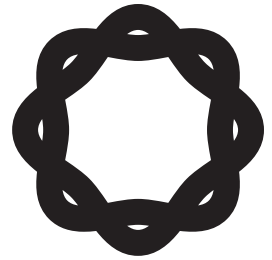


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PASSAGES

MARIA KOZAK

Sept 6 - Oct 18, 2025

Passages is Warsaw and New York-based artist Maria Kozak's (b. 1981, Krakow, PL) second exhibition with Dreamsong and features eight new paintings and a large dual-sided painted folding screen. Kozak's psychological portraits and landscapes allude to an undercurrent of energy coursing through human existence. A descendant of dowsers, alchemists and Polish mystics, her fluid, moody paintings are driven by existential inquiries into the nature of reality and the construction of society. Kozak's paintings are characterized by dissolving forms, layered narratives and ambiguity that carry forth traditions from German Expressionism, Surrealism, Psychedelia and the Transavantgarde.

Passages explores states of metamorphosis in diaphanous paintings that chart experiences of energetic transitions and moments of coalescence. Addressing the psychological implications of personal growth, the work depicts uneasy protagonists navigating fluctuating states of consciousness. Prone to pareidolia, Kozak begins each painting with intuitive digital sketches, pushing and pulling color fields until forms emerge and building compositions through a process of excavation, remixing and digital collage. Referencing these studies as primary source material, the artist largely paints with a palette knife on linen and jute, using their natural

textures to add depth and tactility while varying densities of glazing and impasto serve the psychological complexity of her figures.

In *Faithful in Small Things*, a woman sits contemplatively in a rocking chair, bathed in diffuse light cast through the large panes of leaded windows. Recalling the poetically spare and subliminally laden interiors of the Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershøi, the work reflects Kozak's desire to entangle her subject's inner being with their environment, confusing the boundaries between figure and ground. In *A Bad Case of the Stripes*, this approach is taken a step further: a young man peers through a striped curtain spanning the entire picture plane, seemingly pushing through the painting itself and staring out, half-hidden from a waiting world. Capturing the precarity of liminality and the sheer strangeness of being in-between, Kozak materializes the disorientation of the precipice.

The Map and the Territory is a large freestanding dual-sided painted folding screen which borrows its title from Michel Houellebecq's novel and animates the Janus-faced character of the transitory events at the heart of the exhibition. Predominantly fuchsia on one side and sky blue on the other, the two sides of the folding screen are linked by swathes of evergreen. Depicting spectral figures whose intangibility

elides the boundary between foreground and background, the work ruminates on the gulf between cartography's abstract precision and the complex reality of the physical world. This dichotomy – between narrative and experience, between what we plan and what we live – troubles Kozak's protagonists as they navigate change, passing from one realm into another, forever seeking, eternally in flux.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Maria Kozak lives and works between New York City, Upstate New York and Warsaw, Poland. Her family emigrated to the United States from Poland in 1983 at the height of martial law and she grew up navigating the two cultures. Kozak holds an MFA in painting from the New York Academy of Art and is an alumni of NEW INC, the New Museum's incubator for art + technology. She has shown most recently at Boketto (Monaco), LETO Gallery (Warsaw), Yudian (Hangzhou) with Dreamsong at NADA Villa Warsaw and at The Detroit Public Library. Kozak was awarded a NYFA/NYSCA Grant and a Schusterman Foundation Fellowship for her work in emerging technology. Kozak has been featured in Surface Magazine, Cool Hunting, Artsy, FAD Magazine, The Wall Street Journal, Architectural Digest and Paper magazine.

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