

MARIA SZAKATS

ABLE BODIES

20 March – 23 May 2026

APALAZZOGALLERY is pleased to present *Able bodies*, a Project Room by Maria Szakats. Accompanied by a critical text by Cecilia Bien, the project marks the artist's first collaboration with the gallery. For the occasion, Szakats presents a new series of small-format works, created specifically for the space, which offer an intimate introduction to her artistic poetics.

"Maria Szakats presents *Able bodies*, a collection of new works expanding her oeuvre of embroidered textiles. This is Szakats' first solo presentation in Italy, extending her ongoing exploration of surface, repetition, and containment. While Szakats' process is rooted in the ritual of disciplined repetition and precise handwork, her practice abstains from the rhetoric of healing. Discursive representations of passing time and the body's labor carry a distinctly transcendental charge.

For *Able bodies*, Szakats continues the legacy of the first *couturier*, Charles Worth. Worth drew upon early modern emblematic traditions—most notably the proliferating eyes and ears on Elizabeth I's coat in *Rainbow Portrait*—which Szakats takes another step further. Two embroidered works elaborate these allegorical motifs of eyes and ears, one set against a deep violet hue in a rectangular composition, the other suspended within an elongated ombré field. These organs of perception, translated as tactile surfaces, suggest a divine omniscience. Depth is flattened and the body appears in parts, disassembled into signs.

Three silver vinyl works reference another portrait of Elizabeth I wearing a sculptural gown flush with pearls. Hard-edged chic becomes decorative and eccentric in a wall hanging, a heart, and a box. Each one has been smocked by hand to experiment with shape and scale. The smocking on the wall hanging takes on an organic layout, stretching and tightening angles of what would ordinarily be a uniform grid.

Smocking—a technique historically associated with elasticity and domestic garment construction—is rendered here as a surface which oscillates between *couture* and sculpture, fetish and function. The idiosyncrasies and ironies of fashion are emphasized by an ornamentation of plastic pearls, the faux material contradicting their historical symbolism of purity.

Meanwhile, a triptych of roses resists any singular focal point, dispersing attention across its surface. The rose—an emblem historically saturated with theological, romantic, and sovereign connotations—does not function as a stable symbol here. Departing from the Tudor rose it is based on, it becomes its own fiction. The image appears devotional in the beginning stages of the artist's process. The pixelated grid of the needlepoint canvas reinforces a logic of order and representation. Yet each perforation into the canvas insists upon the body's presence, reiterating affect and duration into a structure often associated with formalist detachment. Szakats' grid is tactile and penetrable, along a lineage that finds its grounding in a personal relationship to the physicality of artistic production, rather than in the tradition of a modernist autonomy.

The image, so meticulously constructed, is destabilized by the dynamic brushing of the mohair and silk fibers, vulnerable to entropy. The rose appears as a fragment suspended, a ruin in process. Meaning frays at the level of surface. As allegory historically emerged in moments of estrangement from tradition, it operates here in the gap between present and past, reactivating forms that might otherwise remain foreclosed."

- Cecilia Bien

Maria Szakats

(1984, Romania)

Lives and works in Paris, France

Maria Szakats is an Austrian designer and visual artist who works primarily with textile. She has an MFA from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs, and is living and working in Paris, France. By utilising a wide array of technical skills with which she produces works combining textiles and installation, she attempts to create a tension between craft, material, image and space. Even though attracted to the banality of techniques like knitting, embroidery and crochet, she intends to create a visual impact which is separating the work from any expected notions.

Her recently exhibitions include, APALAZZOGALLERY, Brescia, Italy (2026); Megan Mulrooney, Los Angeles (2025); Lentos Museum, Linz, Austria (2025); Brooke Benington, London, UK (2024); and Galerie Chloé Salgado, Paris, France (2023).



On view

20 March - 23 May 2026

Opening

Friday, 20 March 2026

6-8 pm

APALAZZOGALLERY
Piazza Tebaldo Brusato 35
25121, Brescia, Italy

For further information, please contact:

general inquiries: art@apalazzo.net

Press inquiries: press@apalazzo.net

t. +39 030 3758554

www.apalazzo.net