

## The OmenaArt Foundation's Polish thematic pavilion named Best Pavilion at the 2026 Malta Biennale. Art as an intercultural bridge.

Once again, the OmenaArt Foundation has created a project at the intersection of cultures and contemporary artistic practices. In 2026, the Foundation returns to the Malta Biennale, organizing the Polish thematic pavilion "Redefining. Polish-Ghanaian Textile Narratives," which was announced as the Best Pavilion of the Malta Biennale 2026 during Malta Falcon Awards ceremony.

On March 14 of this year, the Malta Biennale 2026 awards ceremony took place at the Oratory of St. John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta, during which the winners of The Maltese Falcon—the main prize of one of the most important contemporary art events in the Mediterranean region—were announced. The awards are granted by an international jury of experts in several categories, including Best Artwork and Best Pavilion. A total of 28 pavilions were presented at this year's biennial—including 7 national and 21 thematic pavilions. The award for Best Pavilion at the Malta Biennale 2026 went to the Polish thematic pavilion "Redefining. Polish-Ghanaian Textile Narratives," organized by the OmenaArt Foundation.

The pavilion's exhibition, curated by Natalia Bradbury, consists of large-scale textile installations created by Marta Nadolle, Eliza Proszczuk, and Ernestina Mansah Doku as part of an artist residency in Malta. The artists, hailing from Poland and Ghana, combined the historical narratives of both countries, drawing on weaving traditions and the island's local heritage. Their collaboration began during Accra Cultural Week 2025 in Ghana, when, together with local artists Moses Adjei, Cornelius Annor, and Raphael Adjetey Adjei Mayne, they prepared art workshops for children exploring the textile art heritage of Poland and Ghana. The workshops took place at Kids Haven School, built by the Omena Foundation in Ghana.

*"Our exhibition explores the historical ties and solidarity between Poland and Ghana. Through the artists' works, we aim to show that despite the distance and our different experiences, we are united by shared feelings and values,"* says Natalia Bradbury, curator of \*Redefining. Polish-Ghanaian Textile Narratives\*. – *Ernestina Mansa Doku brings an organic approach to matter and nature to the project, Eliza Proszczuk – a reflection on memory, emancipation, and the body, while Marta Nadolle – a perspective on interpersonal relationships and observations of the tensions between the public and the private. The juxtaposition of these three practices enables the creation of works that operate through*

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*both personal narrative and the universal language of contemporary art, legible within the international art scene,”* emphasizes Bradbury.

Running from March 11 to May 29, 2026, the OmenaArt Foundation exhibition will draw on the philosophy of Ubuntu—“I am because we are”—which emphasizes interdependence, community, and mutual respect. This concept links the collaboration of female artists with the historical Polish-Ghanaian relations that have been developing since the 1960s. The textile works are accompanied by a sound installation by composer Mariusz Szytura. The exhibitions in the pavilion will be complemented by a public program consisting of debates, panels, and meetings with international experts.

The thematic pavilion is organized by the OmenaArt Foundation, which is dedicated to fostering relations and promoting artists from Central Europe and West Africa. In 2025, it presented a collection of African art for the first time during the TOP CHARITY Art exhibition at the Orangery of Wilanów Palace, and also supported the creation of a monumental work by Ibrahim Mahama, presented at Zachęta – National Gallery of Art. It works closely with Phenomenaa Gallery in Warsaw, consistently expanding the presence of African and non-European artists on the Polish market.

In recent years, African art has taken a prominent place on the global art scene. Works by artists such as Amoako Bofo and Julie Mehretu are fetching record prices at auctions and are being exhibited at leading cultural institutions. In 2025, ArtReview magazine named Ghanaian artist Ibrahim Mahama the most influential figure in contemporary art. *“That is why I am proud that through the activities of my Foundation, we support artists from this continent—we invest in art and education, including through the construction of the innovative Kids Haven Sport & Art Complex in Ghana, and we promote their work on international platforms,”* says Omena Mensah, CEO of the OmenaArt Foundation. *“I am incredibly pleased that our exhibition at the Malta Biennale 2026 will highlight just how powerful and inspiring the dialogue between cultures—Polish and Ghanaian, European and African—can be, in the extraordinary setting of a Mediterranean island,”* adds Omena.

The exhibition explores intercultural relations from the perspectives of the past, present, and future, while interpreting the theme of the Malta Biennale 2026—CLEAN | CLEAR | CUT—which refers to the ideas of repair, connection, and purification.

The OmenaArt Foundation project highlights the significance of Polish and Ghanaian contemporary art. Through its presence at the Malta Biennale—a major global artistic platform—it strengthens intercultural dialogue and promotes the rich textile traditions of Poland and Ghana.

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## Artists

**Ernestina Mansa Doku** (b. 2001) is a Ghanaian visual artist who lives and works in Accra. She works in a variety of media, primarily acrylic, as well as artistic textiles, animation, and sculpture. She completed her bachelor's degree in Painting and Sculpture at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi, where she is currently pursuing a master's degree in the same department. She is a member of the blaxTARLINES collective. In 2024, she received a scholarship from the OmenaArt Foundation as part of the Artis Arundo program, which supports emerging talent.

In her work, the artist draws inspiration from nature and the ways in which it adapts to changing conditions and environments: squeezing through cracks, clinging to various surfaces, intertwining with other objects, and adapting to every circumstance. Through her artistic practice, Doku attempts to challenge the anthropocentric perception of life experience, opening space for a posthumanist perspective. She describes her creative process as a kind of surgical intervention; through deformation, reorganization, transformation, multiplication, or division of forms, she strives to create something new. While working on a piece, Doku consciously surrenders to spontaneity and the role of chance. Her painting reflects Horror Vacui—the artist deliberately saturates the space with details and elements that often escape notice in everyday life.

**Marta Nadolle** (b. 1989) – a Polish visual artist specializing in painting. She graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk and the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, earning a diploma with honors in 2014. In her work, she addresses themes related to love, alienation, coming of age, intimacy, and interpersonal relationships. She reinterprets the tradition of veduta, interweaving it with inspirations drawn from folk art and folklore. By juxtaposing these seemingly contradictory tendencies, she transcends the division between center and periphery, public and private. Her works combine metropolitan narratives with intimate handicrafts and folklore, exploring the emotional landscapes of the metropolis. Nadolle's paintings reveal the desires of contemporary city dwellers—for true closeness and emotional peace.

She is the winner of Polityka's Passport Award in the Visual Arts category (2023). Her work has been exhibited both in Poland and abroad—including in Warsaw, Łódź, Sopot, Wrocław, Poznań, Prague, Bratislava, Stockholm, and at the NADA Art Fair in Miami (2021). She has had several solo exhibitions, including "Don't Worry" (LETO, Warsaw, 2022), "I'll Send Him a Nude" (Galeria Dobro, Olsztyn, 2021), and "35" (Galeria Art Hub, Łódź, 2024). Nadolle's works are included in the collections of the National Museum in Gdańsk and the Museum of Warsaw, as well as in the mBank collection.

**Eliza Proszczuk** (b. 1980) – a Polish visual artist, Ph.D., academic lecturer, and researcher. A graduate of the Faculty of Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (2006) and the Post St. Joost Academy in Breda and Den Bosch (Netherlands), where she earned an international Master of Arts degree (2009). She creates textiles, spatial objects, and collages, treating art as a tool for social change and a space for emancipation. In her work, she addresses themes of memory, inheritance, and women’s herstory, combining artistic practice with research and social work.

She has carried out projects with marginalized people, including female prisoners, patients in rehabilitation centers, and refugees. She is the author of, among others, the project “Girls from the Castle,” carried out in collaboration with female prisoners at the Warsaw-Grochów Remand Center (CSW Zamek Ujazdowski, 2014; CSW Kronika, 2022), which explored childhood as a cell and culture as a prison. She draws inspiration from the traditions of northeastern Poland, where she comes from, reconstructing and reinterpreting women’s crafts and narratives excluded from official history.

She collaborates with international academic and artistic institutions, including the University of St. Andrews in Scotland and Humboldt University in Berlin. In 2022, she received a four-year COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) grant for a research-art project on sisterhood and social justice. Proszczuk is co-editor of the publication *Traces of Sisterhood* (Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw Press) and co-organizer of events bridging art and science, including *Care and Repair: Ungendering Memory and Museum Practices* (Ethnographic Museum, Ljubljana, 2023), *Connecting Lines: Tracing Care on the Intersection of Feminism and Ecology* (City of Women, Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana, 2024). Since 2017, she has been working at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, leading the Textiles in Architecture Studio. She is a two-time recipient of grants from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and ZAiKS. She is drawn to the words of Pier Paolo Pasolini: “Culture as a prison, art as liberation”—which is why she consistently creates spaces where art becomes a tool for experimentation, therapy, and social change.

## Sound Installation

**Mariusz Szypura** (b. 1972) – composer, music producer, and audiovisual artist who works at the intersection of music, design, and contemporary art. After years of activity on the Polish alternative scene (Happy Pills, Blimp, Silver Rocket), he focused on interdisciplinary artistic projects in which sound becomes a sculptural medium and a tool for constructing experience.

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In recent years, he has concentrated on large-scale audiovisual installations. In 2024, at the Ujazdowski Castle Center for Contemporary Art in Warsaw, he presented the project *in:human*—an immersive environment exploring the relationship between humans and technology through multichannel sound and image. During the Unsound Festival at Lincoln Center in New York, he presented *êkhos*, combining electroacoustic composition with stereoscopic projections. His most ambitious artistic undertaking is *Chopin Residue*—an international audiovisual project deconstructing the work of Fryderyk Chopin through experimental compositional techniques combined with large-format images, video installations, and spatial sound. On the musical side, created in collaboration with artists such as Adrian Utley, Lee Ranaldo, John Stanier, and Fennesz, it has been presented in New York and Osaka, among other places.

As a composer of music for exhibitions, Szypura creates autonomous sonic environments that engage in a dialogue with the artwork and the architecture of the space. His compositions do not merely illustrate—they shape the rhythm of perception, the intensity of the experience, and the viewer's relationship with the space.

## Curator

**Natalia Bradbury**—art historian, curator, and collection-building advisor—lives and works between Poland and the United Kingdom. She is the Managing Director of the OmenaArt Foundation and Phenomenaa Gallery in Warsaw, which showcases contemporary African and non-European art.

Her primary area of research is the growing significance and market value of a new generation of artists from West Africa and its diaspora, as well as from Central and Eastern Europe, particularly Poland. In her work, she analyzes factors influencing the development of this segment, including the relationships between global institutions, galleries, collectors, and auction houses. She initiates projects that situate the contemporary artistic practices of Polish and African artists within a broader economic, social, and geopolitical context.

Curator of exhibitions: TOP CHARITY Art (2024, 2025), Other Geographies, Other Stories, Malta Biennale (2024, co-curated with Hanna Wróblewska), Redefining. Polish-Ghanaian Textile Narratives, Malta Biennale (2026), co-curator of the Kids Haven Sport & Art Complex in Ghana. Juror for competitions such as the 16th edition of the Best Academy of Fine Arts Diplomas and Loostro – Competition for Young Artists, and mentor at the Rafał Brzoska Foundation.

## Organizers

The OmenaArt Foundation carries out innovative artistic projects in Poland and around the world. The Foundation's mission is to foster intercultural dialogue, support artists, and promote contemporary art from Eastern Europe and Africa, with a particular focus on art

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in public spaces. OAF is also actively involved in the revitalization of historic buildings as well as conservation and educational projects.

The Foundation coordinates the TOP CHARITY Auction—one of the most important philanthropic events in Europe. Over the course of four years, the auction organizers have raised over 145 million zlotys. The funds were allocated to the charitable activities of the Omenaa Foundation, the Rafał Brzoska Foundation, and the Philanthropic Consortium, as well as to projects by the OmenaArt Foundation supporting artists and cultural institutions.

LuginsLand of Art organizes artist residencies, exhibitions, and public programs in Malta. The project aims to breathe new life into one of the island's most important architectural gems—Villa Luginsland, located in Rabat. The historic building, currently undergoing renovation, will be transformed into a center for exhibitions, discussions, and artistic events, supporting international artistic exchange and open dialogue about the past, present, and future.

## Malta Biennale

The Malta Biennale is an international contemporary art exhibition launched in 2024, held under the patronage of UNESCO and the President of the Republic of Malta. The biennale's concept centers on a dialogue between contemporary art and cultural heritage—exhibitions are presented in historic venues, including Valletta, the Three Cities (Birgu, Cospicua, Senglea), and the Citadel on Gozo.

The inaugural edition featured over 100 artists from 35 countries, as well as 14 national and thematic pavilions across 21 historic locations. The first countries to participate in the event were Poland, France, Germany, China, Austria, Serbia, Ukraine, Italy, Spain, and Malta. This year's Malta Biennale will take place from March 11 to May 29 under the theme CLEAN | CLEAR | CUT. The artistic director of the event is Rosa Martínez, a renowned curator and director of the 51st Venice Biennale, who also directed the Barcelona Biennale (1988–1992), Rotterdam (1996), Istanbul (1997), Santa Fe, New Mexico (1999), Busan (2000), São Paulo (2006), and Moscow (2005–2007).

## Redefining. Polish-Ghanaian Textile Narratives

OmenaArt Foundation's Polish Thematic Pavilion, Malta Biennale 2026 (March 11 – May 29, 2026)

Venue: Old Armory of the Knights of Malta, Birgu, Malta

Artists: Ernestina Mansa Doku, Marta Nadolle, Eliza Proszczuk

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Curator: Natalia Bradbury

Organizers: OmenaArt Foundation, LuginsLand of Art

Partners: Embassy of the Republic of Poland in the Republic of Malta, based in Valletta; Central Museum of Textiles in Łódź; Phenomenaa Gallery; Apart; Luce&Light; LOT Polish Airlines

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