

Potatoes and Chamomile

Augustas Serapinas

23 May – 26 July 2025

Emalin is pleased to present *Potatoes and Chamomile*, a solo exhibition of new works by Lithuanian artist Augustas Serapinas (b. 1990). This is the artist's fourth exhibition with the gallery.

Serapinas' practice pivots on the paradox of cultivation through destruction and on the social conditions that render such destruction ordinary. In post-socialist Lithuania, rural depopulation, land privatisation and speculative development have accelerated the disappearance of vernacular architecture—modest, often self-built houses shaped by local needs and materials. These structures are frequently abandoned, sold off as fire wood or burned to clear land. Fire, in this context, functions both as expedient and as erasure: removing not only the material residue of prior inhabitation, but the spatial logic of another way of life.

Serapinas intervenes in the afterlife of these forms. These architectural elements are treated as parts in flux: moved, altered and reassembled into new configurations. Fire, often used to erase these structures, becomes in the artist's hands a tool of transformation—its residue folded back into the logic of growth.

At the centre of the exhibition is an installation of planters carved from the salvaged beams of a rural Lithuanian house. The beams have been hollowed, repurposed and blackened through a process of controlled burning. Recast in this way, they hold soil and support cultivated plants, crops familiar to Lithuanian gardens: potatoes, onion, beetroot, mint, chamomile and wildflowers. These forms metabolise the house, transforming its remnants without disguising their origins. Fire, ash, and soil form a material continuum in which what was residual becomes generative. Ash, once a byproduct of loss, becomes a medium for renewal—its nutrients enriching the soil it enters. Working with beams, roof shingles, glass panes, Serapinas recodes the detritus of vernacular architecture as the material of a sculptural language shaped by cycles of dispossession and reuse.

Accompanying the planters is a series of reclaimed window frames, salvaged from the same architectural context. Their glass has been kiln-fired, rendering a blackened semi translucent surface that filters light. The charred wood retains the marks of exposure and transformation. Detached from their original function, the windows no longer frame a view but instead register the processes they have undergone.

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Displayed in the vitrine at the gallery's entrance are a selection of the artist's photographs taken of abandoned rural houses in Lithuania—images that reflect his ongoing interest in marginal architectures of cultivation and care.

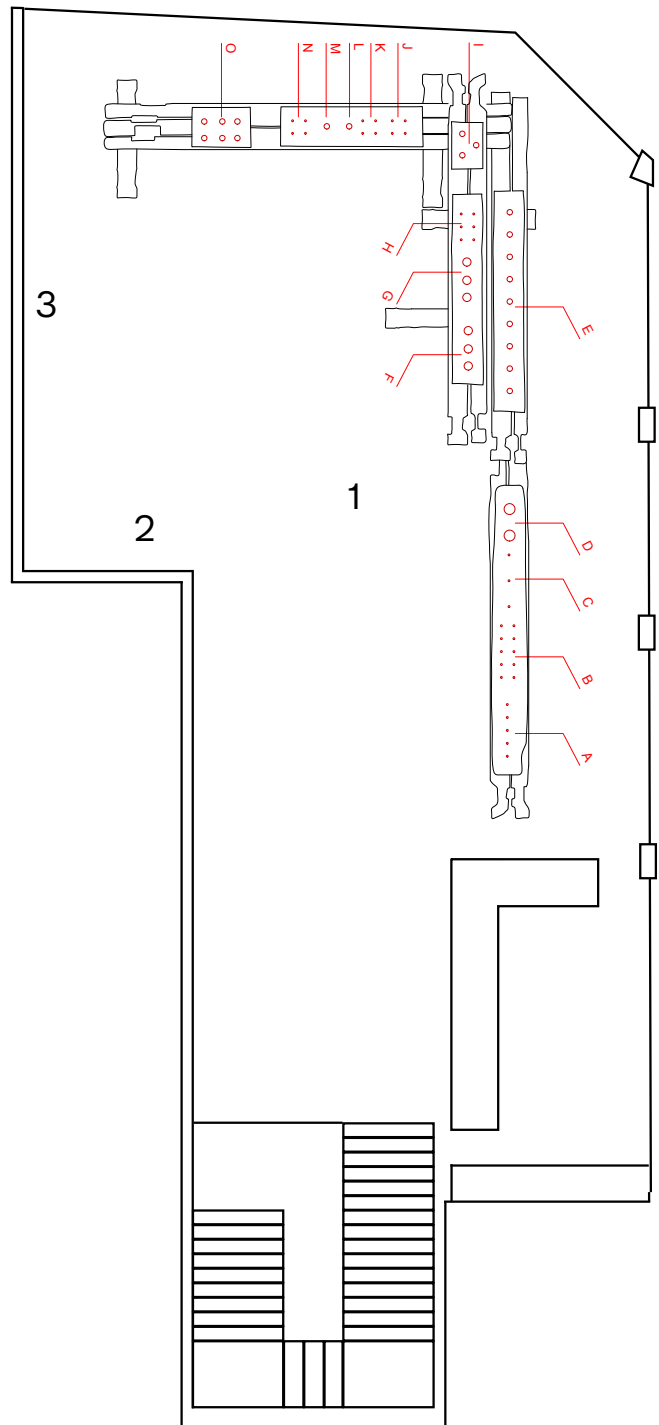
Installed in the gallery's glass-fronted space—evocative of a greenhouse—the works depend on attention. Both the house and the planter require care to persist; without human maintenance, each falls into disuse. Serapinas's work insists on this interdependence. The forms remain mutable, weighted by history and oriented toward continuity and flux. At the close of the exhibition, the artist will harvest what has grown, preparing a Lithuanian cold borscht and herbal tea using the plants cultivated in the planters.

Serapinas's broader practice is rooted in site-specific inquiry. Attuned to the latent dynamics of social space—access, memory, hierarchy—he excavates the hidden architectures that shape institutions and interactions. By reconfiguring materials and inverting spatial expectations, his work draws out the unseen logics that govern what is preserved, who is seen and what is discarded.

Augustas Serapinas (b. 1990, Vilnius, Lithuania) lives and works in Vilnius, Lithuania. He graduated with a BFA from the Vilnius Academy of Arts in 2013. Recent solo exhibitions have been held at Bündner Kunstmuseum, Chur, CH (2025); CAC, Vilnius, LT (2025); Arsenal Gallery, Białystok, PL (2024); Fondazione ICA Milano, Milan, IT (2024); Forof, Rome, IT (2023); Kloosterruine, Berlin, DE (2023); Lichtenfels Sculpture Friedersbach, AT (2023); Galerie Tschudi, Zuzwil, CH (2022); Emalin, London (2022); APALAZZOGALLERY, Brescia, IT (2021); CCA Tel Aviv, IL (2021); P/////AKT, Amsterdam, NL (2020); CURA Basement, Rome, IT (2018); and Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, AT (2017). Selected group exhibitions include Compton Verney, UK (2024); Bündner Kunstmuseum, Chur, CH (2024); Cēsis Makslas Festivals, Cēsis, LV (2023); Nicoletta Fiorucci Foundation, Monaco, MC (2023); steirischer herbst '22, Neue Galerie Graz, AT (2022); Arcadia, Oranjewoud, NL (2022); Misk Art Institute, Riyadh, SA (2022); Toronto Biennial of Art, CA (2022); 13th Kaunas Biennial, LT (2021); 58th October Salon, Belgrade Biennial, RS (2021); CAC Contemporary Art Center, Vilnius, LT (2020); RIBOCA2: Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art, LV (2020); 58th Venice Biennale, IT (2019); Baltic Triennial 13, Vilnius, LT (2018); Glasgow International, UK (2018); and M KHA, Antwerp, BE (2014).

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LIST OF WORKS

- 1 *House for Potatoes and Chamomile, 2025*
charred reclaimed wood, soil, flowers, vegetables
dimensions variable
 - A. Beetroot
 - B. Cucumber
 - C. Common Knapweed
 - D. Mint
 - E. Potatoes
 - F. Chamomile
 - G. Fox & Cubs
 - H. Onions
 - I. Red Campions
 - J. Coriander
 - K. Petunia
 - L. Dill
 - M. Parsley
 - N. Lemon Balm
 - O. Autumn Hawkbit
- 2 *Burned Window, 2025*
charred reclaimed window frame, stained glass
84.5 × 78.5 × 5.5 cm
33 ¼ x 30 7/8 x 2 1/8 inches
- 3 *Burned Window, 2025*
charred reclaimed window frame, stained glass
117 × 76 × 4 cm
46 × 29 7/8 x 1 5/8 inches