

## **Piotr Bury Łakomy's solo show *Garden Exit* at the Contemporary Art Centre**

12.06.2025—14.09.2025

*Garden Exit* – a solo exhibition by Piotr Bury Łakomy taking place in the central exhibition space of the Contemporary Art Centre – presents works produced by the artist specifically for this show. The title subtly references the Garden of Eden but, against its typical occidental interpretation, proposes a conscious exit rather than an exile, thereby suggesting a separation from the idea of pristine nature.

This dynamic evokes a deeper set of thoughts that pertain to the division between what is natural and what is artificial, often framed as the distinction between first and second nature. First nature refers to primal, Ur-nature – a state that precedes culture and is considered 'untouched'. Culture begins with language, habits, and artifice, all of which belong to second nature. Yet, there is hardly anything we perceive today that hasn't already been mediated by language, by perspective, making everything already, in some way, secondary. This recalls Nathan Snaza's proposition to consider literacy as a meeting point between humans, nonhuman animals, and even nonvital objects [1]. In this exhibition, those objects include doors, windows, walls and the floor, together with biomorphic and quasi-natural forms that intervene in and inhabit the space.

Second nature, by definition, is also cultivated. This leads us back to the idea of a garden: a place made through cultivation, yet intended to be a patch of nature within an architectural enclosure. It is also a form of nature that requires care, one that would not exist without human endeavour. The juxtaposition of the inner and outer, reflected in the artist's work, also speaks to the nature of nature itself, which can be understood through this dual structure. In nature, however, the inner and outer are entangled, and their relationship is marked by the need to hone one's inner nature in order to be able to master the outer nature. This is the dictum of the Enlightenment, often described too as the disenchantment of nature. In the arts, it becomes the promise of bridging the chasm between the unknown natural and the mediated world – a legacy of Romanticism that modernist aesthetics sought to fulfil.

The garden occupies an ambiguous place here: both a refuge in nature (so important for the Romanticist worldview) and an enclosure – a meeting place of the quasi-natural and the artificial. This duality is reflected in the works inhabiting the exhibition space. At the same time, the investigation expands to the body as a primal structure in relation to architecture. Its different layers can be inverted, yet they bring their own logic. Architecture, typically seen as artificial, is here considered an alive, mutating organism. Objects are placed in unexpected locations – on window frames, doors, staircases – transforming the space into an invasive yet cultivated garden woven into the fabric of the building. Umbrella-shaped sculptural elements evoke both a refuge, which is architectural – a roof – and a bat-like living form.

Łakomy's exhibitions avoid a singular centre, instead embracing a notion of milieu, in which one remains in constant symbiosis with their surroundings, surroundings that are not simply their 'environment'. Nevertheless, Łakomy's work engages with a scale that is consciously based on Le Corbusier's *Modulor*, itself based on Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*. But rather than affirming an idealised human form, Łakomy's work invites the viewer to measure their own body against the objects, allowing a more organic relationship to the artifice.

This dynamic also alters how viewers move through the exhibition. The materials – aluminium honeycomb, concrete, wood, oil paint and resin – are shaped into objects from which ostrich eggs protrude, evoking another inner-outer relationship. Their placement across the building generates a tension between immanence and transcendence, encouraging viewers to renegotiate how they perceive the space and to reflect on what these spaces are, beyond calculated measurement.

Material choice connects deeply to bodily cycles – reciprocal processes akin to compost, involving constant defragmentation and decay, and regeneration. Broken eggshells are reused, becoming mosaics. The honeycomb and the eggs, though fragile, serve as sturdy building materials. This subtle physicality encourages the viewer to encounter the objects from different angles, shifting perceptions of the exhibition space and emphasising intimacy with the work.

The garden within the building and its urban context becomes something other than paradise – a fragmented, very real place. A balcony, a small plant growing in a concrete structure: a site in constant interplay with our own reflection.

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[1] Snaza, Nathan. *Animate Literacies: Literature, Affect, and the Politics of Humanism*. Thought in the Act. Durham: Duke University Press, 2019.

Photographer: Andrej Vasilenko