



*Raw Earth, Rare Earth*  
Alicja Biała  
18 September – 25 October

Berntson Bhattacharjee is pleased to present *Raw Earth, Rare Earth*, a solo exhibition by Polish artist Alicja Biała (b. 1993). Biała is based in between London, Amsterdam and Poznań, having studied at the Royal Drawing School, London (2022) and the Royal College of Art, London (2023, MA).

*Raw Earth, Rare Earth*, features new works by Alicja Biała that carve out a space in which nature, history, and political agency are intertwined, moving fluidly between the symbolic and the physical. Renowned for her public architectural installations and large-scale murals, Biała will transform the gallery space into a garden, etching delicate natural motifs into mirrored brass, casting flora in metal, and suspending root systems in sculptural form from the ceiling. Both experimental and interrogative, Biała shifts between the roles of painter, sculptor, and chemist. Sourcing industrial acidic solutions and etching surfaces through controlled oxidation, she creates works that are at once fragile and substantial. A critically acclaimed artist, she is forging a language of current ecological awareness while depicting the splendour of the organic world. It is a place where beauty meets inquiry, inviting reflection on our relationship with the environment and its future.

Her practice evokes the material gravitas of Anselm Kiefer and Alicja Kwade, while resonating with the ecological narrative found in the works of Agnes Denes and Antony Gormley. Born in Poland, Biała's work holds a personal resonance with landscape and cultural identity. Exploring themes of agricultural societies, borders, displacement, and the collective pain of past political unrest; a deeper inquiry into socio-ecological transformation drives her practice.

Upstairs, the exhibition will feature the monumental work *Beneath the Soft Ground, Hard Ground*, a series of twelve large brass panels, a symbolic calendar where each month depicts a selection of Central European plants with seasonal regenerative properties. These particular plants are called Hyperaccumulators and have the unique ability to absorb and tolerate high quantities of metal, thereby cleansing the soil and water around them. The work has arrived straight from the Europa Building in Brussels, commissioned by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland, and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, to be on view in the European Parliament. The work is due to be shown at a number of institutions across Europe. This piece is the most significant in Biała's Hyperaccumulator series, a body of work that champions humble plants that have the ability to make great change. Mirroring this piece, delicate bronze sculptures, casts of real hyperaccumulators handpicked by the artist in Poland, seemingly grow

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out of the walls. The dialogue between the nature of the flora and the materiality of the sculptures becomes one of fragility and strength.

The downstairs space evolves into an underground terrain. A vast ceramic *pajak* sculpture will be suspended from the low ceiling, extending outwards towards the walls. Directly translating to spider in Polish, a *pajak* is a traditional decorative mobile, usually made by women. This sculpture is the latest in Biała's ongoing *pajak* series, and this iteration is a hybrid of four endangered flowers with a glowing pistil at its core. Behind the *pajak*, a line of five small brass etchings depicting potatoes emerge out of the darkness. This unassuming root is a recurring symbol in Biała's work and reinforces the idea of quiet strength beneath the surface.

Delving into some of her past practices, Biała expands into a world of sculptural resonance, combining her dedication to geological history in the physical form. Foregrounding the power of world building within an exhibition space, the viewer finds themselves immersed within a sculptural underground of Biała's creation, stimulating an expansive sensory experience.

*Raw Earth, Rare Earth* is presented in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute. In addition to this show, we are delighted to announce that Berntson Bhattacharjee will be exhibiting further new works by Biała at the inaugural Echo Soho Art Fair, 16 - 19 October 2025 in London. Echo Soho is a new art fair founded by and for female-led galleries, which will take place during Frieze week 2025.

n.b. 9 bronze sculptures are currently being held in customs. We look forward to receiving them soon!

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