

ÁLVARO URBANO
September and the Lions

ChertLüdde, Berlin
2 May – 26 July 2025

Chert
Lüdde



PRESS TEXT

As part of Gallery Weekend Berlin, ChertLüdde presents *September and the Lions*, a solo exhibition by Álvaro Urbano. The exhibition presents a botanical path and works as a disjointed landscape, showing different glimpses of a late-summer evening in Tiergarten—Berlin’s largest public park. The gallery space frames a permanent, artificial dusk: a yellow hue settles across the room, rain drops cling to the windows. Suddenly the interior is displaced outward, and the exterior takes refuge within.

Álvaro Urbano (b. 1983, Madrid) is a Spanish contemporary artist based in Berlin, recognized for his immersive installations and sculptures that blur the lines between architecture, fiction, and memory. After studying architecture in Madrid, he developed an artistic practice that often engages with abandoned spaces, mythologies, and historical events, transforming them into living environments where past and present intertwine.

His recent solo exhibition *TABLEAU VIVANT*, on view at SculptureCenter in New York (September 19, 2024 – March 24, 2025), explored the legacy of queer artist Scott Burton’s (1939–1989) public installation in the lobby of the Equitable Center building in midtown Manhattan. Similarly, Urbano’s collaboration with artist Petrit Halilaj (b. 1986, Kostrc), *Lunar Ensemble for Uprising Seas* at the Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) (October 11, 2024 – January 12, 2025), examines personal and collective memory in times of ecological disaster. In this project, hybrid creatures emerge as echoes of lost worlds and speculative futures. Through his work, Urbano crafts poetic encounters with history, inviting viewers to uncover and reimagine forgotten narratives.

At ChertLüdde, Urbano’s installation features meticulously crafted botanical replicas, referencing plants from a specific area of Tiergarten near the Löwenbrücke (Lions Bridge). This secluded zone remains an active cruising site—a public space

OPENING
2 May 2025
6 – 9 pm

PRESS PREVIEW
30 April - 2 May 2025
12 - 6 pm

for casual sexual encounters, primarily among men who have sex with men—where overgrown foliage creates a natural refuge for queer intimacy. The dense canopy of pagoda dogwoods, elderberry bushes, and sweetgum fosters an atmosphere of secrecy and protection, retelling the hidden narratives embedded within the park's landscape. Through this layered interplay of history, nature, and desire, Urbano explores the concept of heterotopia—a space where multiple meanings, identities, and temporalities coexist.

In *September and the Lions*, Urbano articulates the landscape into scenes, presenting different specimens out of their real context, but allows the public to relate to them in their real scale. The plants, in the midst of their autumnal transition, serve both as a captivating backdrop and dynamic performers. They navigate the space and simultaneously provide different ways to wander through the exhibition, blurring the lines between history and fiction and sketching a certain ecology of desire.

Álvaro Urbano (1983, Madrid, Spain) lives and works in Berlin.

Urbano's work involves an archeology of desires and past intentions. By creating atmospheres that replicate specific spaces and architectural gestures, the artist explores the narratives that are embedded in these built bodies. Urbano borrows strategies from theater and filmmaking—such as lighting, sound and costumes—in order to explore new formats of immersiveness, his projects are often structured as scenes or sequenced chapters. The interweaving of different media is used to generate situations that approach liminal and oniric dimensions transforming the exhibition space into a vessel of phantasms and apparitions.

These staged realities are inhabited by vegetal and animal elements, only from a close distance these entities reveal themselves as intricate organic simulations. Functioning as active characters instead of passive props, they interact with the viewers within an established fictional setting, generating parallel stories derived from botanical sensitivities and the common ground of art history. Urbano uses the “whatif” as a narrative trigger for exploring the volitional underground that can be unearthed from these modernist and contemporary ruins, often verging into the hallucinatory realm.

The exercise of re-creating and re-framing architecture becomes an intimate exploration of the subjectivity of other artists and the social context in which these spaces were considered as functional, innovative or condemned to oblivion. Figures such as Federico García Lorca, Luis Barragán, Eileen Gray and Oscar Wilde appear in these stagings as elusive figures enriched with fantasy and speculation. Mimicry is used by Urbano as a platform in which illusion derives in humorous transformation; parody and homage bloom in synchrony.

He was recently exhibited with a solo show at SculptureCenter, New York, US (2024) and with a collaborative exhibition with Petrit Halilaj in MACBA, Barcelona, SP (2024). Amongst other institutional shows, he will have a solo show at Museo Jumex, Mexico City in 2026.

Álvaro Urbano studied Interior Architecture at the ETSAM in Madrid, and Fine Arts at the Institut für Raumexperimente, Universität der Künste in Berlin; he lives and works between Berlin and Paris.

Chert Lüdde

PRESS MATERIAL

IMAGES

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*Available for distribution

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

- [Interview: “Lunar Ensemble for Uprising Seas” by Petrit Halilaj & Álvaro Urbano](#)
- [Book: ACTO I: LA ETERNA ADOLESCENCIA](#)
- [Book: El Despertar](#)
- [Book: Ever Since Night Falls](#)
- [Book: Les albums à colorier des Beaux-Arts de Paris](#)

INFORMATION

“September and the Lions”
Álvaro Urbano
02.05 – 26.07.2025
Admission free

Opening hours:
Tuesday – Saturday
12 – 6 pm

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