



An Astonishing Convergence
2020, video



Death of Animals
2020, video installation



Visit of the White Pigeon
2021, video



Death of Animals
2013-2024, digital photography, 40 x 30 cm each



Empathic Observations of Small Beings
2019-2024, video installation



Silent Night
2021, audio installation, text

Piotr Blajerski

Wandering Among Other Realizations of Life

curator: Piotr Lisowski
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Visit of the White Pigeon
2021, video

The video is a recording of a white pigeon's unexpected visit to the artist's flat. Over the course of a few hours, the bird enjoyed the hospitable welcome, explored the new space, quenched its thirst and rested. The pigeon felt at ease in the company of the man and confidently explored his place of residence. The bird's appearance and the unusual situation evoke associations with some mystical event, a parable of a man visited by a spirit in the form of a beautiful white dove. The emotional charge of such an idea is a result of accumulated cultural archetypes and clichés attributed to the animal. The bird itself is unaware of these connotations, of the cultural determinants and emotions evoked by its unexpected presence. Nor is it aware that from an evolutionary point of view, the plumage on its limbs is impractical and only possible through selective breeding – the arbitrary shaping of animals' biological bodies by humans to fit them into pre-assigned roles.

The film tells the story of this encounter directly, but also metaphorically, showing how a human's relationship with another life can have an unapparent dimension. The artist's specific emotions, thoughts and actions are just some of the possible variations, whose range can be surprisingly broad. This is a recording of a short moment in the complicated relations between different life forms.

Death of Animals
2013–2024, video installation, digital photography, 40 x 30 cm each

Death of Animals is an ongoing project developed since 2013. It consists of a series of photographs and video works documenting the corpses or the very moment of death of animals that live alongside humans in urban spaces. The artist records the unnoticeable deaths taking place in our everyday surroundings. He makes visible not only the dying, but also the programmed blindness of the humans. As he shows, a change of perspective is possible through engaged, conscious observation, being in touch with the death of other beings and one's own feelings. The featured videos record the decomposition of the bodies of a deer and a dog, presumably hit by a train, over the period of one year. The animal carcasses lay next to the tracks, visible both from the passing trains and from a path often taken by people walking their dogs. In the films, we observe the process of decomposition of the dead bodies followed by the gradual disappearance of the shriveled tissues and bare bones.

The photographs, on the other hand, document some of the dead animal bodies that the artist has encountered in the urban space. They depict the various stages of decomposition, but also the factors that may have contributed to the death of the protagonists of the individual photographs.

Of key importance in Death of Animals is to draw attention to the sad situation in which dead bodies are abandoned and allowed to linger in oblivion. The camera lens captures the dramatic fate of these creatures with utter seriousness and respect. The empathetic gaze does not fetishise the sheer organic nature of the carcasses, nor does it reduce them to death represented by decay, as it often functions as an image in culture. The artist's intention is to replace this visuality with a different story, one in which there is room for the subjectivity of these beings.

Empathic Observations of Small Beings
2019–2024, video installation

The work consists of a series of videos showing small beings – animals – in their everyday life. The artist treats his action as a kind of exercise in observation. Accompanying these typically ignored creatures for a longer period of time allows us to view their lives as somewhat close to our own. They eat, move around, have sex and do everything that biological life does. Although devoid of pathos or anything special, such an intimate encounter manages to capture the observer's attention. The individual films are made in such a way that it is easy to get close to the little bugs and their „little goals” without the scientific, hierarchical approach of nature films.

An Astonishing Convergence
2020, video

The video shows a snail walking on the artist's hand. In close-up, the strong resemblance of the fingerprints of human skin to the snail is striking. The eponymous „convergence” is the independent evolution of similar features in species from different periods or epochs. It results in the emergence of analogous structures that have similar form or function, but cannot be found in the last common ancestor of these groups. The human need to order the surrounding reality over the course of different civilisational stages has created equally unusual and astonishing theories about life. The seemingly absurd comparison between human skin and that of a snail raises important questions about ordering the world through the production of knowledge, which itself can be subject to a range of political, social or cultural determinants.

Silent Night
2021, audio installation, text

The work is a fragment of a recording made while the artist was asleep on the balcony of his flat. What comes to the fore here is the specific acoustic of the block of flats, showing how urban architecture divides space. We hear the sounds of a stage on which different actors enter into relationships with each other, being involved in an endless score of the rhythm of life. During the recording, we hear the sounds of the city, the animals' nocturnal excitement as well as atmospheric phenomena. Moreover, from time to time, there is the sound of the artist himself, snoring regularly in his sleep, completely unaware of the spectacle unfolding around him.

Piotr Blajerski's exhibition *Wandering Among Other Realizations of Life*

is a speculative vision of building a community free from speciesism.

The artist looks at the processes that shape biological life, recording that which usually goes unnoticed. He films and photographs the animals encountered on his path, looking at their existence and death. He establishes a specific kind of relationship, stepping into the role of a sentient witness who shares his personal experience of crossing the horizon of vision and empathy.

These encounters, often provoked by chance or curiosity, become a field of changing optics in our perception of the world as a human-dominated space. Piotr's working method is not so much about documenting, but recording the situations in which he finds himself and of which he naturally becomes a part. He steps back and refrains from commentary in order to emphasize the relationship with the encountered beings. The protagonists of his project explore unknown spaces, search for food, copulate, move and die. As subjects to life processes, they form a community of beings – an ecosystem co-created by human and non-human beings (animals, plants and microorganisms).

A change in our approach to living beings occurred in parallel to the development of posthumanist thought. Transcending the idea of anthropocentrism entailed a critical analysis of the previous, traditional approach to animals, both in art and in non-artistic matters. Today, we live in a time when the community of other beings is taking on special importance. The looming specter of the „Anthropocene Era” and the deepening climate emergency force a fundamental shift in our thinking about the planet and its ecosystems. Reflections that provide answers to the questions of how to live as part of an interspecies community seem crucial. How to caringly build an environment in which everything functions on the basis of intertwined relationships?

In the exhibition, Piotr Blajerski adopts an empathy-based strategy, which he puts into practice through observation and wandering, both physically and mentally. The featured works are permeated by a palpable tension between the process of slow annihilation and passing away and the vision of building a community seen from a post-anthropocentric perspective. Here, annihilation is seen in terms of extinction – a process of disappearance of species, planetary change brought about by human activity. However, it is the community that offers the opportunity to establish relationships as the basis of biological life realized in different ways. The artist sees post-anthropocentrism as a constructive way of thinking, which simultaneously rejects an eschatological attitude and expresses a humility that goes against anthropocentric egoism.

Piotr's practice, free from distance and objectification, is intended to trigger empathy and a critical look at our habitual perception and understanding of another life. The motif of wandering, highlighted in the exhibition title, is an invitation to slowly discover that which usually remains hidden. It provides an impulse for a sensitive gaze that breaks the social order in which non-human persons function only as resources. In the exhibition, they are agents as important as humans.

Piotr Lisowski is an exhibition curator and art historian, author, editor of publications and independent researcher of contemporary art. He is the artistic director of 66P Subjective Cultural Institution. From 2017 to 2022 he was worked at Wrocław Contemporary Museum, which he managed in 2020. Previously, from 2007 to 2016, he was curator and supervisor of the CCA Toruń collection, as well as co-founder of the independent GALERIA MIŁOŚĆ (2014–2017). He works as a lecturer at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń and teaches the Art Mediation course at the Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław.

Piotr Blajerski (b. 1980) has graduated from the Faculty of Graphics and Media Arts of the Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław. He creates video, photography and sound installations, as well as performative community events. His work explores the possibility of expanding the boundaries of cognition and consciousness as well as individual freedom in the current social conditions and complex power dynamics, together with the narratives that support them; it envisions a future in which current ideological certainties no longer apply, promoting instead a post-anthropocentric perspective that broadens the limits of community and empathy. In 2023, he began doctoral studies at the Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow. He lives and works in Wrocław.