

fascination, he captures the scene unfolding above the water's surface. Photographs taken by Kowalski and his associates show, for instance, a wintery landscape of the frozen pond, and cats running happily across its icy expanse. To monitor the life of the Nienawiszcz canvases effectively and efficiently, Kowalski constructs "observation posts", which are metal-and-wood structures positioned on the pond's edge, elevated nearly a metre above the ground. Climbing up and settling into a chair, he patiently records inter-species interactions between non-humans and the canvas. In doing so, he resembles a seasoned ornithologist or biologist studying wild flora and fauna. The structure, which includes a ladder, is gradually overgrown by hop vines and tall grasses that blend it into its surroundings.

While exploring the life and the ongoing processes within the pond, Kowalski is far from remaining a distanced observer. He seeks to lose himself in nature and embrace the richness of the pond's living ecosystem with his whole being by wading through mud, sludge, and water. Consequently, he feels directly connected to the spatial and painterly landscape, and his style – if a style can at all be spoken of under the circumstances – although markedly different from that developed early in his career, has retained the essence of "painterly experience"³⁰, a journey that makes him revise his view of painting, its nature, and its boundaries. The paintings by Piotr C. Kowalski and Others straddle the realms of land art and bio art, yet defy categorisation within either trend. Unlike traditional land artists, Kowalski refrains from moulding the landscape or strongly disrupting its nature by creating predetermined forms and objects with the use of natural materials. Instead, he allows nature to create freely, declaring to fully relinquish any claims to authorship. He is not a bioartist who handles living moist tissues in controlled laboratory settings and lacks professional expertise in biotechnology or molecular biology.

The artist's sensitive approach, epitomised fully in the Nienawiszcz canvases, is best described within the principles of eco-friendly painting³¹ or sustainable art³². Aligned with these ideas, the work of Piotr C. Kowalski and Others cultivates harmonious coexistence between humans and their environment, reasonable use of natural resources, and responsible relationships with non-human inhabitants

of the Earth³³. By championing the cultivation of mindful attitudes towards all life forms, the artist steps into the role of an activist striving to preserve ecosystems in the condition that will ensure the survival of future generations of both humans and non-humans³⁴. His collaborative artistic endeavours in the form of abstract canvases retrieved from the pond reveal a political undercurrent, the artist's perceptual and emotional engagement with the world, and his ability to emotionally stir viewers with the energy captured in the canvases.

Viewed in this light, the Nienawiszcz paintings reflect an affirmative, yet discerning stance by the artist. They prompt the exploration of bold, inter-species relationships and the development of fresh perspectives on paintings and the artist's role in the Anthropocene. They suggest that the mission of a contemporary, conscientious painter lies in bridging the gap between art (culture) and nature, and in recognising nature's innate and boundless creativity. On a micro-level, the works of Piotr C. Kowalski and Others encourage us to witness the vibrant life pulsating within an unassuming pond in a Wielkopolska town. Zooming out to the macro level, insights are offered into novel ways of appreciating the ingenious creativity of non-humans, nudging us towards envisioning a posthumanist community of species liberated from competition and conquest. For the time being, assessing their interpretative potential in its entirety remains elusive. Perhaps, if continued over the next few if not dozens of years, the cycle will gradually reveal clearer place and time imprints on the canvases, while the receding layers of silt will unveil a painterly panorama of destructive climate change on our planet. The creative journey in the materials employed to produce the Nienawiszcz paintings will surely continue, even if we do not watch it closely, as does Piotr C. Kowalski.

33 P. Sikora, Sustainable Art. Facing the Need for Regeneration, Responsibility and Relations. About the BWA Studio Exhibition in Wrocław, in: Sustainable..., p. 159.

34 Piotr C. Kowalski made his name as an environmental activist when protesting against logging in the Białowieża Forest in July 2022. On the occasion, he presented a painterly "gift", one of his Sawn Through Paintings made up of canvases bearing marks of a rusty saw having been applied to them, to Minister of the Environment Jan Szyszko.

30 See article by Włodzimierz Nowaczyk in the brochure accompanying the exhibition W stronę nowej sztuki. Czas malowania, Bydgoszcz, BWA (June-July 1985).

31 See article by Bożena Czubak in the brochure accompanying the exhibition Piotr Kowalski (Pies Gallery, Poznań, 23 June-1 July 2011).

32 Piotr C. Kowalski's art has been featured in Sustainable Art. Facing the Need for Regeneration, Responsibility and Relations in this category, ed. A. Markowska, Warszawa-Toruń 2015 and in an earlier exhibition at Gallery Studio BWA Wrocław from 20 to 21 November 2013, curated by Anna Markowska and Patrycja Sikora. Also on view in the exhibition were Frosty Paintings (2009-2020) by Piotr C. Kowalski and Joanna Janiak and the Piotr C. Kowalski's work painted with cherries, Tasty Painting (2010).