Nira Pereg (Israeli, b. Tel Aviv, 1969) creates documentary-based video works that transform everyday actualities into dramatic scenarios. This Black Box presentation features 67 Bows, 2006, a work inspired by visits to the Karlsruhe Zoo, where Pereg studied a flock of flamingos. Employing various camera angles, the artist offers sumptuous close-ups of these exotic animals calmly going about their instinctual business. Over the muffled noise of the birds’ squawks and clucks, she adds a provocative, intermittently startling soundtrack, implying disturbing human intrusion into their peaceful realm and evoking a sense of suspense and heightened apprehension among viewers who must question the relationship between what they see and what they hear.

**During your academic training what was your preferred medium?**

My favorite form of art to watch was film, but my favorite form of art to make was multimedia installation. It has a lot to do with my love of editing, for creating a context through the sheer fact of juxtaposition.

**What did you discover during the making of this work?**

The work actually started from an interest in discovering individual behaviors in a group setting. I realized that in order to find particular qualities in flamingos I must try to set up a situation in which group behavior is expected. Flamingos form interesting communities, since they seem to be very harmonious as a group but they have no leader. They just share this communal sense of consciousness. So once I found a way to set up a group response, I could look at the ones who didn’t cooperate. It’s a crucial work for me; during the production it became clear how radical even the subtlest forms of resistance are.

**What has pleased or surprised you most about viewers’ responses?**

I consider this piece quite a hard one, even a bit sad. But I was happy to find that people always laugh when they see it. I think that if you stay with the piece for some time it fluctuates between these two qualities.

For a longer version of the Q&A with Nira Pereg, see hirshhorn.si.edu.

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