

# Birds of a Feather Dance Together

Nira Pereg explores rebellion and beauty in her work '67 Bows'

## Museum

When planning your next trip to the zoo, be on the lookout for a potential flamingo dance party. Israeli artist Nira Pereg takes bird-watching to a strange new level with "67 Bows," a film installation on view through Nov. 13 at the Hirshhorn.

For the 2006 video, now screening in the museum's Black Box theater, Pereg "choreographed" and filmed the movements of a group of flamingos at a zoo in Karlsruhe, Germany.

"It's interesting, because they are a community, with no one leader," Pereg says. "We go to zoos to observe animals and find comparisons to our own social situations. Flamingos are perfect for that. Birds don't have the same individuality that mammals have, but I was looking for individuals within this group."

"67 Bows" features the birds doing choreography that Pereg (who is unseen in the film) "taught" them during her daily visits to the zoo. In the black-and-white looped video, the birds appear to be responding to the film's nontraditional score, an intermittent cocking and firing of a gun that makes the flock bow in submission. (The score was added during post-production).



Israeli video artist Nira Pereg filmed the movements of a pack of flamingos for her 2006 work "67 Bows," a frame of which is pictured. It screens through Nov. 13.

**"We go to zoos to ... find comparisons to our own social situations."**

— NIRA PEREG, ISRAELI VIDEO ARTIST AND CREATOR OF "67 BOWS," ON VIEW AT THE HIRSHHORN THROUGH NOV. 13.

Pereg tends to explore social situations in her video works, examining systems of control and the nature of belonging and rebelling. She says that her aim with "67 Bows" was to use the zoo environment to make a statement about circumstance and conformity. The

birds' synchronized movements are sometimes lulling, sometimes abrupt and disturbing — especially in context of the violence of the soundtrack. After awhile, the viewer begins to notice the birds who aren't "dancing" along with the pack. This switch in the viewer's perception is central to the piece's message.

So, how was Pereg able to draw out the rebel flamingos? "I could only find them by making all the birds do the same thing, then finding the few who didn't do it. I did something with my body that made them do something with theirs — I can't say much more than that; it's the mystery of the piece."

JESSICA ROAKE

● **Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Independence Avenue and 7th Street SW; through Nov. 13, free; 202-633-1000, [Hirshhorn.si.edu](http://Hirshhorn.si.edu). (L'Enfant Plaza)**