LE CANARI

DIRECTOR
Élène Tremblay

DURATION
0:55

YEAR
2008

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE
No dialogue

CATEGORY
Installation



DESCRIPTION
In *The Presentation of Self*, sociologist Erwin Goffman presents social life as a kind of theatre. When an individual makes a gaff in a social situation, this produces a ‘contradictory representation, a questioning of common reality, causing general unease’. [Translation from fr.wikipedia.org] In *Le canari*, I continue my study of the pathetic body by playing, in a minimal way, an agitated canary batting its wings in a corner of a concrete wall. The camera is positioned high above, giving a birds-eye view of the canary. I accelerated the speed of my movements slightly when editing and used the high-pitched squawks of caged canaries—recorded in a public market—for the soundtrack.

Humour and self-depreciation allow me to distance myself from these images in which I depict myself as pathetic (as in *Youhou*, *Infortunes 1* and *Le canari*). When contemplating such an image, the audience finds itself in the uncomfortable role of voyeur and in an unbalanced relationship of domination. The viewer’s discomfort is perceptible and twofold; it is caused by being made to witness a person being ridiculed and by empathetically identifying with that person’s vulnerability.

KEYWORDS
Body, nudity, animal, strangeness

THEMES
Art and culture
Identity