

The artistic documentation of aesthetic swarm intelligence is commented live

10 short films & raw material | 90 min total | 70 min of which without sound, commented live by me | Final part will be the 10 min short essay film (completion end of March 2019) with sound / soundtrack by Philip Glass

Making-of on the short essay film on aesthetic swarm intelligence using the example of huge swarms of starlings near Basel in autumn 2017 and 2018. In about 90 minutes I grant a view of my computer desk and present some exemplary photographs, 10 short films and specifically selected raw material from my documentation of these swarms of starlings over several weeks. If I had a lot of time and money, I would make a 90-minute documentary essay film out of it. But since I have neither, I present my work improvised.

It is expressly not a pure nature documentary film work, even if the birds are clearly in the foreground. From the beginning, my approach was to document these swarm movements artistically. Already during this documentation it was clear to me that I wanted to make both an immersive installation and a short essay film of it. My approach was the aesthetics of the swarms. I wanted to shoot as long and as much as possible of the flocks of birds, first as photos, but quite soon mostly as film. These *crazy* birds can, in my opinion, only be met with an equally *crazy* work. I feel this accumulation of thousands and thousands of migratory birds over weeks, before the onward flight to the south, at a common sleeping place an unusual natural spectacle, which remained almost unnoticed by the public. These swarms are art.

Thus, about 300 film clips of raw material with an estimated length of five to six hours were created. Throughout the year 2018, I have specifically recorded further phenomena in the sky with time-lapse, with which I would like to underline the artistic character of my short essay film in addition to further thematically foreign film and sound sequences.

In the spring of 2018, I almost gritted my teeth at the financing of the immersive installation, and in the summer the short essay film moved to the top of my agenda. Just as pleasing as surprising were the promises from the music publisher from Berlin and the label from New York to be allowed to use the film rights for a track by Philip Glass at festivals for a friendly fee. In November 2018, I successfully carried out a crowdfunding for this, too, but also in order to take the time for viewing the film footage and editing the track with frame accuracy.

At the invitation of the Trinationale Environmental Centre to the Nature Photography Forum, I prepared this full-length lecture. I report on the better camera perspectives of house and shell roofs, on the use of seven cameras, on my recording technique such as focal lengths and apertures, on recorded conversations with neighbours from Huningue, on whose balconies I was allowed to work and how I made the French official white horse neigh. I also explain what people can learn from the starling swarms, what role swarm intelligence already plays in people's lives and show newly discovered raw material from the depths of my hard disks, which I view for my starlings projects. I also show the difference between a pure nature documentary and my essay film. The result is a very personal, partly poetic, partly improvised, also absurd, but always aesthetic image of these swarms, involving the audience.

Link to the teaser: <https://vimeo.com/320971867> Password on demand