

# Flash Art

November–December 2008

## **ALIX PEARLSTEIN** THE KITCHEN - NEW YORK



ALIX PEARLSTEIN. *After the Fall*, 2008. Production still. Courtesy The Kitchen, New York.

The centerpiece of Alix Pearlstein's new show is *After The Fall* (2008), a four-channel video installation that explores the dynamics among a group of minimally choreographed characters.

Sets of actors enter an empty stage and proceed to enact scenarios: a sexual liaison, rites of public humiliation, physical and emotional power games, etc. The characters then pair off as victims/aggressors in suites of actions and provocations that seem to ask how does someone behave following a crisis that

involves a few but affects everyone? A central character, in a moment of catharsis, interrupts the scene by planting a white board in the center of the stage. This symbolic barrier becomes the cause of much hostility between the characters as they continue to scheme, take sides, and battle for position.

Pearlstein presents two continuous, alternating takes on four screens that encircle and implicate the viewer, not only by directly confronting them with the actors but also by offering the multiple perspectives that the individual characters are denied.

In the accompanying short *Gol-drush* (2008), the same actors enact an animalistic fight over the same white board, this time destroying it and fighting each other to possess pieces of the property. It is a fitting prologue to *After The Fall*, a pessimistic parable of human relations.

*Dmitry Komis*