

## Smile! by Aldo Giannotti

A smile is a gesture that currently encounters us ever so often in public. It may be through contact with people or over the media - a smile can win. Smiling is a non-intuitive reaction which, in comparison to laughing, is hardly noticed. It is actually irrelevant, because smiling is decoded as a friendly gesture that ñ without having to react on something ñ can stand for itself.

Advertisement has used the effectiveness of a smile - in newspapers, magazines and commercial spots as on billboards. People are always smiling at us, even politicians, who's message is jeopardised to disappear behind there smile. Products and people are not only perceived through the transmission of emotions but superposed - only one sentiment, one image is communicated, that the consumer/recipient associates a product or person to. The complacency of a smile seems to support that the smile deprives itself in its nature as a pure gesture of critical questioning. In his video installation "SMILE!" Aldo Giannotti reveals the smile. Innumerable Close-Ups of billboards showing smiling mouths that, looped in the video, create a loom atmosphere. The showing of teeth while smiling, usually suggesting an honest emotion, gives the images an aggressive character, which is amplified by the distorted projection.

Two balloons, floating in the room, set up the projectionsí surface. Tied with two strings to the floor, they seem as the huge balloons in a childhood memory. Giannotti refers to the association of ingenuity and pureness that is inevitably connected to this image. He puts in contrast the unspoiled, faultless with fragments of visualised friendliness that have degenerated to grimaces. Giannotti allegorizes the smile, as said in his own words, into „a cannibalised attack on free decision“, and questions the rhetoric methods of suggestive advertisement used in these days. In the same time he implies the responsibility to the corporate groups for the loss of our innocence - though with a tongue-in-cheek hardly to ignore, when he gives the viewer the hint over the title of the work, to try to smile about it.

text by Severin Dünser