

SYNOPSIS

VIDEOCRACY – the evilness of banality

"Videocracy is the power of image over the society"

Wikipedia.org

A late evening in 1976 a local TV-station in Italy broadcasts a quiz show where the viewers are asked to call in and answer questions. For each correct given answer, a housewife strips off one garment at a time while performing a little dance.

The format is very simple and the show is shot in an ordinary bar. The following day there are complaints from the local factory as a great part of the male workers did not show up in time for work.

Nobody back then could have imagined that the show in black and white was the beginning of a TV-revolution that would forever alter the entire political system, change values and become the powerful instrument of governing a nation.

In a videocracy the key to power is the possession of the image. The people who learn how to use the tools and understand the codes become the leaders and take control. In Italy one man only has kept the control and domination of the image over three entire decades, first as a businessman and TV-magnate, then bringing his television culture paradigm into the politics. Silvio Berlusconi has created a television which is mirroring his very personal taste and preferences.

Today 80 percent of the Italian population has television as their prime source of information.

Television has most consciously been turned into a marketing channel, bringing the message to the masses; "have fun and forget the harsh reality for a moment". The most important thing is to be noticed and seen; stardom, money and people's admiration then come automatically.

The director Erik Gandini was born and brought up in Italy, under the worst thinkable TV conditions and has taken part of a 30 year long experiment of entertainment television. He now lives in Sweden and in "Videocracy" he returns to his country of birth observing the consequences of the non-stop flow of colourful images, music and almost nude dancing girls encouraging the audience "to just have fun". The message that has shaped and "transformed" his generation into citizens of the TV-republic Italy, a country where the step from showgirl to minister of equal opportunities is only natural. What happens when fun is no longer fun in a society governed by appearance and superficiality, where the meaning of the written and spoken word has forever lost its importance, defeated by the power of image?