

SMILE

An anthology by VII Photo

Opening night **February 4, 2016, 7 PM**

Exhibition runs through **March 4, 2016**

Alserkal Avenue, Unit 36, Street 8, Al Quoz, Dubai



About the exhibition

There's a story about a photographer who for years worked throughout Asia. She'd arrive in each new country with her bags of equipment and find a local fixer to take her to meet her subjects. In each new language she learned the words "Don't Smile!", which she'd bark at her subjects before she shot their picture.

After all—smiling is contagious, outwardly carefree, and may remove sentiments of objectivity or hard-hitting news value. There is something about a smiling subject that could suggest inauthenticity or a lack of gravitas in the moment; the very act of smiling seems to soften the drama of an otherwise weighty situation.

A cursory search of archival images by world-renowned VII Photo agency photographers seems to show we often frown upon smiles in our photographs. The Smile exhibition brings together images of people smiling – most often a taboo expression in photojournalism – into a collection of powerful images gathered during the most important historical events that have shaped the past thirty years. Compiled as a group, they reveal the astonishing range of human behavior that smiles represent.

Pride powers a smile, power emboldens a smile, we smile to seduce or be seduced. But we also smile when we lie, when we're scared or anxious. In fact, just one variant of the eighteen different smiles recognizes enjoyment, and it's this universal variant that unites us as human beings.

Smile explores how a seemingly simple action manifests in our world; from the most depressing, violent, dysfunctional and poverty stricken conditions to the warmth and security of joy, affection, love and home. And between those two worlds – of fear and contentment – is the smile we give to the cameras of expression.

The Smile exhibition presents over 40 images by 19 photographers, members of the world renowned VII Photo agency.

About VII Photo

VII was created in 2001 by seven of the world's leading photojournalists and by 2005 VII was listed in third position in American Photo's "100 Most Important People in Photography." VII now represents 18 of the world's preeminent photojournalists whose careers span 35 years of world history.

Renowned for the quality of its photography, the group's collective archive of over 100,000 images is an iconic summary of the defining landmarks of the late Twentieth Century and it continues to grow as the new Millennium develops. The collection has been built in collaboration with the world's leading magazines and as such it defines the visual memory of our times. Time Magazine, The New York Times Magazine, National Geographic, Newsweek, Stern, The Sunday Times Magazine, GEO Germany, Paris Match, Le Monde and others have helped to introduce these images to the world.

VII's cultural position has been cemented by its many exhibitions in leading museums, including the Whitney Museum of Contemporary Art and the Louvre, and featured appearances at major art/photo festivals including Les Rencontres D'Arles, PhotoEspaña and Visa pour l'image.

More than 70 books have been dedicated to the work of VII photographers; VII's work has also been the subject of broadcast documentaries in USA, Europe, Japan and elsewhere. Current members are Jocelyn Bain Hogg, Sim Chi Yin, Stefano De Luigi, Jessica Dimmock, Ashley Gilbertson, Ron Haviv, Ed Kashi, Gary Knight, Antonin Kratochvil, Joachim Ladefoged, Davide Monteleone, Christopher Morris, Maciek Nabrdalik, Franco Pagetti, Sarker Protick, John Stanmeyer, Tomas van Houtryve, Danny Wilcox Frazier and the estate of Alexandra Boulat.

Current members of the VII Mentor Program include: Ali Arkady (Iraq), Arnau Bach (Spain), Poulomi Basu (India), Arthur Bondar (Ukraine), Linda Bournane Engelberth (Norway), Luisa Dörr (Brazil), Maika Elan (Vietnam), Mojgan Ghanbari (Iran), Cristóbal Olivares (Chile) and Esa Ylijaasko (Turkey).

About Gulf Photo Plus

Gulf Photo Plus (GPP) is Dubai's Photography Centre, dedicated to developing the knowledge and appreciation of photography through education, exhibitions, and a variety of events held throughout the year. Over the course of ten years, GPP has garnered an international reputation as a leader in photography events. It exists at the epicenter of the photography community in the MENA region, and continues to develop its international presence through its GPP PopUp events held around the world from Seattle to Singapore. GPP's annual calendar includes photography exhibitions, movie nights, free artist talks, regular photography workshops, and Slidefest evenings where local creatives can share personal projects and find new inspiration.

For further information about the exhibition, please, contact:

Anna Arutyunova

anna@gulfphotoplus.com

T: +971 4 380 8545

M: +971 56 1829137