

Incident- ambivalence (1991-1992), Aleks Danko

Audio Description transcript

You are listening to the audio description of Aleks Danko's work called *Incident – ambivalence* (1991-1992) as part of *Interfacial Intimacies* an exhibition of photography, film, painting, installation, textile, and performance by artists who hold and express tenderly the multiple aspects of their selves through a series of portraits and anti-portraits. The exhibition has been curated by Caine Chennatt, developed by the Plimsoll Gallery and toured by Contemporary Art Tasmania.

Incident- ambivalence is a sculptural wall installation displaying 10 identical red cartoonish faces. Each is a painting 28 x 27.5 centimetres in dimension, made of wood, galvanised steel and synthetic polymer paint and varnish.

Each face has large, round eyes with black pupils, thick black eyebrows, a straight black line for a nose and a mouth with 5 rectangular teeth showing. The face is outlined in black. The red is bright and vivid similar to the colour of a ripe tomato.

The faces are arranged in a pattern on a light coloured background wall.

There is one face in the top row on the far right. There are 8 faces in the middle row displayed side by side spaced approximately 30 cms apart, and another single face in the bottom row on the far left.

The following is quoted from the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia- 'Aleks Danko describes the face in this painting as that of an idiot. This brainless, disembodied head is a recurring motif in his work, first appearing in *Taste* in 1988 and again in the installation *Taste: the DUH-HEADS* in 2013. With its staring eyes and foolish grin it could register any emotion, from surprise to terror to embarrassment. Danko uses it to signify a kind of mindlessness, clustering a number of the vacantly staring faces in his installations to create a sense of a mob mentality; the unthinking and unblinking conformity of the crowd.' The recurrence of this face in Danko's work is a reminder of the importance of independent thought, outside the bounds of convention and conformity.

Aleks Danko is an Australian performance artist and sculptor, born in 1950 currently living Victoria. The son of Ukrainian migrants, he was born in Adelaide, and educated at the South Australian School of Art and the Hawthorn Institute of Education. He started exhibiting in Adelaide in 1970.

Drawing actively on Australia's political and cultural history, Danko combines irony, humour and sarcasm with aesthetically sophisticated and materially confident gestures to interrogate the social, political and cultural landscape of Australia.

Incident- ambivalence is a Collection loan from the University of Tasmania.