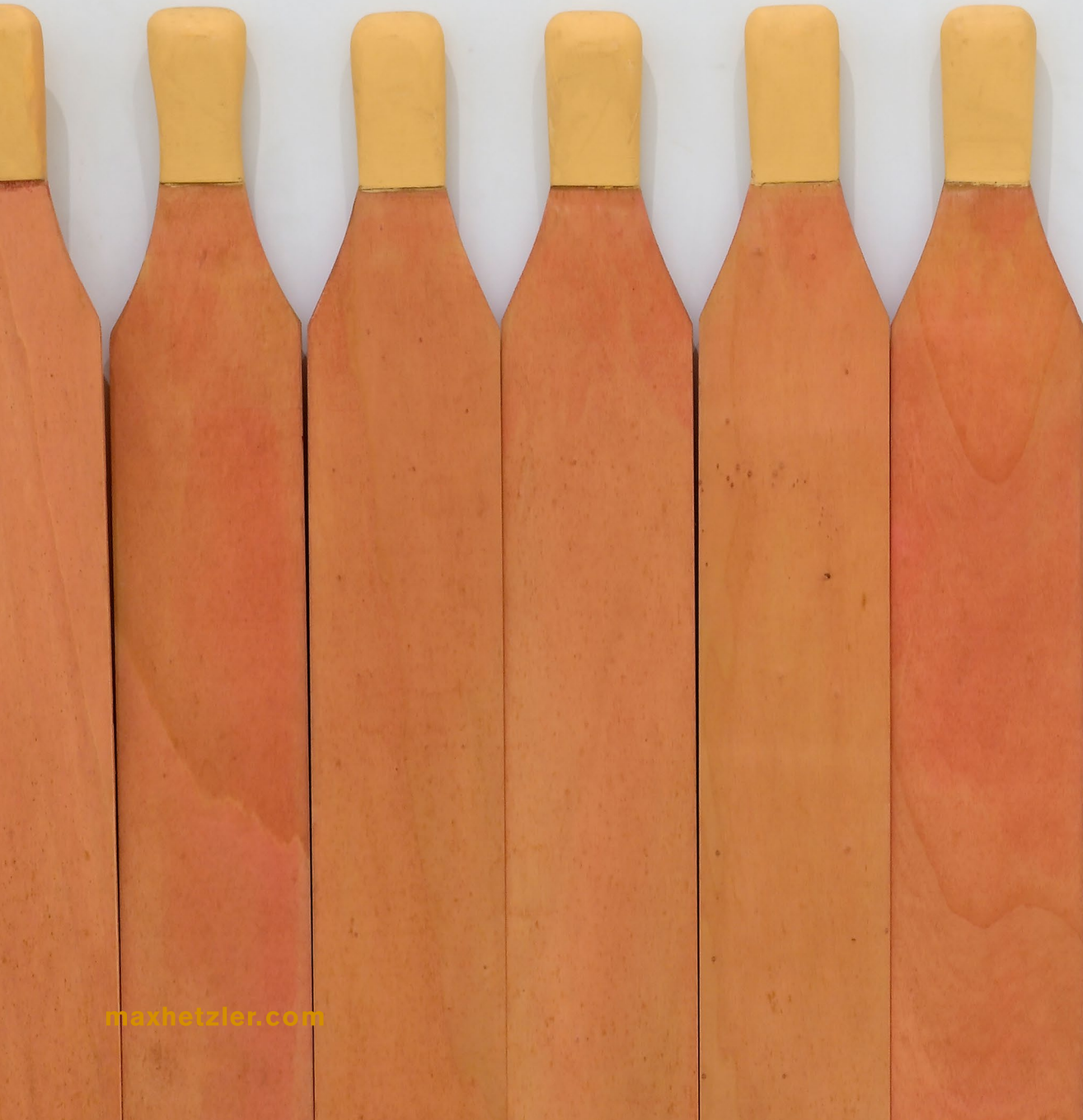


Galerie Max Hetzler Berlin | Paris | London



Online Viewing Room

Raymond Hains

Saffa, 1971

17 September – 1 October 2020



Raymond Hains, *Saffa*, 1971

Raymond Hains

Saffa, 1971

lacquered wood, sandpaper

98.5 x 95 x 11.5 cm.;

38 3/4 x 37 3/8 x 4 1/2 in.

signed and titled (on the reverse)

Provenance

Gallery Orler, Madonna di Campiglio

Private Collection, Naples

Anon. Sale, Cornette de St Cyr, Brussels,

3 December 2017, lot 113

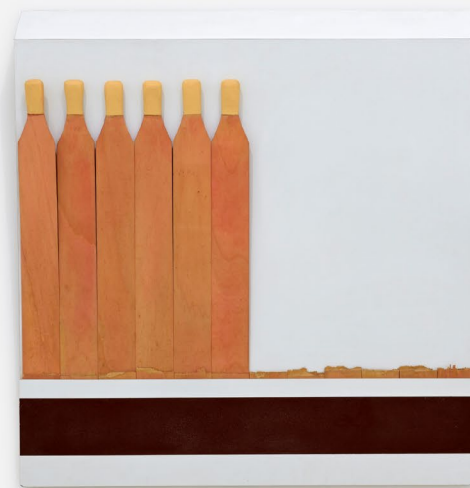
Private Collection

Exhibited

Paris, Galerie Max Hetzler,

Raymond Hains: Saffa | Seita,

September – October 2018



RAYMOND HAINS

1926 – 2005

lived and worked in Paris, France

“The continuous act of shifting, drifting and inflecting through different spaces, images, words and signification is perhaps where Hains retains his extraordinary relevance, not only to current art production but also to the slippery malleability and ever-changing nature of our contemporary environment.”¹

Hans Ulrich Obrist

Saffa, 1971, belongs to Raymond Hains’ seminal matches series. A primary example of a wall-mounted matchbook, it encapsulates the Pop Art aesthetic and minimalist qualities of this iconic body of work, examples of which were exhibited at documenta IV, Kassel in 1968 and are represented in major international collections including MoMA, New York; Musée national d’Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris; MAMAC, Nice; Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth and Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

A central figure in post-war French art, Raymond Hains developed an artistic universe that playfully borrows from the real world and explores the visual and metaphoric possibilities of linguistic frameworks. Together with Yves Klein, Jean Tinguely and Jacques Villeglé, Hains was a founding member of *Nouveau Réalisme*, the French counterpart to Pop Art established in 1960. Even though the group was short-lived and came into existence at an early stage of Hains’ career, the values of connecting the traditions of fine art with popular culture accompanied the artist throughout his career.

Hains initiated his matches series in 1964 while residing in Italy. After seeing Claes Oldenburg’s work exhibited at the Venice Biennale the same year, Hains began the production of oversized matchbooks and matches (fig. 1). Existing in both free-standing and mural form, the works bridge the gap between sculpture and painting, reflecting the artist’s awareness of contemporary discourses around Minimalism. Hains attributed this body of work to two fictional artists, “Saffa” and “Seita”, whose names were based on the acronyms of the Italian and French national tobacco monopolies of the time. Following the first exhibition of this body of work at Galleria del Leone in Venice in 1964, Hains nurtured the myth of the two invented artists through numerous exhibitions, signing works in their name and presenting himself as their agent. Humorously taking on different roles and identities of the art world, Hains questioned the artist’s status and how it was being instrumentalised by society.



Figure 1
Raymond Hains
Allumette Seita, 2005
bronze
263 x 19.5 x 3.2 cm.; 103 1/2 x 7 1/2 x 1 1/8 in.

The matchbooks were produced by a carpenter from an existing model, following Hain's instructions. By delegating the production of the matches, Hains further challenged the role of the artist in creating both work and meaning. In addition to questioning the concept of authorship in his own work, Hains also wanted to pay tribute to the Byzantine concept of *acheiropoieta*, which argues that works are more valuable when untouched by human hand. Similar to Hains' *affiches lacérées* (torn posters) and *palissades*, which used found materials such as advertisements, political posters and boarding fences collected from the street, the matches battle "for the elimination of the personal signature and the refusal of the romantic figure of the artist creator" (figs. 2 and 3).²

The choice of matchbooks, which are trivial objects often used as advertisement gifts, allowed Hains to monumentalise everyday objects in artistic form. By using wood for their fabrication—an inexpensive material rarely used in fine art—the artist honours the original material of matchbooks. Critically exploring and incorporating consumer goods in his works, Hains turned the mundane into "objets d'art". Playing with the legacy of the ready-made, *Saffa* navigates between humour and seriousness, familiarity and aesthetic duty.

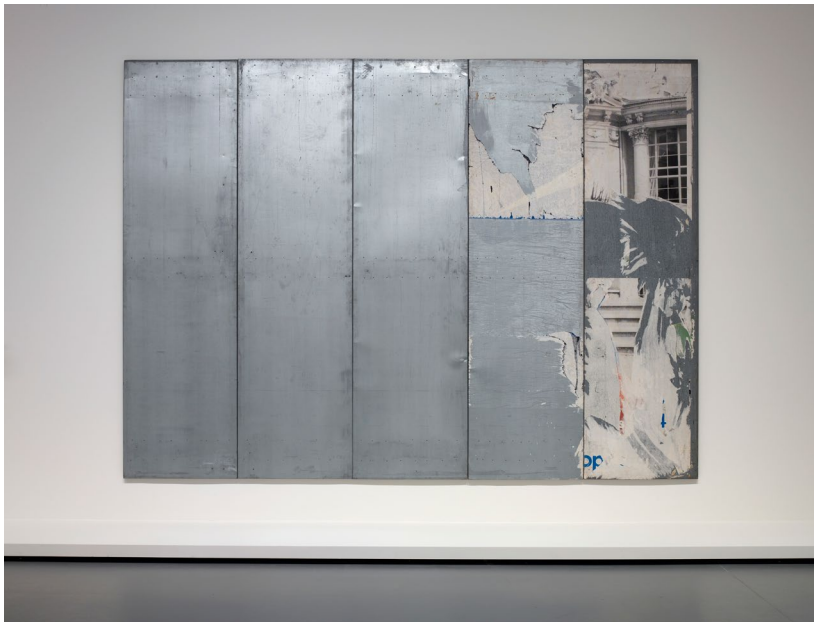


Figure 2
Untitled, 1990
torn posters on billboard
300 x 400 cm.; 118 1/8 x 157 1/2 in.
Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris



Figure 3
Avenue d'Italie, 1974
oil on wood
180 x 200 cm.; 70 7/8 x 78 3/4 in.
MAMAC, Nice

“I was looking at a book of matches produced by the French tobacco company with Lafontaine’s fable’ “The ass in the lion’s skin”; I noticed it on the table, just like that, when we were having a drink in the cafés, and it occurred to me that it would be funny to have enlarged matchbooks, the other way around, hanging on the wall. This was at the time of the 1964 Venice Biennale and the exhibition of Pop Art. I took my inspiration from one of Oldenburg’s ideas. In Italy there were matches with yellow ends, in bright colours of the Klein and Matisse kind. I should also add that at the restaurants, at Il Angelo or La Colomba, for example, photographers took pictures of people during the meal and, by the time of the dessert, brought back their portrait stuck to a box of matches. All that explains how I got around to this business. So I imagined two artists who each had a monopoly on matchboxes. They were gadgets to illustrate Nouveau Réalisme, which could have been called Personified Abstractions.”³

Raymond Hains

Iris Clert carrying a matchbox, 1967





Raymond Hains, Viva Arte Viva, 57th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2017

[Click here to discover more exhibitions](#)

Comparable Works in Museum Collections



Saffa Super Matchbox, 1965
polyvinyl acetate paint on plywood
115.5 x 86.9 x 7.5 cm.; 45 1/2 x 34 1/4 x 3 in.
Acc. no.: 782.1969.
Museum of Modern Art, New York
Gift of Philip Johnson.



Saffa, 1964
painted wood on plywood
128 x 100 x 7 cm.; 50 3/8 x 39 3/8 x 2 3/4 in.
Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris



Seita, 1970
mixed media on wood
98 x 80 x 20 cm.; 38 5/8 x 31 1/2 x 7 7/8 in.
Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon



Seita, 1970
painted wood,
93 x 80 x 47 cm.; 36 5/8 x 31 1/2 x 18 1/2 in.
Museum Ludwig, Cologne



SEITA, 1971
giant matchbox in melamine and painted wood,
emery cloth
98 x 80 x 25 cm.; 38 5/8 x 31 1/2 x 9 7/8 in.
Musée d'art moderne et d'art contemporain, Nice



Allumettes blanches, 1965
painted wood
95 x 84 x 13 cm.; 37 3/8 x 33 1/8 x 5 1/8 in.
Moderna Museet, Stockholm



Pochette d'allumettes (Matchbox), 1971
acrylic, sandpaper and wood on plywood tablex
100 x 94.7 x 9 cm.; 39 3/8 x 37 1/4 x 3 1/2 in.
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid



From Bauhaus to Pop: Masterworks given by Philip Johnson,
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1996

[Click here to discover
more exhibitions](#)

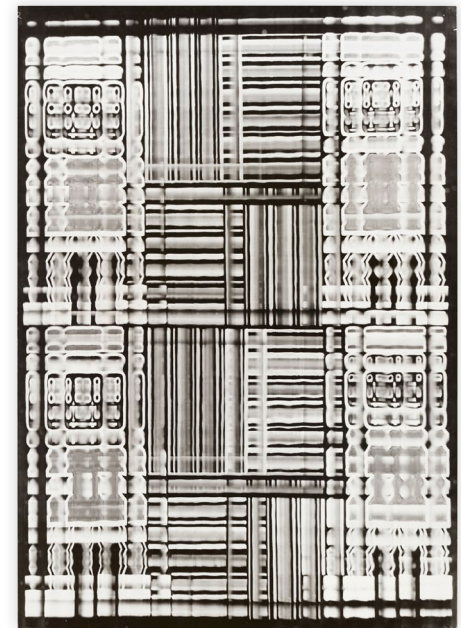
LOOK



WATCH



DISCOVER





Raymond Hains (b.1926, Saint-Brieuc; d.2005, Paris) has participated in major international exhibitions such as “The Art of Assemblage” at MoMA, New York (1961); “Paris-Paris” at Musée National d’Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris (1982); documenta IV, Kassel (1968) and documenta X, Kassel (1997). More recently a large room was dedicated to the artist’s work at “Vive Arte Viva”, the 57th Venice Biennale (2017), and a large-scale torn poster work from the “Dauphin” series was exhibited at the Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, in the exhibition “The Collection of the Fondation. A Vision for Painting” (2019). Between 2000 and 2002, retrospective exhibitions took place at Centre Pompidou, Paris; MACBA, Barcelona; Fondation Serralves, Porto and Moore College of Art, Philadelphia. Other solo exhibitions of Hains’ work include MAMCO, Geneva (2015); Les Abattoirs, Toulouse (2002); MAMAC, Nice (2000); Musée d’art Moderne, Saint-Etienne (2000); MUMOK, Vienna (1995) and Fondation Cartier, Paris (1994).

The artist’s work is held in various museum collections including the Musée national d’Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris; Musée d’Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris; Fondation Cartier, Paris; MAMAC, Nice; MoMA, New York; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Sprengel Museum, Hannover; Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg; Fundação Serralves, Porto; Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon; MACBA, Barcelona; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; MUMOK, Vienna; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

Saffa (detail), 1971



Saffa | Seita, Galerie Max Hetzler, Paris, 2018

[Click here to discover more exhibitions](#)

Footnotes

- 1 Hans Ulrich Obrist, "Ever Hains", in *Raymond Hains*, exh.cat. Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin and Paris; Berlin: Holzwarth Publications, 2016, p. 15.
- 2 Tom McDonough, "Raymond Hains's France in Shreds and the Politics of Décollage," in *Raymond Hains: Art Speculator*, exh. cat., Philadelphia: Goldie Paley Gallery, Moore College of Art and Design, 2002, p. 23.
- 3 "Interview with Marc Bormand", 19 February 1999, quoted in *Raymond Hains: La tentative*, exh. cat., Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2001, p. 33 (found in Jean-Marie Gallais, "Which brings us back to...Raymond Hains (1926–2005)", *Raymond Hains*, exh.cat. Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin and Paris: Holzwarth Publications, Berlin, 2016, pp. 39–40.

Photographic credits

Iris Clert carrying a matchbox, 1967. Photo: André Morain. © Adagp, Paris, 2020

Installation View, *From Bauhaus to Pop: Masterworks given by Philip Johnson*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1996. Gelatin silver print, 15.2 x 22.9 cm.; 6 x 9 in. Object Number: IN1746.12. Photo: Erik Landsberg. © The Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA)

© Photo SCALA, Florence.

Installation view, *Raymond Hains*, Viva Arte Viva, 57th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2017.

Photo: def image. Courtesy of the Estate of Raymond Hains and the 57th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia.

Installation view, *Raymond Hains. Saffa / Seita*, Galerie Max Hetzler, Photo: Charles Duprat.

Installation view, *Raymond l'abstrait*, Galerie Max Hetzler, Photo: def image

Raymond Hains,

Saffa, 1971, Photo: Charles Duprat.

Allumette Seita, 2005, Photo: Charles Duprat.

Untitled, 1990, © Fondation Louis Vuitton / Marc Damage.

Avenue d'Italie, 1974, © Collection Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art contemporain (MAMAC), Nice, France. Photo: François Fernandez.

Saffa Super Matchbox, 1965, © The Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA) © Photo SCALA, Florence.

Saffa, 1964, © Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, Julien Vidal/Parisienne de Photographie

Seita, 1970, © Museu Coleção Berardo. Photo: Bruno Lopes.

Seita, 1970, © Museum Ludwig. Photo: Rheinisches Bildarchiv Cologne (rba_d039983_01)

SEITA, 1971, © Collection Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art contemporain (MAMAC), Nice, France. Photo: François Fernandez.

Allumettes blanches, 1965, Photo: Moderna Museet / Stockholm.

Pochette d'allumettes (Matchbox), 1971, © Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.

All above works are courtesy to: © Adagp, Paris, 2020

Galerie Max Hetzler Berlin | Paris | London works in partnership with the Estate of Raymond Hains, represented by Thomas Hains.

Unless otherwise indicated, the copyright is held by the artists and photographers, or their assignees. Despite our efforts, it may not always have been possible to obtain copyrights. For any claim please email info@maxhetzler.com

Work available subject to being sold.

INQUIRE