

Raymond Hains

Torn Posters

46 & 57, rue du Temple, 75004, Paris

26 November 2022 – 5 January 2023

Opening: Saturday, 26 November, 6 – 8 pm

Galerie Max Hetzler is pleased to announce *Torn Posters*, a solo exhibition of nine works by **Raymond Hains** (1926–2005), a central figure in twentieth-century French art. The exhibition unveils a representative panorama from the 1960s to the 1990s, revealing the innovative universe conceived by this prominent post-war artist.

Associated with New Realism, lyrical abstraction as well as Lettrism and Situationism, Hains crystallised the social and collective memory of his time, by peeling off the skin of urban walls, alongside other members of the Affichiste group, such as Mimmo Rotella, François Dufrêne and Jacques Villeglé. Hains had already photographed a number of advertising posters when, in 1949, he started to strip down sidewalk posters, anonymously torn and damaged by wind and rain. He exhibited them for the first time in 1957 at Galerie Colette Allendy in Paris, with Villeglé. Just like Marcel Duchamp, who elevated everyday objects to the status of high art, Hains substituted an art of predation for an art of creation, also producing readymades.

The exhibition encompasses two types of torn posters: the 'affiches lacérées' on canvas or cardboard, and the 'tôle' works on sheet metal. The posters appear as lyrical, distorted images, with colourful graphics evoking Henri Matisse's cut-outs. Among the earliest on view is *Sans titre (Hommage à Klein)*, 1961, which comprises multiple blue layers in homage to the artist's great friend, Yves Klein. Hains was captivated by the sensuality of the torn paper that he found, the shapes and colours, the split words or letters, as exemplified by *Untitled*, 1971. Moreover, the artist was attracted to puns, double meanings, wordplay and polysemy. Buried between the successive strata of posters, scattered words and fragments of sentences appear, giving new meaning to the original advertisements. The titles often derive from any words that are still legible in the composition. For example, in *La Lessive Génie*, 1961, Hains uses an announcement for a political meeting to make a subliminal political statement about the Algerian war. Meanwhile, the work *Sociale Populaire Nationale*, 1973, refers to another period of political posters from around 1970–73 that were inspired by the resignation of André Malraux and the death of Charles de Gaulle.

Four 'tôle' works on metal are also displayed. Hains became interested in the supporting structures for the posters from 1957 onwards. In these works, images and texts are almost completely blurred in favour of the grey metal sheet, that becomes the very subject of the abstract composition. 'I was interested in posters on sheet metal because I liked



Raymond Hains, *Untitled*, 1967
Photo: Nicolas Brasseur

what rust brings to the composition, the evocative power of its drawings, of its brown spots'¹, the artist explained.

In *Sans titre No °5D (série Dauphin)*, 1990, the name 'Dauphin' refers to the company that produced all of the billboards in France at the time. This small series of monumental works adopts the standard dimensions of the Abstract Expressionist paintings of the 1950s. Similarly, the pattern of vertical stripes visible in *La Palissade de Beaubourg*, 1976 – which was part of the fence of the Centre Pompidou during its construction and whose name presents a mischievous wordplay between 'la palissade' (fence) and 'lapalissade' (truism) – ironically alludes to the striped abstractions so prevalent in the artistic scene at this time. Ever adapting the medium to his discourse, Hains thus blurred the boundaries between sculpture, object and painting.

Raymond Hains (b. 1926, Saint-Brieuc; d. 2005, Paris) participated in major international exhibitions including *The Art of Assemblage* at MoMA, New York (1961); *Paris-Paris* at Centre Pompidou, Paris (1982); *documenta IV*, Kassel (1968); and *documenta X*, Kassel (1997). In 2017, a large room was dedicated to the artist's work at *Vive Arte Viva*, the 57th Venice Biennale; and in 2019, 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.' Between 2000 and 2002, retrospective exhibitions took place at Centre Pompidou, Paris; MACBA, Barcelona; *Fundação 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 Centre Pompidou, Paris; *Fondation Cartier*, Paris; *Fundação Serralves*, Porto; *Hamburger Kunsthalle*, Hamburg; MACBA, Barcelona; MAMAC, Nice; *Moderna Museet*, Stockholm; *Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth*; MUMOK, Vienna; *Musée National d'Art Moderne*; *Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris*; *Museum Ludwig*, Cologne; *Museu Coleção Berardo*, Lisbon; *Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía*, Madrid; *Sprengel Museum*, Hannover; *The Museum of Modern Art*, New York; and *Walker Art Center*, Minneapolis, among others.

¹ R. Hains, quoted in 'Hains et la morale de l'affiche déchirée', *Opus International* 112, Paris, February - March 1989; in *Gli Affichistes*, tra Milano a la Bretagna, Milan: Grafiche Aurora, 2005, p. 214.

Further exhibitions and events

Paris:

14 January – 26 February 2023

Adam Pendleton, Ai Weiwei, Simone Fattal, Leilah Babirye

Distant Voices

46 & 57, rue du Temple, 75004 Paris

Berlin:

4 November – 23 December 2022

Darren Almond

Distant Silence

Bleibtreustraße 45, 1062

Window Gallery, Goethestraße 2/3, 10623

4 November – 23 December 2022

Navid Nuur

STEP BY STEP

Bleibtreustraße 15/16, 10623

4 November – 23 December 2022

BodyLand, curated by Lauren Taschen

Goethestraße 2/3, 10623

11 November 2022 – 14 January 2023

Hans Hartung

Potsdamer Straße 77-87, 10785

London:

9 November 2022 – 7 January 2023

Grace Weaver

TRASH-SCAPES

41 Dover Street, W1S 4NS

Marfa:

25 May – 4 December 2022

Albert Oehlen

Sculptures and Works on Paper

1976 Antelope Hills Road, TX 79843

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