

3rd May 2006

Raymond Hains

9 November 1926 - 28 October 2005

Unlikely happenstance and the aesthetics of coincidence.

"A highly coloured visit [where] less were charmed [and] whoever wrote the land spilled over [and] swirled, lushly underdressed."

"Defining himself as an inventor rather than an artist, Hains bases his method on deductions and comparisons, starting out from a systematic creative deconstruction of the world around him. (...) Hains' work transgresses and explodes all of the established theories of contemporary art."

– Catherine Bompuis (curator), Raymond Hains, MACBA, 1999

[Note]

The gestuality, colour and composition effects – and even the particular texture of torn posters – meant that 'affichisme might easily be confused with the productions of art informel'. As Alain Jouffroy argued, one could even read them as a 'mockery' of the abstract painting of the period, which notably included the works of the School of Paris. They are, at least in part, Hains's ironic response to the scandal of the 1964 Grand Prix, created as they were by deforming the Venice Biennale's own self-image: its poster. [...]

His target was never one Biennale rather than another and it was not part of his project to satirise any given country's selection or national pride. It was more the very basis of the institution that he symbolically 'exploded' every time he attacked the integrity of a national representation. 'In any biennale,' he said, 'the artists become instruments of their country's cultural propaganda. I don't want anybody imposing their ways of seeing on me; I am defending my heritage.' The Biennales éclatées thus continued his hypnagogic vision of the world, which had its origins in the 1940s and in which each step towards illegibility anticipated the advent of a sovereign state of dé-lire (delirium/dis-reading). [...]

– H. Vanel: 'Troublemaker: Notes on Raymond Hains and the Venice Biennale', in Raymond Hains. Venice, exh. cat., 57th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, Venice; Berlin: Galerie Max Hetzler and Holzwarth Publications, 2018, pp. 15, 16, 18, 27