

Artforum

Clausen, Barbara: *Raymond Hains: La Tentative*

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“Raymond Hains: La Tentative”

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AUTHOR BARBARA CLAUSEN

06.27.01-09.03.01 Centre Pompidou, Paris

Hains's Immediacy and Humor on View in Paris

Raymond Hains's significantly titled retrospective, “Raymond Hains: La Tentative” (The attempt), beats both the summer heat and the “Alfred Hitchcock and Art” exhibition three floors up hands down. Born in 1929, Hains was known for his association with France's *Nouveau Réalisme* movement in the '50s and admired by colleagues as an “artist's artist.” Nowadays, he is gaining international recognition in part due to the rethinking of issues of globalism and the renewed attention it has brought to notions of immediacy and specificity. Consistently catching actuality in a timeless present, Hains, in the spirit of accumulation, has been investigating his environment for over five decades. In the process, he offers a conceptual rereading of it, employing a variety of media including photography, film, web art, sound, as well as sidewalk sculpture and painting. His installations, embedded in humor and a personal, encyclopedic, coherent inner logic, superimpose homophonic and homonymic word structures within the aesthetic of the everyday object. Speaking in local as well as international codes of popular culture, his art, challenging yet legible, stays accessible beyond the provinces of the French language.