

# Saâdane Afif

## «*Affiches & Fontaines*»

26 April  
– 7 June 2014

Press Release

Saâdane Afif's work often takes the exhibition as a pretext and originator for production and embraces various formats, such as objects, performances and texts. The new solo show at Xavier Hufkens brings together two important series from his oeuvre: *Affiches* as a witness and narrator of his practice and the *Fontaines*, from his on-going project 'The Fountain Archive', as an expression of his collecting obsession. A complete survey of Afif's posters as well as the largest selection of *Fontaines* is displayed for the very first time. Afif's interest in recurrence, variation and poetry is also mirrored in the alliterating title that intertwines with his name: Saâdane Afif, *Affiches & Fontaines*.

*Affiches: 2005 – 2014*

Limited-edition posters are an integral part of Afif's practice. Produced on the occasion of an exhibition / performance, each design lists the title and date of the related project, as well as the names of any additional collaborators. Serving as both an announcement and an archival document, the posters form a visual record of the evolution of Afif's work. The artist describes the posters as framework for capturing the fleeting moment of an exhibition, an event described by the artist as "not an end in itself but a stage in a longer process. It is from one exhibition to another that the work is constructed."<sup>1</sup>

The posters connect the artist's interest in the 'remake' with his examination of the aura surrounding originality and authorship, whilst also forming a link with the second series presented in the exhibition: *Fontaines*. Comprising a selection of over 250 images, 'The Fountain Archive' is presented within the framework of a grid drawn directly on the wall, a structure that not only frames the images but also functions as a chronological repository and classification system.

*The Fountain Archive: 2008 – on-going*

The archives began life as a playful pursuit of printed reproductions of Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917), a quest that, over time, evolved into an obsession. Afif collects exhibition catalogues and books containing depictions of this iconic work, which feeds his reflection on the role of motives in art and his questioning attitude towards reproduction and representation. Carefully framing each torn and untouched page, many of which contain their own history of handwritten notes and dog-ears, Afif uses the process of selection and the addition of his signature to transform one sheet of paper amongst thousands of copies into a unique work of art.

Two new books accompany the exhibition, one of which is dedicated to the *Affiches* series and the other to 'The Fountain Archive'. *Affiches* is the first monograph to focus exclusively on Afif's posters. Featuring an interview between Anne-Claire Schmitz and the artist, the book chronicles almost a decade's worth of poster production and amounts to what Afif calls "a biography of the work". *Fontaines* includes a text by Elena Filipovic on Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* and the significance of Afif's 'The Fountain Archive'. The books are published by Xavier Hufkens and Triangle Books and are designed by Olivier Vandervliet, who, in collaboration with Saâdane Afif, also created the graphics for the two new

posters produced to mark the opening of *Affiches & Fontaines* in Brussels – the latest additions to an exhibition with the character of a retrospective.

Saâdane Afif (b.1970, Vendôme, France) lives and works in Berlin. Afif's work has been shown at OPA, Guadalajara; Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; and Museum Folkwang, Essen, among others. He was included in Documenta 12, Kassel, in 2007 and he was the recipient of the Marcel Duchamp Prize in 2009. *Affiches & Fontaines* is Afif's second solo exhibition at Xavier Hufkens, following *Blue Time vs. Suspense* in 2007.

<sup>1</sup> *Affiches*, Saâdane Afif in conversation with Anne-Claire Schmitz, Brussels: Triangle Books and Xavier Hufkens, 2014 – p.57.