



THE ACCADEMIA NAZIONALE DI SAN LUCA
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AT THE PRESENTATION OF

ALIGHIERO BOETTI

Catalogo Generale

published by the Archivio Alighiero Boetti with Fondazione Alighiero e Boetti

general editor Jean-Christophe Ammann
managing editor Annemarie Sauzeau

THE EVENT WILL BE INTRODUCED AND PRESENTED BY
Francesco Moschini

SPEAKERS

Jean-Christophe Ammann, Caterina Raganelli Boetti, Annemarie Sauzeau, Claudio Strinati, Angela Vettese

Tuesday 8th October 2013 | 5.30 pm

The catalogue raisonné of Alighiero Boetti's work (conceived and edited by Annemarie Sauzeau together with Jean-Christophe Ammann, and with Arianna Mercanti, Ilaria Giaccone e Caterina Niccolini) divides the artist's oeuvre into four volumes, each covering a period of eight years, presented in chronological order from the mid 1960s up until the artist's death in 1994. Each volume includes various sections of analysis and complementary *apparatus critici*. The catalogue as a whole aims to offer a vehicle for a new and more accurate reconstruction of Boetti's evolution as an artist. At the same time it has been conceived as "book", a "story" that can be read on several levels, from an initial approach based on anecdotes and curiosities regarding the works, to a more detailed historical/critical analysis (exhibition histories, publication histories, the chronology and the introductory essays). In the first two volumes (published by Electa, the first in 2009 and the second in 2012), the intention has been to find and develop a methodology that would respect the "spirit" (the idea) of Boetti's work without ignoring its historical value or distorting the scholarly research. A glance through the catalogue reveals a sequence of images notable in its variety, a variety reinforced by a methodological approach that deliberately avoids the blandness of presenting the artist's oeuvre in a series of anonymous sequences (more appropriate in a visual index) or reshaping it to fit aesthetic credos (better left to exhibition catalogues) – instead focusing on reconstructing the "linguistic evolution" of Boetti's work as a whole. The first two volumes to have been published regard two crucial decades in the artist's story – the 1960s and the 1970s – and illustrate how his work in those years took many complex and often interconnected new forms: from his Arte Povera work to his first experiments with Conceptual Art and finally the explosion of colour that characterized his embroidery and work in biro (bridging the two volumes we find, for example, the Maps, beginning "timidly" in the first volume and then developing fully in the second, or other series such as the *Carte matematiche* that begin in the 1960s but draw to a close sometime later). The "architecture" of the two books has been structured in such a way as to ensure that each remains autonomous but at the same time "complements" the other, reflecting the historical progression and chronological evolution of Boetti's work. Year after year a smooth and "horizontal" reading is offered, with individual entries (in Italian) kept uniform in length thanks to the decision to move the various "curricula" (the exhibition and publication histories of each work) to the back of each volume, linking them to the individual entries via a straightforward system of cross-references. Cross-references also link the individual entries and Annemarie Sauzeau's chronology (in both Italian and English), *Le opere e i giorni*, which analyses the "mechanics" of certain works or considers them in terms of historical context. The chronology forms part of the first volume but is relevant to all four because it covers Boetti's life and output up to 1994. The first volume opens with Jean-Christophe Ammann's essay offering a global analysis of Boetti's thinking and its evolution. Ammann also considers Boetti's role, his "importance" in today's international art world (compared, for example, with Warhol, Nauman and Beuys). In the second volume we encounter a "conversation" between a group of authors, led by Ammann who throws a variety of questions open to scholars from diverse fields (Giorgio Verzotti, Laura Cherubini, Achille Bonito Oliva and Franco La Cecla), question which each author has chosen to answer referring to a specific aspect of Boetti's world. Parallel with this, and again in the second volume, Ammann has asked Annemarie Sauzeau to analyse the theme of "repetition" and "difference", and of the "difference" in the "repetition" – elements fundamental to any understanding of Boetti's art in the 1970s, years in which multiplication, proliferation and a desire to confront the theme of diversity insistently characterized his work. The focus of the texts echoes the sequential organization of the individual catalogue entries: in the first volume the emphasis is on the "inventiveness" of Boetti's work, the novelty of his conceptually more radical output, whilst (as well as examining further novelties) the second volume highlights and interlinks the themes that Boetti continually reprised, applying different techniques and rhythms to the reinvention of existing works and creating new poetic possibilities. The Archivio Alighiero Boetti is currently preparing the final two volumes which cover the last fifteen years of Boetti's career, from 1980 to 1994, years as intense as they were prolific. Reflecting the artist's increased output in the 1980s and early 1990s and his evolving vision and interests, a different approach is being applied to the organization of the third and fourth volumes, the underlying structure of which will no longer be horizontal/chronological, but "vertical" and based on thematic categories.

The evening will conclude with a presentation by Valerio De Paolis, president of the Associazione "Amici dell'Archivio Alighiero Boetti", who will briefly introduce the association – a small group of collectors and gallery owners who support and sustain the Archive's vital work in safeguarding Boetti's artistic legacy.