

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS

Press Release for Immediate Release

ALIGHIERO BOETTI

Pier Paolo Calzolari, Mario Merz, Giuseppe Penone & Michelangelo Pistoletto

Private View 14 May 2012, 6-9pm

15 May 2012 – 28 July 2012

Ben Brown Fine Arts is thrilled to announce the first solo exhibition in Hong Kong of works by Alighiero Boetti, one of the most important and influential Italian artists of the twentieth century. The exhibition will provide an extensive look at Boetti's oeuvre, including a wide range of embroideries from *Mappa*s to small *Arazzi*, works on paper, kilims and sculptures.

Alighiero Boetti was born in Turin in 1940. His first works which were created in the 1960s were more object oriented and fitted well within the realms of Arte Povera. However, his work became progressively more similar to that of conceptual artists such as On Kawara (time) and Lawrence Weiner (language). Boetti used simple and often industrial materials, concentrating more on the creative conception of the work and leaving its execution to others – in case of the embroideries to Afghani women. This also enabled Boetti to integrate Eastern culture and its tradition in his works (often represented by Farsi writing) since he was very much interested in the principle of polar forces and harmonies and hence, bridging West and East. To further contextualize this comprehensive look at Boetti's oeuvre, major works by important Italian artists of the 1960s and 70s including Pier Paolo Calzolari, Mario Merz, Giuseppe Penone and Michelangelo Pistoletto will be exhibited alongside Boetti. It is this group of Italian artists who crystallised the research into spatial inquiries and the purity of form in the mid to late 20th Century.

Mappa (Alighiero Boetti a Kabul Nuova Repubblica Democratica d'Afghanistan - Alighiero Nel Milleenovecentosettantotto Nove Diece), 1978

The *Mappa*, amongst his most important works within the embroideries, were first executed in 1971. The embroidered maps of the world usually have a monochrome background from which the coloured continents and countries appear. At the time of the design of the *Mappa* Boetti chronicled the then current geo-political situation of the world. However, because of the lengthy process of embroidering a *Mappa* (up to two years), each individual work would gain a character of transitoriness because the world had changed since its original design and hence the *Mappa* would lose pictorial value as a true representation of the current state of the world. This concept also ties in with Boetti's concept of order/disorder. The country borders would change frequently so that new *Mappa* needed to be designed in order to represent the transformed situation – there was perpetual change.

Ben Brown opened his gallery, Ben Brown Fine Arts, in January 2004 after spending 10 years as a director of Sothebys' Contemporary Art department, and two years as co-managing director at Waddington Galleries. During his time at Sotheby's Ben pioneered the now well-respected Italian Sale and his particular interest in 20th Century Italian Art has brought him to concentrate on this little-represented field in London. The gallery has now been established as a point of reference in this arena for artists and collectors alike.

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