

ALIGHIERO

BOETTI

METTERE

AL

MONDO

IL

MONDO

**I AM INTERESTED IN PRIMARY
MATTERS, SUCH AS THE ALPHABET,
THE MAP, THE NEWSPAPERS ...
THERE IS AN EXACT ORDER INNATE
IN EACH AND EVERY THING, EVEN
IF IT MANIFESTS IN A DISORDERLY
MANNER**

—ALIGHIERO BOETTI

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ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Mettere al mondo il mondo, circa 1974 (detail).

ALIGHIERO

BOETTI

METTERE

AL

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ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Tutto, 1988 (detail).



METTERE AL MONDO IL MONDO: A COLLECTING JOURNEY IN THE WORLD OF ALIGHIERO BOETTI

ALIGHIERO BOETTI
in front of the first *Mappa*
realised in Afghanistan in 1971.
Photo: Giorgio Colombo.

Coinciding with the thirtieth anniversary of Alighiero Boetti's death, Christie's is delighted to present an outstanding group of works that reflect one of the twentieth century's most enigmatic and ambitious practices. Exhibited at King Street between 19-27 February 2024, this exquisitely curated retrospective captures the extraordinary connoisseurly vision of a singular collector, assembled with an exceptional eye for quality, rarity and beauty.

With select works offered through Christie's, the exhibition charts the breadth and depth of Boetti's three-decade-long career. Beginning with early works born in the crucible of Arte Povera, it includes major examples of his *Mappe*, *Arazzi*, *Biro*, *Aerei* and *Tutto*, culminating in the grand series *Alternando da uno a cento e viceversa* created the year before his death. Juxtaposing masterpieces with unseen gems, it paints a rich and lucid picture of an artist who spent his life 'giving time to time', reconciling 'order and disorder', and 'bringing the world into the world'—*mettere al mondo il mondo*.

The collection begins in 1967, at the dawn of Boetti's *oeuvre*. During this period, he laid the foundations for a practice that would probe the systems we use to make sense of the world, playing with symbols, numbers, dates, words, patterns and puzzles. His seminal poster *Manifesto* (1967-1970) features names of young artists followed by lines of indecipherable code. *Dama* (1967) consists of 100 wooden blocks inscribed with symbols that match only when arranged in a particular order. Many of Boetti's early works also made use of unconventional media that chimed with Italy's economic and industrial landscape. *Mimetico* (1980) employs camouflage material designed for Italian wartime troops. His *Vernici industriali*, meanwhile—four examples of which are present in the collection—use industrial varnish and pre-fabricated cork letters, each spelling out the name of colours used in Turin's car factories. These works testify to a young artist fascinated by theories and philosophies of human creativity, and alert to our desire for meaning.

THE GREATEST JOY IN
THE WORLD CONSISTS
IN INVENTING THE WORLD
THE WAY IT IS WITHOUT
INVENTING ANYTHING
IN THE PROCESS

—ALIGHIERO BOETTI

In 1969 Boetti made *16 DICEMBRE 2040 11 LUGLIO 2023*, combining the 100th anniversary of his birth with the date of his predicted death. Time—an ephemeral concept made visible through clocks, calendars and other numerical systems—would become central to his practice. The 1970 work *EMME I ELLE ELLE E...* spells out the Italian orthography of *millenovecentosettanta*: the year it was made. Its gridded arrangement of the letters anticipates his celebrated *Arazzi*, or tapestries, composed of individual coloured letters designed to be read according to specific formulations. The collection includes the outstanding *Oggi ventesimo giorno dell'ottavo mese dell'anno millenovecento ottantotto* (1988), whose titular year can be read in the uppermost corner. It also features a rare suite of twenty-five smaller-scale *Arazzi*, each expounding the calculation *Cinque x cinque venticinque* ('Five x five twenty five'). Temporality is written into every fibre of these works: from the protracted act of decoding them, to the messages and aphorisms they articulate.

Throughout his *oeuvre*, Boetti would visualise the mysteries and contradictions of human existence in a number of other ways. *Copertine (Anno 1985)* (1985) presents a snapshot of the year 1985 through a random selection of twelve magazine covers taken from each month. Immaculately traced in pencil, the work juxtaposes the rapid, cyclical production of its mass media sources with the slow, time-consuming labour of their handmade reproduction. This dialogue would also come to inform Boetti's most iconic series of works: the *Mappe*. Created between 1971 and 1994, these embroidered maps chart the world's shifting borders and geopolitical tensions during this period, offering a record of history in the making. At the same time, however, they collapse all sense of linear temporal progress. These works were forged in collaboration with skilled artisanal weavers in Afghanistan and Pakistan, who worked over long periods according to Boetti's instructions but were left to make a number of decisions themselves. Thus, the *Mappe* elided multiple time zones, hands and voices, collapsing the notion of the artwork as a single authoritative gesture. The collection features an historic example created in 1979: one of the last works made in Afghanistan before the Soviet invasion that year. Around the edge, Boetti's inscription alludes to a world in flux, his text wavering between 'yes' and 'no', 'black' and 'white', and 'order' and 'disorder'.

Through the process of making art, the artist with the most humble of means should create a new world

– Mark Godfrey

The latter—*ordine e disordine*—was one of Boetti's favourite dualities. The artist understood that everything had its opposing double, even going so far as to split his own identity into two halves—'Alighiero e Boetti'. His was a world of synchronicity and simultaneity: one that saw resolution in conflict, unity in fragments and logic in turmoil. The *Aerei*, led here by a majestic example from 1989, seem to encapsulate this globalised vision. The planes, just like those that bore the artist upon his own far-flung travels, soar and swoop in incalculable patterns. The *Tutto*—represented in the collection by an exceptional example from 1988—represent the apotheosis of this journey, their jigsaw-like surfaces celebrating the harmonious wonder of life's cacophony. 'We then need to perceive this oneness in things, instead of always dividing them into categories and classifications', said Boetti (A. Boetti, quoted in *Alighiero e Boetti: Bringing the World into Art 1993-1962*, exh. cat. Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples 2009, p. 209). The collection itself, too, does just that, with patterns and conversations emerging between works. The phrase 'cinque x cinque venticinque', notably, appears at the centre of *Oggi ventesimo giorno dell'ottavo mese dell'anno millenovecento ottantotto*, nestled into the surrounding chaos of riddles and puns like a hidden solution.

Among Boetti's most entrancing works are the *Biro*. Gleaming patches of white punctuate vast expanses of scrawled ballpoint pen, each a speck of negative space that glows like a star in the night sky. Their patterns alone seem charged with coded meaning; yet—like the *Arazzi*—their true message slowly reveals itself to the reader patient enough to piece it together. At the heart of the collection is the five-part masterwork *Mettere al mondo il mondo* (circa 1974): a phrase singled out by the scholar Mark Godfrey as 'one that perhaps more than any other embodies a Boettian principle of the artwork'. The notion of 'bringing the world into the world', he explains, suggests 'that instead of adding new things to the world (paintings, sculptures, photographs, and imaginary images, for example), the artist should rework the existing materials of the world (which could be numbers and words, as well as images and objects), allowing them to rearticulate our understanding of the world ... Through the process of making art, the artist with the most humble of means should create a new world' (M. Godfrey, 'Divided Interests: The Art of Alighiero Boetti', *Artforum*, May 2009, p. 210). The collection demonstrates this conviction in action. Boetti's world is our world, but one more beautiful, complex and bewitching than we have ever known.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI
in his studio, Rome, 1975.
Photo: Giorgio Colombo.





ALIGHIERO BOETTI
*Oggi ventesimo giorno dell'ottavo mese dell'anno
millenovecento ottantotto, 1988 (detail).*



MISTICO ROMANTICO

By Mark Godfrey

Mark Godfrey is an esteemed art historian, curator and critic, and one of the world's leading Boetti scholars. He organised the seminal 2012 retrospective *Alighiero Boetti: Game Plan* for Tate Modern, London, which was also shown at the Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. The following text is adapted from his monograph *Alighiero e Boetti* (Yale University Press, 2011), the first major English-language survey of Boetti's career.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI
in his studio, Rome, 1974.
Photo: Antonia Mulas
© Antonia Mulas Heirs.
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Among the many word squares featuring Boetti's favourite phrases there is one with the sixteen-character phrase *Mistico romantico*. This small work—among the last he made, in 1994—was meant as a kind of linguistic self-portrait but, rather than understanding the word square simply as a description of Alighiero e Boetti, I want to read it as a kind of provocation, as a work which begs questions. What is there in Boetti's story that one could find romantic? What about his character or his work could one find mystical? What does it mean to use terms like 'mystic' and 'romantic' when discussing serious art of this period?

Speaking now for myself, the word square *Mistico romantico* forces me to admit the extraordinary romance of the story of a self-taught Turinese artist leaving behind the industrial city for Rome, for Guatemala, Ethiopia and most famously Afghanistan. Annemarie Sauzeau Boetti writes of his arrival in Kabul that 'he discovered a bare, pink landscape bathed in a crystal clear light that made distances seem to shrink' and later of his dying wish that 'his ashes should be dispersed over the lapis lazuli water of the lakes of Bandi a Mir—seven lakes in seven craters, high in the desert mountains in western Afghanistan.' How can one not be seduced by these words, especially when (in the past two decades) the land to which Boetti was drawn is inevitably associated with death and war? It would be foolish to deny the romantic attraction of Boetti's story now, just as it would be senseless to deny that the artist sometimes saw himself as a mystic—even if he always remained deeply responsive to the everyday realities of the world he inhabited.

So, then, is Boetti's work itself mystical and romantic? Think about this particular word square. For the artist, the work itself would have seemed 'mystical' for the simple reason that the well-known phrase happened to fit neatly into a four-by-four square, a coincidence that for him would have confirmed its balance, its conceptual rightness. At the same time, one can see how this work has little in common with

This is a work that is mystical and romantic but also critical and austere, a work whose linguistic inventiveness is matched by the richness of its material and colours, a work that is the outcome of a deep respect for the input of others just as it is the product of the unique intelligence of its maker

– Mark Godfrey

the kinds of art one might associate with the phrase *Mistico romantico*. To make it, Boetti dispensed with evocative and symbolic imagery, creating a work made of text alone. This text is subjected to the order of a grid, and the two words run into each other so that customs of writing and reading are challenged. The work seems to acknowledge and internalise all the critiques made of subjective artistic processes in the post-war period: there are no signs of the maker's touch, no personal colour choices; indeed, fabrication has been put in the hands of craftswomen who brought their own materials and sensibilities of colour to the work.

The question of the work's 'mystical' and 'romantic' character also depends on other circumstances of its production and circulation. Whereas the products Boetti grew up with in Turin were factory-produced as efficiently as possible, this small word square would have been hand-made in a distant place and Boetti could not predict how long it could take to finish. Flown back to Rome, word squares such as this were often passed as gifts to friends and family rather than being sold through Boetti's galleries—in this case, the work was a gift for the artist's daughter. It is certain that Boetti was challenging ideas about production and distribution, and of course these challenges were connected to various avant-garde art practices, but it is as certain that, in Boetti's hands, these efforts were flavoured with a romantic spirit.

So, begging these questions, teasing out these answers, with its contradictions *Mistico romantico* lets us as viewers and readers get to the heart of the appeal of Boetti's work now. This is a work that is mystical and romantic but also critical and austere, a work whose linguistic inventiveness is matched by the richness of its material and colours, a work that is the outcome of a deep respect for the input of others just as it is the product of the unique intelligence of its maker. This work—and indeed all Boetti's work—has to be situated in the context of the most radical art of this time, but precisely so we can think of what we mean by radical art anew.



ALIGHIERO BOETTI
in Morocco.
Photo: Isabella Gherardi.

ALIGHIERO
BOETTI
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THE WORKS



MANIFESTO

In 1967, around the time that the critic Germano Celant was writing about what he saw as the emergence of an exciting new tendency in Italian art—one that he would soon define under the term ‘Arte Povera’—Alighiero Boetti produced *Manifesto*. The term, deriving from the Italian word *manifestare*, ‘to show’, is one that has close associations with the history of the movements and ‘isms’ of modern art, most especially with the Italian Futurists, and is usually understood to be a clarifying statement of purpose or collective identity and intent. Boetti’s *Manifesto* is, however, none of these. It is a work that neither shows nor clarifies: in fact, it knowingly does the direct opposite

Manifesto comprises solely of a list of the names of fifteen artists (plus Boetti himself), who as he explained ‘were more or less working [in Italy] at that time.’ Against these names are aligned a selection of eight different symbols whose significance and purpose remain deliberately obscure. Boetti claimed to have an ‘envelope containing the key to the symbols ... deposited in a lawyer’s office, and if you paid a certain sum, you could open it.’ As no-one has ever done so, the meaning of the symbols he devised solely for this work has remained unknown.

‘Nobody was interested,’ said Boetti. He ‘sent out 800 copies’ of his *Manifesto*, he recalled, and ‘a lot of people just threw it away. In 1970, having given fifty copies to Clino Castelli, who was a friend of mine and very supportive of the group, we held an exhibition at Toselli and I numbered them’ (A. Boetti, quoted in K. Schmidt, ‘Alighiero Boetti: Manifesto, 1967’, in *Che Fare? Arte Povera – The Historic Years*, exh. cat. Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz 2010, p. 82).

One work here, numbered 16/50, is among those shown in that exhibition. The other is a rare example hand-coloured in watercolour. When it appeared for the first time in 1992 on the occasion of a show at Galleria Giulia, Rome, it was coloured by unknown individuals. Although Boetti did not recognise the work as ‘artist’s proof’, he authenticated it by signing the work. This makes the work very special and unique in the series.

As an adjunct to the deliberate mystery that his *Manifesto* set up, Boetti also had himself photographed standing in front of the work and pointing to the various names and symbols on its list while making different gestures. These actions, like the manifesto itself, reinforced the sense of variety and difference amongst a list of artists who were starting to be publicly presented as a coherent group. Similarly, with its symbols resembling trademarks, Boetti’s intuition seems also to have been that any such public declaration of a new group or ‘movement’ was less a political proclamation of intent than a form of marketing for future careers.

In this way Boetti in *Manifesto*, as Kirstin Schmidt has written, ‘created a taxonomy that mocks the need of art critics and viewers to categorize, compare and judge. He piques our curiosity and then frustrates it by requiring us to go to a lawyer. The *Manifesto* is a fundamental declaration in a meta-language that is as meaningful as it is laconic’ (K. Schmidt, *ibid.*, p. 83).



ALIGHIERO BOETTI, 1972.
Photo: © Paolo Mussat Sartor.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Manifesto

signed and numbered 'Alighiero Boetti 16/50'
(lower center)

offset print

39¾ x 27½in. (100 x 70cm.)

Executed in 1967-1970, this work is numbered
sixteen from an edition of fifty

PROVENANCE:

Galleria Toselli, Milan.

Private Collection, Rome.

Acquired from the above by the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Milan, Galleria Toselli, *Alighiero Boetti. Manifesto 1967,*
1970.

Trieste, Gallerie ARTE, *Alighiero Boetti*, 1999

(illustrated).

Milan, Galleria 1000eventi, *Da Alighiero Boetti ad*
Alighiero e Boetti, 2000.

LITERATURE:

J-C. Ammann, *Alighiero Boetti catalogo generale, vol. 1,*
Milan 2009, pp. 178 and 315.

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome,
under no. 3083 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Manifesto

signed 'alighiero e boetti' (lower center)

watercolour on printed paper laid down on
canvas

39½ x 27¾in. (100.3 x 69.4cm.)

Executed in 1967-1992

PROVENANCE:

Galleria Giulia, Rome.

Esso Gallery, New York.

Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York.

de Pury & Luxembourg Art, Geneva.

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2000.

EXHIBITED:

Rome, Galleria Giulia, *Alighiero e Boetti. opere dal 1967*
al 1991, 1992 (illustrated).

New York, Esso Gallery, *Alighiero e Boetti: Masterworks*
on Paper 1967-1984, 1999.

LITERATURE:

C. Mendini (et al.), *Galleria Giulia: la collezione di una*
galleria, vol. 1, Milan 1998, p. 11.

J-C. Ammann, *Alighiero Boetti catalogo generale, vol. 1,*
Milan 2009, pp. 178-179 and 315.

L. M. Barbero, *Torino sperimentale 1959/1969*, Turin
2010 (illustrated in colour, p. 496).

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome,
under no. 3098 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



Rosso Gilera
60 1232

VERNICI INDUSTRIALI

In 1967—the year of his very first solo exhibition at Galleria Christian Stein in Turin—Boetti created his seminal early series of *Vernici industriali* (*Industrial Paints*). Each work consists of a square board affixed with cork letters, which spell out the name and code of the industrial automobile paint with which it has been coated. Rather than sites of spiritual or formal purity, these monochromes are boldly self-referential readymades. In line with the ethos of Arte Povera, or ‘poor art’—a term coined by critic Germano Celant in the same year he made his debut—Boetti made critical and playful use of everyday materials in his early practice. His hometown of Turin was in its industrial heyday, home to Fiat’s headquarters and a hotbed of car culture. In the *Vernici industriali*, with his use of automotive pigments from local hardware stores, Boetti suggested that even colour itself—the locus of centuries of artistic passion in Italy—had become subsumed into a world of consumerist experience and brand identity.

Rosso Gilera 60 1232 is painted in the trademark red of the popular motorcycle company Gilera. Boetti also made a diptych displaying this colour alongside the subtly different red of its racing competitor, Guzzi. He played on the rivalry between the two brands, which divided many Italians into *Guzzisti* and *Gileristi* according to their allegiance. *Beige Sabbia 583*, meanwhile, was a ‘sandy beige’ paint colour available to Fiat buyers between 1963 and 1968. There was a rich palette to choose from. One 1967 chart offers six different shades of red for your Fiat: if you wanted a neutral tone, you might consider not only sandy beige

ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Rosso Gilera 60 1232, 1967 (detail).

Some of the best moments in *Arte Povera* were hardware shop moments

– Alighiero Boetti



but also *Avorio chiaro* (light ivory), *Avorio antico* (old ivory) or two different kinds of white. *Bleu Cannes 497* and *Grigio Dover 207* were among the many colours available whose names conjured up far-flung locations and glamorous racecourses. Advertisers, car-makers and artists alike were attuned to the aspirational and imaginal power of colour. *Bleu Cannes 497* might also be read as a nod to Yves Klein's transcendent blue monochromes, which had their own origins in the skies of the French Riviera.

Boetti used an array of commonplace and pre-fabricated materials to make the works for his inaugural show at Galleria Christian Stein, including Perspex, PVC tubing, electrical wire and military camouflage fabric. Each was linked to the factory production of newly industrialised northern Italy. The show also featured a group of painted monochromes that would lead to the *Vernici industriali* later that year. They shared the series' format of cork letters on board, displaying phonetic exercises—*the thin thumb*, *stiff upper lip*, *frou frou*—from a phrasebook used by Boetti's wife while she was teaching English. In the *Vernici industriali*, Boetti condensed the free-floating lyricism of this idea to incorporate the name of the paint itself into one succinct, self-reflexive statement, showing how words and colour alike were bound up in the modern allure of the commodity.

Unbeknownst to both artists, Boetti was making his *Vernici industriali* at almost the exact same time Gerhard Richter made his first 'colour-chart' paintings in West Germany. Like Boetti, Richter was engaged in a Pop-adjacent exploration of colours as consumer goods. Where Richter's interest in commercial colour samplers was largely compositional, however—the colours were arranged in arbitrary grids, without any apparent regard for aesthetic effect—Boetti's presentation of the individual colours, marked with their brand-names, foregrounded them as cultural objects of their time. Having made some of the defining contributions to the movement, Boetti largely abandoned the tactics of *Arte Povera* by 1969, expanding his practice in more conceptual, networked and mystical directions. His ingenious use of colour and words in the *Vernici industriali*, however, would remain central to many of his later series, from his vibrant text-based tapestries to the alphabetic games in his biro works. Reflecting the everyday surfaces of industrial Turin back at itself, they also establish his artistic philosophy of *mettere al mondo il mondo*: 'bringing the world into the world.'

Above:
GERHARD RICHTER
Six Colours, 1966.
Neues Museum, Staatliches Museum
für Kunst und Design, Nuremberg.
© Gerhard Richter 2024 (0015)

Opposite:
ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Bleu Cannes 497, 1967 (detail).

Bleu Cannes
497

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

- (i) Rosso Gilera 60 1232
- (ii) Beige Sabbia 583

(i)(ii) industrial varnish and cork on card
(i)(ii) 27¾ x 27¾in. (70.5 x 70.5cm.)
(i)(ii) Executed in 1967

PROVENANCE:

Sperone Westwater, New York.
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2001.

EXHIBITED:

Turin, Galleria Sperone, *Disegni progetti*, 1969 (*Rosso Gilera 60 1232* exhibited).
New York, Sperone Westwater, *Paper Works*, 1997.
New York, Sperone Westwater, *Alighiero e Boetti: "Untitled" - Victoria Boogie Woogie (1972) and selected early works*, 2001.

LITERATURE:

Color Chart: Reinventing Color, 1950 to Today, exh. cat., New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 2008, p. 37, fig. 5 (illustrated in colour).
J.-C. Ammann, *Alighiero Boetti catalogo generale, vol. I*, Milan 2009, p. 313, nos. 118 and 119 (illustrated in colour, p. 163).

(i) This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under no. 1777 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.

(ii) This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under no. 1778 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

- (i) Bleu Cannes 497
- (ii) Grigio Dover 207

(i)(ii) industrial varnish and cork on card
(i)(ii) 27¾ x 27¾in. (70.5 x 70.5cm.)
(i)(ii) Executed in 1967

PROVENANCE:

Sperone Westwater, New York.
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2001.

EXHIBITED:

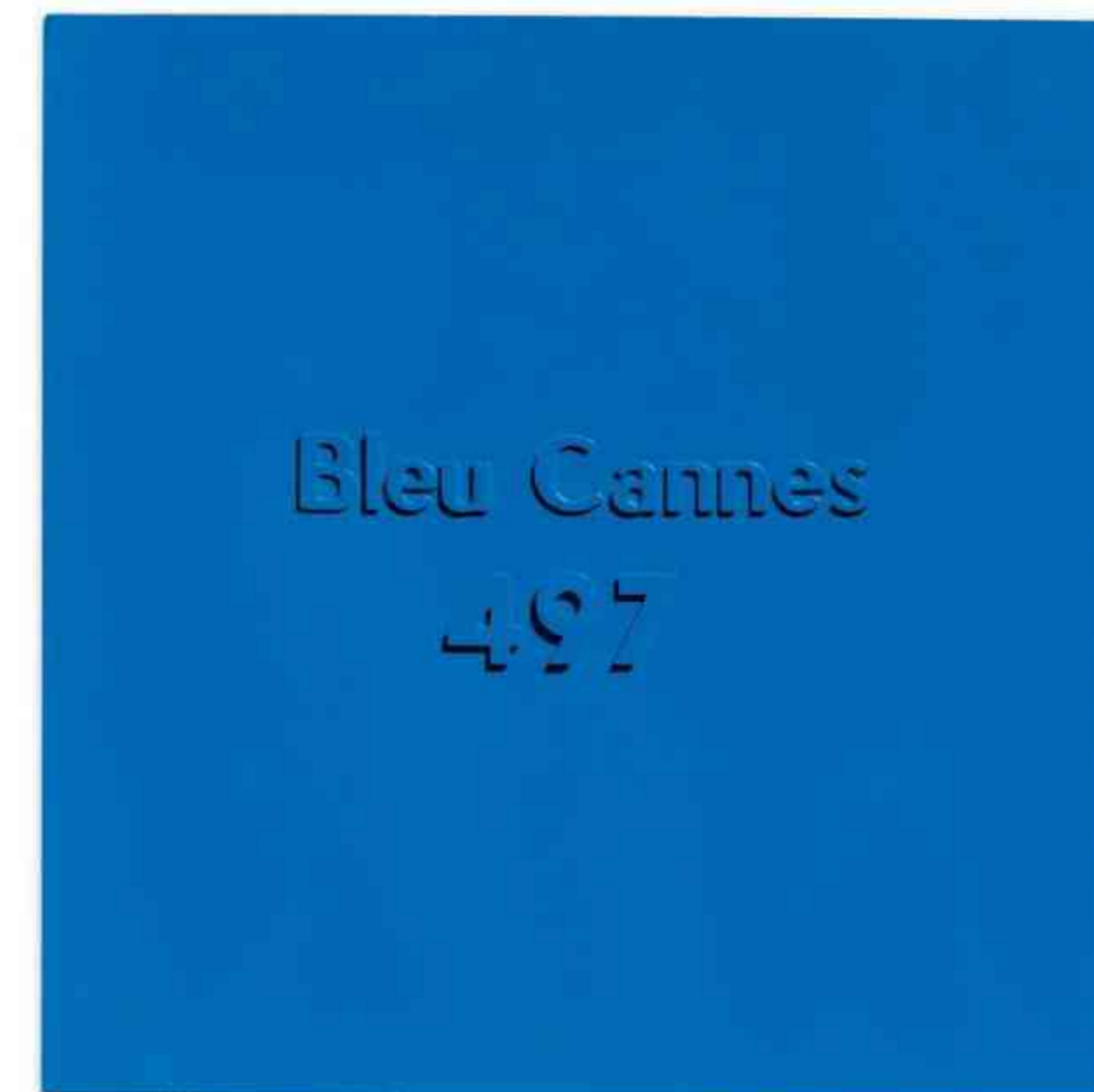
New York, Sperone Westwater, *Paper Works*, 1997.
New York, Sperone Westwater, *Alighiero e Boetti: "Untitled" - Victoria Boogie Woogie (1972) and selected early works*, 2001.

LITERATURE:

Color Chart: Reinventing Color, 1950 to Today, exh. cat., New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 2008, fig. 5 (illustrated in colour, p. 37).
J.-C. Ammann, *Alighiero Boetti catalogo generale, vol. I*, Milan 2009, p. 313, nos. 116 and 117 (illustrated in colour, p. 163).

(i) This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under no. 1776 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.

(ii) This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under no. 1775 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.





ALIGHIERO BOETTI, 1967.
Artwork: © Alighiero Boetti, DACS 2024.
Photo: © Paulo Bressano / Courtesy of
Archivio Alighiero Boetti.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Dama (Draughts)

signed and dated 'alighiero boetti 1967'
(on the underside of one cube)
one hundred punctured wood blocks,
in wood box
each block: 2 × 2 × 2 in. (5 × 5 × 5 cm.)
box: 2½ × 21¼ × 21¼ in. (6.3 × 53.5 × 53.8 cm.)
Executed in 1967

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, New York.
Anon. sale, Christie's London, 23 October 2001, lot 154.
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner.

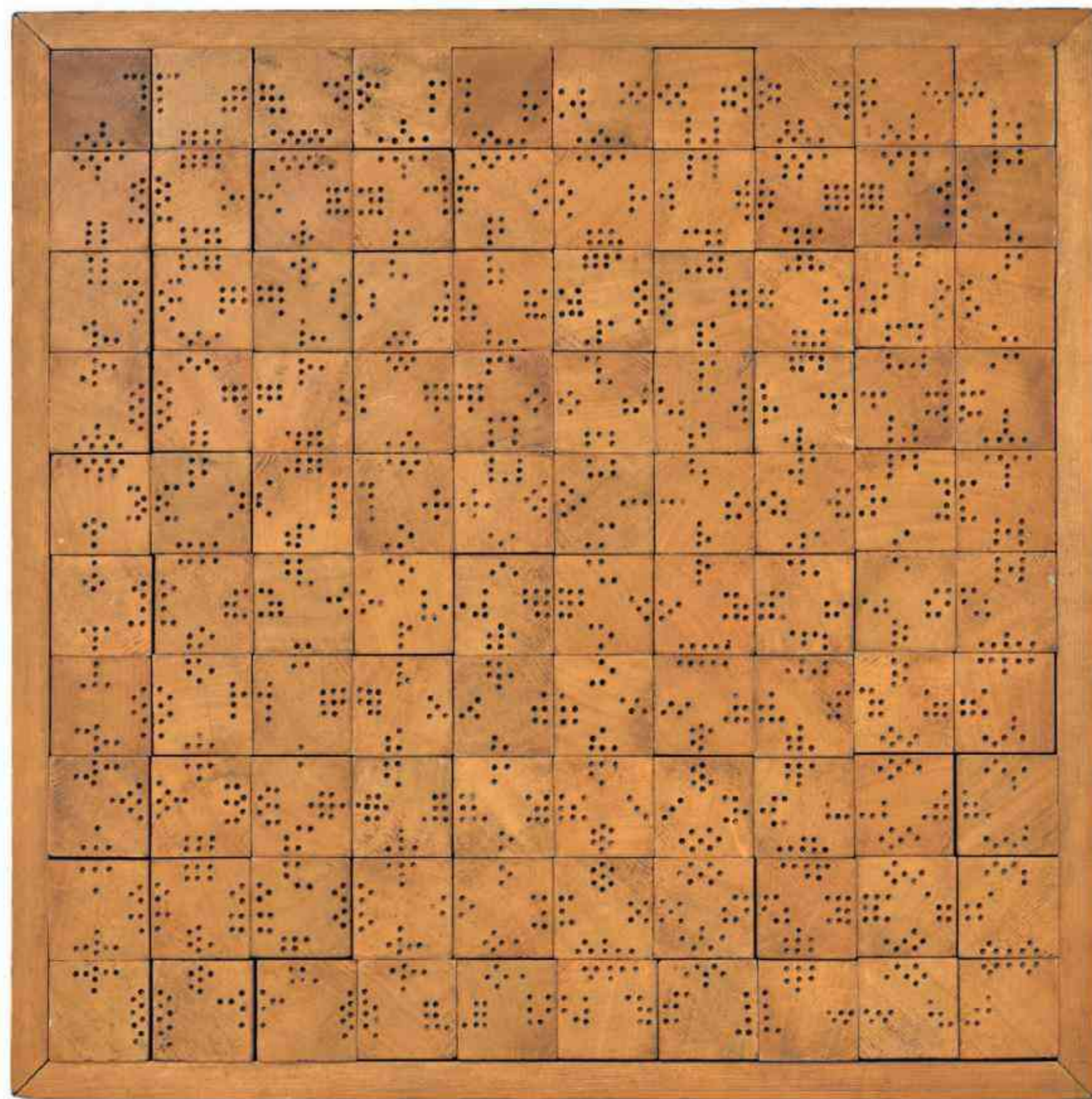
EXHIBITED:

Genoa, Leonardi V-Idea, *alighiero & boetti. Opere 1965/66, 1989-1990.*

LITERATURE:

J.-C. Ammann, *Alighiero Boetti catalogo generale, vol. I*, Milan 2009, p. 313, no. 107 (illustrated in colour, p. 159).

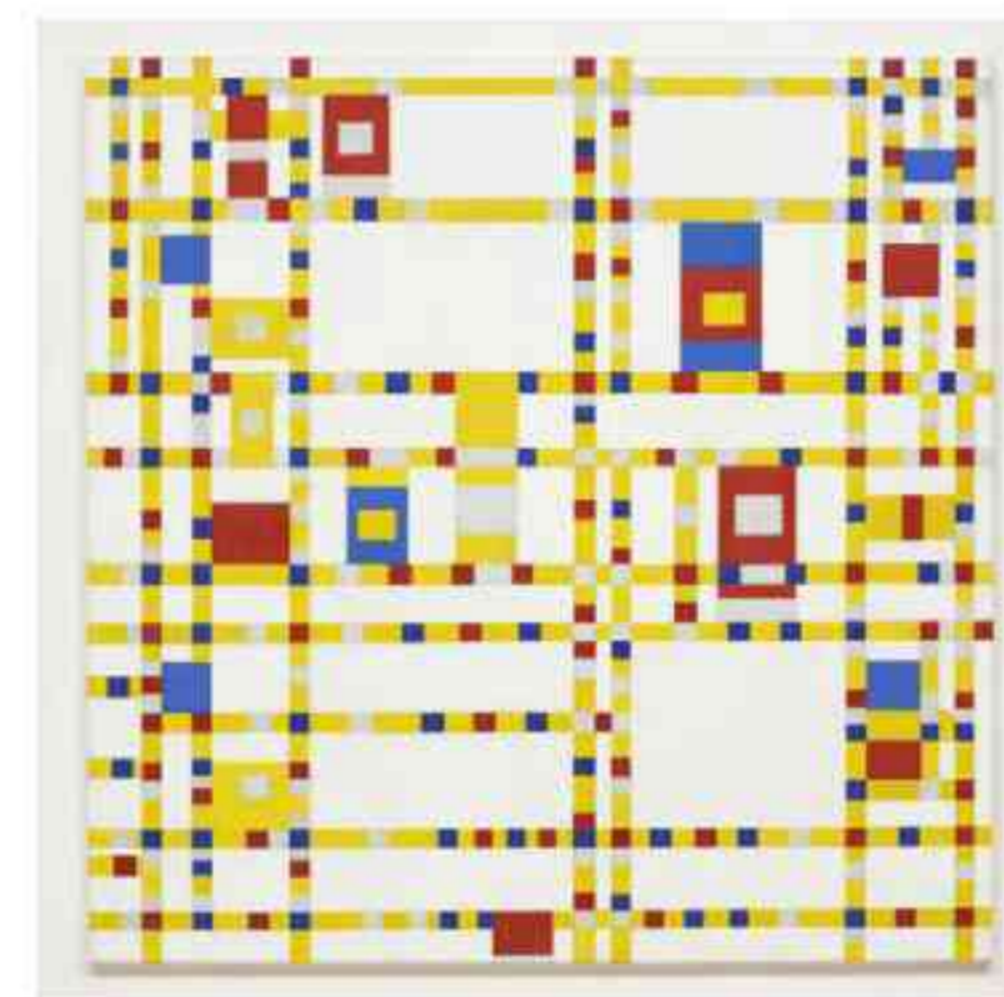
This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under no. 2354 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



DAMA

I have worked much with the concept of order/disorder: by transforming order into disorder or certain disorder into order or by presenting apparent disorder which was, in fact, the depiction of intellectual order

– Alighiero Boetti



PIET MONDRIAN

Broadway Boogie Woogie, 1942-1943. Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Digital image: © The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence.

Alighiero Boetti understood that the world was made up of a constant flux of becoming and decaying, of forming and dissolving, and of a union of opposites that he often referred to as *ordine e disordine* ('order and disorder'). Because of this, much of his work was concerned with exposing the structures by which our interpretation and understanding of the world is produced.

Dama or 'Draughts' is one of the first large-format examples of an elegant series of works begun in 1967 that were among Boetti's first demonstrations of this principle. Measuring 54 × 54 centimetres, *Dama* comprises a sequence of one hundred wooden cubes laid out in a 10 × 10 grid that, in the form of a game or puzzle, can all be aligned into a single, cohesive order. At the top of each of the wooden blocks a specific and unique sequence of symbols—in the form of holes and crosses—has been inscribed to form a binary code that allows each individual block to be aligned, domino-like, with a double. Ordering all the blocks into pairs in this way reveals a surprising unity at work: one that reflects upon how also the apparent multifarious complexity of the world itself can also be recognised as the product of a set of simple rules.

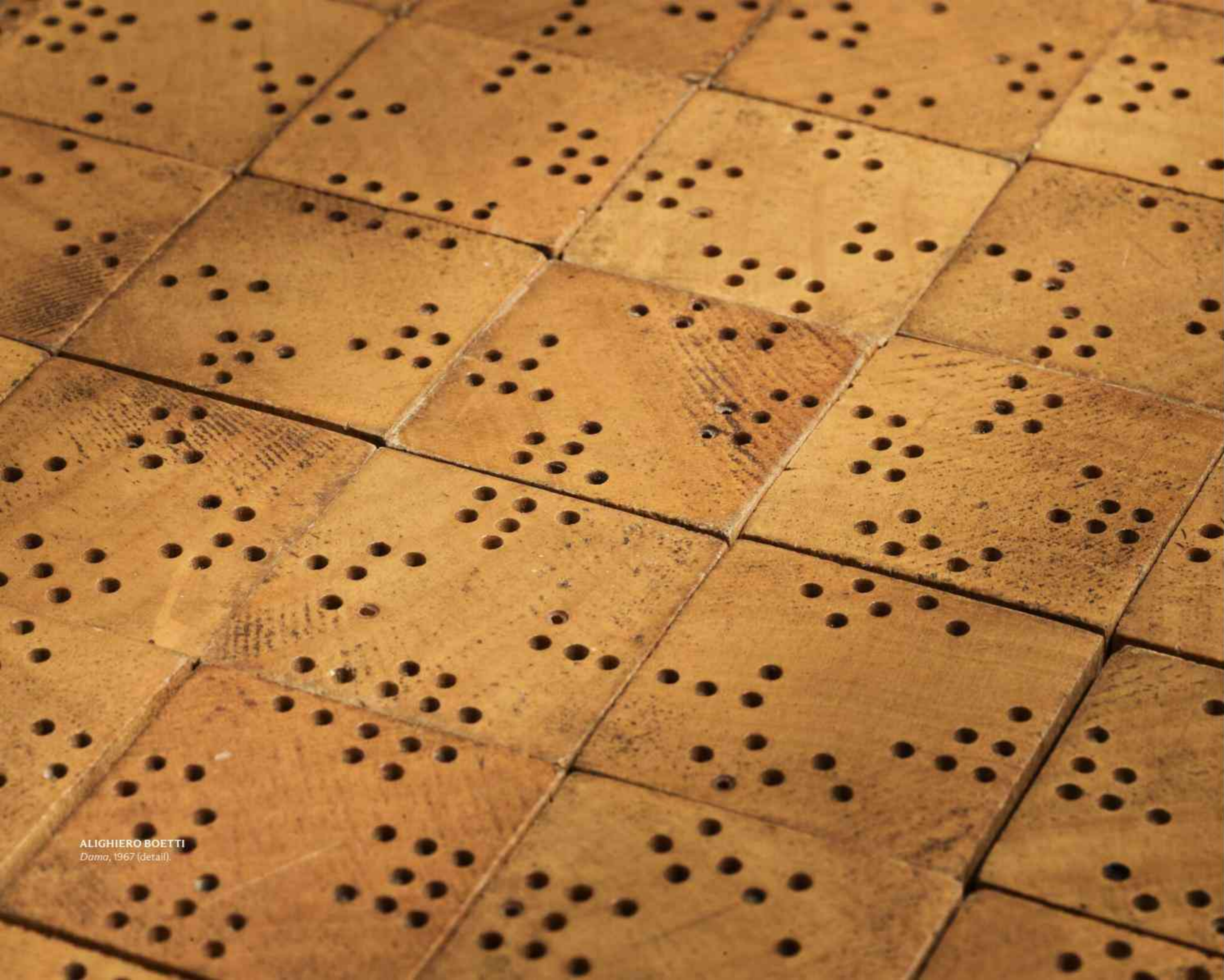
This aesthetic principle, first established in *Dama*, was one that, as in so many of Boetti's works that were to follow, showed the work of art to be an *opera aperta* (or 'open work of art'): a self-authoring entity that represented nothing but itself and which had come into being solely through its own logic of construction. The correct assemblage of *Dama* is determined only by the rules of the game and, once put into the correct order, it stands as a both a visual metaphor for the principle of *ordine e disordine* and also as a tautological representation of itself.



ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Specchio cieco, 1975.
Collezione Gianfranco Gorgoni, New York.
Photo: © Gianfranco Gorgoni.



ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Dama, 1967 (detail).



**... IT IS CLEAR THAT THIS
CONCEPT OF THE PAIR IS
ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL
ARCHETYPES OF OUR CULTURE**

—ALIGHIERO BOETTI

16 DICEMBRE
2040
11 LUGLIO
2023

The concept of time as an active and transformative power in a work of art's creation is one of the central themes of Boetti's oeuvre. *16 DICEMBRE 2040 11 LUGLIO 2023* ('16 December 2040 11 July 2023') is one of the artist's very first 'date' works, which are among Boetti's earliest invocations of this idea. Executed in 1969, using cork letters set onto a pair of square, blue-painted wooden panels in a format reminiscent of the *Vernici industriali* ('Industrial Paints') that he had made two years previously, it is the first of three highly important, evocative and deeply personal works projecting these dates that Boetti described as 'continuing tombstones' (A. Boetti quoted in A. Sauzeau, 'The Words and Days Chronology', in J-C. Ammann (ed.), *Alighiero Boetti, Catalogo generale, Vol. I*, Milan 2009, p. 81). The two other examples are an embroidery—the very first that Boetti made in Kabul in 1971—and a pair of polished brass panels from that same year.

Boetti referred to these works as 'continuing tombstones' because the two future dates that they display—16 December 2040 and 11 July 2023—signify first the centenary of Boetti's birth, and second his imagined or assumed death-date. Bracketing the artist's projected life-span through this pair of projected dates, here fixed onto an ultramarine diptych, the present work appears to document the fixing of the limits of the artist's imagination and his creative potential within a conceptual, monochrome framework that will itself be adjusted by time.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

16 DICEMBRE 2040
11 LUGLIO 2023

signed 'alighiero e boetti' (on the reverse of each); dated '16 Dic. 2040' (on the reverse of left panel); dated '11 Luglio 2023' (on the reverse of right panel)

enamel paint on panel, in two parts
each: 27 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 27 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 1 in. (69.5 x 69.5 x 2.6cm.)
Executed in 1969

PROVENANCE:

Tornabuoni Arte, Florence.
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2001.

EXHIBITED:

Ravenna, Loggetta Lombardesca-Pinacoteca Comunale, *Ut pictura poesis*, 1980 (illustrated).

LITERATURE:

Identité italienne. L'art en Italie depuis 1959, exh. cat., Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1981 (left panel illustrated, p. 362; incorrectly dated).
ALIGHIERO BOETTI, exh. cat., Cosenza, Palazzo Arnone, 2005-2006 (illustrated, p. 58).
J-C. Ammann, *Alighiero Boetti catalogo generale, vol. I*, Milan 2009, p. 323, no. 279 (illustrated in colour, p. 245).

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under no. 259 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



Time is something fundamental, the basic principle of everything. Not much can be said on this; it is simply the basis; the dates of the years ... deal with time, the only property which is really magic; such incredible elasticity. Everything has its own time

– Alighiero Boetti



ALIGHIERO BOETTI
16 dicembre 2040 11 luglio 2023, 1971.
Artwork: © Alighiero Boetti, DACS 2024.
Courtesy Alighiero e Boetti Archive.

Among the first works made in the direct aftermath of Boetti's involvement with Arte Povera in the late 1960s, this diptych is also probably the earliest extant example of a work in which he sought to explore the extraordinary energy that dates can convey. *16 DICEMBRE 2040 11 LUGLIO 2023* was Boetti's personal response to three other, now lost, works he had also made around this time, also displaying dates on blue panels. In the case of these, the dates, Boetti recalled, had been requested from three women, including his wife Annemarie, by asking them each for a future date of interest to them. 'One date was current, in 1968', Boetti remembered; 'another was the date on which a certain person would reach his majority; and the third marked the day of a test for a certain insecure person. What was evident in this work was the difference between an Italian artistic concept, such as *I* or someone else might come up with, and that which might be used, for example, by On Kawara, who also uses dates ... On Kawara made something very precise and rigid out of it; for one year he made a square, a structure; whereas my idea was about the energy that a date can give, and so I took three dates and put them there ... And that was all, you see?' (A. Boetti interviewed by M. Bandini, 1973, in *Arte Povera from the Goetz Collection*, exh. cat. Neues Museum Weserburg, Bremen 1997, p. 65).

What Boetti meant by 'the energy that a date can give' was that, with the passing of time, the resonance and meaning of a fixed date changes. A date that lies in the past gains something as it grows older and more distant, while one that lies in the future becomes less of an imaginative property and more of a graspable concept as it becomes ever closer and more urgent. Time, too, therefore, is demonstrated to be at work in a viewer's changing perceptions of a 'date' work such as *16 DICEMBRE 2040 11 LUGLIO 2023* as it ages.

As Lynne Cooke wrote in the catalogue of Boetti's Tate retrospective in 2012, the very personal dates projected in *16 DICEMBRE 2040 11 LUGLIO 2023* are ones that have continued to resonate even after Boetti's premature death in 1994. Boetti's 'attempts to master his "own time"', Cooke observed, 'to shape it according to his will by spending it as he saw fit ... [was a gamble that] he both won and lost: he did not live to see July 11 2023 as he had predicted, but the centenary of his birth, December 16 2040, will be widely celebrated' (L. Cooke, 'Boetti's Game Plan', in *Alighiero Boetti: Game Plan*, exh. cat. Tate, London 2012, p. 27).



ALIGHIERO BOETTI
I Gemelli, 1968.
Artwork: © Alighiero Boetti, DACS 2024.

SENZA TITOLO, 1969

I remember that in the spring of '69 I left the studio I had in Turin, which had become a warehouse for materials, full of asbestos, lumber, cement, stones. I left everything exactly as it was and started again from scratch, with a pencil and a sheet of paper

– Alighiero Boetti

This untitled work on paper is one of two mysterious, hand-drawn number-puzzle works that date from the time of Boetti's *Cimento dell'armonia e dell'invenzione* drawings in 1969 when the artist was reformulating his work into a new, conceptual direction. The *Cimento dell'armonia e dell'invenzione* drawings were highly important mimetic works that rank among the first formal articulations of this new approach and comprise of randomly-made tracings in pencil of a grid of squares. The unknown number puzzle outlined in this rare drawing from the same period appears to lie halfway between those 'contest between harmony and invention' drawings and the pairing structures displayed in the square blocks of his *Dama* games. It takes the form of a grid of squares comprised of a sequential progression of numbers whose ordering principle remains a mystery.

Boetti, who had studied economics prior to becoming an artist, was fascinated by numbers and by magic squares, and by the balance between complexity and simplicity that they often established. 'There is extraordinary magic in the world of numbers,' he observed, '... but ... we are always faced with the same thing, the same manifestation of a *design* in things' (A. Boetti, 'From Today to Tomorrow,' 1988, in *Alighiero & Boetti: Bringing the World into Art, 1993-1962*, exh. cat. MADRE, Naples 2009, p. 205). What was ultimately 'decisive', Boetti maintained, was 'the fact that structures (systems) have replaced pictures and that pictures obtain their meaning from structures (systems). The goal is to convey structures (systems) by constantly rediscovering them and to create pictures in such a way as to forget the structures within them' (A. Boetti, quoted in *Alighiero Boetti*, exh. cat. Kunsthalle Basel, Basel 1978, n.p.).

ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Senza titolo, 1969 (detail).

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Senza titolo (Untitled)

ink on paper

27½ x 39½in. (69.2 x 100.4cm.)

Executed in 1969

PROVENANCE:

Galerie Lucien Bilinelli, Brussels.

Studio Simonis, Paris.

Galleria Milano, Milan.

Acquired from the above by the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

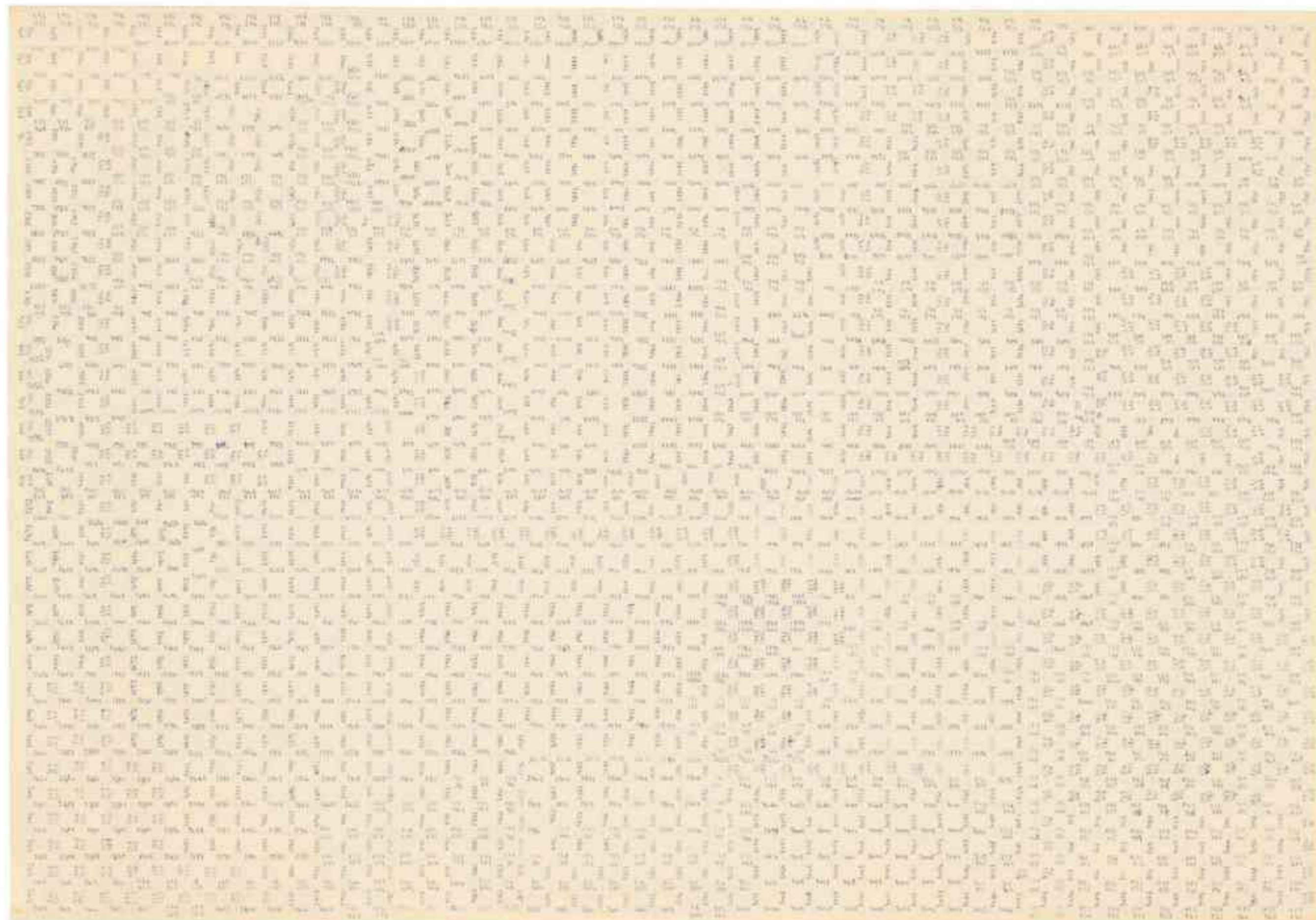
Paris, Studio Simonis, *UN ARTISTE UNE OEUVRE*,
1995-1996.

Paris, Galerie Lilliane & Michel Durand-Dessert,
DESSINS, 1998-1999.

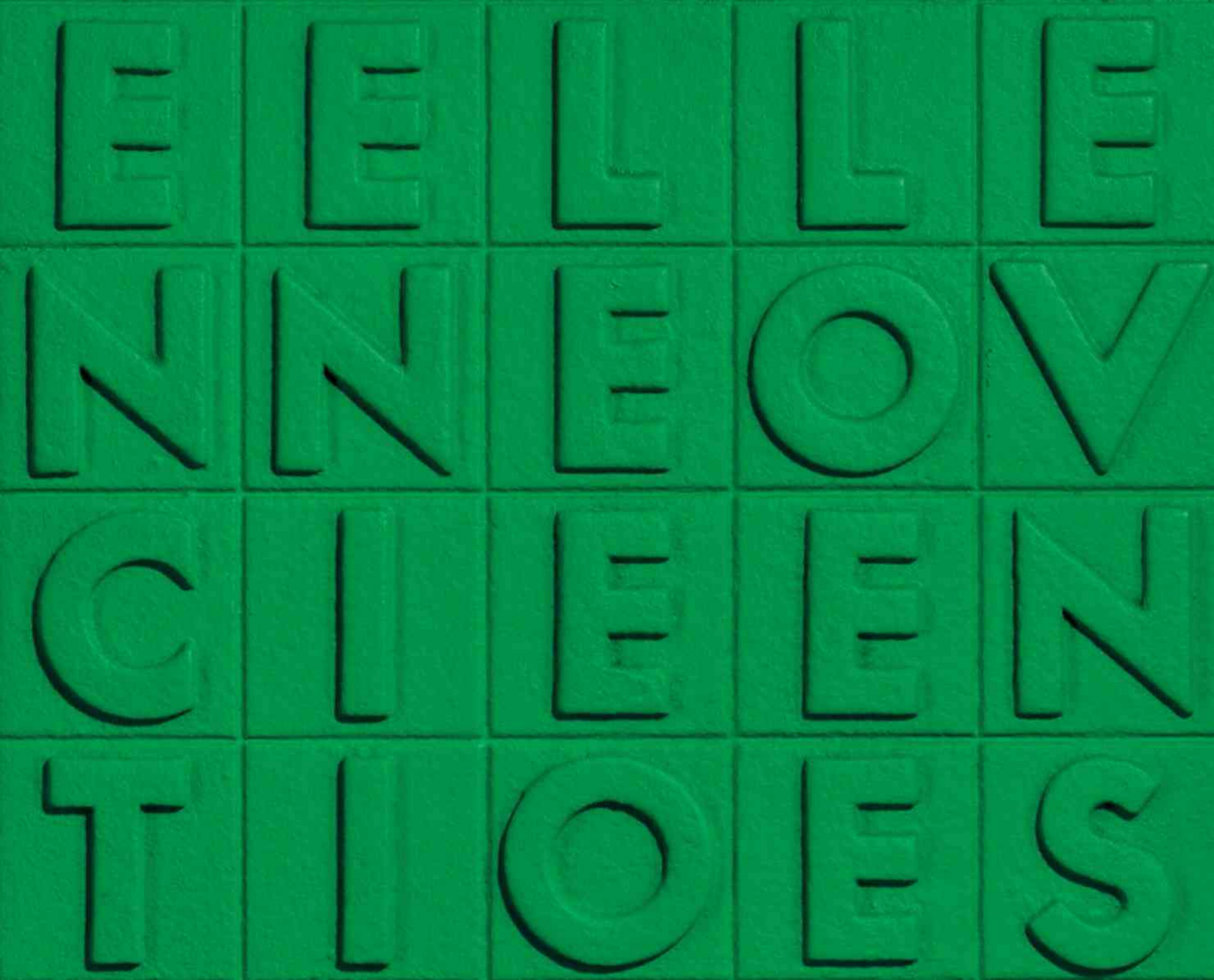
LITERATURE:

J.-C. Ammann, *Alighiero Boetti catalogo generale, vol. I*,
Milan 2009, p. 322, no. 256 (illustrated in colour, p. 231).

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome,
under no. 185 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



ALIGHIERO BOETTI
in front of *Cimento dell'armonia*
e dell'invenzione, 1970.
Photo: Giorgio Colombo.



EMME I ELLE ELLE E...

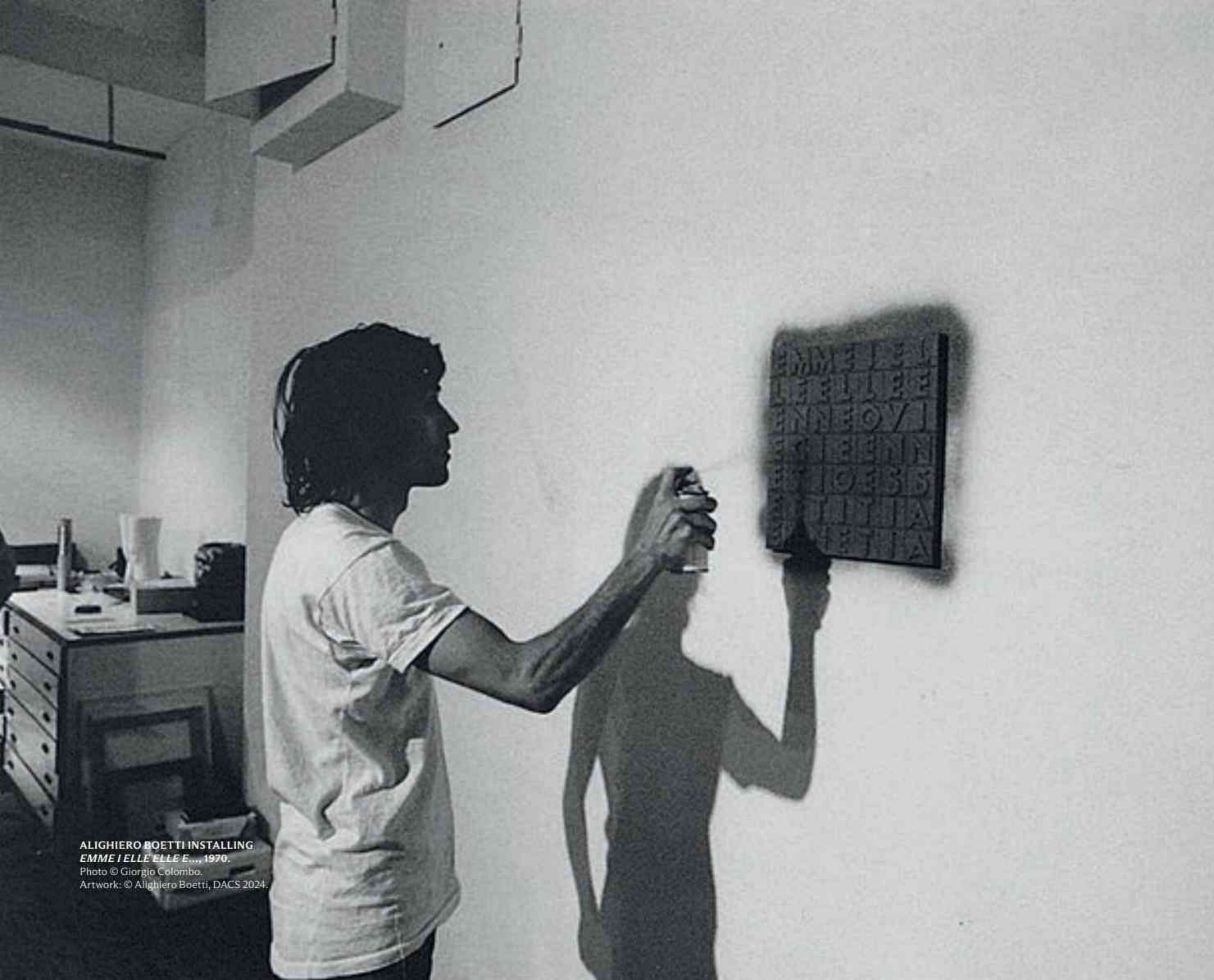
One of the simplest, most elegant and beautiful of all Boetti's open, self-authoring creations, *Emme I Elle Elle E...* is a work in which the original concept of the artwork and the rule of its creation are the sole elements responsible for its resultant form. It comprises a grid of 7×7 squares, each of them containing a letter, that collectively spell out the date of the year of the work's creation: 1970. As in so many of Boetti's works, an apparently disordered group of individual forms, here rendered in a kind of magic-square of lettering, is collated into a cohesive and ultimately meaningful order in a way that reveals a sense of the hidden structures of language, order and time while also appearing to do little more than reflect back upon itself.

Reading the work from top left to bottom right spells out the words: EMME I ELLE ELLE E ENNE O VI E CI E ENNE TI O ESSE E TI TI A ENNE TI A. These phonetically transcribed Italian letters together spell *Millenovecentosettanta*, or 1970. A pictorial demonstration of his concept of *ordine e disordine*, the work is also one of the first examples in Boetti's oeuvre of an investigation of language and semantics that was later to distinguish many of the small embroidered letter-squares that would characterise his *Arazzi*, as well as the linguistic structures of his *Lavori biro*.

Boetti's very first articulation of his concept for *Emme I Elle Elle E...* is here rendered in the exquisite pencil drawing on graph paper that served as the blueprint for all the subsequent expressions of the idea. These ensuing versions, all made in 1970, took a variety of forms, including crocheted lace, spray-painted stencils, two wooden-block versions and, as also seen in the present collection, an impressive 35cm x 35cm spray-painted cast iron version.

The light, free-form particles of green spray-paint which cover the surface of this square of letters represented a direct formal contrast to the rigid shapes and structures of the cast-iron block. In a number of exhibitions of the *Emme I Elle Elle E...* works, Boetti would spray-paint over just such a block while it hung on the wall, creating a vaporous haze of pigment that served as an airy and amorphous opposite to the precision, order and density of the square metal structure. As the cloud of colour hovered in the air, language, speech, time and meaning were visually shown to be suspended between legibility and confusion.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI
EMME I ELLE ELLE E..., 1970.



ALIGHIERO BOETTI INSTALLING
EMME I ELLE ELLE E..., 1970.
Photo © Giorgio Colombo.
Artwork: © Alighiero Boetti, DACS 2024.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

EMME I ELLE ELLE E...

signed, inscribed and dated 'Alighiero Boetti
Torino 1970' (on the reverse)

spray paint on cast iron
13 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 1in. (34.7 x 35 x 2.4cm.)
Executed in 1970

PROVENANCE:

Anastasia Michelagnoli Collection, Bologna.
Angelo Baldassarre Collection, Bari.
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2002.

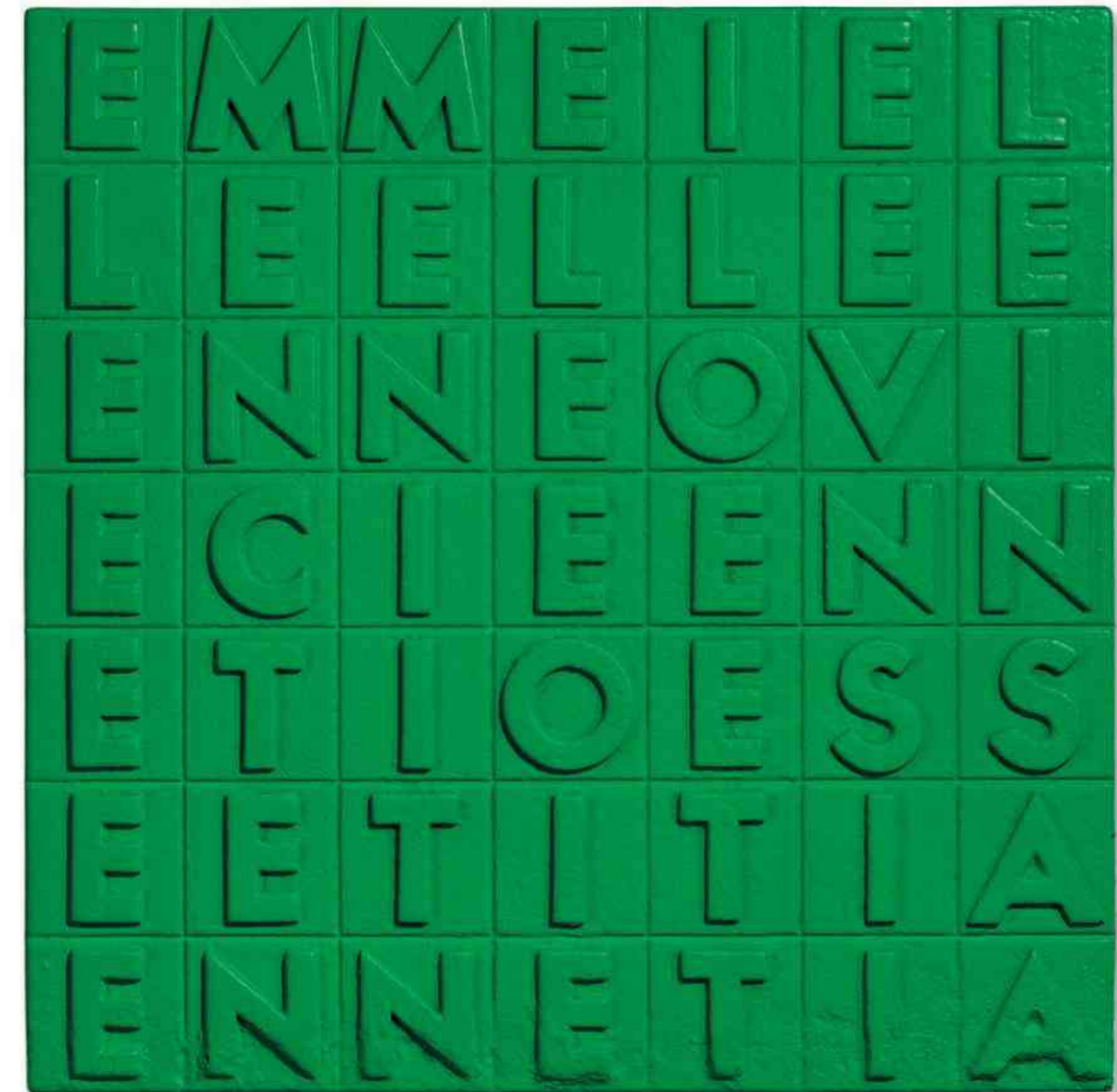
EXHIBITED:

Turin, Galleria Sperone, *Alighiero Boetti. 1970, 1970*
(an example exhibited).
Bochum, Bochum Museum, *Words. L'uso del linguaggio
nell'arte dell'ultimo decennio, 1979* (an example
exhibited).
Munich, Kunstverein, *Arte Povera 1971 und 20 Jahre
Danach, 1991*, no. 9 (an example exhibited).
Genoa, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Villa Croce,
In Pubblica, Azioni e idee degli anni settanta in Italia,
2007 (illustrated, p. 28).

LITERATURE:

T. Trini, 'Arte Povera, Land Art, Conceptual Art: l'opera
sparita e diffusa', in *Arte Illustrata*, no. 34/35/36, Milan
1970, p. 42, no. 3 (an example).
T. Trini, 'ABEEGHIIIILOORTT', in *Data*, no. 4, Milan 1972,
p. 53, no. 4 (an example).
Alighiero Boetti, exh. cat., Basel, Kunsthalle, 1978, no. 26
(an example illustrated, unpagged).
A. Bonito Oliva, *Paolo Mussat Sartor Fotografo.*
1968-1978. *Arte e Artisti in Italia*, Turin 1979
(an example illustrated, p. 43).
Alighiero Boetti 1965-1994, exh. cat., Turin, Galleria
Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, 1996, p. 112,
no. 24 (illustrated in colour, p. 113).
Alighiero Boetti, exh. cat., Milan, Galleria Seno, 1999
(illustrated).
A. Minoli, M. C. Mundici, F. Poli (et al.), *Gian Enzo
Sperone Torino Roma New York. 35 anni di mostre
tra Europa e America*, Turin 2000 (an example
illustrated in colour, p. 166).
J.-C. Ammann, *Alighiero Boetti catalogo generale, vol. 1,*
Milan 2009, p. 324, no. 308 (illustrated in colour, p. 257).

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome,
under no. 3345 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



DO YOU KNOW WHY DATES ARE SO IMPORTANT? BECAUSE, IF YOU WRITE, SAY, "1970" ON A WALL, IT SEEMS LIKE NOTHING, ABSOLUTELY NOTHING, BUT IN THIRTY YEARS' TIME ... EVERY DAY THAT PASSES MAKES THE DATE MORE BEAUTIFUL; TIME IS DOING THE WORK, THAT'S ALL THAT'S WORKING! DATES HAVE THIS BEAUTY: THE MORE TIME PASSES, THE MORE BEAUTIFUL THEY BECOME

—ALIGHIERO BOETTI

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

EMME I ELLE ELLE E...

signed and dated 'Alighiero Boetti '70' (lower right)

graphite on paper
19 1/8 x 26 in. (48.6 x 66.1 cm.)
Executed in 1970

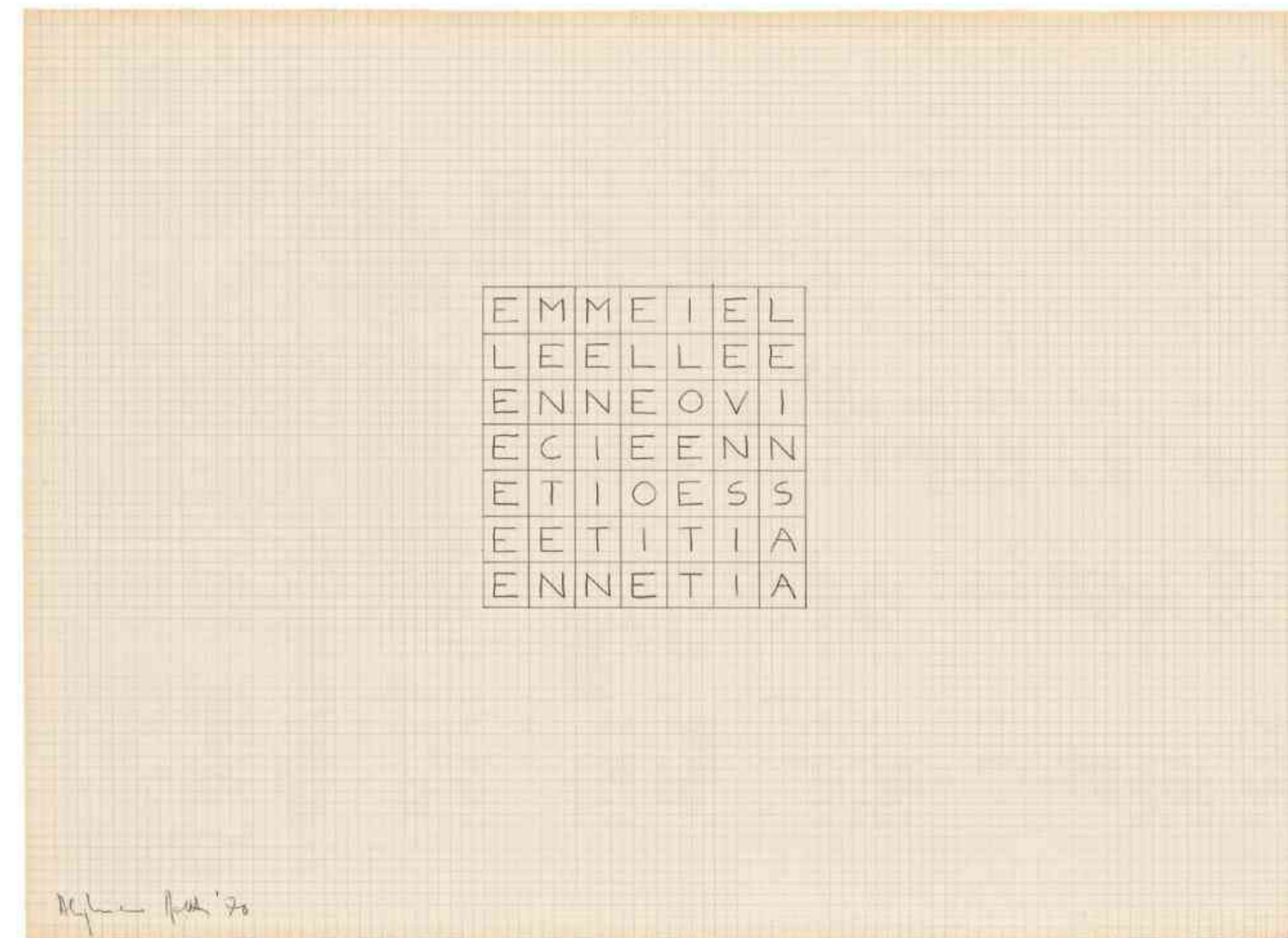
PROVENANCE:

Galleria 1000eventi, Milan.
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2002.

LITERATURE:

J.-C. Ammann, *Alighiero Boetti catalogo generale, vol. I*, Milan 2009, p. 323, no. 288 (illustrated in colour, p. 249).

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under no. 2053 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.





LAVORI BIRO

The drawings in biro are concentrates of time ... they convey to me a physical impression of extended, immense time

– Alighiero Boetti

The collection includes three examples of Boetti's revolutionary ballpoint pen works, or *Biro*. Begun in the early 1970s, these works were contemporaneous with his first tapestries, or *Arazzi*, and marked the beginning of his conceptual practice in earnest. They consist of coloured monochrome biro backdrops punctuated by letters and symbols, and are rendered in short, rapid strokes that vary in density and saturation. These works—like the *Arazzi*—saw Boetti embrace the aesthetics of collaboration, inviting other people to fill in the biro grounds according to his instructions, and submitting to the unpredictable speed and rhythm of their hand. In the spirit of Arte Povera, the humble, everyday pen became a vehicle for profound revelation, its pre-set colours alive with variation and its textures full of painterly magic.

The *Biro* also shared the vocabulary of linguistic puns and games that came to define the *Arazzi*. Early examples, such as *ABEEGHIILOORTT* (1973), spelt out various configurations of the artist's name. In the case of that work, he rearranged the letters of ALIGHIERO BOETTI in alphabetical order, yielding a word that was both nonsensical and strangely familiar. Elsewhere, Boetti developed a coded system of commas that he distributed across the surface in line with an alphabetic strip along one side. Matching each successive comma to its corresponding letter eventually revealed a phrase or saying. *Senza prima né dopo* is an exquisite example from 1991, whose title—read from left to right—translates as 'without before or after'. At first glance, it confronts the viewer as an impossible abstract conundrum. Close reading, however, reveals the lyrical simplicity of its puzzle.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Mettere al mondo il mondo (Bringing the world into the world), circa 1974 (detail).

There's one way of drawing [tracing] and then there's the classical way: taking a pencil in your hand, and then there's the fact of drawing and covering, filling, like in the Biro works. They're all ways of drawing. Everyone has their own way, their own certainty, their own temperament, their own shadows. And here, everyone has their own presence, which is beyond any possibility of choice. Everyone has their bodily self, their fullness

– Alighiero Boetti

At the heart of the grouping is *Mettere al mondo il mondo* (circa 1974), which gives its title to the collection. Spanning three metres in width, it belongs to the suite of predominantly blue works bearing this title that the artist began in 1972. It is the only example composed of five panels, each of which—like *Senza prima ne dopo*—is dedicated to a single word. The phrase ‘mettere al mondo il mondo’ (‘bringing the world into the world’) would become central to Boetti’s thinking, capturing his belief that turning everyday objects and systems into art could reveal their true nature. His ballpoint pen works stood among the most vivid assertions of this idea. Like constellations in the night sky, they were at once mysterious and self-evident, each a riddle and a solution wrapped into a bewitching, elegant expression.

‘Mettere al mondo il mondo’ entered Boetti’s imagination on his first trip to Afghanistan in 1971. While travelling across the deserted landscape to a village outside Kabul, he encountered ‘a Kuci caravan, Afghan nomads with horses, asses and many camels’. It struck him that, just a few hours earlier, he had been sitting ‘in a house in Turin’. Now he was in a foreign land, observing a scene that could have taken place ‘in the year 1000’. ‘At that moment the sentence comes into my head “Bringing the world into the world”, he recalls. ‘I look for a leaf of paper, a very small one, and write on it “Mettere al mondo il mondo”. A kind of autogenesis, an enduring birth’ (A. Boetti, quoted in *Alighiero Boetti: Mettere al mondo il mondo*, exh.cat. Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt 1998, pp. 53-55).

The realisation that time and place were neither fixed nor linear concepts would energise Boetti’s practice. His works played freely with geographical and temporal boundaries: from his embroideries forged in collaboration with artisanal weavers in Afghanistan, to his frequent invocation of dates and calendars. The curator Mark Godfrey explains that ‘mettere al mondo il mondo’ might be more accurately translated as ‘giving birth to the world’, or rather ‘putting the world back into the world’. ‘Instead of inventing images, constructing forms, or having things fabricated’, he writes, ‘Boetti took the stuff of the world, rearranged it, and put it back into the world as art. He used stamps, maps, the names and length of rivers, the colours of biro pens’ (M. Godfrey, press statement for *Mettere al mondo il mondo*, Thomas Dane Gallery, Naples 2022). In 1972, Boetti issued his seminal proclamation: ‘The greatest joy in the world consists in inventing the world the way it is without inventing anything in the process’ (A. Boetti, ‘Interview with Mirella Bandini’, 1972, reproduced in *Zero to Infinity: Arte Povera 1962-1972*, exh. cat. Tate, London 2001, p. 190).



ALIGHIERO BOETTI
in his studio, 1974.
Photo: Antonia Mulas
© Antonia Mulas Heirs.
All rights reserved.



It's like looking at a starry sky. Someone who does not know the order of the stars will see only confusion, whereas an astronomer will have a very clear vision of things

– Alighiero Boetti

VINCENT VAN GOGH
Starry Night, Arles, 1888. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.
Digital image: Scala, Florence.

Boetti would invoke 'mettere al mondo il mondo' time and again across his ballpoint pen works: examples are held in the Musée d'art contemporain de Rochechouart and the Glenstone Foundation, Maryland. Collectively, these works shine light upon the phrase's meaning. On one hand, the *Biro* dispense with all sense of authorship, posing as simple manifestations of everyday objects, acts and systems. At the same time, however, they illuminate those things in new and unexpected ways. The unassuming biro, without any intervention from the artist, becomes an instrument of virtuosity, with different patterns of gesture and coverage creating extraordinary tonal variation across the surface of the work. The dazzling white commas, seen in isolation from the letters on the left, exude a sense of transcendental wonder and mystery, as if straining to communicate from the deep blue abyss. Meaning begins to unravel even as it is prescribed. Through the most basic linguistic and artistic means, Boetti reveals the world anew, revelling in its hidden beauty, complexity and contradiction.





ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Mettere al mondo il mondo (Bringing the world into the world), circa 1974.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Mettere al mondo il mondo
(Bringing the world into the world)

ballpoint pen on paper laid down on canvas, in five parts

each: 39¼ x 27%in. (99.6 x 70.3cm.)

overall: 39¼ x 138%in. (99.6 x 351.5cm.)

Executed circa 1974

PROVENANCE:

Galleria Alessandra Bonomo, Rome.

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2000.

LITERATURE:

La Pensée Tangible. Huit parcours exemplaires en France et en Italie / Il Pensiero Tangibile. Otto percorsi esemplari in Francia e in Italia, exh. cat., Bologna, Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, 1992, no. 2 (illustrated, p. 48; dated '1972').

A. Pohlen and S. Widner (eds.), *Alighiero e Boetti. 1965-1992. Synchronizität als ein Prinzip akausaler Zusammenhänge*, exh. cat., Bonn, Bonner Kunstverein, 1992 (illustrated in colour, pp. 54-55; dated '1972').

J.-C. Ammann, *Alighiero Boetti catalogo generale, vol. II*, Milan 2012, p. 411, no. 582 (illustrated in colour, p. 140).

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under no. 289.



ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

ABEEGHIILORTT

signed, inscribed and dated 'Alighiero Boetti. 1973 Primavera' (on the reverse, not readable)

ballpoint pen on paper laid down on canvas

27¼ x 39in. (69.1 x 99cm.)

Executed in 1973

PROVENANCE:

Galleria Massimo de Carlo, Milan.

Van de Weghe Fine Art, New York.

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2001.

EXHIBITED:

Milan, Galleria Massimo de Carlo, *Alighiero e Boetti. Opere 1968-1981*, 1988.

Milan, Galleria Massimo de Carlo, *Alighiero e Boetti*, 1996.

Frankfurt am Main, Museum für Moderne Kunst, *Alighiero Boetti. Mettere al mondo il mondo*, 1998, p. 331 (illustrated, p. 153). This exhibition later travelled to Frankfurt am Main, Galerie Jahrhunderthalle Höchst.

LITERATURE:

J.-C. Ammann, *Alighiero Boetti catalogo generale, vol. II*, Milan 2012, p. 408, no. 483 (illustrated in colour, p. 92).

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under no. 300 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



I ONCE PLACED THE LETTERS OF
MY NAME IN ALPHABETICAL
ORDER. I HAD BEEN STRUCK BY
THE FACT THAT SOCIETY'S VERY
FOUNDATIONS, ITS GIGANTIC
STRUCTURES, WOULD COLLAPSE,
IF ONLY SOME MINUTE ELEMENTS,
SUCH AS THE ALPHABETICAL
ORDER, WERE NO LONGER THERE

—ALIGHIERO BOETTI

ABEEGHI I I LOORTT



ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Senza prima né dopo (Without before or after)

(i) signed and titled 'alighiero e boetti SENZA PRIMA NE DOPO' (on the reverse); (i)-(iv) titled consecutively 'SENZA PRIMA NE DOPO' (on the reverse of each panel)

ballpoint pen on paper laid down on canvas,
in four parts

each: 39½ x 27½in. (99.5 x 70.2cm.)

overall: 39½ x 110½in. (99.5 x 280.8cm.)

Executed in 1991

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, Italy (acquired directly from the artist in 1983).

Private Collection, Rome.

Acquired from the above by the present owner.

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under no. 877 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



Twenty-five is the square of the holy number five and is therefore also the centre of magical squares. It consists of the sum of the numbers 1 + 3 + 5 + 7 + 9, and thus contains all the holy numbers which can be used in magic

– Alighiero Boetti



ANDY WARHOL
Campbell's Soup Cans, 1962. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Artwork: © 2024 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by DACS, London. Digital Image: © The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala Florence

The element of 'order' in each text-based tapestry, meanwhile, was set out by Boetti's design. Often indecipherable at first glance, the frameworks of letters reveal their meanings when read vertically, and are sometimes encrypted in more complex schemes. Many large, single-panel tapestries are composed of multiple smaller phrase-units. They might spell out word-games and Italian puns, Boetti's own name, self-reflexive references to the date or place of the work's creation, or a mathematical function. The translation of numbers into alphabetical form requires a further layer of close reading. 'We see colours and patterns before we read,' Mark Godfrey observes, 'so that when we *do* read the phrases in these works, our understanding, delayed, is sharpened' (M. Godfrey, 'Divided Interests: The Art of Alighiero Boetti', *Artforum*, May 2009, p. 209). Radiant small works in the collection spell out some of Boetti's favourite words and phrases, including *Ammazzare il Tempo* (*Killing Time*) (1979) and *Inaspettatamente* (*Unexpectedly*) (1987). A tall-format arrangement counts through one, two and three to a wistful *100 parole al vento*: 'words to the wind.'

In *Cinque x cinque venticinque*, the 'five by five' logic of the small panels scales up to the arrangement as a whole: these twenty-five units can themselves be arranged together in a larger five-by-five grid. Displayed together, the total number of letter-squares is 25×25 —or, in a different formulation, 'five x five x twenty-five.' This mathematical scheme is countermanded by the glorious disarray of the tapestries' colours, which result both from Boetti's design and the choices made by the weavers who embroidered them in Peshawar, Pakistan. A chorus of vivid colour-combinations—teal and red, orange and mauve, magenta and olive—gives each panel its own chromatic identity, their shapes and patterns scintillating before the eyes. Another twenty-five-part example of *Cinque x cinque venticinque* from 1988-1989 is held in the permanent collection of the Kunstmuseum den Haag, The Hague.

Oggi ventesimo giorno dell'ottavo mese dell'anno millenovecento ottantotto (1988), a large single-panel tapestry of 25×25 letters, demonstrates some of the more elaborate structures to be found in the *Arazzi*. Each letter has its own vivid colour-scheme, leading the eye to search for patterns across the scintillating surface. Smaller 5×5 phrase units spell out the work's date of creation, and playful phrases such as *quando le parole sono stanche* ('when the words are tired') and *seguire il filo di discorso* ('follow the thread of the conversation'). Decoding those units only gets the reader so far, however. At the centre, a long phrase is hidden in a less obvious cross-shaped arrangement, beginning with a 5×5 section at the left and

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Cinque x cinque venticinque (Five times five twenty-five)

- (i)-(xxv) signed 'alighiero e boetti' (on the overlap)
- (xvi),(xviii) inscribed 'PESHAWAR PAKISTAN BY AFGHAN PEOPLE' (on the overlap)
- twenty-five embroideries on linen
- smallest: $8\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{5}{8}$ in. (21.1 x 22cm.)
- largest: $9 \times 8\frac{7}{8}$ in. (23 x 22.7cm.)
- (i)-(xxv) Executed in 1988

PROVENANCE:

Esso Gallery, New York.
de Pury & Luxembourg Art, Geneva.
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2000.

(i)-(xxv) This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity. For the individual registration numbers please refer to christies.com.





ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Cinque x cinque venticinque
(Five times five twenty-five), 1988 (detail).

We see colours and patterns before we read, so that when we do read the phrases in these works, our understanding, delayed, is sharpened

– Mark Godfrey



ALIGHIERO BOETTI WITH ORDER AND DISORDER, CENTRE GEORGES POMPIDOU, PARIS, 1981.
Photo: Giorgio Colombo.
Artwork: © Alighiero Boetti, DACS 2024.

following a vertical 5 × 20 column down the composition's midpoint, which is itself interrupted by the phrase *venticinque per venticinque*. Revealing the work's title, it reads: *seicento venticinque lettere da i cento colori i colori del mondo Alighiero Boetti Peshawar oggi ventesimo giorno dell'ottavo mese dell'anno millenovecento ottantotto all'amato Pantheon* ('six hundred twenty-five letters from the hundred colours the colours of the world Alighiero Boetti Peshawar today twentieth day of the eighth month of the year 1988 at the beloved Pantheon').

Boetti, who was fascinated as much by the rational structure of sign systems as their imaginative potential, drew on Sufi mysticism and other sources for his numerical and alphabetical games. One antecedent is the 'magic square', a number-grid in which the sum of the rows, columns, and diagonals remains constant. The *Shams al-Ma'arif* (*The Book of the Sun of Gnosis*), an esoteric Sufi text dating from the 13th century, tells of magic squares that function as spells, allowing communication with the angels and Djinn who rule the planets. Albrecht Dürer's famous engraving *Melencolia I* (1514) features a four-by-four magic square, containing 86 different four-number combinations that add up to the magic number 34. The square's bottom row—4, 15, 14, 1—further encrypts Dürer's initials and the date of the work's creation: a Boettian gesture *avant la lettre*.

'I designed some 150 words that could be arranged in a square', said Boetti in 1992. 'Today when I come across expressions like *la forza del centro* ('the force of the centre'), a yoga concept, I know intuitively that the number of its letters allows it to form a square' (A. Boetti, quoted in N. Bourriaud, *ibid.*). While he made squares in many different configurations, the five-by-five grid—and, in his large single-panel works, the twenty-five-by-twenty-five grid—retained a special importance for the artist. 'Twenty-five is the square of the holy number five', he explained, 'and is therefore also the centre of magical squares. It consists of the sum of the numbers 1 + 3 + 5 + 7 + 9, and thus contains all the holy numbers which can be used in magic' (A. Boetti, quoted in *Alighiero Boetti: Mettere al mondo il mondo*, exh. cat. Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt 1998, p. 117). Across the *Arazzi*, with their dizzying, nested semiotic systems coming apart and together in a modular symphony of order and disorder, the magical multiplicity of Boetti's vision comes to life.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

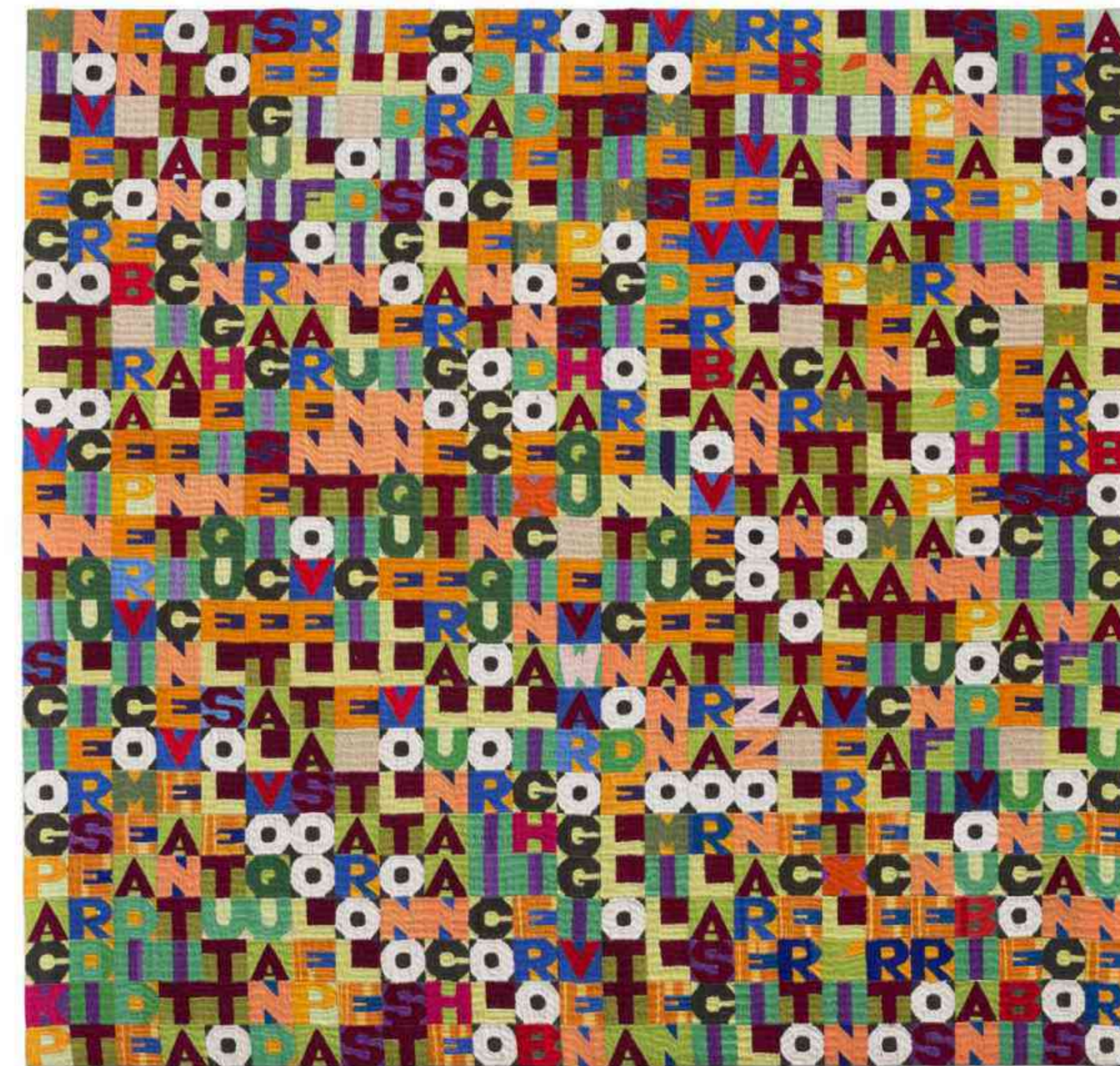
Oggi ventesimo giorno dell'ottavo mese dell'anno millenovecento ottantotto

signed, inscribed and dated 'alighiero e boetti PESHAWAR PAKISTAN BY AFGHAN PEOPLE 20 ' Agosto 1988' (on the overlap)
embroidery on linen
43 × 44 7/8 in. (109.3 × 114 cm.)
Executed in 1988

PROVENANCE:

de Pury & Luxembourg Art, Geneva.
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2000.

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under no. 7415 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.





ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Milanovecentoatrantotto 1988 (detail)

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Inaspettatamente (Unexpectedly)

signed, inscribed and dated 'alighiero e boetti
Peshawar 1987' (on the reverse)

embroidery on linen

6¾ x 67⁄16in. (17.3 x 17.5cm.)

Executed in 1987

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, Italy.

Whitford Fine Art, London.

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2000.

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome,
under no. 10441 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

*Una parola al vento, due parole al vento,
tre parole al vento, 100 parole al vento
(A word to the wind, two words to the wind,
three words to the wind, 100 words to the wind)*

signed 'alighiero e boetti' (on the overlap)

embroidery on linen

33½ x 9¾in. (85 x 24.8cm.)

Executed in 1989

PROVENANCE:

Galerie Vedovi, Brussels.

Acquired from the above by the present owner.

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under
no. 10412 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Il silenzio è d'oro (Silence is Golden)

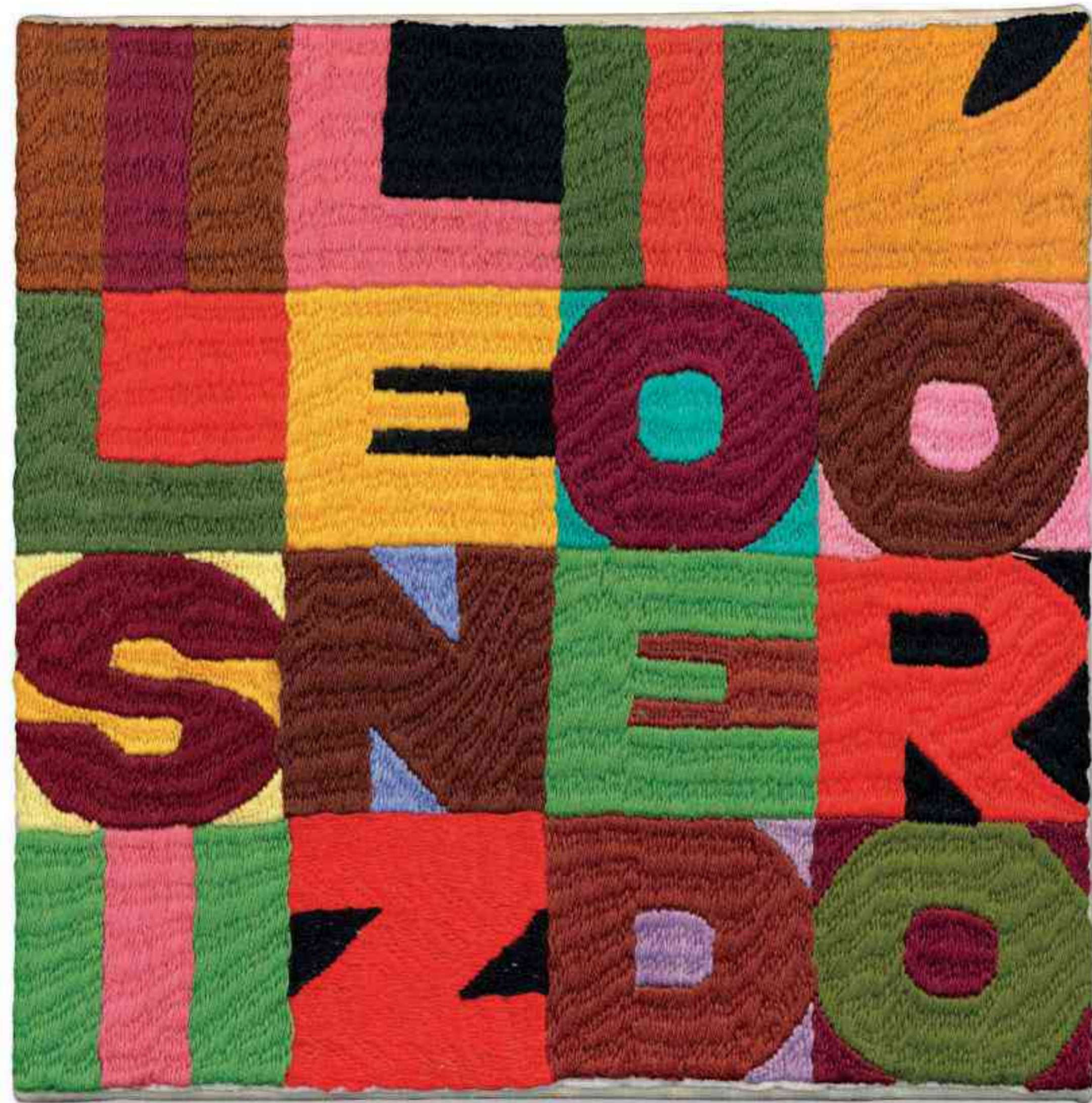
signed, inscribed and dated 'Peshawar 1988
alighiero e boetti' (on the reverse)

embroidery on linen
7 × 7in. (17.8 × 17.7cm.)
Executed in 1988

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, Italy.
Whitford Fine Art, London.
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2000.

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome,
under no. 10442 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Ammazzare il tempo (Killing Time)

signed, inscribed and dated 'alighiero e boetti
KABUL - AFGHANISTAN 1979' (on the reverse)

embroidery on linen
6½ × 7½in. (16.8 × 18.2cm.)
Executed in 1979

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, Italy.
Whitford Fine Art, London.
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2000.

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under
no. 10445 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.





AFGHAN WOMEN WORKING ON
ALIGHIERO BOETTI EMBROIDERIES IN
PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN, 1990.
© RMS Photo, Rami Milkin Studio, West. From
the book, *Boetti by Afghan Peshawar*,
Pakistan, 1990. Artwork © Alighiero Boetti,
DACS 2024.

MAPPA



JASPER JOHNS
Flag, 1954. Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Artwork: © Jasper Johns, DACS 2024.
Digital image: © The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence.

Boetti's embroidered maps of the world are the artist's best-known and most loved creations. A series of radiant, large-scale, embroidered silk tapestries, painstakingly hand-crafted in Afghanistan and Pakistan using traditional methods, these works are ultimately optimistic images that reveal the geopolitical map of the world to be a fascinatingly diverse and colourful single entity held together in a state of perpetual flux. In recent years, these iconic and immediately understandable images have also come to be recognised as powerful and even perhaps prophetic icons of the fluid, fast-paced and ever-changing globalised world of the 21st century.

The present *Mappa*, executed in 1979, is one of the last examples of Boetti's original series of *Mappe* made in Afghanistan between 1971 and the Soviet invasion of December 1979. (A second phase of production was begun, remotely, after the Soviet invasion and this continued until 1986, when Boetti was again able to travel to visit his Afghan collaborators, then living in exile in Peshawar, to supervise a third phase of these works' production until 1994.) Boetti's first series of *Mappe* are all distinguished by the various shades of blue that has been used to colour their oceans: here, ripples of subtly different colour and texture can be traced as the weavers change their rolls of thread, creating an exquisite, patchwork-like pattern across the seas.

Given the auspicious date of this work, it is fitting that its border inscription, rendered in an alternating sequence of black and white *quadrati* (squares), should appear to refer back to the principles that gave rise to the very first *Mappe* when, in 1969, Boetti himself had hand-coloured in a black and white printed teacher's map of the world to create his *Planisfero politico*. Colouring in this black-and-white map of the world solely in accordance with the national flags of each country provided a global image of Boetti's oft-proclaimed principle of *ordine*

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Mappa

signed and inscribed 'alighiero e boetti
KABUL AFGHANISTAN' (on the overlap)
embroidery on linen
47¼ x 65½in. (120 x 165.4cm.)
Executed in 1979

PROVENANCE:

de Pury & Luxembourg Art, Geneva.
Acquired from the above by the present owner
in 2000.

LITERATURE:

J.-C. Ammann, *Alighiero Boetti catalogo generale, vol. II*, Milan 2012, no. 1224 (illustrated in colour, p. 395).

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under no. 6091 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.





ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Mappa, 1979.

FOR ME, THE EMBROIDERED MAPPA IS THE ULTIMATE IN BEAUTY

—ALIGHIERO BOETTI

*Discovering order in disorder
and putting disorder into the
order of things*

– border inscription, *Mappa*, 1979

e disordine—the inherent and interdependent relationship between order and disorder—at work within the geopolitical structure of the world itself. Boetti was thrilled with the result. ‘For that work I did nothing,’ he recalled, ‘chose nothing, in the sense that: the world is as it is. The world is made as it is, not as I designed it, the flags are those that exist, and I did not design them; in short, I did absolutely nothing; when the basic idea, the concept, emerges, everything else requires no choosing’ (A. Boetti, 1974, quoted in A. Boatto, *Alighiero e Boetti*, Ravenna 1984, p. 122).

Invoking this same principle of *ordine e disordine* and of using colour to simultaneously both divide and unite, the border inscription on this 1979 *Mappa* reads: *Si o no chiedere si o no bianco o nero oppure bianco e nero o colore e cosi dividere* (‘Yes or no, ask yes or no, black or white or otherwise black and white, or colour, and divide like this’) and *Scoprire l’ordine nel disordine e mettere disordine nel l’ordine delle cose* (‘Discovering order in disorder and putting disorder into the order of things’). These words are themselves split into alternating black and white letters in a way that indicates the same principle of order and disorder also at work within the structures of speech and language.

Unlike the *Planisfero politico*, the making of Boetti’s embroidered *Mappe* was part of a trans-continental, cross-cultural enterprise that involved the expansion of Boetti’s simple, original concept into a complex and often painstakingly slow process. Each *Mappa* involved the work of up to four Afghan women embroiderers and took at least a year to make: some took two years, and others sometimes as much as a decade. The process of making these works was, however, to completely transform Boetti’s art. ‘I love the *Planisferi* [*Planispheres*],’ he told Mirella Bandini, soon after making his first tapestry. ‘Doing these embroideries, with four women working on the canvas in Afghanistan, where they are the best embroideresses in the world...is a way of recovering something. I love the work. It is one of the few things I could see outside an art gallery and that amuses me a lot! ... I could sell this anywhere because everybody likes it’ (A. Boetti interviewed by M. Bandini, 1972, in *Zero to Infinity: Arte Povera 1962-1972*, exh. cat. Tate, London 2001, p. 190).

It was Boetti’s gallerist Gian Enzo Sperone who first argued that Boetti should create more than one *Mappa*. Although Sperone may have had pecuniary concerns uppermost in his mind, Boetti himself was quick to see the extraordinary power and potential of transforming these works into an open work of perpetual motion.

... the culture of “arts and crafts”
and the traditions of a “poor”
country found their entry into the
greatest museums in the world

– Rainald Schumacher

through the creation of an ongoing series. In this way, not only would each *Mappa* come to serve as a progressive temporal chart of the perpetually-changing borders of the world, but, hand-crafted in the traditional, artisanal way that they were, each would also be a unique, stand-alone work that sustained a permanent cross-border collaboration between him in Rome and his partners in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It was also effectively through the perpetual cross-cultural exchange instigated by the *Mappe* that, as Rainald Schumacher has written, ‘the culture of “arts and crafts” and the traditions of a “poor” country found their entry into the greatest museums in the world’ (R. Schumacher, *Arte Povera: The Great Awakening*, exh. cat. Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel 2012, p. 68).

In the present *Mappa*, for example, there are a number of idiosyncrasies of the kind that that both particularly appealed to Boetti and which made each example unique. Executed on the eve of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, this work is a poignant document of the world, shortly before its geopolitical map was to change so dramatically over the next few years—culminating, in 1990, with the collapse of the Soviet Union itself. As with many maps created in the late-1970s and early 1980s, the map of Namibia has here been rendered ‘flagless’ in a nondescript, brilliant white because, during these years, the country was under a state of civil war and correspondingly had no flag. Similarly, at the epicentre of the work, due to the equal uncertainty about the leadership in Afghanistan in 1979, the Afghan weavers’ own homeland has also been rendered blank. In addition to these examples, also notable is the rare use of an especially vibrant turquoise silk thread in the rendering of the Argentinian and Mongolian national flags. In all these respects this *Mappa* serves as a prime example of Boetti’s belief in artists as ‘an alchemical factor of transmutation’, because it is they who are ‘certainly among those rare people who know how to transform certain unpleasant states, sadness or simply the malaise of being in the world, into beauty’ (A. Boetti, ‘From Today to Tomorrow’, 1988, in *Alighiero & Boetti: Bringing the World into Art, 1993-1962*, exh. cat. MADRE, Naples 2009, p. 207).

Opposite:
© RMS Photo: Randi Malkin Steinberger. From
the book, *Boetti by Afghan People: Peshawar,
Pakistan, 1990*. Artwork: © Alighiero Boetti,
DACCS 2024.





AEREI

Alighiero Boetti's *Aerei* (*Airplanes*), made between 1977 and 1991, were, like his *Mappe*, an extensive series of pictures that he made repeatedly in partnership with a variety of chosen collaborators. Offering a fascinating contrast to Boetti's world maps in the form of a series of images of an open world above the ground, no longer determined by national borders, the *Aerei* depict an alternate paradox to the inherent *ordine e disordine* ('order and disorder') of the terrestrial domain of the geopolitical world map. The *Aerei* take the form of an open and apparently infinite expanse of blue sky that is packed with a dense multitude of different modern aircraft all flying schizophrenically in alternate directions. Looking like an air-traffic controller's worst nightmare in this regard, the inherent 'order and disorder' of the *Aerei* is, however, manifested by the fact that none of its various aircraft ever overlaps with another. They are sustained in a fascinatingly complex and febrile balance by the miraculous laws of pictorial composition.

Dreamy and frenetic images that speak to Boetti's own innate wanderlust, the *Aerei* offer a visual paradox expressive of both speed and stasis. Like Boetti's series of *Tutto* (*Everything*) and *Lavori postali* (*Postal works*) they suggest a unity of infinite variation and, in their evocation of travel, its cyclical nature of perpetual departure and return. The *Aerei* originated in 1977 from a collaboration Boetti made with Guido Fuga. Fuga is an Italian graphic designer best known for his work with Hugo Pratt on some of the *Corto Maltese* stories, and also with the Italian artist—and close friend of Boetti's in the seventies and eighties—Mario Schifano. Fuga helped design the schema for the *Aerei*, tracing the craft in great detail and precision: the series' near-encyclopaedic visual typology of modern and historical airplanes were all taken from a variety of popular magazine sources collected by Boetti.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Aerei, 1989 (detail).



From their beginnings in 1977 up until 1991—as the works in this collection illustrate—the *Aerei* made use of different media and took on a variety of different forms. The very first *Aerei* was a triptych executed against a background made with a fluid wash of azure watercolour. The large-scale example here from 1989 emulates this first version in this regard. In this later work, however, great attention has been paid to the loose, liquid nature of the watercolour medium. Executed with a broad brush, the washes of blue and turquoise have also been spotted, sprayed and splashed in places, like an abstract painting that provocatively asserts its fluctuating, animated and organic nature as a direct contrast to the fixed mechanical precision of its constellation of carefully-drawn planes.

Boetti also produced the *Aerei* in biro. These creations were painstakingly hand-coloured in by chosen collaborators in a laborious manner, using an ordinary biro to fill in the open space between the planes. These works add the element of time to the concept of the *Aerei*: as Boetti explained to Bruno Corà, there is 'one way of drawing [tracing] and then there's the classical way: taking a pencil in your hand, and then there's the fact of drawing and covering, filling, like in the Biro works. They're all ways of drawing. Everyone has their own way, their own certainty, their own temperament, their own shadows. And here, everyone has their own presence, which is beyond any possibility of choice. Everyone has their bodily self, their fullness:

**I WOULD LIKE TO DO A COLLABORATIVE
DRAWING ON PAPER OF THOUSANDS OF
AEROPLANES SET AGAINST A DEEP BLUE
BACKGROUND. PRECISELY RENDERED
PLANES ALL SEEN IN DIFFERENT
PERSPECTIVE AND AT DIFFERENT
ANGLES SO THAT THEY PROVOKE
DESIRE. IT MUST BE AN EXPLOSION**

—ALIGHIERO BOETTI

My planes are real, they exist and fly every day! They go everywhere, in every direction and travel around the entire world. They are free and also so beautiful!

– Alighiero Boetti

above all they've physically filled the sheet of paper. It's really a physical fact. So, the works with the Biro are concentrates of time, for me, in a physical way, they give the sensation of a huge, expanded time frame' (A. Boetti, quoted in conversation with Bruno Corà, in *Alighiero Boetti: Game Plan*, exh. cat. Tate Modern, London 2012, p. 208). In Boetti's biro *Aerei*, therefore, his swarms of aeroplanes appear to be travelling through a field of time as well as one of space.

In 1991 the *Aerei* were to gain one final iteration that expanded the series even further: this time into the wider realm of the public domain and the world of actual airline travel. Through the assistance of the then young curator Hans Ulrich Obrist, Boetti partnered with Austrian Airlines to create a series of jigsaw-puzzles based on the *Aerei* to be given out to children travelling on their planes. In 1986, Boetti had told Obrist that 'as an artist he is always asked to do the same thing—he is asked to do exhibitions in museums, he is asked to do exhibitions in the gallery, he is asked to do exhibitions in the art fair, and he has to do things for auctions and sometimes even public commission. But ... that there are so many other things an artist has the desire to do.' Obrist asked Boetti what unrealised project it was that he would most like to do, to which Boetti replied: 'My dream would be to exhibit in all of the airplanes of one airline and have puzzles distributed in installation on all airplanes' (A. Boetti, quoted in 'An Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist', *Contemporary Practices*, 2008, vol. 4, p. 108).

In 1991, Boetti was to achieve this aim by publishing six of his watercolour *Aerei* in the Austrian Airlines in-flight magazine and creating a jigsaw puzzle based on his original 1977 *Aerei* triptych. The puzzles were designed to fit perfectly within the dimensions of the airline's tray-tables where passengers could then construct their own *Aerei* and initiate a new form of collaborative practice between the artist and his audience. Each of these works about air-travel was physically travelling by air at the same time that it was being made and viewed, consequently reinvoking the same simultaneous sense of speed and stasis innate to the imagery it projected.

When asked once by Jean-Christophe Ammann to explain the meaning of the *Aerei*, Boetti answered simply: 'I think I made it because today everything seems simultaneous and superficial to me' (A. Boetti, quoted in *Alighiero Boetti*, exh. cat. Tornabuoni Art, Paris 2010, p. 29).

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Aerei

signed and dated 'alighiero e boetti 1979'
(on the reverse of the right panel)
ballpoint pen on paper laid down on canvas,
in three parts
each: 27¼ x 197⁄8in. (69.1 x 50.5cm.)
overall: 27¼ x 595⁄8in. (69.1 x 151.4cm.)
Executed in 1979

PROVENANCE:

Giorgio Franchetti Collection, Rome.
Tornabuoni Arte, Florence.
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2001.

EXHIBITED:

Genazzano, Castello Colonna, *Sogno Italiano: La Collezione Franchetti a Roma*, 1986 (illustrated with incorrect orientation, p. 65; dated '1977').

LITERATURE:

J-C. Ammann, *Alighiero Boetti catalogo generale*, vol. II, Milan 2012, p. 424, no. 1109 (illustrated in colour, p. 346).

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under no. 544.



ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Aerei

watercolour and ink on photographic paper
laid down on canvas, in three parts
each: 57 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 39 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (147 x 99.7cm.)
overall: 57 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 117 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (147 x 299.1cm.)
Executed in 1989

PROVENANCE:

Lucas Schoormans Gallery, New York.
de Pury & Luxembourg Art, Geneva.
Acquired from the above by the present owner *circa*
2001.

EXHIBITED:

Zurich, Galerie Andrea Caratsch, *Alighiero Boetti. Cieli
ad Alta Quota*, 2006.

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome,
under no. 7968 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



FACCINE COLORATE

From his very earliest work, such as his cardboard tower *Rotolo di cartone* or his *Dama* in the 1960s, children's games often played a central role in Boetti's aesthetic. The *Faccine Colorate* (*Coloured Faces*) were a series of coloured drawings made between 1977 and 1979. For these Boetti had a print with a hexagonal grid of faces made which he then encouraged children to colour in.

The *Faccine* were to prove the first of an extensive series of works that Boetti would go on to make with children in the 1980s. In 1980 for example, he followed up the *Faccine* by creating a sequence of counting books using the outline of his young daughter Agata's hands. Agata herself remembers the creation of the *Faccine Colorate*, writing that for these works, 'Alighiero had a great quantity of this poster printed. He didn't sell them but gave them away. He gifted a poster, not an artwork. He would suggest to the those lucky enough to receive it to colour the poster. If, after their intervention, Boetti found it appealing, he would give it the status of artwork (usually by signing it) otherwise it remained a nice poster! My father would advise [the recipients] to have their children colour it, but under these conditions they were [often] terrified and didn't want to risk entrusting their children with a hypothetical work of art!' (A. Boetti, *Il gioco dell'arte con mio padre Alighiero*, Milan 2016).

This *Faccine Colorate* from 1979 is a comparatively rare example in that it has been richly, carefully and completely coloured in using a variety of techniques.



ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Faccine colorate

signed 'alighiero e boetti' (lower right)
crayon and felt-tip pen on offset print laid
on canvas
32 7/8 x 27 9/16 in. (83.4 x 69.4 cm.)
Executed in 1979

PROVENANCE:

de Pury & Luxembourg Art, Geneva.
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2000.

LITERATURE:

J-C. Ammann, *Alighiero Boetti catalogo generale, vol. II*, Milan 2012, p. 365.

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome,
under no. 4316 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



ALIGHIERO BOETTI, ROME, 1985.
Photo: © Giorgio Colombo.
Artwork: © Alighiero Boetti, DACS 2024.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Mimetico (Camouflage)

signed 'alighiero e boetti' (on the overlap)
camouflage fabric

43 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 82 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (109.6 x 210.2cm.)

Executed in 1980

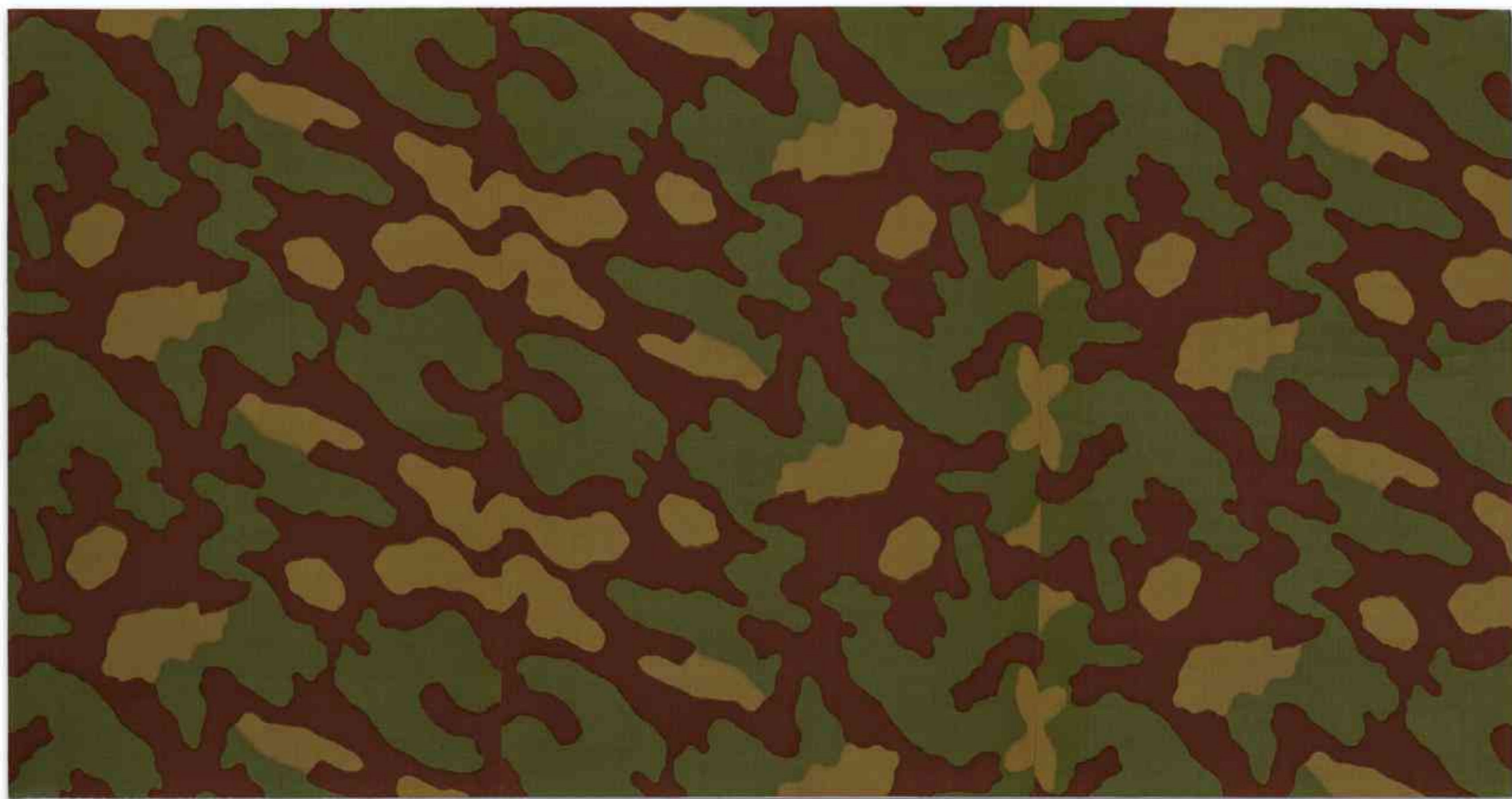
PROVENANCE:

Galleria Giulio, Lecco.
Galleria LP 220, Turin.
Massimo Minini, Brescia.
Willy D'Huysser Gallery, Brussels.
Galerie Lucien Bilinelli, Brussels.
Acquired from the above by the present owner.

LITERATURE:

M. Godfrey, *Alighiero Boetti catalogo generale, vol. III / 2B*, Milan 2022, no. 2436 (illustrated in colour with incorrect orientation, p. 671).

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under no. 2155 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



MIMETICO

I don't want to waste time finding the art object. These things are suggestions, a mental method to help you see reality and life when we are all so conditioned and alienated that we cannot see anything anymore

– Alighiero Boetti

Boetti's earliest *Mimetico (Camouflage)* was created in 1966 for his first one-man-show at the Christian Stein Gallery in Turin. There it was situated behind a two-metre long hand-rail that encouraged the work to be viewed from close to, so that its camouflage pattern filled the field of vision of the viewer in the manner of a large abstract painting. As Mark Godfrey has pointed out in this respect, Boetti's '*Mimetico* seems to have figured [for the artist] as a kind of anti-painting. It was a work which recalled Jackson Pollock's all-over canvases as well as the non-compositional paintings of Jasper Johns and Frank Stella, yet which showed the radical achievements of American abstraction to have been prefigured by everyday military design' (M. Godfrey, *Alighiero e Boetti*, London 2011, p. 59).

Boetti's *Mimetico* works derive from the 'hardware store' years of Arte Povera in 1966 and 1967 when several young Italian artists found inspiration from the abundance of elementary, ready-made materials to be found in local hardware supply stores. *Mimetico* is simply a store-bought fabric bearing a camouflage design that Boetti has stretched, like a canvas, to create a ready-made work mimicking an abstract painting. Mimetic and tautological, like much Arte Povera work of this period, *Mimetico* is a play between what is visible and what is hidden; the original function of a fabric intended to hide or obscure a figure amidst its surroundings has been transformed into an object of scrutiny. As in Pino Pascali's fake weapons of the same period, there is also a hint of military subversion to these works; something that no doubt prompted Germano Celant in his decision to subtitle his famous, first treatise on Arte Povera 'Notes for a guerrilla warfare'.

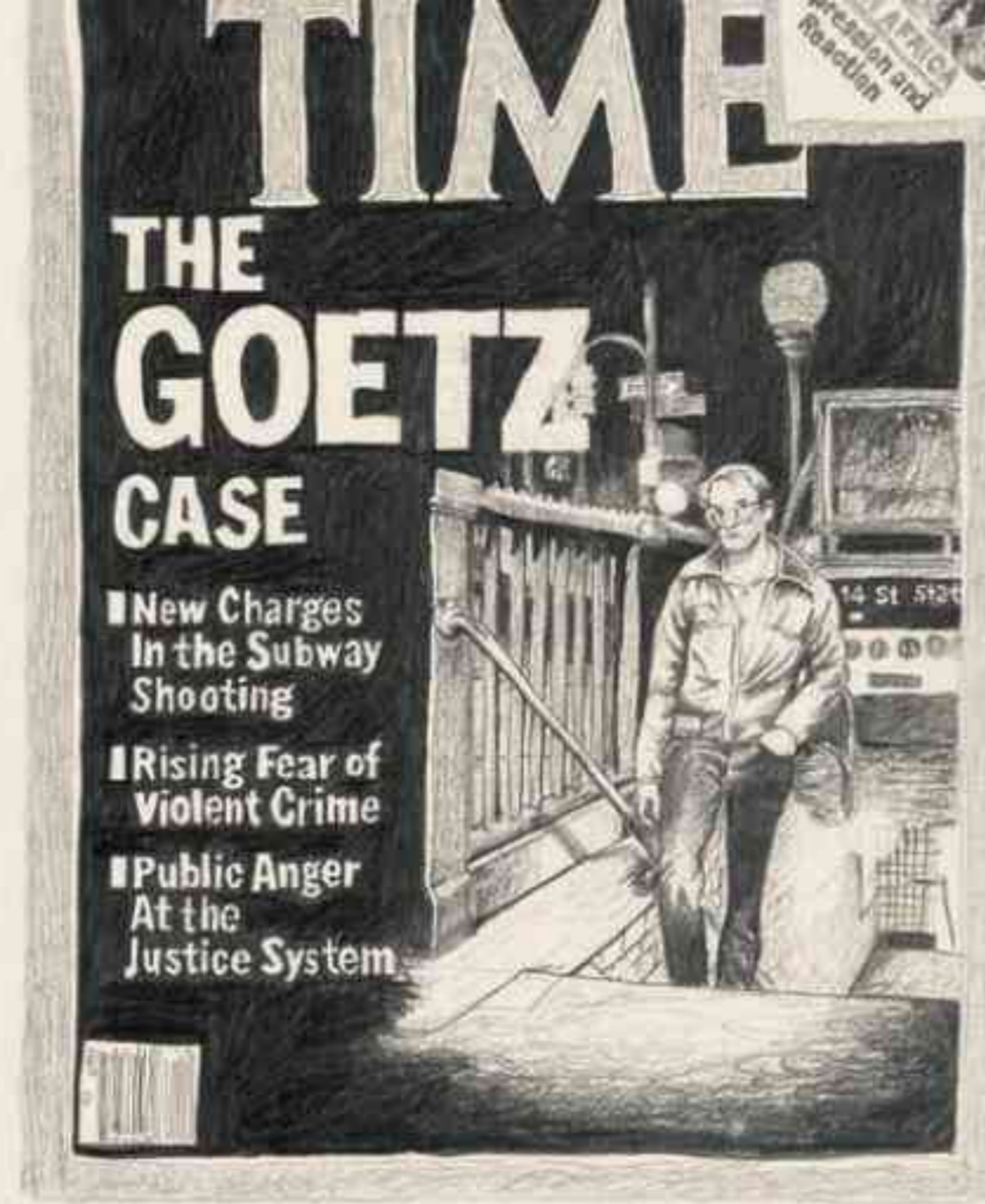
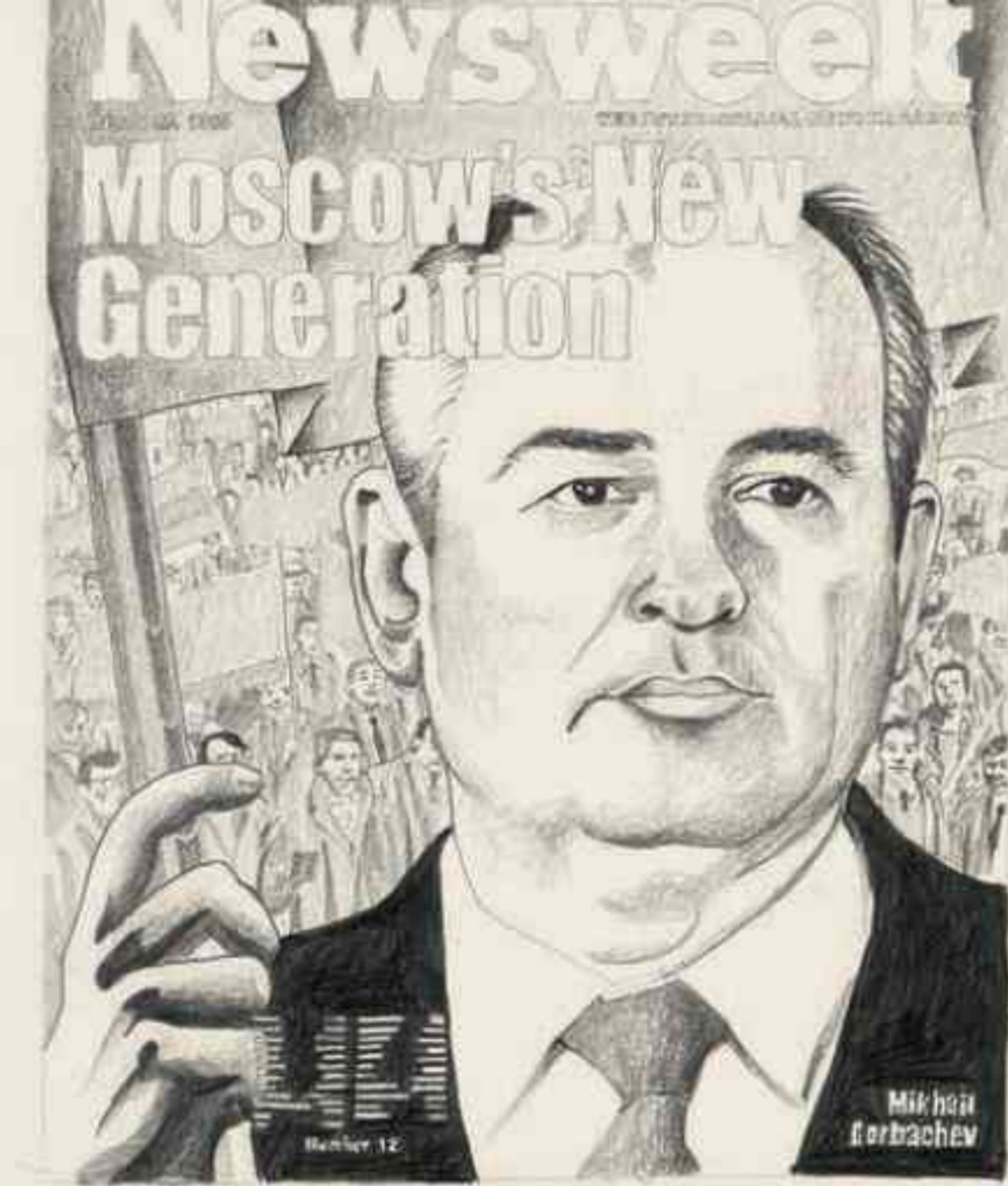
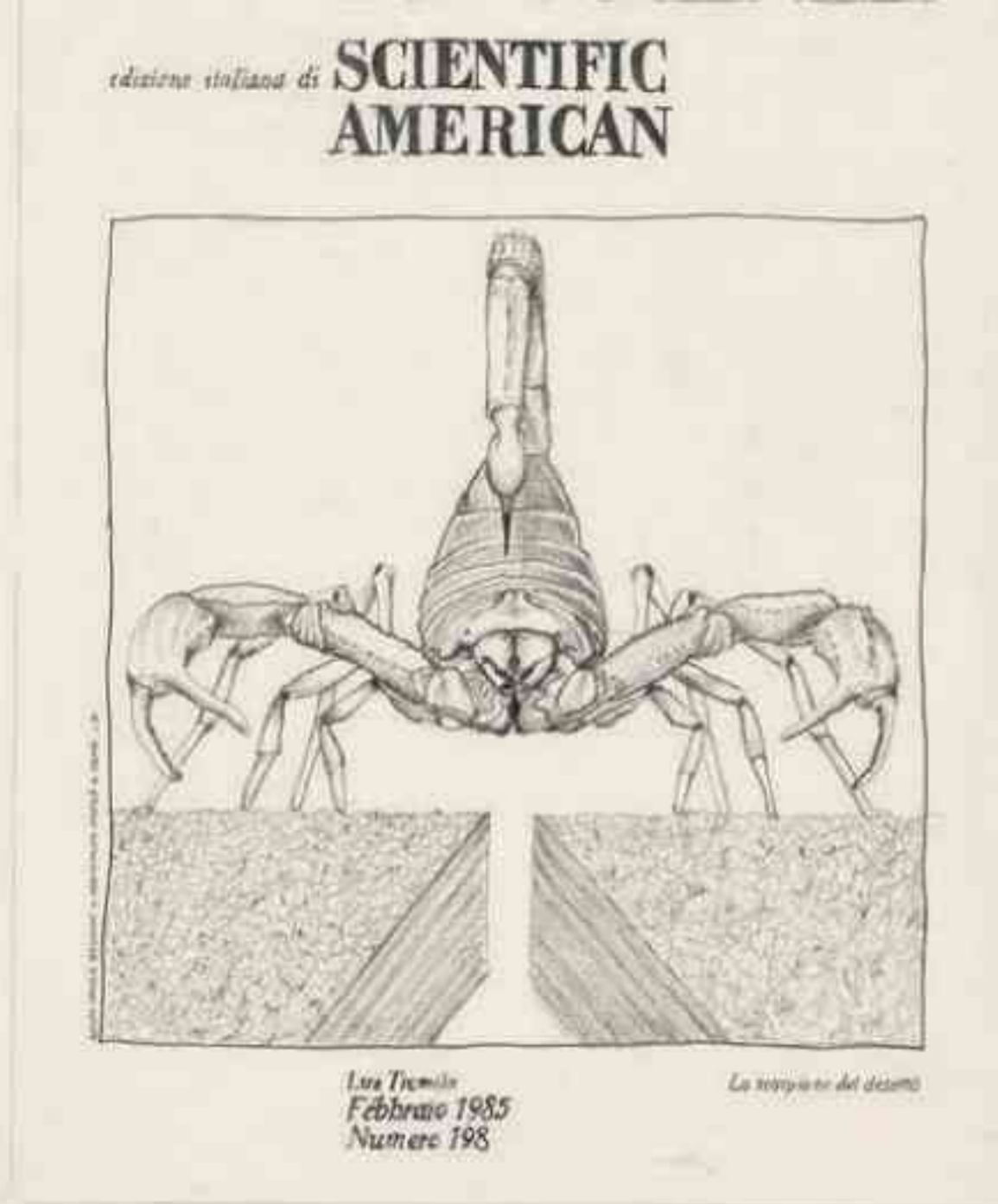


Above:
ANDY WARHOL
Self-Portrait, 1986. Metropolitan
Museum of Art, New York. Artwork:
© 2024 The Andy Warhol Foundation
for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by
DACS, London. Digital image: © The
Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art
Resource/Scala, Florence.

Opposite:
ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Mimetico (Camouflage), 1980 (detail).

Unlike the majority of works from the Arte Povera years, Boetti's *Mimetico* canvases were ones that he would return to and continue to make throughout his career. Referring to them fondly as his 'objects' and sometimes, more cynically as his 'best sellers', he was delighted to discover that, like the changing borders on a geo-political map of the world, for example, the patterns of the camouflage patterns used by the Italian army also changed year on year. This allowed for an ever-changing variation in Boetti's *Mimetico* works. The simple patterns of a store-bought camouflage fabric could now be asserted as independent and individual works of art that in addition to being part fashion, part ready-made, part abstraction and part military symbol also mirrored the time in which they were made. In accordance with their original purpose, Boetti would, in later *Mimetico* works such as the present, often exploit their inherent visible/invisible paradox by cutting up sections of camouflage fabric and then have them sewn together in such a way that some of its previously amorphous forms begin to make shapes that resemble flowers.





COPERTINE (ANNO 1985)

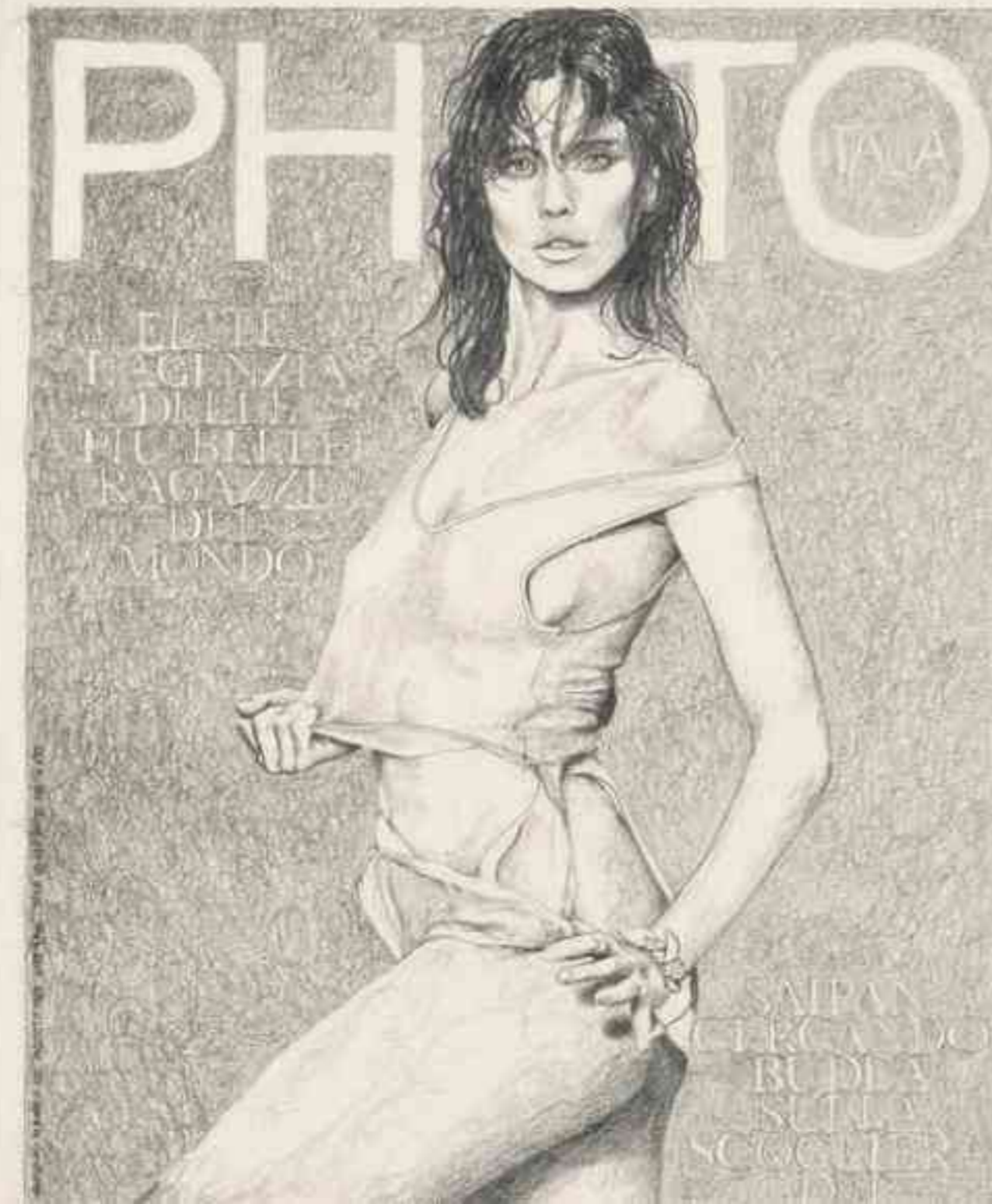
In that month, there were millions of images. Now perhaps, a few hundred. Then, all that will remain is this faded copy of a once brightly coloured time

- Alighiero Boetti

Copertine (Anno 1985) (Covers (Year 1985)) is one of an extensive group of works derived from the cover-imagery of popular magazines that Alighiero Boetti made regularly from 1983 onwards. The series had its origin in a collaboration Boetti had with the daily Roman newspaper *Il Manifesto* in 1983 and for which, every day for that year, he executed a drawing as part of a long-held aim of creating a serial work for the public at large. Painstakingly executed in pencil, this work from 1985 consists of twelve drawings (one for each month of the year) traced from the cover-images of twelve international magazines. An exercise in contrasts between the slow, laborious and time-consuming action of drawing and tracing and the swift mechanised production of up-to the minute media images that, throughout the year 1985, provided a pictorial backdrop to the artist's life, these graphite drawings are also in some way, temporal marker-stones of Boetti's own existence.

The twelve magazine covers were chosen at random by Boetti's assistant Andrea Marescalchi. 'There were no specific criteria for buying the magazines and most of the time it would be totally random', Marescalchi recalled (A. Marescalchi, quoted in M. Godfrey, *Alighiero e Boetti*, London 2011, p. 291). The magazines came from a typical Italian newspaper stand, and are therefore reflective to some degree of the range of publications, both international and local, that were, in the 1980s, increasingly becoming available. Indeed, it is in this respect that the *Copertine* perhaps derive one of their most important functions. Their random, display of different magazines from all over the world reflects the increasing speed, interchange and globalisation of the world as reflected in the glossy media of this period.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Copertine (Anno 1985), 1985 (detail).





In an enigmatic statement that Boetti wrote to accompany the first of these *Copertine* in 1983, he stated: 'In that month, there were millions of images. Now perhaps, a few hundred. Then, all that will remain is this faded copy of a once brightly coloured time' (A. Boetti, quoted in *Alighiero Boetti: Inscuro Noncurante*, exh. cat Nouveau Musée de Villeurbanne, Villeurbanne 1986, p. 76). What Boetti appears to have been asserting here was that the nature, meaning and significance of these images, like their number, constantly changes with the passage of time. While their number, variety and colour inevitably fades and their original significance diminishes with age, their significance as a rarity, and as a memory of the period from whence they came, correspondingly only grows in resonance. Something of this paradoxical process is revealed through Boetti's slow transcribing of their imagery into graphite drawings.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI, NOVEMBER 1984.
Photo: © Giorgio Colombo.
Artwork: © Alighiero Boetti, DACS 2024.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Copertine (Anno 1985) (Covers (Year 1985))

graphite on paper laid down on canvas
39 7/8 x 39 1/8 in. (100.6 x 99.4 cm.)
Executed in 1985

PROVENANCE:
Private Collection, Rome.
Acquired from the above by the present owner.

EXHIBITED:
Chagny, Pietro Sparta, *Alighiero e Boetti*, 1986.

LITERATURE:
M. Godfrey, *Alighiero Boetti catalogo generale*, vol. III / 2A, Milan 2022, no. 1912 (illustrated in colour, p. 248).

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under no. 5590 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.





TUTTO

Tutto is the sum of all human experiences and things

– Rolf Lauter

Executed in 1988, *Tutto* (*Everything*) is an entrancing work from Alighiero Boetti's extraordinary late series of the same name. Standing among the last embroidered works he ever produced, these dazzling tapestries served not only as summations of his artistic practice, but also sought to visualise the 'everythingness' of human experience. From a distance, they confront the viewer as swirling abstract jigsaws of colour and shape; up close, they reveal the intricate detail of their constituent parts. Here we spot a tiger, a swan, a fish, a horse, a map of Italy; we spy a gun, an umbrella, pairs of scissors, a globe, a skull. There are fruits, utensils, musical instruments and body parts. Words—'print', 'bad', 'pop', 'sex' and even 'tutto' itself—leap out of the texture. As his life drew to a close, Boetti intensified his efforts to capture the complex dialogue between chaos and structure that underpinned human existence. At once random and cohesive, discordant and harmonious, the *Tutto* works represent the ultimate expressions of this idea, perfectly encapsulating the principles of *ordine e disordine* ('order and disorder') that lay at the core of his art.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Tutto, 1988 (detail).

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Tutto (Everything)

signed 'alighiero e boetti' (on the overlap)
embroidery on linen

32¾ x 51½in. (83.3 x 131.2cm.)

Executed in 1988

PROVENANCE:

Galerie Guy Bärtschi, Geneva.

de Pury & Luxembourg Art, Geneva.

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2000.

EXHIBITED:

Geneva, Galerie Guy Bärtschi, *Alighiero e Boetti*, 1999

(detail illustrated in colour, p. 33; illustrated in colour,

pp. 34-35).

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome,
under no. 7877 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



... WE THEN NEED TO
PERCEIVE THIS ONENESS
IN THINGS, INSTEAD OF
ALWAYS DIVIDING THEM
INTO CATEGORIES AND
CLASSIFICATIONS

—ALIGHIERO BOETTI



GINO SEVERINI
La Danse du pan-pan au "Monico", 1967.
 © ADAGP, Paris. Photo : © Centre Pompidou,
 MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Hélène Mauri.

The conceptual origins of *Tutto* can be traced an early project of 1967 entitled *Pack*. Designed to resemble pack ice, the work consisted of a bucket half-filled with cement, which dried into cracked and separated segments but which still retained an overall sense of cohesion. The entanglement of flux and unity, it proclaimed, was a fundamentally natural phenomenon. The artist first began to use the term *Tutto* in his work in 1975, and made his first large-scale embroideries under this title in 1982. His earliest *Tutto* works, significantly, were also given the title *Pack*. To make the tapestries, Boetti worked in collaboration with the same skilled Afghan women who had worked on his *Mappe* and *Arazzi*. The artist himself selected the objects from a variety of sources, including textbooks, magazines, newspapers and encyclopaedias, before drawing them in interlocking designs onto linen. After specifying the quantity of coloured thread to be used, he handed the work over to the weavers, who were tasked with deciding upon the exact distribution of hues.

In this way, the *Tutto* tapestries placed the dialogue between order and disorder at the very heart of their facture. The idea that an artwork could unfold across multiple time zones, and through multiple hands, had long fuelled Boetti's practice. The broader notion that fragmentation and partition could breed their own internal unity, meanwhile, was central to the teachings of the Sufi mystics and other philosophies he admired. While the pageant of objects, shapes, patterns and colours in *Tutto* might seem arbitrary at first glance, close observation yields a sense of internal organisation and logic. The form of each motif has a determining effect upon its neighbours; the entire composition thus emerges not as a random collage, but as a tightly constructed visual field. From a distance, moreover, the constituent parts relinquish their individual identities, succumbing to broader, abstract rhythms of colour and form. Microcosm and macrocosm are, like the threads of the tapestry, deeply interwoven. For all its clamour, *Tutto* ultimately exudes a sense of peace: an understanding that the divisions we impose upon the world are fundamentally meaningless, and that they might—one day—melt away in a blaze of colour.

The greatest joy in the world consists in inventing the world the way it is without inventing anything in the process

– Alighiero Boetti



ALIGHIERO BOETTI
 inspecting the production of a *Tutto* embroidery in Peshawar, 1989.
 © RMS Photo: Randi Malkin Steinberger.
 From the book, *Boetti by Afghan People: Peshawar, Pakistan*, 1990.
 Artwork: © Alighiero Boetti, DACS 2024.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1999)

Ferro legno (Iron wood)

signed, inscribed and numbered 'alighiero e boetti H.C. nel ottanta sette' (on the metal element); signed 'alighiero e boetti' (on the wooden element)
wood and metal
diameter: 8in. (20.3cm.)
Executed in 1986

PROVENANCE:

Gianni Michelagnoli Collection, Venice.
Private Collection, Italy.
Whitford Fine Art, London.
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2001.

LITERATURE:

M. Godfrey, *Alighiero Boetti catalogo generale, vol. III / 2B*, Milan 2022, p. 674 (other examples from the series).

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under no. 10414 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



FERRO LEGNO

Executed as part of an edition of works begun in 1986 for Alitalia on the occasion of the Leonardo Prize of that year, *Ferro Legno* is a work that has its origins in the early years of Arte Povera. In 1967 Boetti made three large-scale *Ferro Legno* works comprising, as their name suggests, of a circular wooden disc split into eight segments of equal size, and held together by an iron ring inserted halfway between perimeter and centre.

Like Boetti's *Pack*, also made in 1967—a work which would later give rise to the more famous *Mappe* and the *Tutto* embroideries—these *Ferro Legno* works played with the concept of the dialectical relationship between part and whole. The eight separate wooden segments of the *Ferro Legno* are both united and divided by an iron ring which weighs down upon them and in so doing conjoins them into a single entity in the form of a complete circle. This apparent union of opposites is given a further emphasis by the manifest contrast in the two materials used: cold, smooth metal and warm, textural wood.

'One of the most obvious mistakes of our culture', Boetti once said, 'is the divisions it makes in the oneness and wholeness of the world with rigid classifications ... It's a mental category, a separation, which I feel obscures, veils all possibility of understanding things. In its pretence to explain, it only serves to nullify a broad scope of understanding things. So that's what we need to eliminate. We need to understand that ultimately there is only one mechanism of the world, and it develops through various processes and in different ways into every part of reality' (A. Boetti, 'From Today to Tomorrow', 1988, in *Alighiero e Boetti: Bringing the World into the World*, exh. cat. Museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples 2009, p. 209).

SENZA TITOLO (SPECIALE DALÍ)

Senza titolo (Speciale Dalí) (Untitled (Dalí Special)) is one of an extensive series of works on paper articulating the thoughts, rhythms and ephemera of his day-to-day studio life in Rome that Boetti made during the last years of his life. Executed in 1991, this work, like another from this period, *Senza titolo (morto Salvador Dalí)* of 1989, adopts as its chief subject matter a magazine image of the Spanish Surrealist Salvador Dalí. Here, in the manner of his *Copertina* drawings, Boetti has included a painstakingly traced pencil drawing of a special 1989 issue of the magazine *Vernissage* dedicated to Dalí who had died that same year.

In addition to this dominating magazine image taken from the fast-paced, multi-media world outside Boetti's studio, *Speciale Dalí* also incorporates a range of other drawings, writings, prints and painted marks. These include a careful tracing of a National Lottery Ticket, a mysterious note announcing that 'Ernest T tries by all means to become an international artist' and a series of handwritten phrases outlining Boetti's personal life and thoughts of the moment. These personal statements seem wholly independent from all the other collated imagery taken from the busy world outside the studio.

It is in this way that Boetti seems to offer up a mirror between the inner world of his thoughts and studio existence and that of the exterior world, whose perpetual flux of life, fragmentary imagery and media communications coincides with and to some extent permeates his own. Boetti said of another similar series of works on paper that he made at this time that they were 'a kind of visual diary based on work, notes and just daily jottings. It is a space where I can put everything ... my own things, other people's, postcards, information ... a way to represent the fragmentation of the life we live nowadays' (A. Boetti, quoted in M. Godfrey, *Alighiero e Boetti*, London 2011, p. 281).

ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Senza titolo (Speciale Dalí), 1991 (detail).



ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

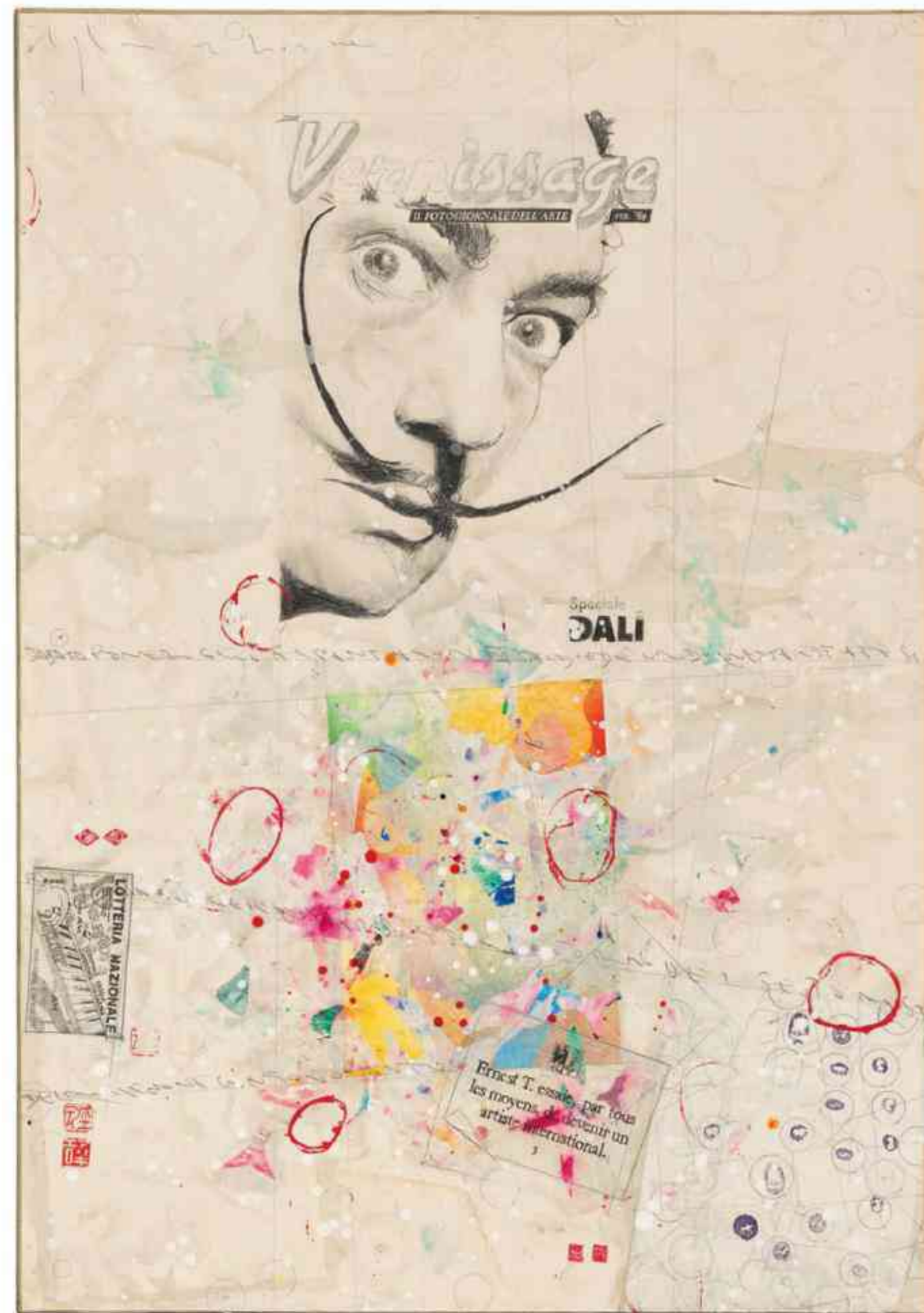
Senza titolo (Speciale Dalí)

signed 'alighiero e boetti' (upper left)
graphite, watercolour, enamel, ink and paper
collage on paper laid down on canvas
39½ x 27½in. (100,3 x 70cm.)
Executed in 1991

PROVENANCE:

Studio d'arte contemporanea Dabbeni, Lugano.
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2001.

This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under
no. 10446 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



**IT'S THE MENTAL GAZE OF MAN,
THANKS TO THE ATTENTION
HE CHOOSES TO FOCUS ON THE
THINGS OF THE WORLD, WHICH
ALONE IS ABLE TO GRASP ITS
COLOURS, SENSES, BEAUTIES**

—ALIGHIERO BOETTI



ALTERNANDO DA UNO A CENTO E VICEVERSA

Alternando da uno a cento e viceversa (*Alternating from one to a hundred and vice versa*) is one of an exceptional group of fifty, large, hand-woven kilims that together comprise the last, great collaborative enterprise of Boetti's career. Executed towards the end of Boetti's life, as part of an ambitious project held at the Centre National d'Art Contemporain de Grenoble in 1993, these fifty, nearly three-metre square kilims are, together with the artist's famous sculptural *Autoritratto* (self-portrait) of 1993, Boetti's very last creations.

Like all of Boetti's carpets, the *Alternando da uno a cento e viceversa* works were woven by Afghan women weavers and embroiderers then living in exile from their homeland in Peshawar, Pakistan. For the creation of the Grenoble exhibition, in addition to collaborating with the many of the same women who had repeatedly woven Boetti's work since 1971, he also sought the assistance of young art students from all over France. It was these students from fifty different French art schools that Boetti commissioned to invent and draw up the necessary grids for these works in accordance with its rule. The students' drawings then became the designs for fifty different woven kilims which, in the 1993 exhibition, Boetti illuminated with naked bulbs hung over them on long wires in a manner reminiscent of the lighting in mosques.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI

Alternating from one to one hundred and vice versa, 1993. Le MAGASIN, Grenoble, 1993-1994.

Photo: Giorgio Colombo.

Artwork: © Alighiero Boetti, DACS 2024.

It's just a question of knowing the rules of the game. Someone who doesn't know them will never see the order that reigns in things

– Alighiero Boetti



SOL LEWITT,
Bands of Color in Four Directions (Within A Square), 1992. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Artwork: © Sol LeWitt, DACS 2024. Digital image: © Whitney Museum of American Art / Licensed by Scala.

The origins of the *Alternando da uno a cento e viceversa* concept lie in 1977 when Boetti was working on a group of drawings on graph paper that involved numeric combinations and progressions. It was then that he first planned out a scheme to which he gave the name 'Alternating from one to a hundred and vice versa.' This scheme consisted of a ten-by-ten grid, in which each of the hundred squares is itself then subdivided into hundred smaller units or pixels. In the corner square, there were to be ninety-nine black pixels and one white one. In the next, ninety-eight white and two black; then ninety-seven white and three black, and so on throughout the sequence until the bottom. Both progressive and regressive, this alternating sequence is self-reflexive and self-defining. Yet within the strict numerical logic of its construction, the precise arrangement of 'pixels' inside each square was left entirely to each individual drawing them. In this way, as Boetti so appreciated, an endless pictorial variety could be achieved through the simplest of mathematical structures.

'As a kid I remember I read a short phrase by a Chinese philosopher that said, "the universe is a square without corners"', Boetti once said. 'These few words can give rise to a thought ... beauty is made up of thought and the will to realise that thought ... It is like a numerical series ... There are two elements: the series and the numbers (which are infinite). That is, there is the one (the series) and the infinite (the numbers). I remember a phrase: "Because the head is a friend to the feet and both of them to the moon and the tides." I think that if one is to do things well, one must find oneself in that situation: one must have achieved a sort of harmony, a state of grace. It is something one has without knowing it: when you know it, you know longer have it' (A. Boetti, quoted in *Alighiero e Boetti 1993/1962* exh. cat. Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples 2009, pp. 34-36). Something of this same connection between the human, the numerical and the infinite potential of the wider cosmos is also powerfully illustrated in this final, joyous, colourful and yet seemingly simplistic sequence of embroidered canvases 'alternating from one to a hundred.'

ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

Alternando da uno a cento e viceversa
(Alternating from one to one hundred and vice versa)

wool and cotton kilim carpet
¾ x 106½ x 114½ in. (1 x 270.4 x 290cm.)
Executed in 1993

PROVENANCE:
Matteo Boetti Collection, Rome.
Gagosian Gallery, New York.
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2000.

EXHIBITED:
Grenoble, Le MAGASIN – Centre National d'Art Contemporain de Grenoble, *Alighiero and Boetti. De bouche à oreille – En Alternant de 1 à 100 et viceversa*, 1993-1994.
Los Angeles, The Museum of Contemporary Art, *Alighiero Boetti's "Alternating 1 to 100 and vice versa"*, 1994-1995. This exhibition later travelled to New York, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center.
Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, *Alighiero e Boetti. L'opera ultima*, 1996-1997.
New York, Gagosian Gallery, *Alighiero e Boetti*, 2001 (illustrated in colour, p. 44).

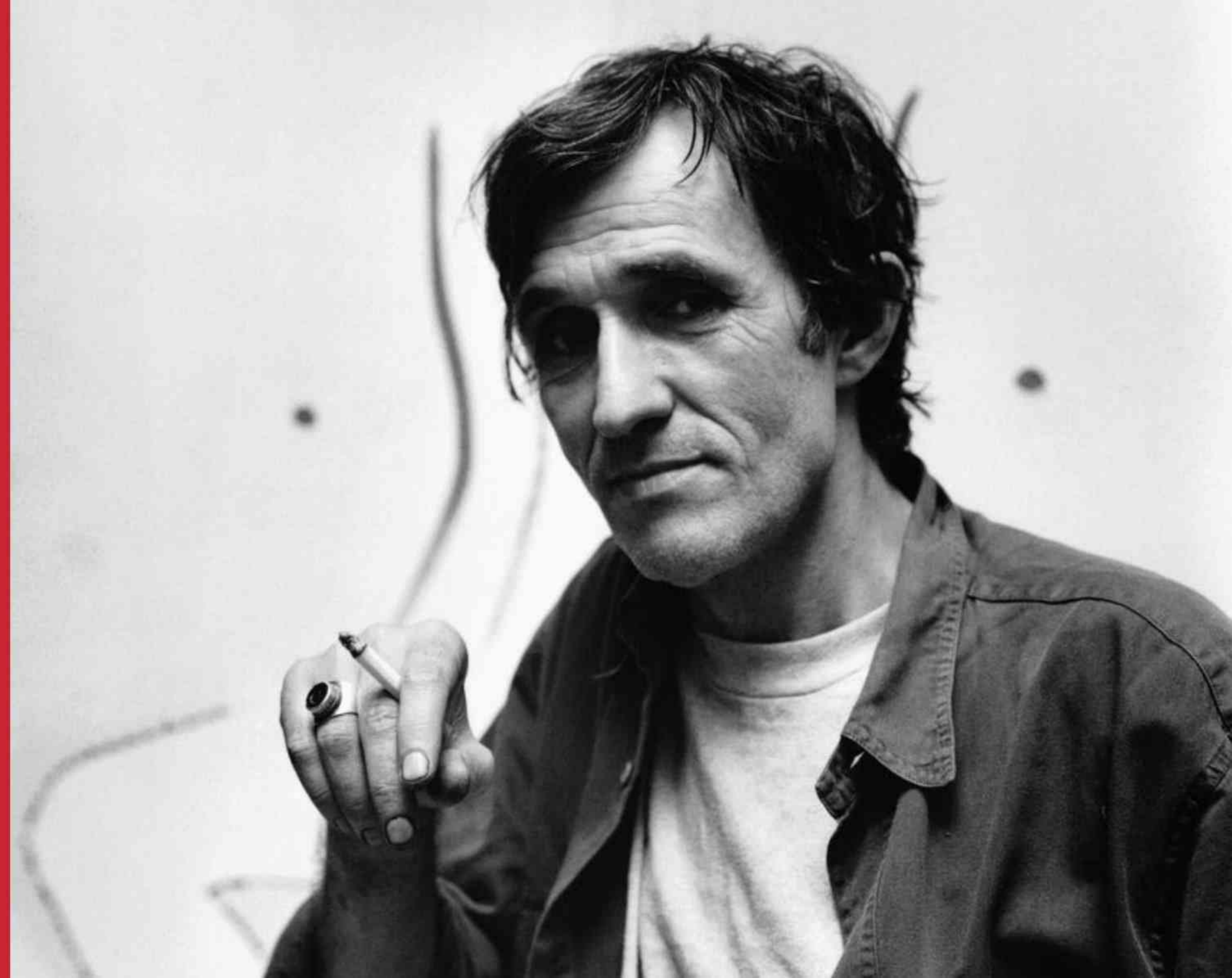
This work is registered in the Archivio Alighiero Boetti, Rome, under no. 2269 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.



... BEAUTY IS MADE UP OF
THOUGHT AND THE WILL
TO REALISE THAT THOUGHT

—ALIGHIERO BOETTI

ALIGHIERO BOETTI
Rome, 1988.
Photo: Chris Felver/Getty Images.



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