

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Alighiero Boetti

"La Forza del Centro"

515 West 24th Street

February 8 – March 23, 2013

Opening February 7, 6 – 8 pm

Gladstone Gallery, in collaboration with the Fondazione Alighiero e Boetti in Rome, is pleased to present an exhibition of works by Alighiero Boetti. Throughout his career, Boetti exhibited a keen fascination with language and the alphabet, and "La Forza del Centro" highlights this interest by presenting an extensive collection of his *Arazzi* works, which meld aesthetic and linguistic elements to create a formal union between images and the written word. This exhibition is the first to display nearly every type of Boetti's *Arazzi grandi*, as well as a number of smaller *Arazzi*, and marks the first time that the majority of these works will be on view to the public.

The brightly colored *Arazzi* works are embroidered pieces made in various sizes that depict sentences drawn from poetry, wisdoms from around the world, or sayings invented by Boetti himself. The *Arazzi grandi*, containing messages in both Italian and Farsi, are each distinct, recording the date when they were created, and containing an elaborate internal code that prescribes the order of the sentences on display. Like Boetti's approach to language throughout his oeuvre, which is at once analytical and playful, the messages alternate between deeply thoughtful statements and whimsical musings. The dates, carefully noted on each *Arazzi grandi*, mark a point of captivation for Boetti, as he was deeply interested in the concept of time and its inevitable passing. Of dating his works, Boetti said: "With every day that goes by, this date becomes more beautiful. It's time that works, it's all that works."

Created primarily during the 1980s and 90s, these embroideries were made in Peshawar, Pakistan by Afghani craftswomen. Boetti first traveled to Afghanistan in the 1970s, where he became enamored with the colorful landscape and culture, local hospitality, and rituals and traditions of the country. On an early trip to Afghanistan he developed a relationship with Afghani embroiderers, who would go on to create works for him for the next two decades. Through these travels he also became interested in Persian writing and calligraphy as an expression of cultural and national identity.

Boetti believed that an artist's role was not to invent, but rather to bring what already exists in the world into his work. He was particularly captivated by duality and dichotomy, ideas he explored in works like the *Arazzi* by juxtaposing notions of order and disorder, fullness and emptiness, east and west. Recognizing the inevitable fluctuation in all systems, he pushed the ideas conveyed in his work to their extreme polarities until disparate ideas expressed united with their opposites.

Boetti was born in Turin, Italy in 1940, and in 1966 became affiliated with a group of artists who went on to form the *Arte Povera* movement. The movement sought to connect with real life through the use of everyday materials, and the artists shared an intense interest in the structures that support the "false" realities fostered by consumer-capitalism, and an equally

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invested interest in deconstructing them. Boetti was recently the subject of the major retrospective "Alighiero Boetti: Game Plan," which originated at the Reina Sofía in Madrid in 2011, and subsequently traveled to the Tate Modern, London (2012) and the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2012). Boetti has also been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Fowler Museum UCLA, Los Angeles (2012); MADRE, Naples (2009); Whitechapel Gallery, London (1999); Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (1998); Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, Turin (1996); Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome (1996); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (1994); Dia Center for Arts, New York (1994); P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York (1994); Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Le Magasin, Grenoble (1993); Kunstverein, Bonn (1992); Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (1986); and Kunsthalle, Basel (1978). Boetti took part in Documenta 5 (1972) and Documenta 7 (1982), as well as the Venice Biennale (1978, 1980, 1986, 1990, 1995). In 2001, the Italian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale was dedicated entirely to Boetti's work.

Mirosław Balka

"The Order of Things"

530 West 21st Street

February 22 – March 30, 2013

Victor Man

"Szindbád"

12 Rue du Grand Cerf, 1000, Brussels

January 19 – March 2, 2013

For further information, please contact Abby Margulies

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New York gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm

Brussels gallery hours: Tuesday – Friday, 10am – 6pm, Saturday, 12pm – 6pm