



Alighiero Boetti (1940 - 1994)

Tutto, 1989

Embroidery

26 by 39 3/8 inches (66 x 100 cm)



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Provenance: Caterina Boetti, Rome
 Caratsch de Pury & Luxembourg, Zurich
 Ben Brown Fine Arts, London
 Private collection

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided above, confirmation of these facts may not always be possible due to the unavailability of primary sources. Please be advised that the work of art described above is subject to changes in availability and price without prior notice.

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Tutto, 1988-89



Alighiero Boetti, or Alighiero e Boetti, as the Artist signed his works from 1973 forward, was born in Turin, Italy in 1940. Although not formally trained in art, Boetti was preoccupied with the theory of creativity from an early age. Traveling to Afghanistan at the beginning of the 1970s, he was introduced to the traditional craft of embroidery, which marked a turning point in the artist's career.

According to the artist, the composition of *Tutto* (meaning “everything” in Italian) was intended to be very democratic, non-exclusionary, and entirely disordered – the only rule being that each image's outline facilitates another. Boetti explains the creative process as follows: "I asked my assistants to draw everything, every possible shape, abstract or figurative, and to amalgamate them until the paper sheet was saturated. Then I took the drawing to Afghanistan to get it embroidered with 90 kinds of different coloured threads, provided that there was an equal quantity of each of them. The different colour of each shape is chosen by the women. In order to avoid establishing any hierarchy among them, I use them all. Actually, my concern is to avoid to make choices according to my taste and to invent systems that will then choose on my behalf." (Alighiero Boetti cited in Adachiara Zevi, “Alighiero e Boetti: Scrivere, Ricamare, Disegnare,” *Corriere della Sera*, January 19, 1992)

This sense of ordered randomness reflects Boetti's deep interest in Sufism, a mystical tradition in Islam. Boetti spent a great deal of time conversing with Sufi scholars, including the poet Berang Ramazan, who was the artist's spiritual teacher during the 1970s and 1980s. A tenet of Sufism is the belief that the essence of truth is devoid of all form, yet inseparable from all forms, material or spiritual. Such a notion is inherent in *Tutto*, an embroidered representation of the world of objects as a self-organizing composite of chaotic form.

“Tutto is the sum of all human experiences and things, while nevertheless remaining only a section cut from the large whole that is the world. Tutto is the language of the world, forms and colours, languages and signs... Tutto is the order in disorder and the disorder in order. Tutto is the symbolic

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unity of body and mind, the connection of East and West, South and North. Tutto is a symbol for unlimited human creativity...” (from Rolf Lauter, *Boetti*, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt Am Main, 1998, p. 93).

Similar works to Tutto can be found in important collections around the world, including *Tutto*, 1987 Centre Pompidou, Paris and *Tutto*, 1987-88, Fondazione per l'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea CRT, Turin.



Boetti, *Tutto*, 1987, Centre Pompidou, Paris



Boetti, *Tutto*, 1987-88, Fondazione per l'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea CRT, Turin