

Alighiero Boetti **Cabinet de curiosités**

November 6, 2024 – February 22, 2025
Press Preview: Wednesday, November 6, 2024 – 11.30 am
Opening: Wednesday, November 6, 2024 – 5 pm – 8 pm

Tornabuoni Arte | Via Bocca di Leone, 88

On **Wednesday, November 6, 2024**, **Tornabuoni Arte Roma** will inaugurate the new **Alighiero Boetti. Cabinet de curiosités** exhibition. Thirty years after his passing, the gallery pays tribute to **Alighiero Boetti** by presenting a unique exhibition that offers unprecedented and privileged access to his world.

At the heart of the exhibition is not just the art but Boetti himself, with his life, his mental process, and his mathematical, combinatorial, and playful approaches: hence the title *Cabinet de curiosités*. It is no coincidence that this exhibition – inherently different from previous ones – is being held in **Rome**, a key city in Boetti's life, where he lived from 1972 until 1994, first in Trastevere and later near the Pantheon.

Following this narrative of Boetti as a person rather than a public figure, the screening of the video **Giovedì ventiquattro settembre 1970** introduces the exhibition itinerary along with the twenty photographs by **Giorgio Colombo** that open the show: a collection of photos of Boetti and his family. Taken between 1966 and 1993 and published, among others, in the volume **Vita di Alighiero Boetti** by Forma Edizioni – which will be presented at **MAXXI Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI secolo** in Rome on **Thursday, November 7** – they portray moments and people who had a shared history with Boetti.

Unpublished documents, sketches, postcards, and letters from **Agata Boetti's collection** are on display, offering insights into Boetti's creative process. These seemingly minor details, combined with his major works, help to "put the broken mirror of memory back together from so many scattered shards" (Gabriel García Márquez, 1981).

Boetti took notes and did numerous studies and sketches, especially in the 1960s and 1970s; he reflected by writing and drawing. He observed reality and processed it in an almost scientific way. He compiled lists of words, phrases, and concepts, mixing them with everyday lists of expenses, phone calls, and things to do.

This collection of documents, arranged on the walls in Boetti's signature "random" style, includes studies for **Cimento dell'armonia e dell'invenzione** and **Lavoro Postale** (both from 1969), as well as the only existing sketch for **Mappe** (1970). Some light-hearted notes are also featured, like the postcard he sent to his wife Annemarie that reads: "I love you baby, Frank Sinatra."

These free-form pages, along with his notebooks, offer insight into the creative process behind some of his works, such as **Piano Inclinato** (1981), **Aerei** (1977-78), and **San Bernardino (Uno uno due due tre tre...)**, all exhibited here. As Agata Boetti says: "No order, no hierarchy. A sketch, a photo, an invitation, a postcard, an embroidery. Only beautiful things by and about Boetti, to perhaps better understand his work and his thinking."

Two rooms of the gallery are dedicated to two extraordinary artworks: **Muro**—a constantly evolving private work made between 1972 and 1993—and **Zoo**, a "domestic safari" and serious game, here accompanied by a typewritten letter from Agata, Matteo, and Alighiero Boetti.

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The latter is an installation made up of hundreds of plastic animals, "fortuitous and endless, as orderly as it is messy" (Annemarie Sauzeau Boetti). Originally intended to be a game between the artist and his children, it was later photographed by Giorgio Colombo in the fall of 1979 and published in **Casa Vogue**, thus becoming a work of art for the public.

The "progressive" Muro that Boetti "accumulated over two decades was not a strictly artistic endeavour: it was conceived as a private iconostasis of his life and dialect, as well as a notebook of notes and projects to be developed" (Annemarie Sauzeau Boetti). It includes memories, newspaper pages, notes, projects, letters from friends, and drawings by his daughter Agata—75 framed two-dimensional elements hanging on the wall, according to the principle of "mutability and subdivision, creating a constellation, incorporating the works of others" (Agata Boetti).

Two display cases exhibit ***I Quindici libri rossi - 111***, four ***Libri Annuali*** (two from 1984, and two from 1986 and 1988), and two related but unique paste-ups. *I Quindici libri rossi* (1993-1994) originated from the single volume *111* created for the 1992 Bonn exhibition, *La Sincronicità come principio non-casuale di eventi*. They are archival photo diaries filled with black-and-white photocopies of articles, sketches, telegrams, postcards, and maps.

The *Libri Annuali* translate the large paper works titled *Copertine* into more accessible, "pocket-sized" works, emphasizing the growing interest in the idea of "distribution."

A third display showcases ***Classifying, the thousand longest rivers in the world***, published in 1977, in which Boetti collects a classification made from 1970 to 1973 with Annemarie Sauzeau Boetti of the 1,000 longest rivers in the world. It is here shown in its original conception, with the documentation and correspondence necessary for its realization, along with a print-up and two different copies—one with an embroidered cover and the other in red fabric.

In this interplay of presences, the exhibition's path unfolds. The focus is on Boetti, extending beyond his works, and through this quest for redefining memory, the essence of Boetti's art emerges in all its wonderful, poignant beauty.

INFORMATION

Tuesday - Saturday

h 10am-1pm / 2-7 pm

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