

## Alighiero Boetti

(Turin, 1940 — Rome, 1994)

Boetti was one of the artists grouped together under the umbrella of the Arte Povera group, and perhaps more than all of them, he cleared a new path, and was profusely influential, on later generations of artists from Italy and elsewhere. Boetti's works in this collection are some of the major examples of his early research from 1966.

For the artist, *Catasta (Pile)*, was the image of the contemporary condition, where there is an evaporation of every possibility of anything adhering, or of a vital, organizational relationship between built form and elements; what remains are only modules and undifferentiated materials, inevitably divided. Boetti writes: "I would like to specify here that there are some formal relationships between the natural 'modularity' of *Catasta* and the modularity of some forms of industrial design, or of certain works by Brancusi, but this doesn't concern me since they are not central to the problem I'm interested in. The formal and psychological key for best penetrating the mental model represented by *Catasta* is the individual perceptive experience itself."

*Scala (Ladder)* and *Sedia (Chair)*, while two distinct works, have always been exhibited together and were thought of together by Boetti. Their formal origin is a graphic, not sculptural, matrix. They are objects produced by the ambidextrous universe of the imagination of the artist, who, faced with the white space of the sheet of paper, the canvas, or the wall, draws with both hands, whether in practice or conceptually, to reverse the image. In *Scala* and *Sedia*, the artist, using a pencil, begins with lines generated from the real object and encloses them within the sheet, trapping the function in a doubling of its structure. He then duplicates the drawing in the three-dimensional mirror of the sculpture. *Mancorrente metri 2 (Handrail m. 2)*, instead, is an object made to overturn the psychology of the viewer, to put him in the condition of being transformed into an object of attention. Boetti writes that he had initially thought of also including a floodlight, to accentuate the theatricality of the position assumed by whoever approaches the work.

The collection includes other works as well, and one in particular conveys a period subsequent to the former two pieces. *Tutto (Every-thing)*, 1987-88, is from the period immediately following the artist's involvement with combinatory rules that resulted in the works of the 1960s, such as *Un metro cubo (A Cubic Meter)*, 1967. It is completely filled, with no empty space, with innumerable packing and construction materials. It is the space of the canvas that finds itself piled up with countless embroidered figures, chosen with encyclopedic universality and wedged together so that the entire surface is covered with images, thus weaving an absolute, Parmenidean existence of reality. (EV)