

CLINT
ROENISCH
/
944
QUEEN
ST W
TORONTO
CANADA
M6J 1G8
/
416 516 8593
/
CLINT
ROENISCH
.COM



Numbers Speak Volumes

Alighiero Boetti

Martin Bennett

Exhibition: 29 June - 28 July 2007

ch is pleased to present an exhibition of five paintings by Martin Bennett
y the late Italian conceptual artist Alighiero Boetti. The exhibition runs to
July 28th.

Martin Bennett was born in Winchester, England in 1970 and immigrated to Canada in 1975. A graduate of the Alberta College of Art he now divides his time between Canada and Rome. Boetti, meanwhile, was born in Turin in 1940 and moved to Rome in 1972 where he died in 1994. The exhibition proposes a link between the underlying structural strategies of both artist's work.

Martin Bennett is known in Canada for his Static Image paintings that examine the regions of abstraction, photography, figuration and the reproduction while being none of these at once. These works, painted in patterns and grids of colour since 2000, are based on the employment of a system that constructs the image while simultaneously obscuring its reading behind a veil of optical effects. To arrive at this method of working Bennett looked to the multivalent cues found in the works not just of Boetti but also Magritte, Canaletto and others. From a physical perspective Bennett built upon the sanding techniques used in an earlier series called Grey Volume Paintings. These luminous grey monochromes project a painted 'atmosphere' that has a grid as its starting point but which is then muted by a uniform, hand-sanding of the surface. In this way the weave of the canvas also begins to show through the dark fields of oil paint. The effect produces an elusive array of visual references. For this exhibition a large pristine Grey Volume from 1996 will be shown beside four smaller, new works.

In 1973 Alighiero Boetti renamed himself as a dual persona Alighiero e Boetti ("Alighiero and Boetti") reflecting the opposing factors presented in his work: the individual and society, error and perfection, order and disorder. Like Martin Bennett, Boetti also took a keen interest in various systems of classification (grids, maps, etc.). As a conceptual artist Boetti produced a great variety of artworks, often following very precise rules and even high principles such as the 1971 Nobel Prize-winning Jacques Monod's "Chance and Necessity". Boetti produced ballpoint pen Monochromes (blue, black, red, green) with a white coded writing coming out of the evenly doodled coloured surface. In the early 1970s he made systematic 'exercises' with pencil on squared paper based on musical and mathematical rhythms. Boetti's elaborate tapestries, embroidered by hand in Afghanistan, used grid structured, multi-coloured "Magic Squares" of texts that stemmed from cultural, philosophical, mathematical and linguistic contexts. His "Tutto" (Everything) works presented dense puzzles where indeed everything can be found (newspaper silhouettes, figures of animals and shapes of domestic objects...). For this exhibition a well-known Boetti work, Da Uno A Dieci, will be shown for its relationship to Bennett's own practice of painting. This work is comprised of twenty cards, ten of which of are of hands and numbers counting from one to ten and the other ten contain only the grids.

Alighiero e Boetti's work has been widely shown for more than four decades, from the now-famous exhibition 'When Attitudes Become Form' (1969) curated by Harald Szeemann to a large posthumous retrospective at the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main.

Martin Bennett's work was recently shown at the Power Plant Centre for Contemporary Art. A new solo exhibition with a catalogue and interview by Christian Eckart will open this Fall in Alberta. His paintings are found in the public collections of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts; Astrazeneca; Newport Partners; Home Oil; the Nickle Arts Museum and the Glenbow Museum; TORYS; Osler, Hoskin, Harcourt and Arcis Corporation among others.