

MASSIMODECARLO

CHESS GAME

CARL ANDRE, ALIGHIERO BOETTI
CURATED BY BETTINA DELLA CASA

My works are not the embodiments of ideas or conceptions. My works are, in the word of William Blake "The lineaments of Gratified Desire". Carl Andre, 1987¹

Ecco io volevo metterla nei termini del primato del pensiero. La bellezza è un fatto di pensiero e di volontà di realizzarlo. Alighiero Boetti, 1991²

Massimo De Carlo presents *Chess Game*, an exhibition dedicated to Carl Andre (1935) and Alighiero Boetti (1940-1994), two artists who played a pivotal role in the international art scene of the XX Century. The exhibition focus on affinities and contrasts in Carl Andre and Alighiero Boetti's practice during the renewal of the artistic language which arose in America and Europe between the 1960s and 1970s, and presents a selection of the most significant artworks in each artist's first twenty years of production. The show is curated by Bettina Della Casa and will take place from the 7th of November, 2020 to the 16th of January 2021.

Both Carl Andre and Alighiero Boetti have participated in some key exhibitions of the season, such as *When Attitudes Become Form*, Kunsthalle Bern, curated by Harald Szeemann; *Conceptual Art, Arte Povera, Land Art*, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, Torino, 1970 curated by Germano Celant; *Contemporanea Roma*, Villa Borghese's parking lot, Rome, 1973-74, curated by Achille Bonito Oliva. Indeed, Andre remembers having met Alighiero at Sperone Gallery, where both Carl Andre and Alighiero Boetti have repeatedly exhibited.

Chess Game - a title that evokes the shared passion for the chessboard, the module of the square and the Dame (Draughts)-examines Carl Andre and Alighiero Boetti's common interest for the language and the alphabet as a set of ordered or random units which create complex visual universes. For both the artists, the elementary modules are activated in geometric combinations on the white page as in the environment: Andre and Boetti create sculptures and floor installations which declare their physical presence without any symbolic implication and in complete accordance with the pre-existing material. Among the exhibited artworks, Boetti's fiber cement work titled *Eternit* (pavimento) from 1967, establishes a dialogue with Andre's red cedar sculpture *Strake* (1960); the steel artwork titled *Mancorrente* (1966) by the Italian artist faces the American's *13 copper triode* (1975). Or, for example, *Contatore* (1967) by Alighiero deals with Carl's 000, a typewriter carbon on paper dated 1958-1963, just to mention two-dimensional early works by both artists.

Chess Game features early works by Carl Andre, works on paper - mostly typewritten verses dated between 1958 and 1963, composed on a manual typewriter, that can be read both as verses and appreciated as visual compositions. The works on paper anticipated some aesthetic and conceptual intuitions that will have characterized Andre's entire production, such as the reiterated repetition and the use of a pre-existing module. Indeed, the artist claims to cut texts like wood or to hit the keys of the typewriter like a hammer on paper. In 1975 Carl Andre stated: "*My interest in elements or particles in sculpture is paralleled by my interest in word as particles of language*"³. In this dynamic between two-dimensionality and three-dimensionality, from visual poetry to sculpture, *Chess Game* is the occasion to admire for the first-time modular floor installations made of different materials such as steel, copper, aluminium, and wood exhibited within the extraordinary rationalist spaces of Casa Corbellini-Wasserman.

Through the exhibition, the dialogue between Boetti's conceptual perspective and the minimal perspective of Andre proceeds on two parallel planes: that of two-dimensional works and that of sculptures. Within the context of the Arte Povera movement, Boetti began experimenting with unconventional materials and in 1967 he had his first solo show at Stein Gallery in Turin (some of those works exhibited are included in this show). Since then, Boetti's entire practice is characterized by an inexhaustible and boundless variety of media and techniques and, at the same time, by a constant consistency in the conception of reality and art. The exhibition also shows how, starting from the mid-1970s, the artist began exploring *order and disorder*, reality's phenomena in order to define a system of rules and laws that determinates the configuration of the work on two-dimensional surfaces.

The choice to stage a dialogue among Andre and Boetti 's work could not have found a more spectacular theatre than Casa Corbellini-Wassermann, built between 1934 and 1936 by the iconic Milanese architect Piero Portaluppi, The once domestic space is characterized by a non-linear sequence of rooms and a careful use of precious materials such as marbles, wood and metal alloys

¹ Smith, K. (2004). *The Museum of Modern Art, MoMA Highlights*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, p. 283.

² Boetti, A. (2015). Niente da vedere, niente da nascondere. In Bonito Oliva, A. (a cura di), *Alighiero & Boetti. Mettere all'arte il mondo 1993-1962*. Milano: Electa, p. 215.

³ Andre, C., Meyer, J. (ed) (2005). *Cuts: Texts 1959 - 2004*. Cambridge: MIT Press, p. 214.

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with a very refined attention to detail. The combination of rationalist suggestions with an obsessive precision reveals to be the perfect place to host a *Chess Game* between Carl Andre and Alighiero Boetti.

Chess Game is curated by Bettina Della Casa, free-lance curator and Director of Giulio and Anna Paolini Foundation, Turin.

We thank Archivio Boetti (Rome) and Carl Andre Studio (New York) for their precious collaboration.

CARL ANDRE

The renowned American Minimal sculptor and poet Carl Andre was born in 1935 in Quincy, Massachusetts. He lives and works in New York, USA. Andre's work has been shown in solo exhibitions in prestigious institutions around the world such as, amongst the most recent: the itinerant show *Sculpture as Place, 1958–2010*, MOCA - The Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, Los Angeles (CA), USA (2017), Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, F (2016); Hamburger Bahnhof - Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, D (2016); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, E (2015); Dia: Beacon, Dia Art Foundation, New York, NY (2014); A Friendship: Carl Andre's Works on Paper from the LeWitt Collection, The Dan Flavin Art Institute, Bridgehampton (NY), USA (2014). Carl Andre's work is hosted in prominent public collections such as the Tate Modern in London, Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, Peggy Guggenheim Museum in Venice, Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid, Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and the MoMA in New York.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI

Alighiero Boetti (Torino, 1940 - Roma, 1994) is widely recognized as one of the pivotal figures in the Arte Povera movement. Boetti was recently the subject of the major retrospective "Alighiero Boetti: Game Plan," which originated at the Reina Sofia in Madrid in 2011 and subsequently travelled 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. Significant examples of his work can be found in the collections of Centre Georges Pompidou, Castello di Rivoli, GNAM Rome, Stedelijk Museum, the Reina Sofia, the Tate, MoMA NY, Dallas Museum of Art, MOCA LA, National Gallery of Canada among others.

Bettina Della Casa, Director of Giulio and Anna Paolini Foundation in Turin since 2019, has been collaborating with the artist since 1996. She also works as free-lance curator; from 1999 to 2018, she has been curator at MASI (Museo d'Arte della Svizzera Italiana), in Lugano, Switzerland. In 2019, she co-curated with Saretto Cincinelli the exhibition *Joint is out of Time* at Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna (GNAM) in Rome.

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