



# Milano Drawing Week

## Serena Vestrucci in dialogue with Alighiero Boetti

The exhibition devised for the Milano Drawing Week in the spaces of the Renata Fabbri Gallery presents a series of drawings by Serena Vestrucci entitled *Toccare il fondo* [*Reaching the Bottom*] (2014–2023) in dialogue with Alighiero Boetti's work *Eterno dilemma tra contenuti e contenitori* (I vedenti) (1989). To make these works, I colour a piece of paper with felt-tip markers up to the point where the ink pierces the sheet, thus reaching the *bottom*, the surface beneath the sheet. The expression *to reach the bottom* means to hit the extreme limit of something. Likewise, I 'stress' the paper, putting its resistance to the test. The strokes and gestures of my drawings can be done by anyone. In my opinion, drawing is an expression of ideas rather than of personality. It's a mental image that makes itself visible.

Throughout Alighiero Boetti's poetics, just like in the work *Toccare il fondo*, the use of language is fundamental in the relationship between the title and the work. In a famous sentence embroidered in squared shape we read: *Mettere i verbi all'infinito* [*Putting verbs into the infinitive form*] (1988). The infinitive verb does not need to be declined in relation to a subject, for it is the subject itself. The same goes for the work *Toccare il fondo*, in which – going back to Boetti again – one might say, there is *Niente da vedere, niente da nascondere* [*Nothing to see, nothing to hide*] (1969): both sides of the sheet are in fact unveiled, comprising two fronts or two backs. They are each the consequence of the other. They are A and B. They are the number two, which for Boetti denotes dichotomy, binary system, "myself, divided."

Boetti's world is one made up of pluralities, within which the value of 'one', meant as singularity, does not exist except in the relation to the presence of others: the river 'X' is the longest in the world only in relation to the existence of other rivers. And that's how, from one to a thousand, all rivers are equally important, or rather, the presence of each one is relevant and necessary for that common field called 'classification' to exist. Boetti's works refer to a lost time, to an almost playful activity that is unveiled day by day: the process underpinning his *Mettere al mondo il mondo* [*Bringing the World into the World*] (1971).

In Vestrucci's work *Toccare il fondo*, the container – the front and back side of the paper – overflows with its own content: the marker stroke that colours the paper, passing from one side to the other, thus becoming one. To create a dialogue with the work *Eterno dilemma tra contenuti e contenitori* (I vedenti) by Alighiero Boetti, which belongs to the Ramo Collection, does not mean searching for inspiration and suggestion in a past practice, but cultivating common ground in which *doing* starts with *thinking*. Thus, thinking about Boetti means distancing oneself from the sense of both achievement and industriousness inherent to the straight line. The attempt is not the product but the idea and its circularity. In Boetti's research, whatever the final result is, it's the process (the circularity

of the journey) that counts. In 1969, he began the series *Cimento dell'armonia e dell'invenzione*, named after the collection of twelve concertos composed by Antonio Vivaldi [*The Contest Between Harmony and Invention*].

Occupying the time of one's reflection without remains.  
Creating the materiality of imagination. Travelling along the itineraries of a squared paper until the grid is entirely covered. Accompanied by pre-existing lines, the pencil can trace images, words or shapes with the guarantee that everything will then gradually disappear, conforming to the whole, equalized so that there is no difference between the moment of ideation and that of laziness, between a straight line and an outline.<sup>1</sup>

To fully trace all the squares on the paper, the possible paths along which the pen can be moved are manifold and the line drawn will never coincide perfectly with the grid printed on the notebook. This slight difference, this mismatch, this crack that opens between human *invention* and action is the *harmony* of the artwork itself. The error, the unexpected becomes a source of abundance and enthusiasm. After all, someone who decides to write with their left hand, even going so far as to believe this gesture goes beyond writing and enters the realm of drawing, cannot but warmly welcome the ensuing variations and mistakes.

*Toccare il fondo* is a series of works in which it is the repetitiveness of the gesture that creates the drawing: stroke after stroke, colour after colour. To quote Boetti once more: "Eventually, only this faded copy of a very colourful time will remain (1984)."<sup>2</sup>

—Serena Vestrucci

1. Emidio Greco, *Niente da vedere niente da nascondere* [*Nothing to See, Nothing to Hide*], documentary on the work of Alighiero Boetti, produced by Gisèle Oser, time 60', 16 mm, colour, 1978. The quote appears at 31'.  
2. [https://www.archivioalighieroboetti.it/timeline\\_slider\\_post/1983/](https://www.archivioalighieroboetti.it/timeline_slider_post/1983/)

Milano Drawing Week  
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Curated by Collezione Ramo  
In collaboration with and  
under the patronage of the  
Milan City Council's  
Department of Culture

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Opening hours  
Tuesday–Saturday:  
3.30–7.30 pm  
Saturday and Sunday:  
12–7.30 pm

Biography  
Imbued with a subtle irony  
toward contemporaneity,  
the works of Serena Vestrucci  
(Milan, 1986) probe the  
obviousness of little things,  
giving voice to what is often

hidden, forgotten or sidelined.  
Through a playful yet direct  
and provocative language,  
the artist elevates ambiguity  
to serve as a foundational  
element for a more accurate  
understanding of reality.  
Selected solo exhibitions  
include: Casa Gramsci, Turin;  
Galleria Renata Fabbri, Milan;  
Galleria FuoriCampo, Siena;  
Galleria d'Arte Moderna,  
Verona; Museo Archeologico  
Salinas, Palermo; Marsèlleria  
Permanent Exhibition, Milan;  
Museo d'Arte Contemporanea  
Villa Croce, Genoa; Galleria  
Ottozoo, Milan.  
Selected group exhibitions  
include: Palazzo Ducale,  
La Biennale di Gubbio; Palazzo  
Merulana, Rome; Palazzo  
Grillo, Genoa; Museo MAXXI,  
Rome; Stefan Gierowski  
Foundation, Warsaw;  
Fondazione Made in Cloister,  
Naples; Fondazione Imago  
Mundi, Treviso; Fondazione  
Pastificio Cerere, Rome;

Palazzo Reale, Milan;  
Fondazione Sandretto Re  
Rebaudengo, Turin; Galleria  
d'Arte Moderna, Milan; Palazzo  
Del Medico, Carrara; Casa  
Testori, Novate Milanese; Blitz,  
Valletta, Malta; IIC, New York;  
IIC, London; IIC, Warsaw; IIC,  
Krakow; Fondazione  
Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice;  
FRISE Künstlerhaus, Hamburg;  
Casa Masaccio, San Giovanni  
Valdarno and Stedelijk  
Museum, the Netherlands.  
In 2017 she won the 18th  
edition of the Premio Cairo  
and was selected by the City  
of Milan to conceive and  
produce a permanent work  
as part of the public art  
commission ArtLine Milano.

Image  
Serena Vestrucci, *Toccare  
il fondo*, 2014, markers on paper,  
one week, 32 x 18 cm.  
Courtesy the artist and Renata  
Fabbri, Milan. Ph: Alberto Fanelli

