

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS

Press release
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Ben Brown Fine Arts

Gavin & Turk

9 February 2012

Like all artists, Gavin Turk's name is his brand and in the schizophrenic title for this show, he turns it into a family brand. Throughout 25 years of artwork, Turk has questioned authorship, identity and the handmade. This new exhibition is no exception, but here, he chooses to pay homage to Alighiero Boetti, an Italian conceptual artist prominent in the sixties and seventies, who is the subject of a Tate Modern retrospective, running 28 February - 27 May 2012.

Boetti was fascinated by symbols and created embroideries of the world map, with each country made from its own flag. He saw his role as orchestrator, rather than executer of a work, with his original Mappas based on a schema by friend and collaborator Rinaldo Rossi and embroidered by a team of craftswomen in Kabul, Aghanistan.

Like Boetti, Turk is collaborating with a production team to create his latest embroideries. The designs will be worked up by members of Fine Cell Work, a charity and social enterprise that teaches needlework to prison inmates, in order to support the rehabilitation process. "I think one of the interesting things about tapestry is how slowly the picture comes out of the picture frame," says Turk. "It's so intense. You have to go close and further away and close and further away; it's like the image slowly unweaving itself."

Turk embraces the labour intensive production process, believing strongly in the importance of hand making as a way to artistic freedom. This is in direct contrast to the machine fabrication of industrial processing, referred to in the *Mappa del Mondo*. Here Turk has collected squashed rubbish - crisp packets, drinks cans, cigarette packets, etc, then collaged them into a two-dimensional world map, to prepare an image for embroidering. Turk's method here renders machine made products hand-made, turning discarded, flattened objects into the ultimate luxury object: a work of art.

Gavin & Turk will include a series of small 'arazzi', intricate embroideries featuring various permutations of 'GAVIN TURK', as well as various other hommages to Boetti: glimmering, gold leaf works on paper, biro pieces and a life-size bronze self-portrait. The latter is doubly referential, being Boetti's homage to Bruce Nauman's 1966 performance *photo Self-Portrait as a Fountain*, in which the artist is seen, bare-chested, spitting a jet of water into the air. Turk's *Self-Portrait* references the Boetti original, in which the fully clothed artist souses himself with a garden hose. A heated element on the figures head sizzles and emits steam as the water hits it. This tragic-comic figure was made a year before Boetti's death and is poignant with a sense of every artist's attempt to make an impact.

**For further information please contact Alice at Theresa Simon & Partners
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Notes to editors

Ben Brown Fine Arts

Ben Brown pioneered the now well-respected Italian Sale whilst at Sotheby's in 1995. His particular interest in 20th Century Italian Art has made him a specialist in this little-represented field in London and the gallery is now an established presence for artists and collectors in this arena.

In 2005, shortly after opening the Cork Street space, the gallery presented a seminal show of works by Lucio Fontana, curated by the eminent art historian Enrico Crispolti. In 2006 they opened an exhibition of Alighiero Boetti embroideries, including *Mappa*, *Tutto* and *Grande e Piccoli Arazzi*. This was the first time that the works of Boetti had been brought to London since 1999. Ben Brown Fine Arts also represents, between their galleries in London and Hong Kong, Candida Höfer, Ron Arad, Miquel Barceló, Tony Bevan, Nabil Nahas and Not Vital.

Gavin Turk

Gavin Turk (b 1967) is a British Born, international artist. He has pioneered many forms of contemporary British sculpture now taken for granted, including the painted bronze, the waxwork, the recycled art-historical icon and the use of rubbish in art. His work is maverick and uncompromising. In 1991, the Royal College of Art refused him a degree on the basis that his finals show, 'Cave', consisted of a whitewashed studio space containing only a blue heritage plaque commemorating his presence 'Gavin Turk worked here 1989-91'. Instantly gaining notoriety through this installation, Turk was spotted by Charles Saatchi and has since been represented by many major galleries throughout the world, including: White Cube, Sean Kelly, Gallery Krinzinger and Almine Reche. He has recently been commissioned to make several public sculptures including NAIL, a 12metre sculpture at One New Change, behind St Paul's cathedral.