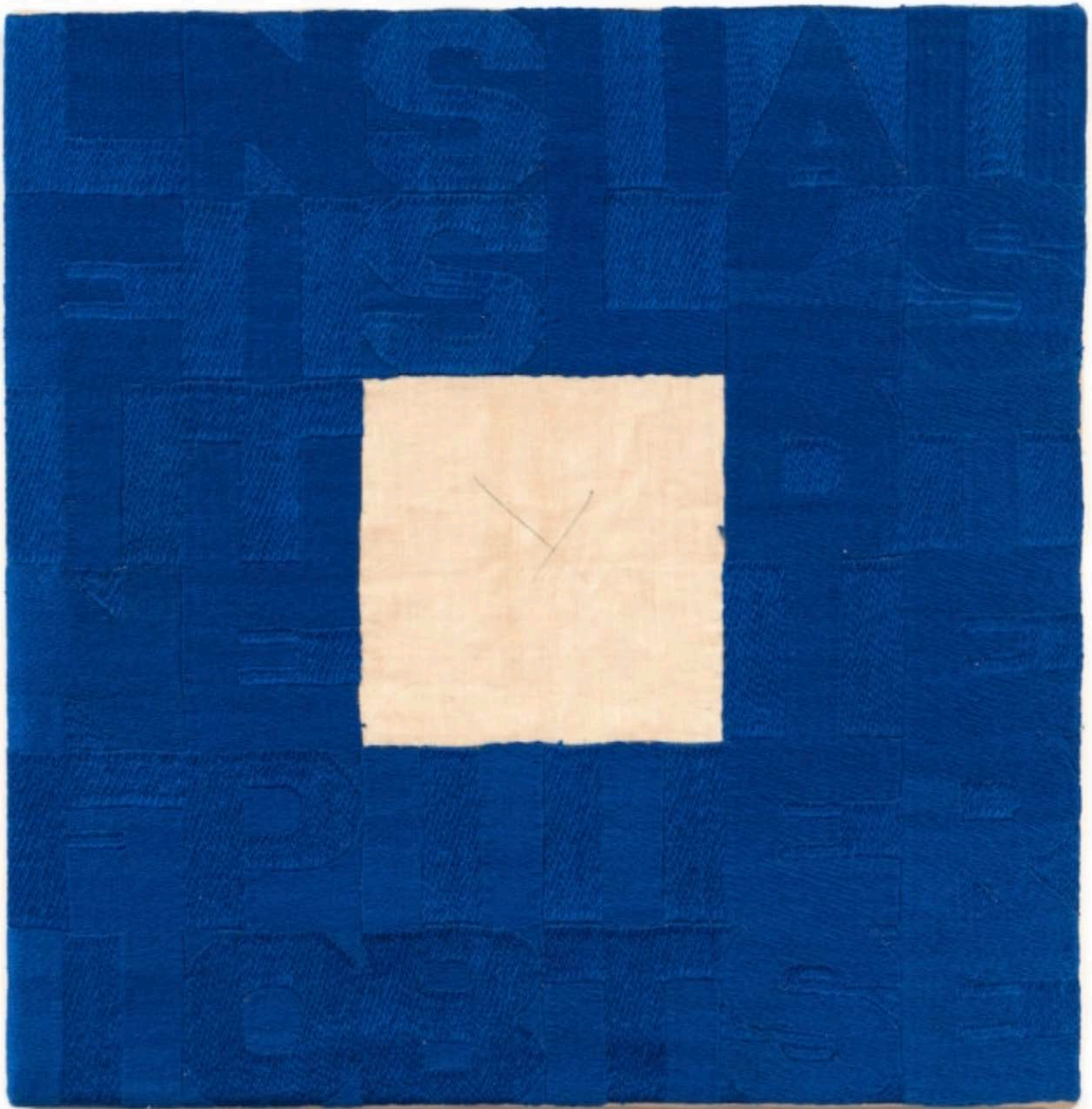


Exhibitions

At Totah, Alighiero Boetti's Self-Portrait In Blue

THE DAILY PIC: Echoing Yves Klein, Boetti invokes metaphysics—and mocks them.

Blake Gopnik, March 24, 2016



THE DAILY PIC (#1518): I saw this piece by Alighiero Boetti in a two-artist show at the new Totah gallery in New York that also features word-works by Mel Bochner, whom I wrote about when he showed at the Jewish Museum.

Boetti had this embroidery made in 1990, four years before his death, and it's hard not to imagine that the title spelled out in its letters, *Le infinite possibilita di esistere* ("The Infinite Possibilities of Existing"), in some sense foreshadows his passing.

On the other hand, it also seems as though it could be meant as a tongue-in-cheek nod to some of the headier, more metaphysical claims that have been made about abstraction – and especially about the blue monochromes of Yves Klein, which Boetti is clearly quoting in this piece.

Of course, Klein too was willing to bill his work as having an absurdist edge, and to call its existential import into doubt.

I'm particularly fond of how Boetti leaves that open space in the middle of his piece, turning it into a picture frame that we imagine filling either with our own face or his. Maybe that too is a foreshadowing: a self-portrait of the artist as an absence.

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