

Satoru Aoyama

March 13, 2016

Guest blog post from **White Rainbow gallery**, by Edward Ball, Exhibitions Manager. White Rainbow is a gallery in London focusing on contemporary art from Japan. *Division of Labour*, a new solo exhibition by Satoru Aoyama at White Rainbow Gallery, focuses on the artist's new series: 'Map of the World (Dedicated to unknown embroiderers)' (2012-), which critically reassesses the circumstances of production of Alighiero Boetti's famous *Mappa* series.



For this exhibition, Aoyama has embroidered four world maps, along with a map of Europe. Reflecting the passage of time since Boetti's works, new countries such as Ukraine and Serbia are now visible on the contemporary world map. Aoyama's maps are embroidered using a fluorescent thread. In daylight they reveal little detail, but when shown in a darkened space each country and border is revealed. With this theatrical presentation, the artist offers a suggestion of the often immaterial and intangible quality of borders and the geopolitics that underpin them.



In new works that build upon his Map of the World series, Aoyama sews over selected found images of Afghan craftswomen. Again this references Boetti's work; where Boetti hired crafts-women to implement the technique necessary to realise his ideas, Aoyama undertakes the skilled labour himself. With this, Aoyama seeks to reconnect Boetti's works with the labour conditions of their production. In highlighting female accounts of craft, Aoyama critiques the gendered aspect of labour in Boetti's original works.



Aoyama's artistic practice blurs the boundaries between the fine and applied arts. Using an old Singer sewing machine, he reflects on the nature of craft in an age of mechanised labour. Aoyama meticulously embroiders a range of found images in photorealistic detail, and suggests that figurative, skill based artistic practice can also be highly conceptual. **Satoru Aoyama** Division of Labour 6 April - 7 May 2016 **White Rainbow Gallery**