

# An Alternative Viewpoint on Contemporary Art: Spazio Neutro



by **Giorgia Salerno**

The museum, in its most classical characterization and by convention, requires formal composure, silence and, to enable optimal enjoyment, a certain distance from the works. Viewing a collection in a museum is governed by museological and museographic principles that sometimes risk diminishing the visitor's experience. This reflection gave rise to *Spazio Neutro*, a project realized at the MAR – Museo d'Arte della città di Ravenna and curated by this writer in the role of responsible of the museum's collections and heritage. *Spazio Neutro* is a place of exchange and participation, but above all it offers the public an alternative way of looking at artworks.

The curatorial choice presents young artists as protagonists who are asked to rethink the relationship between their work and the public, in a space that will be anything but neutral from an exhibition standpoint. In fact, it will be redesigned for each of the projects, addressing issues currently affecting international museums, such as the development of the relational museum, the decolonization of collections, and generative AI.

The first invited artist is Diego Miguel Mirabella, born in Enna in 1988, of Peruvian descent, who now divides his time between Rome, where he attended the Academy of Fine Arts, and Morocco. His works are in several private and public collections, such as the Parco Archeologico dell'Appia Nuova in Rome, the Fondazione Roma, the MAP Museum in Pontinia, and the Museo Riso of Modern and Contemporary Art in Palermo. His research focuses on ornamental patterns.

The title of Mirabella's project for MAR is *Vestiva inoltre una segreta felicità*. The work been specially designed for the museum and extends to all the walls of the room. The branching ornamentation has no limits, interrupted only by the artist's artifice of reflected light from the room windows.

The decoration, inspired by the artist's visual memories and the mosaic ornamentation of Ravenna, becomes a landscape in continuous narrative, stylistic and chromatic evolution. Mirabella moves in different cultural registers, from the West to the East, and from painting to sculpture, using ornamental patterns as a true visual language. A language that is sometimes interwoven with words to tell stories that, on this occasion, lead the viewer into an almost dreamlike dimension where elements alternately hide and reveal themselves. The pigments on the walls, combined with the mosaic dust, envelop the visitor, who, as if immersed in the space, becomes an integral part of the work, of the story told by the artist. The space also comes alive at night, when artificial light from the outside comes in through the windows and overlays the visual illusion created by the artist, preserving a secret happiness.

Due to the immersive nature of the project, and in order to offer a new perspective, people can informally stand in the space, sit on the floor, lie down, or engage with the artwork in whatever way is comfortable for them.

The exhibition: Diego Miguel Mirabella, *Vestiva inoltre una segreta felicità*, curated by Giorgia Salerno, Ravenna, MAR, December 21, 2024 – February 2, 2025.

*Homepage: Diego Miguel Mirabella, Vestiva inoltre una segreta felicità, mixed media and gold leaf, roomsize, 2024 (photo credits Studio DMM).*