

**Marco Bagnoli**  
(Empoli, 1949)

In his commentary on the *I Ching*, the Chinese sacred *Book of Changes*, Wang Pi defines lightning as the “supreme non-being, which is total possibility and indeterminacy. In this sense,” he continues, “lightning that comes to a stop in the earth shows us the heart of the universe.”

In *Mirabile verso di là dall’atmosfera (Wondrous Verse Beyond the Atmosphere)*, 1986, Marco Bagnoli explores the idea of sudden illumination, through which an event or the elements connected to it can lose their material finiteness to be transformed into metaphors of infinity. The work appears as a portion of a tiled roof, referring to the Italian rural tradition. As the title suggests, this view of exterior architecture, transported into the museum space, evokes atmospheric phenomena tied to a stormy downpour and the wealth of meanings related to such an event. The energy of a lightning bolt that has struck from above seems to be contained within the tiles that make up the piece. Traditionally the colour of scorched earth, here they are polychrome and disseminate light in the exhibition space.

Intentionally evocative, like the artist himself, Bagnoli’s art feeds off suggestions from various eras and cultures, ranging from the Islamic world to the mystical poetry of the Persian writer Rumi, Sufism or Hindu and Taoist doctrines. Also connecting to the Italian Renaissance tradition, where philosophical and scientific interests were an integral part of the artist’s vision, Bagnoli tends to achieve complete harmony in his works, within which rationality and creative imagination merge.

(MB)

Entering the collection only recently, *Vedetta notturna* (1986) and *Iris* (1987) are two works that dialogue with one another. The first is a delicate sculpture in onyx obtained through the rotation of circumferences of different radiuses around a vertical axis. As frequently happens in Bagnoli’s interventions produced using this procedure, the work is placed in the corner of the room and caught in a ray of light which casts its shadow onto the wall, cutting and multiplying the uniformity of viewing. However, two profiles may still be made out: that of the upper part, the more sharp-edged, belongs to the Isabella d’Este portrayed by Leonardo, while the lower one, decidedly more substantial, is the face of a statue of Shiva from the Elephanta Caves in India. With an enigmatic title which does not suggest any direction of meaning, *Vedetta notturna* brings together the universality of artistic creation, from East to West, in a single block of stone. In *Iris*, a fresco transferred onto canvas, the silhouette of the sculpture takes on a central position once more, lying over the vertical red strip which is a recurring feature in Bagnoli’s research. Made up of five squares placed one on top of the other, it is the heart of the composition, the golden rule, the passage towards the world of harmony. From its first appearance in 1975 in a

magazine-manifesto titled *Spazio x Tempo*, this element provided the rhythm which underpinned the artist's entire creative and theoretical career.

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