

Michelangelo Pistoletto

The gallery is a white cube

1989

The work entitled *Porta* (Door), 1978-1988, is propped against the wall facing the entrance: this piece is a mirror, 300 x 200 cm, its top and vertical sides framed with thick natural-colored wood. A second work is made up of two triangular mirrors facing each other on the left-hand and right-hand walls. These two mirrors were cut diagonally from a mirror the size of *Porta*. The natural-colored wooden frame lining the four sides of the original mirror was cut in the same way. This second piece is entitled *Divisione diagonale* (Diagonal Division), 1978-88. A third work is set up outside the gallery. It is the first piece that one sees upon approaching the gallery from Via Brentano. This work is a billboard, 400 x 700 cm, which, placed between the advertising posters, displays the words "Anno Bianco" (White Year) in black letters on a white background. *Anno Bianco* is clearly dimensioned in time: it was born in January as an announcement for an exhibition at the Galleria Opera in Perugia. At that time, *Anno Bianco* was virtually a seed (containing the entire tree); it began taking shape at that moment and, in subsequent phases, it articulated and developed the various parts of a body. That same seed also contained the white plaster reliefs exhibited in February at the Jay Gorney Gallery, New York, and the ones made to be shown in March at the Museo di Capodimonte, Naples. Situations outside my direct output, that is, the events of the world, were, in embryo, already destined to become part of the work. Just as a mirror painting is ready to receive the images of tomorrow. As for the *Anno Bianco* billboard, it can clearly be seen even from inside the Galleria Persano, through the open window. Its presence also participates in the mirror reflections that increase the complexity of the works on display.

Upon crossing the threshold, that is, entering the cubic gallery and looking at *Porta*, we notice that it "riporta" (reports) i.e., reflects, the word "Bianco" (white) centered beyond the window, which looks out on the street in back of us. Traditionally, art was seen as a window on the world, but now the mirror reverses this perspective and becomes the "Door to the world", indicating, at every step, a different triangulation of spatial and temporal, physical and mental relations, which multiply the perspectives.

The two lateral mirrors, cut from a single mirror, are both a division and a multiplication. In the network of reflections, they contain both the same and the opposite form and direction. Furthermore, upon looking into one of the two triangular mirrors, we see the four exhibited works lined up one inside the other, as if they were a single work. What we have here is a series of doors, rooms, windows, shapes, signs, words, interiors, and exteriors. All this occurs in a natural exchange between the works and the exhibition site.

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