

Mosaico Italian code of a timeless art

Rome
Pompeii
Aquileia
Ravenna
Palermo / Monreale
Piazza Armerina
Baiae

ORGANISED BY



Ministero degli Affari Esteri
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DIREZIONE GENERALE PER LA DIPLOMAZIA PUBBLICA E CULTURALE



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AREA 00 – INTRODUCTION

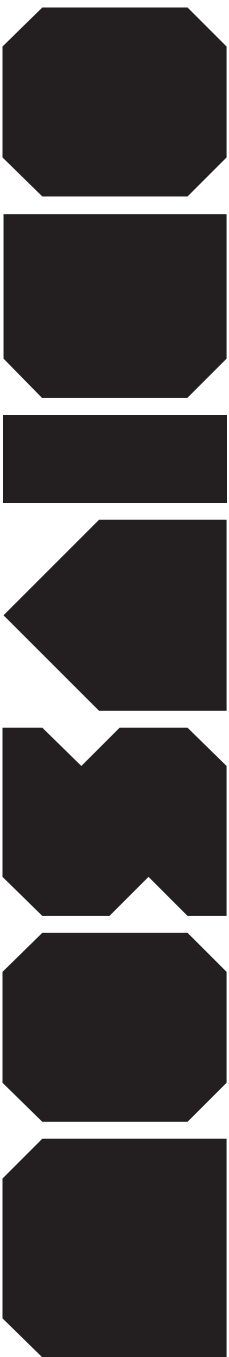
An extraordinarily rich but little-known artistic language has spanned for over 2000 years throughout the 1500 km connecting northern and southern Italy: mosaic.

MOSAICO aims to take you along on a fascinating and unprecedented journey.

The multimedia and immersive exhibition is structured around seven stations, acting as real time machines, magical rooms whose walls are decked out with endless wonders.

A unique journey between gilded motifs, symbols and allegories, aglow in polychromies populated by dolphins, starry skies, labyrinths and battles. An exploration to discover the patrons, images, materials and gestures that characterise some of the most iconic works of Italy's mosaic art. An Italian code of a timeless art, which inspires classical and contemporary expressive alphabets and languages.

The **Farnesina Collection** is the collection of 20th- and 21st-century Italian art kept in the headquarters of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, which has made contemporary artistic research a cornerstone of its cultural policy.



AREA 01 – ROME / POMPEII

ROME

Rome is the first protagonist of the exhibition: the stories told by the mosaics of the **Capitoline Museums** represent the glorious past of the Capital during the urbanization process over the last century.

The **Basilica of Saints Cosmas and Damian** and the **Basilica of Saint Praxedes** are the two masterpieces which allow us to learn about Christian mosaic art: the stories and messages held in their walls vibrate with intense spirituality.

POMPEII

History is unveiled through the mosaics of the **House of the Faun**, one of the biggest and most luxurious houses in Pompeii. Thousands of tesserae joined together depict the scene where Alexander the Great defeats Darius III of Persia during the **Battle of Issus**. These depictions show lances crossing, the reflections of weapons on the ground, horses advancing and men's crazed or terrified looks.

AREA 02 – AQUILEIA

The floor mosaic of the **Patriarchal Basilica of Saint Mary of the Assumption** seems infinite with its explosion of symbols of the Catholic religion dating back to the period immediately after the Edict of Constantine, which granted to Christians the freedom to observe the religion of their choice. With its depictions of sea animals and birds, it tells stories such as the fight between the rooster and the tortoise or the iconic story of Jonah, which is an allegory of the Resurrection of Jesus and, more generally, of the otherworldly life granted to those who were baptized.

AREA 03 – RAVENNA

The **Mausoleum of Galla Placidia**, the **Basilica of Saint Vitale** and the **Basilica of Saint Apollinaris in Classe**: Ravenna's past shines in their mosaics, which are testament to the Paleo Christian and Byzantine art. History is told through tesserae of a bright color range: here, light changes and golden surfaces shine in an otherworldly dimension; nevertheless, the mosaics of Justinian and Theodora show a strong political and religious relationship. The mosaic art becomes an important way of conveying Christian contents, going beyond the concept of beauty towards a purely spiritual dimension mainly made of light.

AREA 04 – PALERMO / MONREALE

The story of Genesis, the Old and the New Testament, the Feast Days, the Apocalypse and the salvation: Sicily's mosaic heritage is breathtaking for its majesty and harmony, its complexity and craftsmanship. Spirituality and commitment constitute the cornerstones of the **Palatine Chapel**, the **Cathedral of Monreale** and the **Martorana Church**.

During the reign of Roger II, Christians, Jews and Muslims lived together and spoke Latin, Arabic, Greek and Hebrew, in a triumph of multiculturalism which can also be found in the architecture and art of sacred places.

AREA 05 - PIAZZA ARMERINA

Roman's customs, traditions and habits are displayed through the corridors and the rooms of **Villa Romana del Casale** in Piazza Armerina, an archaeological find of exceptional value. Through its polychrome floor mosaic, it shows us the daily moments of life in the Roman Empire during the early centuries AD. From the Small and the Great Hunting scenes to the aristocrats' habits, depictions of heroes and deities' up to the the supreme example of a late-imperial Roman luxury villa: the mosaic of the 'Gymnasts'.

AREA 06 – BAIAE

The **Underwater Archaeological Park of Baiae** reveals a thriving harbor submerged in the sea, as well as ancient streets and Roman aristocracy and imperial family's holiday destinations during the 3rd century AD.

Today the extraordinary mosaics of Baiae can only be admired by diving underwater, continually removing the sand by hand: immersed in the silence of the seabed, while discovering a story hidden by centuries of bradyseism (the gradual uplift or descent of part of the Earth's surface), it feels like hearing the slow Earth breath of Naples' neighbourhoods.

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