



Starhotels names Paolo Mangano's *Dark Sun and Me* winner of "La Grande Bellezza" Award

The mirror-sculpture is the winning work of the fourth edition of the Prize, dedicated to the theme "The Beauty of Utility".

The finalist works are on display at Hotel Gabrielli in Venice until 16 October

Venice (ITALY), September 16th, 2026 - **Dark Sun and Me** by Paolo Mangano's Materie is the winning work of the fourth edition of the **La Grande Bellezza Award**, the biennial initiative dedicated to Italian fine craftsmanship and part of the broader contemporary patronage project, **La Grande Bellezza – The Dream Factory**, promoted by Starhotels since 2019 in partnership with Fondazione Cologni dei Mestieri d'Arte and Gruppo Editoriale.

Dedicated to the theme **The Beauty of Utility**, this edition invited Italian artisans and designers to create objects for the world of hospitality in which aesthetics and functionality come together harmoniously, reinterpreting materials, techniques and traditions of Italian craftsmanship through a contemporary lens. The winner received a **€10,000 prize**, providing tangible support for his creative journey.

The Jury, chaired by **Elisabetta Fabri, President and CEO of Starhotels**, selected *Dark Sun and Me*, a circular smoked wall mirror featuring an iron and brass frame from which elements in copper, malachite and crystal radiate outwards. Inspired by a sun with abstract, hand-shaped rays, the work also incorporates reclaimed waste materials from galvanic production, which acquire new preciousness through polished and burnished finishes.

"Among works of outstanding quality, 'Dark Sun and Me' struck me for its ability to transform materials and gestures rooted in traditional craftsmanship into an object that feels profoundly contemporary," comments **Elisabetta Fabri, President and CEO of Starhotels**. *"Paolo Mangano draws on the extraordinary skills of the goldsmith and sculptor and brings them into a new dimension, where reclaimed materials acquire new value and beauty, and the mirror becomes not only a functional object, but also an experience and a story. To me, it represents an especially accomplished interpretation of the theme 'The Beauty of Utility' and of what we seek to champion through La Grande Bellezza: craftsmanship firmly rooted in Italian tradition, yet able to look to the future with creativity and originality."*

A Rome-based goldsmith and sculptor active since 1985, Paolo Mangano has long explored the transformation of materials, experimenting with combinations of traditional metals and more unconventional elements. Alongside his work at his own workshop for jewelry, silverware, metalwork and sculpture in the heart of Rome, he has collaborated with Italian and international artists, galleries

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and brands. He also teaches at IED University and, among the many distinctions received throughout his career, has been awarded the prestigious MAM – Maestro d'Arte e Mestiere Prize.

Dark Sun and Me is on display alongside the other finalist works at **Hotel Gabrielli Venezia – Starhotels Collezione**, overlooking the Riva degli Schiavoni. The exhibition, which opened on September 1 to coincide with Homo Faber, is open to the public free of charge through October 16, 2026. Joining Paolo Mangano on the prestigious shortlist are other Italian artisans and ateliers, whose works together offer a compelling portrait of the richness and diversity of contemporary fine craftsmanship:

Incalmi, *Allegretto*. A functional, reconfigurable decorative wall featuring enameled copper and a variety of materials, including reclaimed wool with sound-absorbing properties. The work brings together artisanal tradition, technical innovation and a commitment to sustainability.

Fabio Fornasier, *Decanter*. A hand-blown Murano glass decanter that reinterprets the sinuous lines of the celebrated LU Murano chandelier collection. Particularly distinctive is the use of clear crystal, chosen not merely for aesthetic effect but for a functional purpose: allowing light to pass through the wine and enhance its color.

Atelier Impressive by Manuel Uka, *Make Make*. A table lamp carved from a single block of travertine and crowned by a luminous onyx orb, inspired by the dwarf planet Makemake and the legend of the creator deity from which it takes its name.

F.lli Levaggi, *Mario*. A solid-wood valet stand that preserves the formal heritage of the Chiavari chair while transforming it into a clothes stand: a quiet yet functional presence crafted from locally sourced Ligurian woods.

MNM Venezia by Michela Nardin, *OCIO Lamp*. A wall lamp made with more than 1,300 glass-paste tesserae from the historic Orsoni furnace, arranged in a gradient mosaic evoking the iris of the eye and the play of light.

Salviati, *Salicornia*. A re-edition of a refined tableware collection from Salviati's historic 1930s archive, crafted in Murano glass and distinguished by elegant combinations of color.

Taftique by Jules Vissers, *Seduta sopra i pini*. A pouf created using the hand-tufting technique, inspired by the Mediterranean pine and the Tuscan landscape. Through wool and yarn, the piece celebrates both the beauty and the fragility of its natural inspiration.

Sveva Collection, *Space Carnival*. A handcrafted bedside lamp made with resin beads and crystals, expressing an eclectic approach to craftsmanship that brings together precious and unexpected materials and draws inspiration from Sveva Camurati's lighting project *Palle spaziali*.



WonderGlass, Venetia. A collection of modular partitions in cast Murano glass, inspired by the shifting colors and soft light of the Venetian lagoon, transforming space through transparency and reflections.

Franco Blumer Restauri, Teiera Scoglio Tafoni. A universal symbol of hospitality and sharing, this piece in sterling silver - shaped from a single sheet, hammered entirely by hand - brings together material, gesture and nature.

The exhibition is part of the program of **The Venice Glass Week**, taking place in Venice from September 12 to 20. The Award finalists thus enter into dialogue with Hotel Gabrielli's extraordinary collection of artistic glass, comprising more than 700 chandeliers and wall sconces, including exquisite, meticulously restored examples of the Murano glassmaking tradition.

La Grande Bellezza – The Dream Factory

This extraordinary initiative results from a successful encounter between Starhotels, Fondazione Cologni dei Mestieri d'Arte and Gruppo Editoriale, an initiative of contemporary patronage, greatly desired and promoted by President and CEO Elisabetta Fabri, which sees Starhotels at the forefront in protecting and promoting the great national heritage of talent and know-how.

The project involves a series of positive activities to support the sector, with a highly active and wide-ranging conception of patronage: involving outstanding master artists in meetings and events promoted by Starhotels in its spaces and in the most prestigious craftsmanship events; exhibiting works by the best master artists in some of the Group's hotels, an outstanding showcase for the finest Italian artisanal production; creating Starhotels-branded high craftsmanship home decor lines; the institution of the biennial Starhotels Award dedicated to craftspeople, for creating works based on contests related to hospitality; supporting training for young master craftspeople; various actions of supporting and sponsoring specific initiatives and events related to the world of high craftsmanship and its leading lights.

Starhotels has the ambitious goal of giving a voice, space and concrete opportunities to the masters and enterprises of Italian craftsmanship, offering an extraordinary spotlight on the key figures in this Italian "Great Beauty", and many genuine opportunities not only for visibility and communication, but also for work: collecting the invaluable baton of the enlightened patronage that has protected Italian art and high craftsmanship and allowed it to flourish.

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Starhotels, the first Italian private hotel company, is a market leader in the hospitality industry within 4 and 5-star hotels. The group counts 34 properties, with more than 4,500 rooms and luxury residences located in the heart of the top Italian destinations, in addition to London, Paris, and New York.

For over 45 years, Starhotels has represented the excellence of Italian hospitality, embodying the values of Made in Italy, even abroad, through every detail. This vocation is also expressed through *La Grande Bellezza – The Dream Factory*, a contemporary patronage project founded in 2019 dedicated to promoting Italian high craftsmanship.

The prestigious **Starhotels Collezione** – icons of style in the world's most beautiful destinations – stand out as historic residences and boutique hotels with a unique identity, capable of reflecting the authentic soul of the cities in which they are located. Starhotels Collezione properties can be found in prime settings in Florence, Forte dei Marmi, London, Milan, New York, Paris, Rome, Saturnia, Siena, Trieste, Venice, and Vicenza.

Starhotels Premium, located in the heart of the most beautiful Italian cities – Bergamo, Bologna, Florence, Genoa, Milan, Naples, Parma, Rome, Saronno, and Turin – stand out for their strategic locations and contemporary style, providing the perfect blend of elegance and comfort, an intangible sense of well-being through excellent and welcoming service.

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