EN

ORIOL VILANOVA

CONCILIAZIONE 5
03.11.26–10.01.27

IL DOVERE URGENTE DI RESTARE UMANI



Il dovere urgente di restare umani, 2026, Installation, 558 postcards, 3.70 × 2.98 m. Site specific

For the exhibition *Il dovere urgente di restare umani*, I present a new work composed of a collection of postcards with one distinctive feature, they are written in red ink.

Red is a color charged with meaning, which varies according to culture and individual perception. On the white reverse of a postcard, red ink standsout far more than black or blue. Its presence is more visible, more difficult to ignore. Red conveys a sense of urgency. It is a color that demands attention, makes the message visible, and seems to express a desire to be read, to be understood. Words do not merely communicate something, they also make themselves known through color. The color of the ink establishes an unexpected connection between messages, people, and very different geographies.

Postcard literature could be considered a literary genre in its own right. It is a format of few words, familiar phrases, and friendly expressions, often stereotypical, much like the postcards themselves. Within this small body of literature, the words of great figures in world literature coexist with those of anonymous individuals. Messages of appreciation, information, and consideration. Everyday words. By bringing all these voices together, a kind of harmonious cacophony emerges, a multiplicity of messages that, despite their differences, find a way to coexist. Each postcard retains its individuality while, at the same time, becoming part of a larger whole in which anonymous voices intermingle and acquire a new dimension.

Here, the images on the postcards remain hidden, though we might be able to imagine them through the information on the reverse of each card.

The exhibition space functions as a vitrine, allowing a certain proximity to the work. Beyond the words they contain and the images they reproduce, the postcards preserve the trace of a gesture, someone chose an image, wrote a message, and decided to send it to another person. The postcards become relics of ordinary people. Objects that have accompanied people's lives, served to maintain bonds, convey affection, share news, or simply make their presence felt. Small material testimonies to our need to communicate and remain connected to others.

The postcard is a familiar object in the Vatican, which has historically produced and distributed a great many of them. They are still sold in the shops near the Conciliazione 5 exhibition space. As I write these lines, I realize just how prominently they feature in my collection: portraits of the popes, interiors of St. Peter's Basilica, the Swiss Guard, panoramic views, interiors of the museum and library, the Sistine Chapel and Raphael Rooms, Bernini's colonnade, and Bramante's staircase.

The exhibition in the Vatican is the next step from *Los restos* at the Spanish Pavilion of the Venice Biennale.

Oriol Vilanova
Il dovere urgente di restare umani

Conciliazione 5
Via della Concilazione 5, Rome
November 3, 2026 – January 10, 2027

Exhibition Opening
Tuesday, November 3, 2026

Presentation
Sala San Pio X, Via dell'Ospedale 1
5:30 pm

Exhibition Opening
6 – 7 pm

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