

OUTTHERE

First Encounters

A RCHITECTURE HAS OFTEN BEEN COMPARED to theater, and nowhere is the connection stronger than in the hotel lobby, where every arrival is its own drama. In Rimini, the Italian city immortalized in the fantasy-tinged films of Federico Fellini, designer Ron Arad has created a masterpiece of imagination. Visitors to the Hotel duoMo, opening in January, will be swept in from the cobblestones of the medieval quarter through curved metal doors—which Arad likens to “giant pinball flippers”—and toward an out-of-this-world reception desk (shown here in a computer rendering). “It’s the focal point,” he says of the stainless-steel form, lined with five-alarm-red shelves that “find their level like water” and serve as counterpoint to the swirling, mirrored exterior. It’s a hyperfuturist vortex that appears to have rolled to a stop, if only for a moment—not a bad metaphor for the traveler’s experience. “Hotels are places of temporary existence,” Arad notes, adding, “even if they moved the hotel, the desk would surely go somewhere else.”

—PHIL PATTON