

BR1

GOLDEN DARK AGE

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The presentation of BR1's work at Palazzo Brama unfolds across three conceptual levels, ideally linked together by an invisible common thread: the border.

A border—often fading—that outlines a new social geography in the Old Continent; that discriminates between human beings within the same society; that generates fear, exploitation, and new superstitions; and that replaces the pursuit of freedom and tolerance, championed in Europe for over five hundred years, with a new regime of deprivation.

This, among other topics, is what BR1's artistic work addresses.

The first of the three conceptual levels, located in the courtyard, reveals itself through the display of photographs from the series *Golden Dark Age*—exhibited as part of the Fotografia Europea 2018 OFF circuit—in which the artist explores the theme of the veil, its cultural significance, and its mystery. The photographs dwell on the contrast between the splendor of the emergency thermal blanket—a paradigm of the affluence of Western society—and the desolation of those wrapped in it, arriving without possessions and stripped of dignity from the shores opposite Europe's southernmost countries.

This reading is complementary to the one presented in the critical text by Annalisa Pellino, who attributes new value to a veil that, while shedding its charge of discrimination and oppression, protects female intimacy threatened by the society of the spectacle.

The second conceptual level develops behind the photographs, inside SPAZIO21, serving as a sort of conceptual deepening. Here, BR1 uses other mediums—painting, sculpture, and video—to illustrate the theme of physical and cultural barriers separating Mediterranean peoples and dividing Islamic traditions from the secular culture of the Western world. In this space, the reflection centers on new walls, “deprived” freedoms, unacknowledged rights, communication, and inclusion. Crucial to this selection of works are the visual documentations of the artist's advocacy and public interventions (documented through photographs of urban and non-urban actions), reminding us all that the theme of the “other” and integration must be confronted, not ignored, and that the ultimate goal of social inclusion is to guarantee the integration of every individual into society, regardless of limiting factors.

The third conceptual space is located apart from the previous ones, at the entrance to the offices of Lo Studio. It houses a selection of works in which the themes of equity and equal opportunities between the two cultures are enriched by a variety of images from daily life, created using collage and painting techniques. In this final collection, the border lies within our imagination, situated between the line of eyes exposed through the slit of a *niqab* and the colors of a vibrant *hijab*.

The presentation of these works fosters reflection on a highly emotionally charged topic in our contemporary society. At the dawn of a millennium marked by a virulent wave of migratory flows—which are unsettling the already fragile political balances of the European Union—BR1's work draws our attention to the social consequences of an issue that has already divided Western nations.

The dream of a United Europe, made up of a federation of peoples with ambitions of peace, prosperity, and solidarity, faces the phenomenon of non-EU migration and its social implications, generating insecurity during an economic juncture already marked by stagnation, political uncertainty, and precarious employment.

The sustainability of the European model of integration depends on the ability to overcome this challenge, which our society has a duty to face responsibly.

This is why BR1's work is relevant.

If one of the purposes of art is to spark debate and reflection on our future, the artist shows us a path forward. His language, both immediate and respectful, emphasizes equality, freedoms, and respect for human rights, while offering us a lesson in civic responsibility and an invitation to a new future.

(Locri, 1984) is a visual artist; his work is charged with social content and reflects on the contradictions between the effects of the global economy and the culture and traditions of the Mediterranean peoples.

Through interventions made primarily in the public space, his work explores aspects of integration and migratory flows—the most significant social and political phenomenon of our time—focusing attention on both the crisis of Eurocentric values and that of Western hegemony.

Central to his artistic research are the status of women in society and the veil, considered a watershed symbol between Western and Islamic cultures.