



ARTWORK BY LBS: "THE MASK OF PAIN"

Photo courtesy LBS

Steccato of Cutro Beach, Italy

February 26, 2025

INTERNACIONAL

STREET ART: REDEFINING SEMANTIC LANGUAGE IN ACTIVISM THE MASSACRE OF MIGRANTS IN CUTRO (2023) AND THE ARTISTIC OPERATION OF LBS IN THE MEMORY GABRIELE ROMEO - AICA/ITALY

ABSTRACT: Bruno Salvatore Latella, aka LBS, is a young visual artist born in the city of Reggio Calabria, Italy, in 1999. Gabriele Romeo interviewed him on the occasion of his recent donation in the Municipality of Crotone, during the commemorative anniversary dedicated to the migrants who were victims of that very violent shipwreck, which occurred in Italy, on the Calabrian coast, on February 26, 2023. His artwork refers to the news value that the research of the visual arts in the new languages of Street Art assumes in relation to the ferment of activism and the multiple fundamental democratic languages of civil rights, in a dialogue open to all social classes to raise awareness of public opinion, Italian, European, world, so as to help it reflect and raise awareness of the many victims and the many misfortunes that immigration often entails.

KEYWORDS: art, streetart, Calabria, Italy, freedom, activism, Bruno Salvatore Latella, Gabriele Romeo

Finding myself as a correspondent for Italy, in my dynamic observatory that I build daily from all my numerous trips that see me every week divided between the North and the South of Italy, from Venice, Turin and Reggio Calabria, I decided to deal with a theme lateral to visual art, precisely of the era that I call Netflix Generation. In these last three years, the news, the pages of newspapers, or rather of news programs that fill the television schedules in columns overflowing with the most dramatic situations, the most varied to describe our world - with an extension from social media - have led to a redefinition of the semantic superstructures on young artists, so as to decode them from street-art, (think of the activist work of JR who arrived for the first time in Italy in Turin in 2023, with the great success of the exhibition entitled *JR. Déplacé·e·s*, at the Gallerie d'Italia) to the new allergic urban pollens of visual activism and repositioning in what I define as “art-grammar” the media languages of the phigital stele, between incursions of the Past

Up multiples, and performance reforms that in this context are called, in jargon, sit-in.

This study aims to be impartial, not ideological, and the following conversation with the artist aims to serve the reader as a moment of comparison in this discussion to think about the multiple functions that art ethically holds, especially when it performs a social function socially untied from the logic of the market and is destined to live among the “community”.



Bruno Salvatore Latella: visual artist born in Reggio Calabria in 1999 - Photo: LensCulture

Bruno Salvatore Latella, aka LBS, is a young visual artist born in Reggio Calabria in 1999. Graduated from the Single Cycle Master's Course in Primary Education Sciences, educator and activist for human rights, from social analysis to visual art, LBS uniquely combines pedagogical humanistic studies with his artistic production, transforming ideas and visions into phigital visual works, halfway between the virtual and the real world, trying to stimulate, through Street Art and the exhibitions of his works at Public and Private entities, the now “decadent” consciences of the human.

Situated at the crossroads between pedagogism and “arte alacre”, Latella's artistic activity has grown gradually; coming from a classical musical education at the Francesco Cilea Conservatory, and always in contact with contemporary arts, in 2016 thanks to his passion for photography he began his journey as an amateur photographer following RAI television crews together with his non-biological father, thus creating a work of visual documentation of a reportage-type of phenomena

concerning the social, and then in 2018 he began an activity aimed at the union between conceptism and artistic photography with his first personal exhibition at the Caffè

Storico Letterario le Giubbe Rosse in Florence in 2019, with the GHOSTS project, an exploratory field of action on the concept of postmodern ghosts cited by the theories of the



Photo: courtesy Luigi Maida Place Steccato of Cutro Beach, Italy Febraury 26, 2025

philosopher Gunther Anders. From the social stimulus that the pandemic in 2020 transmitted, that is, the need to get out of the walls of domestic confinement, the artist began to devote himself to the activity of Street Art of social denunciation, evolving into a typology of semantic language, dealing with themes ranging from social and symbolic to political and hermetic ones; simultaneously building with Urban Art a teaching methodology for the “oppressed” (a core of thought born from the ideas framed on the research of the pedagogist Paulo Freire), working on an educational project in 2023 at the Ministerial Community for Minors of Reggio Calabria, which became an academic research work for the degree thesis entitled “*Art as an expressive and educational means of youth discontent; The Urban Art project Is it possible?!*”. Also following his artistic research project Globalized Street Art, which took place in October 2023 and was based on a simultaneous posting of the work *No Money, No War, No Web* in ten different countries around the globe,

glocalizing his art. His powerful and socially critical street art has received widespread recognition and appearances in national media. LBS courageously addresses the problems of society, inviting the viewer to openly confront the challenges of the contemporary world.

His “art-lens” vision of the “liquid society” symbolically and allegorically explores the cataracts of contemporary society and the lack of dreams and certainties of the new “artificial” generations. With a technique that combines photography, digital drawing, fine art print design and painting, LBS draws inspiration from different artistic currents, creating an incisive visual language, alongside the literal transcriptions of the hypertext of the enunciated messages. His works communicate, in fact, a conceptual and social message, with a pedagogical profile that reflects his academic training.

FOLLOWING THE MEETING WITH THE ARTIST IN FRONT OF THE POSE OF ONE OF HIS URBAN PASTE UPS, DEDICATED TO THE CASE OF IMPRISONMENT

OF THE KURDISH-IRANIAN ACTIVIST MAYSOON MAJIDI, DETAINED IN THE PRISON OF REGGIO CALABRIA, ACQUITTED ON FEBRUARY 5, 2025, WE ASK HIM TO TELL US ABOUT HIS LATEST PROJECT DEDICATED TO THE STECCATO DI CUTRO MASSACRE, THE SHIPWRECK OF AN IMMIGRANT BOAT IN 2023, WHICH LED TO THE DEATH OF ABOUT 94 PEOPLE, INCLUDING 35 CHILDREN. OUR FIRST QUESTION IS HOW AND WHY THIS WORK WAS BORN.

*The work entitled **Born with the guilt of being born** was created to tell and artistically disseminate one of the many horrors of my native land Calabria, but above all of Italy as a whole: The Cutro massacre, called a massacre precisely because of the dramatic scale of the event, carries several shared responsibilities, especially on the lack of intervention by the many institutions responsible, due to an international human rights system that is collapsing. The uniqueness of this event was above all for the solidarity expressed by*

us Calabrian citizens, who united in grief, went to the site of the crime a few days after the news to support the families of the victims, who had come to Italy. There were intense days of sadness, regret and peaceful rebellion. One of the things that remained most impressed on me was precisely when, during the national protest of March 11, we, united people, all went to the beach where this tragedy took place, still finding the remains of the debris emerging from the beach and the sea. A few days earlier, on March 2, the great personality of our Head of State, the President of the Republic of Italy, Sergio Mattarella, also intervened, representing all of us Italians with his moving visit to the San Giovanni di Dio Hospital in Crotona and to the PalaMilone. Two years after those dramatic days, I returned to the land of Crotona for the last hearing that led to the acquittal of the activist Maysoon Majidi. Walking through the city, my memory revived those images seen daily in that cold February, and learning about the story of KR46M0 (the identification code of one of



ARTWORK BY LBS:
“BORN WITH THE GUILT OF BEING BORN”
Past Up/ Affiche,
Photo courtesy LBS
PalaMilone, Crotona, Italy
February 26, 2025

*the children who were victims of the shipwreck, disclosed by the journalist Vincenzo Montalcini in his book *Quale umanità?*, published by IDEMEDIA) I decided to design such an emblematic work that could do justice to the victims of the shipwreck and with the delicate hope of raising public awareness and the Italian and European institutions on how much still needs to be done to protect the rights of the most unfortunate and disadvantaged people.*

FROM A PHENOMENOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW, EXPLAIN TO ME THE CHARACTERISTICS RELATED TO THE DUPLICITY OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THIS RESEARCH WORK OF YOURS, WHICH EPISTOLARY, MUSICAL AND VISUAL EMBLEMS OF THE PAST COULD HAVE A MEANING IN THE REAFFIRMATION OF YOUR VALUES AND IN THE INFLUENCE OF YOUR IDEATIONAL THOUGHT?

We live in a world of injustice and discrimination, of expectations and disappointments, of positive and negative actions, of apparent inclusion and decisive exclusion. A world that

*appreciates and mythologizes the exclusivity of a few individuals. Is the exclusive also excluded? What is the excluded? The deviant perhaps? And what is deviance? Everything that goes outside the norm is epistemologically deviant. Right norms and wrong norms... We live in a society that hopes and tends towards an inclusive model, creating ideological boundaries that close themselves in a hyperuranion made of walls, closures and injustices. Thinking of Sartre we could take the idea of the wall as an example or we could think of Pink Floyd and their masterpiece *The Wall*. WE DON'T NEED NO EDUCATION.*

Shaking consciences is something utopian, we know! Today the function of the visual medium has become almost a basic necessity. We artificially consume projections of utopian ghosts, but everyone responds to the scandal present. The brutal circumcision of the external walls and the power represented by the internal walls led me to think of an operation, in collaboration with the Rete 26 febbraio committee, which was based on a dualist performance that involved

the declination of two versions: a variant of the same phigital work, with the language of street art at the PalaMilone in Crotona, (external walls); the other instead a painted monotype that was donated to the Municipality of Crotona (internal walls). The performance included a ritual route during the night of February 25, starting with the sit-in dedicated to the anniversary of the massacre, making the monotype emerge from the sand in a procession that took it from the beach to the town hall. On the pilgrim route, a stop was made at the Palamilone, to place on the walls of the building the work of street art technique affiche dedicated to the anniversary, which with its brutality aims to educate citizens to active citizenship, and also to remember how in the face of a tragedy, mutual aid by the people becomes a gesture of solidarity of re-emerged conscience. A clear reference, this, to the chained hand of the fisherman that bursts into the scene from the left diagonal of the composition.



ARTWORK BY LBS: "THE MASK OF PAIN", Photo courtesy LBS, Steccato of Cutro Beach, Italy, February 26, 2025



Gabriele Romeo:
critic, journalist,
investigator, teacher.

GABRIELE ROMEO

He was born in Palermo, Sicily, in 1983. After obtaining a high school diploma in applied art from the State Institute of Mosaic Art in Monreale, he graduated in Art Science and Technology from the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy of the University of Palermo, and later obtained a Master's degree in History of Art (contemporary curriculum) from the Faculty of Literature and Philosophy at the Alma Mater Studiorum (University of Bologna). In 2014 he specialized in the curation of photographic images, attending the advanced training course called ICON at the

Modena Photography Foundation. In 2017 he was appointed curator of the Pavilion of the Plurinational State of Bolivia at the 57th International Art Biennale in Venice. In 2021 he was elected president of the AICA Italia section (International Association of Art Critics) and holds the position of President of the Italian Scientific Committee. For several years he taught various academic subjects: History of contemporary art, Multimedia Languages, History of applied arts, History and methodology of art criticism. He is a permanent professor, 1st level (Full Professor) in Phenomenology of contemporary arts, teaching the same at the

Albertina Academy of Fine Arts in Turin, Piedmont. He also taught at the Academy of Fine Arts in Reggio Calabria, Calabria.

In addition, he has also held several workshops related to those involved in the ERASMUS+ Teaching Mobility programme: University of the Arts, Helsinki (2018); TAI, Escuela Universitaria de Artes y Espectáculos, Madrid (2019); Athens School of Fine Art (ASFA), Polytechnic, Athens (2020-2021); Javna Ustanova Univerzitet Crne Gore, Podgorica, Faculty of Fine Arts (Montenegro), (2022); Panepistimio Dytikis Attikis / University of West Attica (2023). Gabriele Romeo is the president of Nuova Aica Italia.