



BLACK LIVES MATTER ITALY

AND THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM

The majority of people in Italy, as well as abroad, are unaware of the long history of the African diaspora on the Italian peninsula. There is a general assumption that black people are a relatively new presence in Italy and are thus viewed as historical and national outsiders. I have been working on investigating Blackness and related projects for more than a decade. Blackness in Italy is currently under-reported and under-addressed in virtually all media and educational circles. Most films and articles which discuss the experiences of Black people in Europe focus primarily on nation-specific studies usually involving the United Kingdom and France. Rarely do such works concentrate on Italy, a country that is the subject of an infinite number of studies when it comes to art, history and design. The vast majority of people around the world think of Italians as exclusively white people.

2020 is a pivotal year providing an opportunity for the Western world to question itself genuinely as to whether enough has been done to portray and include the histories of people of African descent in western society. Recent events in the United States of America are also having an effect in Italy. Now is the perfect moment for people to ask themselves whether Black lives matter in Italy and if the country is ready to reappraise the way in which it talks about itself. How can anyone define themselves as antiracist when the Black people living in Italian society are frozen out of Italian history to the extent they are completely absent from it? How can people define themselves as antiracist when the same Black people are excluded from the way in which Italy portrays itself except in the use of stereotypes? When the horrors of Italian colonialism are scrubbed from history, or frozen out by collective memory?

In many events I have given a talk in the past in American colleges one of the most frequent questions was whether there is racism in Italy and how it differs from the American one.

This multi-media lecture aims to give a reasoned answer considering the nature of American institutional systemic racism structurally and statistically different from the Italian one, offering the audience of the event a cultural and semantic framework to interpret the current condition in Italy with the contest of the past of Italian Colonialism. When was racism born in Italy? Who are the Afro-Italian activists? Which is the composition and history of Black Italy? Is there any collective memory of the Italian past? On which battle is black activism in Italy engaged?

At the end of the event, also through the Q and A, the audience will have more knowledge not only about the Italian context but also about concepts like: privilege, power, prejudice more useful to make personal and US-related consideration.

Duration 45 minutes + Q & A (flexible)

Language: English or Italian

some of the topics:

Africans in the Roman Empire, Renaissance, Modern Era in Italy • Italian scientific racism from the transformation of Lombroso's school to the fascist • Italian invasion of Horn of Africa • New Racist policy in the colonies and racial laws in Italy • Exploitation of Black Women's Body • Black Italians Digital Activism and Bloggers • Differences between BLM Italy and BLM United States •