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The Invisible Man

This fascinating new exhibit is much more than meets the eye. **Tiffany Parks** takes a closer look.

Born in 1973 in Shandong, a western province of China, critically acclaimed photographer **Liu Bolin** has become known as the “invisible man.” His calling card? Images in which he camouflages himself into the background with the precise application of body paint that captures whatever is directly behind him, rendering him all but invisible. In 2017, he completed a series of photographs in which he is literally hidden amongst the stones of the Colosseum and the grand halls of the Reggia di Caserta. These images, along with 70 others spanning the past decade, are on display for the first time at the Vittoriano Complex. The exhibit features many iconic Italian locations, including the Arena of Verona, La Scala opera house in Milan, Venice’s St. Mark’s Square, and the ruins of Pompeii, as well as historic sites

around the world, such as the Wall Street Bull and Tiananmen Square. The works are a synthesis of multiple art forms—painting, installation, and photography—which come together to try and capture the present moment, suspended between the weight of history and the consequences of the future. Seven sections make up the exhibit, with themes ranging from the artist’s journey through China, the strong influence of Italian culture on his work, and his travels throughout the rest of the world. Other themes tackle social issues, such as “Shelves,” which looks at the frenzy of consumerism, and “Migrants,” a powerful series of photographs that captures African migrants who are camouflaged into the background of the very boats that they arrived on. From 2 March at the Vittoriano Complex.