Many urban projects realized during the Ventennio remain part of the Italian landscape and, together with architectural monuments and works of art, create a constellation of surviving images of Fascist visual culture in contemporary Italy. As part of the national cultural heritage these artefacts are protected by preservation laws. However, in the ambiguous process whereby Italy confronts its Fascist and colonial past, they have also become a nexus of critical debate and political struggle.

The conference focuses on the material history of Fascist-era works of art, monuments and architecture in Italy, and examines their afterlife and reception in the longue durée. In order to frame the contemporary debate, a transdisciplinary approach and a historical perspective will take as its starting point the iconoclasm following the Fall of the Regime (July 25th, 1943). Papers will explore the ambiguous transition from Fascism to the Republic and the dynamics of postwar censorship. Moreover, the critical examination of artistic historiography, together with the main narratives of the history of Italian art, aims to underline elements of continuity throughout the 20th century. It also permits a re-examination of the damnatio memoriae implicating some of the artists close to the Regime and the role played by private collections in the preservation and survival of Fascist-era works of art.

Probing the theoretical concept of ‘difficult heritage’ in relation to the peculiarities of the Italian case, and in a comparative perspective with other nations, the conference addresses issues of restoration, display, and critical preservation of Fascist-era artefacts located in public and institutional spaces. The event aims to foster a discussion open to different disciplines such as History, History of Architecture, Heritage Studies, Literature, Philosophy, and Anthropology, and to examine the potential contribution of Art History to the topic. Strategies of memorialization and the role of contemporary art interventions will be discussed in an open dialogue with artists focusing on political monuments and multilayered memories in public space.

Presentations will be held in English and Italian. The conference and the discussion are open to the public. No registration required. The project is made possible in part by the Fellows’ Project Fund of the American Academy in Rome.
Monday, March 11, 2019

10:00 am  Welcome  
TRISTAN WEDDigen, Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rome

10:10 am  Introduction  
CARmEN BELMONTE, American Academy in Rome

10:30 – 11.45 am  Works of Art and Historiography  
Chair  
PETER BENSON MILLER, American Academy in Rome  
GEULIANA PIERI, Royal Holloway, University of London  
Michele dANTIni, University per Stranieri di Perugia/IMT Scuola di Alt Studi, Lucca  
Religioni politiche. Amnesia e rimozione nella storia dell’arte italiana postbellica

11.45 am  Break

12.00 am – 1.15 pm  The Multiple Lives of Buildings  
Chair  
LYNNIE LANCaster, Ohio University/American Academy in Rome  
ROSSALIA VITTORINI, Università degli Studi di Roma ‘Torvergata’  
Architettura e fascismo: vita e destino delle opere per il regime  
HANNAH MALONE, Freie Universität Berlin  
Questioning the Idea of Italy’s Fascist Architecture as Difficult Heritage

1.15 pm  Lunch

2.15 – 3.45 pm  Monumentality  
Chair  
MARIA BREMER, Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rome  
ANDREA PINOTTI, Università degli Studi di Milano  
The Negation of the Monument. Contemporary Strategies of Memorialization  
NINA FISCHER & Margarett El Sanvi, Berlin  
Projection of Freedom of Movement, short film, 2018

3.45 pm  On-site visit to L’Italia tra le Arti e le Scienze by Mario Sironi (speakers only)  
with ELIANA BULLI, Sapienza, Università degli Studi di Roma

Tuesday, March 12, 2019

10:00 am  Welcome  
JOHN OCHSENDORF, American Academy in Rome

10.15 – 12.45 am  From Fascism to the Republic  
Chair  
CARmEN BELMONTE, American Academy in Rome  
ESTER COEN, Independent scholar, Rome  
Corrado Cagli 1935 Race of the Barber Horses: Restoring and Interpreting  
JOSHUA ARTHUR, West Virginia University  
Revolutionary Iconoclasm and Damnatio Memoriae after the Fall of Mussolini

11.45 am  Break

12.00 – 12.45 am  FRAncO BALDASSO, Bard College, New York/American Academy in Rome  
Fear of Freedom. Carlo Levi and Alberto Savinio on the Legacy of Fascism in Early Postwar Italy

1.00 pm  Lunch

2.00 – 3.15 pm  Politics of Memory  
Chair  
JIM CARTER, University of Michigan/American Academy in Rome  
FLAMINIA BartolinI, Cambridge Heritage Research Centre, University of Cambridge  
From Iconoclasm to Heritage: Mussolini’s Legacy, Display and Politics in Contemporary Italy  
LIZA CANDIDI T. C., Humboldt-Universität Berlin/Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca  
Architettura e arte monumentale pubblica. Politiche di memoria, le due Germanie e il post-89

3.45 pm  Break

3.30 – 4.45 pm  Political Monuments and Contemporary Art  
Chair  
LINDSAY HARRIS, Independent scholar, Rome  
ALESSANDRO GAL LICCHio, TELEMM, Aix-Marseille Université  
Relations Between Italian Architectural Modernism and Contemporary Art in Tirana (Albania) through the Prism of the ‘Unwanted Heritage’  
KARIN OLIVIER, Tyler School of Art, Temple University/American Academy in Rome  
Witness

4.45 pm  Discussion

6.00 pm  Conversations/Conversazioni  
Are Monuments History?  
DELL UPton, UCLA, Los Angeles/American Academy in Rome  
AdriAchA ZeVi, architect, art historian, the president of Fondazione Bruno Zevi