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 long 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 WEIDIGEN, Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rome

10.10 am | Introduction
CARMEN BELMONTE, American Academy in Rome
Fascist-Era Artefacts in Italy: From Iconoclasm to Critical Preservation

10.30 – 11.45 am | Works of Art and Historiography
Chair: PETER BENSON MILLER, American Academy in Rome
GIULIANA PIERI, Royal Holloway, University of London
MICHELE DANTINI, Università per Stranieri di Perugia/IMT Scuola di Altis 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: LYNNE LANCaster, Ohio University/ American Academy in Rome
ROSA L 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 & MARGAN EL SANI, Berlin
Projection of Freedom of Movement, short film, 2018

3.15 pm | Break

4.30 – 5.30 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
Crorado Cagli 1935 Race of the Barber Horses: Restoring and Interpreting
JOSHUA ARTHURS, West Virginia University
Revolutionary Iconoclasm and Damnatio Memoriae after the Fall of Mussolini

11.45 am | Break

12.00 – 12.45 am | Fear of Freedom. Carlo Levi and Alberto Savinio on the Legacy of Fascism in Early Postwar Italy
FRANCO BALDASSO, Bard College, New York

1.00 pm | Lunch

2.00 – 3.15 pm | Politics of Memory
Chair: JAM 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 CANDID T., Humboldt-Universität Berlin / Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca
Architettura e arte monumentale pubblica. Politiche di memoria, le due Germanie e il post-89

3.15 pm | Break

3.30 – 4.45 pm | Political Monuments and Contemporary Art
Chair: LINDSAY HARRIS, Independent scholar, Rome
ALESSANDRO GALlicchio, TELEMMé, 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, (2019 AAR Resident), UCLA, Los Angeles/UC, Berkeley
ADACHIARA ZEVi, architect, art historian, the president of Fondazione Bruno Zevi