

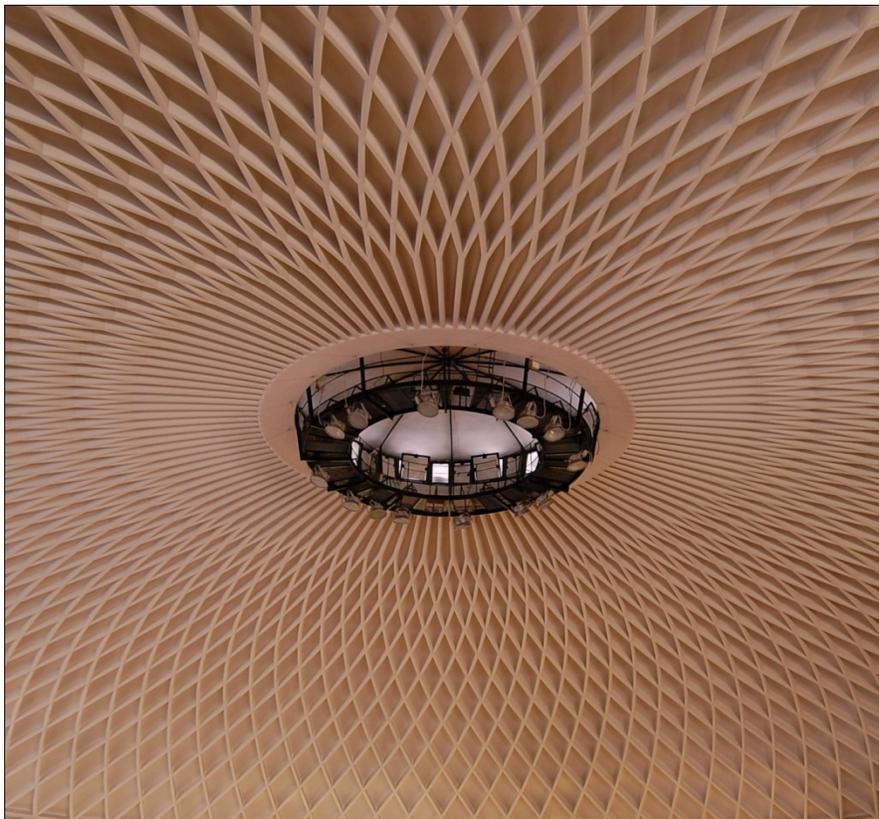
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## The American Academy in Rome Announces *The 1960 Rome Olympic Games Conference*

The Olympics that Changed Rome, Revived Italy and Captivated the World: Television, Cold War Tensions, and the Bid for 2020

30 September – 2 October 2010



Detail of Rome's Palazzetto dello Sport - © Corey Brennan

**Rome** - The American Academy in Rome is proud to present The 1960 Rome Olympic Games Conference, a comprehensive forum commemorating the 50th anniversary of the 1960 Rome Summer Olympics. The multi-disciplinary three-day conference will take place in Rome across several institutions from Thursday 30 September until Saturday 2 October 2010. In addition to scholarly presentations, site visits will be held in Rome's Villaggio Olimpico and Foro Italico the morning of 2 October.

Corey Brennan, Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the School of Classical Studies, American Academy in Rome, commented: *"There are two prevalent views on Rome 1960, that it was 'the last Olympiad on a human scale', but*

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*that the XVII Summer Games also represent a turning point for the history of modernity and in that sense 'changed the world'. Over the course of three days we are going to explore those somewhat contradictory ideas, and examine the Rome Games as a cultural as well as athletic event. The fact that Rome's preparations for the 1960 Games also mark the last major intervention in the city's urban fabric positively invites reflection on the event's impact and effects, especially now that Rome has entered a serious bid for the 2020 Olympics."*

The 1960 Rome Summer Olympic Games marked a turning point in both the history of the Olympics and modernity. As the first televised Games, these events would be broadcasted and watched by audiences worldwide. It was at these Games where US track stars Rafer Johnson and Wilma Rudolph would assert their pre-eminence, with Rudolph being the first woman to win three gold medals in track and field in a single Games, Johnson receiving the decathlon gold medal, and boxer Cassius Clay beginning his epic and storied career on the global stage.

These were also the Games where the USSR powerfully asserted its dominance in women's gymnastics as did Italy in men's cycling, and where the barefoot Ethiopian runner Abebe Bikila, just 25 years after the Italian invasion of his country, won the dramatic torch-lit marathon competition that traversed the Appian Way and finished at the Arch of Constantine.

But the Games also laid bare the Cold War tensions between East and West, friction between China and Taiwan, civil rights issues in the US, apartheid in South Africa, and anti-colonial sentiment across a range of participating nations—as well as a host of newly emerging problems that ran the gamut from drug use by athletes to ethically questionable running shoe endorsements.

To house the events, the Games' organizers adapted ancient Roman ruins (Baths of Caracalla, Basilica of Maxentius), appropriated Fascist-era constructions (the ex-Foro Mussolini complex), and built several major venues. Chief among these are Pier Luigi Nervi's iconic Palazzo dello Sport (with Marcello Piacentini) and the Palazzetto dello Sport (with Annibale Vitellozzi), as well as the Villaggio Olimpico of Adalberto Libera and Luigi Moretti, among others.

In addition, much of Rome's infrastructure, from the water supply to the roads, the airport system, and public transportation, saw a significant upgrade, despite causing some irretrievable damage to the historical urban fabric. The story of the post-event adaptation of structures built for the Olympics—such as the Villaggio Olimpico, turned into housing for government workers—is in itself a crucial component of the story of these Games.

These are but some of the many topics that will be discussed at the symposium. In addition to the American Academy in Rome, sessions will take place in Rome's Centro di Studi Americani and at the Foro Italico. The complete program of the conference will be available on August 25, 2010 on the Academy's website, [www.aarome.org](http://www.aarome.org).

### **Thursday 30 September**

The conference will kick off with a keynote address by David Maraniss, author of *Rome 1960*, who will be speaking at the Centro di Studi Americani. Maraniss has been a Pulitzer Prize finalist three times and won the Prize in 1993 for his newspaper coverage of then presidential candidate Bill Clinton.

### **Friday 1 October**

There will be two sets of discussions at the American Academy in Rome in the morning and afternoon with presentations by both Italian and American scholars. Ann Keen (Rutgers University) and Marzia Marandola (Università degli Studi di Roma "Tor Vergata") will examine the engineering accomplishments of Pier Luigi Nervi. In addition, Alicia Imperiale (Temple University) and Marida Talamona (Università degli Studi di Roma "La Sapienza") will focus their dialogue on the Olympic Village.

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The afternoon session will commence with Susan Schafer (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University) and Nadia Zonis (City University of New York) discussing the manner in which the Olympics necessitated a reevaluation of Rome as a modern city. Simon Martin (British School at Rome) will discuss how the Olympics seemed to change the world but not Rome, and Rita Liberti (California State University, East Bay) and Maureen Smith (California State University, Sacramento) will discuss Wilma Rudolph. Leonardo Tiberi (Istituto Luce) will screen *Sul Filo di Lana*, his documentary of the Italian political background to the 1960 Rome Games, at which Gianni Alemanno, the Mayor of Rome, and Renata Polverini, the President of Lazio, have been invited to be present.

### **Saturday 2 October**

On Saturday morning, Corey Brennan of the American Academy in Rome with Paolo Pedinelli of the Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano will conduct a site visit to the Villaggio Olimpico and Foro Italico areas.

The day will conclude in the Foro Italico with a panel discussion led by athletes such as Lucinda Williams Adams on their memories from the 1960 Rome Olympic Games as well as a final discussion on the 1960 Games and Rome's bid to host the Games in 2020.

Collaborating institutions include the British School at Rome, Centro Studi Americani, the Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano, Istituto Luce, Reale Circolo Canottieri Tevere Remo, and Università degli Studi di Roma "Foro Italico."

To preregister for the conference (free), email [corey.brennan@aarome.org](mailto:corey.brennan@aarome.org).

### **For more information:**

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### **The American Academy in Rome**

Established in 1894 and chartered by an Act of Congress in 1905, the American Academy in Rome is a leading center for independent studies and advanced research in the arts and humanities. Situated on the Janiculum, the highest hill within the walls of Rome, the Academy today remains a private institution supported by gifts from individuals, foundations, corporations, and the memberships of colleges, universities, and arts and cultural organizations as well as by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Each year, through a national competition, the Rome Prize is awarded to approximately thirty individuals working in Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Early Modern, or Modern Italian Studies, and Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Design, Historic Preservation and Conservation, Literature, Musical Composition, or Visual Art. The application deadline is November 1st. The Academy community also includes a select group of Residents (RAAR), distinguished artists and scholars invited by the Director. For more information please visit [www.aarome.org](http://www.aarome.org).