

## **Call for Papers: *The Afterlife of Fascism: The Reception of Modern Italian Architecture and Urbanism***

Nearly 75 years after the regime's end, questions about the built legacy of Italian Fascism continue to provoke polemic responses and questions. Mussolini's government constructed thousands of new buildings across the Italian peninsula, islands, and in the colonial territories of North Africa. From government buildings, hospitals, and post offices to stadia, housing, summer camps, Fascist party headquarters, and ceremonial spaces, the physical legacy of the regime maintains a presence in nearly every Italian town. Infrastructure projects such as roads, railways and bridges bear the imprint of Fascism: manhole covers of sewer systems in small towns across Italy are still marked by the regime's insignia today. In some areas, such as the Pontine marshes and Asmara, Eritrea, the regime built entirely new quarters or towns as part of land reclamation projects and its colonial agenda.

Histories of Italian architecture and urbanism have documented and examined the vast body of work constructed by the regime. Scholars have debated whether these works of architecture remain worthy of study due to their remarkable form alone, because they satisfactorily symbolize a body of ideas, or both? Moreover, scholars have deliberated whether the political intention and physical form can be separated; that is, can a great fascist building be valued as art abstracted from the ideology that produced it? How do we make sense of the role of the architects who worked for the regime? Was the architect the source or merely the conduit of political and often poetic architectural expression? While these debates persist and continue to inspire scholarship about modern Italian architecture, a new dilemma has surfaced: what to do with these political constructions as they age and in the wake of change? How are they envisioned by their current constituents and citizens, and what is their destiny?

*The Afterlife of Fascism* will investigate what has become of the architectural and urban projects of Italian Fascism; how have sites been transformed or adapted; and what do these sites mean today? We invite submissions that examine the afterlife of fascist architecture through studies of destruction, adaptation, debates over re-use, artistic interventions, and

even routine daily practices, which may slowly alter collective understandings of a site. The volume will consider whether these structures and their material remains embody or retain some essence of the defeated political movement or, in contrast, whether they stand as reminders of the fragility of the connection between meaning and architectural form.

Questions for consideration may include:

- How do changes in the constructed landscapes of Fascism reflect evolving relationships among national identity, political authority and the physical landscape?
- What happens when the modernity of fascist architecture becomes historicized alongside the monuments of popes and emperors, when modernity becomes part of tradition, or when the avant-garde becomes subject to historic preservation?
- What do fascist constructions mean to the generations of Italians whose experience of the regime is limited to history textbooks and ancestral tales? How do the meanings of these sites change when they no longer have the power to conjure memories of the regime?
- What do instances of preservation, adaptation or indifference to fascist sites tell us about the nature of the connection between political authority and place?
- How does political power operate through design at scales ranging from domestic design to infrastructure? How, for example, did the constructions of fascism shape Italian culture through spatial practices? Can spatial practices be divorced from the original political intentions? Or do daily rituals shaped by the constructed spaces of fascism still bear witness to the intentions of the regime decades later?
- After the fall of the regime, how were connections between architecture and politics renegotiated in the service of postwar political agendas? How, for example, did debates over what was fascist, anti-fascist, or Italian revise stylistic associations? How was history revised and/or redacted to serve new purposes in the postwar era?
- How did those architects associated with fascism rewrite their own histories through design or activism in the postwar era?

Through a critical history of the reception of fascist-era architecture and urbanism, *The Afterlife of Fascism* seeks to broaden our understanding of the relationships between politics and place. It aims to build on histories of the reception of politically charged sites in the modern era, which highlight how interventions, practices, and events have altered

meaning even as physical forms often remain. Scott Sandage, for example, traces the evolution of our collective understanding of the Lincoln Memorial from a site intended to commemorate the preservation of the Union to one that associates Lincoln with emancipation and memorializes the civil rights movement. In *Ghosts of Berlin*, Brian Ladd analyzes the debates surrounding the many politically charged sites of Berlin and brings to light how the memories of each era in the city's modern history are reflected and constructed through debates over meaning, use, and form. Kristin Ann Hass's *Carried to the Wall* considers how the meaning of the Vietnam War was negotiated through the reception of the Vietnam Wall through an analysis of the objects left at the wall. In doing so, she reminds us of the power of individuals, ordinary people, to engage in these contests over meanings and of place.

We invite papers on fascist architecture and urbanism that contribute to this discourse on reception through studies of the negotiations among politics, identity, memory, and place. Interested authors should submit an abstract of 400-500 words and a C.V. to co-editors Kay Bea Jones ([kaybeajones@gmail.com](mailto:kaybeajones@gmail.com)) and Stephanie Pilat ([spilat@ou.edu](mailto:spilat@ou.edu)) by Monday, **16 October 2017**. Decisions will be made by December 2017. Papers of 4,000 – 8,000 words will be due on 15 June 2018. Papers from accepted abstracts will undergo peer-review before publication.