

Call for Papers: International conference Sites of Transit in Europe from WW2 to the present. History, Spaces, Memories". Carpi, Italy, 4-5 October 2018

The conference aims to analyse the roles and uses of transit camps and sites in the European historical, geographical and cultural context from WW2 to today from a multidisciplinary and comparative perspective. The two-day conference is organized by the Fondazione Campo Fossoli, whose mission is to preserve and transmit the history and memories of this Italian site of transit.

Fossoli is a key example of a site of transit within the broader history of forced population displacements in 20th-century Europe. In 1942 and 1943, under the Fascist Royal Army, Fossoli worked as a POW camp for British prisoners. In 1943-1944, under the control of the Fascists and, afterward, the Nazis, Fossoli was a transit camp and site of deportation to Nazi concentration and extermination camps for Jews and political opponents of Fascism, arrested by the Nazis, and transported to Germany as forced labourers or victims of genocide. In the post-war years up until the 1970s, Fossoli hosted "undesirable foreign refugees", the Nomadelfia Catholic community founded for orphans, and finally the San Marco village for Istrian-Dalmatian refugees. Several of the major turning points in 20th-century history intertwine in Fossoli, making it a key case-study.

The Fossoli case touches on a number of important general issues for the study of sites of transit. The site of transit is a place in which different memories and meanings overlap. Decade after decade, transit camps are used and re-used for different, sometimes antagonistic purposes, with heterogeneous events and stories that write and overwrite the very meaning of the place. Sites of transit are places in which meanings are stratified through time, and in which their uses and the different roles they play change together with the historical context.

We invite abstracts for papers that deal with, but are not limited to, the following aspects:

- The history of Fascist and Nazi concentration and POW camps and of the different deportation paths in the territories occupied by the Nazis; the reconstruction of the Nazi concentration camp system network and its organization; the history/the analysis of the complex phase that followed the conflict, from the attempts at post-war justice to the failed purges, from the management of war refugees, returning soldiers and displaced persons, to forced migrations.
- The reconstruction of the semiotic transformations that sites of transit undergo through the decades, focusing on symbolic resources and different discursive practices: from the collection of individual memories of those who lived and live in the camps, to the way in which local populations perceive the camp as a inner and/or alien space within the community fabric; from media discourses on the camp to the policies that constitute the camp as object or subject of institutional practices from security (POW or refugee camp for controlling migration flows) to memory (the camp as place of memory).
- The striking opposition between the banality and fragility of the architecture of transit-, concentration- and extermination camps, and the heavy symbolic and memorial dimension that these artefacts embody; their material conservation, museification; the uses of the historical sites; the transmission of memory narratives that live within these spaces (and that these very spaces "witness") and that confer meaning on places that otherwise appear as deprived of any recognizable architectonic shape and material stability.

We invite submissions from scholars of History, Philosophy, Architecture, Semiotics, Memory Studies, Museology, Public History, Cultural Heritage, History Teaching.

We invite abstracts in Italian or English (max 600 words) that focus either on Fossoli or on other sites of transit in Italy and Europe (also in a comparative perspective). Abstracts should be accompanied by a brief biographical profile (max 300 words). The abstract should describe the topic and the specific object of analysis as well as aims and methodology, accompanied by a bibliography (max 10 titles that will not count towards the 600 words limit). Proposals will be evaluated and selected by the scientific committee.

Abstract, profile and bibliography should be sent to ricerca@centrostudifossoli.org by **31 May 2018**.

Accepted contributors will be asked to send a summary of their paper in Italian or English (max 2000 words, notes and bibliography not included) to the scientific committee and discussants by 31 July 2018. The selected contributors will have 20 minutes to present the paper at the conference.

After the conference, a selected number of speakers will be invited to contribute to a book to be published within the Fondazione Campo Fossoli book series.

<https://eventi.unibo.it/convegno-campi-di-transito-in-europa-fondazione-fossoli-2017>