



Rome and the ‘difficult heritage’ of Fascism

Professor Nick Carter, Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences



[Professor Nick Carter](#) is a specialist in nineteenth and twentieth century Italian history and historiography, including the Italian Risorgimento in transnational context and the ‘difficult heritage’ of Fascist monuments, monumental art and architecture in postwar Italy. Nick’s interest in transnational history has also led to his current involvement as a Chief Investigator in the [ARC Linkage Project ‘Conviction Politics: The Convict Routes of Australian Democracy’](#). Nick has also researched and published on Britain’s fraught relationship with the European Union.

Despite a wave of iconoclasm following Mussolini’s arrest (25 July 1943), a remarkable quantity of Fascist art, iconography and architecture in Rome – and across Italy – survived into the postwar period. The regime’s remains are still visible today.

In recent years, many sites, artworks and buildings once closely identified with, or redolent of, Fascism have been placed under heritage protection and restored. In some parts of Italy, Fascist heritage has been critically preserved in order to contextualise, mediate or confront its ‘Fascistness’. In contrast, Rome wears its Fascist heritage lightly. Here, Fascist relics have been depoliticised and aestheticised, with little or no acknowledgment of their authoritarian origins.

Rome’s experience of dealing with the ‘difficult heritage’ of Fascism – that is, with the physical legacies of a significant but heavily burdened past – raises a number of important questions. Why did so many regime artefacts in Rome survive the fall of Fascism and the postwar creation of the anti-Fascist Italian republic? How have local and national authorities approached Rome’s Fascist heritage since the 1940s? How have ‘ordinary’ Romans negotiated the everyday presence of historical Fascism in the urban landscape? And why, in Rome at least, is Fascist heritage no longer considered ‘difficult’?

Join the seminar

CONVENORS

Professor Nell Musgrove (NSAH)
Dr Clare Davidson (IHSS)

DATE & TIME

Monday 11 May, 1-2pm AEST

IN-PERSON VENUE

MEL-412-1-01, Arts Precinct
36-38 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy
(access via Graham St)

VIDEO LINK

[Join via Teams](#)