

ASMI

ASSOCIATION FOR THE
STUDY OF MODERN ITALY

Call for Papers

Association for the Study of Modern Italy (ASMI) Annual Conference 2027

Architectural and Design Crossovers Between Modern Italy and Britain



29-30 January 2027

ILCS, Senate House, University of London

The Conference explores architectural and design crossovers between Modern Italy and Britain from circa 1750 to the present. Papers can cover architectural and design cultures and their resulting intersections with politics and society including issues of gender, ethnicity and identity. Priority will be given to papers that discuss themes directly through architectural and design crossovers between Modern Italy and Britain. These crossovers could include travel, collaboration, influence, perception, reception and reaction. Papers could also address the relative evolution and standing of architectural and design cultures in the national and regional life of the two countries, with comparative aspects such as professional organisations (including country participation in international organisations such as CIAM), pedagogy and philosophy, media publications. Relevant sectors to consider include industry, housing, urban design, consumer products, and designing for state, commercial, civic and religious settings. Exhibitions and trade fairs, whether national or international in scope in the two countries, are a particularly rich source for comparing and contrasting Italian and British relationships and outputs, as is the study of Italian and British Pavilions at World Fairs and Exhibitions hosted by other countries.

Papers can be located within these periodisations:

- From the Grand Tour to Italian Unification, c.1750-1860
- Nationhood, Architecture and Design, c.1860-1920
- Interwar Britain and Italy: Empire, Fascism and Modernist presences, c.1920-1945
- Post-World War II: Consumer Culture, Urban Design, Radical Critiques, Postmodernism, c.1945-2000
- Current Concerns: National and Transnational, c.2000-Present

Some indicative examples of crossovers and pairings:

- The significance of visiting Italy for the aspiring architect John Soane (1753-1837)
- Visitors to Britain from Italian states observing the impact of the industrial revolution in Britain
- London 1851 ‘Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations’
- National monuments and displays, such as the *Vittoriano* in Rome (inaugurated 1911) and the Festival of Empire at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham, also 1911.
- Italian Art Nouveau *Stile Liberty*, taking the name of the London store of Liberty & Co.
- Italian Futurism compared with Vorticism in Britain, including for graphic design.
- Architecture and design in imperial and colonial contexts in the interwar period
- Italian Rationalism, Fascist monumentalism, Art Deco and Modernism
- Post-WW II Triennale exhibitions and ‘Made in Italy’ marketing, ‘Britain Can Make It’ (Council of Industrial Design, 1946) and Festival of Britain (1951)
- Ernesto Rogers-Richard Rogers-Renzo Piano as Italian-British architectural linkages
- ‘Critical Design’ Superstudio, Archizoom (Florence) alongside Archigram (London)
- Postmodernism - Ettore Sottsass and Memphis; Terry Farrell and John Outram
- Venice Architecture Biennales, International practices in London – architecture and design now more global and transnational than national?
- Architecture and Design in Italy and Britain – current exchanges, due engagement with ethical, civic and environmental concerns? Impact of Feminist architecture and design approaches and collectives? Post-industrial urban strategies?

Keynote speaker (confirmed): Professor **Grace Lees-Maffei**, Professor of Design History, University of Hertfordshire. Other keynote speakers will be communicated when confirmed.

The **conference will be in-presence**. The keynote speeches will be live-streamed online.

Papers can be presented either in **English** or **Italian**.

All proposals for papers or panels (300-word abstract per 15/20 minutes presentations, plus a brief biography) should be sent to asmi.conference.2027@gmail.com by 15 **September 2026**.

Acceptances will be communicated by **15 October 2026**.

Registration details will be announced no later than **1 December 2026**.

Accepted speakers will be required to join ASMI (<https://asmi.org.uk/membership/>) and register for the conference by **15th December 2026**.

Organising committee: Martin Brown (Independent scholar, coordinator); John Foot (Bristol University); Patrizia Sambuco (GBS/Oxford Brooks University); Tommaso Zerbi (Edinburgh University); Karen Bertorelli (Pisa University); Amy King (Bristol University); Victoria Witkowski (University of Southern Denmark); Milena Sabato (Salento University); Rossella Merlino (Queens, Belfast); Niamh Cullen (Queens, Belfast); Michele Maiolani (Manchester University).