

Post-Earthquake Reconstruction: Learning from L'Aquila (New York, 3 Mar 26)

Italian Academy for Advanced Studies at Columbia, Mar 03, 2026

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Post-Earthquake Reconstruction of a Historic City: Learning from L'Aquila, Italy.

Experts in many disciplines—some working in L'Aquila since 2009's catastrophic earthquake, and some involved with other post-disaster scenarios—will discuss the current state of L'Aquila: the damaged and restored cultural heritage, the gradual revival of urban life, and the city's new association with post-disaster aesthetics and construction sites.

What does it mean to “rebuild” a city after a natural disaster? Restoring housing and monuments seems to be the obvious answer; but what are the methods and techniques for recovering heritage without losing its memory? The recovery of the social system is even more complex.

How can we reconcile two needs: ensuring safety while not losing the memory of ancient building techniques?

Moreover, how can we overcome the fracture in a community's history and the disruption of its past memories, planned future, and tangible and intangible cultural heritage?

What can we learn from recent cases, and how can we improve prevention and future interventions?

This symposium will foster a multidisciplinary dialogue on the current state of L'Aquila, which is still being reconstructed after the 2009 quake. The anastylosis of monuments and the recovery of historical and artistic heritage to date allow us to reflect on the safety of historic buildings, restoration methodologies, and retrofitting interventions at various scales. Meanwhile, much has changed in the social and productive fabric of the city during the long years of post-earthquake standstill and then during the slow reconstruction.

PROGRAM

2:00 PM

Opening Remarks: Barbara Faedda, Executive Director, Italian Academy, Columbia University

Session 1: Cultural Heritage, Memory, and Community

Chair: Tanja Michalsky, Art History, Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History: former Fellow, Italian Academy

Alessandra Vittorini, Architecture and Conservation, formerly Superintendency for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape for L'Aquila

"Rebuilding stones and communities. Recovery of cultural heritage after the 2009 earthquake in L'Aquila"

Elisabetta Scirocco, Art History, Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History & Antonio Di Cecco, Photography, Academy of Fine Arts of L'Aquila

"The Shape of L'Aquila. Memories in Transformation 2009-2026"

Monica Musolino, Sociology, University of Messina

"Post-disaster communities. Change and resistance in some cases of relocation from Italy"

3:50 PM

Session 2: Preservation, Safety, and Reconstruction

Chair: Gianmarco de Felice, Engineering, Roma Tre University; former Weinberg Fellow, Italian Academy

Eva Coïsson, Engineering, University of Parma

"Restoration in earthquake-prone regions: learning from the past"

John Ochsendorf, Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Alper Ilki, Engineering, Istanbul Technical University

"Post-earthquake damage assessment and recovery of historic urban heritage after the 6 February 2023 Turkiye earthquakes"

5:40 PM

Session 3: Regulations and Scientific Research

Chair: Gianmarco de Felice, Engineering, Roma Tre University; former Weinberg Fellow, Italian Academy

Elena Aprile, Physics, Columbia University; Director, Italian Academy

5:45

Eugenio Coccia, Physics, Gran Sasso Science Institute

"The Role of an Advanced Studies Center in the Post-Earthquake Regeneration of L'Aquila"

6:45 PM

Concluding Remarks: Barbara Faedda, Executive Director, Italian Academy, Columbia University

Co-sponsor: Sidney J. Weinberg Jr. Foundation

Under the aegis of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) / Consiglio Nazionale Italiano dei Monumenti e dei Siti

This event is part of the Italian Academy's International Observatory for Cultural Heritage.

Registration does not guarantee a seat; registrants are seated first-come, first served.

This event is in-person only.

Registration:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/post-earthquake-reconstruction-of-a-historic-city-tickets-1980749573294?aff=oddtcreator>

Organizers:

Barbara Faedda, Executive Director, Italian Academy, Columbia University

Gianmarco de Felice, Roma Tre University; Weinberg Fellow in 2020 at Columbia's Italian Academy

Elisabetta Scirocco, Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History

Moderators:

Gianmarco de Felice, Engineering, Roma Tre University; former Weinberg Fellow, Italian Academy

Tanja Michalsky, Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History; Fellow in 2018 at Columbia's Italian Academy

Reference:

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