

Albuquerque International Association

presents

Art, Architecture and Authoritarianism: How Antiquity is Recast to Serve Power

Diana K. McDonald, PhD

art historian, curator, and lecturer

Thursday, March 19, 2026, 4:00 p.m.

Botts Hall, Albuquerque Special Collections Library

423 Central NE, Albuquerque, NM 87102 (Central & Edith)

AIA's March lecture will discuss how ancient forms of temples, palaces, and sculpture in the Ancient Near East, Greece and Rome, and elsewhere, were reused and reconfigured in modern architecture and art in the 20th and 21st century. In the 1930s, in particular, the fascist states of Italy and Germany were adept at creating forms based on the past that served their purposes of intimidation and glorification of the leader and the state. The Nazi architect Albert Speer was steeped in ancient architecture, and the Italians used Roman forms to recall a glorious past. Use of monumental buildings, oversized socialist realist sculpture, and 'realism' characterized the totalitarian states. Soviet art and architecture served propagandistic purposes, and all totalitarian states used such art and architecture as a weapon of oppression. Forms that were rooted in the past were often used but then subverted for their own purposes. Dr. McDonald will examine how those forms served the state and what effects they had on the populace.

Dr. Diana McDonald has a PhD in Ancient Near Eastern Art History and Archaeology from Columbia University and an AB in Ancient Art History from Harvard. She taught at Columbia, and at Boston College for nearly 18 years. She also worked at the Ancient Near Eastern Department of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and curated and lectured at The Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Emory's Michael C. Carlos Museum, the Jakarta National Museum in Indonesia, and for private collections. She has written on Serpents in Ancient Art; The Looting of the Iraq Museum, Baghdad; Ishtar, Lions and Love; and Aphrodite, and is a Great Courses Professor, with her lecture series, *30 Masterpieces of the Ancient World*.

\$15 for AIA Members; \$20 for Non-Members; Students are Free! Register on our website at www.abqinternational.org or mail check by March 17 to: AIA, PO Box 92921, Albuquerque, NM 87199.