

AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME

The American Academy in Rome celebrated 2024 McKim Medal Gala
on June 5, 2024 at Villa Aurelia, Rome

Sofia Coppola Awarded Prestigious McKim Medal

The annual event raised € 848.000 to support artists and scholars at the American Academy in Rome.

A new Fellowship sponsored by Bvlgari in collaboration with Whitney Museum and MAXXI was also announced.



The **American Academy in Rome** honored filmmaker **Sofia Coppola** at the 18th edition of the McKim Medal Gala at **Villa Aurelia** on **June 5, 2024**.

The annual benefit, which this year celebrated the presence of the American Academy in the Eternal City for 130 years, recognizes the achievements of exceptional individuals who have contributed to the intense artistic and humanistic dialogue between Italy and the United States.

“The Academy in Rome is built on this idea of a community of artists in many mediums having a place to work and come together. It’s a place I had always hoped to visit and be a part of someday... Thank you to the Academy for all that it does to support artists and for including me with this legendary McKim medal designed by the great Cy Twombly,” said **Sofia Coppola**, who received the award from artist **Rachel Feinstein**.

The gala raised € **848.000 gross** to support the Academy’s interdisciplinary community and promote the exchange of innovative practices between American and Italian artists and scholars all within the context of the city of Rome.

“Over the past 130 years, Rome has welcomed more than 2,000 scholars from the American Academy,” said **Peter N. Miller, AAR President and CEO**. “Today, the Academy’s role and importance as a pillar supporting US-Italian relations could not be stronger.”

The McKim Medal Gala served as the occasion to announce the exciting new collaboration between the **American Academy in Rome**, **Bvlgari**, the **Whitney Museum of American Art**, and the **MAXXI – National Museum of 21st Century Arts, Rome**. The partnership, generously sponsored by Bvlgari, will support Fellowships in 2025, 2027, and 2029 that will bring an American and an Italian artist to the Academy for short-term residencies. “This new partnership celebrates our historical role as a bridge for two-way traffic between Italy and the United States, even as it strengthens our twenty-first century commitment to making the past speak to the future,” said Miller.

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The **Carla Fendi Rome Prize** was also conferred by **Nina Pons Fendi** to artist **Kamrooz Aram**, who held his residency at the American Academy in 2024.

This year's sold-out Gala was chaired by **Margherita Marengi Vaselli**, together with the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the American Academy in Rome **Calvin Tsao**, President **Peter N. Miller**, Director **Aliza S. Wong**, and Honorary Gala Chairs **Ginevra Elkann**, **Carla Markell** and **Maria Teresa Venturini Fendi**. **More than 540 distinguished participants** from the worlds of art, fashion, entertainment and business gathered at the historic Villa Aurelia to support the Academy's fellowships in the arts and the humanities.

The evening included a surprise performance by soprano Cinzia Forte and tenor Marco Ciaponi who sang *Libiamo 'ne lieti calici* from Giuseppe Verdi's *La Traviata* dressed in the original Valentino costumes from the 2016 Sofia Coppola production with the Opera di Roma. Guests were delighted at the end of the evening by illuminations on the facade of the Villa celebrating 130 years of the American Academy in Rome.

"The gala not only serves as a bridge between the Academy and the city of Rome but also as a radiant moment to honor and elevate the remarkable achievements in arts and culture. This year we decided to honor the talented Italo-American director Sofia Coppola for her visionary storytelling, artistic brilliance, and bold visual aesthetic," said Gala Chair **Margherita Marengi Vaselli**.

"On the occasion of the 130th anniversary of the founding of the American Academy in Rome and the 80th commemoration of the Liberation of Rome and the landing at D-Day, the McKim Medal Gala celebrated the historic relationship that the United States and Italy has shared and the special welcome that the city of Rome has always shown to the Academy. We are so grateful to the city, our Italian Trustees, and this incredible Roman community for allowing us to create, dream, and flourish here," said **Calvin Tsao**, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the American Academy in Rome.

"The American Academy in Rome and the Gala Committee were proud to honor Sofia Coppola for her brilliance, her generosity, her visionary filmmaking. We recognize her genius in insisting on storytelling and telling stories as they need to be shared. The Academy hopes to provide the same type of freedom of expression and communication and profundity that Sofia offers her characters in her award-winning films," said **Aliza S. Wong**, Director of the American Academy in Rome.

The Media Partner for the 2024 McKim Medal Gala was **Rai Cultura**.

Sponsors of the 2024 McKim Medal Gala included: *Presenting Sponsor* Bvlgari SpA; *Corporate Benefactor* Fondazione Valentino Garavani e Giancarlo Giammetti; *Corporate Patron* Gagosian; Lottomatica Group; *Corporate Supporter* Amanita; Assicurazioni Generali; Blazé Milano; Bloomberg; Carla Fendi Foundation; Chanel; Chiomenti; Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosle LLP; Fendi; Fincantieri SpA; Gianni & Origoni; Giorgio Armani; Jefferies; Valentino SpA.

Wine and cocktails Sponsors of the evening: Cantina Paolo and Noemia d'Amico; FIOL Prosecco D.O.C.; Belvedere Vodka.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Sofia Coppola

Sofia Coppola's eighth film is *Priscilla* based on the memoir *Elvis and Me* by Priscilla Beaulieu Presley. The film, starring Cailee Spaeny and Jacob Elordi was released by A24 and Mubi.

Her films include *The Virgin Suicides* (1999), *Lost in Translation* (2003) for which she won an Academy Award for Best Screenplay, *Marie Antoinette* (2006), *Somewhere* (2010), *The Bling Ring* (2013), *The Beguiled* (2017) whereby she made history as only the second woman to win the Best Director prize at the Cannes Film Festival, and *On The Rocks* (2020). In addition to her film career, Sofia directed a production of Verdi's classic, *La Traviata* at the Rome Opera House, with fashion designer Valentino Garavani and production designer Nathan Crowley. In 2023, Mack Books released her book *SOFIA COPPOLA ARCHIVE*, currently in its fifth reprinting.

The McKim Medal

Sofia Coppola joins distinguished previous McKim Medal Gala laureates such as **Massimo Bottura, Matteo Garrone, Cecilia Alemani, Luca Guadagnino, Paola Antonelli, Roberto Benigni, Sir Antonio Pappano, Paolo Sorrentino, Carlo Petrini, Renzo Piano, Cy Twombly, Umberto Eco, Franco Zeffirelli, Ennio Morricone, Miuccia Prada, Luigi Ontani, Riccardo Muti and Bernardo Bertolucci**. The Medal, dedicated to architect Charles Follen McKim (1847-1909), one of the founders of the American Academy in Rome, was designed by **Cy Twombly** and handcrafted by **Bulgari**.

American Academy in Rome

Since 1894 the American Academy in Rome has functioned as a residential center for research and creativity. Its purpose has always been to enable highly motivated scholars and artists to immerse themselves in the experience of Rome, ancient and modern, and to be inspired by daily exchange with the other members of this creative community. The Academy has made an outsized impact on the intellectual and cultural life of the United States, and its Fellows and Residents have been recognized with 629 Guggenheim Fellowships, 75 Pulitzer Prizes, 53 MacArthur Fellowships, 26 Grammy awards, 5 Pritzker Prizes, 9 Poet Laureate appointments, and 5 Nobel Prizes. Approximately 35 Fellows are selected as winners of the Rome Prize each year by rotating juries in the different fields.

The American Academy offers the city of Rome a rich public program of events involving scholars and international guests – including, this season, Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Andrew Sean Greer, Grammy Award-winning composer Mason Bates and MacArthur Fellow artist Xu Bing – with talks, lectures and conversations, exhibitions, performances and concerts.

The American Academy in Rome is preparing to welcome its 2024-25 Fellows, including the Italian Fellows announced in the Rome Prize Ceremony in New York, on April 25, 2024: Giuseppe Grant (Enel Foundation Italian Fellow in Architecture, Urban Design, and Landscape Architecture), Daria Scia (Italian Fellowship in Musical Composition), and Eugenio Villa (Italian Fellowship in Renaissance and Early Modern Studies). The work of the current season's Fellows will be presented on 6 June, when the Academy will open its doors to the city for the Open Studios event.

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