

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



Aliza Wong (photograph by Ashley Rodgers)

## **Aliza Wong Appointed 25<sup>th</sup> Director of the American Academy in Rome**

**ROME AND NEW YORK (April 1, 2022)** – The American Academy in Rome is pleased to announce that Aliza Wong, a professor of history and interim dean of the Honors College at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas, has been appointed to be the Academy’s 25<sup>th</sup> Director, following a national search process. Dr. Wong begins her appointment, which is based in Rome and has a term of three years, in July 2022.

“The Search Committee was impressed with Aliza’s scholarship, her immersion in multicultural work, and experience as an academic administrator,” **said Mark Robbins, AAR President and CEO.** “We are delighted to welcome her to the Academy.”

“We are thrilled that Aliza has been appointed as the next Director in Rome, following a competitive search process,” **said Cary Davis, chair of the AAR Board of Trustees.** “We welcome Aliza and look forward to the enthusiasm and expertise that she will bring to the Academy. We also thank members of the Search Committee for their thoughtful advice during this process.”

Dr. Wong studied at Amherst College before earning a PhD from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2001. Her research focus is modern Italy and the Mediterranean with a particular concentration in race, nation, culture, and identity. A dedicated educator, she has taught for two decades at Texas Tech University where, in addition to being a professor and interim dean, she is the director of European Studies. She has won numerous teaching and research awards as well as received recognition for her work in diversity,

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equity, inclusion, and belonging, including being named a Lubbock YWCA Woman of the Year for her work on social justice (2018) and a Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation professor (2019).

“To be offered the opportunity to work at the American Academy in Rome and envision what the next century might bring is awe-inspiring and humbling.” **said Dr. Wong.** “I look forward to working with the incredible AAR staff to cultivate and nurture the community’s creative arena and to continue challenging ourselves to do better.”

A two-time Fulbright Award winner, Dr. Wong is a recipient of a National Endowment for the Humanities Hispanic Service Institute Grant (2020) and an NEH Connections Planning Grant (2018). Her current research examines Italian constructions of the American West in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the realm of public and engaged scholarship, Dr. Wong is director of *The Texas Liberator* Project, a multimedia educational project that includes an app, educational resources, interactive maps, museum and digital exhibits, and book, and the producer of the documentary film, *Narratives of Modern Genocide* (dir. Paul Hunton, 2021) and curator of the corresponding museum exhibit, both funded by the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission. Her books include *Race and the Nation in Liberal Italy, 1861-1911* (2006) and *The Texas Liberators: Veteran Narratives from World War II* (2017).

AAR interim Director Elizabeth Rodini, whose term will end in August 2022, will return to New York City to pursue new research and writing in the field of museum studies and cultural heritage, including several projects initiated during her time in Rome. The Academy is grateful to Elizabeth for her stewardship at the Academy, both as the Andrew Heiskell Arts Director and in this last year as interim Director. Her resilience and compassion throughout the challenging period of the last few years is appreciated by all.

## American Academy in Rome

Established in 1894, the American Academy in Rome (AAR) is America’s oldest overseas center for independent studies and advanced research in the arts and humanities. The Academy has since evolved to become a more global and diverse base for artists and scholars to live and work in Rome. The residential community includes a wide range of scholarly and artistic disciplines, which is representative of the United States and is fully engaged with Italy and contemporary international exchange. The support provided by the Academy to Rome Prize and Italian Fellows, and invited Residents, helps strengthen the arts and humanities.

To learn more about the American Academy in Rome, please visit [aarome.org](http://aarome.org).

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