

AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME

Andrew Heiskell Arts Director

Rome, Italy

Reports to: Rome Director

Term: Three-year appointment, renewable for up to two additional years. Start date August 2027.

Founded in 1894, the American Academy in Rome is a leading American overseas center for independent study and advanced research in the arts and humanities. Each year, the Academy awards the Rome Prize to approximately 30 artists and scholars who join a dynamic, transdisciplinary residential community on the Academy's eleven-acre campus on the Janiculum Hill—enriched further by invited Residents and Affiliated and Visiting Artists and Scholars, reaching a community of approximately 100 at any given time.

The Academy is led by the President & CEO, who sets its direction and serves as its chief fundraiser and public representative. A Chief Operating Officer manages the Academy's business and administrative functions across Rome and New York. The Rome Director is responsible for the daily intellectual and communal life of the residential community. The Andrew Heiskell Arts Director and Andrew W. Mellon Humanities Professor report to the Rome Director and, together with the Director, constitute the Academy's intellectual leadership team in Rome—the primary intellectual resources for the Rome Prize Fellows and the animating force behind the Academy's scholarly and creative life.

Role

The Andrew Heiskell Arts Director is a member of the Academy's intellectual leadership team. This is a role for a practitioner or scholar of genuine distinction—someone with an established reputation in one of the Academy's arts disciplines, the range to engage with work across artistic and humanistic fields, and the commitment to place their intellectual life in service of a community.

The Arts Director works alongside the Rome Director and the Humanities Professor to shape the Academy's intellectual vision in Rome. Their primary institutional responsibility is to the Rome Prize Fellows: offering creative and scholarly guidance, facilitating engagement with Rome's artistic and cultural communities, and helping Fellows make the most of their time at the Academy. The Arts Director brings particular depth to the arts disciplines represented at the Academy—architecture, design, landscape architecture, literature, musical composition, and visual art—while engaging generously with Fellows across the full breadth of the residential community. But for the Arts Director to fully embody the role the Academy needs them to be active in critical, creative, or curatorial work at the highest level.

Key Responsibilities

Intellectual Leadership and Support of the Fellows (60%)

- Serve as a primary intellectual resource for Rome Prize Fellows across the Academy's arts disciplines—architecture, design, landscape architecture, literature, musical composition, and visual art—offering creative and scholarly guidance, substantive engagement with Fellows' work, and mentorship calibrated to each Fellow's stage of career and project.
- Work in close partnership with the Rome Director and the Humanities Professor to foster intellectual exchange across disciplines; encourage and facilitate dialogue among Fellows, Residents, Italian Fellows, and Affiliated and Visiting Artists and Scholars.
- Facilitate introductions and sustained relationships between Fellows and their counterparts in Rome's and Italy's artistic and cultural communities through the Advisors in the Arts network and beyond.
- Design, organize, and lead site visits and longer trips in and around Rome, Italy, and the Mediterranean that deepen Fellows' engagement with the material, historical, and cultural dimensions of their work.
- May participate in the selection of Rome Prize and Italian Fellows and assist as needed in the selection of Residents and Affiliated and Visiting Artists and Scholars.
- Conduct their own creative and research work and set an example for the Fellows of what a life in the arts could look like.

Programming and Institutional Vision (30%)

- As a member of the Academy's intellectual leadership team, contribute to the design and execution of programming that serves the institutional mission in close collaboration with the Rome Director, the Humanities Professor, and Programs staff.
- Serve as staff liaison to the Arts Committee of the Board of Trustees, contributing to governance discussions on matters of artistic programming, fellowship in the arts, and the Academy's creative identity.
- Attend meetings of organizations where the Academy holds a board seat or institutional partnership, as necessary.

Community Stewardship and External Engagement (10%)

- Maintain a visible and engaged presence in the life of the residential community—at meals, at internal and public events, in communal spaces—as an active participant in the community the Academy exists to sustain.
- Represent the Academy in Rome's artistic and cultural communities; build and expand relationships with Italian artists, institutions, and organizations that enrich the Fellows' experience and deepen the Academy's presence in the city.

- Support fundraising efforts as requested.

Qualifications

Required

- An advanced degree in one of the arts disciplines represented at the Academy and a record of accomplished creative or scholarly work commensurate with national or international standing, with a minimum of five years of experience in an academic, cultural, or arts institution.
- Demonstrated intellectual generosity and disciplinary range: the ability and genuine desire to engage with creative and scholarly work across fields, and to support Fellows whose practices differ substantially from one's own.
- Fluency or a high degree of proficiency in spoken and written Italian; strong working knowledge of the arts, cultural sites, and organizations of Rome and Italy.
- Proven ability to mentor artists and scholars at varying stages of career, with superior interpersonal skills and the ability to build trust across a diverse and talented community.
- Demonstrated ability to represent an institution professionally—interacting diplomatically with Fellows, staff, board members, donors, institutional partners, and government officials.
- Strategic thinking and organizational capability, with experience managing programs and working collaboratively across teams.
- Flexibility to work outside standard hours given the Academy's evening and weekend programming, and willingness to travel between Rome and New York.

Preferred

- Established relationships with artists, institutions, and cultural organizations in Rome and Italy.
- Experience living and working in Italy or another international context, with demonstrated cross-cultural fluency.
- Familiarity with arts administration, exhibition development, or public programming in an international setting.

Leadership Profile

The ideal candidate will be recognized by Fellows, colleagues, and peers in Rome for the following qualities:

- **Creative distinction.** A practitioner or scholar whose work commands genuine respect—whose presence at the Academy lends artistic authority to the community and whose engagement with Fellows' projects carries real weight.

- **Disciplinary range.** The curiosity and capacity to engage substantively with work far outside one's own discipline—to follow the argument of a historian, to understand what a composer is working through, to engage with equal interest a poet and an architect.
- **Institutional commitment.** A genuine orientation toward community and collaboration—someone who finds meaning in supporting the work of others and understands that their role is as much about creating conditions for excellence as producing it themselves.
- **Roman fluency.** A real connection to Rome—its artistic landscape, its institutions, its rhythms—and the ability to move through the city's creative and cultural communities as a trusted participant.
- **Mission conviction.** An authentic belief in what the Academy does and why it matters—in the value of sustained individual creative and scholarly work, in Rome as an irreplaceable context for that work, and in the Academy's unique role in American cultural life.

To Apply

Nominations and expressions of interest are welcome and will be held in strict confidence.

Candidates should submit a letter of interest of no more than two pages outlining their interest in the Academy and the contributions they expect to make to its mission, along with a current CV, and three references. Applications should be submitted to careers@aarome.org with the subject line "HEISKELL" and will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Submission deadline is October 15, 2026.

The American Academy in Rome is an Equal Opportunity Employer. AAR believes that a diverse community makes for a stronger institution, and actively encourages applications from candidates of all backgrounds, identities, and lived experiences. We are committed to a hiring process that is equitable, inclusive, and free from bias, and to building a leadership community that reflects the breadth of the artistic and scholarly traditions we support.