

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**American Academy in Rome Announces
Visionary Gift of Nearly \$5 Million from the Tsao Family Foundation**

Gift Will Establish and Endow the Tsao Family Rome Prize, the Tsao Family Residency, and the Tsao Family and Harvard University Graduate School of Design Affiliated Fellowship at the American Academy in Rome

ROME AND NEW YORK (May 25, 2022) – The American Academy in Rome (AAR) announced today a visionary set of gifts by the Tsao Family Foundation that will establish and endow the Tsao Family Rome Prize, the Tsao Family Residency, and the Tsao Family and Harvard University Graduate School of Design Affiliated Fellowship at the American Academy in Rome. The gift of \$4,980,000 is the largest single gift in the Academy’s 128-year history. This new initiative will support scholars working on the historical intersection of China and Italy in arts and ideas, artists from China, as well as faculty or doctoral students from the Graduate School of Design (GSD) of Harvard. This gift strengthens the ongoing global conversation at the American Academy in Rome across the arts and humanities with a broadness that has become a hallmark of the Academy. The Tsao Family is connected to the Academy through Calvin Tsao, founding partner at Tsao and McKown Architects, who was a Resident in architecture at the Academy in 2010 and who has served on the Board of Trustees since 2012.

“With this transformational gift, the Tsao Family Foundation ensures that the Academy will be a hub for comparative research about the philosophical worldview and the way it is given form through art and architecture,” **said Mark Robbins, AAR President and CEO.** “We are grateful for the vision and generosity of the Tsao Family Foundation and I thank them for their belief in the Academy’s mission to foster artistic and scholarly work that spans disciplines and continents.”

“Even though the world’s economy is globally connected, we remain culturally apart, making it more important now than ever to forge common ground,” **said Calvin Tsao.** “My family is delighted to endow a Rome Prize, affiliated fellowship, and residency at the American Academy in Rome to support multidisciplinary explorations of different worldviews and philosophies. We believe the outcome of this work will enable the many societies and cultures in our world to develop and strengthen the foundation of a more truly humane, cooperative, and mutually supportive global community.”

Tsao Family Rome Prize

Whether looking at the ancient Chinese teachings of Confucius, Mencius or Lao Tzu, or of Roman philosophers such as Lucretius or Pliny, there is a shared interest in existential questions about how we live and what defines a good life, questions that cross cultures and time periods and are relevant to all humanists. Philosophical tenets animate the world around us and are evident in art, architecture, and literature, as well as the writing of history itself.

AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME

The Tsao Family Rome Prize will support projects that further our understanding of the history of ideas, that link the East and West, and that draw on the experience of Rome as a crossroads. The fully endowed prize will be awarded annually to a scholar proposing the most compelling project that would benefit from the time in Rome within the Academy's unique residential community. The one-year annual fellowship will bring the study of philosophical practices to the Academy, furthering the interdisciplinary nature of the scholarship that AAR supports. The first Tsao Family Rome Prize Fellow will be selected through the annual Rome Prize competition and will join the AAR community in September 2023.

Tsao Family Residency

The Tsao Family Residency will be awarded to distinguished Chinese artists who have had a record of solo exhibitions at major galleries or museums around the world and critical monographs published, as well as scholars who have distinguished themselves through publications and groundbreaking research. The Residency would rotate between an artist and a scholar annually for approximately four to eight weeks. The first Tsao Family Resident will join the AAR community in spring 2024.

Tsao Family and Harvard University Graduate School of Design Affiliated Fellowship at the American Academy in Rome

The Tsao Family and Harvard University Graduate School of Design Affiliated Fellowship at the American Academy in Rome builds a bridge to the best and brightest architects and designers at the GSD, promoting a critical engagement between the two institutions for years to come. The Affiliated Fellowship will be awarded to either faculty members or doctoral students at the GSD working in landscape design, urban design, or architecture. The fellowship term will be approximately twelve weeks, and the recipient will be chosen by the GSD. The first Tsao Family and Harvard University Graduate School of Design Affiliated Fellow will join the AAR community in 2023.

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.

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