

AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME WILL HONOR ARTIST WILLIAM KENTRIDGE & DIRECTOR PETER SELLARS IN NEW YORK CITY ON 25 APRIL 2012 AND CONDUCTOR RICCARDO MUTI IN ROME ON 28 MAY 2012

New York/Rome – The American Academy in Rome is pleased to announce that it will celebrate music and the visual arts in two separate gala dinners in New York City and Rome, Italy, in the spring of 2012. The New York event honorees include artist William Kentridge and theater director/impresario Peter Sellars, and will take place at the Plaza Hotel on Wednesday 25 April 2012. In Rome, the McKim Medal Gala will honor conductor Maestro Riccardo Muti on Monday 28 May 2012 at the Academy's Villa Aurelia.

By honoring these individuals the Academy renews its commitment to the arts and humanities, intellectual and artistic freedom, innovation, and interdisciplinary cultural exchange. Proceeds from the New York and Rome benefits support the ongoing fellowships and operations of the American Academy in Rome. A tradition 118 years strong, the Academy has maintained its mission of fostering the arts and humanities by bringing together emerging and established artists and scholars from a range of fields. Since 1894, many Academy Fellows and Residents have had significant influence in the worlds of art and scholarship.

One of the most celebrated artists of our day, **William Kentridge**, RAAR'11, is a prolific and versatile artist whose work combines the personal and the political in an ingenious use of charcoal drawing, animation, film, and theatre. Kentridge's work has been exhibited in museums and galleries around the world since the 1990s, including Documenta in Kassel, Germany (1997, 2003), the Museum of Modern Art in New York (1998, 2010), the Albertina Museum in Vienna (2010), and the Jeu de Paume in Paris (2010). This spring he will deliver the Norton Lecture series at Harvard University. Among his numerous accolades, in 2010 Kentridge received the Kyoto Prize in recognition of his contributions in the field of arts and philosophy. In 2011, he was elected as an Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and awarded the degree of Doctor of Literature *honoris causa* by the University of London. This year he was named as a laureate for the Dan David Prize, awarded by Tel Aviv University.

Opera, theater, and festival director **Peter Sellars** is one of the most innovative and powerful forces in the performing arts in America and abroad. A visionary artist, Sellars is known for ground-

breaking interpretations of classic works. Whether it is Mozart, Handel, Shakespeare, Sophocles, or the sixteenth-century Chinese playwright Tang Xianzu, Peter Sellars strikes a universal chord with audiences, engaging and illuminating contemporary social and political issues.

Novelist Toni Morrison and baritone Paulo Szot will introduce the laureates.

In Rome, the Academy will honor internationally renowned conductor **Riccardo Muti** for his significant accomplishments and contributions to classical music throughout his career. For over four decades the work of Riccardo Muti has captivated audiences worldwide. He has conducted most of the important orchestras in the world and currently serves as the Music Director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and as honorary director for life at the Rome Opera.

The 28 May McKim Medal Gala kicks off a week of activities at the American Academy in Rome that include the Fellows Opens Studios, Readings and Concerts. The New York tribute dinner precedes the 2012-2013 Rome Prize Ceremony on 26 April, during which the Rome Prize winners will be announced. The Prize is awarded annually to approximately 30 individuals in 14 disciplines.

Last year's Centenary Celebration dinner in New York honored world-renowned architect Frank Gehry and distinguished scholar and New York Public Library President Paul LeClerc. Previous McKim Medal laureates include Umberto Eco, Ennio Morricone, Luigi Ontani, Renzo Piano, Miuccia Prada, Cy Twombly, and Franco Zeffirelli.

For more information please visit: www.aarome.org

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The American Academy in Rome

Founded in 1894, originally as the first graduate school of architecture for the United States, the American Academy in Rome emerged in its present form – a hybrid center for the arts *and* humanities – by 1912. It remains the premier American overseas center for independent study and advanced research, a not-for-profit, private entity, the only academy in Rome not supported primarily or entirely by its government.

With an 11-acre campus on the highest point within the walls of Rome, the Academy annually offers the Rome Prize to 30 individuals, following a national competition presided over by rotating independent juries of peers in each discipline, which include ancient, medieval, Renaissance and early modern, and modern Italian studies, as well as in literature, music composition, visual arts, architecture, landscape architecture, design, and historic preservation and conservation.

Academy support and fellowships have been beacons to generations of young artists and scholars. The roster is a who's who of America's finest in their formative years. To name but a few: architects Louis Kahn, Robert Venturi, Michael Graves; landscape architects Edward Lawson, Laurie Olin, Martha Schwartz; composers Aaron Copland, John Adams, Laurie Anderson; writers Ralph Ellison, William Styron, Francine Prose; artists Philip Guston, Nancy Graves, Anthony Hernandez.

On the scholarly side are such pioneering classicists as Esther van Deman, Lily Ross Taylor, Lucy Shoe Merritt, Richmond Lattimore, and Michael C.J. Putnam; distinguished medievalists Peter Brown, and Brian Stock; field-changing students of Renaissance and early modern Europe James Hankins and Anthony Grafton; and razor-sharp interpreters of modern Italy Victoria de Grazia, Mia Fuller, and David Kertzer.