

# AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME

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## **AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME HONORS ARCHITECT FRANK GEHRY AND NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY PRESIDENT PAUL LECLERC AT GALA ON 13 APRIL 2011 IN NEW YORK CITY**

### **GALA CELEBRATED THE ACADEMY'S 100 YEAR MERGER IN THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES AND THE CONCLUSION OF \$70 MILLION CAMPAIGN FOR THE AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME**

**New York** – The American Academy in Rome's Centenary Celebration Gala took place on Wednesday 13 April 2011 at The Plaza Hotel in New York City. The Academy celebrated 100 years as one intellectual and creative community by honoring world-renowned architect Frank Gehry and distinguished scholar and New York Public Library President Paul LeClerc for their contributions to art, culture and scholarship. At the event Academy President, Adele Chatfield-Taylor announced the successful conclusion of a 7 year campaign that has raised over \$70 million to restore, renovate, invigorate and endow the Academy.

The event was hosted by Sid and Mercedes Bass, and was attended by over 380 guests including Henry and Nancy Kissinger, Frank Gehry, Paul LeClerc, Annette de la Renta, Robert A. M. Stern, Michael Graves, Thom Mayne, Renzo Piano, Duane Hampton, Morley Safer, Barbara Goldsmith, Lynn Nesbit and John Guare. Academy President Adele Chatfield-Taylor introduced actor Edward Norton and Founding Director of the Signature Theatre Company James Houghton, who presented the award to Frank Gehry and Prof. Anthony Grafton presented the award to Paul Leclerc.

Established in 1894 by Charles Follen McKim (1847-1909), the American Academy in Rome quickly emerged as a premier overseas center for America's most promising architects and artists. In February 1911 the Trustees of the American Academy in Rome and the Managing Committee of the American School of Classical Studies in Rome voted to consolidate so that they could together more effectively advance the study, investigation and practice of both the arts and the humanities. Three months later, in May 1911, the Academy took possession of Villa Aurelia, the bequest of Clara Jessup Heyland, an heiress from Philadelphia who had made the Villa her home, and set out to fulfill Mrs. Heyland's wish that her home would become a center of American artistic and intellectual life in Rome. Here the foundations were laid for what has now become a cluster of 10 buildings on 11 acres on Rome's Janiculum, the highest hill within the city's ancient walls. Some of the pre-existing

buildings were acquired with the property, others like the Academy's main McKim, Mead & White building, were to be designed and built.

Beginning in 1992 the Board of Trustees of the American Academy in Rome led a \$70 million campaign to restore, renovate and endow the Academy. They implemented a plan to restore the entire 11-acre site, starting with the gardens and then progressing building by building, to return each to its former glory, and to truly make each meet the needs of artists and scholars of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. After the success of the garden restorations, work began on reclaiming the buildings, one by one. Beginning with the main building, one of the only McKim, Mead & White buildings outside of the United States, and continuing on steadily for 15 years, each building was restored to their original beauty and usefulness.

Through the efforts of the Centenary Campaign, the Academy has more than realized the aspirations of the leaders who voted to merge, and the thoughtful – and ambitious – generosity of an American ex-patriate. In celebrating 100 years the Academy renews its commitment to the arts and humanities, intellectual and artistic freedom, innovation and interdisciplinary and cultural exchange.

### **Frank Gehry**

Raised in Toronto, Canada, Frank Gehry moved with his family to Los Angeles in 1947. Mr. Gehry received his Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Southern California in 1954, and he studied City Planning at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design. In subsequent years, Mr. Gehry has built an architectural career that has spanned five decades and produced public and private buildings in America, Europe and Asia. His work has earned Mr. Gehry several of the most significant awards in the architectural field, including the Arnold W. Brunner Memorial Prize in Architecture, the Pritzker Prize, the Wolf Prize in Art (Architecture), the Praemium Imperiale Award, the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Award, the National Medal of Arts, the Friedrich Kiesler Prize, the American Institute of Architects Gold Medal, and the Royal Institute of British Architects Gold Medal.

Notable projects include: the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain; the DZ Bank Building in Berlin; Nationale-Nederlanden Building in Prague; the Jay Pritzker Pavilion and BP Bridge in Millennium Park in Chicago, Illinois; Maggie's Centre, a cancer patient center in Dundee, Scotland; Hotel Marques de Riscal in El Ciego, Spain; Lou Ruvo Brain Institute in Las Vegas, Nevada; the New World Symphony in Miami, Florida; Princeton University Peter B. Lewis Science Library in Princeton, New Jersey; Art Gallery of Ontario Renovation in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, and the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, California. Projects under construction include the Signature Theatre in New York City; the 8 Spruce Street Residential Tower located in New York City; the Make it Right Foundation in New Orleans, Louisiana and the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum in Biloxi, Mississippi. Mr. Gehry is also completing design work on the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi; Foundation Louis Vuitton Museum in Paris, France; LUMA Foundation in Arles, France and the University of Technology, Sydney in Sydney, Australia.

### **Paul LeClerc**

Paul LeClerc is President and CEO of The New York Public Library. A scholar of Voltaire, he earned his Ph.D. in French literature with distinction at Columbia University. In 1966 he joined the faculty of Union College and eventually served as the Chair of the Department of Modern Languages and the Division of the Humanities. In 1979 Dr. LeClerc joined the administration of

The City University of New York; in 1984 he was appointed the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs of CUNY's Baruch College. In 1988 Dr. LeClerc became President of Hunter College. While there he also held the position of Professor of French and taught nearly every semester of his presidency. Dr. LeClerc became the President, Chief Executive Officer, and Trustee of The New York Public Library on December 1, 1993. It goes without saying that the Library is one of the greatest and most revered libraries in the world, with collections numbering more than 60 million items and with one of the most advanced IT infrastructures and popular websites of any library in the world. The New York Public Library system consists of 88 branch libraries in Manhattan, the Bronx, and Staten Island, and four research libraries, all of which are in Manhattan. There were 18 million physical visits to NYPL's libraries in 2010 alone and 26 million additional visits to [nypl.org](http://nypl.org), a website created under Dr. LeClerc's egis. It has become the most heavily used website of any cultural organization in New York and the second most heavily used library site in the world, second only to the Library of Congress.

Far from ignoring the physical Library, Dr. LeClerc devoted equal energy to building the collections and to the physical plant of the Library. During Dr. LeClerc's tenure the Library secured the papers of Malcolm X (on deposit for 75 years) and acquired the archives of John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Jerome Robbins, Jack Kerouac, Henry Miller, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Annie Proulx, Farrar, Straus & Giroux and Yaddo, the film and video archives of Rudolph Nureyev and Robert Wilson, as well as key collections of maps, prints (Jim Dine), Holocaust material, photographs, and so forth. Because the Library's physical facilities are so numerous, so heavily used, and in many cases - so old - a significant part of Dr. LeClerc's agenda has been devoted to capital planning and building. During his tenure, more than 1/2-billion dollars have been raised and invested in capital projects.

In addition to being a Trustee of The New York Public Library, and Trustee and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the American Academy in Rome, Dr. LeClerc is also a Member of the Board of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Getty Trust, the Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation, the National Book Foundation, Union College, and the Voltaire Foundation of Oxford University. He is Chair of the Advisory Board of the Maison Française at Columbia University. He also serves on the boards of two important scholarly publishing projects: The Papers of Benjamin Franklin (Yale University) and The Complete Works of Voltaire (Oxford University). The French government conferred upon him the rank of officier in the order of the Palmes Académiques and, in 1996, the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. King Juan Carlos made him an Officer of the Order of Isabel the Catholic in 2010. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Philosophical Society, and a past member, under President Clinton, of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. He holds honorary doctorates from the University of Paris, Oxford University and eight American universities.

For more information please visit: [www.aarome.org](http://www.aarome.org)

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### **The American Academy in Rome**

Established in 1894 and chartered by an Act of Congress in 1905, the American Academy in Rome is a leading center for independent studies and advanced research in the arts and humanities. Situated on the Janiculum, the highest hill within the walls of Rome, the Academy today remains a private institution supported by gifts from individuals, foundations, corporations, and the memberships of colleges, universities, and arts and cultural organizations as well as by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the

National Endowment for the Humanities. Each year, through a national competition, the Academy awards the Rome Prize to approximately thirty individuals working in ancient, medieval, Renaissance and early modern, or modern Italian studies, and architecture, landscape architecture, design, historic preservation and conservation, literature, musical composition, or visual art. The annual application deadline is 1 November. The Academy community also includes a select group of Residents, distinguished artists and scholars invited by the Director, as well as Affiliated Fellows, and Visiting Artists and Scholars.