

# AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME

Via Angelo Masina 5 00153 Roma ITALIA Telefono 39 06 58461 Fax 39 06 5810788  
7 East 60 Street New York New York 10022-1001 USA Telephone 212 751 7200 Fax 212 751 7220  
WWW.AAROME.ORG

## BETTY WOODMAN: Roman Fresco/Pleasures and Places



**Opening: 21 October 2010, from 6pm to 9pm**

**22 October – 10 December 2010**

**Monday – Friday, 9:30am-12:30pm or by appointment: +39 06 584 6459**

The American Academy in Rome, in collaboration with the Galleria Alessandro Bagnai, is pleased to present Betty Woodman: *Roman Fresco/Pleasures and Places*, an exhibition of selected recent works in ceramic and on canvas. The exhibition is curated by Roberto Caracciolo and Emanuela Nobile Mino.

Betty Woodman is an American artist who began her career as a ceramicist producing magnificent objects for everyday use. From an early stage, she developed a highly innovative approach where ceramic became one of the many means for far more complex and ambitious work. In recent years, Woodman's work has shifted towards a combination of ceramic and painting, of three dimensional elements and the flat surface that interact and enhance one another, creating a unity of the whole.

For the exhibition at the American Academy in Rome, the artist has created a new work for the spaces of the gallery: *Roman Fresco/Pleasures and Places*. This work, monumental in size being 560 centimeters high, is a poetic response to Rome, its history and its art, filtered through the emotional subjectivity of the artist who has had a long, passionate and curious relationship with the city. *Roman Fresco/Pleasures and Places* involves both the wall and the floor in a strong architectural construction, being subdivided at various levels, both horizontally and vertically. The three canvases that descend from the ceiling are painted with geometrical bands, squares and frames in light and luminous colors giving the work as a whole the impression of being cut, as though it could be far larger and, vaguely, recalling the Roman frescoed walls of imperial times. On top of the canvas, wood brackets hold multicolored ceramic "vases": formal

elements positioned in a symmetrical way, while other forms, in unglazed terra cotta held by thin nails, move freely across the surface in a more unpredictable and lively way. The three canvases as they extend from the wall onto the floor are painted in black and white, upon which there are some white ceramic sculptures. These constitute an homage to Roman mosaics but also contrast with the wall and, symbolically and in another time, effect a transition between life and the ghosts that flee it. The exhibition will also include four free-standing sculptures and two benches in bronze with colored patinas.

Betty Woodman (b. 1930 in Norwalk, Connecticut) came to Italy for the first time in 1951; she then returned in 1960 and in 1965 with a Fulbright scholarship. Since 1969 she has spent part of the year in Antella, outside Florence, where she has her studio, and part of the year in New York. Her works have been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including solo exhibitions at the Museo delle Porcellane, Palazzo Pitti, Florence in 2009; at the Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado; at the Museu Nacional do Azulejo, Lisbon; at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence, Rhode Island and at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. In 2006 Betty Woodman was the subject of a large retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. She exhibits in galleries such as Max Protetch in New York since 1983 (since 2010 Edwin Meulensteen) and the Frank Lloyd Gallery in Santa Monica, California among others. In Italy she exhibits with the Galleria Alessandro Bagnai in Florence and the Galleria Massimo Minini in Brescia. Her work is represented in major public and private collections, including the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Brooklyn Museum in New York, the Museum of Modern Art of New York; the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

### **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 Rome Prize is awarded 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 application deadline is November 1st. The Academy community also includes a select group of Residents (RAAR), distinguished artists and scholars invited by the Director. For more information please visit [www.aarome.org](http://www.aarome.org).

### **Press contact:**

Email: [press@aarome.org](mailto:press@aarome.org), Tel: +39 06 5846470 or +1 212 751 7200, ext36.