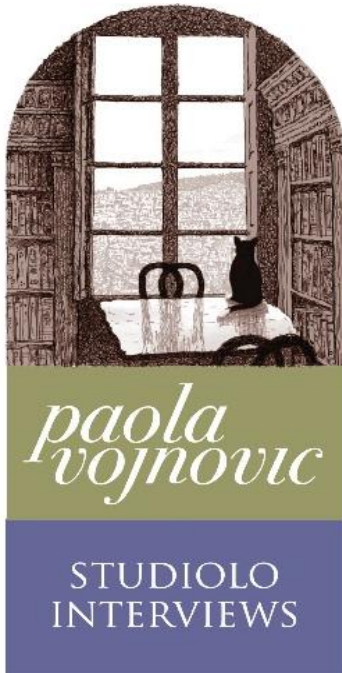




PAOLA'S STUDIOLO: Fall Program 2025

Presented Live on Zoom

10am Los Angeles and Phoenix
1pm New York and Toronto
6pm London
7pm Florence

Full Season of 9 live interviews: \$188. Each event is recorded and yours to keep!

To reserve your spot or with any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to Paola50122@gmail.com



September 20	<i>Sofonisba's Chess Game: A Conversation with Howard Burton</i>
October 4	<i>How Much Did Michelangelo Borrow from Classical Greece? A Conversation with Kim Hoffnagle</i>
October 18	<i>The Treasures of Tutankhamun at the Grand Egyptian Museum: A Conversation with Mark Maher</i>
October 25	<i>Florentine Baroque: The Haukohl Collection, A Conversation with Rachel Zebro</i>
November 1	<i>From the Water Lily Pond to the Lagoon: Monet's Venice Paintings in Context, A Conversation with Lisa Small</i>
November 15	<i>Monet and Japan: The Bridge at Giverny, A Conversation with Ross King</i>
November 22	<i>Living With Design: A Conversation with Roger Thomas</i>
December 6	<i>The Poetry of Michelangelo, Between Word and Image: A Conversation with Professor Sarah Rolfe Prodan</i>
December 13	<i>Ghirlandaio's Frescoes in Santa Trinità: A Conversation with Dr. William R. Cook</i>

Travel the World with Me (virtually)!

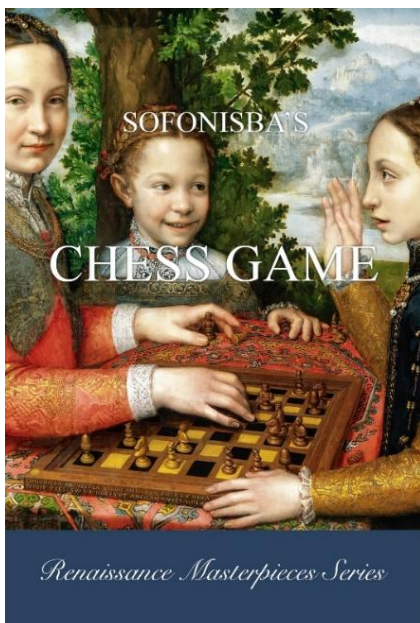
This Fall 2025 season of **Paola's Studiolo** is inspired by my travels, from the museums of ancient Cairo, Athens, Paris, and Phoenix, Arizona, where I used to live, all the way to the bright lights of Las Vegas and my beloved city of Venice. Join me on this eclectic virtual travel adventure with experts and curators to learn about the ancient Greek works at the Acropolis Museum that inspired Michelangelo and the inspiration that Claude Monet found in Japan. You'll get an insider's look at some of this Fall's most anticipated exhibitions: the King Tutankhamun exhibition at [The Grand Egyptian Museum](#), an exciting new museum that opens in November; [Florentine Baroque: The Haukohl Collection](#) at the Phoenix Art Museum; and [Monet and Venice](#) at the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

But that's not all! We will hear bestselling author Ross King discuss his new book, [Monet, The Water Lily Pond](#), while Roger Thomas, an internationally influential interior designer who lives in Venice, will discuss his book, [Resort Style: Spaces of Celebration](#), exploring his concept of evoca-ecture design.

Of course, we always honor the Italian Renaissance art core of Paola's Studiolo, and to that end, this season we will delve deeply into three extraordinary artists: **Sofonisba Anguissola**, the subject of [Sofonisba's Chess Game](#), a new art documentary; **Domenico Ghirlandaio's** magnificent frescoes in Santa Trinità; and **Michelangelo Buonarroti**, whose beautiful poetry will be examined by a distinguished Stanford professor.

September 20

Sofonisba's Chess Game: A Conversation with Howard Burton



The Chess Game, which is Italian artist Sofonisba Anguissola's best-known painting, was created in 1555. A new documentary on [Sofonisba's Chess Game](#) was produced by the filmmaker Howard Burton and his company, Ideas Roadshow. He will share the historical and artistic context of both Sofonisba's life and the role of chess in the Renaissance, and discuss the many fascinating aspects of the painting itself.

Dr. Burton, the creative force behind [Ideas Roadshow](#), has produced 7 full-length documentaries since 2022, including four on Renaissance art. He has a PhD in physics and a MA in philosophy, was the Founding Executive Director of the Perimeter Institute (a leading center for theoretical physics in Canada), and has written 6 books on a wide variety of topics.

October 4

How Much Did Michelangelo Borrow from Classical Greece? A Conversation with Kim Hoffnagle



It may be surprising to some that Michelangelo had “borrowed” from Classical Greece. As with so many topics in the Greco-Roman tradition, the Greeks themselves began by amalgamating their influences from other civilizations, and then innovating – at least as far as the West is concerned – in an extraordinarily long list of areas across the arts and sciences. While Ancient Greek art and aesthetics are certainly not monolithic, a trip to the Acropolis Museum is enough to illustrate a rapid evolution, from what seems an overt blend of the Mesopotamian and Egyptian traditions, through the Classical wonders which anyone would later recognize from Ancient Rome and even the Italian Renaissance.

Our guide will be artist and historian **Kim Hoffnagle**, who graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design in Printmaking in 1993, worked as a gallery and artist assistant in New York City,

and spent time there designing textiles before settling in Athens, Greece, in 2002. Now a visiting faculty member at the Hellenic American College in Athens, he teaches studio courses on art and design, as well as art appreciation. Since 2021, he has also given historical tours in Athens and the Peloponnese, an occupation which he finds continually inspiring and has led him to pursue a Master's degree in Greek and Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology.



October 18



The Treasures of Tutankhamun at The Grand Egyptian Museum: A Conversation with Mark Maher

For the first time since their discovery in 1922 by archaeologist Howard Carter, all 5,398 artifacts from Tutankhamun's tomb are now going to be displayed together in one place, in the all-new and much-anticipated Grand Egyptian Museum that is opening in Cairo in early November. The museum's dedicated Tutankhamun galleries span 75,000 square feet and include the pharaoh's famous golden mask, sarcophagi, chariots, thrones, jewelry, and everyday items that offer unprecedented insight into ancient Egypt's royal life and death rituals.

Our presenter is Mark Maher, an accomplished Egyptologist and acclaimed tour guide who is passionate about bringing history

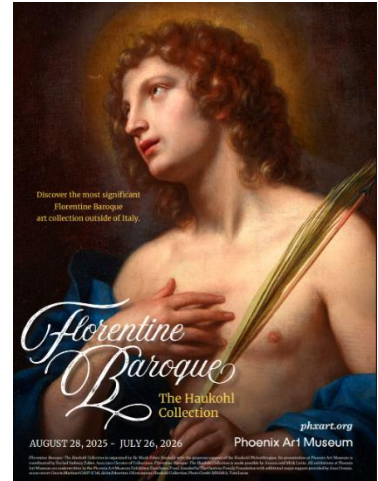
to life through engaging interpretation. Based in Cairo, Mark excels at making complex cultural information accessible and exciting for diverse audiences. He will share with us his favorite objects currently being assembled and prepared for the new exhibition that is now scheduled to be the centerpiece of The Grand Egyptian Museum, which opens to the public on November 4.



October 25

Florentine Baroque: The Haukohl Collection, A Conversation with Curator Rachel Zebro

Florentine Baroque: The Haukohl Collection presents more than 30 examples of painting and sculpture drawn from the most important Florentine Baroque art collection outside of Italy, assembled over more than 40 years by Houston-based art collector and co-founder of the Medici Archive Project, Sir Mark Fehrs Haukohl. [This spectacular exhibition](#) features artworks by local Florentine artists and artists living across Europe reflect Florence's flourishing art industry, as well as the cultural and intellectual legacy of the Medici Grand Dukes on the Renaissance and Baroque movements. The exhibition illustrates the sumptuous visual pageantry and the blending of new stylistic elements with established models that are central to Florentine Baroque art, while also shedding light on the intellectual history of Florence under the reign of the Medici.



Our presenter is Rachel Sadvary Zebro, Associate Curator of Collections at the Phoenix Art Museum. Zebro has curated numerous exhibitions highlighting the depth of the museum's modern, contemporary, and European art collections. These include *Larry Bell: Improvisation* (2024), *Breaking Up* (2022), *Sweet Land of Funk* (2020), and *In the Company of Women* (2018). Rachel was a contributor to the *Agnes Pelton: Desert Transcendentalist* exhibition catalogue (2019), *Kristin Bauer: This Is Like That* (2023), and *Enchanted Reverie: Klee and Calder* (2024).

November 1

From the Water Lily Pond to the Lagoon, Monet's Venice Paintings in Context: A Conversation with Curator Lisa Small

Claude Monet once claimed that Venice was “too beautiful to be painted,” a challenge he embraced by creating an extraordinary sequence of works depicting the Italian city.

Monet and Venice at the Brooklyn Museum (October 11, 2025–February 1, 2026) is the first exhibition to focus on Monet’s luminous Venetian paintings—a radiant yet underexplored chapter in the artist’s late career—since their debut in 1912. New York’s largest museum show dedicated to Monet in over 25 years, this exhibition features more than 100 artworks, books, and ephemera. Two masterpieces, the Brooklyn Museum’s own *Palazzo Ducale* and *The Grand Canal, Venice* from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, are presented alongside selections from throughout Monet’s career—including 19 of his Venetian paintings.



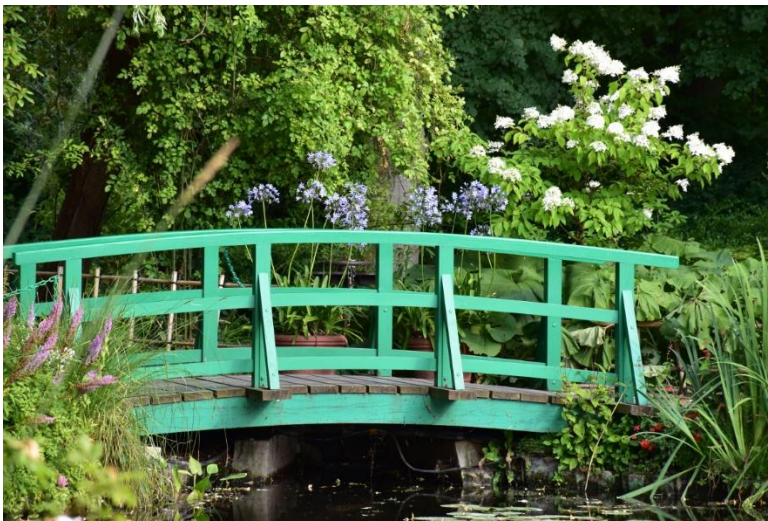
Our presenter, Lisa Small, has been a curator at the Brooklyn Museum since 2011, and was appointed Senior Curator of European Art in 2017. She has organized numerous permanent collection installations and special exhibitions, including *Monet to Morisot: The Real and Imagined in European Art* (2022–23); *Rembrandt to Picasso: Five Centuries of European Works on Paper* (2019); *Rodin: The Body in Bronze* (2017); and the touring exhibition *French Moderns: Monet to Matisse, 1850–1950* (2017–21, 2023–27). She will explore a fascinating yet underexplored chapter in Monet's late career: his 1908 trip to Venice. Her presentation will assert and amplify this trip's significance to reveal how the artist's evocative images of La Serenissima resonated within his life and oeuvre.

November 15

Monet and Japan: The Bridge at Giverny, A Conversation with Ross King

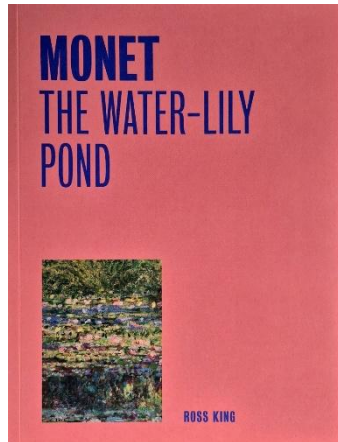
Ross King has made a career elucidating crucial episodes in the history of art and architecture. —Time Magazine

Claude Monet's paintings of his Japanese bridge are emblematic of his late style of Impressionist painting. They are also a reflection of the horticultural and artistic interests that he pursued for much of his life. This lecture by renowned historian and writer Ross King, will look at these paintings in the context of both the construction of his water lily pond and Japanese bridge in the 1890s as well as his passion for the prints of artists such as Hiroshige and Hokusai. We will see how Monet's Garden became a living canvas, uniting East and West in a vision that still captivates today.



Monet's interest in Japanese prints heavily influenced his creation of the Japanese-style bridge at his Giverny garden, which became a central motif in his later works. He designed and built the arching, turquoise bridge over a water lily pond he created in 1893, turning the area into his own "artistic medium". In 1899, he painted a series of 12 works focusing on the bridge, and the garden continued to inspire him until the end of his life.

Ross King is well known to friends of Paola's Studiolo. He is the bestselling author of books on Italian, French and Canadian art and history, including *Brunelleschi's Dome* (2000), *Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling* (2002), *The Judgment of Paris* (2006), *Leonardo and The Last Supper* (2012), and *Mad Enchantment: Claude Monet and the Painting of the Water Lilies* (2017). A prolific writer, his newest book is [*The Shortest History of Italy*](#). Covering 3,000 years of Italian history and culture



from ancient Rome to COVID-19, it has been praised as a 'miracle of compression', a 'densely packed volume of tantalizing details', and 'a splendid companion to 'a holiday in the bel paese'.

November 22

Living With Design: A Conversation with Roger Thomas

Roger Thomas, an internationally influential interior designer, is the visionary behind iconic Las Vegas properties for Wynn Hotels and Resorts as well as the company's emeritus Executive Vice President of Design and Development and Founder of The Roger Thomas Collection. Adding flourishes of beauty and opulence to interiors around the world, he has a beautiful home on the Grand Canal in Venice, to which he often retreats.

Roger helped shape modern Las Vegas in a long partnership with resort impresario Steve Wynn, offering guests a new, unique vision. He recently published [Resort Style: Spaces of Celebration](#) (Rizzoli, 2024), which explores what he calls his “evoca-ecture” design philosophy developed during his work on Wynn Resorts (The Mirage, Bellagio, Wynn Las Vegas, Encore Las Vegas, and Wynn Macau). His designs



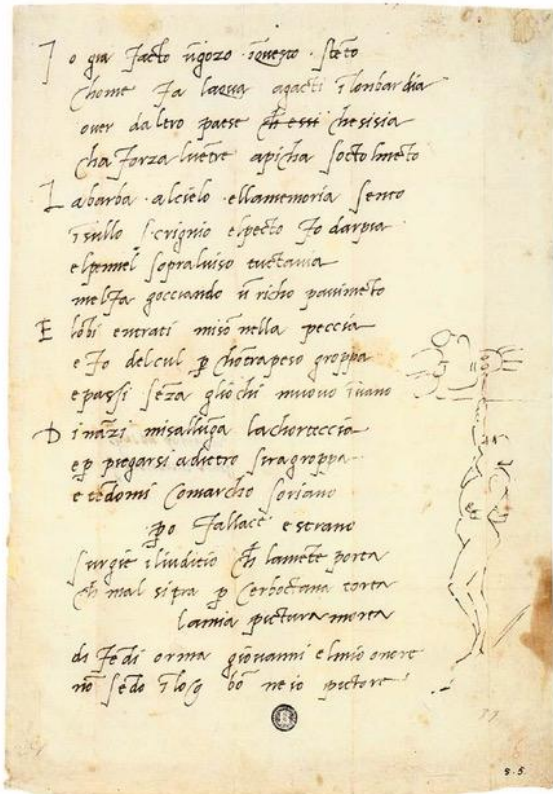
often feature grand entrances, meticulously crafted lobbies, luxurious suites, and carefully curated art collections. In addition to a host of former civic roles in the development of arts and culture in Las Vegas, Thomas is a former member of the Board of Trustees for The Neon Museum of Las Vegas and a founding member of the Board of the Las Vegas Museum of Art. Thomas was elected five times to the *Architectural Digest* AD100. He is a member of the Italian Board of Directors of [Venetian Heritage](#) ,

a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving Venice's cultural legacy.

Thomas received a BFA in Art History from Tufts University and The School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, as well as an honorary Master's Degree from the Interior Design Institute. Born in Salt Lake City, he still has a home in Las Vegas resident, but spends most of his time in Venice.

December 6

The Poetry of Michelangelo, Between Word and Image: A Conversation with Sarah Rolfe Prodan



Revered as one of the greatest artists in history, Michelangelo Buonarroti lived an extraordinarily long and productive life in a period marked by peace and war, religious change, and political upheaval. In addition to his sculptures, paintings, drawings, architectural designs, and a vast and diverse collection of letters, personal notes, documents, and contracts, the artist left behind a rich and eclectic corpus of poetry. The verses he composed reveal and reflect intriguing facets of his personal, creative, and intellectual life as well as the world of 16th century Italy. In this presentation by scholar Sarah Rolfe Prodan, we will follow Michelangelo and his pen on a journey from the comic to the serious, from the grotesque to the sublime. Examining his poetry and his pages, we will explore the place and character of love, beauty, art, and friendship in Michelangelo's work and in his world.

[Sarah Rolfe Prodan](#) is Assistant Professor of French and Italian and

William H. & Frances Green Faculty Fellow in the School of Humanities and Sciences at Stanford University, California. A scholar of early modern Italy, her research centers on the lyric and on relations among cultural forms, philosophy, and religion in the period. Her publications include the award-winning monograph [Michelangelo's Christian Mysticism: Spirituality, Poetry and Art in Sixteenth-Century Italy](#) (Cambridge University Press, 2014) and the co-edited volume *Friendship and Sociability in Premodern Europe: Contexts, Concepts, and Expressions* (Toronto: CRRS, 2014). Her current book project on poetics of piety in early modern Italy considers the ways in which male and female poets of the introspective devotional lyric engaged the word in text, image, and imagination in the 16th century.



December 13

Ghirlandaio's Frescos in Santa Trinità: A Conversation with Prof. William R. Cook



The *pièce de résistance* of the artworks in the Santa Trinità church in Florence is without doubt one of the finest and most complete remaining Renaissance chapels – **the Capella Sassetti**, and those frescoes (1486) are among **Domenico Ghirlandaio's** finest work. The episodes of the life of St. Francis are embellished by contemporary Florentine settings and personalities. The altarpiece, a Ghirlandaio painting on canvas, is of the birth of Christ and would be admired in any museum in the world. But even that painting is about Florence, Jerusalem, and the Sassetti family as well as about Jesus. Bill Cook, a scholar and expert on Saint Francis

and Medieval and Renaissance history, will offer an insightful talk on these extraordinary frescoes – a lovely way to end this season before the holidays.

Dr. Cook earned his B.A. from Wabash College. Shortly thereafter he received the Woodrow Wilson and the Herbert Lehman fellowships to study Medieval History at Cornell University where he completed his M.A. and Ph.D. He is a lecturer for The Great Courses and was Distinguished Teaching Professor of History at the State University of New York at Geneseo since 1970 until he retired with the rank of Distinguished Teaching Professor in 2012. His publications include *Images of St. Francis of Assisi* and *Francis of Assisi: The Way of Poverty and Humility*. He also currently edits and contributes to *The Art of the Franciscan Order in Italy*. He has lectured widely in the USA and Europe and has taken countless students to Europe to study medieval and Renaissance history and art. In retirement, he founded [the Bill Cook Foundation](http://www.billcookfoundation.org), a nonprofit organization supporting schools and school programs in Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and Latin America.

