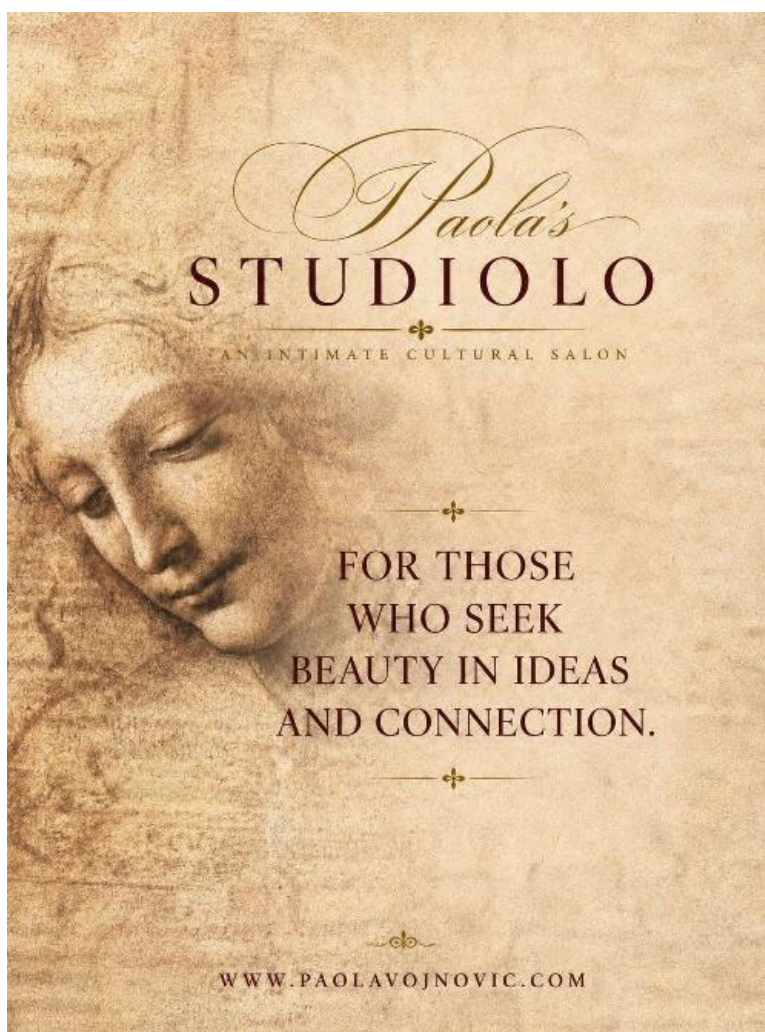


PAOLA'S STUDIOLO: Autumn 2026



Presented Live on Saturdays via Zoom

10am Los Angeles / 1pm New York / 6pm London / 7pm Florence

Full Season of 10 Live Events: \$228 (Each event is recorded and yours to keep!)

To Reserve Your Spot: Paola50122@gmail.com

To register:

Zelle – registered with Paola50122@gmail.com

[Credit card](#)

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FULL PROGRAM OF LIVE EVENTS

September

Sept 5th – Five Ghirlandaio Paintings I Love, and Why – lecture by Paola Vojnovic

A complimentary season-opening event!

Sept 12th – Mastering Connections: A Conversation with Joe Navarro

Sept 26th – Female friendship and cultural collaboration in early modern Florence ~ Vittoria della Rovere, Grand Duchess of Tuscany: A Conversation with Adelina Modesti

October

Oct 3rd – Spaciousness Meditation with Mantegna: A Conversation with Lilit Sadoyan

Oct 10th – Vasari and the Sacred Image: A Conversation with Sally Cornelison

**Oct 24th – “Peggy Guggenheim in London: The Making of a Collector”
~ A Conversation with Grazina Subelyte**

November

Nov 14th – An Inheritance of Beauty: A Conversation with Emma Hepburn Ferrer

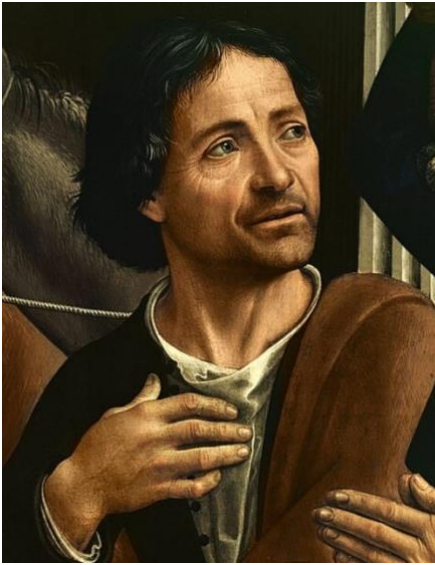
Nov 21st – Inventing the Renaissance: A Conversation with Ada Palmer

December

**Dec 12th – The Art of a Life Together:
A Conversation with Idanna Pucci and Terrence Ward**

An extended Studiolo session of 90 minutes!

Dec 19th – Michelangelo’s Women: Images of Female Power and Divinity from the Casa Buonarroti ~ A Conversation with Gary Radke



To open the new season of Studiolo, please join me for a personal journey through five paintings by **one of my favorite artists, Domenico Ghirlandaio**.

Few painters bring Renaissance Florence to life quite like Ghirlandaio. His frescoes and portraits are filled with exquisitely dressed Florentines, magnificent interiors, familiar streets, intimate gestures, and wonderfully observed faces. Look closely, and sacred stories become windows onto the very real world of fifteenth-century Florence—a city of beauty and ambition, family and faith, wealth, fashion, and extraordinary artistic invention.

Together, we'll look closely at what makes each one special, uncover some of the people and stories hidden within them.

Along the way, we'll encounter the Florence Ghirlandaio knew, the remarkable patrons he painted, and the young Michelangelo, who entered his busy workshop as an apprentice.

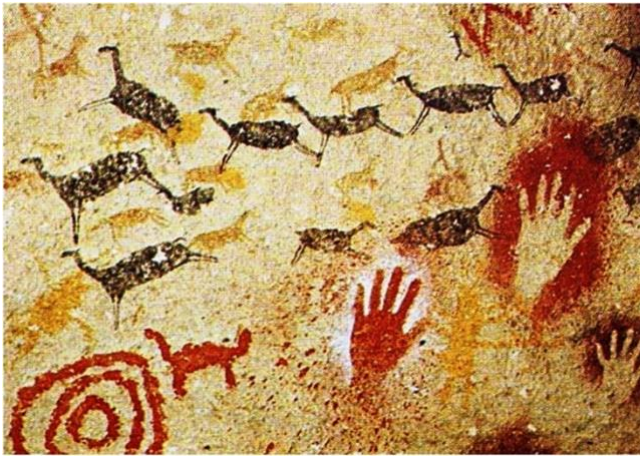
This complimentary season-opening event is also an invitation to discover Paola's Studiolo—a place to slow down, look closely, and follow our curiosity.

Paola Vojnovic is a Renaissance art historian, curator, published author, and cultural heritage specialist. She holds master's degrees in Renaissance Art History from Syracuse University and in the Preservation and Management of Archaeological, Historical and Artistic Heritage from the Università di Siena, and was the recipient of Syracuse University's prestigious Renaissance Florence Fellowship. An authorized guide in Florence and Tuscany since 2008, Paola has shared her passion for Italian art and culture with visitors from around the world, including leading figures from the arts, entertainment, media, and business. For a decade, Paola worked with the Opera di Santa Croce in Florence, where she edited and co-authored publications and spearheaded international fundraising campaigns for the restoration of Renaissance masterpieces from the Basilica of Santa Croce, including Brunelleschi's Pazzi Chapel and Michelangelo's tomb. Her research and writing have appeared in books and international publications, and she has contributed to documentary and film projects on Florence and its cultural heritage.

Today, she is the creator and host of **Paola's Studiolo**, an intimate cultural salon inspired by the Renaissance tradition of the *studiolo*, bringing together leading art historians, museum curators, authors, artists, and thinkers for conversations about art, ideas, and the enduring pleasure of looking and learning.

Paola is a member of the Renaissance Society of America, and often acts as a liaison between museums and clients to provide special behind-the-scenes access. Since leaving her home in Scottsdale, Arizona, Paola divides her time between Viareggio, Florence and Venice. Read more about her in [The Florentine](https://www.paolavojnovic.com).





What can a handprint on a cave wall tell us about being human? And what connects the earliest images made tens of thousands of years ago to the art of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci?

In this special conversation, bestselling author and former FBI agent Joe Navarro joins Paola to explore an unexpected idea: that art has always helped prepare us for life. Beginning with the astonishing prehistoric images preserved in the caves of Europe—created in

darkness, by firelight, tens of thousands of years before the Renaissance—they will trace our enduring impulse to observe, create, communicate, and make meaning.

Moving from cave walls to Etruscan tombs, Roman mosaics, and the revolutionary curiosity of Leonardo and Michelangelo, Joe and Paola will consider how art reflects the environments that shape us while also revealing something fundamental about the human mind. Why did our ancestors make beautiful things even when survival was precarious? What does art teach us about attention, curiosity, connection, and our ability to understand one another?

Drawing on ideas from Joe's latest book, *Mastering Connections*, the conversation will bring together art, human behavior, and the lessons of a lifetime spent studying how people communicate. It is an invitation to look at some of humanity's greatest artistic achievements from an entirely different perspective—not simply as objects of beauty, but as evidence of who we are and how we learned to navigate the world.

Joe Navarro is a former FBI special agent, spy catcher, self-trained ethologist and scientific researcher, and the author of 15 books. During his 25-year career with the FBI, he specialized in behavioral assessment and the interpretation of nonverbal behavior, developing an extraordinary understanding of how we reveal ourselves through gesture, expression, and action. His bestselling books, including *What Every BODY Is Saying* and *The Dictionary of Body Language*, have introduced millions of readers to the hidden signals that shape human interaction. In his latest book, *Mastering Connections*, he turns his attention to the qualities and behaviors that allow us to build stronger, more meaningful relationships.



Sept 26th *Female friendship and cultural collaboration in early modern Florence ~
Vittoria della Rovere, Grand Duchess of Tuscany:
A Conversation with Adelina Modesti*



Princess of Urbino and Grand Duchess of Tuscany Maria Vittoria Leonora Feltria della Rovere (1622-1694) passed much of her life in the company of women, with many of whom she developed long-lasting friendships and relationships. This talk will explore the grand duchess's female networks and her cultural patronage in Baroque Florence as well as the connections she established with women throughout Italy and Europe. It will address the following questions: What characterizes friendship and collaboration between women in early modern Europe, especially for a female ruler? Loyalty, fidelity, commitment, diplomacy, empathy, trust, bonds of reciprocity, of affection, of kinship? What is the impact of such female friendship, collaboration and networks on patronage and the arts? The talk is drawn from my recent essay in a volume honoring the

pioneering work of feminist art historians Marry Garrard and Norma Broude.

Adelina Modesti is an art historian specializing in Renaissance and Baroque art, with a particular focus on women artists, patrons, collecting, and cultural networks in early modern Italy. She received her PhD from Monash University with a dissertation on the celebrated Bolognese Baroque artist Elisabetta Sirani and is an Honorary Senior Fellow in Art History and Art Curatorship at the University of Melbourne.

The recipient of numerous international fellowships, grants, and awards, Adelina has published extensively on women artists and patrons, including Elisabetta Sirani, Artemisia Gentileschi, Vittoria della Rovere, and Margherita de' Medici. Her major publications include books on Sirani and Vittoria della Rovere, and she formerly served as an Advocate in Florence for the Advancing Women Artists Foundation.



October 3rd

Spaciousness Meditation with Mantegna: A Conversation with Lilit Sadoyan

NB: Live only event – no recording will be made!



Step into Andrea Mantegna's extraordinary *Camera degli Sposi*, or *Camera picta*, in Mantua's Palazzo Ducale, and look up. Painted between 1465 and 1474, Mantegna's astonishing *trompe-l'œil* fresco appears to dissolve the ceiling itself, opening the room to the sky as playful figures peer down over a painted

marble balustrade—an illusion so daring that it helped establish a new tradition of looking up into seemingly limitless painted space.

In this session, art historian and museum educator Dr. Lilit Sadoyan invites us to look closely at Mantegna's ingenious manipulation of space and perspective—and to experience it as an invitation to shift our own perspective. Through guided exploration and mindfulness meditation, we will consider what happens when we slow down, look up, and allow our awareness to expand beyond the boundaries of the room.

Dr. Lilit Sadoyan is an independent curator, art historian, museum educator, and meditation practitioner. A Gallery Educator at the Getty since 2008, she creates experiences that encourage curiosity, foster embodied learning, and embrace diverse perspectives. She also leads OMMM, the Getty's initiative investigating the role and impact of mindfulness in museums. She is a co-author of *Activity-Based Teaching in the Art Museum* (2020). Dr. Sadoyan has also led curatorial projects at various museums across Southern California.





When people think of Giorgio Vasari (1511-74), his paintings and architecture in Florence and Rome and, above all, his groundbreaking artist biographies in the *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1550, 1568) typically come to mind. This talk explores a lesser-known aspect of Vasari's artistic and architectural production, his renovation of the prestigious medieval church of Santa Maria della Pieve in his hometown of Arezzo.

In addition to renovating the Pieve to make it conform to Catholic Reformation liturgical standards, Vasari built four new altars in the church, including a monumental, freestanding high altar that also served as his family funerary chapel. Vasari intended that altar to mark his grave and commemorate himself and his family members in perpetuity, but a radical renovation of the Pieve in the 19th century resulted in

the alienation of Vasari's works from the church, thus shattering the formal, iconographical, and patronal relationships that once existed between them.

Sally J. Cornelison is a specialist in the history of Italian late medieval and Renaissance religious art and the director of Syracuse University's Florence Graduate Program in Italian Renaissance Art, of which she is an alumna. Her scholarly research concerns the history of art, devotion, ritual, iconography, and patronage as they relate to the cult of saints and relics in Renaissance Italy and the sacred paintings of artist, architect, and author Giorgio Vasari. She has published extensively, including her recent book "[Vasari and the Sacred Image: Renovating Santa Maria della Pieve in Arezzo](#)" (Cambridge University Press, 2026).



Oct 24th “Peggy Guggenheim in London: The Making of a Collector” ~
A Conversation with Grazina Subelyte

NB: Live only event – no recording will be made!



One of the most celebrated exhibitions of this year in Italy, is “[Peggy Guggenheim in London: The Making of a Collector](#)” at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice.

The exhibition celebrates Peggy Guggenheim’s years in the UK and her first gallery, Guggenheim Jeune, which operated in London before WWII, between 1938 and 1939. The exhibition brings together key works exhibited those pioneering exhibitions, as well as works from the same period by artists including Barbara Hepworth, Wassily Kandinsky, Rita Kernn-Larsen, Piet Mondrian, Henry Moore, Cedric Morris, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, and many others. The show also features archival material, bearing testimony to this period of intense experimentation and cultural vibrancy in the lead-up to WWII. This exhibition will be on view in Venice through October 19, 2026, then travel to the Royal Academy of Arts, London in later fall 2026, and to the Guggenheim

New York in spring 2027. (image: Gisèle Freund, Herbert Read and Peggy Guggenheim, 1939 (printed 1977), Peggy Guggenheim Collection Archives)

Studiolo guest will be my dear friend Gražina Subelytė, PhD, a Curator at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection and a specialist in modern and Surrealist art. Her recent exhibitions include *Surrealism and Magic: Enchanted Modernity, 1948: The Biennale of Peggy Guggenheim, Rita Kernn-Larsen: Surrealist Paintings*, and *Peggy Guggenheim: The Last Dogaresa*. She is currently co-curating *Peggy Guggenheim in London: The Making of a Collector* with the Royal Academy of Arts and Guggenheim New York, and developing future exhibitions on postwar abstraction and Hedda Sterne.



Gražina received her PhD from the Courtauld Institute of Art. She serves on the Advisory Boards of Museum Frieder Burda and the MO Museum in Vilnius, and is a member of the Visionary Circle of The Warburg Institute in London.

Nov 14th

An Inheritance of Beauty: A Conversation with Emma Hepburn Ferrer

In November, Paola's Studiolo will travel to the studio of talented young artist, Emma Hepburn Ferrer, whose work is deeply inspired by the Renaissance while reflecting her own distinctive artistic vision. In Emma's Tuscan studio, we will talk about how the Italian Renaissance continues to inspire her work, as well as some of the places and works of art she loves most in Florence.

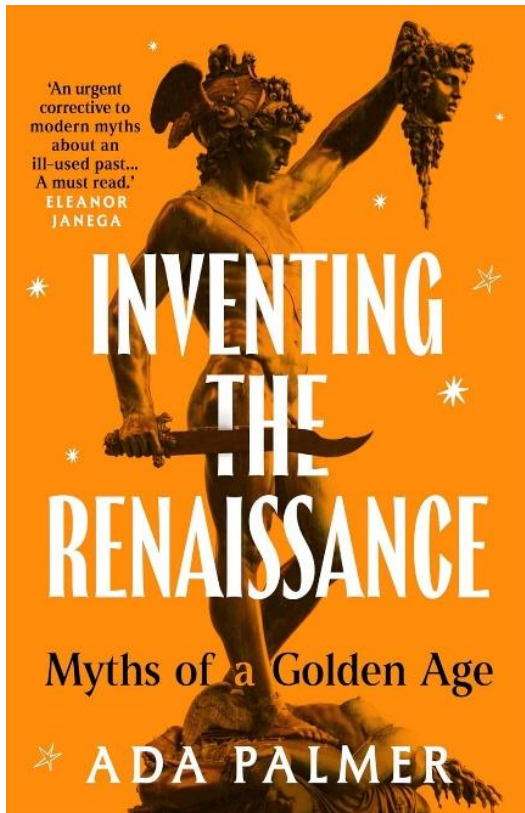
Emma is also the granddaughter of the much-loved actress and humanitarian Audrey Hepburn, and we'll touch upon that extraordinary family legacy and how it has shaped her own life and creative journey.

It will be a very personal journey through art, inspiration and Italy.



Foal (First Snowfall), oil on embroidered silk

Emma is represented by [Sapar Contemporary](http://SaparContemporary.com) Gallery in NYC.



[Inventing the Renaissance: Myths of a Golden Age](#), a *New Yorker* Best Book of 2025, is award-winning novelist and historian Ada Palmer's witty and irreverent challenge to one of history's most enduring myths: that a dark Middle Ages suddenly gave way to a glorious Renaissance. Through vivid portraits of Renaissance men and women, Palmer reveals a far more complicated, diverse, fragile—and fascinating—age.

From Machiavelli and the Medici to Europe's enduring fascination with ancient Rome, Palmer explores how the idea of a Renaissance was created, reshaped, and repeatedly put to political and cultural use. The result is not only a fresh look at a period we thought we knew, but a provocative exploration of how—and why—we invent “golden ages” in the first place.

[Ada Palmer](#) is a cultural and intellectual historian & novelist focusing on radical thought and the recovery of the classics in the Italian Renaissance. She works on the history of science, religion, heresy, freethought, atheism, censorship, books, printing, and on patronage and the networks of power and money that enabled cultural creation in early modern Europe. She teaches in the History Department at the University of Chicago, her first book is [Reading Lucretius in the Renaissance](#) (2014), her second is *Inventing the Renaissance: the Myth of a Golden Age* (2025).

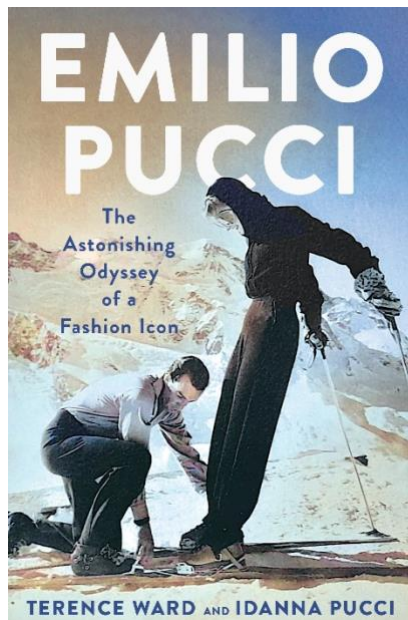


Dec 12th

The Art of a Life Together: A Conversation with Idanna Pucci and Terence Ward

NB: This will be an extended Studiolo, for the duration of about 90 minutes!

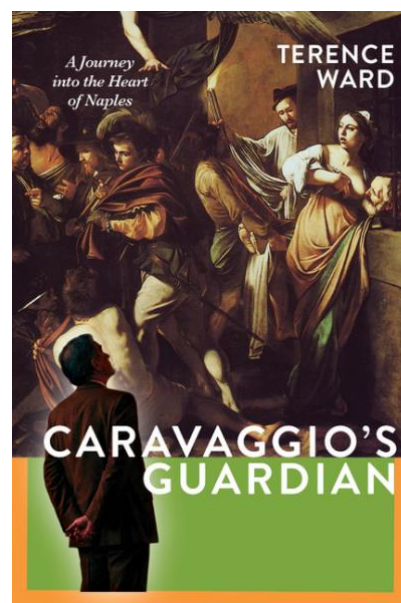
In December, **Paola's Studiolo** steps inside the Florence studio of writers and creative partners **Idanna Pucci and Terence Ward** for an intimate conversation about books, art, family, and what it means to spend a lifetime creating together.



At the heart of our conversation are two remarkable books. [Emilio Pucci: The Astonishing Odyssey of a Fashion Icon](#), co-authored by Idanna and Terence, takes us behind the dazzling colors and patterns of one of Italy's most celebrated designers to reveal a little-known story of courage, intrigue, and survival. Before becoming an icon of postwar Italian style, Emilio Pucci was an aviator and resistance figure who survived imprisonment and torture by the Gestapo—and emerged from the devastation of war to help create the exuberant new vision of Italy that became known around the world as **“Made in Italy.”**

Terence's [Caravaggio's Guardian](#) takes us to Naples and another extraordinary Italian story, weaving together the turbulent life of Caravaggio with the contemporary world surrounding his masterpiece *The Seven Acts of Mercy*. Moving between past and present, the book asks a question close to the heart of the Studiolo: **Can a work of art actually change the way we live?** As Ingrid Rowland observed, the book reminds us that Caravaggio's paintings still call upon us “to think and act, not just to look on passively.”

But our December Studiolo will go beyond the books. We'll talk with Idanna and Terence about **creating side by side**, the ideas and adventures that have shaped their work, and how a life shared between cultures has influenced the stories they choose to tell.



And, from their studio, we'll venture into **their Florence**—discovering some of the places, works of art, corners, and hidden treasures they return to for inspiration.

Part literary conversation, part art journey, and part personal portrait, this will be a chance to enter the creative world of two remarkable storytellers—and to experience Florence through the eyes of people who have made the city both their home and their muse.

Born into the Pucci family in Florence, **Idanna Pucci** has spent her life exploring cultures, histories, and remarkable human stories around the world. After working in New York with her uncle, legendary fashion designer Emilio Pucci, she settled in Bali, where her study of myth and oral tradition led to *The Epic of Life*, now considered a classic on Balinese culture.

An author, filmmaker, and cultural historian, Pucci's books and documentaries have taken her from Patagonia and the Congo to Gilded Age New York, exploring colonial history, social justice, family legacy, and lives that transcend borders. Her most recent book, *Emilio Pucci: The Astonishing Odyssey of a Fashion Icon*, was co-authored with her husband, Terence Ward, with whom she lives in Florence.

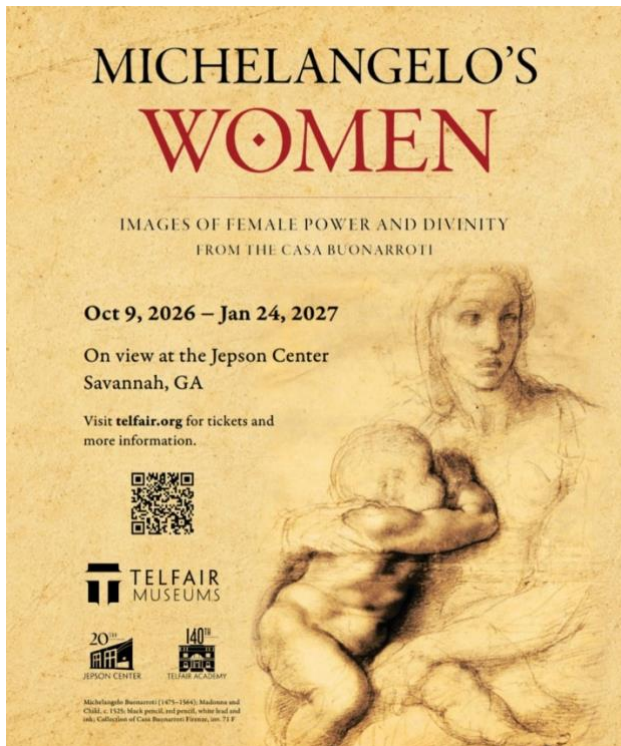
Terence Ward is a writer and filmmaker whose work crosses cultures, continents, and centuries. Raised in the Middle East, his writing explores the connections that transcend cultural divides, with a particular focus on Iran, Arabia, Indonesia, and Italy. His acclaimed books include *Searching for Hassan: A Journey to the Heart of Iran*, *The Wahhabi Code*, and *Caravaggio's Guardian*, which intertwines the turbulent world of Caravaggio's Naples with the enduring power of *The Seven Acts of Mercy*.

Ward has appeared on BBC, CNN, NPR, PBS, and RAI-TV, and has produced award-winning documentaries on Iran and Congo.



Dec 19th

Michelangelo's Women: Images of Female Power and Divinity from the Casa Buonarroti ~ A Conversation with Gary Radke



For the last interview of 2026, I have invited renowned art historian Gary Radke to talk about a wonderful exhibition, [Michelangelo's Women: Images of Female Power and Divinity from the Casa Buonarroti](#), which opens October 9, 2026, at Telfair Museums in Savannah, Georgia.

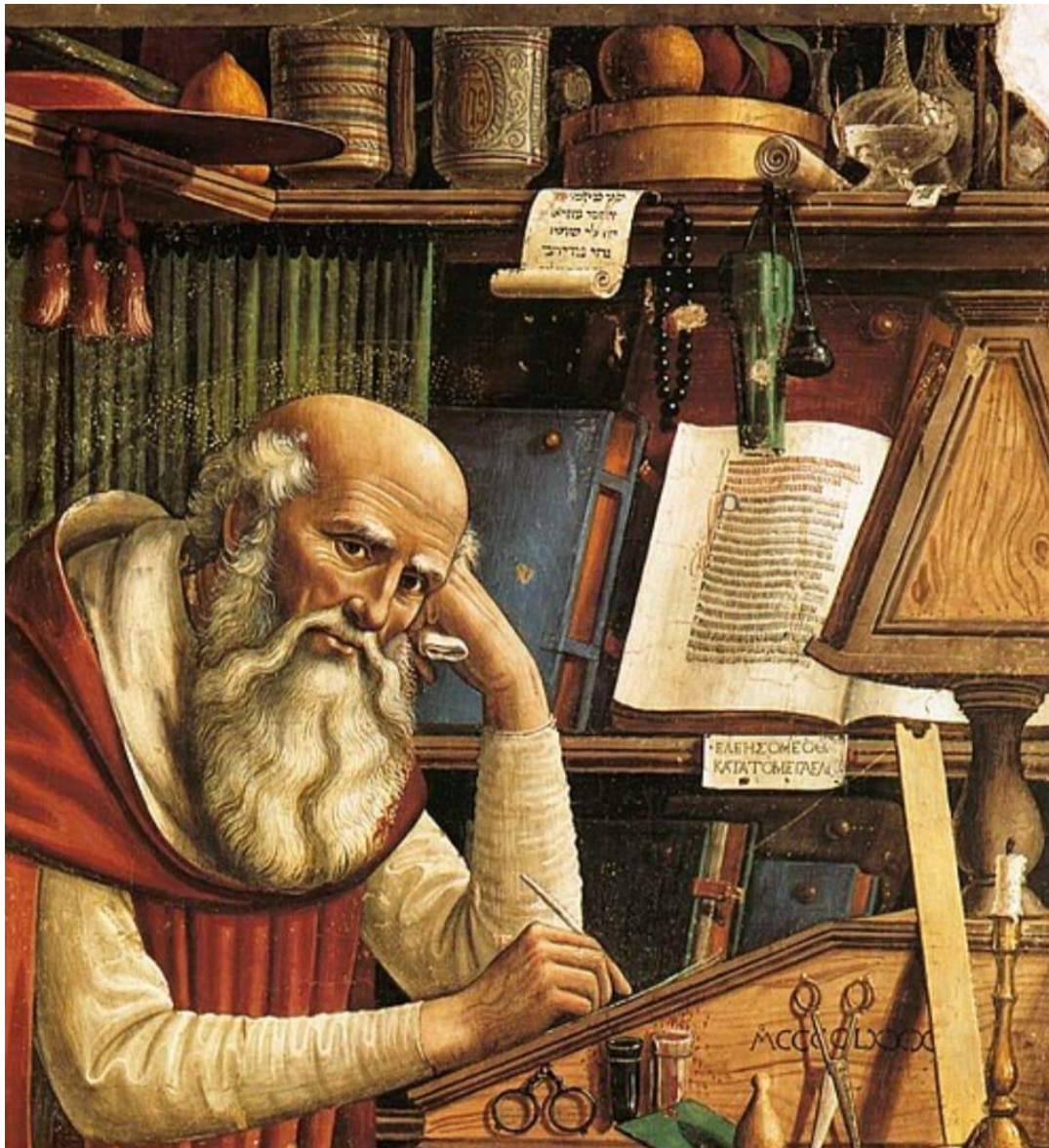
With Dr. Radke, my dear professor from grad school, we will have the extraordinary opportunity to explore Michelangelo, the women who inspired his art, and the remarkable works at Casa Buonarroti. Drawn from the historic collections of the artist's own family, the exhibition includes Michelangelo's drawings, poetry, and letters, some never before seen in the United States. Dr. Radke's exhibition will encourage visitors to think about the ways the artist viewed women and what

women saw in his works. Reproductions of the Sistine Chapel ceiling and the Last Judgment will allow visitors to have new, close studies of the women the artist included in his most famous work. The show will also introduce visitors to Michelangelo's great patron and muse Vittoria Colonna (1492–1547) and to preservationist Rosina Vendramin (1814–1856), women who supported Michelangelo and maintained his legacy.

Gary Radke is Professor Emeritus of Art History at Syracuse University and a leading expert on Italian medieval and Renaissance art. He has curated major exhibitions throughout the United States and co-authored the widely used textbook *Art in Renaissance Italy*. He also leads the Caravaggio Illumination Project, an international initiative exploring how Caravaggio's dramatic paintings were originally seen and experienced under the lighting conditions of his time.



It should be a wonderful exhibition to see if you happen to be in Savannah this Fall. But if not, you will get the insider's look from Dr. Radke's visit to Paola's Studiolo!



I hope you will join us for this new season!

Come for the Art. Stay for the Conversation.

Here is a lovely endorsement of Paola's Studiolo by Swedish-Hungarian multidisciplinary artist and writer Marta von Poroszlai:

"My interest in Florence did not arise from a touristic impulse, but from a slower, almost artisanal process. For two years I have been part of the Studiolo of Paola Vojnovic, an art historian of the Italian Renaissance specializing in northern Italy. In that space—half intellectual workshop, half refuge for those of us who love history—I have discovered a different way of looking at the past: closer, tactile, and human."