

## PAOLA'S STUDIOLO: Spring 2025

*Presented Live on Zoom*

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

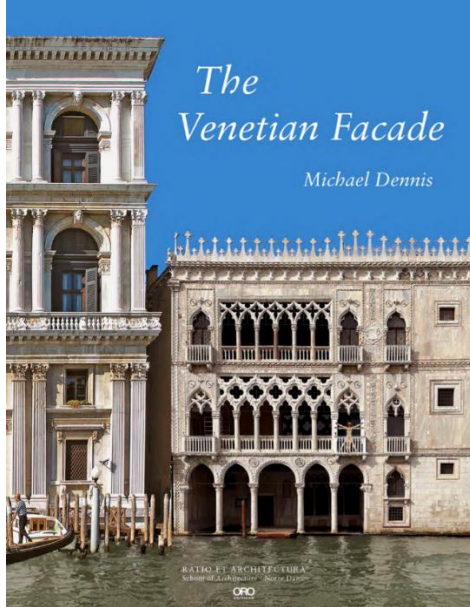
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**To Reserve Your Spot or with any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to [Paola50122@gmail.com](mailto:Paola50122@gmail.com)**



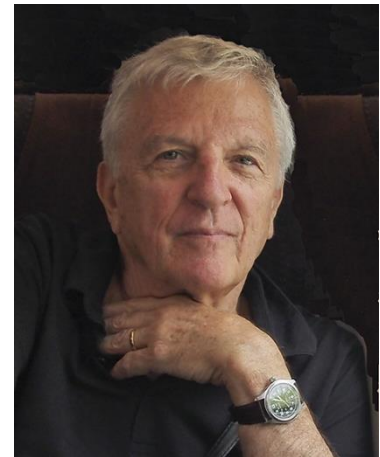
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| <b>January 25<sup>th</sup></b> | <b><i>The Venetian Façade: A Conversation with Michael Dennis</i></b>  |
| <b>Feb 1<sup>st</sup></b>      | <b><i>The Genius of John Singer Sargent: A Conversation with Nick Todhunter</i></b>  |
| <b>Feb 22<sup>nd</sup></b>     | <b><i>The Carnival of Venice, The Unknown Story: A Conversation Matteo Casini</i></b>  |
| <b>March 15<sup>th</sup></b>   | <b><i>Living Under the Tuscan Sun: A Conversation with Frances Mayes</i></b>   |
| <b>March 22<sup>nd</sup></b>   | <b><i>Inside Florence: A Conversation Livia Frescobaldi</i></b>  |
| <b>April 5<sup>th</sup></b>    | <b><i>A Special 100<sup>th</sup> edition of Paola's Studiolo!</i></b><br><b><i>The Road to Redemption: Jubilees, Pilgrimages and Sacred Journeys - A Conversation with Ross King</i></b> |
| <b>April 12<sup>th</sup></b>   | <b><i>Saving Michelangelo's Dome: A Conversation with Wayne Kalayjian</i></b>  |
| <b>April 26<sup>th</sup></b>   | <b><i>Soul and Body in Michelangelo: A Conversation with Rab Hatfield</i></b>  |





There are no books that focus on the unique artistic characteristics of the Venetian facade and its potential relevance to contemporary architectural and urban issues, as this book intends. The Venetian Palace is to the art of the facade as the French Hôtel is to the art of the plan—the quintessential level of architectural achievement. Unique in the history of architecture, and a product of an equally unique circumstance, the Venetian facade is almost modern in its planar abstraction and lack of structural expression. This book is about architecture; it is not about history, it is not about theory, it is not about structure and technology, and, most definitely, it is not about the plan. All of these topics are well-covered elsewhere. This book is about the facade. It explores the art and typology of the Venetian facade, not only as a high point of architectural literacy and achievement, but as a potentially useful contemporary stimulant.

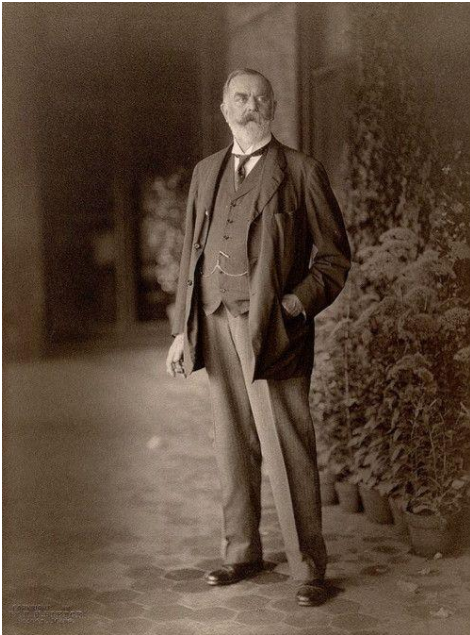
Michael Dennis is a principal of Michael Dennis & Associates in Boston, and Professor of Architecture Emeritus at MIT, where he taught Urban Design and Theory. He was the 1986 Thomas Jefferson Professor of Architecture at the University of Virginia, the 1988 Eero Saarinen Professor of Architecture at Yale University, and the 2006 Charles Moore Professor of Architecture at the University of Michigan. He has lectured widely and is the author of *Court and Garden: From the French Hôtel to the City of Modern Architecture* (1986), *Architecture and the City: Selected Essays* (2020), *Temples & Towns: The Form, Elements, and Principles of Planned Towns* (2022), and *The Venetian Façade* (2024). Forthcoming: *American Architects and Urbanism: Nation and City Building Before the Apocalypse*. In 2011, he was awarded the CNU Athena Medal for his contributions to urbanism.



February 1

## The Genius of John Singer Sargent: A Conversation with Nicholas Todhunter

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Sargent in 1924 by Henry Havelock Pierce

*“Every time I paint a portrait I lose a friend.”*

This special edition of Studiolo is dedicated to Florentine born **John Singer Sargent**, on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. He died, aged 69 in London, on April 14, 1925.

Born in Italy, to American parents, he was trained in Paris before moving to London, living most of his life in Europe. He enjoyed international acclaim as a portrait painter. An early submission to the Paris Salon, his *Portrait of Madame X* (1884) was intended to consolidate his position as a society painter in Paris but instead resulted in scandal. Considered today one of his best works, he described it in 1915, writing to a friend, "I suppose it is the best thing I have done."

During the year following the scandal, Sargent departed for England, where he continued a successful career as a portrait artist. Considered the "leading portrait painter of his generation," he created roughly 900 oil paintings and more than 2,000 watercolors, as well as countless

sketches and charcoal drawings. His *oeuvre* documents worldwide travel, from Europe to the Middle East, and across the United States. In this talk we will especially explore Sargent's connection to Venice, and his friendship with Isabella Stewart Gardner, who posed for him at the age of 47, and often welcomed him in her Venetian residence, Palazzo Barbaro.

Nicholas Todhunter, born in Paris in 1981, has lived and worked across Europe, the United States, and Asia. He studied at the Chelsea School of Art in London before moving to Florence to study at the Charles Cecil Studios, the only atelier in Europe where traditional realism is taught. He spent three years there, learning drawing and painting and being introduced to the visual language and techniques of painters from earlier centuries. After his studies in Florence, Nick moved to Venice, where he now resides. For him, Venice is the heart of portraiture and is the source of limitless inspiration. He has exhibited throughout Europe and his works are in private collections throughout the world. Nick divides his time between Somerset, England, and Venice, Italy, and is the curator of the highly popular [Instagram page Portrait Paintings Daily](#).







Even if the origins remained obscure, in the late Middle Ages and Early Modern period (1400s-1600s) the Carnevale of Venice was one of the most significant in Europe. In time, a great celebration developed with multiple and complex aspects. First, the rituals and games of Fat Thursday in Saint Mark square became the real heart of the Carnival, dominated by the doge and government of the nobility. Second, the festival spread out in other parts of the city, at first inspired by the ruling classes, then evolving into a more popular event.

The talk will present a vision of the Venetian Carnival substantially different from the current, simplistic and touristic view, which developed

only in the last part of the history of the “Most Serene” Republic.



Matteo Casini, born in Parma, received his doctorate in history from the University Ca' Foscari, Venice, and is a scholar of Italian Renaissance and Baroque history. He was a fellow at the Warburg Institute, Harvard University in Florence, the Folger Shakespeare Library and National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the Universities of Florence and Padua, the University of California Los Angeles, and the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. He has published many articles in Italian and international journals, and the book *The Gestures of the Prince: Political Festivals in Florence and Venice in the Renaissance* (Venice, 1996). He has taught in Venice, Padua,

Florence and Boston, and is currently a lecturer of Renaissance, Mediterranean, and European history at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

March 15h

## Living Under the Tuscan Sun: A Conversation with Frances Mayes

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I am truly honored to welcome a very special guest, Frances Mayes, who now divides her time between her homes in Cortona, Italy, and North Carolina. She is the author of the now-classic *Under the Tuscan Sun*, which was a New York Times bestseller for nearly 3 years and became a film starring Diane Lane. Her other international bestsellers include *Bella Tuscany*, *Everyday in Tuscany*, *A Year in the World*, and three illustrated books: *In Tuscany*, *Bringing Tuscany Home*, and *The Tuscan Sun Cookbook*. She published two novels, *Swan* and *Women in Sunlight*, and has written six books of poetry and *The Discovery of Poetry*. Other books are *See You in the Piazza* and *Always Italy*. Her books have been translated into more than fifty languages.

Frances will talk with our Studiolo audience about her life in the villa Bramasole, and how her bestselling book “Under the Tuscan Sun” changed her life. We will also discuss her newest book and third novel, *A Great Marriage* (Ballantine Books, August 2024). In this poignant novel, when a perfect wedding is called off just days before the big event, it sends two people—and their families—reeling. With her signature warmth, humor, and incisive style, Frances creates a multigenerational probe into the complexity of love and the great mystery ride of marriage. A novel of casual choices and fateful consequences, *A Great Marriage* introduces two unforgettable families and the arrival of a stranger who rearranges their futures.







An account of Florence that stems from a love for the conservation of its treasures, something made possible by the age-old know-how of the Florentine craft workshops and their ability to preserve and keep in perfect condition the architecture and decorations that make Florence one of the world's most widely admired cities. A fresco with a myriad different scenes, whose protagonists live in today's world and at the same time are heirs to a history stretching back for centuries, in a difficult balancing act between modernity and tradition. Livia Frescobaldi's approach to the city is the fruit of a passion that has grown over the years, in a process of continual discovery of its values and emotions. The memories of her childhood, the cultural milieu and the gaze of someone who has rediscovered the city of her birth after having lived elsewhere: these are the perspectives through which Livia has chosen to

present her Florence. A Florence in which to discover the arts and crafts, the best-known buildings and the more hidden ones; an itinerary conceived for someone who wants to experience the place fully more than just pay it a visit.

This volume, through the sensitive photography of Alessandro Moggi and Eugenia Maffei and its texts rich in anecdote, offers an intimate and original view of what it means to live in Florence today.

**Livia Frescobaldi** is Florentine by birth and by choice. She grew up in Oltrarno's neighborhood of Santo Spirito. She discovered her passion for the decorative arts in Paris, where she lived for five years, studying, graduating and specializing in particular in European porcelain. Returning to Florence, she carried out valuations of the collections of some of the finest residences in Italy and set up the Associazione Amici di Doccia—which she heads—for research into and preservation and promotion of the Ginori porcelain manufactory. She is also the president of the Fondazione Istituto de' Bardi, which is active in the education and promotion of artisanship. She has lived for 25 years on the Lungarno, in the Santa Croce district. A curator of exhibitions and editor of volumes devoted to Ginori ceramics, including *Gio Ponti. The collection of the Museo Richard-Ginori della Manifattura di Doccia* (Imola, 2015, reprint 2019) and *The Revival of Italian maiolica: Ginori and Cantagalli* (Florence, 2011).



April 5

## *The Road to Redemption: Jubilees, Pilgrimages and Sacred Journeys – A Conversation with Ross King*

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The 100<sup>th</sup> edition of Studiolo, welcomes back the very first Studiolo guest, an amazing scholar, and a dear friend, Ross King. For this special edition, we look into what truly marks this year in Italy! 2025 is a Jubilee Year, a tradition with deep historical roots dating back to 1300.

But what exactly is a Jubilee, and why did it inspire countless pilgrims from all over Europe to set out on arduous journeys to Rome? This lecture explores the rich history of pilgrimage, uncovering the motivations that drove medieval travelers—spiritual devotion, penance, adventure, and even social status.

How did they navigate the perils of the road? What awaited them at their destinations? And how did these journeys shape the wider world? From relics and indulgences to the bustling streets of medieval Rome, join us for a fascinating look at the enduring power of pilgrimage and its cultural impact across the centuries.

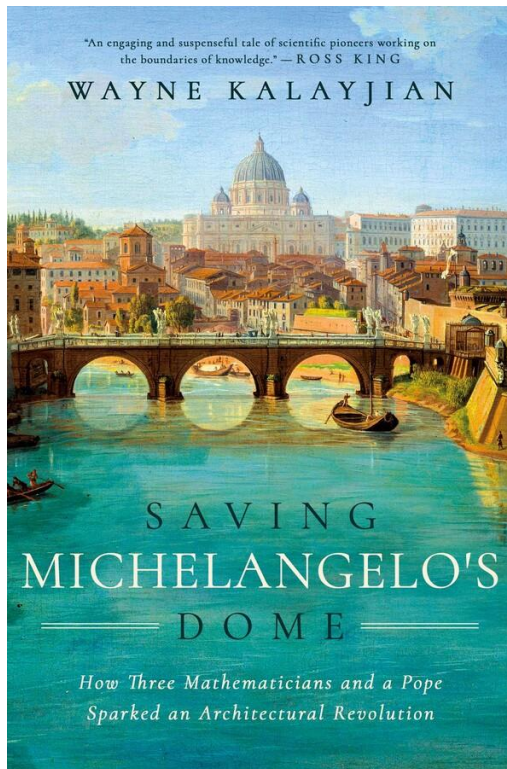


### Ross King's books

include *The Bookseller of Florence*,

*Brunelleschi's Dome*, *Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling*, *The Judgment of Paris*, *Leonardo and The Last Supper*, and *Mad Enchantment: Claude Monet and the Painting of the Water Lilies*. He has also published two novels (*Domino* and *Ex-Libris*), a biography of Niccolò Machiavelli, and a collection of Leonardo da Vinci's fables, jokes, and riddles. He is currently working on a "short" history of Italy. Among many other honors, Ross King serves on the Council of Academic Advisors for Friends of Florence, and lectures widely on a range of art subjects. He lives with his wife Melanie in Oxfordshire, England.





1742: the famous dome atop Saint Peter's Basilica, designed by Michelangelo, is fractured and threatened with collapse. The dome is the pride of Italy and the largest of its kind anywhere in the world. And no one knows how to fix it.

This engaging and colorful narrative tells the overlooked story of how Michelangelo's Dome was saved from disaster by three mathematicians and Pope Benedict XIV, who had asked them for help. It is a gripping story of decisive leadership, crisis management, and scientific innovation, and the resistance that was faced when sailing into the headwinds of conventional thought.

In *Saving Michelangelo's Dome*, Stanford-trained engineer Wayne Kalayjian illustrates how new ideas in science and mathematics established an entirely new way of looking at the world—as well as solving its complex problems. In the end, readers will appreciate that in saving Michelangelo's Dome from collapse, these three mathematicians and one determined pope unknowingly invented the profession of engineering as we practice it today. With it, they transformed the architectural world and ushered in generations of future buildings and structures that, otherwise, would never have been built.

**Wayne Kalayjian** is a civil and structural engineer who has designed bridges, buildings, tunnels, airports, pipelines, railroads, data centers, and power stations around the world. Kalayjian lectures at the University of Southern California and is an engineering expert for the California Department of Consumer Affairs. He holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and art history from Tufts University, a master's degree in structural engineering from Stanford University, and a master's degree in management from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This is his first book.







A renowned Michelangelo scholar, Rab Hatfield will explore Michelangelo's understanding of the human body and how this changed towards the end of his very long lifetime. We today tend to view the human body as an incredibly complex organism that is the product of a long evolution. We think of our thoughts and emotions simply as aspects of this organism. And, often heedless of what we are doing, we tend to worship this body in beauty contests, bodybuilding, beach culture, and so on. But for Michelangelo the human body was merely a formless piece of matter that was shaped, made to live, and guided by an independent force or power that had entered it from without. This power or force was the

body's soul, which also constituted its "inner life"—its thoughts and feelings—and was, he believed, immortal, whereas the body as such was doomed to perish.

This different understanding of the human body and its relationship to its soul of course meant that Michelangelo "saw" or conceived of the marvelous figures in his sculptures and paintings differently from the way we tend to view them now. If we really want to understand Michelangelo's great figures, we should therefore make an effort to "see" them the way he did, that is, in numerous cases, as images or "reflections" of people with extraordinary spiritual qualities and not merely as people with amazing physiques.

Rab Hatfield received both his B.A. and his Ph.D. from Harvard University. After a brief assistant professorship at Yale University, he taught for forty-one years at the Syracuse University in Florence program. He has been a Fellow of Villa I Tatti (three times) and a Member of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. His best-known books are *The Wealth of Michelangelo* (2000) and *The Three Mona Lisas* (2014). His *Soul and Body in Michelangelo* will be published later this year.



Paola and her graduate school advisor and professor Rab Hatfield at Syracuse University in Florence campus, May 2012