

Princeton University

Honors Faculty Members
Receiving Emeritus Status



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colleagues in the departments of those honored.

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Faculty Members Receiving Emeritus Status

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Patricia Fortini Brown



With Patricia (Pat) Fortini Brown's retirement at the end of this year, the Department of Art and Archaeology will lose not only a leading specialist in the art of Renaissance Venice, but also a kind and generous colleague with a great love of teaching.

A Californian by birth, Pat arrived at Princeton in 1983 to teach Renaissance art with an unusual background in studio art and a career as an artist, but also with an B.A. in political science and a Ph.D. in art history from the University of California–Berkeley. In 1989, she became the first woman in the department to receive tenure, and she served between 1999 and 2005 as its chair.

Venice, from the late middle ages through the early modern period, has been the primary site of Pat's scholarly research, with a focus on how works of art and architecture were able to form and convey significant aspects of the city's culture in which they were produced. In the course of her career, Pat provided substantial contributions to Venetian and Renaissance studies: Her early interest in the painter Carpaccio gave way to studying the discourse of antiquity in Venice—a city that did not share with other Italian cities a past in classical antiquity and instead oriented itself toward other models, such as Byzantium. Her interest in the discussion of the cultural context of art led to *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice* (1997)—subsequently translated, among other languages, into Mandarin and Korean—in which she explored the role of guilds and the nobility, the environment of the church and the private home, the political rivalries with other states, and Venice's distinct taste for symbols and metaphors. Her most recent work, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice: Art, Architecture, and the Family* (2006) provides deep insight into the aristocratic lifestyle in Venice during a period of changing definitions of nobility. Recapturing the interplay between the public and private, she focused now on attitudes toward wealth and display, the articulation of

family identity, and the visual culture of Venetian women—how they decorated their homes, dressed, undertook domestic tasks, entertained, and raised their children.

Pat has received numerous fellowships and awards, including Fulbright and Guggenheim fellowships, a Rome Prize at the American Academy in Rome, a Folger Shakespeare Library Fellowship, and several Delmas grants for research in Venice. Pat was also president of the Renaissance Society of America (2000–02, Slade Professor of Fine Arts at the University of Cambridge (2001), and a member of the Board of Advisers for the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (2004–07). She currently serves on the Board of Trustees of Save Venice. In the past years, Pat spearheaded the introduction of courses to the department’s curriculum that included a travel component. Sponsored by the Program in Hellenic Studies, her courses on Venice and the Mediterranean introduced students to Crete and Corfu. Pat’s active career at Princeton may perhaps come to an end in this academic year, but all signs indicate that her life as a scholar will not lose its fast and productive pace, fueled by the passion for everything Venetian. Her new project will trace the steps of some prominent members of Venetian society who shaped the urban character of Venetian cities outside the Serenissima as far as Crete and Cyprus in the eastern Mediterranean.