

## Faculty Watch

The following three faculty members presented at the Renaissance Society of America annual conference held in Chicago earlier this month (April 2-5). Along with these faculty members, several of SUF's former Fine Arts graduate students also presented papers, including: Sebastian Bentkowski, Sally Cornelison, Alexandra Korey, and -in the same session- Diana Bullen, Robert La France, and Lia Markey.

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### Matteo Duni

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Matteo Duni organized a panel, “Critics of the Witch-hunt,” as well as presented a paper, “A Renaissance Lawyer Confronts the Witch-hunt: Gianfrancesco Ponzinibio” at the RSA conference. The paper discussed the important role of men of law, jurists and lawyers, who opposed the witch-hunters’ ideas. Matteo focused particularly on an important, but little-studied figure, Gianfrancesco Ponzinibio, a lawyer from Piacenza whose book *De lamiis et excellentia iuris utriusque* (*On Witches and On the Excellence of Civil and Canon Law*, 1520) was the most radical attack on the belief in witchcraft to that date.

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### Sara Matthews Grieco

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Sara Matthews-Grieco organized a panel entitled, “Thinking about Visual Literacy: Color, Text, Media, Audience.” The panel was chaired by Dennis Romano (Maxwell School, Syracuse University), and featured three papers: Louisa Matthew (Union College) spoke on “Reading Color in Sixteenth-Century Venice”, Sara Matthews-Grieco read a paper entitled “Making Pictures That Speak: Early Emblematism and the Codification of the Visual Idiom” and Alexandra Korey, former SUF Fine Arts graduate student who has just completed her doctorate in Art History at the University of Chicago, presented material on “Visual Literacy and Textual Literacy in Leo X’s *Giochi di Putti* Tapestries.”

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### Jonathan Nelson

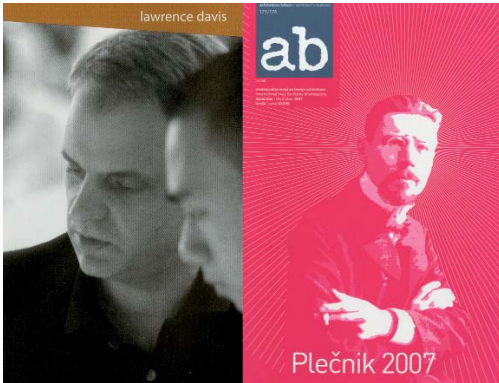
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Jonathan Nelson has spent a lot of time on the road this semester. In February, he gave a paper in Rome on “Michelangelo’s Female Figures,” at a conference celebrating the publication of Cristina Acidini’s important book on *Michelangelo Pittore*. Jonathan argued that not all of Michelangelo’s women look like bodybuilders; rather, “for female figures, form follows function.” In late March, Jonathan gave two talks in Tokyo (see related article) then continued on to the Renaissance Society of America meeting. Here he had co-organized a session, dedicated to “Unacceptable Art: Rejected Commissions in Renaissance Italy,” together with Richard Zeckhauser, a professor of economics at Harvard. Their book, *The Patron’s Payoff. Conspicuous*

*Commissions in Renaissance Italy* (Princeton UP), is now in press. This project led to the paper on their current research, on the importance of dissatisfied patrons. In Chicago they spoke about “Quality Control for Commissions: The Potential for Rejection or Replacement.”

## Lawrence Davis



The article “The Alternative Modernity of Jozef Plečnik,” by Larry Davis was recently published in the December 2007 (no. 175/176) issue of *AB* [*Architect's Bulletin*] edited by Bostjan Vuga. The issue is especially dedicated to the work of the influential Slovenian 20<sup>th</sup> century Architect Jozef Plečnik on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his death. Davis’s article speaks from the point of view of an architect and examines the “modern” aspects of Plečnik’s work, a body of neoclassical and figurative projects that are contemporary with the more familiar Modernist of the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The issue features articles by Vuga, Winka Dubbeldam, Kenneth Frampton, Juregen Meyer, as well as other respected scholars and critics.

## Tokyo Journal

Until May 18, the *Venus of Urbino* is not on view...in Florence. She is currently the centerpiece of a splendid exhibition at the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo: “The *Venus of Urbino*. Myth and Image of a Goddess from Antiquity to the Renaissance.” In the main room, against a bright

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red background, you can see Titian’s masterpiece and another work usually found in the Galleria dell’Accademia: the *Venus* designed by Michelangelo and painted by Pontormo. These competing ideals of beauty were the focus of a paper I delivered (after a trial run here at SUF): “The Battle of the Female Nudes.” This was part of a conference on erotic art, organized by Prof. Michiaki Koshikawa (Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music), that provided a rare and exciting opportunity for American, Italian, and Japanese scholars to exchange ideas and compare approaches. As a sign of respect for the three foreign speakers –Marzia Faietti, Bette Talvacchia, and myself— the Japanese gave their papers in Italian; with simultaneous translation, the audience could follow all. Interestingly, both the exhibition and conference were sponsored by a newspaper, *The Yomiuri Shimbun*, something that never happens in the West. While in Tokyo, I also gave an informal talk about my own experience as an exhibition curator to Professors Koshikawa’s graduate



students, all of whom study Western art, from Bellini to Rothko. The group very kindly led my wife Silva Catitti and I on an excursion to see a nearby ancient Buddhist shrine. Conversation flowed, especially over dinner in a wonderful traditional restaurant. In the photo of this magical evening, we stand before Philippe Stark’s *Super Dry Hall*, together with our gracious host and his students: Hiroyo Hakamata, Mutsuki Iwaya, Yujin Tashiro, Sayaka Ando, Akimi Iwaya, Yuiko Mukasa, Aya Onose, with Maria Fukada and Naoko Matsuda behind the camera. Let’s hope we can welcome them at SUF one day soon!