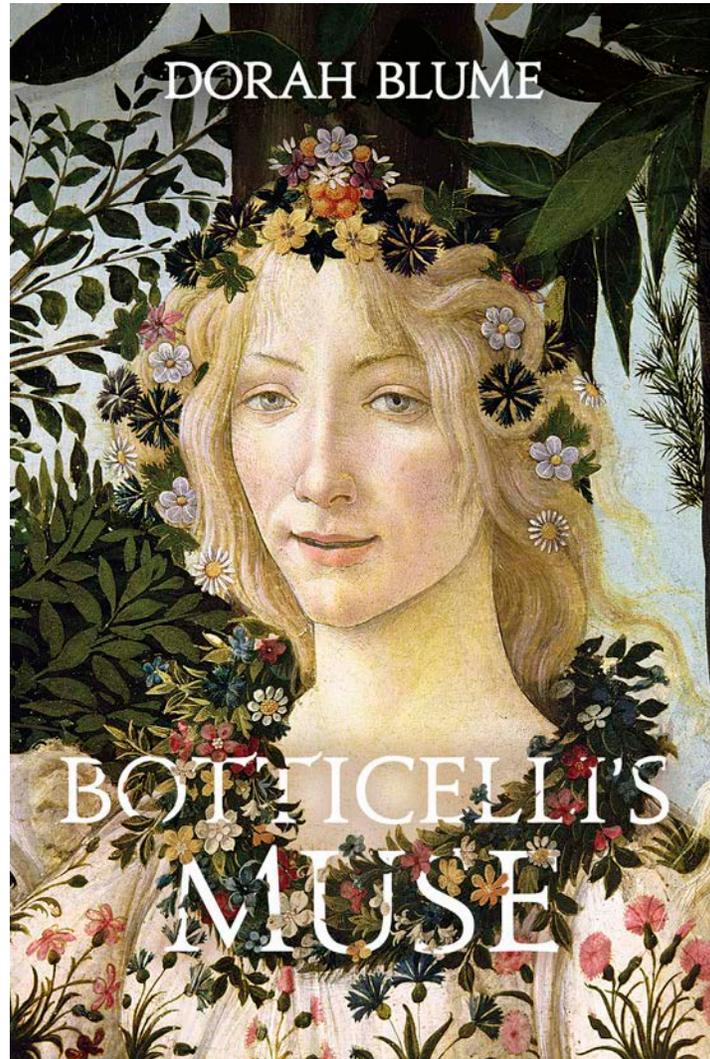


MEDIA KIT FOR
BOTTICELLI'S MUSE
BY DORAH BLUME



In the villa of his irritating new patron, Renaissance artist Sandro Botticelli feels his creative well run dry—until he accidentally discovers Floriana, a Jewish weaver imprisoned in his sister's convent. Events threaten to keep his unlikely muse out of reach, and so begins a tale of one of the art world's most beloved paintings, *La Primavera*, as Sandro, a confirmed bachelor, and Floriana, a headstrong artist in her own right, enter into a turbulent relationship.

Sales, Marketing, and Publicity Contacts:

Deborah Bluestein, Publisher

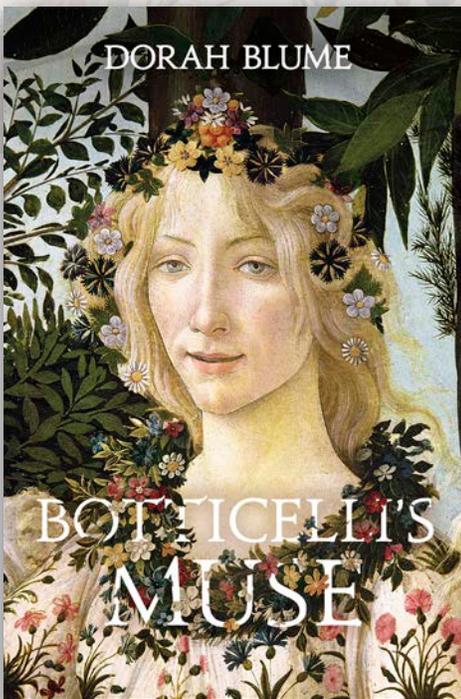
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Juiceboxartists Press



BOTTICELLI'S MUSE

BY DORAH BLUME

About the Book

Relegated to an obscure Medici villa and the whims of an annoying patron half his age, Renaissance artist Sandro Botticelli falls into indecision and depression. Once he meets Floriana, a Jewish weaver held prisoner at a nearby convent under the control of Sandro's estranged older sister, Oslavia, everything changes. Although the Medici hold the purse strings, Floriana—the inspiration behind his painting *La Primavera*—holds his heart strings. All the while, the religious fanatic Savonarola watches and waits to renounce Sandro's work and threaten the safety of his muse and her unborn child. A tanner's son, Sandro lives in a world of nobles, philosophers, and intellectuals, yet never belongs to it. Whether to love and leave his work behind, or love his work and leave Floriana behind—Botticelli's divided loyalties torment him. How long can he refuse to choose?

The first of a three-volume series that begins in 1477 and culminates with the execution of Girolamo Savonarola in 1498, book one, *Botticelli's Muse*, spans 1477 to 1478, the time it took Botticelli to paint his masterpiece, *La Primavera*, and to conceive his most iconic work, *Birth of Venus*—both paintings hang in the Uffizi Gallery Museum in Florence, Italy.

Sensuous and provocative as well as mysterious . . .

Blume's interpretation of master painter Sandro Botticelli is at once a florid love story and a chilling political drama.

—Publishers Weekly

In Dorah Blume's capable hands, Renaissance Italy comes to life in all its complexity, historical fact deftly woven into a captivating narrative. Ostensibly the tale of the creation of Sandro Botticelli's famed Primavera masterpiece, Botticelli's Muse is in equal parts a story of artistic inspiration, political intrigue, religious faith, temptation, and yes, romance.

—Sarah Cascone
Associate Editor, artnet News



About the Author

An Italophile since the age of nineteen when she studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence, Ms. Blume has published short fiction and nonfiction in newspapers, magazines, and literary journals. Considering herself a late bloomer, she expanded her artistic reach from the visual to the written word in her forties with an MFA from Emerson. As a certified Amherst Writers & Artists (AWA) facilitator, she has led writing workshops for adults in Greater Boston as well as Tuscany.

Marketing Plans

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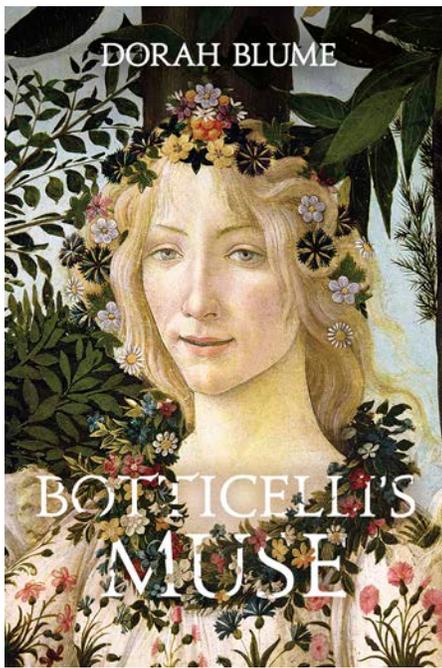
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Synopsis

During a rare moment of solitude apart from the protective group escort of clerics from her home town of Ferrara, Floriana, a young Jewish weaver is raped by one of the priests whose face she cannot see. Instead of being taken to the woolen mills in Florence, the clerics imprison her in a nearby monastery tower where she languishes until Oslavia, the stern abbess at the adjacent convent and estranged older sister of Sandro Botticelli, takes over the girl's confinement. Oslavia threatens pain of death unless the young girl takes a vow of silence and converts to Christianity, but Floriana continues to refuse.

Sandro's patron and childhood friend, Lorenzo de' Medici, dismisses the artist by sending him to Villa di Castello, the new home of Lorenzo's fifteen-year-old orphaned cousin, Piero, an irritating teenager who lives with his three younger sisters, a multitude of dogs, and Poppi, his long-suffering childhood nurse and confidant. The only bright spots for Sandro in this demotion are the villa's proximity to Oslavia's convent and his new patron's promise of artistic freedom.

Feeling betrayed by Lorenzo, and trapped in this uncomfortable and uninspiring situation, Sandro struggles to find a subject for his first painting, until a reunion with his sister, Oslavia, introduces him to Floriana, whose beauty, intelligence, and skill immediately capture his heart.

Sandro convinces Oslavia against her will to release Floriana to Piero's villa, where she can pose for him, and he can be close to her. Although she is Jewish, and pregnant with her rapist's child, they develop an intense, but chaste relationship, quietly savoring their blooming attraction and their mutual creativity.

As winter approaches and Floriana's likeness in the painting is complete, she fears that her faceless attacker is on the prowl to find her. Her dread is justified, and we realize that Savonarola—the religious fanatic who many years later will launch the Bonfire of the Vanities—was her rapist. Though he has tried to expiate his sins, he has been racked with not only guilt, but a lustful obsession. Honoring Floriana's fear, Sandro arranges for her to be safe in the home of the Jewish moneylender who has secretly lent money to Piero against his future inheritance so he can purchase Villa di Castello from Lorenzo. Sandro learns his residency as an artist had been part of the deal between Lorenzo and Piero.

Through cryptic communications the couple reconnects, Sandro vowing to be with Floriana when she gives birth to her child. On the day she goes into labor, however, Lorenzo's brother, Giuliano, is murdered following a conspiracy hatched by the rival Pazzi family and backed by the pope. When Floriana's midwife arrives, with news of Giuliano's death and the river of blood flowing through the city of Florence, Sandro's loyalty to his adoptive Medici family forces him to leave Floriana's side. Once at the Medici Palace, he discovers that Lorenzo has become a brutal tyrant who treats Sandro coldly. Placing him under house arrest, which makes Sandro's return to Floriana impossible, Lorenzo commands him to paint a grisly mural on city hall depicting the dismembered bodies of the Medici's defeated enemies, as a warning to Florence. Sandro has lost his love in order to serve the whims of a madman.

During his long and demeaning commission, just as his hope of ever seeing Floriana again fades, he receives a letter from her. She has departed from the moneylender's compound for what she has heard will be a safe haven for Jews. While asserting her independence, she forgives him, and offers the promise of an eventual reunion for which Sandro waits.

MEDIA KIT FOR BOTTICELLI'S MUSE BY DORAH BLUME

Reviews



Publishers Weekly

Set in Renaissance Italy, Blume's interpretation of master painter Sandro Botticelli is at once a florid love story and a chilling political drama. Sensuous and provocative as well as mysterious, the novel follows Sandro's troubled relationship with Florence's ruling Medici family.

He works under the patronage of Lorenzo de Medici until a sudden dismissal leads to a new benefactor, Lorenzo's young cousin, Piero. During a visit to his sister's nearby convent, Sandro meets Floriana, a captivating Jewish weaver who is a prisoner being forced to renounce her faith. Beguiled by her beauty and artistry with flowers, Sandro becomes inspired to create his iconic painting *La Primavera*. Sandro and Floriana fall in love, but Savonarola, a zealot priest with a violent past, is a threat to both. Meanwhile, a political conspiracy threatening the Medici family is gaining steam. Political unrest and an assassination that hits close to Sandro separate him from an expectant Floriana; he is placed under house arrest and forced to memorialize the political bloodbath with his art, an order he despises. Blume convincingly evokes the tumultuous time period; however, her passages involving lustful priests feel more gratuitous than necessary for the narrative. The prose is clear and precise and, despite the book's length, the pace does not lag. (BookLife)



Botticelli's Muse, the first in Dorah Blume's trilogy set in Renaissance Florence, begins in 1477, when the artist Sandro Botticelli is dismissed by his friend and patron, Lorenzo de' Medici. Forced to work for Lorenzo's fifteen-year-old cousin, Piero, Sandro runs out of ideas for his art until he meets Floriana, a Jewish weaver imprisoned in his sister's convent. Sandro and Floriana are attracted to each other, and she becomes the inspiration for his masterpiece *La Primavera*. But, because of the difference in their religions, they cannot marry. When church officials threaten to force Floriana to convert, she goes into hiding. Meanwhile, the young Dominican friar Savonarola sets out on a mission to save souls. He knows of a secret in Floriana's past and threatens to keep her and Sandro apart. Sandro learns of a plot to overthrow the Medici family, and has to choose between his love for Floriana and his loyalty to his patrons.

The novel is beautifully written, with great insight into the life of an artist, and what inspires artists to choose their subjects. Blume is an artist herself, and her delightful illustrations illuminate the story. The characters are believable, with Sandro and Floriana as an appealing hero and heroine. Savonarola is portrayed as a complex character with a violent past, but not entirely unsympathetic, as the reader learns what motivates him. Blume includes some loveable fictional characters, such as Sandro's sister Oslavia and young Piero's generous nursemaid, Poppi. But I was surprised to find some glaring anachronisms in an otherwise meticulously researched novel. These include a mention of tomatoes, which could not have been available anywhere in Europe before 1492, and references to the Via Cavour, which did not exist until the 19th century. I hope these will be corrected in later editions. (*These two cited anachronisms have been corrected.*)

MEDIA KIT FOR
BOTTICELLI'S MUSE
BY DORAH BLUME

Reviews

artnet® news

15 Scintillating Art Books to Read on the Beach This Summer

—Sarah Cascone

Summer is officially upon us, and to celebrate we've compiled a list of the best new titles from around the art world. Whether exploring the untold history of paintings or contemplating the state of museum curation, 2017 has given us pages of insight and intrigue. From an interrogation of Modernism in veteran curator Darby English's *1975: A Year in the Life of Color*, to a juicy biography of a 19th-century art muse who inspired the likes of Émile Zola and Édouard Manet, there is a summer gem for every taste. See the 14 books that made our list below—and make sure to save room in your suitcase.

Botticelli's Muse by Dorah Blume (July 2017)

In Dorah Blume's capable hands, Renaissance Italy comes to life in all its complexity, historical fact deftly woven into a captivating narrative. Ostensibly the tale of the creation of Botticelli's famed *Primavera* masterpiece, *Botticelli's Muse* is in equal parts a story of artistic inspiration, political intrigue, religious faith, temptation, and yes, romance. To a cast of historical characters featuring the imperious Lorenzo de' Medici, the pious-yet-tortured Girolamo Savonarola, and the handsome Filippino Lippi, Blume adds Floriana, a forced Jewish convert who became Botticelli's unlikely muse—a love that would both inspire and challenge the great artist.

Reader Reviews



marjorie sarzana

★★★★★ Renaissance comes to life in Botticelli's Muse.

March 4, 2018

Format: Paperback | [Verified Purchase](#)

Outstanding. Could not put it down. The author intergrates art, philosophy, religion, mythology , and wonderful characters. I highly recommend this book. It will make you want to head to Florence especially to the Uffizzi which houses Botticelli 's Masterpieces.



Adina S

★★★★★ Botticelli's Muse takes the reader into amazing detail that brings the story alive and the life ...

December 19, 2017

Format: Kindle Edition | [Verified Purchase](#)

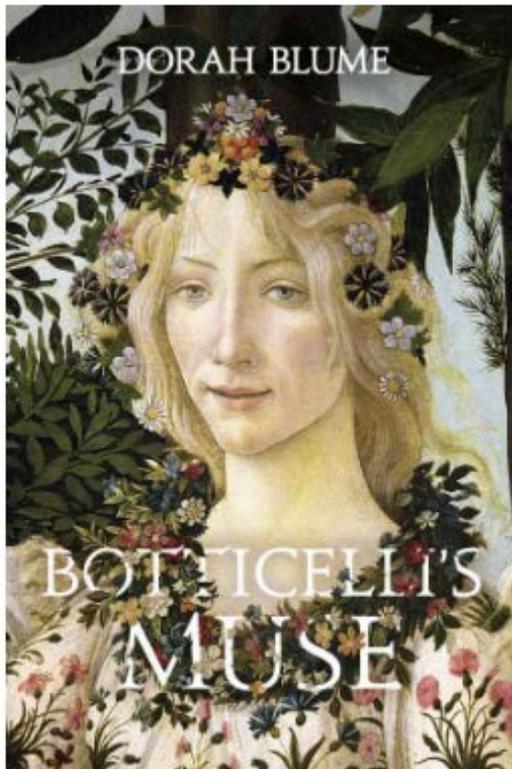
One of my all time favorites even being a brand new book. The story captures your heart and imagination, it seems real fully alive and sweeps the reader away into a another time. Historical novels that hold onto the a sense of believing this must have been this way, this has got to be real are magical indeed. Botticelli's Muse takes the reader into amazing detail that brings the story alive and the life of Botticelli a delightful love story that has our hearts aching for all the characters. READ IT you will love it!! Brilliant!!

MEDIA KIT FOR
BOTTICELLI'S MUSE
BY DORAH BLUME

Awards

2017 FOREWORD INDIES WINNER

HISTORICAL (ADULT FICTION)



BOTTICELLI'S MUSE



2017 INDIES Winner

Silver, Historical (Adult Fiction)

Dorah Blume

Juiceboxartists Press (Jul 21, 2017)

Softcover \$24.95 (528pp)

978-0-9981316-0-3

Tags: [#silver](#) [#historical](#)

"Sensitive and provocative as well as mysterious . . . Blume's interpretation of painter Sandro Botticelli is at once a florid love story and a chilling political drama." —Publishers Weekly. When the artist's creative well runs dry, he meets an unlikely muse beyond his reach. So begins a tale of one of the art world's most beloved paintings, La Primavera, as this bachelor artist and his muse Floriana—a headstrong creative in her own right—enter into a turbulent relationship.

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BY DORAH BLUME

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Feature article by Ed Karvoski Jr.
Author, visual artist self-collaborate for novel Botticelli's Muse

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Paintings Referenced in the Novel



Sandro Botticelli began *La Primavera* in 1477

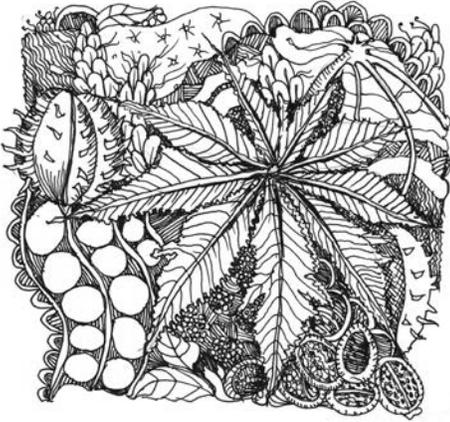


Detail (lower left, bottom) from *Procession of the Magi*, Benozzo Gozzoli's mural in the Medici palace chapel described in chapter six of *Botticelli's Muse*, book one of the Arno trilogy.

Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* (detail/lower right) was completed at Villa di Castello during the sequel, *Botticelli's Mistake*, though its inspiration was triggered by Sandro's love for Floriana in book one, *Botticelli's Muse*.

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Sample Spot Illustrations from the Novel



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