

LEM Notes for Best Book Club reading: **The Passion of Artemisia, Susan Vreeland**
Viking Penguin, 2002

Meeting: May 8, 2012 — 7:30 pm @ Eleanor's

Author's Note + 28 chapters

- most chapters are titled with the names of one of the main characters – some repeat – word portraits? – story told in first person via word paintings.

Setting

Rome

Florence

Genoa

Rome

Main Characters

Artemisia Gentileschi

Orazio Gentileschi

Agostino Tassi

Sister Paola

Sister Graziela

Giovanni and Porzia Stiattesi – neighbours

Pietro Antonio di Vincenzo Stiattesi – Giovanni's brother from Florence and Artemisia's husband

Palmira Prudenzia

Fina – upstairs neighbour in Florence

Vanna – Artemisia's model for her first Florentine commission

Galileo

Umiliana Rossi – daughter of Marco Rossi the dyer – model for Artemisia's painting, The Penitent Magdalen.

Giuliana – Genoan model for Cleopatra painting

Themes

1. female honour

2. sacrifice for art – time, attention, focus, possible love of her husband if she had taken her 'proper place'

3. historical fiction — timelines

4. forgiveness

5. persistence – “The real principles of living are not all in the scriptures. They are in blood ties, histories, sayings, innuendoes, surreptitious looks, clandestine agreements, and hot clasped hands” p40

6. inclinazione – story telling in art

a cheap soap opera dressed up in period costumes

an early Renaissance self-help book