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From rags-to-riches to burnt-at-the-stake

Modern day Renaissance woman shares 14th-century story

New York, NY - Manhattan doesn't normally conjure up thoughts of the Italian Renaissance. But inside one Upper Westside home, chats about the Renaissance are as normal as laundry. In fact, novelist Traci L. Slatton says her husband, the renowned classical figurative sculptor Sabin Howard, talks about Renaissance masters every day, as if they breathe, sweat and walk among us.

"For me, two of the major achievements of this century and a half were the development of the human figure in art, and the humanism that was rooted in ancient philosophy but spread its flowers far into the future," says Slatton, whose debut work of historical fiction, *Immortal*, (978-385-33974-2, \$14.00) releases in late January from Bantam Dell.

In this Dickensian coming-of-age saga, Luca Bastardo is an orphaned boy left on the streets of Renaissance Florence at the time rife with deadly plagues and war. Slatton enlivens 14th century passion and drama through Luca, a mysterious boy who is anything but ordinary. He explores his roots, befriends figures such as Giotto, Botticelli and Leonardo daVinci and encounters growing religious persecution.

When asked what led her to write this modern-day Joan of Ark tale, Slatton points to her love affair with the Renaissance - sparked of course by her husband, who names Michelangelo as his muse.

Through a marriage of literature and classical figurative sculpture, Slatton and Howard are bringing to life the era marked by intellectual bursting and are making strides in metropolitan New York art circles. A truly Renaissance couple, they hope to inspire others to learn about the period between 1401, when Florence held a competition among artists for the second set of Baptistery doors—which Ghiberti won, and went on to create the glorious Doors of Paradise—and 1541, when Michelangelo unveiled his "Last Judgment."

"My third daughter was kicking so hard in my belly that I couldn't sleep past five a.m., so I sat down at my computer and imagined a character who could have met my Renaissance heroes," says Slatton. "He would have had to live a long time and he would have enjoyed the company of prodigies, as well as endured the terrible suffering endemic to the time.... And thus was born Luca the Bastard on the streets of Florence."

In *Immortal*, Slatton animates figures like Botticelli and Giotto, giving readers a historical perspective on the Renaissance -- the age when artists stopped painting human bodies as flat abstractions floating in a gold sea, and started depicting them with hyper-real anatomy, bulging with muscles and sinew and rippling with personal psychology.

TRACI L. SLATTON left high school at 16 to attend Yale University and went on to graduate at 20 with a B.A. in English. She holds an M.F.A. in creative writing from Columbia University. Hailing from a family line of healers, she is a graduate of the renowned four-year Barbara Brennan School of Healing and formerly operated a hands-on healing practice. She has published dozens of poems, short stories, and articles in magazines and literary journals. Her first book, *Piercing Time & Space*, examines the work of Stanford physicist William Tiller, radical British biologist Rupert Sheldrake and American mystic Edgar Cayce. *Immortal* is her second book. To learn more, please visit www.tracilslatton.com. She resides in Manhattan with her husband, classical figurative sculptor Sabin Howard (www.sabinhoward.com) and four daughters.

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To schedule an interview with Traci L. Slatton, or to receive a press kit and review copy of *Immortal* please contact Stephanie Mayabb at (512) 478-2028 ext. 203 or smayabb@phenixpublicity.com.