

BOCCONI UNIVERSITY
BROADEN YOUR FRAME SEMINAR SERIES
2025-2026

WHO'S AWARE OF THE ROTHKO CHAPEL?
A JOURNEY BETWEEN TRAGEDY AND HOPE WITH MARK ROTHKO & HIS ART

Annie Cohen-Solal, Distinguished Professor, Department of Political and Social Sciences

Abstract

In museums all over the world, Mark Rothko's paintings are impossible to miss: with their floating colors, they radiate their own energy. But it is in the Rothko Chapel set in Houston (Texas) that his fourteen panels engage a masterful dialogue with each of us. In the sixties, when the United States were suffering of racial discrimination, the pioneer artist created an interfaith chapel (« a sacred place, open to all, at all times »), that has become the epicenter of the fight for civil rights. But how did this artist, at the crossroads of art, politics, and ethics manage to navigate between tragedy and hope, in an attempt to repair the world?

Today, in our chaotic world, this question resonates with particular relevance.

Annie Cohen-Solal addresses these issues in the catalog that she co-edited *Revisiting the Rothko Chapel* (Brepols, 2025), and in her book: *Mark Rothko. Towards the Light in the Chapel*. She reveals how the artist's experience of immigration, uprooting, and stigmatization was at the very heart of the aesthetic subversion that Rothko brought to the heart of our modern societies.

Mark Rothko has been translated into 10 languages and will be published into Italian under the title *Mark Rothko. Riparare il Mondo* by Einaudi in March 2026 (translation by Manuela Bertone). It will echo the exhibition *Rothko a Firenze* at the Palazzo Strozzi (Firenze, March 14th-August 28th, 2026).

Calendar

Session 1 **10 February 2026** 6:15-7:45PM Room TBA

Presentation of the Chapel, «A sacred place open to all, at all times»

Guest speaker: Gabriela Garza, Art Collector

Session 2 **12 February 2026** 6:15-7:45PM Room TBA

The Chapel as an Epicenter for Civil Rights Fight

Guest speaker: Abdullah Antepli, President of the Rothko Chapel

Session 3 **17 February 2026** 6:15-7:45PM Room TBA

Towards the Creation of the Chapel. A Committed Intellectual

Guest speaker: Silvia Beltrametti, School of the Arts Institute of Chicago

Session 4 **19 February 2026** 6:15-7:45PM Room TBA

Rothko 's Trajectory: Pogroms in Russia and Emigration to the US

Guest speaker: David N. Myers, UCLA

Session 5 **24 February 2026** 6:15-7:45PM Room TBA

Rothko as Subversive, Literary and Committed Intellectual

Guest speaker: Gabriella Belli, Art Historian and Museum Director

Session 6 **26 February 2026** 6:15-7:45PM Room TBA

Rothko Against the Financially-Oriented Gallery World

Guest speaker: Paola Marini, Art Historian and Museum Director