

ON THE COVER

Vineyard at Volpaia by Catherine Renzi

This article is based on a video interview with the artist on July 30, 2025, and information on <https://www.catherinerenziart.com>.

Vineyard at Volpaia, the painting on the cover of this issue of *American Psychologist*, is a representation of many rich and diverse impressions of the artist, Catherine Renzi. The painting is an amalgamation of memories of vineyards in the Chianti region of Tuscany, Italy. Although I had an image of an artist sitting by the roadside on a stool reproducing this beautiful scene on an easel, this was not the case. The creation of this piece is far more complex and interesting than a direct rendering.

Renzi paints en plein (outdoors) to infuse her work with the light and sensations of the natural environment. Her hope is that her paintings show “what my eyes saw and my heart knew.” Her emphasis is on conveying emotion and a full sensory experience of the aromas, sounds, and tastes of the ingredients in her images. Renzi’s style is grounded in Expressionism, a 20th-century European art movement in which the artist does just that—eschew concrete reality to convey their subjective emotions and responses.

When creating her art, Renzi enjoys the physicality of moving oil paint around on the canvas. She finds that with oil paints, one does not erase or remove something but rather move the paint around. She notes that she actually sees differently from most people, in that she has monocular vision, having each eye separately focus on a subject and then melding the visual information to complete the process of seeing. She feels that this allows her to have multiple focal points in her pictures and alters the portrayal of light in her work. *Vineyard at Volpaia* does not have one clear focus point but rather plays with the dark lines of the vines, imbuing them with an architectural quality.

Renzi is an artist, farmer, and entrepreneur, distinct roles that have tied together with unexpected threads and

consistencies. She describes herself as a “wild child” who dropped out of high school and worked on a horse farm. She worked on another farm in Vermont for an alumna of Smith College who inspired her to go to Smith. Having no personal knowledge of women who went to college, she was curious and drove directly to Northampton, Massachusetts, one morning after completing her farm chores. Interviewing in her overalls, something clicked, and she enrolled at Smith. Renzi remains in contact with Helen Searing, Alice Pratt Brown Professor Emerita, an art professor at Smith, who encouraged her to develop a self-directed major combining art history, architecture, and studio art. Renzi subsequently completed a Master of Arts in the History of Art at the University of Pennsylvania.

Renzi has deep and broad ties to Tuscany, Italy. She spent her junior year in Italy, describing the design and social history of the Florence train station, which was commissioned and won awards during Mussolini’s rule. She was able to travel around the country by train and has returned many times, connected with the seasonality of the agricultural industry, including the vineyards, and appreciates the lack of control that farmers have over the factors that affect their crops.

After a career in business, Renzi and her husband owned a farm in Chester County, Pennsylvania, raising plants and goats and writing about their experiences melding farming, business, and love of nature (*Is the Grass Always Greener? Life With Goats, Gardens, and Gourmet Cheese*). She currently lives in Talbot County, Maryland, where the coastal beauty of the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay provides rich opportunities for her creativity.

 Anne E. Kazak
Art Editor