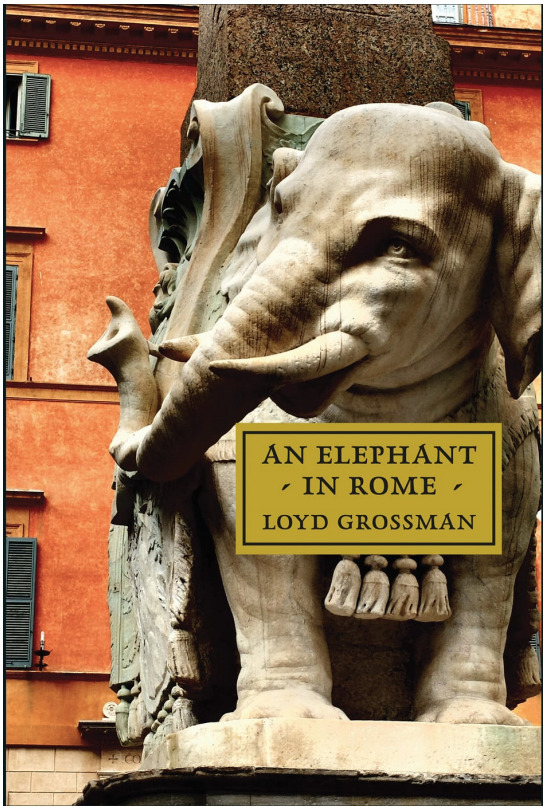
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An Elephant in Rome

The Pope and the Making of the Eternal City

Loyd Grossman

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- A beautifully produced book about the 17th century development of baroque Rome, with Italian sculptor Bernini very much at the centre of its redevelopment

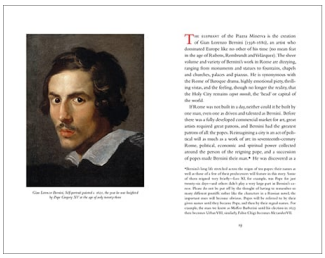
"A total delight, a brilliant vignette of 17th-century Rome, the Baroque and the Catholic church – warts and all – rolled into an erudite narrative…. with an ease of writing that is rare in art history." – Simon Jenkins

By 1650, the spiritual and political power of the Catholic Church was shattered. Thanks to the twin blows of the Protestant Reformation and the Thirty Years War, Rome, celebrated both as the Eternal City and Caput Mundi (the head of the world) had lost its pre-eminent place in Europe. Then a new Pope, Alexander VII, fired with religious zeal, political guile and a mania for building, determined to restore the prestige of his church by making Rome the must-visit destination for Europe's intellectual, political and cultural elite. To help him do so, he enlisted the talents of Gianlorenzo Bernini, already celebrated as the most important living artist: no mean feat in the age of Rubens, Rembrandt and Velazquez.

Together, Alexander VII and Bernini made the greatest artistic double act in history, inventing the concept of soft power and the bucket list destination. Bernini and Alexander's creation of Baroque Rome as a city more beautiful and grander than since the days of the Emperor Augustus continues to delight and attract.

Famous as a TV presenter for *MasterChef* and *Through the Keyhole*, **Loyd Grossman** has also been deeply involved in heritage and art history. His love of Rome was kindled by his first encounter with the enigmatic and strangely beautiful monument to this relationship between artist and pope: the elephant carrying on obelisk outside Santa Maria sopra Minerva, just behind the Pantheon. Written with this as a starting point, ***An Elephant in Rome*** is a book for those who love the endless fascination of the Eternal City and want a deeper and more entertaining tale of how it came to be.







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