

# Villa Rossa

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## Voice

IN THE  
FIELD







The **VILLA ROSSA VOICE** is a  
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We welcome your questions and comments.

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### **Letter from the Director**

*It's appropriate that we're featuring our field trip program in this issue, since Fall 2015 was the semester in which a dramatic spotlight fell on the matter of field trip safety and security in the wake of the November Paris attacks. While student safety has always been a priority at SUF, the attacks put additional pressure and urgency on a process we had already begun to stringently examine our safety protocols. This process is ongoing, and it's a responsibility I take very seriously considering how much time our students spend outside the classroom, even during the classes themselves. While professors, TAs and field trip lecturers feel responsible for the students while on-site in churches and museums, it's my job to support everyone – teachers and pupils alike. I'm thrilled that our new Field Trip Coordinator, Julia Colchie, whom you can meet on page 7, is making the care and well-being of all field trip participants a focus of the program, though certainly not the only one. The study abroad experience simply would not be the same without site visits and field trips.*

*Sasha Perugini*



### **Letter from the Editor**

*As a longtime lecturer for the SUF all-school field trip program, the theme of this issue is close to my heart. There's not much that beats guiding students through churches and museums to see works of art and architecture up-close, each time reliving my own favorite memories of studying in Florence 20 years ago. In fact, not much has changed when it comes to the big hitters like Giotto in Assisi or Michelangelo in Rome. But as she explains herself on page 7, our new field trip coordinator Julia Colchie is envisioning a development of both the program and the trips themselves to expand beyond the art history focus to highlight destinations and aspects of local, contemporary culture that students might otherwise overlook. Flipping through this issue will give you a sense of the fabulous range of trips students get to experience while studying at SUF and the kind of unforgettable memories they can make along the way.*

*Michelle Tarnopolsky*



# FIELD GUIDE

An Interview with Longtime  
Field Trip Coordinator  
**Elaine Ruffolo**



Elaine lecturing to Family Week participants in the Loggia dei Lanzi.

## 1. When and how did you become Field Trip Coordinator for SUF?

I became Field Trip Coordinator in 1991 after the Coordinator of the Art History department, Rab Hatfield, thought it would be good for the program to have more trips led by experts offered to all the students in the program. With the director's approval, I was able to design a new program and run with it. We were

excited because no other program in Florence was doing anything similar. That's probably why the program has had such an emphasis on art history over the years, because that's what I personally found interesting and what I could teach well. From that point, it was easy to find good teachers (we have so many of them here at SUF) as well as the teaching assistants who are talented and energetic and happy to come on the

trips to help out and eventually teach.

## 2. How has the field trip program changed over the years?

The program has expanded exponentially. Once we got started and saw what a success the trips were and how much the students both enjoyed and learned, we kept adding more and more. Soon the professors jumped on board



and designed field trips for their classes as well (hence both All School and Course-Related trips). The biggest change in the program has been moving away from basic trips such as Siena, San Gimignano, Pisa, Lucca, etc. to much more specific and topic driven trips related to subjects like Sustainability and Urbanism like to, say, Freiburg or Basel, or the Studio Arts classes travelling to Venice to see the Biennale, or the Mediterranean Diet class visiting cheese makers and olive oil presses in Chianti.

### 3. What are you proudest of in your development of field trips for SUF?

I am proudest of the amazing group of teachers who have developed out of the field trip program. The preparation, passion and joy that they convey is really unmatched. One can hire a guide



Outside Florence Cathedral.

to take you through, say, Rome, but following one of our field trip lecturers through the Colosseum is a highlight of the student's stay in Italy.

### 4. Please describe your most memorable experience on an SUF field trip.

Unfortunately my most memorable experience was the 1996 earthquake in Umbria. We had 98 Syracuse students in the Lower Basilica in Assisi when the earthquake struck. No one was injured but that experience shook us up (no pun intended).

### 5. What have you learned from this job?

I have learned a great deal of patience from this job. So many things can happen, one just has to roll with the changes, including earthquakes, gypsies, riots, volcanoes, snow storms and strikes. I have also learned that the students appreciate what we do and if we are enthusiastic their enthusiasm grows tenfold.

### 6. What is your advice for incoming SUF students?

I advise incoming students to not fill their weekends with trips to other countries just to be able to tick off the box or boast that they "did Prague" or "did Amsterdam." Save the other European cities for Fall or Spring break.

Instead I advise that they stay in Italy and delve in deeply to the culture and society...visit little known places throughout the country and soak up the art, food, and culture of the city. Explore Naples, Sicily, Umbria or Puglia rather than Oktoberfest in Munich. This is the most beautiful country in Europe and it is at their disposal.



Inside the Accademia Gallery.

### 7. What is the best thing about our field trip program?

Without a doubt the best thing about our field trip program is the close rapport that is formed between the students and teachers during the trips. Sharing those trips creates an amazing sense of camaraderie and a feeling of being part of an experience that is lasting and changes students' lives. I take that very seriously. In the end, it's all about the students, as it should be.

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Elaine Ruffolo directed the field trip program at Syracuse University from 1991 to 2015. She left to pursue other professional endeavors but still happily lectures for Syracuse University as a field trip lecturer.



Inside Florence Baptistery.



### A Message from New SUF Field Trip Coordinator Julia Colchie

*"When I studied abroad myself, both as an undergraduate and graduate student, my main objective was to see firsthand as much as possible what I had studied in books, and so one of my criteria for narrowing my choices was how many travel opportunities were provided to me as a student. The SUF field trips have become, over the years, a hallmark of our program. In my new role, it is a great personal satisfaction to be on the planning end, working with our talented faculty and staff to develop itineraries that reflect our high academic standards and expanding curriculum. The itineraries were developed originally as a learning tool for our Art History students, but one of my goals is to tap into the incredible resources that both Italy and Europe have to offer for other disciplines. For instance, we can make just as strong of a case for an aeronautical or mechanical engineering student to come study here as we can for a Renaissance Art History or Modern Architecture student. My primary purpose, though, remains the same: to expand the boundaries of the classroom and provide the students with unique opportunities for hands-on learning during their travels abroad."*



# Discovering Mediterranean Cities Up-Close

## A Field Trip to Emilia-Romagna and the Veneto

by Jonathan Schaefer (Syracuse University)

In early October, my decision to take the Mediterranean City architecture course proved to be a wise choice. I had been enjoying the class before that weekend, of course. Professor McLean's expertise and enthusiasm made a new and abstract way of thinking about cities and their structures a lot more interesting than I would have thought possible. However, on our weekend journey through four different cities, which ended in the beautiful Venice, not only were we able to apply what we learned to actual physical buildings, which was strangely satisfying, but the trip itself was really beautiful, and really fun.

knowledging that it was a beautiful building, by looking at small clues we were also able to figure out the phases of its construction as well as the church's ties to not only religious but also economic, social and political life in the city. Then we went to the third city of the day, Vicenza. While we saw interesting museums and studied the works of Palladio such as the famous Villa La Rotonda, the real treasure was at the end of the night when we discovered the showers that lit up in our hotel rooms.

Loath as we were to leave our nice new digs, we knew we were moving on to equally great things. After we visited the actual Villa La Rotonda, which was a treat in itself, we hopped on a train to Venice. The first glimpse through the train window of the legendary city was by no means the most beautiful view I would get while I was there, but it was definitely the most exciting. Things only got better from there when we dropped our bags off at our canal-side hotel then immediately went to the neighboring island of Torcello by "bus" — which was really more like a

boat, in fact it was exactly a boat, which was just plain awesome. There we saw an ancient church that had an interesting mixture of architectural styles and articulations, including beautiful Byzantine mosaics. Then we stopped in the stunning, multi-colored town of Burano, where a town law is still in effect which states that no two houses may be the same color.

We broke for the night, giving us stu-

dents time for exploring and finding a good Venetian dinner. My friends and I accidentally took the wrong bus-boat back to Venice, but I count that as a blessing because I felt I deserved to treat myself to two dinners that night. Update: Burger King in Italy holds up, Indian food does not. Voracious mosquitoes in the night and itchy skin the next morning did not stop us from enjoying more field trip treats, including a Palladian church, the view from a high bell tower that overlooked the city and its ship construction yard, an up-close look at the Rialto Bridge, a visit to the old Jewish Ghetto during the holiday of Sukkot (Chag Sumach!), and a walk on a red carpet. Leaving Venice was unfortunate, but it was a sweet end to a relaxing and educational trip because we all shared in good food and conversation on the train home to Florence.

*“Not only were we able to apply what we learned to actual physical buildings, which was strangely satisfying, but the trip itself was really beautiful, and really fun.”*



The Church of Santa Fosca on the island of Torcello.



Villa La Rotonda by Palladio in Vicenza

We started far too early Friday morning in order to make sure we could thoroughly enjoy the three — yes three — cities we would be traveling to just in that day. First stop: Nonantola, where we learned calligraphy as carried out by ancient monks. The exact script we learned was actually the basis for the Times New Roman font. We then visited the Duomo di Modena in — you guessed it — Modena. Apart from ac-



In St. Mark's Square, Venice.



In front of St. Mark's Basilica, Venice.



On the island of Burano.



# UNCHARTED TERRITORY

## Visiting the Teatro Regio in Parma



by Megan Jones (Syracuse University)

**W**alking into the Teatro Regio in Parma is, in a way, similar to walking into Fenway Park for the very first time – minus the smell of Fenway Franks and peanuts, of course. You present your ticket, get directed to your section and, for that short period of time between entering and arriving at your section, you cannot help but pick up speed. There is an internal build-up, a sense of excitement for the unknown. And then it happens. You walk under that small overhang or through that balcony door and you cannot help but stop, look around and take it all in. Walking into the Teatro Regio in Parma to watch Shakespeare's and Verdi's *Othello* brought me back to my first experience of Fenway.



The author in Venice.

Before my field trip to Parma with my theater history class, I had never put much thought into what my first opera experience would be like. I had never seen the inside of an opera house or a professional opera production, so I had no idea what to expect. The grandeur of the

Teatro Regio blew me away – I had never seen anything so dignified and opulent. Everything from the ceiling down to the legs of the chairs seemed to shine.

Although my professor had mentioned that we had “nice seats”, I never expected to walk through two doors into a red-velvet-lined balcony box on the third floor of the theater. I was afraid to sit down on the gold-trim bench and ruin its utter perfection, but I quickly got over my nervousness once the performance started.

To my surprise, according to the professional opera singer that just happened to be sharing my balcony box, the production was mediocre. She said the orchestra was the best “actor” of all, and I agreed with her. However, this did not take away from my experience. Despite the quality of the production, I was still

absolutely elated by the experience I had at the Teatro Regio.

Without this field trip opportunity, I am not sure I would have ever experienced an opera production. As I've gone on more trips over the past few months – be it here in Florence or a two-hour-train-ride away in Milan – this idea of having new opportunities and experiences has become a theme, or pattern, for my semester. These trips have made me excited for the chance to experience new things. Prior to this semester, I was not as open to exploring “uncharted territory.” Now, seeking the unfamiliar and the new has become something I cannot live without.





# THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE

A Class Trip to the Photolux Biennial in Lucca

by Kaitlyn Spina  
(Syracuse University)

Once every two years, Lucca hosts a massive photography show in various buildings throughout the city as banks, churches and palaces are turned into unique exhibition spaces and SUF photography students had the fortune of seeing this biennial. Upon learning that this year's event would explore the theme of the sacred and the profane, I could not help but wonder whether it would receive praise from the general public considering that Italy was built on religion. Andres Serrano and Joel-Peter Witkin were advertised as a couple of the big artists whose works would be present, and they are both controversial figures who push the boundaries of what is considered art.



SUF photography class with professor Stefania Talini and photographer Bettina Rheims

Photos: Francesco Guazzelli



In fact, upon the show's opening, the public was extremely upset by Serrano's *Piss Christ* and it was taken out. However, the gaping, empty yellow wall in the middle of the artist's exhibition was itself a statement about the controversy of hosting this type of show in a historically Catholic nation. Though we were disappointed that we would not be able to see this famous photograph, I was excited to have the chance to visit a show that I already knew

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*The tension between the show's theme and its place in Italy was palpable.*

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would be historically significant in the art world.

The first building we entered was an old palace built in Napoleon's time. Dark walls and gorgeous black and white photographs of Saint Peter's led us into the space. I loved the artist's work and understood how photographing a sacred place could be seen as profane, but it was a mild start to the day compared to some of the grotesque, difficult imagery we would see later.

By late morning we reached a significant building for me, mainly because it was the location of Andres Serrano's work. When I pulled back the black curtain to enter his assigned space, several photographs – his interpretation of the Last Supper – stretched out before me. Turning the corner, I found a photograph of a cross composed of milk and blood, along with the aforementioned empty wall. The tension between the show's theme and its place in Italy was palpable: I marveled at the fact that the people opposed to the *Piss Christ* had not demanded more of Serrano's work

be removed from the show. The early afternoon brought even more controversial work: that of Joel-Peter Witkin, who famously works with cadavers. A sign outside the building suggested those under eighteen not enter. Behind a curtain hung grotesque photographs of human bodies that made me incredibly uncomfortable. I did not care for the work because I could not find justification for such disturbing imagery. However, the fact that his works made me disgusted and caused me to think about their themes reinforced how successful they are as art.

The last building we entered was a bank-turned-exhibition-space for the artists Bettina Rheims and Serge Bramly, whose show explored what the story of Jesus would look like if



Judas slumped against the wall of his apartment, empty save a fallen portrait of Jesus, a gun in the apostle's hand. One wall in the last room held a large triptych of three crosses: a woman Christ-figure on the left cross, a man Christ-figure on the right, and an empty cross in the middle. It was a magnificent image: a classically composed crucifixion referencing modern-day struggles



it occurred today. I was immediately taken by this work. The back wall of the first room had a large photograph of a modern-day Jesus figure with piercing blue eyes wearing a crown of metal shards, his body covered in black oil that accentuated his bones. The floors in each room had short biblical quotes referencing different times in Jesus's life. I went upstairs excited to see more, finding a simple yet powerful image of a dead

for gender equality.

I was amazed by the show, and my professor and I were the last to exit. When our whole class was ready to go, we walked out of the building and noticed that Bettina Rheims herself was standing outside! We were star-struck. Our professor introduced herself and our class, and we talked with her briefly before getting a group picture together. We walked away in disbelief—how lucky we had been to meet such a brilliant artist! It was a perfect end to the day, and we could not stop talking about all the moving works we had seen.



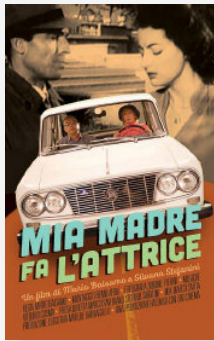
# At the MOVIES

## Highlights from the Torino Film Festival

In November, Professor Carlotta Kliemann's film history class traveled to Turin for the weekend to experience the 33rd Torino Film Festival, which featured titles from around the globe. Two of her students reflect here on the films the class enjoyed the most, one Italian and one American.



The students with Professor Carlotta Kliemann, second from right, in front of the Po River.



### ***Mia madre fa l'attrice* (My Mother is an Actress)**

Reviewed by Cameron Lwin (Syracuse University)

Mario Balsamo's film elaborates on a complicated relationship between the director and his mother, retired actress Silvana Stefanini. Starring Balsamo and Rodrigo Ojeda-Beck's

every line and their conflicting personalities become increasingly evident. The stoic director just wants his actress to follow instructions. The eccentric actress just wants her director to let her do what she wants, spicing up her remarks with typical Tuscan humor and sarcasm. Their stubbornness has kept them apart for years, but now that they are forced to spend time together, they find a new appreciation for one another. In the end, while they are not able to finish the remake, they do succeed in rebuilding their relationship.

The audience does not find a perfect relationship between a mother and son in *Mia madre fa l'attrice*. They find a realistic

one. Mario's mother was not as affectionate as she could have been and the two never became close – a distance that eventually escalated to resentment on Mario's part. His inability to let go blinds him from the truth that while Silvana may not be perfect, she loves him very much. The film caused the audience to erupt several times with laughter and warmed their hearts with a touching ending. Balsamo cleverly managed to take subjects that filmmakers use for fiction and apply them to reality. For example, a Hollywood rom-com may feature two people with conflicting personalities who find love after being forced to spend time together. The director proves that you do not need fancy actors or cheesy one-liners to get the audience's attention; you just need two people with a good story worth telling.

this Italian film follows them on a comedic adventure as they attempt to rebuild their relationship by remaking one of Silvana's old films. The stubborn duo clash over

### ***God Bless The Child***

Reviewed by Dan D'Agostino (Syracuse University)



One of the more creative films featured in the festival was Robert Machoian and Rodrigo Ojeda-Beck's *God Bless the Child*. This film blurs the line between fiction and reality with its docu-drama style of shooting of a fictional story.

Utilizing one family of five children ranging from a one-year-old boy to a young teenaged girl, this film takes realism to a whole new level. Reminiscent of the recent critically acclaimed hit *Boyhood*,

it takes us through one day in the life of five children trying to maintain normalcy in the absence of any caretakers.

The film begins with the children's presumed-single mother indefinitely abandoning their chaotic home in haste for what we soon find out is not the first time. The children – all played by five actual siblings – are left to carry out their day without the supervision or guidance of any adults. The eldest, Harper, continuously attempts to reach their mother and refuses to call anyone else for help.

As we discovered during a Q&A with the directors after the screening, some of the scenes and lines were pure improvisation. Most significant in this sense was the one-year-old Jonah who essentially could not speak and so was left to react in his own natural way. The result of giving this kind of creative freedom to these real-life siblings was impeccable. Rarely before has a film set for potential major distribution featured such stunningly realistic behavior and actions. You find yourself constantly

wondering, what are these children going to do next? What will happen to them? This anxious feeling is only resolved at the end of the film.

Reactions to the screening were varied, and seemed split along cultural lines. We American viewers saw these children as the archetypal representation of the modern middle-class American family and recognized ourselves and our own siblings in them. However, the film seemed to make many Italians anxious and uncomfortable. Many even left the theater before the film had concluded, possibly due to their lack empathy for the situation and the subject. For Italians, for whom family is everything, it seems the idea that five children would just be left alone to take care of themselves and run amuck was deeply disturbing. However, this interpretation of the modern, independent American family, in which many must look out for themselves, could not have been more accurate or prevalent in the minds of us American viewers.



# Down Memoria Lane

An SUF Alum Returns to Florence

by Tom Dapice



**T**his year my wife, her father and I vacationed in Italy. While in Florence, I took my wife to see the Villa Rossa where I studied during the 1999 spring semester. I caught up with program director Sasha Perugini, and the staff helped me reconnect with my host mother. The experience was very meaningful for me and I was happy to see that the program is still going strong and has expanded its campus.

Thinking back to my first week at Syracuse University's study abroad program, I remember meeting my host parents Alda and Luigi, and their daughters Tiziana and Emanuela. They were very welcoming and helpful in orienting me to life in Florence. In addition to being placed with a great family, Syracuse matched me with a great roommate, John, who shared similar interests in hip hop and a vegetarian diet. The dinner table was where we interacted most with our host family and learned about a variety of topics, whether it was Alda's experience as a little girl during WWII or Luigi's endless collection of puns. We talked about

these topics over delicious home cooked meals like Tuscan bean soup, which I had never had before. In addition, I sharpened my Italian

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*Syracuse took the students on a generous list of tours from Rome to Ravenna so we could see in-person what we were discussing in the classroom.*

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skills as my family patiently helped me improve my vocabulary and pronunciation.

My schooling at the Villa Rossa was excellent. Syracuse's wide variety of courses gave me the opportunity to study subjects such as European history and the Italian family structure, which complimented the dinners I had with my hosts. I found the professors to be quite knowledgeable and passionate about their subjects, and the small class sizes allowed them to dedicate substantial time to each student. Outside the classroom, the professors were al-

ways available for questions or just to chat. But the learning didn't end at the Villa, as Syracuse took the students on a generous list of tours from Rome to Ravenna so we could see in-person what we were discussing in the classroom. I enjoyed these trips with a diverse group of classmates who hailed from all over the US, and with whom I often hung out when we weren't studying. Last but not least, I can't forget the dedicated Syracuse staff who made everything run smoothly from Orientation to my work-study position at the library.

Over 16 years have passed since that semester in Italy and a lot has happened since then. After graduating from college, I studied housing policy and started a career in affordable housing development. Most importantly, I met my wonderful wife to whom I've been married for over four years. Looking back, the new experiences the Syracuse program gave me helped prepare me for life's challenges and made me a better person. I am grateful to the people who have been part of Syracuse in Florence and I wish the program continued success in the future.



# Facing Fears

How Studying in Italy Changed Me

by Natalie Zisa (Fordham University)

**C**hange has never been easy for me. Being in new environments with new people has always been a difficult thing for me to adjust to. So why did I choose to study abroad?

I always grew up proud of my Italian culture, but I hated the fact that I couldn't speak the language. I hoped coming to Italy would force me into it. My friends talked so highly about studying abroad that I didn't want to turn down the opportunity. If this was a life changing experience, I was the perfect candidate for it. But as the days got closer to August 31st, I was more and more nervous. A simple thing like packing my shampoo and conditioner made me emotional. Everyone was telling me I would have so much fun, and while I certainly expected to, I also knew that a huge part of it would be really hard. On my flight, I looked at all the groups of friends and thought they were lucky; they would have a great time. I wasn't so sure about me, the girl flying solo, literally.

I couldn't express how nervous I was because I didn't want to think maybe I had made a mistake. My dad kept telling me, "I give you a week and you'll be fine." I should've known to listen to him. While I felt pretty lonely those first two days, still unsure of everything, my attitude changed once I moved in with my host mom. I'm thankful that I had such a caring host mom who made me feel so comfortable. I woke up the next morning as optimistic as ever. I was in a beautiful city with beautiful weather: life was good.

But of course it was, because everything

was new and exciting: amazing food, legal drinking and so many things to discover. The real growth doesn't happen until you're a month or two in and realize just how much you've already accomplished; when you realize that the walk home is now a normal part of your routine; when you've gotten used to saying *ciao* and *grazie*; and especially when you travel outside Italy and start to miss things about Florence. For me, growth happened when I was able to translate a conversation in Italian to English at H&M. It happened when I was able to wander around Florence and find my way back, without using a map. Growth especially happened when I stuck to my plans and took ballet classes at an Italian dance studio (I've danced since I was 9, I couldn't give it up that easily). It was then that I realized that I do everything I set out to do. Only a few days after telling my dad how I wanted to make friends with the Italian girls in my class, I was getting

coffee with them. Ever since high school I have perceived myself as shy and quiet, and just meeting people in our program was daunting at first, but I guess I got through it because I didn't have another option. I don't think I've ever felt more confident or independent and I owe that to this experience.

I've also had the amazing opportunity of visiting relatives in Sicily and realizing that even miles away, family is still family. Though my classes were not the highlight of my experience, I've definitely learned more about Italian history and culture. I'm already thinking about a way to come back. The best part is, I did this all on my own. Granted, I always had friends and family to talk to, but no one told me what to do to make the most of my time here. This was my experience, my way. And I can't wait for the next challenge in my life because now I know good things come from stepping out of your comfort zone.



# The Best Medicine: Laughter and Cross- Cultural Adaptation

by **Julia Grace** (Syracuse University)

I want to identify the warming smell of Paola's cooking as she tells me about her summer. I am pleased with the words I pull and piece together, and we both laugh. I am not sure why, but we laugh and laugh. I realize this is a quickly formed reaction during both pauses of confusion and moments of understanding between two people who speak different languages. My strictly-Italian-speaking host mother Paola and I connect this way. Laughter acts as both relief and proof of her household's joy. She laughs so hard and richly, like the purest and most relatable outburst of emotions I have ever heard. Over one of Paola's dinners that tastes as good as the apartment's aroma, I attempt to explain in Italian one of Boccaccio's stories that I am studying in class.

After a pause and what I think is a nod of comprehension, she exclaims, "Does your sister still eat a lot of French fries?" Everyone at the table breaks into heaving giggles.

Over the months since I arrived, laughter has become a part of my host family's daily intake of new cultural information and their understanding of an eager American in Italy. For me, it is a part of experiencing a new city, which has given way to seeing new parts of myself. The infrequent solitude that I experienced at home is sometimes all I have in Florence. I have developed a peaceful sense of oneness to replace lost time or a failed effort of fumbling Italian words. Sometimes all I want to do is explain my day or my studies to my host mother. But that is when our laughter comes and it all seems to make sense why I came here

because this new environment is all that I wanted.

I think of the wall that wraps around Lucca like a stone promise from so many years ago. Last month I visited the town and spent the afternoon biking around the Renaissance wall—a pebbled, tree-lined alley. To me, the wall symbolizes the long history of this incredible country, securing both Lucca and my memories of it. The strange joy of a foreign city's confusion turns into regained comfort. What is becoming a new home began with pauses of doubt, with the urge to both run and return.

The familiarity and comfort of my American life quickly became unnecessary emotional life support. Unforeseen new

“*Laughter has become a part of my host family's daily intake of new cultural information and their understanding of an eager American in Italy.*”

friends and experiences have fueled my young adulthood. And I have realized that there are excellent means of human connection other than an aligned verbal language. Laughter is the love I share in this new home, the familiar release of the unknown.





# Slowing Down

## What Studying in Italy Taught Me about Time

by Adriana Herrera (Syracuse University)

“  
I no longer  
measure time in  
numbers, but  
rather in mo-  
ments and  
memories.  
”

**S**ix hours. That is the time difference between Florence, Italy and my hometown in southern West Virginia. However, I was unaware that by traveling halfway across the world more than just the time zone would change. During the past three months that I have lived in Florence, time has become more than just the seconds ticking by on a clock that my eighteen-year-old self still has plenty of. Time has become something I have learned to cherish and value. I no longer measure time in numbers, but rather in moments and memories.

When I first arrived in Florence, I had nothing but time—time to travel and explore. Every weekend I visited a new city. But with my semester in Florence quickly coming to an end, I find my time has run out, and I'm frantically trying to savor as much of Italy as I can. Being American, I am so used to a fast-paced lifestyle, always on the go. You have the sense that if you stop even for a second, life has passed you by. Here in Italy, time is different. It moves much slower. Before I moved to Florence, I had never once sat in a restaurant for two hours, *after* finishing my meal. Over the past few months, I have realized that throughout my life I've been so busy trying to go everywhere and see everything that I have forgotten to stop and appreciate what's right in front of me. With less than a week left in Florence, I have realized I'll never be able to eat gelato on the steps of Santa Croce at midnight with my roommate ever again. I may never watch the sun set behind the Ponte Vecchio again. I now wish I had taken the time to pause and take it all in. After all, it's the smallest moments that make life so wonderful. The funny thing is we often never realize it until that moment has passed.

I am leaving Florence with a new appreciation for time and the people I share it with. Though it is unlikely I shall ever return, I will never forget the first time I saw the Duomo and the sense of awe I felt in its massive presence. I'll cherish the day I returned to Rome. After two long years of waiting, my Trevi Fountain wish came true. Years from now I will look at the photo of me “pushing” the Leaning Tower and laugh at how many tries it took to get the picture just right. I will never forget the day I fell in love with Italy and its art in the town of Urbino. I will always remember the time I studied abroad for my freshman year of college.







# Arms, Armor and Costumes, Oh My!

A Visit to the Stibbert Museum in Florence

by Shannon Monahan (Syracuse University)

**B**eyond the bustling city center of Florence is a quaint castle tucked away in the suburban hills of Tuscany, just a few minutes' drive from SUF's main campus in Piazza Savonarola. This mansion was once the home to Englishman Frederick Stibbert, and when his grandfather passed away, Stibbert himself inherited the entire estate. Instead of enjoying it alone, he devoted his life to collecting a myriad of armor from all over the world from the 15th to the 19th century and opening his home to the public as a museum. I had the pleasure of visiting his vast collection along with some classmates guided by Victoria Miller, a PhD candidate at Cambridge University who is working on Renaissance arms, armor and costumes. Victoria studied in Florence and obtained her Master's Degree in Art History here at SUF.

This museum contains more suits of armor than any army would know what to do with. Victoria pointed out that the differences in these beautifully crafted metallic suits lies in the purpose behind them, whether they were used for battle (and thus allowed for movement), as costumes (more decorative) or for tournaments (more protective). There was even a

part of the tour in which we could try on different parts of armor such as chainmail and helmets (see photograph)! We were also shown Stibbert's collection from other parts of the world such as the Islamic and Japanese Armory, which was a refreshing change for an Italian museum.

In my opinion, the most fascinating section of the entire museum was the Cavalcade, where Stibbert himself designed a scene of horses, knights and foot soldiers carrying out a procession through a grand hall that connects two sides of the museum. Each



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*Stibbert devoted his life to collecting a myriad of armor from all over the world from the 15th to the 19th century and opening his home to the public as a museum.*

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horse and knight is different from the next. It would be easy to spend hours in just this room alone to appreciate all the intricate details. Each room's décor also perfectly matches the armor within it, so walking into each room makes you feel like you've entered a new medieval world. Although this museum does not tend to be high on everyone's Florence "must do" list, it is surely a bang for your buck and truly fascinating. Its most famous visitors are none other than Queen Victoria and Oscar Wilde, and if it's good enough for them, it's good enough for me!





# YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

## 29TH ANNUAL GRADUATE SYMPOSIUM

By Graduate Program Coordinator Molly Bourne



Is it true that “You Are What You Eat”? Can depictions of food and drink in 15th and 16th-century Italian art help us understand how comestibles were perceived by their original consumers? Our four graduate students in Renaissance Art (class of 2015) set out to find answers in their final research projects, presenting their impressive findings at the 29th Annual Graduate Symposium before a standing-room-only audience at the Villa Rossa on December 3. The first two papers investigated the moralizing, religious, and gendered meanings of foodstuffs, such as fava beans and red versus white wines, depicted in large-scale Last Supper paintings created for two female Florentine refectories: nun-painter Plautilla Nelli’s canvas for the Dominican convent of Santa Caterina da Siena, examined in Cristina Garza’s presentation, and Giorgio Vasari’s Last Supper for Le Murate, analyzed by Isaac Messina. Following intermission, the final two presentations explored two edible liquids central to early modern culture: breast milk and wine. Lauren Cooley surveyed the visual culture and wet-nursing industry surrounding Montevarchi’s relic of the Virgin’s breast milk, while Laura Marsolek examined a luxurious rock-crystal wine fountain created for the 1589 wedding of Grand Duke Ferdinando I de’ Medici. A splendid and very palatable reception provided the fitting conclusion to these four successful presentations.



Clockwise from top right: Prof. Molly Bourne; symposium audience; Isaac Messina; Laura Marsolek; Professors Rab Hatfield, Jonathan Nelson and Gary Radke; Prof Radke congratulating Lauren Cooley; Prof Radke congratulating Laura Marsolek; Prof Radke and Art Historian Cristina Acidini; Lauren Cooley; Prof. Sally Cornelison, Cristina Garza; Director Sasha Perugini.

Clockwise from top left: Graduate Program Director Sally Cornelison; SUF Director Sasha Perugini; Graduate Program Coordinator Molly Bourne; Graduate Professor Matteo Duni; Lauren Cooley; Laura Marsolek; Cristina Garza; Isaac Messina.





# SUF Art Students at Palazzo Strozzi

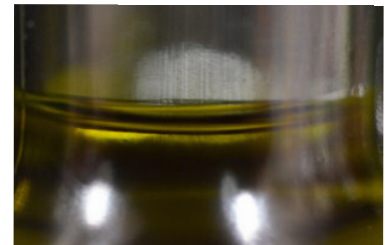
By Studio Art Supervisor Kirsten Stromberg



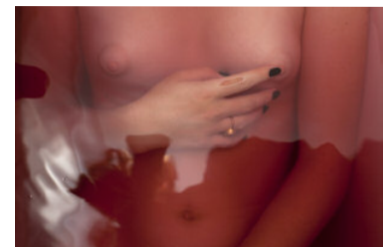
**O**n the occasion of the exhibition, Divine Beauty: from Van Gogh to Chagall and Fontana at Palazzo Strozzi in Florence, SUF photography and painting students participated in a special program called Holy!Holy!Holy!. Spearheaded by the educational department at Palazzo Strozzi, the project was inspired by sacred themes and concerns in the Divine Beauty exhibition while setting these themes in contrast to Allen

Ginsberg's footnote to the poem 'Howl' titled 'Holy!Holy!Holy!'.

Along with 3 other universities in Florence, SUF painting and photography students researched ideas that related to the exhibition through various platforms: visiting the exhibition, explorations and research around Florence, studio work, as well as a series of contemporary artist talks on the theme. At the end of the semester, selected students presented their works to the public at Palazzo Strozzi, discussing their work and how they addressed the project. Photography Professor Stefania Talini and I (for Painting) were involved in the project. Intermediate and advanced students from our courses spent the semester learning not only about the exhibition and contemporary art discourse, but what it means to research a theme in their work and to develop it both technically and conceptually.



Sara Fitzgerald (photography)



Riley Ryan-Wood (photography)



Sophie Brande (photography)



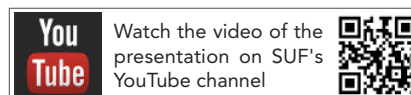
Xueyun Li (painting)



Courtney Griffith (painting)



Jane McGehee (painting)





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## Molly Bourne

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Molly Bourne, an expert on the early modern history of Mantua, was featured in "Ad Tempo Taci: Songs for Isabella d'Este," a 30-minute historical film about music at the Renaissance court of Isabella d'Este, Marchioness of Mantua. The film, which is part of the research project "IDEA" (Isabella d'Este Archive), for which Prof. Bourne serves as an advising consultant, can be viewed here: <http://poppreperatory.web.unc.edu/2015/10/ad-tempo-taci-songs-for-isabella-deste/>

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## Matteo Duni

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Matteo Duni's major publication in the fall was the collection of the proceedings of an international conference he had organized at the Università di Urbino in 2013, published by Carocci as *Prescritto e proscritto: religione e società nell'Italia moderna (secoli XIV-XIX)*, edited by Matteo with fellow co-organizers Guido Dall'Olio and Andrea Cicerchia. An essay by Prof. Duni, "What About Some Good Wether? Witches and Werewolves in Sixteenth-Century Italy" was also published in the volume *Werewolf Histories*, edited by Willem de Blécourt (Palgrave Macmillan).

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## Antonella Francini

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Antonella Francini published an article on food imagery in American poetry ("Percorsi gastronomici nella poesia statunitense," *Semicerchio*, LII, 2015/1) in which she outlines the role of the culinary arts in a selection of texts, from colonial times to the present. In October, she was invited to participate in the annual conference on literary translation at the University of Urbino where she led a seminar on translating poetry.

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## Baret Magarian

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Baret Magarian's poem "Carousel" was published in *Contrapasso* in September; a selection of his poetry was published in *Semicerchio* in Italian and English in October; his short story "The Meltdown" was published in *World Literature Today* in January; and "Desert Visions" was published in Italian and English in the *Journal of Italian Translation* in February 2016. In December he gave a piano recital and poetry reading at the British Institute of Florence, his piano music was posted on Soundcloud under the name Floto Music – the Angels, Piano Piece for Nebs, The Shadows, & Erasing the Waves and he participated in a Skype video conference in Taipei, Taiwan on the subject of students' presentations on the international image of Taiwan, urban planning and art history projects. He also co-translated four articles about the life and art of Giuseppe Castiglione-Lang Shining included in the book *Giuseppe Castiglione, Jesuit and Painter in the Celestial Empire* (Edizioni Feeria), published in November.

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## Sara Matthews-Grieco

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Sara Matthews-Grieco will be presenting a paper at the Renaissance Society of America Annual meeting in Boston entitled "Engraving Anteros: The Printed Picture as an Agent of Change in Counter-Reformation Italy" and scheduled as part of the three sessions organized by Sally J. Cornelison "Encountering the Renaissance, Honoring Gary Radke." As Associate Organization Representative for the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women, Sara Matthews-Grieco also recruited five sessions for the Renaissance Society of America Annual meeting in Boston (31March-2April 2016) that were awarded SSEMWW sponsorship. The purpose of SSEMWW sponsorship is to promote the study of women, gender and sexuality between the 15th and 18th centuries in all disciplines.



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## Eric Nicholson

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During the fall season of 2015, Eric Nicholson directed and performed in the SUF Players' production of "The Haunted Casa," an original adaptation of Plautus's classic Latin comedy *Mostellaria*. Beyond Syracuse, he completed professional voice-over work on the English version of the documentary video "Le chiavi di Dante" for La Società Dantesca Italiana. He also translated and voice-recorded official audio guides for museums in the Province of Salerno and the City of Grosseto, and in Florence, for the renovated Museo dell'Opera del Duomo.

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## Sasha Perugini

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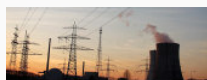


In June Sasha became a member of the US State Department's OSAC (Overseas Security Advisory Council) Steering Committee for Tuscany. In September she presented on "Strategies for integration through language acquisition and food culture" at the Intercultural Horizons Annual Conference in Cagliari, Sardinia. In November, she gave a talk on "STEM in Study Abroad" at the CIEE Annual Conference in Berlin, "The Reinvention of Study Abroad", and a lecture in Arezzo on Women and Power Narratives as part of the "Autumn School of Formazione Politica 2015".

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## Kenneth Resnick

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In November Kenneth Resnick spoke at the 3rd Annual Energy Law Business Forum, sponsored by Thomson Reuters in London, England. He spoke on the challenges of building a "gold standard" compliance program, particularly for those involved in the energy industry who do business in countries at high risk for corruption and other forms of business wrongdoing. His comments included observations on the U.S. Department of Justice's recent decision to hire a full time compliance expert to help the Department evaluate the effectiveness of a company's compliance program in the context of a potential investigation or prosecution. The conference was attended by executives, legal professionals and compliance experts in the energy sector.

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## Alessandro Ridolfi

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Through his work as a researcher for the Department of Industrial Engineering at the University of Florence, Alessandro Ridolfi co-authored an article on the field of underwater robotics, published in the *Elsevier Journal of Ocean Engineering*, entitled "A new AUV navigation system exploiting unscented Kalman filter". In September he received the John F Alcock Memorial Prize 2014 from the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) - Railway Division Prizes and Awards, along with some colleagues of the University of Florence, for the paper "A localization algorithm for railway vehicles based on sensor fusion between tachometers and inertial measurement units" published in *Proceedings of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, Part F, Journal of Rail and Rapid Transit*.

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## Michelle Tarnopolsky

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A collection of essays translated by Michelle Tarnopolsky and edited by Maurizio Vaudagna, *Modern European-American Relations in the Transatlantic Space. Recent Trends in History Writing*, was published by Otto.



## Highlights of the SUF Field Trip Program

# ON THE **ROAD**





