

Number 24 | April 2011

# VILLAROSSA VOICE

Syracuse University in Florence

## points

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VIEW

Italian Language & Culture

Internships

Service Learning

Lectures, Symposia, Workshops

Art, Theater, Music

Faculty Watch

Outstanding Students



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## **Letter from the Director**

Dear readers,

At the beginning of each semester we provide our students with a three-day orientation to our program and the city of Florence. During this time we discuss the importance and value of both the curricular and co-curricular activities that are available to them. We emphasize some of the signature elements of our program which are intended to engage them in this community--living with a host family, attending classes at the University of Florence, taking part in international workshops, and participating in internships and service learning.

In this issue of the Villa Rossa Voice we celebrate the hard work and accomplishments of students who have stepped out of their comfort zone and become active participants in their new-found community. From the many articles written by students themselves, we also discover the variety of ways in which study abroad has impacted and enriched their lives. I hope you'll enjoy the articles they have contributed.

In a few days I return to Syracuse University's home campus. It has been a great privilege to serve as interim director of SU in Florence for the past 16 months. I leave future students and this very talented staff and faculty in the capable hands of Sasha Perugini, our incoming director.

A presto,

**Michael Calo**  
(outgoing) Interim Director  
Syracuse University in Florence



I ♥ Donatella  
Fall 2008

The professor was great. She would answer any questions that we had about the language and Italian culture in general. Very, very patient with us.

I liked that it was a really friendly environment. It's easy to be frustrated when learning a new language but the course was set up in a really casual way but it felt like I learned a lot.

Spring 2007

(Everything). This is a great class and helped immensely with my Italian. Costantini is a wonderful professor.

Fall 2007

Donatella was fantastic. By far my favorite professor here. She was so willing to help us whenever we needed anything. If we didn't understand, she would explain until we did. The material was incredibly interesting and gave me a much better understanding of the language, as well as improved my Italian.

Fall 2007

(Definitely). Learning Italian made my experience in Italy much easier. Being able to communicate with the people around you is crucial. I would especially recommend Donatella as an instructor. She's awesome at teaching introductory students. The best teacher I had at SUF.

Spring 2007

Donatella is an amazing professor and always full of energy - not easy to do when you often have a class filled with tired university students. She is a definitely + to have in the Italian department here at Syracuse. Molto bene!

Fall 2007

Donatella is the most thorough and best language teacher I've had. We always learned but still have fun. I was lucky to have Donatella as a professor. She is definitely a great teacher.

Spring 2007

Donatella always had a positive, constructive attitude.

Spring 2007

Donatella's energy and passion for teaching is contagious and inspiring.

Fall 2008





In class



On a field trip with class to the artisan workshop Polloni

## Remembering Donatella

by Loredana Tarini (Italian Department Coordinator)

Students' words are the best way to remember and commemorate Donatella Costantini, our beloved friend and colleague who sadly left us in January of this year.

Students' words are also the best way to describe and recognize the enormous heritage that Donatella left behind after more than 21 years of teaching Italian language and culture at Syracuse University in Florence. Language and culture are intrinsically related. And Donatella, while teaching the language, transmitted to her students the spirit, heart and soul of her country with infinite grace and passion.

One thousand and four hundred students. This is the approximate number of young adults that Donatella taught during her 21 years of service to SUF and who are now out there in the world carrying with them her legacy. In effect, Donatella never really left; she will always be with us in spirit.

Donatella's smile, courage and positive energy will continue to be a source of inspiration for those of us within the SU Florence community and beyond.

Donatella, grazie.

*Great teacher, period.*



At the European University



With department colleagues



Field trip to Cinque Terre



On the train to Cinque Terre

# Florence by

by William Partin  
(Emory University)

*The following was one of four winning essays in the Coluccio Salutati writing competition. The other essays can be found on the SU Florence website at: <http://www.syr.fi.it/study-abroad-florence-excellencewards.php>*

# BUS

Ten, eleven, seventeen, and sixty-eight—it almost sounds fibonaccian. But these are the buses in my life, flammeous chariots of tempered steel, whisking across the city through a criss-crossed web and into the suburbs beyond. Each day, I buzz my ticket (or sometimes don't) and take my seat on the molded benches, the front row to the Florentine show passing behind the great glass panes.

Most days, I take the seventeen, or maybe, it takes me, to and from my apartment on the far side of the stadium, crossing the train tracks and skirting the via Marconi over the course of our transversal. We pass Paninoteca, where Mustafa sometimes gives me free kebabs and Italian lessons from Arabic. Many days, I glimpse him anxiously watching the TV, hoping for better news from his native Egypt. Other times, he is bedecked in purple, cheering for La Fiorentina.

Every few days, I find myself making this trip on the similarly minded eleven. Though more infrequent, it prunes the unnecessary switchbacks of the seventeen, and pierces directly through the Campo di Marte with stunning efficiency. I disembark at “Fermata Sirtori,” at the elementary school whose students often wake me up on lazy Saturday mornings.

Then there is the ten, which takes me to work in the hills above Settignano, where the streets are quiet and the air is still. Here, verdant waves of green, crested by hoary villas, have lain unchanged and unchallenged through the centuries. From the windows of the Villa I Tatti, I often watch as the crepuscular light of an afternoon's final, aching moments beats down over the Tuscan pines.

photo: Francesco Guazzelli



The sixty-eight is the most mysterious of all. The love child of the eleven and the seventeen, it only comes out after its parents have gone to bed. Four times a night it makes its intermittent peregrination of the city. If I join it, it is usually after a night of Martellina at birrifico Mostodolce, where I call myself a regular. But more often, I simply see it thunder away, a fleeting specter in the gathered darkness.

Someone once told me that we don't have inspirations, only memories. And my mind's eye cannot help but see these memories through the bus window as I pass the places where I have turned. But even as I look out the transparent panes, I cannot help but see my reflection, ghosted over the buildings and people as they pass. Catching one's self in the act of seeing is often greater than the gaze itself. It makes you self aware. You learn to see yourself on the world's stage. Finding your place in a new culture is not so much a matter of looking out as it is looking in.

But true cultural experiences are not a process of adoption—they are the progeny of absorption: the osmosis of the buses' hum, the tactile light on the Tuscan pines, La Fiorentina's purple hue, the sound of schoolchildren on a Saturday morning, the taste of martellina and mayo covered fries, and the ever-shifting incidentals of language.




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*The sixt-eight is the most mysterious of all. The love child of the seventeen and eleven, it only comes out after its parents have gone to bed.*

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In time, these moments all came to be memories, and from remembering, custom was formed. The grain of memory softens wonder and through its rounded edges slips in habit. And it is then that what I once heard, saw, and felt around me, was suddenly within me.

Finding a new truth about yourself is often like falling asleep, or better yet, waking up. You can never be sure when it happened, only that it did. But in one moment, somewhere in the space and time of the months behind us, as I stared out the bus window and into myself, I realized the truth that I, you, and everyone in this room has been learning to learn since the moment we stepped off the plane. That I was home.

# Me, My Host Mother, and the Microwave

by Judith Stapleton (Franklin & Marshall College)



To tell this story, I need to describe the main characters. There is me: five foot seven, blonde hair, blue eyes, Americanized English accent, studying abroad in Italy for a semester. There is my host mother: 73 years old, about five foot three, gray cropped hair, walks with the dodderly steps of a woman we would politely call *anziana*. Then, there is the microwave: a foot and a half long, heavy 30 lbs, and unfortunately broken. Which is the start of this story in the first place.

I would like to clarify that the microwave was not actually damaged. Yes, the plate didn't turn, but the numbers still counted down to zero and the heating-up-the food part worked fine. But, it had to be fixed.

Obvious next step: find a place that fixes microwaves. Luckily, there is one a 10 minute walk from the apartment where I live with my host mother. Now, considering that my host mother doesn't have a car and doesn't drive, the obvious second step would be to call a cab. But no, my 73-year-old host mother insists that she and I can carry the microwave to the shop.

OK, shouldn't be too bad. Still, I don't want my host mother carrying a microwave through the streets of Florence. I enlist friends. But, my offer is politely—but firmly—cast down. We will manage. So, heaving up the microwave (held in two plastic bags) we exit the apartment.

First off, it is raining. I'm not talking about the light sort of rainfall that allows you to get by without an umbrella: this is a downpour. The sort of downpour that leaves you *inzuppata* like bread dunked in a bowl of soup. We head out onto Viale Matteotti, one of the biggest streets in Florence. Cyclists angrily ring their bells as they play "hit the pedestrian," and cars zoom by in an endless race around the historic centre of Florence. No one even looks twice at the little old lady and the less-little young woman carrying a microwave through the streets of Florence.

Now, I won't describe every agonizing step of our journey to the microwave-fixing shop. But, did you know that microwaves are heavy? Heavier than they look? And a plastic bag, oh sorry, two plastic bags, is just not going to cut it. Then there is the fact that I am about four inches taller than my host mum. That may not sound like much, but you try walking crookedly down a busy street attempting to hold a microwave in two plastic bags at just the right angle that its whole 30 lbs doesn't fall into your host mother's hands. Then there is the rain. And the traffic. Running through my head are the following thoughts: *Oh my god she is going to have a heart attack. She is going to fall down in the middle of the road and no one will come to help us and it will be my fault for not making us take a cab. Shit, this weighs a ton. How do you say, "My host mother had a stroke because we were trying to carry a microwave through Florence" in Italian? How do you say "microwave" in Italian? How far until this microwave shop place? How long until she collapses? How long until I collapse?*

About twenty minutes later (every second thinking that either: 1. my host mother was going to faint, or 2. somebody was surely going to offer to lend a hand and hoping that two would come before one) we finally make it. *Riparazione e Ricambi Elettrodomestici*, Fra' Bartolommeo, 45, Firenze, Italia.

So we survived. And, as good Italians do, we immediately went to recover at *Cafe Libertà* (best brioche in town) by each gulping down an espresso and the most delicious pastries you have ever eaten. It stopped raining as soon as we made it home.

And there you have it: the memory of just one of the many memorable moments from my time abroad. And, if you will forgive me a little moment of reflection, one of the most genuine moments I could have hoped to experience. This was not the Italy of the postcards and the guide-books, not a moment with a host family that are more "host" than "family," but the real thing—rain, traffic, microwaves, and espresso. And one of many tiny little moments of bonding with my little old, dodderly host mother.



# Mamma Mia

by Devon Ritchie (Northwestern University)



*From photo archives*

As everyone had told me, it's not hard to stay within a little American bubble when studying abroad in Florence. Many students admit to not having made any improvement in their knowledge of the Italian language after an entire semester or even a year abroad. This may be true, but it's not possible when living with a host family, especially one that speaks no English.

When my Italian mamma picked my roommate and me up at Syracuse two days after we arrived in Florence, her first words to us were "I don't know any English!" We were then told (in Italian of course) that she was throwing a surprise party at her apartment that night and there would be around twenty-five Italians. This was total immersion. From that day on, we spent dinners speaking only in Italian. Yes, there were lots of hand motions and the like. I distinctly remember the time my host mom snorted like a pig when I asked what type of meat we were having for dinner. And yes, there were plenty of mistakes and mispronunciations. A particularly entertaining dinner

party consisted of three of my host mom's friends, which she affectionately introduced to us as our "Italian aunts," trying to pin the last piece of *tiramisu* on one of us by singing the Italian equivalent of "Eeny, Meeny, Miny, Moe." As if that weren't entertaining enough, they then wanted to know how our song went in English. With their limited knowledge of the language, their attempts at understanding our song were quite

comical. What they understood went something like this: "To touch a tie here by the toe. If it col-lars, let it go. To touch a tie here by the toe." But for the most part we managed well and fortunately always had the little green Italian-English dictionary when in dire need.

Looking back on this brief experience in Florence I can safely say that I have learned the most from living with a host family. It has been here that I've experienced the true Italia. It has been here that I've enjoyed hearing about Italian history and culture from my host mom and have enjoyed the stories that her mother once told her. And every night for the past four months my Italian mamma has echoed my own mother's nightly words, wishing us a *buona notte* and *sogni d'oro* with a *bacio* on each cheek. She said on our first weekend together that she hoped to be our *mamma italiana*, and she has truly been that for me.

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*I can safely say that I have learned the most from my time living in a host family. It has been here that I've experienced the true Italia.*

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**By Gregory Fitton (Syracuse University)**

As fireworks light up the skyline over Piazza Signoria to celebrate Italy's 150th birthday, it is evident that the once peninsula of city-states and World War II battlegrounds has come a long way in unity and achieving the idea of being a "nation." The country has indeed had a tumultuous and complex history; a rough road to unity in its first fifty years, class conflicts and corruption, the rise and fall of Mussolini and Fascism, the great wars and their aftermath on the country's political, social, and economic landscape, and the Catholic Church and its role in Italian society. As a student coming into contact with Italian political and social culture (and their relationship) for the first time, the Italian headlines upon my arrival brought these two societal aspects to the forefront of my experience.

When I first arrived in Florence, the newspapers and television programs were filled with news about the Italian prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, and his most recent sex scandal, dubbed "Ruby gate," a scandal that has sparked widespread outcry and calls for Berlusconi's resignation. Prior to my stay in the country, I had absolutely no knowledge of Italian politics or Berlusconi, other than a simple recognition of his name as the Italian premier. My host family and others were more than happy to fill me in. Silvio Berlusconi is a corrupt media giant turned right-wing politician who has been overstepping his legal authority through bribery for a number of years. He is a disgraceful representation of Italy not only because of his shady political actions, but also because of his sex scandals and consistent disrespect for women, open political discourse and Italian laws.

In late February, BBC's documentary film "The Berlusconi Show" was screened in the Villa Rossa, followed by a "Q and A" with one of its producers, Marco Colombo. The 2010 film delves into the political rise of Berlusconi, the allegations of his corruption, and, most shockingly, his political popularity and strong approval rating among the Italian masses. In interviews with regular, working Italians throughout the documentary, many of them feel connected to Berlusconi as one of their own and have unwavering support for him. In lieu of the sex scandals throughout the years, his coalition's approval ratings rarely drop and this recent scandal has only lowered them slightly.

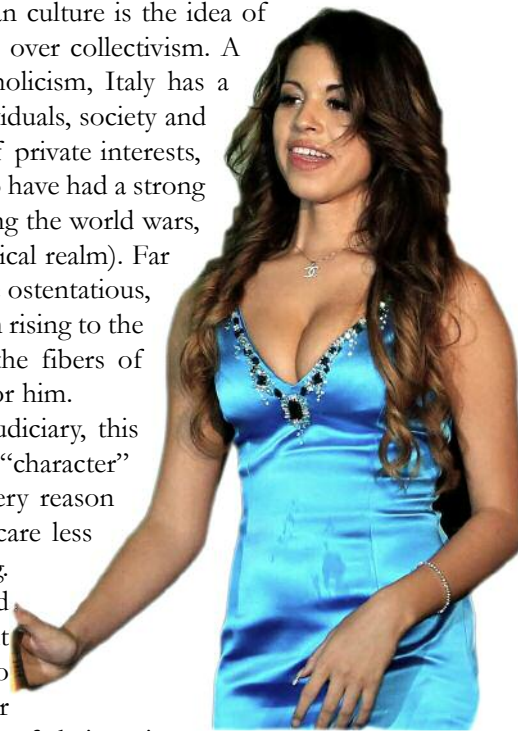


Parliamentary democracy, a political concept very familiar to most Europeans but foreign to Americans, fosters the growth of party alliances and sees governments (implementers of the state) occasionally “collapse,” leading to new elections and new coalitions. Although perhaps a flawed system, “the Italian Constitution embodies a fairly standard system of representative democracy,” says Italian historian Paul Ginsborg in *A History of Contemporary Italy* (1990). However, Berlusconi has been able to manipulate members of the government through both political and financial incentives, pass laws which benefit him and keep his coalition safe in power. But, it is by no means a dictatorship, and if Berlusconi and his party were to lose at the polls, he would indeed be out, as has happened before. Hence, as an outside observer I pose the difficult question: is it the Italian political system that is broken or the political culture?



There is clearly enough political fervor to generate protests, demonstrations and rallies, but, to paraphrase Colombo, it is not clear that Berlusconi will lose in the next parliamentary elections. Many in the opposition claim that Berlusconi’s dominance of the media leads to a manipulation of mass information, but the presence of alternative channels, newspapers, and the Internet fail to give that argument true weight. Perhaps, there is simply a cultural indifference to politics as a whole.

Ginsborg believes that a definitive trait of Italian culture is the idea of family, and sees a long history of individualism over collectivism. A country deeply rooted in regionalism and Catholicism, Italy has a unique history of the relationship between individuals, society and the state. Berlusconi seems to be a champion of private interests, claiming to rid the nation of “communists” (who have had a strong presence in Italy historically, particularly following the world wars, but are irrelevant in the modern European political realm). Far from populist, Berlusconi does not hesitate to be ostentatious, but perhaps his story of a seemingly average man rising to the top of the corporate world resonates within the fibers of ordinary Italian citizens who consistently vote for him. Claiming to be plotted against by the Italian judiciary, this centre-right politician is more of a rebellious “character” than a politician, and conceivably that is the very reason that he is popular among those who couldn’t care less about the mundane aspects of policy making. With trials for the “Ruby gate” scandal scheduled for April 6th, Berlusconi may indeed be brought down by the legal system. But if not, it is up to ordinary Italians at the polls to decide whether or not Silvio Berlusconi will continue to be the face of their nation.



“Ruby”



Pierluigi Bersani, leader of Democratic party



Gianfranco Fini, FLI party leader

# Ninjas Exchange Conversation

by Students of Liceo Russell-Newton (Mercurio 5C)



On Thursday, March 31 our class from the Liceo Russell-Newton spent a morning meeting and talking with students from Syracuse University in Florence studying Italian. The visit started off with a “Tandem” conversation exchange which helped us get to know each other by asking and answering questions in Italian and English. During this exchange we discovered a lot of differences between our lives and those of the American students. For example, the

things that are popular in the US are not popular in Italy: we have different kinds of music, TV shows and daily habits. Our schools are very different too. The Syracuse campus looks like Hogwarts with a large, beautiful garden!

After talking we played a game called “Ninja” invented by one of the American students. Since it was a game that not even the other Americans knew, the differences we had experienced before diminished. After

the game, two of the American students showed us an interesting Power Point presentation on optical illusions.

We left Syracuse happy; it had been a beautiful day where we were able to

improve our English and learn a little more about life in a different country. The students were lovely and very friendly. We recommend this experience to every language student and would like to return to SU Florence soon!





# Scandicci Tram Ride

by Mina Riazi (University of California, S.Diego)



photo: Michael Thron

The tram ride to Scandicci takes twenty minutes. Unlike the buses—which hiccup through the streets—the tram barely bounces, zipping cleanly past whirls of trees and houses. If you schedule an early-morning visit, you might experience the strange serenity of pale morning light scooting its way through the windows. If you ride the tram with your host-mother, you might receive whispered snippets of commentary about the surrounding suburbs.

I visited Scandicci for my internship with The Florentine newspaper—a bi-monthly publication printed in English. Through my internship, I relished fragments of Florence that I might have otherwise left undiscovered. These included the Ghirlandaio exhibition, the frescoed winter garden at the

Museo di Casa Martelli, and the small, hidden rooms of the Ospedale degli Innocenti. As an intern, I also realized that writing is never only about writing. It requires a bouquet of many diverse elements—from observation to absorption to reflection. The act of visiting a place, and noticing its peculiar details, is just as much a part of writing as is pushing pen to paper.

A small, quiet town, Scandicci nevertheless glows with its collection of churches. The *Castello dell'Acciaio* does not reflect the usual dreamy imaginings of castles in Tuscany. It is—in many ways—quite brief. The sprawling courtyard one expects, spotted with flowers and voluptuous trees, is mostly bare. But then there are three rooms dedicated

to fifteen of the Ghirlandaio family's artistic creations. Here, I admired the ripe, bursting colors of Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio and Michele Tosini's Wedding of St. Catherine, as well as Francesco del Brina's The Holy Family and Saint John as a Child.

Though fascinating in its beauty, the Ghirlandaio exhibition was not the most precious part of my visit to Scandicci. I valued more the opportunity to grow acquainted with a place outside of Florence that was just as much "Italy" as the David and the Duomo. The tram ride through the trees and

the Castello dell'Acciaio's uncomplicated beauty encouraged me to begin dissolving the shuddering generalizations that once shaped my views of Florence and Italy.

Interestingly enough, as I continued my explorations and moved closer towards the end of my internship, I realized how much less I was beginning to understand Italy. At first, this unsettled me. Then, I relaxed, realizing that to understand an entire country as if it were a simple mathematical equation is impossible. At that point, my appreciation for writing and for my internship with The Florentine—and all the delicious thoughts, musings and adventures that they both required—would continue to increase as time went on.

*Though fascinating in its beauty, the Ghirlandaio exhibition was not the most precious part of my visit to Scandicci. I valued more the opportunity to grow acquainted with a place outside of Florence that was just as much "Italy" as the David and the Duomo.*

## Option II Language Program Spring 2011 Photo Album



Option II students arrive in Florence, Jan. 2011.



Students attend Marco Colombo's lecture on "The Berlusconi Show."



Sigra Diletta Frescobaldi demonstrates the art of wine tasting.



Students enjoy the taste of good wine.



... and learn the art of making fresh pasta.



La pasta e' pronta!



E il pranzo e' servito.



Students meet with young Italian authors Alessandro Raveggi and Vanni Santoni.



With Dott.ssa Gheno at the *Accademia della Crusca*.



Group photo at "La Crusca."



# Aula Magna (Option III Program)

## Studying at the “Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia” of UniFi

By Alexandra K.G. Lipezker (Syracuse University)

I remember feeling my heart race as I tried to find the Aula Magna in the enormity that is the Università di Firenze. I've always been rather shy so naturally the simplest task, like finding my classroom, seemed monumental since it required asking for instructions in a language in which I am not usually used to expressing myself. The myriad doors and corridors made me uneasy, and the sheer quantity of Italian students walking in and out of rooms was overwhelming. Where had they been hiding? I had been walking around the city for weeks and never seen this many Florentine students about. Or maybe it was my nerves... As I walked around the courtyard of n.4 Piazza Brunelleschi I finally found the stairway to the second floor. The Aula Magna turned out to be a lecture hall that quickly filled up with more than eighty students, greeting each other and chatting away whilst awaiting the professor's arrival. I moved towards the front and sat in the third row next to a girl typing away furiously at her computer. Apparently she had researched the assignments and had begun to meticulously schedule them into her daily calendar. I barely had time to ask her about the homework when our conversation came to an end as the Prof.ssa Capecchi walked in. She had kind features; however her penetrating eyes seemed to study the room and with a single gaze quickly silenced



photo: Michael Thron

it. She set up the presentation and then sat at the front of the class to begin to explain exactly what would be covered in the lectures and what parts of her course applied to which students. She could have been speaking Japanese for all I knew. The Italian system is very different from the American one, so naturally I understood very little about her initial conversation concerning modules. From what I could tell the class was composed of a group of people of various ages, some completing the laurea whilst others the magistrale. She also addressed foreign students or *stranieri* like myself, for whom she stated that the final grade would be based on an oral exam. This again made me slightly nervous as I had never before been asked to recite before a professor numerous amounts of information and data concerning ancient Roman archeology and architecture. As the lecture began my nervousness was replaced with wonder. The Prof.ssa was a fountain of information. Despite the fact that I had a hard time following the conversation when archaeological terms were introduced, the passionate way with which she explained the foundation of Rome that first day convinced me that, despite how challenging it would be to take the class, I would come to love it. Her passion for the topic was evident in the way she relayed the information and in the excited gestures she made as she spoke. The end of class came too soon, but by that time I was certain that choosing Option III, despite how hard it would be to balance my studies as an architecture student at Syracuse with the requirements of the Università di Firenze, had been the best choice I could have made for my studies in Florence.

# Taking Care of the Planet

by Gabriela Ramírez Vargas (Syracuse University)



When I heard I got an internship with UNICEF I did not know what to expect. Ever since I can remember I have wanted to do work that would help children, that would ensure them their human rights and give them the chance for a better life. This internship has constituted a major step towards achieving one of my life's goals. Just as with any non-profit organization, raising funds is an intrinsic part of the work, and this was our first task. My partner Bommy Cha and I chose to raise funds for the project "Nascere e crescere sani" to combat infant mortality in Guinea Bissau.

What I was not expecting at all was to have the opportunity to be a part of the National Conference for Italian UNICEF volunteers: a three-day conference that took place here in

Florence. Over three thousand volunteers from all over Italy came to Florence to participate in lectures given by Nobel Peace Prize winner Betty Williams (1976); the mayor of Florence Matteo Renzi, UNICEF Italia's president Vincenzo Spadafora; and many others including singers, actors and journalists.

The second day of the conference was dedicated to the youth group YOUNICEF: a group that consists of young volunteers ages 14-30. On this day I was asked to read part of the Bill of Responsibility "To Take Care of the Planet" side by side another volunteer. As I was standing on stage, I realized that I was no longer just helping raise funds for an organization, but I was part of the organization.

One thing that struck me the most was the emphasis on fieldwork. UNICEF in Italy has demonstrated the importance and effectiveness of sending youth to do humanitarian work in the world's poorest countries. The fact that such an important organization has given opportunities to young people to make a difference gave me greater motivation to pursue my own goals. I have now seen how non-profit organizations work here in Italy, been able to experience the Italian culture through this internship and along the way I have met some incredible people, such as Gabriele Zagni and Dafne Vasetti, with whom I worked directly, and the rest of the YOUNICEF Florence group. It was a great experience not only as the first step along the path that will lead to the fulfillment of my career goal, but for my personal growth as well.

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*As I was standing on stage, I realized that I was no longer just helping raise funds for an organization, but I was part of the organization.*

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# Volunteering at Pantagruel

by Kaitlyn Curran (Davidson College)

Initially, I did not know what to expect when I signed up to volunteer at Pantagruel. I only knew that it involved working with female ex-prisoners and creating handmade dolls to sell to the public. I have had some experience with quilt-making so I was not concerned about producing a doll in a matter of sessions. The reservations I had about this volunteer opportunity had to do with the language barrier (I am in Italian 101) and the possibility of a generational gap between myself and the other women.

But all of my uncertainties were dispelled during the first session. It started with meeting Maibratt at the front desk of the Villa Rosa. Her sunny disposition was palpable and her extensive knowledge of English and Italian, in addition to her native Danish, made me realize



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*I felt as if I was already part of the group before being formally introduced.*

*I often feel like I am the one who is taking away a lot more than I am giving in this volunteer program.*

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that communicating would never be a problem. When we arrived at the doll shop, we were warmly greeted by everyone. I felt as if I were already part of the group before I was even formally introduced. Before getting started on the intensive process of doll-making, we had tea and muffins. This has in fact been a staple part of our weekly get-togethers.

My first impression of the small group of doll-makers was that they were warm-hearted individuals with a great sense of humor. They all love to laugh and joke around. I may not always understand everything they are saying, but I can generally understand the gist of their conversations and can contribute once in a while. I often feel like I am the one taking away a lot more than I am giving in this volunteer program. For one thing, everyone is incredibly talented and can probably produce at least fifteen beautiful *bambole* in the span it takes me to make one doll. In addition to the one-of-a-kind dolls, these



fantastically creative ladies also make pillows, hats, stuffed animals, etc. by hand. The volunteer program has allowed me to interact with the Italian community, practice my Italian skills and meet great people. Furthermore, Gloria has taught me the art of making dolls, which is a lot harder than one might presume. The only thing I think I can do to truly help the Pantagruel program is to continue to show my interest in their message and spread the word about its existence.

# Learning Self-Confidence from Kids

by Taylor Smith (Indiana University)



A surge of laughter belted from behind the door of a third grade classroom. “Giraffe!” “Elephant!” and rowdy animal noises erupted from the mouths of the eager children, the shouts reverberating through the halls of a primary school on the outskirts of Pistoia, a small Tuscan town forty minutes outside of Florence.

For these giggling children, this Friday was special. It was more than just the surprise of having American guests, learning new English words or acting out a silly Dr. Seuss story called *I Wish I Had Duck Feet*. It was a day to learn about self-confidence, honing in on the message of loving who you are, just as you are.

Coming to Italy, I’m sure many students start their study-abroad experience with sweaty palms, a racing pulse and their minds swirling with a random mix of words learned from an Italian-English phrasebook. Speaking a new language can be intimidating, especially when you become instantly saturated in a sea of

vocabulary that takes you three times as long to process as your mother tongue.

The only way to survive the start of your time abroad is to have confidence—to be aware that you will inevitably make mistakes, commit cultural faux pas and constantly butcher the language. More importantly, you need to be okay with this, recognizing that you are learning and that learning takes time.

*Stepping into a new culture and being a child—you need to test yourself while acknowledging maybe not even “good.”*





# Learning Self-Confidence from Kids

cont'd

Stepping into a foreign culture and learning a new language is like being a child--you need to test the waters of how to express yourself while acknowledging that you won't be perfect, or maybe not even "good." If you walk into any English-speaking classroom in Italy, you will



find these same fears that seem part-in-parcel with learning a language.

Arriving in Pistoia, we entered classrooms where children were both nervous and excited about the activities we had planned for them. Gathering into a semi-circle inches away from our feet, their eyes glowed with curiosity as we pulled out the props for our storytelling. Flipping through the flashcards of pictures describing important vocabulary, the room was still with silence until the first little hand was raised, a girl softly whispering the name of the animal depicted on the card.

"That's right!" I boomed, smiling and clapping at her courage to answer while her classmates refrained. The girl beamed and sat up straight, proud of her response and ready to shout out an answer for the next card.

Soon, the other children began to see the magic that comes with taking a risk – that by putting themselves out there, even if it's a little frightening, they create an environment for learning, one that is warm and accepting, even if they are incorrect.

The rest of our hour with the students involved fits of laughter, playing games to remember new words and phrases and sharing with them the power of loving themselves for who they are.

At the end of the day, I can confidently say that our group of college students left Pistoia having learned just as much as the students we had taught.

Each day we have the opportunity to challenge ourselves, whether it's speaking Italian with our host families, ordering a meal at a new restaurant or going to a language exchange with other Italian students. It's easy to choose to just speak English, continue to go to the same panino stand and hang out in the campus courtyard with American classmates. But what's more sat-

isfying: living in a community where you make an effort to embrace the culture and occasionally look like a fool, or continuing to live out the same old routine, playing it safe and never knowing what your potential might have been?

Looking back on our time in Florence, I hope we can say we chose to be vulnerable, that we took hold of experiences with childlike excitement and that we made mistakes--many of them--while taking an extra helping of laughter along with a *doppio shot* of espresso.



*and learning a language is like  
the waters of how to express  
that you won't be perfect or*

# ART in DANGER



photo: Charlotte Watts

The church of Paganica near L'Aquila

by Margaret Contompasis (Teaching Assistant, SU Florence)

The SUF Lecture Series opened with a standing-room-only panel discussion entitled “Art in Danger: The Preservation of Works of Art” presented by several SUF faculty with diverse perspectives on the field of cultural preservation. The topic was certainly a timely one since merely a few months before several constructions at Pompeii, including the House of the Gladiators, had collapsed, calling into question the Italian government’s ability to manage its immense cultural heritage on a budget which is a fraction of that at the disposal of other Western European nations.

Professor Charles Ewell, SUF’s resident archaeologist who teaches on Etruscan and Roman art, addressed the Pompeii controversy head on while offering a historical perspective on the abuses suffered by the site since it was first excavated in the 1700s. These have ranged from inadequate conservation to the theft of artifacts to the defacement of buildings by tourist graffiti. Prof. Ewell stressed the need for additional funding and more effective management of the site to stem the tide of its disintegration.

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*One positive effect that emerged from the tragedy of the flood was that technology and methodology in art conservation took a huge leap forward.*

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The discussion then moved closer to home, looking back on the immense damage done to Florence's artistic heritage by the flood of 1966. On November 4 of that year, flood waters rose as high as twenty-two feet in some parts of the historic center leaving behind a trail of destruction that is still evident today. Professor Rab Hatfield, an art historian who specializes in archival research, discussed the damage that was done to the archives which at the time were housed just meters from the Arno river. Researchers who still rely on those documents today, continue to face the



challenges of poring through waterlogged pages.

One positive outcome of the tragedy of the flood was that technology and methodology in art conservation took a huge leap forward in response to the number of artworks affected and the severity of the damage done to them. SU Florence professors Diane Kunzelman and Ezio Buzzegoli teach art conservation to SU graduate students by night and restore artistic masterpieces at the *Opificio delle Pietre Dure alla Fortezza da Basso* by day. At the Art in Danger panel discussion Professor Kunzelmann spoke of some of the triumphs of conservation that occurred in the aftermath of the flood as well as some tragic losses which were suffered. Additionally she discussed the art world's response to other more recent tragedies including the 1993 Mafia bombing in Via dei Georgofili (located directly behind the Uffizi Gallery), which damaged many paintings and completely destroyed others. Kunzelman closed her lecture by illustrating the new philosophy of preventive conservation by which the environmental conditions of an artwork are strictly controlled thus mitigating the possibility of further damage.

Professor Richard Ingersoll, an expert on Italian urbanism, opened his portion of the evening by highlighting the danger that the natural beauty of the Florentine countryside, an often under-appreciated work of art, has been facing for the past several decades. At one time consisting of miles of idyllic farmland, these suburban areas are being swiftly populated by high-rise condominiums and multi-purpose shopping centers. Although efforts are being made by wildlife conservationists such as Carlo Scoccianti of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to preserve the remaining land, Prof. Ingersoll recounted that numerous obstacles have been encountered and some successes had along the way.

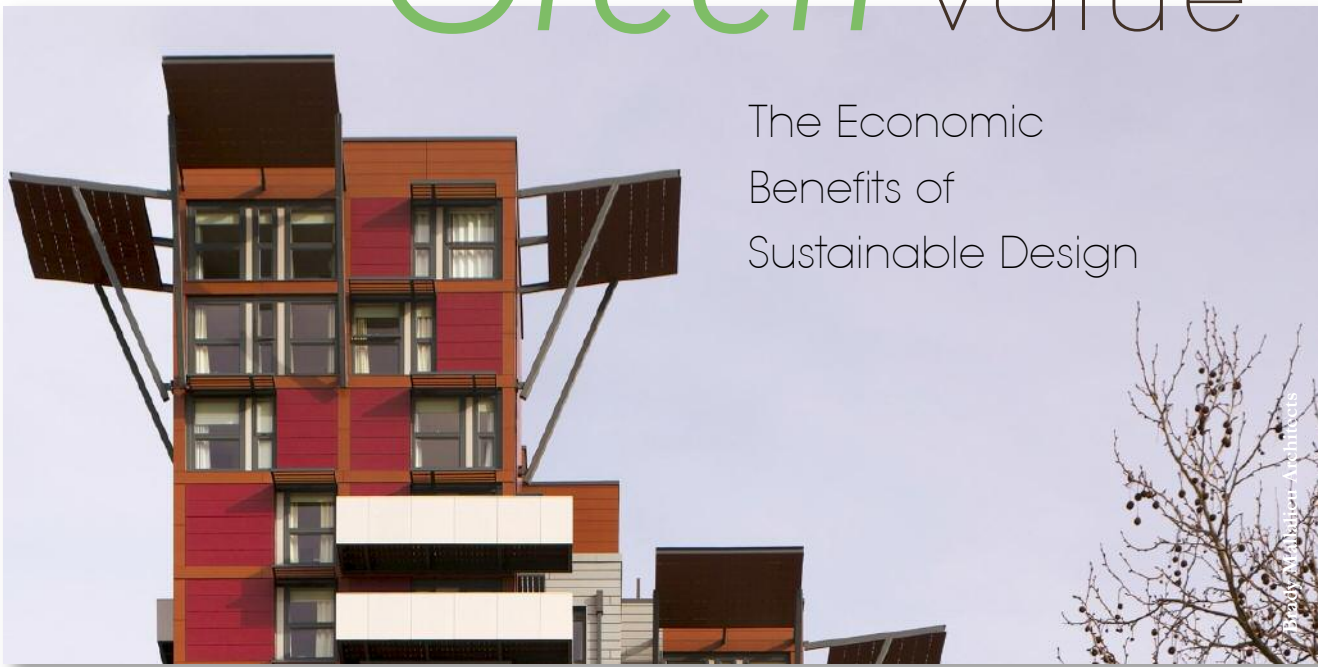
The evening drew to a close by addressing one of the most threatened areas in Italy, the historical center of the city of L'Aquila still reeling from the 6.3 magnitude earthquake that struck the city on April 6, 2009. Ingersoll outlined many housing solutions that have been proposed and/or realized which are now changing the urban fabric of the historic city.



Piazza S.Croce after the 1966 flood

photo: Swietlan Kraczyna

# Green Value



by **Elena Carlini**  
**School of Architecture, Syracuse University in Florence**  
 photos: Francesco Guazzelli

*GREEN VALUE: The Economic Benefits of Sustainable Design* was the dashing title of the yearly symposium curated by Syracuse School of Architecture in collaboration with the School of Architecture of the University of Firenze. The aim of the international forum, hosted in the Aula Magna of the Rettorato, was to explore issues of sustainable design practices, public policy and their economic benefits. A broad range of professionals and scholars presented their research and built work to demonstrate how environmentally sustainable projects – public and private – add both economic and ethical value to cities and landscapes to society.

The guest speakers included: Luis Fernández-Galiano of Madrid (professor ETSAM and chief editor of *AV Arquitectura Viva*), Angela Brady of London (President of the Royal Institute of British Architects and principal of Brady Mallalieu Architects) and José Alfredo Ramírez (Groundlab partner/LU studio master, AA London).

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*The symposium was an excellent opportunity for students and professionals to review technical, normative and economic aspects but also the ethical and social issues surrounding sustainable design and its increasingly important socio-economic benefits.*

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Luis Fernández-Galiano, editor,  
*Arquitectura Viva*, professor ETSAM,  
 Madrid



Angela Brady, President-elect RIBA,  
 partner Brady Mallalieu Architects,  
 BBC television host, London



José Alfredo Ramírez, co-  
 founder GroundLab, London





The *Aula Magna* of the *Istituto Geografico*

The event was introduced by the Deans of the School of Architecture of Syracuse and Firenze, Mark Robbins and Saverio Mecca. Dean Robbins initiated the visual part of the event taking the audience on a journey through the recent sustainable architecture built in Syracuse's s Near Westside where revitalization is achieved by weaving together art, technology and sustainable urban development - or Syracuse Center of Excellence, a building where serious green technological research is to occur and which will serve as an anchor to the connective corridor between downtown Syracuse and Syracuse University.

Prof. Fernández-Galiano, stressing the importance of designers' social commitment and political responsibility in current troubled times, underlined the importance of "urbanity", preferring urban density and variety to the indifferntiated suburban expansion that "eats" the open landscape all over the world. He presented some exceptional visual material including vintage photos of London after war bombing - to illustrate architects need to be optimistic even in difficult times – along with Norman Foster's "zero-carbon" futuristic city of Masdar in Abu Dhabi.

Angela Brady used an enthusiastic and poignant approach to giving the audience an overview of architecture by her firm Brady Mallalieu in London showing such projects as Phoenix Heights in Canary Wharf, a thoughtful mix of high density residential units where sustainable design is routinely applied for the community's benefit.

The last speaker before the roundtable discussion was José Alfredo Ramirez. He presented the most recent landscape urbanism and city masterplans in China by Groundlab. With similarities to Zaha



Lawrence Davis, Coordinator, School of Architecture, SUF



Mark Robbins, Dean, School of Architecture, Syracuse University



Saverio Mecca, Preside, Facoltà di Architettura Università di Firenze

Hadid's formal work, Groundlab "develops its work out of the close analysis of existing and potential conditions on site and utilises the temporal and dynamical forces that are currently shaping the cities".

The symposium was an excellent opportunity for students and professionals to review technical, normative and economic aspects but also the ethical and social issues surrounding sustainable design and its increasingly important socio-economic benefits.

The roundtable was chaired by Lawrence C. Davis and Richard Ingersoll, curators also of the event with Elizabeth Kamell and Marissa Tirone of Syracuse University in Florence.



Interim SUF Director Michael Calo with incoming Director Sasha Perugini



Questions from the audience



Richard Ingersoll, Professor, Syracuse University in Florence

# International Style

by Peter Randolph (Syracuse University)

9:50 sharp, Monday, March 14th; a train stops at the platform in Incisa Val d'Arno, a town of 2,000 outside of Florence. Sixty architecture students from America, France, Germany, and



Italy disembark and walk *en masse* to a tent on the bank of the Arno River. There are speeches by the mayor, the town planner and the town historian--translated into three languages--and a walking tour of the city. Everyone shakes hands, and then begins to work.

Incisa was originally established as a defensive outpost between Florence and her rival Arezzo. Today its condition of being a satellite is sapping the city of residents and business. The mayor and town planners sought the help of young architects to design spaces to give the city an identity and a sense of place. Professors Lawrence Davis, Elizabeth Kamell, and Marissa Tirone of Syracuse University's architecture program in Florence organized an international workshop of students from Syracuse; the *Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Nancy*, in France, the *Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft des*

*Saarlandes*, in Germany; and the *Facoltà di Architettura di Firenze Corso di laurea in Architettura*, in Italy to respond to the brief set forth by the city of Incisa.

Students from each university worked together in groups to propose designs for three critical sites in the city's regeneration: a former cement factory, the location of a new elementary and secondary school; a riverside football pitch, an opportunity to provide for a community center; and the train station, proposing an appropriate entry to the city.

In working to find architectural solutions for the immediate needs of Incisa, the students found that collaboration with international universities was a critical component to the success of their work. Peerati Upatising, a member of a team designing a proposal for a school on the former factory site, described the benefits of the international partnership, "Our project is about

using the school as a sort of wall to define a realm for the children, and stitching the site back into the city via a series of pathways and apertures. The expertise of the French students in our group was indispensable because they are intimately acquainted with the workings of a European urban structure, like Incisa, and they were able to help us move the design in a direction that really worked on the site." Thomas Day, working on the riverside site, echoed her statements, "'Our collaboration with two French students helped to raise a series of specific cultural and pragmatic questions for Incisa. On one hand, we attempted to address regional and local complications which currently impair the city's commercial and public spaces. On the other, we aimed to challenge the current processes and methods established there.'"

The week culminated in a presentation to the city of the design work. The response of the city to the work and the experience of working with international students made it apparent that this had been a two-way street; an exchange of ideas from and to the architecture students of Syracuse University in Florence.

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*Students from each university worked together in groups to propose designs for three critical sites in the city's regeneration: a former cement factory, the location of a new elementary and secondary school; a riverside football pitch, an opportunity to provide for a community center; and the train station, proposing an appropriate entry to the city.*

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# Fresco Painting

New Approaches to Renaissance Painting Technique and Conservation  
by Professors Diane Kunzelman and Ezio Buzzegoli

The traditional technique of fresco wall painting as practiced by artists in the workshops of Renaissance Florence is demonstrated below by SU Florence students.



1. Preparing the full-scale cartoon from preliminary sketches and designs



2. Readying the wall for fresco painting: laying down the first, rough layer of lime mortar (Arriccio).



3. Preparatory drawing (Sinopia) on the arriccio, after dividing the space into a grid by "snapping the cords"



4. Preparation of fresco colors for painting: powdered pigments in water



5. Lime mortar preparation: 2 parts inert (river sand)/1 part lime paste



6. Mixing the lime mortar



7. The final smooth layer of lime mortar (Intonaco), laid down over the arriccio for painting day by day (Giornata), following the sinopia drawing



8. Fresco painting: wetting the mortar before painting the last giornata



9. Fresco painting



10. The finished fresco

photos: Lily Sehn

Art, Music, Theater

# Student Art Show

by Kirsten Stromberg (Professor of Painting, SU Florence)

photos: Francesco Guazzelli



Sculpture studio

On Thursday Apr 14th, the SUF Studio Arts Department celebrated the end of the semester with the Student Art Show, the latest installment of the bi-annual exhibition and juried competition of student work. This year's show included over one hundred pieces in print-making, photography, sculpture, painting, drawing, Renaissance painting, batik, silkscreening, and metalsmithing, highlighting the breadth and depth of creative work by SUF students. The SUF Studio Arts Department holds a student exhibition at the end of every semester. It is a unique opportunity for students to not only learn the important process of installing and exhibiting their works, but also a chance for them to share, celebrate and communicate their thoughts and creative reflections with the greater Italian community.

Awards for outstanding projects in each medium as well as a 'Best in Show Cash Prize' are juried during every exhibition by a distinguished group of artists, curators and critics active in the Florentine and international communities. This year's Jury consisted of Marco Cianchi and Maurizio Berlincioni. Marco Cianchi teaches Art History at the *Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze* and California State University. His research focuses on the parallels between Renaissance and Modern/Contemporary art. Maurizio Berlincioni is a renowned Florentine photographer who taught at the Academy of Fine Arts of Florence and at the Academy of Fine Arts of Bologna.



Studio Arts Galleria during exhibition



Figure drawing studio



# Student Art Show



Suf Studio Art coordinator Nick Kraczyna with Marco Cianchi and Intro Painting award winner Kara Templeton



Detail of a sculpture by Michael Thron

## Studio Arts Competition Spring 2011

**This year's winners are:**

**Best In Show Prize:**

**Elijah Borek**

**Honorable Mention to:**

Introductory Painting: **Kara Templeton**

Interm. Painting - Special Topics: **Christine Schumacker**

Sculpture: **Elijah Borek**

Drawing: **Victoria Wright**

Sketchbook: **Molly Snee**

Printmaking: **Peter De Pasquale**

Digital Intro Photography: **Leslie Senzer**

Digital Advanced Photography: **Michael Thron**

New Approaches to Renaissance Painting: **Lily Sehn**

Metalsmithing: **Jennifer Franks**

Batik: **Catherine Boyle**

Silkscreen: **Lisa Stace**



One of Elijah Borek's sculptures



Maurizio Berlincioni and Marco Cianchi, competition jurors



Elijah Borek winner of the "Best in Show" award



Metalsmithing display

# La Nascita della Canzone Moderna Italiana

by Victoria Taylor

**Luisa Demuru** brought a whole new understanding of the origins of Italian music to Syracuse University in Florence through her lecture on the birth of Italian music. I could see that most students at the lecture had no idea what to expect in terms of what defines Italian music. We normally hear only outdated 90's pop from the United States on the radio and contemporary dance music in the *discoteca*. However, Italian music was born in Napoli, where there were competitions for new songs. The arrival of the *distributori di copielle*, printed sheets of lyrics and notes, allowed sheet music to be printed and widely distributed. Many tourists came to Italy to visit



Domenico Modugno; painting by Francesco Toraldo

Napoli, Pompei and Mount Vesuvius--the latter requiring a gondola-like cart to transport tourists to the top of the volcano. This was called a *funicolare* and inspired the song "Funiculi Funiculà" sung entirely in the Neapolitan dialect. "O' Sole Mio" was another Neapolitan hit that became so popular it was played at the Olympic games in Anversa in 1920 instead of the national anthem.

Many Italian musicians started out in opera and theater, but the *romanza da salotto* movement moved opera into people's living-rooms. Andrea Bocelli is a modern-day example of this movement. Music then went to the streets and finally to the *caffè concerto*. When Italy became a unified country in 1861, a mere 2.5% of the population actually spoke Italian; most Italians spoke only their local dialect instead. But music helped to unify the country's language by spreading Italian throughout the country. World War I also had a huge impact on Italian music due to American soldiers who flooded Northern Italy, influencing music and modernizing it, especially

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*Hearing not only the original tracks but learning the history behind the birth of Italian music and its importance in the unification of a nation was quite an unreal experience and gave us more pride to study here in Italy.*

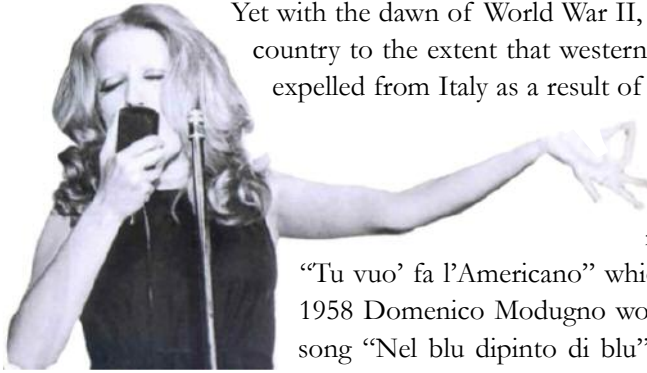
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in Milan. On October 6, 1924 Italian radio was born. There was only one station which broadcast out of Rome and was used not only for music, but also for political propaganda during Mussolini's fascist regime. The themes of fascist music were war, the countryside, work and everyday life, as demonstrated by the song "1,000 Lire al Mese." Il *Trio Lescano* were three sisters who's mother was Jewish Dutch. The sisters became extremely popular with the song "Maramao perché sei morto?" and even Mussolini wanted to meet them.



# La Nascita della Canzone Moderna Italiana

cont'd



Mina

Yet with the dawn of World War II, Italian nationalism was forced upon the country to the extent that western music was banned and the sisters were expelled from Italy as a result of racial laws.

After World War II, Renato Carosone became one of the protagonists of Italian music combining traditional music from Naples with Jazz. He wrote

“Tu vuo’ fa l’Americano” which jokingly mocks American culture. In 1958 Domenico Modugno won the *San Remo* music competition. His song “Nel blu dipinto di blu” (more commonly known as “Volare”) marked a transition in Italian music. The lyrics differed from the usual

love song. Instead of love, they were about dreaming and soaring through the sky. In 1954 Italian TV was born and the musical legend Mina became an immediate sensation. Her popular song “Brava” demonstrates her impressive vocal range and rapid-fire pronunciation.

At the end of the talk we were surprised by the number of songs we actually recognized. Everyone laughed particularly when “Tu vuo’ fa l’Americano” played because of the recent remix version that is popular and well known in the US today. Hearing not only the original tracks but learning about some of the history that lies behind the birth of Italian music and the importance music has had on the unification of Italy, was a fascinating experience and made us even prouder to be studying in Italy.



Il Trio Lescano



Renato Carosone with his Orchestra

# I Giullari di Syracuse: *Come Vi Piace*

by Eric Nicholson (Professor of Drama and Theater, SU Florence)

There's no clock in the forest, so set your watches well, and mark 6:30 P.M., Tuesday 19 April, on your calendar: at that time, in the Annex Garden of the Villa Rossa, the SUF student-faculty theatrical company I Giullari di Syracuse will perform scenes from Shakespeare's classic comedy *As You Like It*. All the world's a stage, and love triumphs over all in this play of fabulous fun, folly, music and magic. "Sweet lovers love the spring," so come and celebrate the season with a fine and philosophical frolic through the fantastic "Foresta di Arden": you'll not only like it, you'll love it!

## AS YOU LIKE IT - COME VI PIACE"

Tuesday 19 April, at 6:30 P.M.,  
SUF Annex garden



# I Shall Paint a Piece: Theatre Workshop

by Margaret Contompasis

SU Florence's resident theatre troupe "I Giullari" had the privilege of attending a workshop led by Devon Black and Matt Douglas, two professional Shakespearean actors hailing from London and passing through Florence after a successful US tour of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Black and Douglas led the SUF thespians through several exercises and theatre games to train them in interpreting Shakespearean verse.



The lessons were well taken as "I Giullari" were currently rehearsing an adaptation of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, to be performed in the suggestive setting of the Syracuse garden at the end of the semester. Many of the SUF actors also attended a special performance given by Ms. Black and Mr. Douglas in Florence's historic Palazzo Davanzati. The performance entitled *I Shall Paint a Piece* gave life to the verse of two of Florence's most celebrated expatriate authors, Robert and Elizabeth Browning.



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# Serbia, Land of Frescoes

by Paola Vojnovic

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A traveling exhibit from the National Museum of Belgrade entitled “*Serbia, terra di affreschi*” opened in Florence on April 15 in the church of Santa Croce. The exhibit ideated by Paola Vojnovic, a graduate of SU Florence's MA in Art History program, was sponsored by the Serbian Culture and Tourism ministries, UNESCO and Syracuse University in Florence.

Approximately thirty copies of the most important frescoes from medieval Serbian monasteries found an ideal exhibition space in the old cloister of Santa Croce, located just behind Brunelleschi's Pazzi Chapel. Members of the SU Florence community and numerous other



guests were greeted by Padre Antonio Di Marcantonio and Serbian Ambassador to the Holy See Vladeta Jankovic in the church's exquisite refectory. Prof. Valentino Pace of the Universita di Udine reflected on the fascinating relationship between Byzantine and Italian art in the early 1300s, after which all guests were invited to visit the exhibition itself.

The Serbian frescoes will remain on exhibition at Santa Croce until May 15, 2011.

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## I Write Like This

by Maya Pisciotto (Scripps College)  
Option II student

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The meeting with writers Vanni Santoni and Alessandro Raveggi made me contemplate the complexity of life and the many choices that lay ahead of me. The world is a malleable place, one that caters to the dreams and desires that grow in its fields. A writer doesn't have to be a presumptuous intellectual, or someone who has studied for years on a thirsty quest for greatness; he/she just has to be someone with a story to tell. As Vanni tells us, that story is usually already present, hidden in some dusty, corner of your life, between books you never had a chance to read and the tissues you used to wipe your eyes after your last life-altering breakup, waiting for you to give inky materiality to its fleeting memory life. The difficulty, then, lies in unearthing it. If I wanted to become a poet,

*I would write,  
Like this, with rhythm and rhyme,  
The written words waving from my pen  
Like the foamy strands of the sea  
Back and forth  
Across the page until its end.*

But no, I don't want to be a poet. And if, instead, I wanted to be a writer of fables? Someone who, once upon a time, put pen to paper to send you an important message, a way of life that would always end with “and they lived happily ever after.”

You see, we're already there. We're already writers. According to Vanni, we just need to look at our lives with a pair of fresh eyes and we will find an ocean of thirst-quenching material.

## Richard Ingersoll



Richard Ingersoll continues to work on sprawl civic agriculture, recently publishing “La Proliferazione della città,” in *Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani*, and “Civic Agriculture: Urban Gardening between Sensual Pleasures and Social Renewal of the City,” in the catalogue for the exhibition in Frankfurt called *Stadtgrün Europäische Landschaftsarchitektur für das 21. Jahrhundert*. Some of his recent architectural criticism includes: “In the Age of Toxic Bonds,” in the catalogue *Spain Builds. 1975-2010*, ed. Luis Fernandez-Galiano, Madrid, 2010 and the essay “Reverse Orientalism: The Work of Seung H-Sang,” in *Seung H-Sang*, 2010.

## Swietlan Kraczyna



Swietlan (Nick) Kraczyna, with his recent work “Arlecchino e la sua Arlecchina” (2010), is one of sixty printmakers in Italy represented at the Turin exhibition *Grafica Oggi: Viaggio nell'Italia dell'incisione--Sessanta Maestri*. The show runs from April 21 to May 21 at the Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino, where Kraczyna's five-plate color etching exemplifies the etching technique developed by Kraczyna in the 1970s. The exhibit is part of the 150th anniversary celebrations of the Unification of Italy which are taking place throughout Italy this year. The piece shown here was purchased by and for the exhibit's sponsor, the *Fondazione Bancaria Cassa di Risparmio di Asti*.

## Marco Klee Fallani



Marco Klee Fallani recently held a one-man exhibit entitled ‘Still a Life’ in Amsterdam, Netherlands. The ongoing theme of Fallani’s oil paintings is how we relate through visual stimulation to our inner world and its complexity. Large and medium-sized works made up of layers of paint recall the passage of time and everyday moments that accumulate like a surface and textural existence. Fallani first freezes life only to wake up some crucial emotional accents later in his compositions thus creating a unique still life, full of bright life. Fallani's work can be viewed at: [www.marcofallani.com](http://www.marcofallani.com).

## Sara Matthews Grieco



For the Renaissance Society of America Annual Conference, held in Montreal (23-27 March 2011), Sara Matthews-Grieco co-organized with Margaret Katritzky two complementary sessions on the social and political uses of the Cuckold theme in visual and literary discourse in Renaissance Europe. Bringing together scholars from Europe and North America, these sessions permitted contributors to explore the similarities and differences between the use of the Cuckold in different media, at different social strata, and over different geographic areas. “Cuckolds I: Social and political uses of the cuckold in visual culture” was sponsored by the RSA Discipline on Women’s and Gender Studies and chaired by Discipline Representative Elissa Weaver (University of Chicago).

## Marissa Tirone



A series of drawings by Marissa Tirone are to be shown in Seattle as part of an exhibition entitled “Art and Architecture.” Her project investigates the role of memory within architecture with a primary concern in looking at mnemonic value within space. What makes a space memorable? What is forgotten or distorted over time? This initial sequence looks at five of her childhood homes. Each is hand drafted and aligned through a ground datum. Watercolor washes and captions highlight areas of most importance. Studies will follow on this project that deal with re-presenting these previous homes in several ways: a composite memory drawing that speculates on the spatial relationships of the home and site, as-built drawings, photographs, and text. Each memory set will be compared to the as-built set, revealing themes and biases as well as raising questions about the nature of home and memorable space.



## Molly Bourne



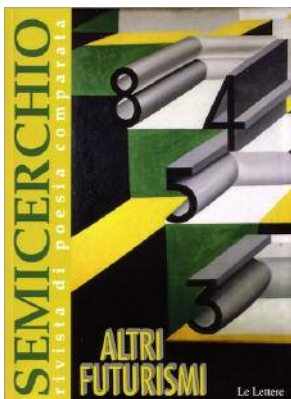
Thanks to a faculty travel grant from SU Florence, Molly Bourne attended the annual meeting of the Renaissance Society of America held in Montreal 23-27 March 2011, where she co-organized with Sarah Cockram (University of Edinburgh) three sessions entitled "Snakes and Ladders: Power Games at the Renaissance Court." With participation by scholars from North American and European universities, these sessions explored the darker side of strategies for social and political advancement at early modern courts in Italy, England, Spain, France and the Low Countries. Each session focused on a different theme: the "Fate of the Court Favorite," "Slippery Maneuvers and Magnificent Failures."

## Elena Carlini



Elena Carlini participated in the conference "Trieste. La Sostenibile Leggerezza del Futuro - 30 disegni della città che verrà" organized by the Center for Journalism in Trieste. The conference, focusing on the urban and social future of the city, was a conversation between Elena Carlini, writer Mauro Covacich, the creative collective MANIFESTO2020, Roberto Weber, President of SWG Research Group and Studio 11 from the University of Westminster in London. Carlini was also invited to "Longing for... Symposium and Exhibition in Motion" in Grazer Kunstverein, Graz Austria, an interdisciplinary spatial research lab focusing on innovative approaches and interfaces between architecture, composition and choreography. She also attended "Focus R: Restauro Recupero Riquilificazione," an international conference on contemporary architectural design in the historic context organized in Trieste by DIAPReM research center (Development of Integrated Automatic Procedures for Restoration of Monuments) of the *Facoltà di Architettura dell'Università di Ferrara*. Finally, Carlini was Invited Juror for the Diploma 1 and 2 classes of Prof. Andrew Peckham and Dusan Decermic at University of Westminster in London.

## Antonella Francini



Antonella Francini has co-edited a volume, *Altri futurismi*, published by Le Lettere (issue N. 42 of the journal *Semicerchio*, February 2011). Developed in cooperation with the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, this collection of essays by international scholars focuses on the role of Italian Futurism in the broader context of the avant-garde literary and artistic movements of the early 20th century. Presenting new approaches and new material from a variety of cultural milieus in Europe and the Americas, the volume illustrates the metamorphosis of the Italian movement once it has been transplanted in different cultures, its influence and the criticism it has generated by single authors or within intellectual and artistic groups—from France to Poland, Russia, Holland, Germany, the United States and Latin America. Francini also contributed to the volume with an essay, "Futurismo contro. I manifesti, le poesie, il teatro di Mina Loy," in which she carries on her previous work on this anti-futurist author through unpublished material deriving from the Loy Papers at the Beinecke Library of Yale University.

## Eric Nicholson



Eric Nicholson will be giving a talk on "Female Singers in Golden Age Spanish Tragedy" at the upcoming international "Theater Without Borders" conference in Madrid, Spain, 25-28 May. He will also be presenting a seminar on "Italian Commedia and Shakespeare's All's Well That Ends Well" at the International Shakespeare Association congress in Prague, Czech Republic, 17-21 July.

# SU Florence Outstanding Students

## Outstanding Students Awards Ceremony



photo: Elijah Borek

**Above: Spring 2011 Coluccio Salutati award winners.**  
On Thursday April 21, SU Florence Director Michael Calo and program coordinators awarded those students who have excelled in their commitment to academic study and engagement with the SUF and Florentine communities.

### Coluccio Salutati Essayists

William Partin - Emory University  
Gregory Fitton - Syracuse University  
Andrew Foster - Pomona College  
Shreya Shah - Syracuse University

### Outstanding Option II/III Students

Judith Stapleton - Franklin & Marshall College  
Andrew Foster - Pomona College

### Outstanding Interns

Sara Mooney - Syracuse University  
Tyler Prince - Syracuse University  
Eve Brickner - Syracuse University  
Chelsea Holmes - Syracuse University  
Mina Riaz - University of California, S.Diego  
Marsha Faynshtayn - Syracuse University  
Maya Pisciotto - Scripps College

### Outstanding Volunteers

Taylor Smith - Indiana University  
Kaitlyn Curran - Davidson College

### Outstanding *Lettori per un Giorno*

Taylor Smith - Indiana University  
Hanna Puente - Santa Clara University  
Caitlin Allen - Syracuse University

### Outstanding Architecture Student

Alexandra Lipzker - Syracuse University

### *Happy Little Girl Blue*

by Allyson Taylor (Lafayette College)

*what is it you seek?  
friends of a foreign tongue  
god crawling out of the stone  
a purpose to your name  
the uncertainty of touch  
matched only by the bitter  
sweet missing of a phone call  
to breathe love  
to spit fire  
to speak up  
sound it out  
swallow it whole  
spectator and specter  
mimic me  
mirror me  
internally*

*externally  
eternally  
i dream of raincoats  
and spiked fruit punch  
sitting in the garden reading  
brodsky  
posiden behind grey eyes  
ears wide open  
brush off the marble  
light one up  
and tell me about happiness  
between the ink of the pen  
and the page lies an answer  
brief yet intimate*

*belonging to another age  
the thrill escapes us  
like a kiss with  
eyes  
wide  
open  
bring me to paradise  
the invisible city  
the embodiment of the  
abstract  
take my hand  
jump into the white noise  
of the unknown  
the water is clear  
so come lose your balance with me*

Allyson composed "Happy Little Girl Blue" after reading, in her Travel Writing course, texts set in Venice by E.E.Cummings, Charles Wright, and Joseph Brodsky, which inspired her.



# They've Got Talent!

by Rosa Mannino (Student Life Office Assistant)

The first *All-Florence Student Talent Show* was held on March 23 at Florence's *Palazzo Giovane* and exceeded all expectations. Originally an in-house SU Florence tradition, this year's show included the participation of the *Comune di Firenze* and students from various study abroad programs throughout the city resulting in a great success.

Fifteen acts consisting of Italian and American students proved not only that these young adults are extremely talented, but that their talents cover a broad range of disciplines in the performing arts. The audience was ignited by exhibitions of break dancing, slam poetry recitation, piano-playing, guitar-strumming, a *cappella* singing, comedic rapping, psychedelic bolas-twirling, poetry reading and modern Indian dance. More than 100 enthusiastic students came to see what their friends and peers had in store for them.



SU Florence students **Maya Pisciotto** and **Dylan Hogan** were the perfect emcees for the evening. The two ran the show with Maya's bilingual fluency and Dylan's DJ experience making this a truly student-based event.

A committee of three judges consisting of: Aaron Craig, actor and head of a student-oriented organization *Firenze Live*; Benji Menchiari, a 20-year-old Italian/American whose parents are both musicians; and Charlie Stevenson, co-founder and owner of the culture-based travel group *Snow or Sand*, had a difficult time selecting just three winners. In the end, they based their decisions not only on how talented the performers were, but on how much originality, effort and dedication they put into the preparation of their acts.

Prizes were spread across three study abroad programs, including SU Florence. Third place went to our very own **Katie Perez** who won a gift certificate to Paperback Exchange for her moving vocal and guitar rendition of Bruno Mars' *Grenade*. Second place was awarded to a high-energy "rock-n-rap" trio from Florida State University (Camille Trazcinski, Michael Jobling and Kristen Wharton) for their contemporary rendition of the Antoine Dodson's *Bed Intruder Song*, while first prize went to NYU's Daniel Radin for his vocal, musical and compositional talent performing a piece which he wrote this semester in Florence.

In addition, honorable mentions went to SU Florence's three other talented participants Vicky Gill (modern Indian dance), William Partin (classical piano) and Maya Pisciotto (a *cappella* singing).

SU Florence hopes this is just the first of many cross-campus, cross-cultural student events to come. It will continue to be a Syracuse University in Florence tradition and perhaps will now be a Florentine one as well.



Katie Perez, third place winner





## Arrivederci Michele!

Over the past forty-one years Michael Calo has been involved with the Syracuse University in Florence program as student, parent, recruiter, special projects expert and three-time Resident Director. Those of us who have had the pleasure of working with Mike would like to thank him for his untiring leadership over the past sixteen months. His positive spirit and great sense of humor, coupled with rare managerial expertise, have been fundamental in leading the SU in Florence program through a time of significant changes and challenges.

**Grazie e arrivederci Michele!**



photos: Francesco Guazzelli





# IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU!

From April 14 to 21 an on-campus celebration of a semester of exploration and cultural engagement



## PROGRAM

**Thursday, April 14th at 17:30**

Student Art Show (Mostra d'Arte)  
Studio Art, Piazza Donatello, 21  
Including Reception

**Tuesday, April 19th at 18:30**

I Giullari di Syracuse present:  
"Come You Like It"  
Scene da William Shakespeare's  
"Come vi Piace" ("As You Like It")  
Annex Giardino (weather permitting)  
Reception to follow

**Thursday, April 21st at 6:15**

Outstanding Students Awards  
Rm. 35 (upstairs)  
Reception to follow

The award ceremony will be followed by  
the **Cena Finale** starting at 8:00.  
The Cena will be followed by a **foto collage**  
provided by this semester's students  
and then **dancing** to our very own DJ, Dylan Hogan.



## THURSDAY APRIL 14 - THURSDAY APRIL 21, 2011

### April 14: Student Art Show

5:30 - 7:30pm | Studio Arts, Piazzale Donatello 21

Light refreshments served

*Host families invited*

### April 19: I Giullari di Syracuse present: "Come You Like It"

Scene da William Shakespeare's "Come vi Piace" ("As You Like It")

18:30 - To be held in Annex Giardino (weather permitting) -

Reception to follow

### April 21: Outstanding Students Award Ceremony

6:15 - 7:15pm | Villa Rossa, Room 35

In recognition of outstanding students in the following categories:

- Volunteer Program
- Lettore per un giorno
- Option II / III Program
- Internship Program
- Coluccio Salutati

The award ceremony will be followed by the Cena Finale starting a 8:00. The Cena will be followed by a foto collage provided by this semester's students and then dancing to our very own DJ, Dylan Hogan



The VILLA ROSSA VOICE is the newsletter for the Syracuse University in Florence community. We welcome your questions, comments, articles and/or artwork.

#### Editorial staff

##### Director

Michael Calo

##### Spring 2011 Editor

Sylvia Hetzel  
syhetzel@syr.edu

##### Copy Editors

Sylvia Hetzel  
syhetzel@syr.edu  
Amy Kleine  
askleine@syr.edu

##### Graphics and Layout

Francesco Guazzelli  
ffguazze@syr.fi.it

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SEE  
YOU  
FALL  
2011