

Villa Rossa

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Voice



ART

in the right place



The **VILLA ROSSA VOICE** is a
Syracuse University in Florence publication.
We welcome your questions and comments.

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Contents



Letters from the Director and the Editor by Sasha Perugini and Michelle Tarnopolsky

4



State of the Art An Interview with Professor and Studio Arts Supervisor Kirsten Stromberg

5



Allies in Art Partnering with the Strozzi Centre for Contemporary Culture

6



A Multicultural Curriculum Fighting Prejudice through Art by Nadia Armouti (Harvard College)

7



Scratching the Surface Studying with Master Printmaker Swietlan (Nick) Krazcyna by Casiana A. Kennedy (Syracuse University)

8



Sketching out a New Future How Studying Art at SUF Changed My Life by Marissa Mele (Syracuse University)

9



The Italian Experience in a Bag What I Learned Studying Art at SUF by Andrew (Ski) Kolczynsky (Ponoma College)

10



Drawn Out The Value of Keeping a Sketchbook by Devin Passaretti (Syracuse University)

11



Multicultural Awareness through Fashion Shots A Window on Ethnic Integration at SUF By Zebradedra Hunter (Loyola College)

12



Unexpected Encounters Contemplating Culture and Ethnicity in Florence by Hasmik Jasmin Djoulakian (Syracuse University)

13



Having a Ball Attending a Renaissance Soccer Match in Florence by Julia Tomeo (Bucknell College)

14



Being LGBT in South Africa A Lecture by Anthropologist Maheshvari Naidu By Aubri French (George Washington University)

15



Role Reversal An Italian Student's Experience of Syracuse University by Anna Ricciardi

16



SUF Direct Placement Program with the University of Florence

17



Staff & Faculty Watch

18



Letter from the Director

Although most people think of Florence exclusively as the cradle of the Renaissance, a place that revolves entirely around its age-old artistic traditions, you might be surprised to learn that it is actually a vibrant hub for contemporary art and culture. And one thing I always try to keep in mind is to expose our students to this side of Florence that people often miss. In addition to offering classes in subjects one would not expect to study here like business, education and engineering, we also have art professors who regularly move beyond the classical approach to art-making at the heart of this city's history to engage students with the present and future of art as well. In fact, one collaboration of which I am especially proud is that with the Strozzi Centre for Contemporary Culture, which is going on its fourth year and that you can learn more about on page 6.

We also take advantage of our location to introduce students to key avant-garde art spaces like the Pecci Centre for Contemporary Art in Prato, the Gori Collection of site-specific sculptural installations in Pistoia, the MAXXI in Rome and, every two years, the Venice Biennale – arguably the world's most important contemporary art exhibition. So this issue's selected theme will revolve exactly around this aspect of our program. Enjoy reading!

Sasha Perugini



Letter from the Editor

What better place is there in the world to study art than Florence? What other city is so steeped in a history of such deep respect for art and artists? Whether you're an art history major who's never truly understood the process that went into creating the objects you study, or a business student who wants to see what it's like using your right brain, Florence will drive and nurture your artistic explorations in countless ways. As Kirsten Stromberg, SUF Painting Professor and Studio Arts Supervisor (interviewed on page 5), says to non-art majors studying in Florence: "If you've ever wanted to take an art class, this is your chance!"

*As an art history major who never picked up a paintbrush until I came to Florence for my junior year, I can attest to the transformative nature of studying art in this city. The impossible romance of adding sketches to your travel journal as you bounce around Italy. Being able to identify the *tratteggio* technique that Michelangelo used in a drawing because you've learned how to do it yourself. Studying art in Florence is truly an opportunity not to be missed.*

In this issue, you'll find out what it's like to study fine art at SUF, where dedicated professors offer the added bonus of sharing their experiences as internationally renowned working artists. In addition to the interview with Professor Stromberg, who gives us an overview of the program, you can also walk in the shoes of the students themselves on pages 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Michelle Tarnopolsky



An Interview with Professor and Studio Arts Supervisor **KIRSTEN STROMBERG**

1. What is your role at SUF and how long have you been doing this?

Currently I teach 2 painting courses: Introductory Painting and Special Topics in Painting: Intermediate and Advanced Studio. I am also the Studio Arts Supervisor managing exhibitions, the lecture series, special projects and the studios.

2. In your experience, what makes our studio art program stand out among study abroad programs in Florence?

Our program is unique in that it refuses to fall into stereotypes that one would like to associate with art schools in Florence. Our courses are not oriented around making academic 'stylistic copies' of the past, nor are they free-for-alls where students do what they already know and leave Florence in the same position that they came in. We are dedicated to helping students link with the great art lineages fostered here coupled with exploring contemporary modes of creative thinking and expression – all with a high level of academic rigor, discipline and excellence.

3. As you know, community engagement has long been central to the SUF mission. How does the studio art program help to fulfill this?

The SUF Studio Art Department works in collaboration with our outstanding volunteer and internships programs to link students with local institutions and opportunities both inside and outside the classroom. SUF Studio Art Professors, who are of international origins, are deeply

involved and embedded in the art community in Florence as well as other parts of Europe. As a result, they are up-to-date on the exciting projects that occur here and are frequently involving their students in those projects. A few examples are the yearly presentations at the Strozzi Center for Contemporary Culture; fashion shoots with international photographers and fashion events; helping install major exhibitions in Tuscany like Michael Lin at Museo Pecci; developing community outreach programs for top museums; or collaborating with the Centro Berberi, an art center for persons with disabilities. SUF Studio Arts professors deeply believe that art is an opportunity to experience our humanity, despite – or indeed in celebration of – all our cultural and national differences.

4. What is your favorite thing about teaching art to college students? What have you learned from it?

I'd like to qualify your question with 'teaching art in a study abroad program in Florence', as I think that is one of the things I love the best about the context within which I am teaching and the age of the students with whom I am working. Art is a big word and can mean a lot of things and this specific context is very exciting from a creative and educational perspective. I love that my students have taken the risk to test their own boundaries of the known...whether they have realized this and are ready for it or not. This questioning of the known is fundamental for creative thinking and the study abroad experience, by its very nature, is one that fosters that.

I also love working with the students to help them link with the incredibly rich and profound heritage of art in Italy. This is extremely important for American students, who tend to have a very specific idea of what art is and means. Florence has art all the way inside its bones. Art is

not an 'extra', a 'decoration', or a 'style' and 'identity' to take on. One of the greatest lessons of being here is getting a little tiny taste of that sensibility, understanding and knowledge. Interestingly, my concentration is in contemporary art, which some might perceive as a little odd in Florence. I see no problem in this – in fact, quite the opposite! I love working with the students to try to see beyond the separations between 'past' and 'present', 'American' vs 'Italian' and to see underlying human and creative principles throughout time so they can be informed participants in contemporary culture today.... This is a process that both the students and I never stop learning from.

5. What does the SUF studio art program teach students besides the technical, practical business of making art?

Many, many things! We are certainly not just interested in teaching students how to manually hold a paintbrush (though you would be surprised how challenging this first step is for many students today!). In my painting courses I focus on several different levels of educational development. On one level, I am teaching a technical understanding of specific art lineages that relate to Florence and Europe. On other levels, each project and exercise has a corollary and deeper lesson relating to human experience and understanding. Learning chiaroscuro is not only a lesson in creating form through the use of light and dark, but also a lesson in many complex principles: Interdependence, Perspective and questions of Illusion and Observation, to name a few. Simply the practice of learning how to mix different tones on a palette teaches one patience and precision. These are all processes that are fundamental skills for life.

6. Why would a business major or a pre-med student, or anyone not majoring in studio art for that matter, benefit from taking an art class while studying in Florence?

Well, many of the things I mention above.... But I also think it is important today that a business major, or a pre-med student (of which I have many in my intro painting class) has a basic understanding of some of the issues of art and the processes of art making. If only to teach a little bit of unexpected appreciation and understanding! Contemporary society tends to be a little flip-pant with visual culture and art history; we readily despise or fall in love with images while not truly understanding the actual processes behind the making of them. Most of my students leave my class with a mixture of profound awe at the subtlety and difficulty of the many artworks they experience coupled with a confidence in their own creativity that they never thought they would ever have.

Also, I confess, one of my hopes is that the business majors and pre-med students in our classes will, later on in life, be the informed ones who know how to choose art and help contribute to the development of it, say, from a financial point of view, from a conscious and conscientious place for themselves and others.

7. Is there anything else you'd like a potential SUF student to know about our studio art program?

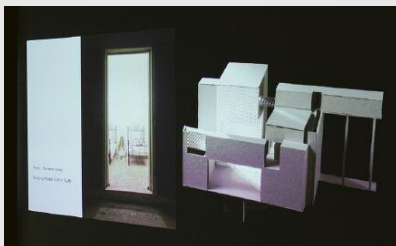
Our program is well designed to find space for students at all levels of art experience - for those who haven't held a pencil since kindergarten (and you know you are out there!) to sophisticated art students looking to seriously deepen and challenge their art practice. I often say to students: This is your chance! A chance to grow, to disappear, to flourish, and to fundamentally shift something in your understanding of this terrifying, glorious and stunning thing that we call 'Art'.



An SUF student presents her work

Allies in ART

Partnering with The Strozziina Centre for Contemporary Culture



A work presented at the Strozziina in spring 2012



Selecting works before the presentation



The Palazzo Strozzi, home of the Strozziina

One of the benefits of SUF is its long-standing presence in Florence and its academic prestige, which allows its students to participate in unique projects and alliances that develop over time. One such evolving alliance has been with the Strozziina Centre for Contemporary Culture, where for the last three years SUF photography and painting students have been presenting their work in response to various art exhibitions held there.

The Strozziina is part of the Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi, located in the center of Florence and dedicated to contemporary art. Its focus is to develop shows following an interdisciplinary approach and linked to the most up-to-date research on current cultural trends. For the past three years, the Strozziina has been inviting a select number of American universities to collaborate on projects that relate to their exhibitions. Art professors from each school visit the exhibition with their students

and then explore the show's theme in their own way. Following a period of research, selected students present their works to the public in the museum space itself by discussing how their works relate to the theme.

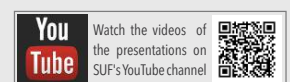
The first program, which took place in 2012, was *Retreat from Reality*, related to the show *American Dreamers*:

Reality and Imagination in American Contemporary Art. This first initiative proved so successful that three more editions followed, each one involving the participation of SUF students: *Me, Myself and I* for the show Francis Bacon and the *Existential Condition in Contemporary Art*, *Boundary Line* for the show *Unstable Territories: Borders and Identity in Contemporary Art*, and *Variations* for the show *Picasso and Spanish Modernity*.

Those who oversee the projects at SUF are Photography Professor Stefania Talini and Painting Professor Kirsten Stromberg. Intermediate and advanced students from their courses spend the semester learning not only about the Strozziina exhibition and contemporary art discourse, but also what it means to research a theme in their work and to develop it both technically and conceptually.

As Stromberg says, "It has been an invaluable lesson for the students on all levels. They learn the intricacies of developing a theme in their work, seeing how to refine it in their creative practice, as well as learning how to communicate their work to the public clearly. It also offers them a chance to engage directly with issues and events that are occurring in Florence as well as learn how to relate to a greater context artistically."

You check out all the past presentations for yourself on the SUF Florence YouTube channel.



“Students learn the intricacies of developing a theme in their work, seeing how to refine it in their creative practice, as well as learning how to communicate their work to the public clearly.”

A Multicultural

CURRICULUM

Studio Art Program

Fighting Prejudice through Art

by **Nadia Armouti** (Harvard College)

My time at SU Florence—particularly in my Introductory Painting course—fostered a key realization that greatly influenced my personal growth. I'll never forget our first lesson on color when Professor Kirsten Stromberg made us all very seriously contemplate whether we were colorblind. She'd point out gray shadows and passionately declare their yellowness, blueness, purpleness or greenness. She'd present us with a lemon and call attention to the browns and oranges. She forced us to look with purpose—an intent to see objects as they are, not as we expect or 'know' them to be. Instead of projecting our expectations onto the little red apple, Professor Stromberg challenged us to clear our minds of our assumptions, and to just paint the details and nuances of what we saw.

Assumptions about form and color in painting function in the same way prejudices do. It is a bit uncanny how well this analogy applies to interpersonal relations. Just as projecting

“Just as projecting your creative expectations creates caricatures of fruit, projecting your social expectations (read: prejudices) creates caricatures of people, thus robbing them of their agency and making them victims of harmful stereotypes”

ing your creative expectations creates caricatures of fruit, projecting your social expectations (read: prejudices) creates caricatures of people, thus robbing them of their agency and making them victims of harmful stereotypes. Stereotypes strip a black man of his love for Vivaldi and replace it with past-due child support. They erase an Asian woman's

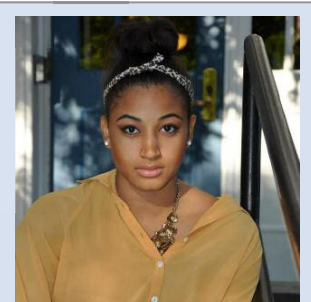
passion for Hip-Hop and exchange it for a mathematics textbook. They confiscate a white man's rhythm and baselessly brand him as sexist. Prejudice—whether conscious or not—perpetuates oversimplified, unfair and off-putting expectations of unique individuals. When prejudice isn't acknowledged, it creates an uncomfortable atmosphere for the victim and a fruitless environment for all.

Everyone has biases; as long as we recognize that they exist and prevent them from affecting our expectations and/or treatment of others, developing an inclusive environment remains possible despite them. Education is a powerful means to this end because ignorance is the vehicle through which prejudice becomes discrimination. Without recognizing that “other” groups have nuanced histories and experiences and that a group is a collection of unique individuals rather than a monolith, it becomes increasingly easy to accept one's own fabricated expectations as reality and consequently act on them. Including diverse representations of diverse peoples within curriculums helps to eliminate the ignorance on which prejudice feeds. Yet, all too often discussion of diverse peoples is largely ethnocentric—or viewed from the perspective of one's own culture—if they happen at all.

Having never studied art history previously, my time at SUF fueled my passions to address the lack of cultural diversity in education today.

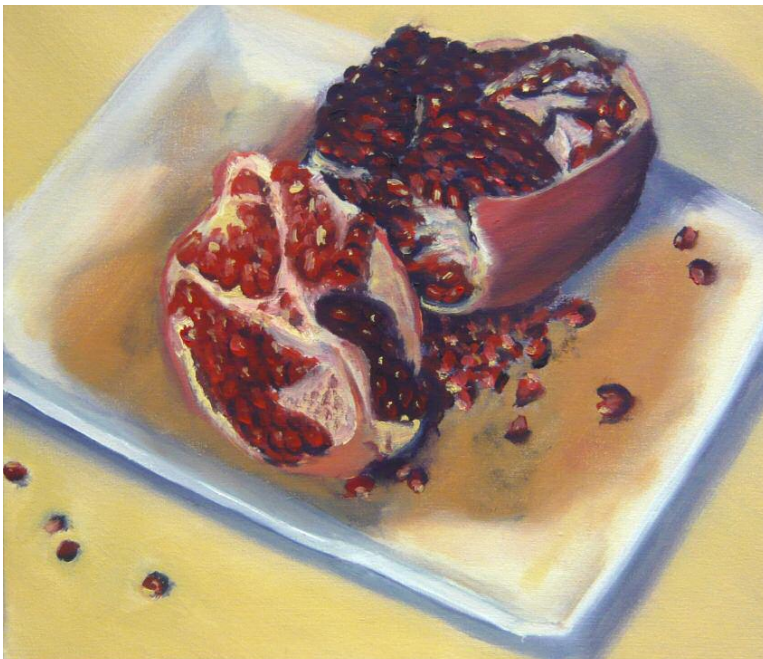
Many days Professor Stromberg and I could be found deeply engaged in conversations about race relations and social justice. I expressed to her both my observations and frustrations with the way art history was presented as well as my everyday experiences interacting with fellow SUF students. She listened patiently, always encouraging me to speak up so that I could make a difference.

I hope to now make a greater difference. I am creating an after-school program that teaches art and art history to middle school students in St. Louis in a way meant to foster cultural awareness. By teaching youth of all backgrounds about the experiences and contributions of diverse cultures, I believe that stereotypes may be subverted before they are ingrained, and our future may be full of people who better understand and respect one another.



Nadia Armouti

is a graduating senior at Harvard College, completing a bachelor's degree in Government, a minor in Modern Middle Eastern Studies, and a citation in Arabic. She hopes one day to help people better understand each other by eradicating xenophobia.



Scratching the surface

Studying with Master Printmaker Swietlan (Nick) Kraczyna



Prof. Kraczyna in the printmaking studio

by **Casiana A. Kennedy**
(Syracuse University)

I had long known the famous images of Rembrandt, the etchings that complemented his distinct style and rendered his features almost palpable in their detail.

The pictures were familiar, but how they came to be – through etching, printmaking – was not. The technique served as an opportunity for something new to be discovered, something beautiful that became art through its process as well as its appearance. This is how Professor Kraczyna's printmaking course unfolded in Florence, in the spring of 2015 – a series of discoveries both beautiful and practical. As would be expected in an introductory course, most of us knew little about printmaking. We started by making simple lines and moved on to drypoint engraving on Plexiglas before learning about aquatint and using metal as an etching surface.

Each piece had its own special meaning. There was much anticipation, much excitement and amazement, as well as reproach when something was rushed. We learned to be patient, to trust our instincts, our hands. We could be creative with our subjects but we also had to be self-aware and careful all the while. There was a sort of healthy responsibility that lingered in the studio – appropriate for a demanding endeavor. A great complement and parallel to this art form is architecture. In architecture there is that same healthy responsibility and striving for a desired outcome through a specific process. As an architecture major, printmaking felt very natural despite the newness of it all.

A favorite moment of the semester was when I

had just completed my first aquatint piece. The image depicted an ancient Greek amphitheater in sunlight. I had first drawn the image with pencil on white paper before

transferring it to the metal by tracing – the “soft ground” technique. I liked that I had a precise image with sharp lines. After retrieving the print from the press and seeing that the sharpness was lost and the scene was more “smudged”, I initially felt slightly disappointed. But then Professor Kraczyna told me that this is what soft ground

looks like and that it is the perfect technique for the Ancient Greek site, and suddenly I liked it more than the precise image. Actually, I loved

it. The meaning of the image was expressed through the technique; there was great harmony.

Set against the backdrop of a master printmaker's studio in Florence, or a gallery celebrating achievements in the art world, everyday we learned and gained something new. To say that Professor Kraczyna's

course was an extraordinary experience would simply be scratching the surface.

“*The meaning of the image was expressed through the technique; there was great harmony.*”



The printmaking class, with Prof. Kraczyna in the middle and the author to his left

Sketching Out a New Future

How Studying Art at SUF Changed My Life

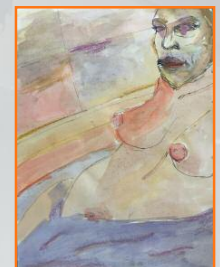
by Marissa Mele (Syracuse University)

“Nick has become one of the most influential people in my life, inspiring me to follow my passions and, as he says, ‘Find a career that you don’t consider work.’”



This spring semester in Florence has been the most enriching and fulfilling four months I have ever experienced. I know I will always consider this journey to be one of the most distinctive milestones in my life because of the positive changes it has led me to go through. I started the semester as an unhappy engineering student, doubtful of my future; and now I am leaving Italy knowing that I definitely do not want to be an engineer, and that I am okay with the thought of not knowing the final outcome of my education. I believe I was able to make these changes because of the notion of exploration imparted to me by the professor of the Introduction to Sketchbook class, the wonderful and talented artist Swietlan, a.k.a. Nick, Kraczyna. Nick doesn’t teach you, he guides you to discover yourself and Florence, and to discover what feels good for yourself. Whether you’re a novice or an advanced draftsman, this class

will allow you to look deep within yourself simply by exploring unseen, non-touristy areas of Florence. By going to these places during class, you begin to see each site as a piece of art and therefore discover what truly makes Florence such a magical city. I started the course as a beginner, and often found myself feeling frustrated because I was constantly disappointed with my work. However, with Nick’s guidance and motivation to “just keep drawing,” I slowly learned, and am still learning, what it means to let go, stop worrying so much about the end result and accept my art for what it is. The atmosphere that Nick creates for the class, combined with the magic that can be found within Florence, has allowed my desire to make art and discover what makes me truly happy come alive. In such a short time, Nick has become one of the most influential people in my life, inspiring me to follow my passions and, as he says, “Find a career that you don’t consider work.”



From the author’s sketchbook.

The Italian Experience in a Bag

What I Learned Studying Art at SUF

by Andrew (Ski) Kolczynski (Pomona College)

When I arrived in Italy, I didn't realize how much I would be doing. I thought I would have handfuls of free time until I found myself with two art classes – one on the other side of the city, a handmade leather bag internship – and an amazing classical art history class. Suddenly I was immersed in learning about the empathy of Goya and Donald Judd while studying the techniques of painting alla prima. After that, I would be silk screening designs inspired by the classical history, architecture and mythology I had learned. I would end the day by focusing on making sure all of the stitches were straight on a leather bag. Walking to all of these commitments, I had a backpack that carried all of the supplies I needed, from fabric to paintbrushes to fresh leather, as well as little things from the places I've traveled to and the homes I've made. The pack has lasted me five years through all of my travels around the States and here in Italy. I still use it despite its faded color and copious rips and tears as my friends tell me, "Get a new backpack, Ski!" Then I realized that from the artistic techniques and art history I've learned in class combined with the techniques of hand-making a leather bag, I didn't need to go buy a bag from someone else. I could design and build my own that would be perfect for what I needed. I could use the proportions of Brunelleschi with the empathetic color palate of Goya to design it. I could use the skills I learned making leather purses to give the care and attention needed in sewing my bag. And I could use the inspiration of Roman art to hand-paint the finished product. At first, I had no idea I would learn all of this at SUF. I thought it would just be a fun time in Florence. But I have walked away as a more intelligent and aware artist with a vaster array of skills. And so, with freshly screen-printed canvas, leather and *la manualità* (roughly translated as "craftsmanship"), I can return home to The Ski Shop - where I design and sew - to create my own bag to carry all of my future supplies and remind me of everything I've learned in Italy.

“ I realized that from the artistic techniques and art history I've learned in class combined with the techniques of hand-making a leather bag, I didn't need to go buy a bag from someone else. ”



DRAWN OUT

The Value of Keeping a Sketchbook

by Devyn Passarelli (Syracuse University)

Photos by Devin Passaretti

The art professors at SU Florence truly emphasize the importance of the sketchbook. For me, this is the place to sort out my ideas, practice various techniques, and experiment.

As an illustration major, keeping a sketchbook with me at all times pushes me to draw more, and sort through ideas for different projects I am working on.

This semester at SU Florence, I had the pleasure of taking Professor Kraczyna's drawing class. His impressive background in the art world is an inspiration to not only me, but to all of his students. He teaches from personal experience, and has a vast knowledge and understanding of each technique we worked with this semester

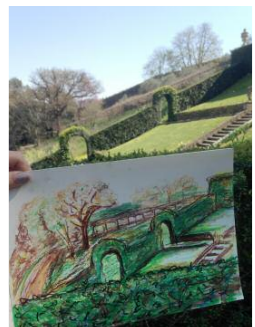
(and many more), but never presses his personal style on his students. We were provided with examples of past students' works, and Prof. Kraczyna's personal work, for each medium we were taught.

During this course, we received many different materials to work with each week, and freely put these techniques to use while we visited a new place in Florence during each class. Through this freedom, I discovered a connection between the materials we used and the specific locations we went to throughout the city. For example, we used pen and ink when we drew the wisteria tree in the Villa Rossa garden to capture the dramatic effect of the bare, twisting branches, before the wisterias bloomed in the spring. Professor Kraczyna encouraged us to experiment and not be afraid of messing up, and this freedom alleviated the pressure of doing everything perfectly. This helped me understand the true nature of each technique, and helped increase my visual vocabulary. By drawing in different locations every week, I developed my own shorthand that I will use when I return to my illustration work.

One of my fondest memories of my semester abroad was when Professor Kraczyna invited me and three other students to his studio in Barga, Tuscany. The trip began with a beautiful drive through the winding roads of the Tuscan mountains, and ended with having the opportunity to draw on the hillside; not to mention the fact that this day

included one of the best meals I have ever had, of pasta and truffles. Each encounter in the community was so effortless and unplanned. Not only were we able to see his massive collection of drawings and etchings, but we also learned the history behind the town of Barga. Seeing this town in person helped me understand the sense of magic and fantasy that Professor Kraczyna presents in many of his pieces. Likewise, this day helped me see that each part of an artist's life contributes to their creations. Professor Kraczyna expressing to us how a specific song or mountain crest of Barga has influenced his work helped open my range of vision for my own work.

Overall, my observational skills have greatly improved because of this course. Not only was I able to broaden my experience with different materials, I had the opportunity to illustrate a number of beautiful locations around Florence. Keeping a sketchbook is even more of a valued routine to me now.



MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FASHION SHOTS

“ Out of their interpretation of the word ‘faces’ came a meaning that went beyond its ‘face value’.”

by **Zebradendra Hunter**
(Loyola College)



A model in action at the SUF Photo Lab



The final products



On display at the atelier Chiocciolini



The project participants.

A WINDOW ON ETHNIC INTEGRATION AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY FLORENCE

Professors Stefania Talini and Vittoria Tettamanti collaborated together to create a photography project that would serve as course work for advanced photography students while also developing a visual representation of the many “faces” of SU Florence. The works of Florentine fashion designer, Michele Chiocciolini, made visual appearances in these photos as corresponding ethnic pieces.

Out of their interpretation of the word “faces” came a meaning that went beyond its “face value”. Societies on every continent are becoming more like mixed tossed salads – to use a popular Italian expression denoting a mixed ethnic background – composed of different races, ethnicities, religions and customs that migrate all across the world. Community Engagement Coordinator Vittoria Tettamanti realized that this new phenomenon even holds true for the students at SUF and the greater community that most of us have begun to call home.

The project that arose from these great concepts was a photography campaign incorporating representatives of different ethnicities on the SUF campus and a local Florentine fashion designer. This project was a collaboration of coursework in photography, the students and the professor of the advanced photography course, participants of the SUF Food for Thought community engagement project, UNESCO interns and fashion designer Michele Chiocciolini, whose Florence atelier doubled as a gallery space to display the final products to the local community.

Organized by:

Vittoria Tettamanti,
Community Engagement
Coordinator
Stefania Talini,
Professor of Photography
Students
of Advanced Photography
Interns
of UNESCO, Florence

Photo Students

Kiani Ned
Hongye Wu
Casidhe Holland
Ian Jackson

Fashion Designer

Michele Chiocciolini
Assisted By:
Francesca Chiocciolini

Models

Caroline Beasley
Zebradendra Hunter
Peter Lok
Mylena McCoggale
Alberto Gomez
Sarah Prather
Marcos Velez
Abdou Aziz Dieye

Unexpected Encounters

Student Life

Contemplating Culture and Ethnicity in Florence

by Hasmik Jasmin Djoulakian (Syracuse University)

The author at Piazzale Michelangelo

On my second day in Florence, my host mom, Mara, took my roommate and me to Piazzale Michelangelo, as I'm sure many host parents do for their hostees during their first weekend in Florence. She didn't tell us what we would find when we got there. Judging from the steep ascent, I expected breathtaking views, which of course we did find. But what I certainly did not expect was to feel a connection to my Armenian ancestry.

Mara handed us a sheet of paper when we arrived at the steps of San Miniato, a beautiful church near the piazzale. She had printed out a descrip-

tion of the church's history, which said San Miniato was erected to honor an Armenian saint, Minas, around the 11th century. While I am not a religious person, there is something staggering about bearing witness to a church that lovely, that unmovable and that connected to my ethnicity, when so little else in the world makes space for Armenian voices and histories.

I have wondered whether many people who visit the church partake in this exploration of its history. As with so much else in Florence – the nuanced histories of the city and its churches, buildings, food, artisanship and people – this church's story may often be diluted into rough understandings of saints, marble, Catholicism and stained glass windows. As students, we were lucky enough to have art historians for TA's who taught us about the origins of churches like this one during our field-trips around Italy, but it's unlikely that most visitors have that privilege.

Even though our amazing TA's explained how these churches came to be, I wonder about myself and others in my program: did we really experi-

ence these spaces, or were there just too many beautiful sites to possibly feel awed by every one of them? Even if we did let the immensity of these buildings and their histories settle within us, I wonder if we carried that same awe and curiosity into our daily interactions with Florence.

Maybe it isn't entirely possible to avoid distilling our understandings of Florence into discrete chunks of gelato, bars and dinners with our host families. And maybe that is just fine. Three months is not long enough to fully know any place. However, if we recognize that our bodies occupy spaces inaccessible to so many others and if we refuse to boil Italian "culture" down to any vacuous definitions, then I think we would navigate the politics of studying abroad pretty well. In a sense, the key to experiencing Florence may just lie in looking up from our phones and asking questions about the man painted on the façade of San Miniato before taking a selfie in front of it. And asking those questions might lead to unexpected connections amid a dizzying framework of cultural imperialism.

“*In a sense, the key to experiencing Florence may just lie in looking up from our phones and asking questions about the man painted on the facade of San Miniato before taking a selfie in front of it.*”

Attending a Renaissance Soccer Match in Florence

by Julia Tomeo (Bucknell College)

Having a Ball

“ A prayer was said before the match. The mayor even said a few words to wish the players good luck. ”

Before the match in Piazza Santa Croce.

SU Florence Housing and Student Life Coordinator Jim Kauffman offered to take students to a Calcio Fiorentino match, a historic soccer game played by the Florentines since the 16th century. I heard about this opportunity from a Syracuse email blast to all students, and my sculpture professor thought it would be a unique opportunity to immerse ourselves in Florentine culture, so my class participated in the walk to Piazza Santa Croce where the match has always been held. We started off the afternoon in Piazza Della Signora where we waited for the parade to walk by. There is a parade before every match to celebrate the players on both teams. The parade winds its way throughout the city of Florence, and ends in the arena in front of the church of Santa Croce. We followed

the crowd to where the arena had been set up, taking up the entire Piazza Santa Croce. The square was filled with sand and fenced off for the match. We were lucky to be invited to the starting ceremony inside the church because Jim was able to get the Syracuse group VIP tickets before the game. The church was filled with all of the participants of the parade and the players who filled the front rows of the church and a prayer was said before the match. The mayor even said a few words to wish the players good luck. We then followed the team outside to the square and watched the game. The piazza was packed with people in their supporting colors. The cheering was loud and the game had begun. It was such an amazing experience to be a part of something so culturally significant here in Florence.



Photos by Julie Tomeo



The pre-match ceremony in the church of Santa Croce.



SUF students with parade participants

Being **LGBT** in South Africa

A Lecture by Anthropologist
Maheshvari Naidu

by **Aubri French** (George Washington University)

On April 15, 2015, Dr. Maheshvari Naidu, an anthropologist with a doctorate in Feminist Anthropology and currently a professor at the School of Social Sciences, University of Kwazulu-Natal, spoke about LGBT identities in Africa at SU Florence. Dr. Naidu has had a global career lecturing at conferences in Turkey, Malaysia, Italy and Jordan, among other countries. In 2013, she was given the "South African Woman in Science Award" for research excellence. Her current research project focuses on women's experiences with their LGBT identities and Christian faith in the South African context.

South Africa has had a complicated history concerning LGBT rights. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender South Africans are still dealing with the residual effects of the human rights movement and apartheid. South Africa was the first nation in the world to make discrimination based on sexual orientation illegal and the fifth in the world to legalize same-sex marriage. However, while it has been at the forefront of the LGBT movement from a legislative point of view, the nation is still riddled with social stigma and cultural intolerance towards LGBT people. These communities in South Africa face severe challenges, includ-

ing religious discrimination, homophobic violence and corrective rape.

The African continent as a whole is made up of complex ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds. The homosexual identity in Africa is denounced as being "un-African" and thought to have the potential to destroy traditional family values. These notions are no doubt coming from Western influences in Africa. Dr. Naidu discussed how homophobia in South Africa is a reaction to the "visible," public homosexual identity. Certain African countries - such as Nigeria, Malawi, Senegal and Uganda - have stronger opposition to alternative sexualities than others. In Malawi, same-sex couples can be arrested for celebrating their engagement. In

"While it has been at the forefront of the LGBT movement from a legislative point of view, South Africa is still riddled with social stigma and cultural intolerance towards LGBT people."

Nigeria, LGBT people are equated with "sick, dangerous and subhuman" individuals. Anti-homosexual bills have been passed in Uganda that deem being gay punishable by death. Gay people in South Africa are subject to victimization, corrective rape and murder. Sexuality remains very controlled and policed. Homophobic violence and mistreatment in Africa are driven by political, cultural and religious fundamentalism.

Concluding with reference to her current research project, Dr. Naidu ex-



Professor Sara Matthews-Grieco and Professor Naidu

amined the experiences of lesbian South Africans in the Christian church. She interviewed South African lesbian women who wanted to be religious in a public setting while also open with members of their community about their sexuality. Christian lesbians in South Africa are made to feel especially sinful about their sexuality since sexual intercourse between two women is considered a transgression of the flesh against God. This attitude tends to marginalize lesbian women outside of any spiritual or religious congregation. The interviewed respondents felt that they had "no right to praise the Lord" because of their sexuality. It is believed to be even worse to be a gay woman than a gay man. Dr. Naidu argued that this was because being gay is thought to undermine patriarchal stereotypes, roles and behaviors and therefore homophobia against lesbian women, especially in the church, is a form of social control driven for men to reassert themselves and their place in society.

The discrimination and homophobic violence faced by the LGBT community is driven by social stigma and intolerance rather than legal barriers. It is now necessary to advocate changing people's attitudes about alternative sexualities since the laws have already been put in place to protect them. Dr. Naidu's thought-provoking and disturbing lecture forces us to realize how many social injustices still exist throughout the world.



During Prof. Naidu's lecture.



ROLE **REVERSAL**

An Italian Student's Experience of Syracuse University in the US

by Anna Ricciardi

In November 2013, while I was working one night on my Master's thesis, I received an email from my supervisor informing me about a call for a 4-month scholarship in Syracuse, New York. I was enrolled at the University of Florence, in the Master's program in Art History, and I was working on American modern art, in particular the American artist and art theorist Donald Judd (1928-1994).

Before that day, I did not know anything about the study abroad opportunities that Syracuse University in Florence also makes available for Italian students. The call was for students and researchers at my university whose work could be improved by access to the library resources available on the campus in the US. At the time, I was struggling to find magazines, exhibition catalogues and monographs here in Italy, so I browsed the SU library sources online and found out there were plenty of things useful for my research. I did not think twice, and applied for the call. A few months later, I was notified of being one of the three students selected, and within a very short time many things changed, in a good way. In less than two months, I had my J-1 visa and my plane ticket for Syracuse. I arrived there on March 17, 2014 to find extremely cold weather but very warm people waiting for me. I found a room to stay in, not too far from campus, and I spent the first days familiarizing myself with the environment. I quickly found a spot in Bird Library on the 4th floor, close to those shelves full of books I wanted to look at. I was provided with an SU ID, so I could check out

books and make requests for interlibrary loans. I suddenly had a lot of things to read and pull together. My point of view kept expanding until July, when I was finally clear on the main revisions I wanted to make to my thesis. In May, I took part in a weeklong class in New York City, organized by my advisor at SU, Stephen Zaima. This was a great chance to visit museums and art galleries, and also to meet new peo-

“*The most exciting part for me was visiting the Judd Foundation in Soho – my first time coming into direct contact with “my” artist.*”

ple. The most exciting part for me was visiting the Judd Foundation in Soho – my first time coming into direct contact with “my” artist. I also wanted to consult



Judd Foundation in Marfa, Texas

the archives, but I found out they are kept in Marfa, a small town in western Texas where Judd had moved from New York in the late 1960s to base his practice. I knew that going to Marfa would be a great opportunity, and I was encouraged to go by my advisor and the VPA department, which even sponsored my trip. I flew to El Paso in June. After a long flight, I then had to rent a car and drive for three hours through the desert (the only way to reach Marfa!). The Judd Foundation gave me permission to consult the archives for three days. For the rest of the time I visited Judd's studios, his library of 13,000 books, his house and his exhibition spaces.

Once back in Syracuse, I only had a month left and it flew by. The weather was definitely nicer then and I had new friends with whom to share my experience. The day I went to the airport to fly back to Italy I could hardly believe that four months had already passed. What was I carrying back home with me? Certainly not just a tablet full of files. Somewhere in my suitcase filled with warm clothes were also the feelings and emotions related to challenges overcome, friends made, places seen. Because of all these things together, not only the improvement in my research, I have wonderful memories of my experience in Syracuse.



NYC Class

DP Coordinator Antonella Francini with Spring 2015 DP students at the Teatro dell'Opera to see Verdi's La Traviata.

SUF's Direct Placement Program with the University of Florence

Every morning of the spring 2015 semester, five SU Florence students (Allyson Arnone, Caroline Beasley, AbbyLeigh Charbonneau, Ben Goodwin, Carrie Wang), took a different route to school to join international classmates at the Centro di Cultura per Stranieri of the University of Florence and immerse themselves in the Italian language at the advanced level.

SU students Christina Reid and AbbyLeigh Charbonneau also chose to study with Italian peers in regular courses at the university as part of SUF's Direct Placement Program, taking classes in philosophy and art history.

AbbyLeigh, together with six other students, was also enrolled at the University of Florence course that SUF hosts at the Villa Rossa, also as part of the Direct Placement Program, conducted in English. Every Tuesday an equal number of Italian students and their professor Lucia Re joined them to discuss the Politics of Globalization and Human Rights from different cultural perspectives.



Clockwise from top right: wine tasting; wine tasting; wine tasting; showing off Italian university ID's; meeting Anna Ricciardi (see pg. 16); pasta making; pasta making.

Dorothea Barrett



Dorothea Barrett's *Vocation and Desire: George Eliot's Heroines* (1989) is being reissued by Routledge as one in a series of classics of George Eliot criticism.

Molly Bourne



On May 19, 2015 Molly Bourne presented "Il Turco a Mantova: Francesco II Gonzaga e la Moda Ottomana" at the Università IUAV di Venezia. In this lecture, she discussed cultural and gift exchange between the courts of Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II and the Marquis of Mantua in the late 1400s, with particular attention to Francesco II Gonzaga's interest in Ottoman fashion and his commissioning of a series of turbans.

Matteo Duni



Matteo Duni was invited by the Ecclesiastical History Society (UK) to participate in its Winter Meeting, which was convened in London on January 18 on the theme The Church and Doubt. In his paper, "Doubting Witchcraft Theologians, Jurists, Inquisitors between the Fifteenth and the Sixteenth centuries", Prof. Duni discussed the debate between believers and skeptics that characterized the outset of the witch hunt in Renaissance Europe.

Antonella Francini



Antonella Francini was made a member of the Italian jury of "The Bridge Award", a newly established book prize founded by the US Embassy and the Casa delle Letterature, both in Rome, with the support of other Italian and American institutions. In this role, she will participate in the selection of the winner for the fiction category, who will be awarded on Columbus Day in fall 2015.

Sylvia Hetzel



In spring 2015, Sylvia Hetzel was awarded a full scholarship with stipend by Syracuse University's School of Information Studies in conjunction with Bird Library to pursue a Masters in Library and Information Science degree. Thanks to a one-year leave of absence from SU Florence, she will be studying on the home campus throughout the 2015-2016 academic year to complete two-thirds of the 37-credit degree program while working as a part-time graduate assistant in Bird Library. Sylvia looks forward to returning to SU Florence and her duties here in August 2016 and plans to complete her MLIS degree requirements on a part-time, online student basis.

Richard Ingersoll



In May, Richard Ingersoll produced two parts of a multi-sectioned exhibition, "Agricivismo", devoted to urban agriculture, and "Plasticland", concerned with the increasing use of plastic in the landscape, at the MAXXI museum in Rome.

Johan Jonsson



Johan Jonsson, a professional violinist, played a recital with pianist Elina Yanchenko in January at the Oratorio di Santa Cecilia in Bologna. The recital, which was part of the San Giacomo Festival, was entitled Musica d'Amore, and included works of Beethoven, Dvorak, Pärt and Smetana. A former Professor of Music at Montana State University, Johan also returned to Montana in May, invited by the String Orchestra of the Rockies, to perform at the ensemble's 30th Anniversary Concert. As one of the founding members of the SOR, Johan served the orchestra as Leader and Artistic Director for more than 25 years. The concert took place in Missoula, Montana, and the program included music by G.F. Handel, Clarice Assad and J.S. Bach.

Swietlan Nicholas Kraczyna



Nick Kraczyna participated in three different exhibitions. The group show "Aqua Viva", held at the Museo di Arte Contemporanea in Monsmmano Terme in March, also included works by Paul Cezanne, Pierre Bonnard, Giorgio De Chirico, Carlo Carra', Max Ernst, Francis Picabia and Ben Nicholson. SU Florence held a solo show in the Studio Art Gallery, "40 Years of Multi-plate Color Etching". Finally "Dream of Icarus", a solo exhibition of new large (70x100cm) pen-and-ink drawings, opened at the Galleria Comunale in Barga on July 22, 2015.

Sara Matthews-Grieco



At the annual Renaissance Society of America meeting in Berlin in March, Sara Matthews-Grieco presented a paper entitled "Animal Ages: Fable Books, Emblems, and Animal Allegory in the Ages of Man" in a dual panel session on Popular Books in Early Modern Europe. This paper looked at animal allegory in 16th-century representations of the ages of man that drew upon commonly accepted characteristics attributed to different beasts, and a suggestion was made to look at popular as well as erudite sources for Titian's enigmatic triple portrait known as the "Allegory of Time" (Venice, circa 1565).

Alick Mclean



Alick Mclean published an article about medieval corruption and sex entitled "Don't screw with the law: visual and spatial defenses against judicial and political corruption in communal Italy," in the essay collection *Genealogies of Legal Vision*, edited by Peter Goodrich and Valerie Hayaert and published by Routledge.

Eric Nicholson



Eric Nicholson co-edited the book *Transnational Mobilities in Early Modern Theater* with Robert Henke, which includes his chapter "Et in Arcadia the Dirty Brides" and was published in summer 2014 by Ashgate Press. Also by Ashgate is the collection *Shakespeare and the Italian Renaissance*, edited by Michele Marrapodi, that includes Prof. Nicholson's essay "Helen the Italianate Theatrical Wayfarer of All's Well That Ends Well". He also presented two papers, one for a session on Women's Voices in Early Modern European Culture for the Renaissance Society of America meeting in Berlin in March, and another for a session on "European Women in Early Modern Drama," at the Shakespeare's Europe/Europe's Shakespeare(s) conference at Worcester University in England, organized by the European Shakespeare Research Association, in June/July.

Sasha Perugini



Sasha was featured in an article on "Women Making Their Marks" in the September-October 2014 issue of *International Educator* magazine. In June, she was elected Co-Chair of the Women's Working Group in Florence. She was also interviewed for an article in the Italian magazine *Myself*. In May, she was made a member of the Advancing Women Artists Florence Council of Advisors.

Ken Resnick



On May 4, 2015, Ken Resnick participated in a meeting of the Special Prosecutors who prosecuted the white-collar crime associated with the failure of the Home State Savings & Loan Association 30 years ago in Cincinnati, Ohio. Home State's collapse was a prelude to the federal savings and loan crisis in the 1980's and led to the first bank holiday being declared in Ohio since the Great Depression. The special prosecution team obtain guilty pleas, convictions and jail sentences for over a dozen individuals who participated in the fraud at Home State.

Michelle Tarnopolsky



Michelle Tarnopolsky translated and created the subtitles for a short documentary called *Strade: Femminile Plurale* and presented the film to the public in March, along with activist Lorella Zanardo, at an event that she co-organized called Women Taking Back the Streets. She also presented a paper on "Maternal Ambivalence in Contemporary Italian Film" at the conference Maternal Subjectivities: Psychology/Psychoanalysis, Literature, Culture and the Arts in Rome in April. In May, she became a member of the Advancing Women Artists Florence Council of Advisors.

YOU SHOULD BE HERE



Studios

Located in the heart of the Florentine art district, The SUF The Studio Art Department facilities include an exhibition gallery, spacious studios for each course, large windows for excellent lighting, and private gardens for inspiration and relaxation. Each of the two buildings, Donatello 21 and the Printmaking studio, hosts dedicated studio space, equipped to handle the diverse media and methods available to students. In addition to these two campus buildings, jewelrymaking, silkscreen, batik, and weaving courses are held at the Fuji Studios, located about a ten minute walk from the main campus of SUF.

Donatello 21

The main hub of the Studio Art Department, painting, drawing, sculpture, restoration, and digital photography courses are all held in Piazzale Donatello 21. In the late nineteenth century, the neighborhood surrounding Piazzale Donatello was specifically designed and designated as an "artists' district" by the city of Florence. More than fifty art and architecture studios continue to function in this neighborhood today.

Printmaking

The printmaking studio is specially designed and equipped to accommodate a wide variety of printmaking techniques including monotype, drypoint, etching, aquatint, soft ground, engraving, and a variety of experimental techniques of plate-making and printing.

Field Trips and Special Projects

In addition to the instruction provided by these courses, one of the key advantages of the Syracuse University in Florence program is the ability to view art first-hand, and not just in Florence. Numerous field trips every semester, organized and led by experienced professors and lecturers, allow students to explore the history of Italy and its world-changing art from the Etruscans and the Ancient Romans to the present day, providing inspiration for their ownworks of art.

Some highlights include trips to the Vatican Museums and the MAXXI (the National Museum of 21st Century Art) in Rome, visits to the marble quarries of Carrara, where great artists like Michelangelo have obtained materials for their sculptures for centuries, and a trip to the Venice Biennale, one of the biggest international exhibitions of contemporary art.

Special Projects open to SUFlorence students include internships with art organizations in Florence, and guest lectures and workshops by international artists. In recent years students have also had the opportunity to collaborate with the CCC Strozzi, a major center for contemporary art and culture located in a Renaissance palazzo in the heart of Florence.



SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY FLORENCE

ARTS
STUDIO