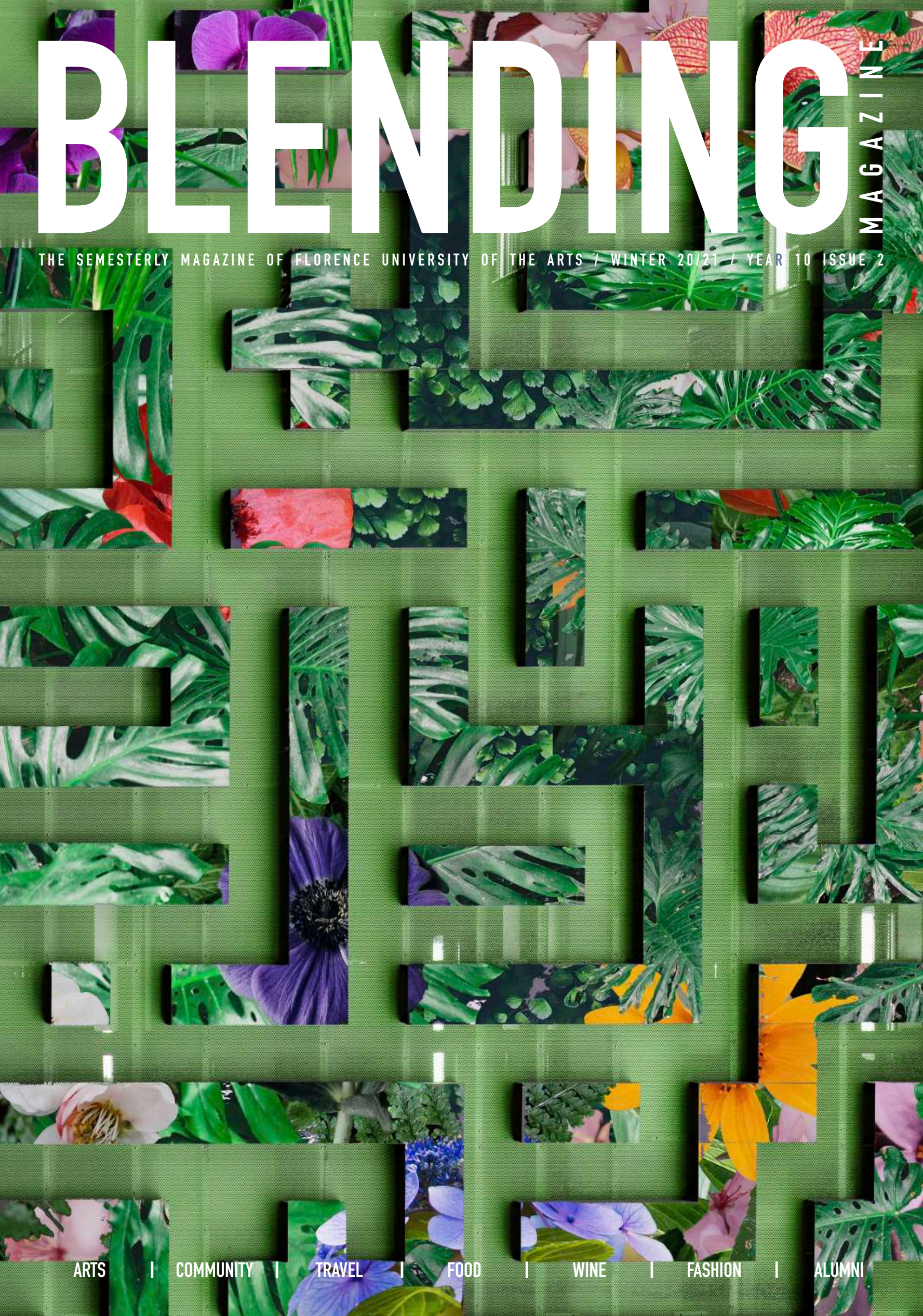


BLENDING

MAGAZINE

THE SEMESTERLY MAGAZINE OF FLORENCE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS / WINTER 20/21 / YEAR 10 ISSUE 2



ARTS

COMMUNITY


TRAVEL

FOOD

WINE

FASHION

ALUMNI



Blending is a semesterly magazine created with and for students of FUA-AUF. The newsletter is published by campus press Ingorda, a member of the non-profit Fondazione di Partecipazione Palazzi - FAIE, which supports the experiential learning methodology of FUA-AUF. For information contact blending@fua.it.

Semestrale / Semesterly Magazine
Reg. Trib. di Firenze n° 5844 del 29 luglio 2011
ISSN 2284-063X
Anno 10 – Numero 2 – Autunno-Inverno 20/21
Year 10 – Issue 2 – Winter 20/21

In redazione / Masthead

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Il numero è stato chiuso in redazione nel mese
di Dicembre 2020 / This issue was completed in
December 2020

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ISSN 2284-063X



THE MIND
garden

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the mind garden.

Come, make yourself comfortable. You can sit anywhere, there's a moss-covered stone bench just next to the sense of self, or you can lay down on a meadow-carpet next to a stream of thoughts, or simply take your place on that comfy wicker chair overlooking fields of blooming memories. All set? Good, then we'll begin.

Maybe you're still scratching your heads and asking what we mean by a "mind garden." We can broadly define it as a mental space, using a visual representation as a shorthand to manifest one's own psychology or way of thinking. In recent years, the concept of the mind palace has come to the attention of the general public and researchers as the modern name for the method of loci, the mnemonic device utilized by the ancient Romans for visualizing a familiar environment to recall information quickly. When trying to picture it as real structure, it feels much more austere and rigid, a manor filled of notions stacked and placed neatly in their cubbyholes, a silent artificial archive, unshakable, unmovable, unbending.

In comparison, a mind garden is a mindscape of tranquility, a reflection of a space within ourselves where new ideas can be planted to grow and bloom in a myriad of forms under your watchful eye, the gardener of the space. The garden as a blueprint suggests a fundamental intersectionality since gardens are spaces in which clashing ideas come together: natural simultaneously artificial, a private space that is out in the open.

In this challenging year of 2020, we've all needed to create our own mind gardens. The articles in this issue reflect this particular sentiment from interviews and articles concerning real gardens to the relationship between art and nature, the wellbeing that one derives from mountain climbing, and much more. We hope this issue will inspire you to create and cultivate your own mind garden, which will nurture and sustain you as we head into 2021.

Happy Reading,

The Blending Staff



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A vibrant collage of various green plants and a large yellow flower. The background is filled with different types of foliage, including a large, deeply lobed green leaf in the center, a fern frond in the bottom left, and a large, bright yellow flower with a detailed brown center in the bottom right. The overall composition is lush and colorful.

City & Community

Mind Garden: Sustainability & Environment

FALL 2020 - FUA-AUF STUDENTS EXHIBIT

This issue's "Mind Garden" theme is connected to the final semester exhibition of DIVA and SAS Fine Arts students. Featured artists and designers representing various courses and departments offered a personal interpretation of the theme and elaborated it through the use of visual media. We've made a selection of some of the best works for you to enjoy.

This virtual exhibit entitled "Mind Garden" is more than a showcase of the student work from this semester. It's a beautiful representation of how each student followed their dream to come to Florence to study, learn, and express themselves. I am reminded of the quote from Aristotle, "Whatsoever that be within us that feels, thinks, desires, and animates, is something celestial, divine, and, consequently, imperishable." Mind Garden as a theme

embodies the power of thought and a space where the seeds of ideas are sown. As ideas, concepts, and identities take root in individuals, a window of opportunity widens for rebuilding communities worldwide despite the uncertainty of current terrains. The creativity in each featured work is the result of how each our students cultivated their self-expression in uncharted places, many far from their home countries and all within the challenges brought on by 2020.

I would like to thank Fall 2020 students, faculty member, and staff for their commitment to learning and discovery, for believing in this semester's journey of knowledge and experience in Florence. It will be an unforgettable term, and the visual documentation generated by the exhibit's results will provide an ongoing source of reflection in the years to come.

David Weiss
FUA-AUF Staff, Digital Imaging
and Visual Arts Coordinator

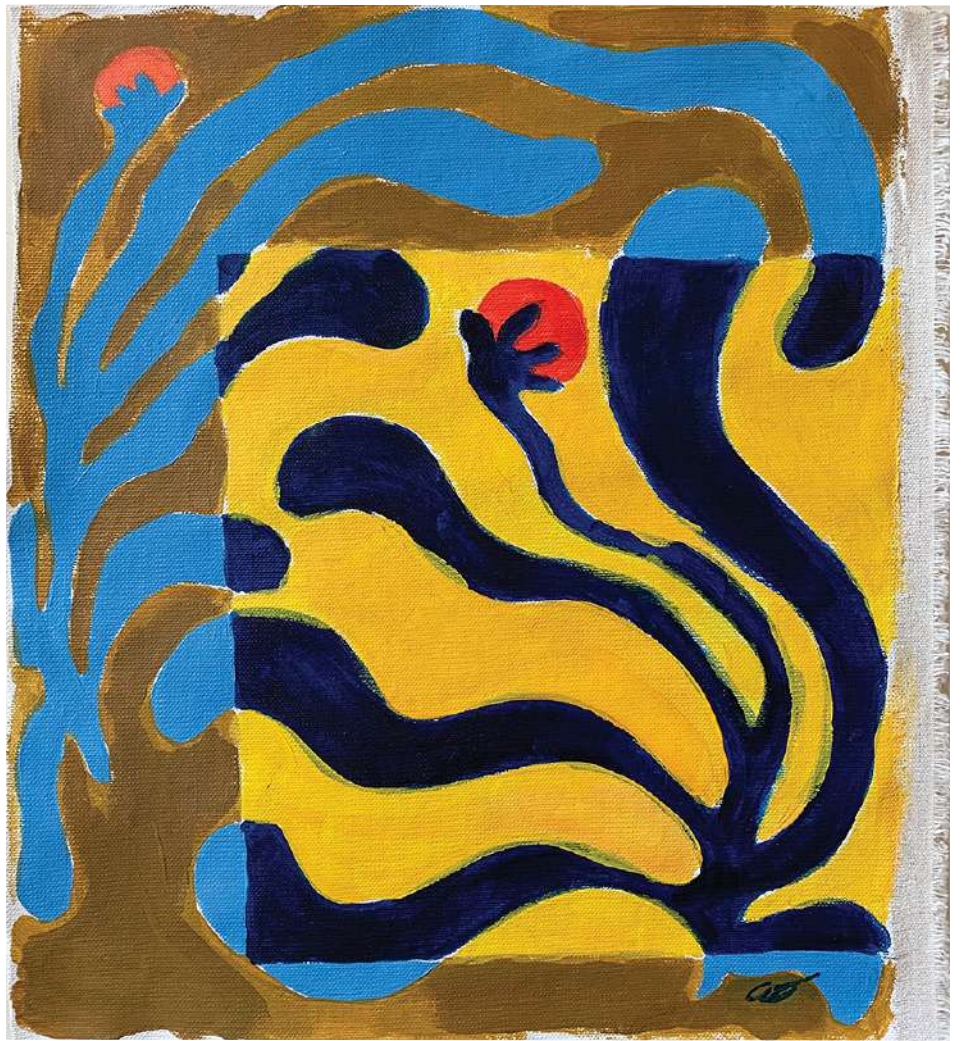
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1. LABYRINTH OF THE MIND
ALYSSA CANTWELL
WORDS, PAINTING, AND EMOTIONS:
THE MIND MAP OF CREATIVITY

2. UNTITLED
ALEKSANDRA TSANGARIDES
FOUNDATION PAINTING

3. TERRA BISTRO
OLIVIA LANDRY, EMILY HAYWOOD
INTERIOR DESIGN INTERMEDIATE LEVEL



1. LABYRINTH OF THE MIND
30CM X 40CM
ACRYLIC AND PEN ON PAPER

Alyssa Cantwell
Westford, Massachusetts
Endicott College

In this piece, I took inspiration from Georgia O'Keeffe's simplification of shapes in nature. I wanted the petals of a rose to appear to be suspended in the air above an abstracted version of an aerial view of a garden. The inspiration for the labyrinth-like

shapes beneath the rose came from my visit to the gardens at Villa Farnese in Caprarola and Villa Lante in Bagnaia. The labyrinth is symbolic of the "mind garden" because that is how I visualize ideas and thoughts moving through the mind.

2. UNTITLED
12 IN X 13 IN
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS
FOUNDATION PAINTINGS

Aleksandra Tsangarides
Hinsdale, Massachusetts
Endicott College

Created through a balance between choice and chance, this piece explores the idea of perception. In his book *A New Earth*, author Eckhart Tolle claims that there is a "deep interrelatedness between your state of consciousness and

external reality." What grows in your mind is what cultivates in your world; what you believe is what you see.

3. TERRA BISTRO
RESTAURANT DESIGN PROJECT

Olivia Landry and Emily Haywood
Intermediate Interior Design

Bistro will offer its clients a unique experience in food, service, and atmosphere. Our clients seek a space that offers customers a welcoming and stimulating space to enjoy good food and drink.

The design is separated into five sections: the cafe, the bar and lounge, the courtyard, the dining area, and the kitchen. Throughout the spaces, different seating arrangements and serving options were created to provide variation for customers. A connection to nature and the use of daylight was also emphasized in the project. The architecture and choices made at Terra Bistro combine mid-century modern and minimalist design.

The blend of these two styles creates a casual and community-based atmosphere. The interior is bright, colorful, and energetic. Customers will be enticed to come at any time of the day for a wide range of foods. The materials and furniture installed also reflect the client's desire to connect with the community. The color palette is warm and natural, expressing the Terra Bistro brand.

THE JOURNEY
BLACK AND WHITE FILM

Ornella Kristall Fanciulli
Intermediate Digital
Photography Experiential
Learning

While seasons come and go in their stable cycles, an individual's journey is also filled with ups and downs - this is what this series represents, the phases we

go through such as experiencing pains, struggles, and trials. A quote from K.M. Golland describes how "Life is full of ups and downs, twists and turns, love and loss. And life would not be worth experiencing if it weren't just that. You can't have the good without the bad, you need to somehow learn to accept the bad and adjust it in a way that you can endure and overcome." All of these ideas are portrayed in this project through a pair of shoes.

The shoes you wear, like fashion and beauty products, may reveal something about who you are as a person. Not only does your favorite footwear allude to your everyday mood, it is a sartorial icon often bundled with hints about your tastes and hobbies. After all, shoes are armor through which we can protect our feet and the foundation needed to face whatever the day throws our way, whether it's a torrential downpour or a climb up the stairs. →



Fondazione Palazzi Community Center Embraces Florence

A CULTURAL CENTER BASED ON SUSTAINABILITY,
OPEN TO THE FLORENTINE COMMUNITY.

Fall 2020 marked an important development for FUA-AUF and the Palazzi Foundation, thanks to the opening of the Palazzi Community Center.



The center is a new concept for integration and support for the city of Florence. Reception and Florentine community participation have been positive from its inception and overall activities provided many engagement benefits for the student body throughout the course of the fall semester. Palazzo Villani Stiozzi Ridolfi is the historic building where Apicius, FUA-AUF's hospitality division, relocated in January 2019. After over a year of campus transition and upon the Covid-19 outbreak worldwide in Spring 2020, a need arose for increased outreach for the local community and the city of Florence who suffered

a significant toll due to global mobility restrictions. With the idea of embracing local residents and offering them increased services, moments of relaxation, and a message of positivity, the palazzo welcomed the Palazzi Community Center as a meta-CEMI in support of existing CEMI creative learning labs for experiential learning at FUA-AUF.

The center's initiatives featured new services for the Florentine community such as after-school programs for children, culinary and wine lessons, art activities, yoga, pilates, Florentine city walks, wellness services at the Sorgiva spa, Fedora dining services and personalized dessert orders, events on sustainability, and much more.

Central to the overall location is the historic garden, the Cafaggio del Vescovo. The garden belonged to the Bishop of Florence in the 1200s, and was part of a larger property called the Cafaggio del Vescovo mentioned in historical documents.

The building, on the other hand, was divided into two homes known as the “big house and the small house,” and was documented in the 1400s as the property of the Falcucci family. Since then, the palace and the garden have changed private ownership of various families throughout the centuries, hidden from the public until today. The garden today continues to captivate with its citrus trees and herbs regularly used by Apicius students and faculty for a homegrown touch to food studies coursework.

Fondazione Palazzi: Who are we & what we do

The Fondazione di Partecipazione Palazzi - Florence Association for International Education is a not-profit foundation that manages the projects and activities of the Community Engagement Member Institutions (CEMI) affiliated with Florence University of the Arts - The American University of Florence (FUA-AUF), entities that support FUA's commitment to cultural integration. Each CEMI is strongly linked to an academic division at FUA. CEMI initiatives and projects signify specific services and structures that are open to the public and involve students in experiential learning results shared with the local Florentine community.

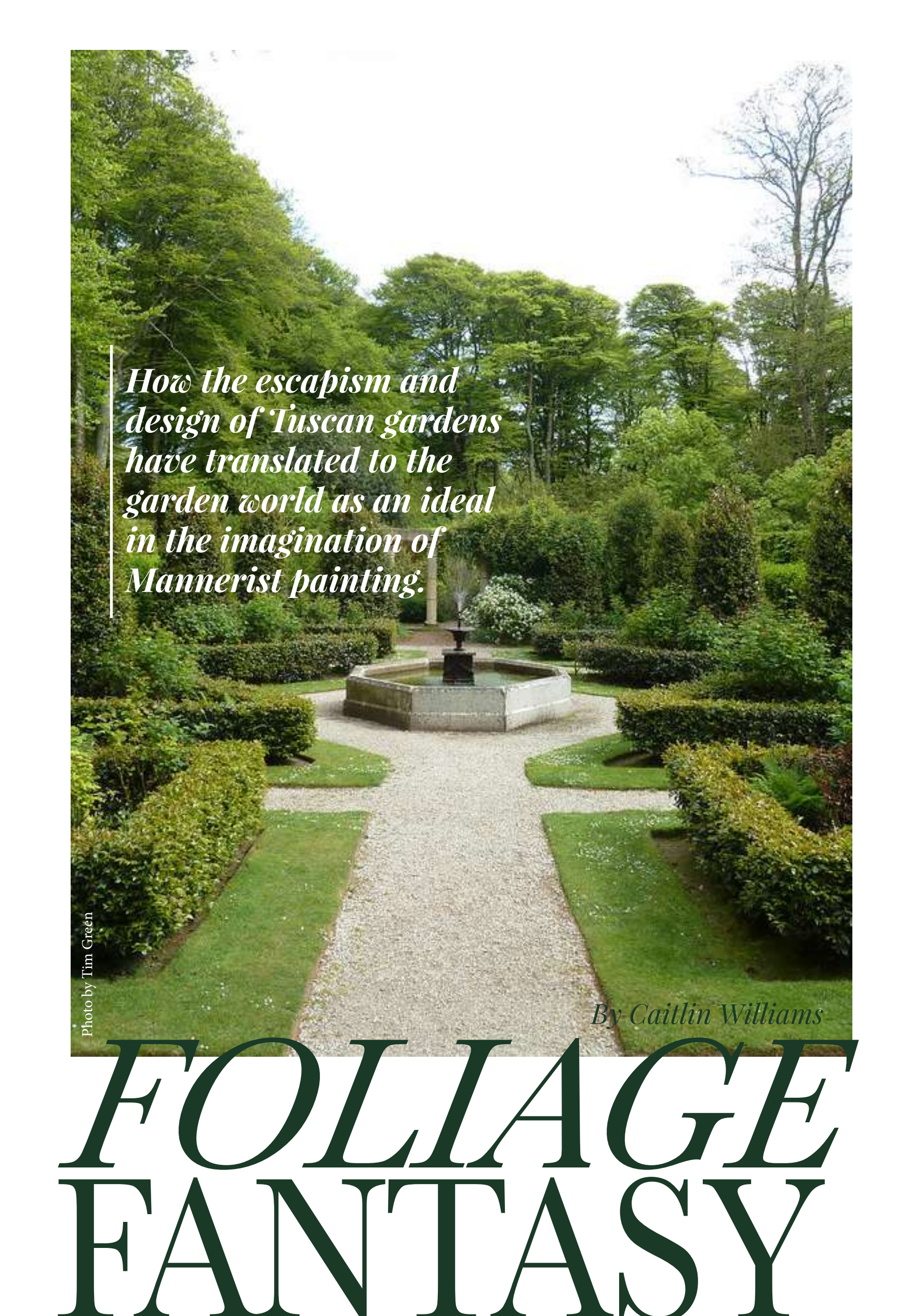
All Palazzi initiatives support learning opportunities of current and future students, and a primary objective of the foundation is to raise scholarships for international education opportunities. The foundation's fundraising efforts support scholarships for 1, 2, and 4-year academic programs in collaboration with Florence University of the Arts – The American University of Florence. All foundation activities are open to FUA-AUF students for extracurricular involvement and enrichment.







Arts

A photograph of a formal garden. In the center, a square stone fountain with a central spout sits on a gravel path. The path is flanked by manicured hedges and green lawns. In the background, there are tall, dense trees. The overall scene is a well-maintained, classical garden.

How the escapism and design of Tuscan gardens have translated to the garden world as an ideal in the imagination of Mannerist painting.

Photo by Tim Green

By Caitlin Williams

FOLIAGE FANTASY

Art provides an escape for many, and is a place to get lost in reflection, similarly to gardens. This strong overlap of an escape from the reality of the world around oneself and building one's own world is apparent especially in the extravagant gardens of Medici villas. One of the Medici family's many legacies in Italy were their gardens, their private paradises attached to grand villas. They were a place of relaxation and beauty, as well as a place of encounters. Having papal ties, the Medici family had to be religious examples and also host religious ambassadors. Many of the meetings and transactions hosted by the Medicis took place in their intricate, verdant gardens. Villa Castello in particular, home of Cosimo de' Medici, is the perfect example of the quintessential Renaissance garden. There is symmetry, balance, harmony, a mastery of landscape, and even a control over the form of nature. Garden historian, Giorgio Galletti, oversaw the restoration of

The garden was “divided into sixteen compartments, in perfect geometric shapes. It was a demonstration of perfect control of space and nature, and it was also the first time that an axis was used.”

this particular garden and claims the Villa Castello garden was designed as a symbol of “buon governo” or “good government,” meaning that the abundance of the garden was to show that “the Medici really are the only ones who can provide prosperity and happiness to Tuscany.” Galletti goes on to describe the layout and symmetry of the garden illustrating that the garden was “divided into sixteen compartments, in perfect geometric shapes. It was a demonstration of perfect control of space and nature, and it was also the first time that an axis was used.”

The garden of Villa Castello seems to be a vessel for sculpture, though; carved works draw the eye from the maze of perfectly cropped greenery. This garden begs the question: can we experience gardens as art in itself? Rather than a vessel for sculpture, or just a utilitarian section of a house, or even an agricultural plot for growing food out of necessity, it seems that gardens as an art form are ever-present in Italy, especially in villas during the Renaissance era. The symmetry of the garden

at Villa Castello echoes the divine symmetry seen in Italian art and architecture. The colors of the garden mirror large swaths of paint on a canvas through the tactful choice of flora. It seems as though the gardens of Tuscany and Italian art are deeply intertwined; both serve as a space of beauty, abundance, escape, and reflection. The garden seems to be an idealized place of heightened self-awareness and connection to nature, and can be seen mirrored

in art. The ideal of the garden in art history has been used as a backdrop for many epic scenes of history, adaptations of religious texts, and fantasy settings. Mannerist artist Lavinia Fontana's piece, *Noli me tangere*, depicts the reunion of Mary and Jesus in a garden. Through this composition of a lush Italian landscape, the garden is transformed into a holy space. There is a clear separation between the foreground and background of the composition, which parallels the sectioning of the garden plots at Villa Castello.



Photo of Villa Castello by Sailko, Creative Commons

In both this painting and at the villa, the compartmentalizing of landscapes allows for flow and intention. This also allows the viewer to experience an artwork or a garden both as a whole, but also in more intimate facets. When restoring Villa Castello, Galetti realized this need for a sectioning of space that emulated the harmony and symmetry seen in an Italian Mannerist painting.

Another Mannerist artist, Jacopo Zucchi, painted *Allegoria del Creato*, which is an example of a more fantastical set painting despite referencing biblical themes. Zucchi's work is located at the Borghese Gallery in Rome, and was originally created through the patronage of Ferdinando de' Medici. It stands out amongst the other paintings grouped along with it. At the Borghese there is no deficit of incredible Titian and Caravaggio paintings, but what jumps out at the viewer when encountering a Zucchi is the vitality of the paintings. His color mirrors the hues and values of a garden such as the ones associated with the Medici villas. With the Medicis having been avid patrons of the arts, it is highly probable that he took inspiration for his color palette and compositions from Medicean gardens.

In *Allegoria del Creato*, there is an overgrowth of the garden, and as a garden would be embellished with patches of flowers or sculpture, this landscape builds upon a floral foundation with tightly packed swaths of shells, fruit, and vegetable still lifes. The Eden-like abundance and color of the garden is key in this Zucchi piece. Even if experiencing the painting through a biblical lens, the presence of fantasy is present within this highly embellished and constructed landscape.



Painting by Lavinia Fontana

Even *Amor and Psyche*, displayed alongside *Allegoria del Creato*, has a horticultural touch; Cupid reclines on a bed of flowers that seem to be growing out from behind him, mirroring the form of his wings.

Overall, the connection makes sense between the grand Medicean gardens of Tuscany and the stylized flair of the Mannerist paintings such as the works cited here.

What jumps out at the viewer when encountering a Zucchi is the vitality of the paintings.



Painting by Jacopo Zucchi

Both the paintings and gardens are imaginative and abundant works of art, almost suspended from reality. Both the imagination of Tuscan gardens and Mannerist art include bountiful gardens that are an escape for the viewer - they become a world crafted for the pursuit of beauty and reflection within that plentiful beauty.



Painting by Jacopo Zucchi

The History and Meaning of Color: Red and Green

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MORGAN RELYEA

Color has a profound effect on the mind. Each individual culture and person has a drastically different interpretation of it. Analyzing these interpretations can tell us a lot about human nature and the human mind.

When exploring the mind garden, what better colors are there to analyze than red and green? These complimentary colors are both commonly found in florals, but they have dramatically different emotional associations.

Each color has the power to affect a person's mood or emotional state, and the color red is no exception. In fact, red provokes the strongest emotions of any color and these emotions are quite contradictory. Red is a color of extremes, being associated with love and passion, as well as anger and power. But how did these associations develop, and why?

Red is one of the first colors people are able to see when they are born, right after black and white. It is one of the most visible colors, second only to yellow, because of its wavelength. This makes the color extremely attention grabbing. To add to the color's eye-catching nature, the way red wavelengths react with the retina makes it appear as though the color is moving forward. Because of this, red is and has always been an important color to humans. Evidence of this innate connection is shown in the creation of language, with red being the first color to receive a name after black and white in almost all languages.



Red is connected to a wide range of emotions including love, passion, desire, heat, longing, lust, sexuality, sensitivity, romance, strength, leadership, courage, willpower, rage, anger, danger, malice, stress, action, and determination. Evidence of these associations can be seen throughout human history. In prehistoric times, red came to represent fire and blood. The raw energy of fire and the vitality of blood as a life source lead to a strong

association between the color red and power. Later associations with the color red can all be traced back to the feeling of power that red evokes. Scientists have found evidence that Stone Age hunters and gatherers wore body paint made of red clay. This plays into the association between the color red and power, violence and strength.



Paleolithic people buried their dead with red powder to serve as protection in the afterlife by warding off evil spirits, highlighting the connection between the color and strength or power.

Because red is the color of human blood and hearts, it has long been used to symbolize love. Red is a color found at weddings around the world and throughout history. In Roman times, brides wore red to signify love and fidelity. The color red is heavily featured in Chinese weddings, from the dress to the veil to the carpet covering the aisle. Similarly, red saris are worn by brides in India and Nepal. The association of red with love is an excellent example of how red is consistently associated with the feeling of power. Love is a very powerful emotion, overwhelming and all-consuming in some instances. When you love someone, they hold power over you; they hold the power to hurt you, to break your heart.

Red is also strongly associated with the feeling of anger. Anger can also be an all-consuming emotion, and it, like fire, can be an unstoppable force. Forces like violence and danger are intrinsically tied to anger and also have a strong association with the color red. Because of this, red is commonly seen as a color to represent evil and the devil himself. This has a lot to do with the connections between the color red and blood, and the associations between blood and violence, and blood and injuries.

As red's compliment, green is its opposite in many ways. Green is a very calming, balanced color. It is associated with nature, hope, safety, compassion, self-control, adventure rebirth, vitality, harmony, energy and freshness. It tends to be relaxing, peaceful. Green has very strong positive connotations overall, but it has some negative ones as well. The color is associated with envy, jealousy, greed, inexperience, cowardice, materialism and sickness.

→





Green is loved by many because it is the color of nature, as it is the most prominent color on earth. Green is also the most restful color to the human eye. The body has a soothing response to the color green that involves the relaxing of muscles and the dilation of blood vessels. It can also enhance vision, stability, and endurance. Many of green's associations come from its ties to nature.

Red it has long been used to symbolize love. Green is the most restful color to the human eye.

Young plants are usually green, naturally creating an association between the color and freshness, growth and renewal. Green is a very important color in the Muslim world because of its ties to nature and its associations with paradise. In Islamic cultures, green can represent respect. The color's ties to nature also help explain its associations with inexperience, since young plants are usually the greenest. The abundance of the color green in nature has also led to its association with the devil. In medieval times, the devil was often depicted wearing green. Green was seen as a pleasant color that attracted animals, because of this, hunters often wore green. In these depictions, the devil is a hunter and humans are the prey.

The history of the color green is a bit more complicated than that of red because green pigments are much harder to make. The Egyptians were the first to use green pigments, however, the mineral they used was expensive and would often turn black. Green represented protection to the Egyptians, and was used to depict the god Osiris who was also known as "the great green." The Romans were more successful at creating green pigments, using copper as a base for dyes. Green identified the gentry and was used to represent the House of Commons. In Da Vinci's Mona Lisa, she is dressed in green as a sign of her social status. This association evolved as green came to represent money, wealth, and greed. Green became associated with jealousy when Shakespeare coined the term "green-eyed monster." In popular culture today, green is associated with radioactivity and poison. This association has ties with history since many green paints were poisonous. People believe that green paint played a role in Napoleon Bonapart's death, Paul Cezanne's diabetes, and Claude Monet's blindness.

The colors red and green have drastically different connotations, but they both have positive and negative associations. This gives us a bit of insight into human nature, as it is a natural human response to see the positive and negative sides of everything. Historical uses of color play a major role in the human perception of color, but nature plays an equally important role. The connections between the color green and peaceful emotions come almost entirely from the color's abundance in nature, but green's association with wealth is almost purely a human creation. Red's associations with love and danger come from the ties between the color and blood, but humans built upon this natural connection to form associations between the color and leadership, strength and determination. Color associations are developed as a part of a complex interaction between human perception and a color's natural qualities. Each color has its own unique associations and everyone has their own individual interpretation of color. No two people view color the same way, what does color mean to you? What colors are present in your mind garden?



Connecting to Nature through Art

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ANEL TULEGENOVA

The Great Mother surrounds us everywhere, regardless of where you are: in the park, in the yard or just walking down the street.

The relationship between nature and man can be defined as symbiotic.

Artists and poets of all times praised it in songs and poems, and created masterpieces of world art inspired by magnificent landscapes. This connection is beautiful, spontaneous, and the go-betweens, who express themselves through different directions in art, touch on many aspects concerning the world around us. Art is the universal language that essentially helps us understand and analyze our connection with creation.

The concept of the role and significance of the world around us differed depending on the period of time and culture. During antiquity, the natural world was viewed as changeable, constantly mobile and at the same time perfect. Being in harmony with the living world was considered ideal, but the relationship between nature and man subsequently changed with the advent of Western Christian

culture in which man was the center of divine creation. Then, during the Renaissance, this close connection changed yet again and man transformed his worldview of nature. During this era, the great masters created many works of art depicting the beauty of the surrounding world. The next stage arose against the background of the Industrial Revolution, which was influenced by scientific and technological progress.

Today we live in a world where people are less exposed to nature, thus artists, sculptors, and architects create projects to restore the lost connection, which is bound to impact the further development of our society. Contemporary artists, who have their own unique worldviews, convey in their works various motives of nature in its most varied interpretations. Tomas Saraceno's work is a prime example of the interconnection between



art, nature, and engineering. An exhibition by the Argentine artist took place in 2020 at Palazzo Strozzi in Florence. Installations by Saraceno seek to change our view of reality, often through details we often don't notice. These works were inspired by spectacular objects in nature such as spiders and their webs. We know that spiders sense our world through vibrations and shapes, so most of the exhibition takes place in the dark, that is, the

artist provides the audience with the opportunity to feel the forms of perception. There are different types of shapes in our universe, installations that take on shapes such as balloons give us a visual perception of space. These unusual shapes move the viewer to another time, into a fantasy world, and into different world perspectives.

Another open-air exhibition in Florence's historic city center is *Arrival of the Wolves*. It was held in the Piazza Pitti and Santissima Annunziata public squares.

Zhan Liu's monumental installation depicted angry wolves ready to attack a human being the central figure of this composition. It is thus a metaphor for the relationship between man and nature. This scene interprets the human predatory attitude towards nature, and exploitation of natural resources despite the potential consequences. The sculptor encourages viewers to reflect on values and think about contributions we can make to protect our world. Art shows not only beauty, but also affects the anthropogenic impact on the environment.

Both Florentine exhibitions opened a new perspective on flora and fauna, and the contemporary movement among the city's medieval buildings enthralled visitors throughout 2020. Despite the fact that the modern world is becoming more technological, art continues to remind us that people belong to this world and should care about nature.



Art is the universal language that essentially helps us understand and analyze our connection with creation.





A vibrant tropical scene featuring a large green Monstera leaf with characteristic holes, a pink and yellow orchid flower, and a yellow flower bud.

Community Voices





Interview with Tattoo Artist Bradipo

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CALEB ENGLAND

I was helping a friend, who didn't have much experience with tattoos, to check out a shop and ended up signing up on the spot because I respected the work. Bradipo (Brian) Gonzales is a tattoo artist with a great portfolio of work across multiple styles. I found him easy to collaborate with, committed to his customers rather than pushing his ideas on them.

I heard some great stories when we sat down to talk at Sweaty Betty's Tattoo on Via De'Vellutini, 7R. I recommend stopping by to meet him if you're "in the market."

When and where were you born?

I was born in Peru, South America in 1986.

When and why did you come to Florence?

11 years ago, as soon as I arrived in Europe, I came immediately here to Florence.

Was it the art scene that drew you here?

No, no. I came here as an immigrant so... My goal was to start tattooing right away, but I didn't know exactly how the scene was here in Florence. In Peru, you don't need much to start tattooing. You start tattooing, that's all. Here, there were a lot of documents to do, a license as

well. So at the beginning I wasn't tattooing but just doing random jobs.

Do you think of yourself as an artist, or tattooist specifically?

Uuuhhh...being an artist is a big word right? I think I would like to be better in so many things, when I have free time I try to paint but at the end of the day I'm always finishing things that are related to tattoos. My girlfriend asked me the same thing yesterday, and I was thinking "uff what a question." To be honest, I don't know.

What is your artistic background?

I used to do graffiti when I was in Peru, but I've been tattooing since I was 18 years old. Even if I was just doing a small tattoo for my friends or working in a tattoo shop...when I was in Peru I was tattooing and also attending college splitting my time between both things, but it was when I decided to start taking

tattooing seriously that I started doing more and more."

Do you think Florence influences your style?

When I first arrived in Europe I was doing graffiti so my style was a bit more musical or cartoony. But since I've been in Florence, maybe because everything looks so old, I started to appreciate old-school styles like American Traditional. In some ways yes.

What kind of constraints does tattooing have besides the obvious of not being able to erase and correct work?

Improvisation is the most important, it's also something that my background as a graffiti artist taught me. You can f*** up a line but then you have to work with that and fix it, and make something different and maybe even make it look cooler. You can always make mistakes, but then you have to know how to work

with that mistake and I think you have to be a little clever or think a bit about what you can do with that mistake because it's always gonna happen.

Are there new innovations or movements happening within

It's not just the tattoos you're doing but also your character you're putting out. It's not just what you do, it's who you are.

the tattoo industry?

Nowadays hand poking is really popular, just doing one dot at a time, and I don't like it too much. The trash tattoos, which are tattoos done to look like a bad tattoo. Social media is also a bit annoying, it's not just the tattoos you're doing but also your character you're putting out. It's not just what you do, it's who you are. I remember when I started tattooing there was no Instagram no nothing, our Instagram was one guy on the street trying to sell our tattoos. We called them *jalador* in Spanish, the guys who grab you and get you in a store. Their catch phrase was "Man you look cool! You need a tattoo!" always holding a tattoo magazine in the middle of the street. That was our Instagram. I just get annoyed, I get tired actually. For example, recently I was in Peru and I stopped posting because I was on vacation. I received a lot of messages from my clients thinking I stopped doing tattoos because I wasn't posting photos.

How important is color in your work?

Super important. I also like black and gray tattooing but I really like to work with colors. I often look for contrast in tattoos, and sometimes I forget about logic and I'll put the shadow where it's not supposed to be. But I want that contrast and I like to play with it.

Is there anything that stands out in your career, highs/lows achievements/difficulties?

All the weird stuff that happened was in Peru. Especially when I was starting out in this tattoo shop because I was doing all the tattoos the other artists avoided. I remember once this guy came to the shop looking like a gangster cholo (slang for Latin American tough guys). He said "I want to get a tattoo but you have to come to my place." My boss said yeah you can do it I'll drive you. I arrived in the slums of Lima and it was actually a whole gang who wanted the same tattoo. They wanted the Nike symbol on their cheek, seven of them I remember now.

So you did all seven?

My boss was with me but, yeah...

Is there a goal you still want to achieve within your career?

I just want to keep improving myself. I would like to try to be the best I can be. No goals, I'm pretty happy with what I have now. Work on my craft.

What, if anything, do you dislike about your work/profession/job?

I always have problems with my machines, and I get used to it. I get used to dealing with these technical problems, which eventually become part of the ritual. This machine is not doing what I want and I spend like 5 minutes fixing the machine and then everything goes smoothly. Now it feels like a ritual, okay let's do this. But not really anything I dislike, maybe the social media.

Is there anything you want people to know about you?

I hate fairies! I don't like fairies. You can do a pin-up or a butterfly, but not mix them together.





Interview with Gardening Author Tommaso Turchi

BY BEATRICE RAMASAUSKAITE PHOTOS BY TOMMASO TURCHI

Alignment with nature has always been an important concept of human life, often forgotten in modern day society. Due to the recent pandemic and limitations to connect ourselves with nature, this concept gains a completely new meaning and represents a rebirth in the lives of many.

Tommaso Turchi, a Florentine expert of gardening and balcony-based planting, has dedicated his life and his book *Il Balconorto* to educate the public on accessible and possible alternatives to cultivate in urban spaces. Turchi shares here his thoughtful insights on the importance of gardening, its connection to mental health, and the challenges that he faces in educating society on green topics.

Tell us how you started your career and what steps you took in order to be where you are now. My family introduced me to gardening in my early childhood, and I grew up with a great passion for plants. I would even bring plants and seeds as souvenirs from school trips instead of the usual souvenirs. I started out as a restoration artist. While attending architecture school, I was called to serve in the military but as a conscientious objector I ended up working as a guardian at the Boboli gardens for a year. During that period, I also learned restoration techniques from an artisan. Being at Boboli allowed me



to unite my passions: plants, art, and Florentine history. Afterwards, I began working as an eco-friendly restoration

I work with the synergy that plants share with one another and I aim to create a relationship among the plants so they can function in the same way as they would in nature.

artist and was one of the first in Tuscany to take on this approach. Unfortunately, a scooter accident completely changed my life. I had to stop working for a year and I couldn't walk for six months. Back at home, I turned my attention to plants, books on plants, and planting on my balcony to pass time. This is where my career took a turn, and transformed a passion into my job and life aim. If ten hours a day are spent on the job, I thought I should at least dedicate myself to something I care about. While recovering at home, I began navigating the online forums that led me to create my association, Seed Vicious, which aims to preserve and exchange ancient plant varieties. The networking allowed me to meet the Marchese Pucci who offered me a job to supervise the Pucci terrace vegetable gardens here in Florence, just a few steps away from the FUA-AUF hospitality campus. I've been there ever since, working and refining my personal techniques while being inspired by the principles of permaculture.

What is the main aim of your work?

I work with the synergy that plants share with one another and I aim to create a relationship among the plants so they can function in the same way as they would in nature. In my gardens, I do not add any external or chemical substances, I leave all the work to the plants themselves as my main technique. It is important to acknowledge that two different varieties of plants can thrive together, not causing harm even if planted next to each other. For instance, there are plants that keep harmful insects away, others that attract the helpful ones, and then there are those who enrich the soil while others make it more acidic. I work with an infinite variety of combinations, and through study and experimentation the synergy among plants constantly improves.

Tell us what your typical workday looks like.

It varies from day to day and on the season. In the winter I prepare the soil, summertime is for harvesting. I usually work two or three times a week at the Pucci terraces and as a consultant. In recent years my free time has been dedicated to fixing up an abandoned farmhouse in Reggello. At first, I worked on the house itself, restoring it in an ecological manner, then I started to work on the garden next to the house. I've been able to regenerate the orchards and olive grove, and maintain ancient plant varieties. It's open to the public, and I now hold seminars there.

What changes in people's gardening attitudes have you noticed during the pandemic?

During the first wave, I realized that my year spent indoors after the scooter accident had marked my career shift because it made me understand the need for independence from industrial products. In times of mobility restrictions, if you have a piece of land there's a lower risk of food scarcity and access. I realized that my "private pandemic state" post-accident is now happening to millions of people worldwide. Constrained to their homes, for many the only space for greenery is a balcony. I received several requests to work as a balcony gardener and saw an increase in interest for my book and my advice. All of this confirmed that my career decision ten years ago was not a crazy one.

What are the biggest challenges that you face in your work?

A challenge is to educate people and help them see conventional and new gardening techniques. This is also my ambition and mission, to make people realize that in order to start gardening you just have to start with a few seeds - this is a tradition that human beings have lost in the modern age. My ambitions are thus aimed at kindling the passion of those who have never touched a seed in their life. My challenge is sometimes my own



ambition, since I want to reach as many people as possible.

What is the artistic significance of a garden for you?

I think that a garden is right when it is beautiful or simply equilibrated. In the same way that the woods are a form of art, where one can find the equilibrium of nature. Plants show that in the apparent irrationality there is an exceptional balance. To me, the artistic significance of a garden is directly proportional to how much one is willing to not negatively impact nature while working with it, while recreating a well-balanced and natural

environment without inserting foreign substances. Therefore, it has to be beautiful, natural, and it does not have to hurt the environment. It should not exploit the richness of the earth, as it is finite.

From your experience, do you believe that gardening can be a way to get in touch with one's mental health or a form of meditation?

I encourage people to realize that city life distances us from nature's rhythm. Our modern way of life is not natural. When I began my new life, I realized that I stopped rushing from place to place and started to respect nature's time, and it makes me escape the pace of the modern world. Little things like touching the bare earth, walking on grass, taking care of a plant are ways that help us to reconnect with nature. These moments are hard to come by in a city, and I am convinced that they are crucial experiences for us. However, the connection with nature can be created even when gardening on one's balcony. One ends up re-aligning with nature, acknowledging the climate, going back and realigning with the seasonal rhythm of nature. A crucial point to remember is that you need to be patient with nature. What you produce in the garden is not born out of chance but from one's work, passion, tenacity, and consistency because this is what nature needs. What I realized in my period of personal quarantine is that what you give to nature is given back to you, to the contrary of some human beings. I found that this exchange helps me with my self-worth, organizational skills, and it restores my psyche. I like staying alone in the garden, it tires me physically and allows me to meditate and create a full immersion in what I do. This way my head reaches a void of any worries I might have in that moment, and an awareness of cyclical seasonality is a psychological help. I have many colleagues and friends that work on

this very subject, in permaculture or utilizing agriculture, to help individuals with disabilities, addiction issues, or psychological problems. One should be also aware that there are certain energies and frequencies in nature, in each animal and plant, and these are important elements to acknowledge and experience.

What is your opinion on gardening as a community activity?

Gardening can be done collectively and therefore help face with one's personal issues or problems. While working during the grape or olive harvest season, I have noticed that people come together and talk about anything, from silly jokes to politics. People are constantly glued to their phones even when walking, eating, and while in company. This isn't possible during gardening. Gardening connects people and creates communities. When your hands are busy working the soil, you can't use your phone and suddenly people socialize more in the old-fashioned way.

What would be one piece of advice you would give to people who want to get into gardening?

I would advise them to start on their own balconies with a few seeds of basil or other common aromatics that can be used in cooking. This way one can smell the perfume of their own herbs and this can be the spark that ignites further experimentation that grows over time. You start with a vase on your balcony and when the balcony is full you will look for a plot of land to expand it to. My advice would be to simply begin, improvise, and lean from your own experience.





Interview with Artist Marco Klee Fallani

BY BEATRICE RAMASAUSKAITE

Born in New York City and raised in Florence, the artist bases his creative expression mostly in both painting and sculpture.

The dual background of Italian and American cultures in Marco Klee Fallani's life is not the only reason for which he divides his character in two. As the child of artist parents, he associates his first creative moments with his childhood and his family's visit to Rosso Fiorentino's exhibition in Florence. There he sketched some paintings with his father, who also provided Fallani with fine art education and helped him to develop his painting skills, while the young artist focused on mastering the art of sculpting.

To Fallani, both media of his artistic expression are important as they allow him to explore different sides of himself: sculpture as a form of an objective and physical reality that requires less second thought and more skill, and painting as a more complex form that moves from reality to illusion, creating a world that does not exist and that, according to the artist, is a great

responsibility. "You have to think ahead of time of what kind of illusion you want to transmit, what kind of illusion interests you," notes Fallani, admitting that he does find some frustration in the creative process of painting. "In painting I paint over, I have second thoughts, I get up in the middle of the night and I don't like what I see on my canvas. You're creating a world that does not exist, and what's complicated is that you can easily create something you don't want while it may be difficult to create something you're fine with." He adds that in his 30 years of teaching experience, he sees many artists giving up once they face this creative challenge, followed by another great issue in the arts – the time that artists have to spend alone. According to Fallani, many students get used to the constant exchange between artists and fellow students but once studies have concluded they are left on their own. Working alone must be guided by discipline and being in the studio on one's own terms. Yet he adds that being



Old Radio | Oil on Canvas, 120x60cm, 2000

alone as an artist is both a challenge and a prize, as one can discover a higher level of distraction-free concentration. Once the initial challenge has been overcome, solitude can also be a source of motivation and creative inspiration, as well as an addiction. "There is the saying, 'If you do not like being alone then you are a bad company,' and every artist must be willing to encounter this challenge."

When asked about inspiration, Fallani believes that it is difficult to define or connect to any specific triggers. He often finds inspiration in his concentration when alone yet sometimes splashes of ideas for new paintings can arise in social environments: "Inspiration is a weird beast. You have no idea where it comes from." Fallani draws a

parallel between artistic inspiration and cooking, another passion of his.

The ideas for a painting, a sculpture, or a recipe start developing in his head like little bits and pieces that later build themselves into a collage and a more complete, concrete idea in his mind. The more he thinks about it, the ways and possibilities to make it become more realistic. "It is something that you build up in your mind that does not exist at all. It is totally constructed in your mind as

without any interruption. Another organizational ritual cleaning his palette from the previous day, organizing his brushes, or simply sweeping the floor. The mundane, thoughtless actions ease him into the zone, in the discipline and in a way of forgetting the outside world as he prepares for studio time. Contrarily, he describes his studio as a chaos where he knows where each item is located and thus represents an orderly way that works for the artist in his creative explorations.

different ways of applying paint, wax, or other materials. One of the best parts of artistic research is the element of surprise, if one is lucky. "I like to find work that I did not know I was able to do or that I was ever going to do, so there is a whole side of research that is fundamental for me, because it is very fun." As he rarely paints from life or refers to real objects and uses his imagination to depict an inexistent world emerging from his subconscious, it is thus a success when he manages to surprise himself with his works. However, he also adds that "... without making mistakes and failures, there would be no challenge or fun. If you quickly learn how to create a masterpiece, it would be boring to make only masterpieces; it would be just production."

Without making mistakes and failures, there would be no challenge or fun.

Organization for Fallani involves the preparation of ideas followed by a process of research. The word creativity itself is very self-

an idea, an imagination, a fantasy, and then if you keep thinking about it you find a way to actually create it." However, the process is not only based on collecting creative ideas - organization also plays a rather important role in the creative routine. One of Fallani's rituals is trimming down bureaucracy by responding to emails and organizing his day at the computer before painting or sculpting. This way he gains the freedom of a good 5 or 6 hours to dedicate to art

explanatory according to the artist, as it means creating something from nothing. As often happens in the contemporary art world in which one wants to create something that has never been seen before, Fallani believes that one must research and not base the work on what's already known. That is why he sees research being fundamental to the creative process, along with production, as it allows the artist to play around with materials, techniques, chemical reactions, and

Although the execution of a piece can be time-consuming, Fallani admits that the process of its creation is what actually thrills him. He believes that the result shows if the artist experienced enjoyment in the process of creation and maintained self-honesty. "Art is unforgiving," he says, "It always reveals when you are trying to please others or yourself." On the other hand, he agrees that being an artist in the 21st century is also about



Man and dog on beach | 60x120cm oil on canvass 2013





being a figure, often based on fame or a commercial, social image.

“That is not my aim, it is not what keeps me up at night,” he says, emphasizing that self-honesty is one of his creative aims as an artist. “I believe it is much more interesting to focus on the poetic common thread of existence with people and to communicate beyond language and culture with as many individuals as possible. To send a very contemplative, reassuring message of how interesting it is to be a human being on this Earth – this is my biggest aim in art.”

Fallani often tests himself, his ideas, and new ways of communication through diverse art media. From animation to videos and writing, photography, poetry, and experimental music, Fallani continues to look for ways to artistically surprise himself and transcend a new sense of creativity that materializes his ideas from imagination to reality, always in different ways and colors.

Old Radio | Oil on Canvas, 120x60cm, 2000



A vibrant floral arrangement featuring a large yellow flower with a textured center, a purple flower with a dark center, and various green foliage including monstera and ferns. The word "Travel" is written in a white, cursive font across the top right.

Travel



DON'T LOOK DOWN

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TROY JOINER

Could rock climbing be prescribed as an effective therapy for depression? A new form of therapy is being implemented in clinics worldwide.

Anyone who really knows me would not likely mistake me for a mountaineer. On any other ordinary day here in Tuscany, you would be more likely to find me in Lucca soaking up the sun at a café in the Anfiteatro Romano, strolling the cobblestone streets, or casually pedaling a bicycle atop the city's medieval walls. Today however, I am Sir Edmund Hillary, I am George Mallory, and I have soared to heights where only eagles dare.

Today, I sit here at the peak of Mount Sumbra in the Parco delle Alpi Apuane. From this lofty perch, a mere 1800 meters above sea level, the view and the accompanying sense of exhilaration is beyond imagination. It's easy to imagine oneself as one of the great explorers, a pioneer, a discoverer of natural wonders. Never mind that the well-attended parking area, the casual approach, and the Ferrata Malfatti di Sumbra I've traversed earlier in the day, is generally considered to be a beginner or entry-level introduction to an activity known as Ferrata Climbing.

The Vie Ferrate or "Iron Ways," named for and characterized by the iron stakes, ladders, and chains chiseled into the rocky faces and crags of the mountain, were originally a network of rudimentary climbing routes installed and utilized by WWI Italian Alpine soldiers and WWII partisan freedom fighters. Today they provide similar access to more casual and moderately experienced adventurers. Without the Ferrata, these spectacular views would be reserved for only the most daring of mountaineers present and past.

From this awe-inspiring perspective, it's difficult to imagine the chaos and violence of the wars that fueled the necessity to construct these iron passageways. It is equally challenging to carry to the summit one's own inner conflicts. Regardless of the mood, concerns, or thoughts I might have left home with earlier in the day, they have all changed on the way up. It's hard to point to any one euphoric element: the adrenaline, the crisp fresh air, the breathtaking view, the combined sense of both danger and accomplishment or perhaps it is simply the timelessness of the mountain itself that belittles all my troubles and soothes my mind.

The connection between an active lifestyle and regular exercise, combined with nature and the great outdoors, and how these can positively impact a person's mood and mental health is considered to be common knowledge these days. Countless studies show that not only does exercise build aerobic capacity, muscular mass, and endurance, it also has a profound impact on one's mental wellbeing. Improved memory, stress management, increased energy, better sleep, a positive self-image, and a boost in overall mood are just a few of the associated benefits.

Research indicates that exercise can be a powerful tool in treating mild to moderate depression, oftentimes more effectively than antidepressants minus the side effects. For example, one recent Harvard study discovered that running for 15 minutes a day or walking for an hour reduced the risk of clinical depression by 26%.

Science suggests that regular physical activity promotes many beneficial changes in the brain from neural growth to reduced inflammation, and perhaps most importantly, the production of endorphins (powerful chemicals that energize mood and positive feelings). Finally, regular exercise provides a distraction from the cycle of stressors, anxieties and negative thoughts that lead to and feed depression.

One doesn't need to be a fitness freak, body builder, or an Olympic hopeful to reap the mental rewards. From a rigid routine of yoga, running, cycling, and swimming, to merely a simple stroll several times a week during your lunch hour can make a huge difference. In study after study, all of these neurological benefits (and more) have been well established.

With this in mind, a duo of researchers, Eva-Maria Stelzer, a psychologist at the University of Arizona, and Katharina Luttenberger at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, conducted a pair of studies, enlisting a total of 100 people, almost all of which were new to climbing, in a new therapeutic theory subsequently dubbed Bouldering Intervention. The pair recruited volunteers (patients from two psychiatric hospitals) from Erlangen, Germany. Half of the participants immediately began a regular routine of bouldering, which involves climbing rocks or walls to a moderate height without ropes or a harness, while the other half did not begin right away. The results indicated a remarkable disparity in the overall progress of the two groups. The research prompted some psychiatric hospitals in Germany to use indoor rock climbing as a psychotherapeutic intervention for depression and anxiety.

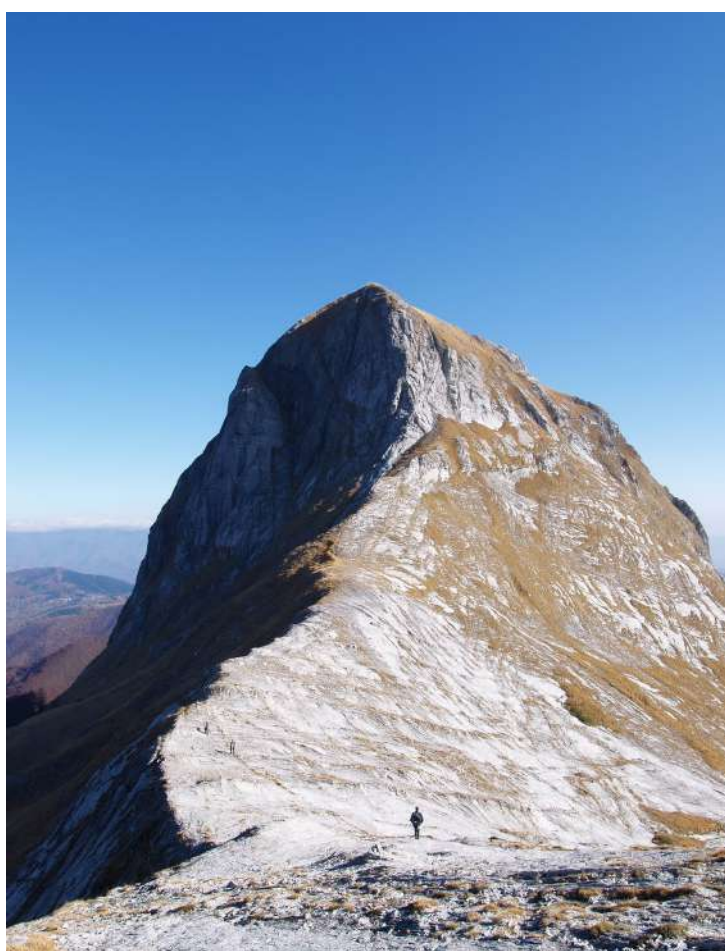
There is more research to be done but the practice is showing promise. Exactly why this therapy appears to be particularly effective is still speculative. "You have to be mindful and focused

"It's not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves."

- Sir Edmund Hillary

on the moment. It does not leave much room to let your mind wander on things that may be going on in your life - you have to focus on not falling," Stelzer said, adding that many people who suffer depression are also dealing with a feeling of isolation. Climbing, by nature, has a strong social component attached. Instilling trust and reliance on each other provides yet another therapeutic tool in the battle against depression.

Mindful of the Tuscan sun inching closer to the horizon, I retrace in my mind, the journey to the top of this mountain and recalculate the return trip back down to earth. I realize it's time to go. I will leave pondering life's endless possibilities with fresh new insight and optimism. Content in the knowledge that every time I ascend a peak such as this, I come back down feeling better equipped and a more complete person.



Villa Demidoff

A Magnificent Wedding Gift and Romantic Public Garden

BY ANH NGUYEN

From a magnificent wedding gift to one of Florence's most romantic gardens, Villa Demidoff is a lush oasis where reflection and artistic contemplation unite in green harmony.

Located a few kilometers from the city center, Villa Demidoff, originally called the Medicean Paggeria of Pratolino, is one of the most beautiful parks in Tuscany. The park is known for its history and nature, along with many incredible works of art and architecture from the 15th century. Many original works are still standing despite the loss of features such as the main villa, two Italian gardens, and several sculptures, statues, pools and caves. The massive *Appennine Colossus* statue by Giambologna is one of the park's key features. Made from stone and brick, it depicts a giant by the edge of the *Fountain of Mugnone* who seems to crush the head of a snake. There are also the beautiful Chapel and the Cupid's Grotto by Buontalenti that can be visited on a regular basis, while others must be specially requested such as the Maschera fishpond, the *Fountain of Jupiter*, and the *Lodge of Montili*.



Thanks to its survival over several centuries, the park boasts important tree varieties including the silver fir, large oak, old cedars, momenta trees, and horse chestnuts.

There are also diverse species of fauna and flora throughout the park. One can easily sight a deer, foxes, and hares in the vegetation along some of the more isolated and less frequented paths.

Romance has been associated with the Demidoff gardens since the property's inception. When the Grand Duchy of Tuscany was established in 1568, Francesco I de' Medici bought the estate and transformed it according to the principles of luxury and beauty with the help of architect Bernardo Buontalenti. The result was a splendid wedding gift from Francesco to his second wife, Bianca Cappello. During the 15th and 16th centuries, gardens were an important display of power and wealth for noble families. Buontalenti worked on the garden from 1569 to 1581, and the property was first presented publicly during Francesco and Bianca's wedding in 1579. The garden represents the Mannerist styles and Renaissance architectural norms of the time, and eventually claimed the title of "the Tuscan Versailles" for its luxury and beauty.

The property was the largest estate belonging to the Medici family. After the death of Francesco and Bianca, the garden was abandoned by the Medici family. In the early 19th century, the Grand Duke Ferdinand III decided to bring the garden back to life again. Ferdinand III decided to demolish the villa and hired the Bohemian engineer Joseph Fritsch, who redesigned the garden in 1819 according to the English style of landscapes that represented a more natural and less symmetric idealization of nature. After the redesign, the garden claimed a new title, the most romantic garden in Tuscany.

Fifty years later, the property was sold by the Grand Duke Leopold II to the Russian prince Pavel Pavlovi Demidov, who changed its name to Villa Demidoff di Pratolino in 1872. Later in 1981, the Council of the Province of Florence bought back the garden and turned it into a public park.







FOODS & WINE

Growing Together at the Orti Dipinti

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TAYLOR SAMUELS

As time goes on and technologies advance, we evolve and adapt our lifestyles to our ever-changing surroundings. Sometimes, the best thing to do when problems arise under these circumstances is to go back to our roots.

Our ancestors seemed to know what they were doing, as many of their practices were natural and sustainable. Food production is just one of the many factors of adaptation that have greatly changed over time, and surely some large issues came along with it.

Agriculture, the practice of growing food, is a method used since the beginning of time from hunter-gatherers who harvested crops to individuals cultivating small-scale gardens on their land. It is how humans have known to feed themselves through nutrient-dense fruits and vegetables, leading to the large-scale factory farming techniques used today. The commercial agriculture and factory farming methods that are practiced presently bring along with them a number of negative health,

environmental, and ethical effects. Mass-produced can often contain a lesser amount of nutrients, or they contain harmful chemicals like pesticides. Livestock on factory farms produce significant amounts of methane and carbon dioxide, and these greenhouse gases play a huge role in the increase of climate change.

Furthermore, employees can often work under harsh conditions and are usually paid low wages for intensive labor. While the majority of produce in supermarkets today come from commercial agriculture, old strategies are making quite the comeback.

As people return to their roots and learn the benefits of traditional cultivation, the processes look back to ways that have worked for centuries, and do good to both humans and the Earth. I recently



visited a place that does just that - a community garden here in Florence called Orti Dipinti. Entering the garden is a serene step outside of the urban environment we are used to in the city center. The entrance area is lined with trees and benches where members of the public can come to experience a change of scenery. In the back area is where Orti Dipinti operates, allowing participants to grow their own vegetables and bond with others

who share the same interest. Members are incredibly friendly and willing to share their knowledge with you, creating a space that feels welcoming and exciting. Flowers, tomatoes, herbs, and fruits grow abundantly and add beautiful colors to the already green environment.

I had the pleasure of speaking with Giacomo Salizzoni, who runs Orti Dipinti, about what the garden stands for and the goals that it hopes to achieve.



There's a focus on benefitting from the nutrition of the produce while using the most sustainable methods and teaching others how to do the same. One interesting thing that the garden does is to allow plants to live their whole life cycle, for example, from planting to flowering, harvest, and seed collection. This allows for people to observe the way the whole plant grows, and see as many parts of its life cycle that they can benefit from. Renewable energy, water safety and management, and food security are amongst a few of the things they practice. For example, the planters at Orti Dipinti have created a system of clay pots that water the soil effectively, allowing both water and oxygen to reach the roots of the plant. One unique part about Orti Dipinti is the experimentation with creating sustainable solutions for urban spaces. The produce from Orti Dipinti not only feeds people, but also provides meals for numerous events, allowing people to bond, learn, and grow alongside the fruits and vegetables.

Salizzoni also spoke about his own plant-based diet as a healthy and ethical choice. Cultivating one's own produce also helps with resources such as time and money. Italian food culture is rooted in many traditions, both plant and meat/dairy-based, and Orti Dipinti seeks to educate others and encourage an interest in the important role of plants in nutrition. The garden has a mission for creating change, and demonstrates how a single community garden can generate over time a positive impact on public health and the environment itself.



I left Orti Dipinti with more knowledge than I had ever anticipated, and gained a sense of influence to be more sustainable on my part. By rediscovering the practices of small-scale agriculture and horticulture, people are able to expand their opportunity for community growth while creating nutrient-rich produce in a sustainable and ethical way. Culinary traditions in Italy and elsewhere are given an opportunity to grow and evolve in the ways that the Earth needs them to.



A dense, vibrant collage of tropical plants and flowers. The background is filled with various green foliage, including large, deeply lobed Monstera leaves with characteristic holes. Interspersed among the leaves are several bright yellow and orange flowers, including a large, multi-petaled flower in the bottom left and a smaller, more delicate one in the middle right. A single, bright red bird is visible in the upper left quadrant, partially obscured by the leaves. The overall composition is rich and layered, creating a sense of a lush, tropical environment.

Fashion



From Flower Crowns to Flower Gowns

BY CARLY FROMMER PHOTOS COURTESY OF UNSPLASH

For centuries people have used floral patterns in fashion, from fabric, and silk, to lace, and embroidery, these flower prints never seem to go out of trend.

Individuals worldwide can relate to their love of flowers, especially in fashion. With every new season comes a new collection, and this season is no different from the last, flowers are all the rage. From the likes of Zara and H&M to high-end fashion brands such as Gucci and Zimmermann, floral prints never seem to leave the inventory. However, floral patterns made their way into fashion long before Gucci, Prada, and Chanel existed. This trend is nowhere near new, it has been around for decades, even centuries. Women and men in history have always used flowers in fashion and accessories as a way to represent symbolic as well as personal expression.

A prominent use of flowers in history was during the times of the Ancient Greeks and Romans. Crowns fashioned from leaves were given to victors during competitions, such as the Olympics, to symbolize a win. Greek and Roman women adopted the concept and made it more feminine by adding beads and flowers. For special occasions and festivities, real flowers were worn on dresses and flower crowns in their hair to add beauty and aroma. These flower crowns were meant to honor the gods during special events.

With the rise of Christianity during the Roman Empire, flower crowns lost popularity throughout the Middle Ages due to their association with paganism. Further east, however, flowers were still on the rise in Asia. The floral patterned fabric came into fashion in China during the 12th century, and embroidery embellished clothing through flower and nature scenes sewn into the medium of silk. Middle Eastern and Asian countries quickly adopted this approach, and the development of Eastern-Western trade eventually allowed flower patterns to travel the world and Europeans to obtain silk and other useful textiles to replicate the designs.





With the rise of the 15th and 16th centuries, lace became another way to incorporate flowers into fashion. Lace finishing on garments was produced throughout Italy. Venice and Florence especially were known for the exquisite lacework that lined the edges of clothing. India, on the other hand, was using a different floral pattern approach. In the 17th century, chintz was introduced. Chintz-cottons are shiny fabrics with painted flower patterns on them. British and Dutch colonial merchants became extremely wealthy by buying and selling them to European countries until 18th century British manufacturers devised production methods for a lower price. During the 19th century, the industrial revolution brought about the mass production of chintz, often utilized for women's dresses and men's dress coats.

By the 20th century, flowers in fashion were portrayed in many ways including embroidery, lace, and printed fabrics. The mid and late-1900s were times when flower fashion blossomed. During the '60s and '70s, "flower power" was at an all-time high and the use of the retro flower pattern was seen on many different garments. The trend took a break during the '80s marked by neons, spandex, and high-waisted jeans. But in the '90s, flowers came back into style, especially in the form of tropical flower patterns. Flowers in 21st century fashion are here to stay. Flower-embroidered jeans and printed leggings gained popularity in the early 2000s, and fashion shows began to incorporate real floral decorations and inspirations that got positive feedback from the public. Luxury designers continue to use floral patterns and prints in collections, such as Gucci's iconic flower design. But perhaps the most prominent and consistent way that flowers have been used this century is through lingerie. Lacework and floral details are abundant in this sector, and brands such as Victoria Secret, Intimissimi, and Coco de Mer have thrived on the floral aspects of lingerie.

Nowadays floral prints are everywhere in fashion from garments to accessories and shoes. Even though floral patterns and pattern styles can go in and out of style, they are an eternal trend that will never fully leave the fashion world. But why are floral designs such a recurring phenomenon? I personally believe it is because of how real flowers, gardens, and nature makes one feel. Pure happiness and joy erupt from looking at a flower and being around them, so why not put these images on clothing? Flowers and nature are not only visually and emotionally appealing, they have the power to evoke calmness, serenity, and peaceful emotional states. Making flowers wearable is one of the many ways fashion has the opportunity to positively impact people's moods and outlooks.







Autumn





Alumni Interview with Jessica Miranda

BY THE FUA-AUF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
PHOTOS COURTESY OF JESSICA MIRANDA

Tell us about yourself and when you studied in Florence.

My name is Jessica Miranda. I'm from Buffalo, New York, and I studied criminology at SUNY Courtland New York. I studied at FUA in the spring of 2015.

Tell us about your profession and/or what you have been up to since you left Florence.

I graduated in May 2018. I worked at an afterschool program for the town of Amherst and I did assistant teaching for dance in Buffalo. In



February 2019 I moved to Disney World in Orlando to work there as a performer.

Why did you choose to study in Florence?

I always wanted to go to Italy. Once I found out about the study abroad opportunity, I decided to look into it. My roots are Italian so I wanted to learn the language, try the food, and FUA-AUF happened to offer a human rights course that counted for my major.

Did you have any particular community engagement opportunities while at FUA-AUF?

I did an English teaching program through the community outreach initiative, I loved it. I taught 3 and 4-year-olds English while learning Italian at the same time.

What did you do at FUA-AUF that helped you in your career and/or in your personal growth?

It helped me become more confident and independent in my growth. I

gained a lot of world experiences by going to different countries and trying different things. It was a great opportunity and I'll have great

memories to look back on, and of course I got to come back as an alumni so that was pretty cool.

Have you traveled with FUA-AUF? How was it?

Yes, we went to Sicily and it was really awesome because part of my family is from Sicily. It was cool to see where my family is from and see that specific part of Italy.

What are your favorite FUA-AUF memories?

I met one of my best friends here. We actually met at the Italian Consulate before we got here but then we kept in touch. I still talk to my former roommates occasionally.

What would you say to any future students looking into FUA-AUF and Florence?

Do it. Even if you want to but are still unsure, you should do it.

Describe your experience with one word.

Unforgettable.

What are your plans for the future?

Working at Disney World and seeing where that will take me next.



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