

BLENDING

MAGAZINE

THE SEMESTERLY MAGAZINE OF FLORENCE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS / SPRING 2021 / YEAR 11 ISSUE 1

The Possible City

ART | LITERATURE | COMMUNITY | TRAVEL | FOOD & WINE | FASHION | ALUMNI



Letter From The Editors

As spring sweeps through the city, we cannot stop thinking about change.

The current season crosses the hills, parks and even small patches of grass surrounded by concrete as they shed the dreary coat of winter. Hints of floral fragrances float through the narrow streets and squares. Any change in the environment stimulates us to change ourselves, and with such input we want to see what new possibilities are in front of us. A first place where we start to look for them may be the spaces that we inhabit. The current issue's theme aims at exploring this very idea - "The Possible City" is a meditation on how we can rethink the urban environment of Florence, the new communities we can find or form, how to render the city more sustainable, and the possibilities we have yet to conceive.

We are proud to share with readers the product of a semester-long collaboration between FUA-AUF students, instructors, and staff. Our Spring 21 writers explored the city of Florence by seeking new communities, observing city changes, and looking for the new possibilities in the city. In the art section, artists re-think the concept of space for exhibits. The community section showcases Florentine start-ups aiming to create more secure and sustainable communities. The travel section meditates on how the future of travel and tourism might change in the Florentine context.

Before you start reading this issue, we want you to leave you with a quote from Kurt Vonnegut's *Timequake*: "You were sick, but now you're well again, and there's work to do."

We believe in the necessity of embracing change and innovation moving forward, and an important first step for the FUA-AUF campus is to explore change alongside our students.

Happy Reading,

The Blending Staff

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Final Student Exhibit

This issue's "The Possible City" 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.



Rory Torstensson, "תובושת שפחמ" – *Searching for Answers*, Exploratory Digital Photography Experiential Learning, 2021



Rory Torstensson, "תובושת שפחמ" – *Searching for Answers*, Exploratory Digital Photography Experiential Learning, 2021



Demi Harris, *Just a Phase*, Exploratory Digital Photography Experiential Learning, 2021



Demi Harris, *Invisible Cities*, Exploratory Digital Photography Experiential Learning, 2021

A black and white photograph of a classical painting displayed in a stone niche. The painting depicts a woman on the left holding a large, dark, textured object, and a man on the right in a draped garment. The scene is set outdoors with trees and a building in the background. The word "ART" is overlaid in a white, serif font in the center of the image.

ART

Art in the time of the Coronavirus: Interview with Nicoletta Salomon

By Clara Pillard

Art by Nicoletta Salomon

FUA-AUF Faculty Member Nicoletta Salomon, a writer, a painter, and a specialist in aesthetic philosophy and the classical world, trained as a Greek historian at the Scuola Normale in Pisa. She has done research in Paris, Tübingen, and Princeton, and taught aesthetics at the University of Florence. Her work is represented by the art gallery Immaginaria, Florence-Berlin, and is also found in private collections.

It is through her emotional landscape, music, and nature that the artist asserts her independence. Nicoletta expresses her art through color. This one emphasizes the matter, the thickness, and the emotion. The diversity of nature enriches her creative enthusiasm and allows her to unite with her subject in a committed pictorial expression. To paint is to breathe, to breathe is to live. All art is an evolution, each work is a new step. This summer, the Palazzi Community Center will be featuring an exhibition of Nicoletta's recent work. We interviewed the writer-painter to help you discover the artist behind the palette that transports us to unknown horizons.

What is your most significant childhood memory?

I grew up among brushes and the smell of oil painting and turpentine, as my father was a painter. I remember trying to imitate his traditional landscape paintings with my markers or oil pastels as a child.

What does your workplace - your studio - look like?

I am a colorist, I experience colors as visual translations of my inner emotional landscape. As I sense the energy

of each color pairing with specific emotions, I usually need instrumental music to enhance their interplay during my painting sessions. When I am working on a series, I obsessively listen to the very same instrumental pieces, dancing their rhythm with my brushstrokes.

What were your first steps into the world of art?

I spent years studying, not even thinking about making art, to discover later, during traveling and living abroad, that I felt attracted by Nicholas de Staël's research between abstraction and figurative painting, and by Mark Rothko's meditative color field painting.

My adventure with professional painting had begun.

A meaningful work to you?

In its Art Department, FUA-AUF hosts a permanent collection of large canvases I created during a year of clashing energies and conflicts, which now pierce through thick and vibrant impasto gesture works, painted while listening to Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" and his tone poem "Night on the Bare Mountain."

What are the main subjects in your upcoming exhibition?

The work I am presenting in the upcoming exhibition, *Almost Nothing*, marks a turning point in my research. While painting, I have been listening to the silence wrapping the city of Florence during the pandemic: no music was playing in my studio. *Almost Nothing* strips down the surface of things, aiming to reach their bones, the way I think we all are guided to do now.

What do you want to express in your work? What is your message?

My palette has dramatically veered to muted and lighter colors, hosted by unprimed canvases, reduced to an intimate

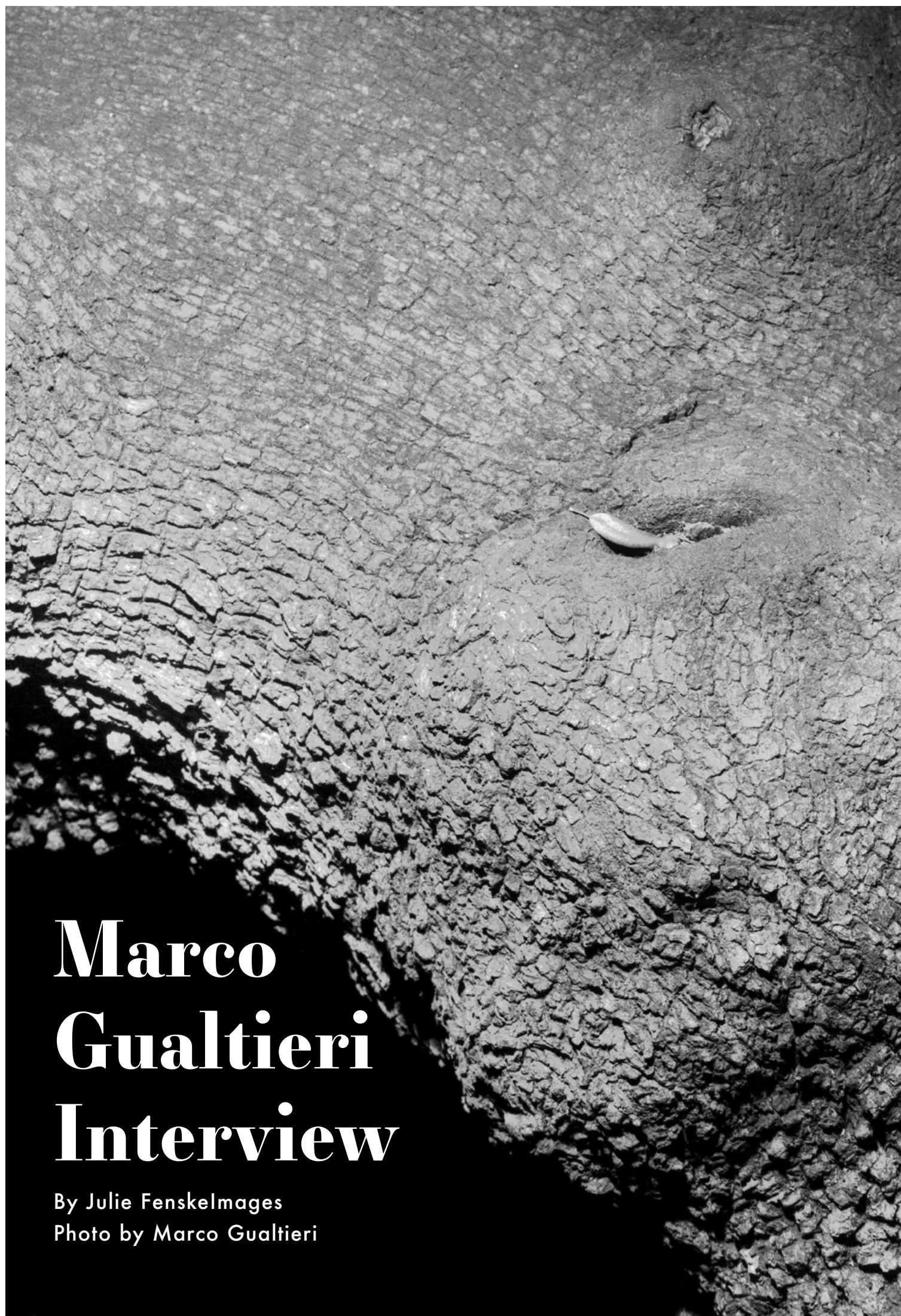
small size, that calls for private fruition. The almost nothing that I have experienced and performed on canvas has a living core to it and I can sense it as a subtle movement, sometimes quiet, other times crisp, and both circular and oriented to a possible horizon.

Do you define your work as abstract or figurative?

I would like the viewer to read my paintings as figurative, abstract, or "in-between," depending on their need and background, as the visible world is always both figurative and abstract simultaneously.



Nicoletta Salomon, #5, mixed media on canvas, cm. 90 x 90, 2020



Marco Gualtieri Interview

By Julie Fenskelimages
Photo by Marco Gualtieri

FUA-AUF professor Marco Gualtieri is interested in spaces — natural, familial, liminal, personal.

His photography emphasizes his relationship to these spaces, and as a professor, he's passing on his knowledge to the next generation of photographers who might capture the possibilities of our world.

Educated in Bologna and Rome in the areas of Visual Arts and Cinematography, Gualtieri uses his knowledge of cinematic elements like lighting and composition to elevate his photographs and their subjects. He lived and worked in the United States for the last decade, where he shot his collection of American landscapes and "Collateral Images," his study of an immigrant mother and son. He'll expand his photographic relationship with nature in his upcoming exhibit at Corridorio Fiorentino, where he will showcase prints from an ongoing project about trees. After he moved out of downtown Florence, he found inspiration from long walks in nature and wanted to capture the expressiveness and variety of the trees he observed. In his teaching life, Gualtieri hopes to pass on the qualities of art and photography as an avenue for personal expression, and the collaborative setting of the photography classroom lends itself to mutual inspiration for both Gualtieri and his students.

What inspired you to seek out photography as a career path? What does photography mean to you?

Photography was my father's hobby, and sometimes I would pick his 35mm camera and explore how the world looks like photographed. Fascinated by movies, I picked cinema studies in college, learning how to operate a movie camera and how to tell a story with lighting. Eventually, the magic mystery of photography and its evocative power convinced me that still images are my favorite means of expression.

Your work explores liminal spaces and the idea of space apart from the activities that define it. What interests you about these spaces?

I think I hope to discover hidden passages to connect, through the photograph, the viewer's mental spaces with those places captured in the images. The liminal nature of the spaces I believe facilitates the relationship between the viewer and the photographs.

You explored this topic with American landscapes in your 2016 collection, *Enter Paradise*. What do you think these photographs reveal about the American mood at the time they were taken?

Enter Paradise is a series of landscapes that capture my perception of America: it's a mosaic composed of my preconceived idea of the US that I formed through movies and the constructed image that the American society wants to project of itself. It's a walk through Paradise, maybe.

In your 2015 collection *Collateral Images*, you capture a mother and son who recently obtained political asylum and are striving towards a better life in America. How did you go about capturing these photos of their daily lives and their relationship?

Jinan and Mohammed allowed me in their personal space and with time I was able to capture moments of their daily lives from a close distance. It's an extraordinary experience to capture somebody's life through photographs, and at some point, I felt so close to them that I started to project my experience and my emotions on them while I was photographing. At that point, I felt I crossed the line of being a photojournalist and that made me think that my purpose in photography was more artistic.

What are you working on now?

On my archive and on the prints for the *Alberi* exhibition which will be made in the traditional darkroom.

How has your work changed or your idea of your work changed due to the effects of the pandemic?

Lots of studying and a good dive into my archive. I had time to reorganize and make some plans for the future. Now I hope we can move forward and begin exploring the world again.

What is a moment that stands out to you from your career thus far?

I don't think I had a moment of a peak in my career, it was all quite consequential with some setbacks and some important events that shaped my path so far.

You're currently living in Florence and teaching at FUA-AUF. What inspired you to teach, and what inspires you in your photography today?

Teaching gives me the opportunity to keep studying and exploring, theoretically and practically, the visual arts. By sharing my experience with students and receiving their fresher approach to personal expression, teaching is very stimulating for me.

What lessons or ideas do you hope to pass on to your students?

I hope they find their way to be creative and understand how art can be a way to express themselves, no matter what their career is.

What do you hope audiences take away from viewing your work?

I hope they feel invited in the spaces I capture and desire to initiate a dialogue with the photographs. I hope they feel invited in the spaces I capture and desire to initiate a dialogue with the photographs.

The New Spaces For Art

By Danelia Rodriguez Santana

Photo by Demi Harris

The pandemic has affected many cultural spheres, the art sphere among them. With the closing of museums, there have been limited opportunities for the public to engage in art. The risk of over-tourism in the post pandemic era is also a concern in Florence. However, alternatives are available for art to survive and interact with the viewer. One of the most used ways to access art differently has been through virtual exhibitions, one of the most recent ones being Salvatore Ferragamo's *Silk Exhibition*.

The museum made the virtual tour as interactive as possible with a user-friendly interface and the ability for text closeups as well as different visual angles. The images were of extremely high quality and three-dimensional pieces had a 360° view. They also had videos that were projected at the exhibition and audio guides.

While virtual exhibitions are one way to make art more accessible there are also other methods. Sculptures and installations in public spaces are another alternative. A good example of this could be the annual installation that is placed at Piazza della Signoria, this year's being the spruce sculpture of Giuseppe Penone in honor of the

700th anniversary of Dante's death and as a sample of his upcoming exhibition at the Uffizi.

Palazzo Strozzi also unveiled an installation.

The Wound, created by French artist JR, is exhibited on the outside of the palace and is viewable from one of its walls. The installation features a black and white collage of a "wound" in the palazzo showing what could be inside. JR chose this to represent how art and cultural spaces have been affected by the pandemic.

The Uffizi recently announced that it is planning on spreading out its exhibits throughout Tuscany, calling the project "Uffizi Diffusi." With this project, museum officials plan to spread out exhibits from 60 to 100 locations throughout Tuscany. This would not only relieve Florence from mass tourism but it would also make tourists go to other areas and incentivize tourism in lesser-known parts of Tuscany. Although it has been a difficult time for the art scene, it has also been a time to reflect and consider new, better alternatives that will be able to balance tourism and encourage financial growth throughout Tuscany.





LITERATURE

Based on an Untrue Story

By Liliia Smichenko

Illustration by Carly Frommer



In hopes of better understanding the present and where it leads, the writers of different epochs fantasized about the future of the cities and described them in literature. Each saw their own. One saw a picture-perfect place of harmony, the other saw a ruin, and the third saw a familiar place.

Thomas More's *Utopia* was one of the first to bring out the idea of imaginary far away lands and is often credited as an establisher of the utopian genre. Utopia, by definition, is a place where the author idealizes not the individuals or the land, but the social structure in an imaginary city. More wrote his book in England during the Age of Discovery in Europe, the exploration of new routes and new land. The atmosphere was filled with the sense of possibility and hope in human progress.

Utopia tells a story of the character Thomas More, who serves as an ambassador of England in the Netherlands. There he meets an old man called Raphael Hythloday, who has traveled to the New World, and where he met Utopians. They were the people from the prosperous land of Utopia, the most perfect place in Hythloday's opinion. He describes the place as an island artificially isolated by a canal, to separate it from the mainland. All the cities are identical to each other except for Amaurote, the capital located in the center of the island. Amaurote is a city of two-square miles surrounded by thorn-filled trenches on the three sides and the river on the fourth. What was so fascinating for Hythloday was that Utopians collectively shared their resources, worked together the same amount of time for the good of the community, had a very simple law system and were respectful of each other's religious beliefs. However, for the protagonist not everything sounds so great about the place such as shared property ownership and the absence of money. More still thinks that the European cities as they were at the time could use some of the Utopia's ideas of the society structure.

Utopia was a stepping stone for many other works of literature about journeys to imaginary places, one of them being *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift. Swift was an Irish lawyer from Dublin, who was involved in and eventually critiqued the religion and the politics of his time in England. The power shifted back and forth, while the readers were hungry for stories of the exploration of the new land and colonies claimed for England. The story is based on the English surgeon Lemuel Gulliver, who took off to see the world, making journeys to four peculiar lands. On the first trip he ends up in Lilliput, where all men are the size of a toothpick. On the second, he meets the land of Brobdingnag, a complete opposite of Lilliput, the land of giants. One of the most fantastical journeys of all, Gulliver

encounters the island Laputa, a flying land up in the air held by a lodestone in the center of it. The fourth and final journey brings Gulliver to the land where horses are above human kind.

Swift wrote *Gulliver's Travels* as a satire of the popular travel narrative and the people who believed everything that was written in those books, even when it wasn't accurate or was elaborated on in retellings. It was also a satire of the political and religious situation of the time. Swift was trying to point out the problems in England of the time by exaggerating the descriptions of imaginary countries.

Invisible Cities by Italo Calvino was written much later than *Utopia* and *Gulliver's Travels*, yet it still touched on the same topics and ideas. Calvino lived to see the world drastically change during World War Two and its aftermath. He wrote the book during the times of "intellectual depression" in his life after the loss of a friend and cultural revolution in France, where he resided at the time.

Invisible Cities is a story of a famous Venetian merchant and traveler, Marco Polo, and his travels across Asia in the 13th century. Marco Polo describes the cities he'd seen to Mongolian emperor Kublai Khan, who listens attentively but is still skeptical of the stories. All the cities have their peculiar properties that are indeed hard to imagine, such as Despina, a city that looks different depending on where a traveler comes from, or Zora, an unforgettable city that never changes, or Zirna, a city that repeats itself yet each person remembers different things. Those cities are not the ones that could be found on a map; Polo describes them not by their sights and streets, but by their ideas. "You take delight not in a city's seven or seventy wonders but in the answer it gives to a question of yours," says Marco Polo to the emperor.

Many stories later, the Mongolian emperor points out that the merchant didn't mention his home Venice. Marco Polo realizes that he described Venice in each and every story he's told. Unlike Swift's character Gulliver who is not too fond of his homeland and is always quick to leave, Calvino's Polo would always come back to Venice in his body or mind.

Calvino still critiqued modern consumerism and media culture in his work, referencing Thomas More's *Utopia*. Many authors try to bring out the problems that surround them by writing a work of fiction, fantasizing about what could be done or undone. As a result, with a closer look, the reader might see this work of fiction being truer and more realistic than any other work of literature.

Vernon Lee: An Unlikely Florentine

By Danelia Rodriguez

Portrait of Violet Paget by John Singer Sargent



Born in France in 1856 to British parents, Violet Page began her writing career as Vernon Lee. She wrote for an English audience even though she lived most of her life away from England. By her early 20s, she had already become a reputable writer and had relations with other writers of the time.

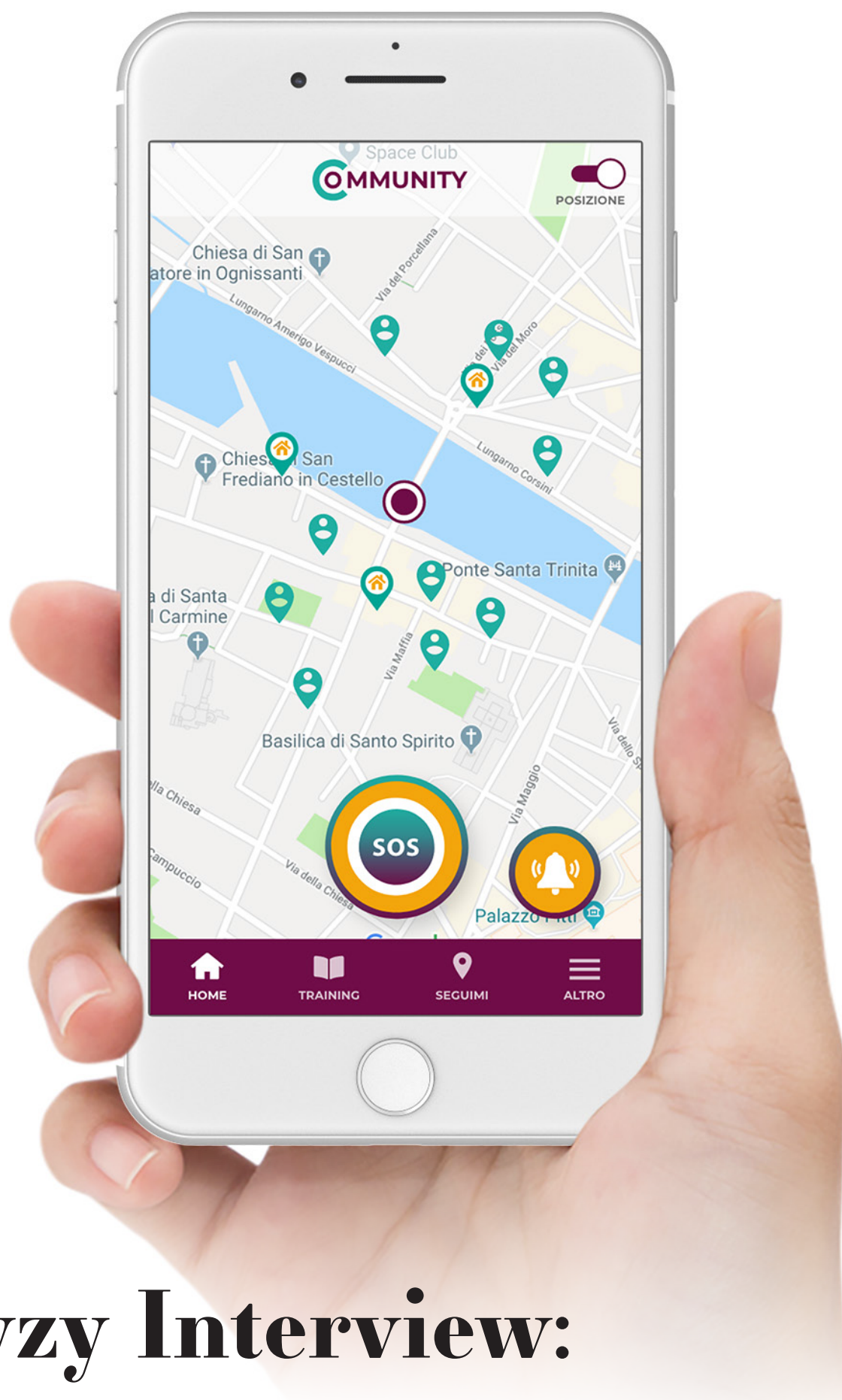
Lee loved living in Italy; her writings include numerous accounts of her expressing her love for the country. "There is a magnificent garden near Pescia, in Tuscany, built-in terraces against a hillside, with wonderful water-works...A similar garden, near Genoa, consisting of marble mosaics and colored bits of glass, with a peach tree on a wall, and an old harpsichord...We moderns have flowers, and no gardens. I must protest against such a state of things," she wrote, in "Old Italian Gardens." Not only did she express her love of Italy through her essays but also through her short stories. Her writing was sensory with such detailed and beautiful descriptions that one could almost feel being in the garden with her. In "Tuscan midsummer magic," Lee is able to tell a fairytale-esque story about a witch and a

princess by using inspiration from her beloved gardens. She also used mythological and historical influences in her work, mentioning nymphs, witches, and goddesses. In "Old Italian Gardens," she mentions pope Julius II and Leo X: "For the classic Italian garden is essentially Roman in origin... its shape suggested by the ruins below, its ornaments dug up in the planting of the trees; and until the time of Julius II. and Leo X" This proves her interest in not just scratching the surface but having a deeper understanding of Italian history.

She loved nature and Italian landscapes. She wrote many essays of her travels and compiled them in *Genius Loci: Notes on Places*. In 1889 she purchased the Residenza del Palmerino in Florence and fully restored in 1922. As part of the Aesthetics movement, Lee placed great importance in the beauty of her surroundings and spaces. Not only did she restore her own property but she also worked for the protection of many historical buildings in Florence. With her love and dedication for the city, Lee was able to maintain many buildings as they are today and leave a lasting legacy for its visitors and locals alike.

A black and white photograph of a group of people standing in a tunnel with multiple arches. The word "COMMUNITY" is overlaid in large white letters. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking down a series of stone arches. The people are silhouetted against the bright light coming from the end of the tunnel. The word "COMMUNITY" is written in a large, white, serif font across the middle of the image.

COMMUNITY



Coyzy Interview: A New Way to Help People

By Carly Frommer

COZZY is a new app being developed by a team based in Florence, with the aim to provide safer communities. We've asked Marco Nari to sit down with us virtually to learn more about the project.

How was this project born? What is your story?

The COYZY project was born from our desire to make people feel safer in all contexts of their lives, at home, at work and in their free time.

As you know, ideas often blossom in the most unexpected places and, in fact, our first sprout was born at a bar table. In the beginning, it was something that could integrate insurance policies (a world that is part of our background of expertise). Over time, however, thanks to the involvement of new team members, it has evolved to become what it is today. However, it remains an entity in constant evolution according to the feedback we receive from all the people we talk to.

What are the goals of your start-up?

Let's start with a figure, even rather disturbing, in Italy alone the social cost of interpersonal violence is over 16 billion euros. Think about what beautiful things we could do for the country if we were able to free at least part of these resources by reducing the economic impact of this social scourge!

We could invest in education, research, jobs, social solidarity and business in a circular mechanism that leads to an exponential benefit for all social groups.

Obviously, all this begins with the awareness of each citizen and with a perception of security; and it is precisely from there that we start.

What kind of audience are you targeting?

A common opinion is that the issue of security (and consequently of the violence that occurs) concerns only women. From our long-term research, we realized that this vision is not exhaustive of the phenomenon. This topic concerns the whole society, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, and is present across all classes.

Obviously, the impact will be different depending on the context and that women are, in percentage terms, the people most affected but I think we can agree that "the phenomenon of violence against women is an aberration that has women as its victim but the main perpetrator the men." For this, we must involve men in the process of change that we want to carry out!

A very important part for us at COYZY is Prevention through information and cultural growth. For this reason, schools, universities, associations and all those who deal with training in the country must begin to do so keeping in mind their organization-specific goal. This project intersects perfectly with at least 7 out of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

How does the Cozy app work? Can you give us some examples?

The COYZY app itself contains a whole world made up of

the Community (made up of Sentinels, Safe Points, Angels and Users) and the various functions that connect all the subjects of the Community itself.

We start from the Prevention that we do through the partnership with national-level professionals such as psychologists, psychotherapists, lawyers, criminologists and personal defense experts who, thanks to the sharing of video pills for Users, give them information and practical advice on behavior on related issues to safety.

The Support consists of useful and concrete functions in case of need, such as sending an SOS to the Community with your location, recording what is happening around you or instant notification to your trusted people that you are safe and at the destination. All this, and more, with a simple click! Lastly, Assistance is access to our specialized network that can give you listening, consultation and services.

How is your team professionally composed?

COYZY is a multidisciplinary team made up of many different professionals and experiences. There is myself and Luca Piras with a background in the world of insurance consultancy, with experience in digital project management, corporate welfare and economic and project management skills. There is Alessio, our CTO, a Google software engineer who is currently in London and is involved in research and development. Ely, our Chief Designer, who designed the service based on the final needs of the user and who has many years of experience in social sustainability projects. He is assisted in all this by Anna-Lisa as Design Strategist. Then there is Serena, with a background in cognitive science and strategic marketing, who deals with branding & communication. The variety and contamination of skills are undoubtedly one of our founding values.

Does your team have a diverse gender representation?

Absolutely, we are very clear about the importance of this aspect and the value it brings. Currently there's a 50-50 male-female breakdown. Each colleague has their own peculiar characteristics and sensitivities that bring value to the whole Team and multiply exponentially.

What are your plans for the future?

At the solution development level, we certainly want to exploit technology to implement predictive AI and integrate the service with wearable devices to provide users and stakeholders with ever greater quality. Regarding the diffusion of COYZY, we are very ambitious. Initially, we will launch in the main Italian cities (here we are at a good point) even if our dream has always been to become international as soon as possible starting from the big European cities and then moving eastwards in Asia and west overseas, in the US and Brazil.



Interview with Giovanna from the Venerabile Arciconfraternita della Misericordia di Firenze

By Samantha Berlin
Photo by Carina Bandoni

When I first learned ambulance rides in Florence are completely free of charge, I was astonished. I glanced at an ambulance with the word *misericordia* written on the side, but never knew what it meant or why these rides are free to the public.

My thoughts came full circle when I learned about the Misericordia. The *Misericordia di Firenze*, known to Florentines simply as *La Misericordia*, is a confraternity founded in 1244 dedicated to caring for the sick. The Misericordia is the oldest private voluntary institution in the world. Before 2006, you could have spotted members wearing a long black mask to conceal their true identity while volunteering.

I had the pleasure of speaking with Giovanna, the first woman to serve on the board of the Misericordia. I wanted to hear more about her experience being the first female to step into a leadership role and how it shaped her views on Italian feminism.

Why did you decide to join the Misericordia?

I decided to join the Misericordia after becoming fascinated by the entire institution when my daughter began volunteering. I had finally found an effective way to practice: By turning my prayers into an objective. And from that moment on I fell in love with this incredible world.

Can you describe the Misericordia for those who may not be familiar?

The Misericordia is broken down into two realities. On one side is very traditional and one is very modern. We strive to preserve the history without losing the importance of updating procedures and staying up to date with medical capabilities. It is one of the only places you can find multiple social classes working together and becoming peers in a sense for one common goal - to help others.

What was it like being the first woman on the board?

I was scared, but not because I was a woman. I do not feel responsible in this position as a woman, but rather as a person. From the beginning I never had a reason to fight for my space. Male colleagues encouraged me to feel free instead of trying to control me. Others definitely wished they had my position, but not because there was a female filling the role.

How has this experience shaped your values and your views on Italian feminism?

Italy's feminist world didn't truly begin until around 1968 when the battles of divorce and abortion began. While they have been considered by the media as victories, in some ways I see them as losses. In terms of divorce, women were left without money and in terms of abortion women were left to deal with the most difficult decision all alone. In some ways the world is now worse. Nonetheless, I do see some room for change. It starts with making

changes inside the family. By teaching respect to our children and our spouses.

Post pandemic, where do you think Italian feminism is going?

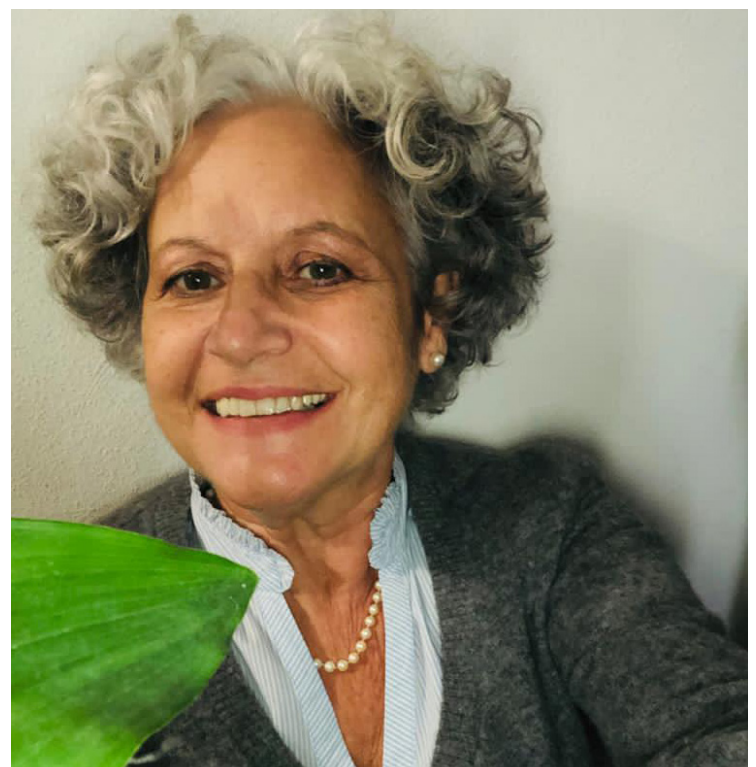
Women will always need to make sacrifices. During the pandemic, women have lost their jobs and needed to stay home with their children. I see Italian feminism as a huge question mark. Feminism needs to be rebuilt as much as every other aspect the pandemic has destroyed. All over the world people are struggling. This barrier for women is not specific to one part of the world. We are all part of the movement.

What would you tell other women who want to set a new precedent as the first female in a position or want to 'break the glass ceiling' as some say?

I would tell them to remain who they are. Don't try to change to fit the mold of how you think they want you to act. Learn and work alongside others as if they were other strong women. And most importantly, never forget what it means to be a woman. We will always have to fight harder, study more, and prove ourselves, but that doesn't mean it is impossible to arrive at the position we desire.

What would you tell your 21-year-old self?

I would tell young Giovanna to follow her dreams. I would hold her tight and tell her she is loved because I know she was very insecure. I would give her a medal for each one of her failures because those same mistakes turned into the most important lessons. And it is the lessons over the years that have formed my current identity as a strong successful woman in Italy.





START PARK

Community and Sustainability: Start Park's Project for the Future of Italian Cities

By Taylor Samuels
Photos courtesy of Start Park

How can we rethink the city in a more sustainable way? A group of Tuscan designers is trying to answer the question by engaging local communities with the help of design thinking. *Blending Magazine* met online with Rita Duina, one of the members of the group, to explain to us their project.

What exactly is a start park?

Start Park is a process of co-planning or collaborative design of urban parks resilient to climate change, thanks to the introduction of nature-based solutions and the creation of active communities in the area.

By activating groups of local citizens to rethink the green areas of the city together with the introduction of Green-Blue Infrastructure [an approach to urban planning that focuses on green spaces and water flows - Ed] and furnishings and activities to promote social aggregation in the park, *Start Park* promotes awareness of the effects of climate change and favors the development of resilient behaviors in citizens. We provide a consultancy service for administrations and individuals who undertake a *Start Park* path. First of all, through the development of semi-final feasibility studies for the redevelopment of green areas; secondly, through a gaming experience that allows all citizens to acquire the skills necessary to collaboratively design parks that are more resilient to climate change and capable of creating social aggregation.



How was this project born?

Start Park is a project idea that emerged during the 2017 *Climathon* organized thanks to the collaboration between *GreenApes* and *Codesign Toscana* in Florence at *Impact HUB*, where two multidisciplinary groups made up of professionals, municipal technicians, individuals and students challenged each other to propose, in 24 hours, a solution to mitigate the impact of climate change on extreme weather events that the city of Florence will have to face in the near future. The idea of *Start Park* was born to answer the following question: how can we stimulate people to be aware of climate change and transform it into resilient actions? From this question emerged the proposal to devise a public / private service that favors the creation

of widespread urban parks capable of activating resilience, home and urban, modular and digital.

IRIDRA Srl, a Florentine environmental engineering firm, present at the 2017 *Climathon*, and *Codesign Toscana*, therefore organized a second event dedicated to further formalizing the *Start Park* design concept in January 2019 with multidisciplinary experts and citizens. The event was a success, with 60 applications, 34 of which selected participants divided into 4 thematic tables: architecture, engagement, strategy, communication. From this second activity, *Start Park* emerges as a co-design process oriented towards awareness and mitigation of the effects of climate change starting from the creation of a resilient community protagonist of the co-design and redesign of urban green areas through the introduction of green infrastructures.

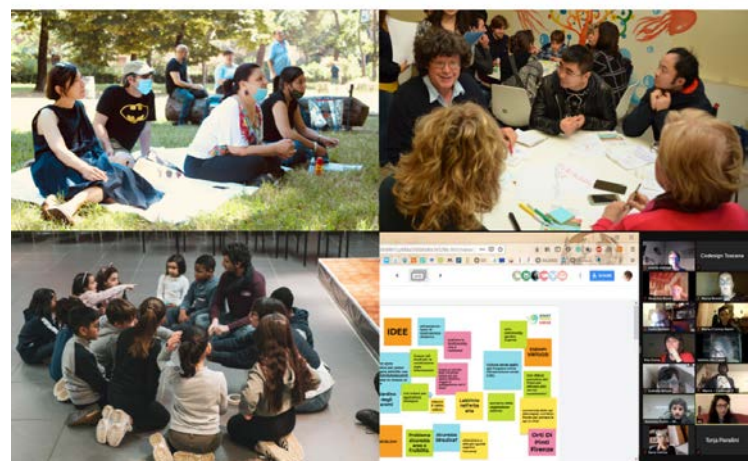
What are your goals?

We aim high. In addition to the optimization of engagement and co-design processes, we are developing the *Start Park* gaming experience. We are also working with public and private individuals to link the socio-cultural value emerging from the *Start Park* process with the resulting economic one. Finally, we are collaborating with the administrations of Prato and Lucca to identify funding opportunities for the construction of the two co-designed parks this year.

Who are the professionals who make up your team?

Two experts in architecture and environmental engineering who are well acquainted with nature-based solutions and

2 Local communities engagement



the use of green and blue infrastructures, belonging to one of the promoters, *Iridra srl*, and the four professionals from the *Codesign Toscana* association, with skills, as well as design-based, art direction and graphic design, social research, engagement.

3 Environmental sustainability awareness



What kind of disciplines and sectors take part in your projects?

Environmental engineering, architecture, social research and innovation, experiential design and teaching.

What kind of strategies have you implemented in your spaces?

In the parks of the cities where we have worked, we have transferred the minimum skills of the architect and environmental engineer, of design thinking to all participating citizens through the methodologies of co-design, service design, and systematic practice of audience engagement.

How many projects have you started up to now?

The first opportunity to carry out the co-design process came in the second half of 2019 with the winning of the European call *Designscapes | Design-enabled innovation in urban environments* dedicated to the prototyping of processes, services and products devoted to social innovation in the urban context through the use of design methodologies and tools. The promoters - IRIDRA Srl and Codesign Toscana - have created a collaboration network with CUT - *Circuito Urbano Temporaneo* and the Municipality of Prato to create the first prototype of a Start Park in a green area in the Soccorso district of the city. The output of the process was a new plan of the park, co-designed by some citizens of the neighborhood and also from all over Tuscany, enriched with new green and blue infrastructures, new furnishing elements and ideas for the realization of activities dedicated to making the park a place of social gathering. Currently, a second replica of the process is underway in Lucca, in the Valgimigli park, with the support of the *Lucca Creative Hub* association, the Municipality of Lucca, and the ASP Carlo del Prete. Also,

in this case, the replication was made possible thanks to the winning of the grant of the *Third Call of Designscapes* dedicated to scalability.

Is there a new park coming up?

We are working to establish relationships with public and private institutions in other Italian municipalities to implement the *Start Park* process in other Regions. We would very much like to do it in Florence, where we already have a consolidated network of actors working on the issues of social and environmental innovation. Also for us, it was really a pleasure to record the applause of the mayor of Florence for the victory of the Climathon Awards.

What plans do you have for the future?

In this year we expect to make many steps forward: from the design game of resilient urban parks to calls for innovative startups with an environmental and social impact. Then who knows, maybe a European *Start Park* network will soon be born;

How can we support you and your projects?

On the *Start Park* website, it is possible to download the basic toolkit to understand how to replicate the project in each city. We would like to see new *Start Parks* appear starting from our inputs. You can follow the project on the startpark.org website, and on our social media channels. We strongly believe in word of mouth, so speak to friends and relatives about our project!



Spring 2021

Engaging with the City, an Interview with the Criticity Project

By Troy Joiner

Photos by Lorenzo Brunello and Emma Zerial



How was this project born and what is it about?

Criticity, of which *Futuri Urbani* was born, was the final output of our research (Emma Zerial and Lorenzo Brunello) for a thesis project at the end of our 3-year studies at *ISIA Florence*. Over the last few months, the cycle of Urban Future meetings, promoted through the organizational platform of *Criticity*, has dealt with the various themes that revolve around the project and the perception of the space we live in, our cities. When we began this research path, we focused in particular on the theme of urban voids, intended as a space of possibilities and, therefore, of the project; in this first phase, we mapped the disused spaces of the north Florence area by elaborating cards, maps and theoretical contributions around the design approach with respect to the disused space. In addition to this work, collected in the volume *Assènze*, we have elaborated two volumes of research where on the one hand we investigated the various urban criticalities specifically connected to the Florentine context, then widely highlighted by the pandemic, and on the other hand the various practices of facilitation and qualification for participatory urban projects, through the tools that design offers and can offer in this sense.

What are the objectives you want to achieve?

Initially, *Criticity's* goal was to create an opportunity for dialogue and discussion on the limits and opportunities of the contemporary city. The inaugural project, with which we wanted to bring together the two horizons of the project, would consist of an inter-faculty seminar day that would involve students and professors from different universities and departments in Florence. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, *Criticity* has been transformed into a series of online conferences on various topics related to urban visions and planning. We believe that during this second pandemic phase, *Criticity* may have represented a first moment of confrontation necessary for the real rethinking of the social and urban models of a postmodern society in continuous decline.

With respect to the goals you have set yourself, how will you measure the success of the project?

For now, more than a year after the start of the project and in the face of a necessary rethinking of the original format, we believe that the digital form that *Futuri Urbani* has taken has been entirely profitable. We had the opportunity to meet with over thirty-two speakers from twelve different cities, thus reaching more than three thousand people through fourteen evening meetings. These are numbers that we would otherwise have hardly reached. We take into account that both university students and professionals followed the meetings, which leads us to think that the multidisciplinary dimension we were looking for has been widely achieved, not only in quantitative terms but also, and above all, qualitative; we took advantage of the time and the 'lack of borders'

that the web offers to deepen all the themes we had set ourselves, and we did it together with an unusual audience of listeners: to reach and unite planners, urban planners, designers, artists, architects, sociologists, activists etc. with a single common theme we think is the real success of the project.



Which institutions and universities are you collaborating with?

First of all with our home institution, *ISIA Firenze*, which supported us in the planning and promotion of the meetings and which we thank for joining the initiative with enthusiasm and belonging, demonstrating commitment and openness and making possible new design horizons. We believe that the first thing to safeguard as the outcome of this project is to all intents and purposes the network of actors and realities with which we have come into contact. In addition to the partners - *the Academy of Fine Arts of Florence* and *the University of Florence* - we have involved twelve university faculties and fourteen innovative realities distributed over much of the Italian territory and partly internationally. Many are local, such as *CSA Next Emerson*, *Firenze NoCost* and *Codesign Toscana*. *Urban Innovation Foundation*, *InfoAut*, *Crash Laboratory*, *Macao Milan*, and the *Open Source School of Bari* represent different parts of Italy while *Projekt Nîmes* and *Tesseræ* are located abroad. The network is equally rich with university speakers from institutions in Venice, Milan, Turin, Rome, Bologna, Ferrara, Pisa, Ascoli Piceno, etc.



Given your multidisciplinary approach, which fields did you focus on most?

We certainly gave space and voice to urban planning, community projects, collaboration and design. We did it following an implicit path that turned from a more critical / theoretical look on space and urban criticalities, then going on to discuss experiences, practices and tools during the last meetings. This program has allowed us (and we hope it will be the same for others) to glimpse a project horizon made not only of criticism and questioning, necessary but not sufficient, but also of practical phases, of qualification and awareness of the collaborative urban project. The multidisciplinary nature of the meetings and the different professional backgrounds of the speakers represented a moment of enrichment and training for all involved including ourselves.

Which professionals took part in the conferences?

From November to February 2021, we have discussed the urban project with professors, activists, students and designers including: Agostino Petrillo, Alessandro Tartaglia, Carlo Cellamare, Chiara Belingardi, Davide Di Fabrizio, Elena Dorato, Federico Fumagalli, Francesco Alberti, Francesco Dini, Giuseppe Caridi, Iacopo Zetti, Ilda Curti, Lorenzo Tripodi, Manuel Ramello, Marco Feller, Marco Tangocci, Marco Tognetti, Margherita Vanore, Massimo Ilardi, Massimo Preite, Mauro Cozzi, Michela Deni, Michele D'Alena, Paola Boscaini, Raffaella Fagnoni, Sonia Paone, Stefania Paolazzi, Valentina Gianfrate and Vando Borghi.

Do you want to develop this project locally or are you willing to extend it to other cities? Maybe even internationally?

Criticality was born by identifying the criticalities and opportunities of the city of Florence but we are very inclined to the idea of scaling the project and reviewing it in other cities, both in its analysis and research phases and in its practical and urban intervention phases. Let's look at Bologna, Turin, Milan, Bari, where some of the companies involved already operate, as well as in Berlin. This would allow us to constantly compare starting points, objectives and viable paths through the different actors who can take part in the processes of imagination, planning and territorial transformation. We see *Criticality* as a project built on a systemic process where the research on design

takes place with the design itself. This dimension offers us constant ideas for analysis and reflection and allows us to pose as the mutable content of a container that is not afraid to redefine its shape. Just like the disciplines of design, in that constant phase of design and validation, capable of questioning themselves thus proving to be completely anti-fragile.



What are your plans for the future?

We believe that one of the tools for a strategy of safeguarding and integrating development of the network could be the creation of an editorial product in which the various shared contributions can be translated into a project that can be consulted and create a symbolic bridge between the various intentions of those who took part in the path. Finally, to return to the intentions with which the first initiative was conceived, what we really consider fundamental for the future of the network created starting from *Criticality - Futuri Urbani*, is the possibility of inaugurating a new season of collaborations. We hope to translate into practice the ideas of co-planning, transdisciplinarity, and collaboration at the base of the new design paradigm. The aim is to keep the collaborative system and knowledge sharing, revolving around urban planning, alive and active between the stakeholders involved.



TRAVEL

The Florence Lifestyle

By Elizabeth Dooher, Sophie Bublick, Zhanel Yerdauletova, Margot Drouet

Photos by Demi Harris & Rory Torstensson



You may hold various ideas about the benefits of the Italian lifestyle.

Maybe you have heard that extra virgin olive oil adds a few years of youth to your life or that the Mediterranean diet has superior health benefits. Yet, Florence offers its own “secret sauce” to health and wellness that is unique to the Florentine culture. Through local business from varying specialties, you can prep yourself for a day at *Sorgiva*, a spa operated by the students and faculty of Apicius International School of Hospitality at FUA - AUF.

At first glance, Florence’s architectural charm and friendly encounters with the locals may take precedence in any traveler’s mind. Yet with time, the city reveals a culture of wellness. Throughout your day, Florence’s local eateries offer delicious cuisine that communicates the city’s commitment to the culture and a balanced diet. There are several eateries that emulate the Florentine lifestyle through their missions, such as *Base V Juicery*, *Gilli* and *La Loggia del Piazzale Michelangelo*. They integrate the Italian food culture with wellness-based thinking that reflects the atmosphere of *Sorgiva*.

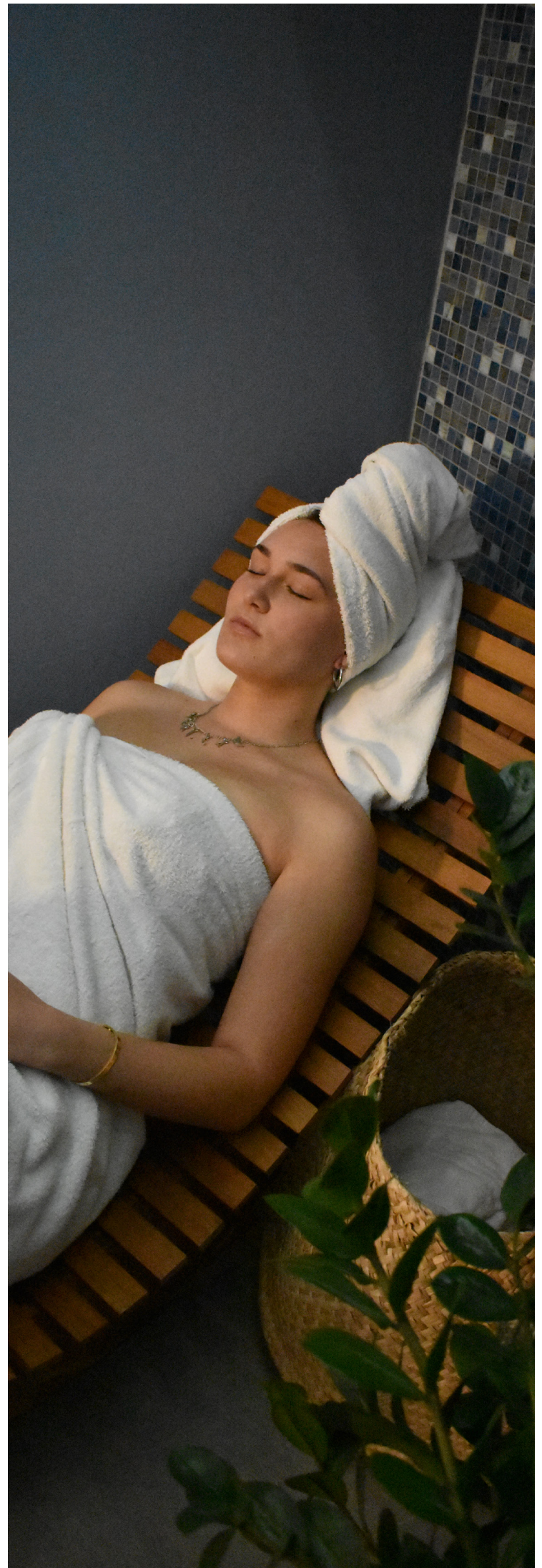
Base V is the first cold-pressed juicery in the city and integrates the Florentine lifestyle through natural and healthy ingredients. *Gilli*, another gem, offers authentic Italian coffee and an inside look into the warmth and hospitality of the local culture. *La Loggia del Piazzale Michelangelo* harmonizes the city’s international beauty as well as a taste of the healthy lifestyle. The restaurant is located inside the monument to honor Michelangelo and prides itself in its focus on the art that captures the hearts of people across the globe. A breathtaking view of the city naturally lends the restaurant a reputation in itself. Beyond the timeless art and iconic views, *La Loggia del Piazzale* crafts dishes unique to the Tuscan region as well as other international cuisine. Meals capture the nutritional value from the Mediterranean diet to the famous Florentine steak. Beyond the cuisine itself, the restaurant’s atmosphere nurtures positive energy from staff and customers alike. You are immediately immersed in the love Italians have for their cuisine. Food is an experience, and with *La Loggia del Piazzale* the value of enjoying a meal with friends and family is cherished. All these eateries have a strong sense of community and Florentine culture and promote an emotional and physical well being.

The countless museums and landmarks in Florence are often a first stop for tourists eager to soak in some of Italy's most famous sights. However, for locals and international students alike, it's important to consider the wellness benefits of the city's monuments. Take the *Boboli Gardens* for example at *Palazzo Pitti*. The 45k square meters of Renaissance garden landscapes can have a green therapeutic effect on your mind and body one day, or stimulate your visual appetite the next with the many symbols and histories embedded throughout. From Pitti one can find a treasure cove of green spaces in the city such as the *Parco di Villa Stibbert* or the *Giardino di Orticoltura*.

After an afternoon of self-love, it's time to experience FUA-AUF'S *Sorgiva Spa*, located in the heart of Florence and a mere two-minute walk from the Duomo. *Sorgiva* is a community-oriented wellness spa and learning lab located at Apicius International School of Hospitality. *Sorgiva* serves both a Florentine and international audience as part of its mission to host an authentic experience. Students take pride in providing services that enrich your well-being as part of their training. *Sorgiva* offers various treatments such as manicures, pedicures and massages, using essential oils and natural ingredients. This provides guests a memorable experience in a relaxing atmosphere complete with dim lighting and soft music. Some unique treatments *Sorgiva* offers are chocolate massages or total body mud treatments in addition to usual treatments such as waxes and facial treatments. These special treatments provide guests with numerous benefits including the relief of aches and pains via anti-inflammatory properties. *Sorgiva's* sauna and hammam further serve the health and wellness of their clientele.

The spa hosts many wellness events that directly involve the community of Florence and international students alike. From yoga to pilates classes, participants build relationships with one another as part of FUA-AUF's international approach to education.

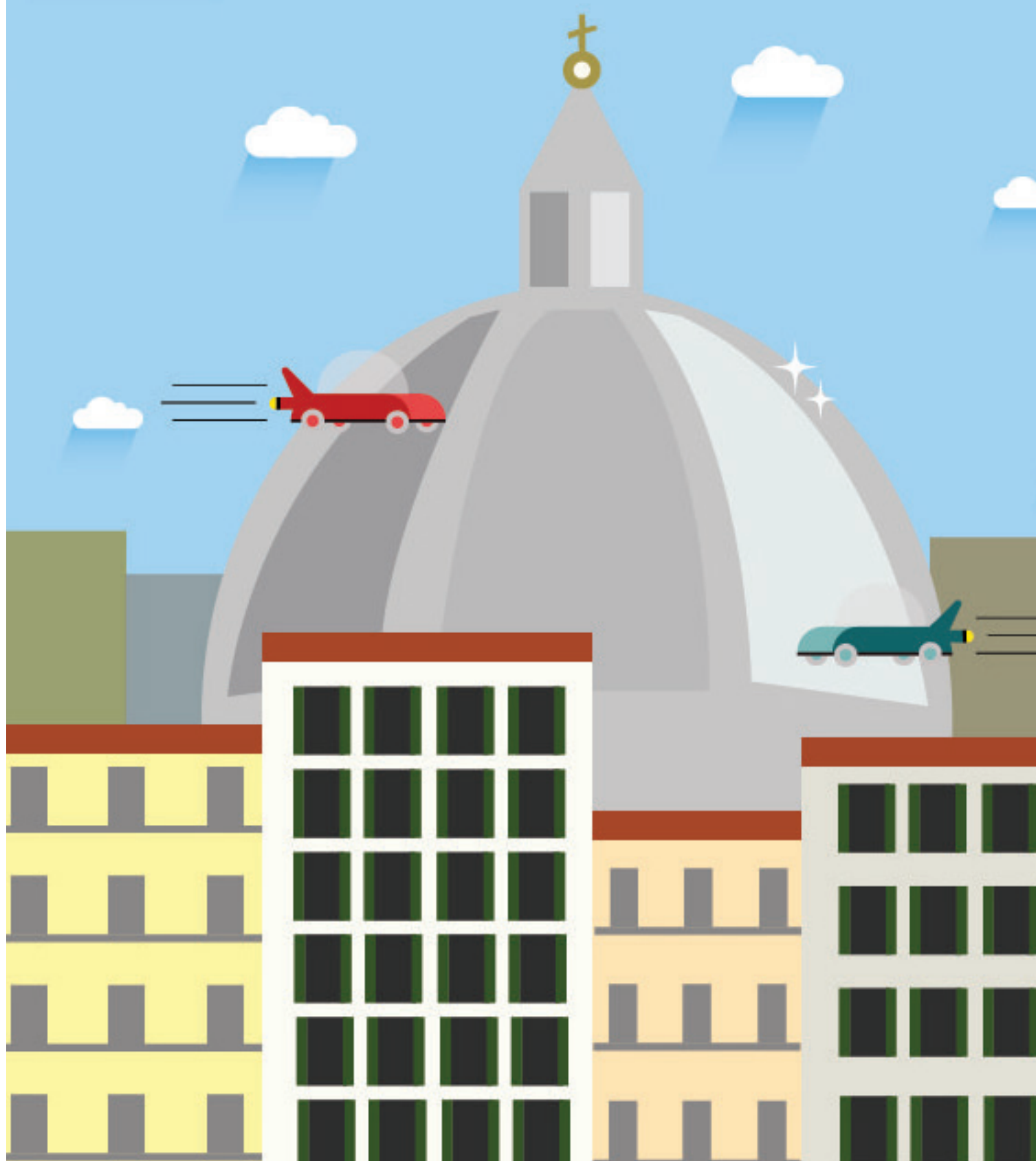
Sorgiva's mission blends Florence's culture around mental and physical wellness in its experiential approach. It provides a unique experience for everyone - locals, students and internationals. *Sorgiva* and other local businesses reflect Florentine practices that promote a balanced lifestyle. Their stories are diverse and unique with pride for their profession and devotion to the community, inspiring us as much as their customers.

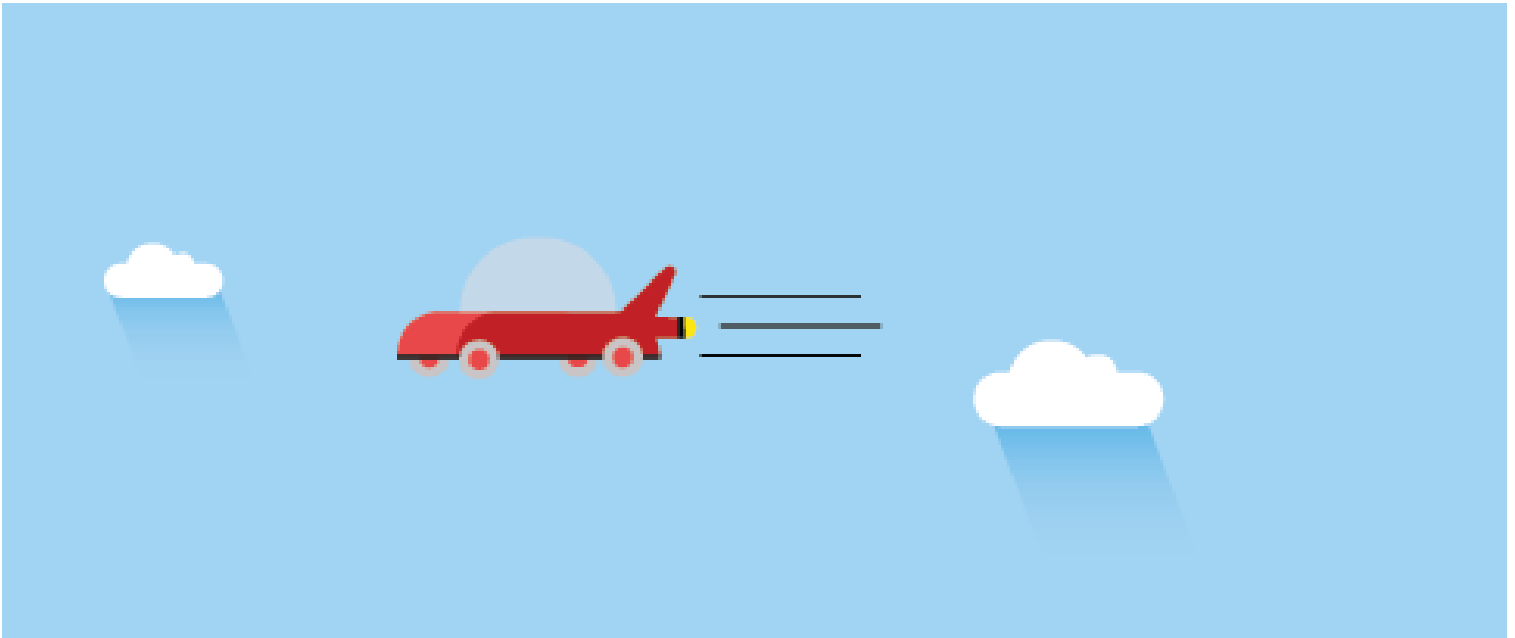


Futuristic Views of Travel in Florence

By Logan Medisetti

Illustrations by Taylor Samuels





The pandemic has made traveling difficult, but Florence is recovering and getting ready to re-embrace its renowned glory. If there's one thing we can say about 2020, it taught us how to handle unprecedented levels of uncertainty. Over the last year and into 2021, the pandemic has put leisure travel largely on hold. There is plenty of speculation regarding what the future will be like in Florence and more importantly how to strike back from the current situation. 2020 was about sustainable travel and limiting the impact of mass tourism in Italy's busiest cities like Florence. Currently, an issue examined by EU governments is how to maintain a healthier balance in the city for locals as well as visitors. Reflecting on the future of Florence, Mayor Dario Nardella has outlined his intentions at the first event held in the inspiring space at Palazzo Vecchio.

“Florence has reawakened from the slumber of the pandemic like a beautiful animal. The boat of our administration will chart new courses, but the destination has not changed: a liveable city, which takes care of its citizens, a sustainable city, a capital of a knowledge economy and technological development, which counterbalances the city's inevitable character as a tourist destination.”

Here are a few demonstrations of how Florence is working ways to bring out its best:

Renovated Runway at Florence Peretola Airport

A temporary closure until March 2021 allowed for the Peretola airport to implement some well-needed renovations in what was one of Florence's largest construction sites within the city limits. An enhanced, special braking asphalt was utilized in order to eliminate some of the longstanding challenges that airplanes historically experienced during Peretola landings.

The entire surface pavement was redeveloped, along with the lights and light signals. New LED signals will be introduced to increase environmentally-conscious performance, overall durability, as well as performance. In addition, a continuous control and monitoring system for each light will provide the main control tower with immediate information on malfunction issues for real-time responses to maintenance and/or replacement needs. This technology has been adopted by only a few airports thus far in Italy, giving Peretola a definite edge.

The overall plan was a round-the-clock effort that cost 8.5 million euros and generated jobs for 150 individuals.

Reopening Plans for the Vasari Corridor

The Uffizi Gallery formally announced plans for the reopening of the famed corridor in 2022, a full six years after the 2016 closing due to safety issues. Past visits of the Vasari Corridor were allowed through group visits only, and this would be the first time in history that it allows visitors with a regular opening procedure.

The Vasari Corridor is a unique and panoramic walkway that weaves through the Uffizi, Ponte Vecchio, and Palazzo Pitti. 73 round windows offer incredible views of the city, and a section also hosts self portraits of famous artists. The plan is to reopen the walkway to larger audiences thanks to a sophisticated climate control system for an improved regulation of interior temperatures. Low-consumption LED lighting along with a video surveillance system will be installed throughout the entire kilometer length of the corridor.

A total of 10 million euros have been dedicated to project financing and the 2022 reopening aims to welcome 500k visitors annually.



FOOD AND WINE

The Italian Aperitivo Goes International

Taiwanese Stir-fried Tomato with Egg Crostini

By Zhuang Zhi Hao

Photo by Rory Torstensson

A traditional Taiwanese dish that's first to pop up in my mind is the stir-fried tomato with egg. Like Italian crostini, it's a great way to re-use leftovers. Usually it's enjoyed as a side dish and eaten with rice. For this recipe, the Taiwanese specialty is modified to use bread instead of the rice starch and the result is a delicious match made between Italian and Taiwanese cultures.

Ingredients (For 4 people)

1 Tuscan bread
200g eggs
500g tomatoes
Ketchup to taste
75ml water
15g garlic
75g green onion
Salt and pepper to taste

Method

Slice the bread into pieces, drizzle some olive oil and bake at 180°C for 3 minutes. Peel and dice the tomatoes. Chop the garlic and slice the green onion. Put a little oil in the pan and stir fry the tomatoes and the garlic. Add ketchup to the pan and add water to boil and then set aside. Beat the eggs in the pan and stir until they are half cooked. Re-fry the tomatoes in the pan with the eggs. Season with salt and pepper, place on top of the bread. Decorate with some green onions and enjoy!



Thai-Style Coccoli

By Jearanai Sae-Lim

Photo by Rory Torstensson

This dish is a combination of two traditional snacks from two cultures. First, the coccoli is a commonly known Tuscan snack that you can find in almost all the bakery shops that come with stracchino cheese and prosciutto crudo. The other element is inspired by the authentic Thai snack, called ma hor, which is normally served into a small ball shape, on top of a piece of pineapple or orange wedges that gives the freshness to the dish, and thin-sliced fresh red chili, cilantro leaf for garnishing. In this recipe, I choose to keep the coccoli as it was, with the ma hor stuffing, and transfer the freshness into a fluid gel, with the sweet-spicy and tart touch accompanied by a savory green sauce to balance the dish.

Coccoli

Ingredients (For 4 people)

500 g flour
300 g water
10 g salt
20 g yeast

Method

Bread mixing method, shape ball as finger food size (10-15g)
Let proof at room temperature for 1 hour, until doubled in size.



Ma Hor Stuffing

Ingredients

200 g ground pork
 100 g shrimp, roughly chopped/roughly crushed
 2 tbsp shrimp fat (from the head)
 50 g peanut, toasted, chopped
 1 tbsp cilantro root, or stem (if used, double quantity), finely chopped
 1 tbsp garlic, minced
 1 tbsp white peppercorn, crushed
 3 tbsp shallot, finely chopped
 1 tsp salt, add more if needed
 3 tbsp fish sauce
 75 g coconut sugar, add more if needed

Method

In the mortar, crush the cilantro, garlic, white pepper, and salt all together. Pound until it turns into a paste, set aside. Clean the shrimp, keep the liquid fat from the head. In a hot pan with olive oil, cook the paste until fragrant. Then add the chopped shallot and let cook. Add the ground pork and heat until almost cooked, then add the shrimp meat and fat and keep stirring. Season with coconut sugar, salt, fish sauce. Continue cooking and keep stirring until it starts to thicken, then put in the toasted peanuts. Lower the heat, keep stirring until mixture is thick and can stick together enough to shape into balls. Let the mixture cool down enough to roll into balls by hand. Create small balls according to the coccoli size and slightly flatten them.

Spicy Orange Sauce

Ingredients

100 g orange juice
 20 g lemon juice
 3 fresh chilis, finely minced
 1 tsp lemongrass, grated
 5-7 mint leaves, blanched
 Sugar, to taste
 0,4 g Xanthan gum
 1,2 g low acyl Gellan

Method

Combine all the ingredients together with an immersion blender, except for the mint, Xanthan gum and the Gellan that you will set aside. Taste the mix, and then adjust with salt, sugar, or even more lemon juice if it is not acidic enough. Meanwhile blanch the mint leaves in the boiling water, cool in the ice bath and then set aside. Dry mix the Xanthan and Gellan powders, then dissolve into 100 g of water and mix together with an immersion blender. Transfer the mix in a pot and heat it up on a stove until it reaches 95C°. Then blend with the liquid mix with an immersion blender. Pour on the small tray, let it cool to set. Blend into the fluid gel, with blanched mint leaves.

Green Sauce

Ingredients

1 tbsp cilantro leaves
 1 tbsp basil leaves
 4 cloves garlic
 100g coconut cream
 1 tbsp peanut paste/butter
 1 tsp white pepper
 1 tsp galangal
 1 tsp Kaffir lime leave
 Sweet paprika to taste

Method

In a pot, infuse the coconut cream with kaffir lime leaves, galangal, and white peppercorn. Let cool, put in a sous vide bag, and infuse overnight. Reduce the coconut cream to thicken. Blanch the cilantro leaves and basil leaves in the boiling water to keep the green color. Blanch the the garlic by immersing it in a pot of water and starting from cold bring to a boil, then drain the garlic. Repeat this step for three times. Blend together the leaves, coconut cream, and peanut paste. Add water if necessary. Season with salt, white pepper, and a pinch of sweet paprika. Strain through a sieve.

Black Rice Arancini stuffed with Mutton Rogan Josh

By Shrinivasraju Chekuri
Photo by Rory Torstensson

Mutton Rogan Josh is an Indian lamb gravy that originated in Kashmir. This Mutton Rogan Josh recipe is a delicacy with intense flavors that you can't make just once. With the increasing popularity of Mutton Rogan Josh, there are countless versions of it made in all corners of the country. Traditionally, Rogan Josh is prepared using the slow-cooking method with authentic whole spices that make it unique. You can also add soaked almond paste, although this easy mutton recipe is more of a light gravy cooked with aromatic spices.

Mutton Rogan Josh Ingredients

1 kg chopped into cubes mutton 1/2 cup ghee
1/2 tsp asafoetida
1 1/4 tsp cumin seeds
2 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp peppercorns
5 black cardamoms
4 red chilis
1 1/4 tsp ginger powder
1 1/4 tbsp coriander powder 150 grams hung curd
2 pinch saffron
salt to taste
1 tbsp red chilli powder

1 1/2 cup water
1 1/2 tbsp fennel seeds powder 2 1/2 tablespoon milk
1 1/4 tbsp all-purpose flour
2 sprigs coriander leaves for garnishing

Arancini Ingredients

1 cup of black rice
1/2 cup of white rice
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
2 large eggs
1/2 cup water
pinch of salt
2 cups breadcrumbs



1 To prepare this delicacy, first prepare the saffron milk by soaking saffron in milk and set aside. Next, heat ghee in a pressure cooker. When the ghee is hot enough, add the whole spices and fry for a few seconds.

2 Then, add whole red chilies, cumin seeds, and asafoetida to the pressure cooker and fry for a few seconds. Add the mutton pieces and stir well. Cover with the lid but don't close it and cook the mutton for 5-6 minutes on medium to high flame. The meat will turn light brown in color. After 5 minutes, remove the lid and add 1/2 cup of water and stir well with the spices. This will help the mutton to soak the flavors of all the spices. Then, lower the flame and cook the mutton for 10-15 minutes.

3 Meanwhile, take a small bowl and add all-purpose flour along with the yogurt, mix well. In this yogurt mixture, add saffron milk (step 1), salt, fennel powder,

coriander powder, Kashmiri red chili powder, and dry ginger powder (sonth powder). Mix all the spices well. Once done, add to the pressure cooker. Stir well, using a ladle, and cook the mutton in the yogurt for at least a minute.

4 Cook the rice in the saffron milk from step 1, once ready give it a good mix for the colors to evenly mix and let it cool down. Place 1 tbsp of the rice mix in the palm of one hand, then use your fingers and thumb to shape it into a hollow bowl. Place about 1 tsp of the mutton in the center then gently close the rice around the filling to make a ball. Repeat until you've used all the rice. Cover the arancini with batter (flour, eggs, water, salt) and coat with breadcrumbs. Deep fry the arancini and serve while still hot.

Negroni Maria Clara

By Bianca Arambulo

Photo by Rory Torstensson

The red-orange tinted negroni is ubiquitous in Florence. You might say it outwardly appears to be the Aperol Spritz's older sibling, boasting a more robust and no-nonsense flavor profile. It is designed as an aperitivo drink which, as the name implies, is meant to open (*aprire* in Italian) the palate and prime the taste buds before dinner. Said to have been invented at the Caffè Cassoni in Florence, the negroni was actually a request made by Count Camillo Negroni to his bartender, Fosco Scarselli. It was a riff on the Americano, with the soda water replaced by gin. Traditionally, a classic negroni is composed of equal parts of gin, sweet vermouth, and bitters with an orange peel for garnish. This version, named after a writer and filibuster, Jose Rizal's famous demure heroine, Maria Clara, is a twist on the usual, using coconut, pandan leaves, and rice to lend Philippine aromas to this cocktail. The flavors of coconut and pandan are subtly nutty, while the rice softens the bitterness of the overall concoction.

Ingredients

3 cl coconut-infused Campari*
1.5 cl London dry gin
2.3 cl Pandan cordial**
1 tsp toasted mochi rice



Tiki bitters:

Rinse the glass with the bitters then discard.
Add all other ingredients to the shaker with ice. Strain into a glass with rocks.
Garnish with pandan leaves.

* To infuse Campari, infuse it with dried coconut for 48h in a sous vide bag. Strain.

**For Pandan Cordial: Combine 5 cl vodka with 3 crushed pandan leaves. Infuse in sous vide bag for 48h. Add 7.5 cl simple syrup and stir.

Deep Fried Seaweed Roll with Fegatini

By Eunjeong Park

Photo by Rory Torstensson



Ingredients

500 gr chicken livers, cleaned from all pellicles and veins
4 shallots, thinly sliced
5 sage leaves, medium size
350 ml veg stock
350 ml vin santo
180-220 gr unsalted butter, cold
1 tbsp capers
5 anchovy fillets
500 gr cellophane noodle
To taste:
dried seaweed
soy sauce

sesame oil
olive oil
salt and pepper

Method

Sear the livers in a pan with olive oil and season with salt. Separately cook the shallots and the sage leaves with olive oil until softened. Add the livers to the shallots. Add 60% of the Vin Santo and cook for 2 minutes over medium heat. Cover with stock and let cook until done but still moist (approx 10 minutes). Puree in the

food processor adding butter and the remaining Vin Santo. Flavor with capers and anchovies. Then, boil the noodles and mix them with soy sauce, sesame oil, salt, pepper, and the chicken liver. Put the ingredients in the seaweed, roll it up, and then dry it with tempura powder. Deep fry the rolls.

Brioche with Guabao Stuffing

By Nuo Lee

Photo by Rory Torstensson

Guabao is a well-known Taiwanese snack, a steamed dough sandwich stuffed with kang meat, sauerkraut, and other fillings. The origins stem from the "tiger bite pig" in Fuzhou, Fujian Province, and the localized evolution of the dish in Taiwan has made widely popular. For this recipe, Western bread is combined with the Taiwanese Guabao stuffing.



Brioche Ingredients

21g fresh yeast
450 g strong white flour
105 g milk
4 eggs
190 g salted butter
50 g sugar
2 tsp salt

Method

1 Put the flour in a bowl of a stand mixer with a dough hook. Add the salt to one side and sugar to the other. Pour in the yeast to the side with the sugar. Mix each side into the flour with your hands, then mix it all together with the dough hook.

Stuffing Ingredients

50 g pickled mustard greens
50 g toasted peanuts
50 g sugar
100 g coriander leaves
500 g pork belly
100 g fried shallots
25 g rock sugar
4 tbsp soy sauce
3 tbsp soy paste
4 tbsp shaoxing wine
4 cloves garlic
1/4 tsp white pepper powder
2 green onions
1 tsp Chinese five spice powder

2 Heat the milk until warm to the touch, but not hot. Mix into the flour mix until combined. With the dough hook on medium, gradually add the eggs and mix for 10 mins.

3 Gradually add the softened butter, one or two cubes at a time, until combined. This will take 5-8 mins. Scrape down the sides, the dough will be very soft.

4 Scrape the dough into a large bowl, cover with a tea towel and leave for 1.5-2 hours until doubled in size and well-risen. Once risen, put in the fridge for 1 hour.

Method

1 Cut the pork belly into large slabs. Place in a pot with enough cold water, bring to a boil and continue cooking for 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer out, drain and clean.

2 Heat around 1 tablespoons of oil in a wok and then fry the pork belly until browned. Transfer to a simmering pot, add all the other ingredients and enough water except fried shallots, bring to a boil and continue cooking for around 1 hour. Add fried shallots and continue

5 Line the bottom and sides of a 900g loaf tin with baking parchment. Portion the dough into 25-30g/pieces. Lightly dust a work surface with flour, take a piece of dough and pull each corner into the middle to form a circular shape. With a bit of pressure, push down and roll into the ball. Repeat with the six remaining pieces.

6 Put the balls on the tray with parchment paper. Cover with a plastic wrap and leave to prove for 30-35 mins until almost doubled in size. Heat the oven to 180°C. Lightly brush the dough with the egg wash and bake for 30-35 mins until golden and risen. Leave to cool in the tin for 20 mins, then remove and cool completely.

simmering for 30 minutes to 50 minutes until the pork belly becomes really soft.

3 Take the brioche bun and cut it in half. Add the pork belly with some of the broth it was cooked in and enjoy!

The Effects of COVID-19 on Small Restaurants

By Mia Fanizzi

Photo by Rory Torstensson

COVID-19 is a pandemic that has affected millions of people across the world. For many it has been a real crisis, for others it represents new beginnings. From whichever viewpoint you see this, the world is always changing, and sometimes, a change like this is what gets business owners thinking about the future.

Pino, a local here in Tuscany, owns a sandwich shop in the center of Florence called Pino's Sandwiches - Salumeria Verdi. He is one of the many shop owners affected by the pandemic.

For the majority of these shops, despite the abrupt March 2020 closures, there is still hope for a brighter future during trying times.

"Unfortunately running as normal now is impossible. But we are trying to do our best to keep going. We are passionate about what we do. We try out new dishes and sandwiches every day. We sell Italian wines and products and ship them worldwide while seeking to increase our social media visibility. We want to give customers something new every day." Pino said.

News and updates are what seem to be keeping these shops afloat during these times. Businesses are quickly learning that the fastest way to keep in touch with their customers is through social media. For Pino, it's important to maintain efforts in order to support the people of his

community. Therefore, he and his family will be increasing their e-commerce and delivery activities. E-commerce has become an increasingly useful tool over the past year and a half. Many see it as a shift for multiple categories of businesses, as well as an easier way to help businesses navigate their way through the current crisis.

As individuals and families order online and request deliveries, business owners such as Pino work towards increasing efficiency. And no matter what platform or practice is applied, the art of hospitality is important to maintain through guaranteeing fresh products and quality, as well as smaller details such as a smile for customers even from under protective masks.

Pino states, with optimism: "For the future, we hope to go back to "normal" by hosting many customers including students on-site, but also continuing online sale with wines and other Italian products. We miss our customers, we can't wait to welcome them again into our family. Our spot is not only a panini shop, it's been a second home for many locals and students for over 30 years now."

The desire to travel, to meet and congregate with others, to try new and exciting foods is not something that can be easily or permanently taken away from society. The human being is a social animal by nature. As we transition to current and future phases transitioning out of Covid, it's essential to keep this aspect of human nature in mind.



The Transmission of Traditional Italian Cuisine

By Margaux Nguyen Tien Phuc, Lisandre Pinsard, Elise Colard, Jonatan Graille,
Margaux Louaizil
Photo by Demi Harris



The Apicius campus pastry shop at FUA-AUF is named after a beloved traditional Florentine dessert, the Fedora. Sweet tooth and dessert lovers be warned, this article will capture you and make you want to visit Florence immediately.

The Torta Fedora, usually shortened to Fedora, dates back to the 1930s, and originated in the city of Florence renowned worldwide for its monument and of course, its cuisine. The Fedora may be more complex and require a longer preparation than other cakes, but the final product is worth the effort: a dreamy concoction made with puff pastry, pastry cream, sponge cake soaked in Alchermes (a traditional red liquor), whipped cream, and chocolate flakes. The dessert is often in rotation on the Fedora pastry shop menu, and a favorite with locals and visitors alike.

We had the opportunity to catch up with Pastry Chef Simone De Castro, who shared with us the fascinating background of the Fedora cake. The name on one hand recalls the Fedora hat, while a longstanding theory on how the name came about is based on the cake's inventor. In the 1930s, a Florentine pastry chef wanted to create the perfect dessert for his wife. She happened to love both the "diplomatica" and "zuppa inglese" desserts and thus the combination of elements derived from both resulted in what we know today as the Fedora cake.

Fedora has the aim of sharing the Italian pastry and baking arts, as experienced by international students enrolled in Apicius programs, with the Florentine community. Through the academic coursework, students are directly involved in Fedora operations and services both in the production lab (back of the house) and front of the house for service and guest relations. Breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea and snacks, and evening aperitivo are featured daily from Monday to Saturday, 8:30am to 9pm. Fedora was originally just a pastry shop but its current location at the Via Ricasoli 21 Apicus hospitality campus has expanded its concept to a bistro as well.

We also interviewed two international students involved in Fedora operations, Winnie and Sarah, to learn more about the pastry shop, its role in FUA-AUF experiential learning, and the students' personal stories. They came to Florence from different countries (UK and Taiwan) and for different reasons, but their experience is united by a European and specifically Italian approach to pastry traditions. At Fedora, they are able to put theory in practice through the experiential approach that sees them involved in the production lab on a daily basis. Through faculty guidance, students work with the seasonal menus and even add their own touch as an opportunity to showcase their learning process and talent as per the Fedora philosophy.

Local clients as a matter of fact have spread by word of mouth the unique student involvement and outcomes displayed at Fedora. The academic courses associated with Fedora production cover various regions of Italy such as Tuscany, of course, Lazio, or Piemonte, other Italian regions, international dessert traditions, as well as seasonal specialties. On any given day you may find croissants, brioches, torrone, amaretti, cannoli, tiramisù, babà, panettone during Christmas, colomba at Easter, various types of chocolate, and more. You may find an additional, contemporary touch or a twist reminiscent of a student's international background. And when you do stop by, whether to enjoy an item on-site or for pick-up, you'll also notice that the pastry program students are supported by their hospitality student peers for front of the house operations.

We hope the many faces of Fedora will entice you to visit: the beautiful space, the story behind its name, and the educational philosophy based on the FUA-AUF institutional mission represented by Fedora. As explained by the student interviewees, learning through experience is an invaluable opportunity with a real connection to real customers whose feedback allow students to evolve and improve moving forward in their future careers. For customers, on the other hand, visiting Fedora is a discovery of new products and Italian traditions while supporting the learning and skill development of students. Why not try Fedora for yourself? *Ti aspettiamo!*



FASHION

Look of the Season



**Oops!
...it's 2000
again**

Fashion photography students dive back into the fashion of the turn of the millenium, recalling the glitz and glamour of Paris Hilton and Britney Spears. So grab your tamagotchi and your mp3 player, we're going back to the year 2000!

**Models: Stefanie Stark, Vittoria Gallelo, Rory Torstensson, Berenice Cadet
Hair and Makeup: Avery Barakett
Styling and Set: Rory Torstensson
Photography: Avery Barakett, Danelia Rogriguez Santana, Kaitlyn Kantor**







Loungewear Trend in Italy: Is it Sustainable?

By Briana Rodrigues
Photo by Demi Harris



When you think of Italian fashion, what comes to mind? Would you think of sweats? Probably not, however, given the recent trends, could this be the future of Italian fashion? It is hard to believe so, given the stature Italian brands have and the history of fashion trends. Brands like Armani, Gucci, Versace, and Dolce and Gabbana... How could it be that loungewear is a current trend in Italy, and will it stay? To address the question, I will analyze Italian fashion trends and how they have evolved in terms of brands, specifically those that are adapting to the loungewear trend.

However, in order to begin, we must define the term "sweats," because multiple clothing items may come to mind when discussing this. To me, "sweats" are sweatpants and a sweatshirt. In the past year this combination became popular during the COVID-19 pandemic because of the increased time at home and comfort of the outfit. Fashion stylists began pairing their sweatshirts and sweatpants to match, called "sweatsuit." Other popular loungewear featured on the runway this year are hoodies, house shoes, track pants, oversized button-downs, athletic shorts, and more. Designers are getting more creative in ways to pair comfort with style; you can see these looks by Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Valentino, Miu Miu, Balenciaga, Prada, and more. How is Italy adapting to this trend?

Italian fashion, in certain cities, is known for being classy. When I was preparing for my trip to Florence, I had to buy more dress pants and shirts to try and blend in. I would read articles and YouTube videos to help me learn the basic rules about Italian style, like not to wear open-toed shoes or shorts. I used Pinterest to learn that Italians prefer to wear neutral colors, layers, and accessories. Therefore, when I first arrived in Florence and saw some shop windows with sweat suits front and center, I was shocked, to say the least. Although sweatsuits aren't as popular in Italy as they are at home, they are a lot more common than I was expecting. Just walking and shopping around Florence, I have found brands such as Napapijri, Zara, H&M, and Two-Way that all promote loungewear while maintaining a certain "Italian style."

One example of a brand that is combining Italian fashion and comfort is Napapijri, an Italian brand that specializes in jackets and sweatshirts. The hoodies are high-end, with prices ranging between 90 to 200 Euros. The style is simple, with some neutral colors and very few bright colors (there is one bright red hoodie, for example) with a "Napapijri" logo in the middle and sometimes features a Norwegian flag. Walking along the street, almost every other male

in their late teens/twenties that you see is wearing this brand in Florence. The growing popularity of this Italian brand throughout Europe is a sign that the loungewear and sportswear trend is alive in Florence, while still maintaining a sense of value in the consumer's mind with high-end prices.

Zara is another brand that has been promoting loungewear in Italy. Although it is an international brand originating in Spain, Zara has different lines for each country, so it is an easy way to compare Italian fashion with the rest of the world. Zara's main success comes from its ability to adapt to the trends and environment quickly, as opposed to other clothing brands whose designs are stable throughout a season. Therefore, given the loungewear trend gaining popularity in the times of COVID-19, you can see why Zara is pushing and promoting this style. Zara currently has 130 sweatshirts available in the Italian market, with matching shorts/sweatpants sold separately. Prices for these sweatshirts range between ten and fifty Euros, so they are more affordable and therefore more common. H&M has similar styles to that of Zara, also selling sweatshirts throughout Italy between ten and forty Euros.

Napapijri, Zara, and H&M are all examples brands with an international presence. Two-Way is a store that is only located in Italy, for example. The main clientele is women in their twenties, therefore the styles are more geared towards younger clients. Although sweats are not a main product for sale, several sweatshirt models are available for purchase and on display at the store. Styles come in a mix of colors, from tan to baby blue to black, and in unique options such as hoodies, cropped sweatshirts, and sweatshirt dresses. Prices run from thirty to sixty Euros, so definitely within an affordable range.

After this analysis, do you think loungewear is here to stay in Italy? The loungewear popularity worldwide has definitely been boosted by the pandemic and increased amounts of spent indoors. What will happen when the pandemic is over in Italy? Maybe in some places people will still be wearing sweats. The style undoubtedly has a substantial business relevance on an international level. I personally do not think the trend will be sustainable in the long run, and it remains to be seen how businesses will adapt loungewear styles moving forward.

The Prince of Prints and his Influence on Florence

By Parker Blackburn

Photo by Taylor Samuels



Born to an aristocratic Florentine family on November 20th, 1914, a young Emilio Pucci was interested in sports and education. Pucci received a skiing scholarship from Reed College in Oregon, where he studied political science as well as agriculture. He found his love of design while at Reed by designing the ski team uniforms. After years of experience, Pucci designed a leisure ski suit for himself as well as a female friend. Those ski suits were then photographed and made their way into the influential fashion publication, *Harper's Bazaar*.

The photographer noticed the young Florentine's design talent immediately and advised him to design a collection. Emilio, who was then serving in the air force, returned to Florence and began his fashion house from home. In 1950, Emilio released his first free flowing, vibrantly colored sportswear collection. The collection was well received, becoming best known for its tight silk "Pucci" pants. These were the original capris, the figure-hugging trouser style became a staple for all women's wardrobes for decades to come. His designs embodied the glamorous post-war jet setter that many 1950s women wanted to be.

Emilio wanted to liberate women from the harsh corseting and restrictive fashion of previous decades. He designed dresses, pants, and tops that included free-flowing lines that followed the natural curves of the body. He not only brought these new ideas to the haute couture level, but brought them without the typical cost of haute couture creations, therefore granting a new group of customers access to haute couture. Pucci explored this liberation through experimentation of fabric, developing several original lightweight fabrics including silk stretch jersey as well as cotton jersey. These fabrics proved to be unlined, weightless, and wrinkle-proof, the perfect pieces to complete a jetsetter's travel friendly wardrobe.

In the 1950s Emilio began to develop his signature prints, including abstract designs using colors that were inspired by exotic cultures and landscapes of the Mediterranean. The print was inspired by kaleidoscope patterns as well as other optical illusions. Inspiration came from his travels to North and South America, Bali, Africa, the Middle East, Australia, and Asia. Pucci's prints also represented rich aspects of Italian history and cultural events as well as Mediterranean land and seascapes. His prints from the 1950s, for example, featured motifs from Renaissance art, Florentine landmarks, the flowers of Capri, the mosaics of the Duomo di Monreale in Sicily, nightlife in Naples, and the flags from the famous annual Palio race in Siena.

Each print bears the name "Emilio" in tiny handwriting, revealing the designer's name as the external logo of the brand. His prints caught the attention of many American female icons including Jackie Kennedy, Marilyn Monroe, Madonna, and Nicole Kidman.

Major American department stores such as Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus began to take notice of Pucci's innovative designs. Pucci's on-the-go aesthetic worked perfectly for his ready-to-wear collections, bringing him to a new level of fame and recognition, and earning him the coveted Neiman Marcus Award in 1954. Pucci won the award a second time in 1967, when he was at the height of his career. Pucci dresses became less popular in the 1970s as fashion trends changed, but saw a reemergence in the 1990s due to a boom in interest in vintage 1960s pieces after the death of the designer in November of 1992.

After Emilio's death, the company was given to his daughter Laudomia, and his wife, Cristina Nannini. The rich archive of vintage Pucci fabrics maintained at the Palazzo Pucci in Florence provided young designers such as Christian Lacroix, Matthew Williamson, and Peter Dundas with an on-going source of inspiration for the brand. This past year, Fashion Loves You at FUA-AUF, unveiled its latest student-designed collection, using the same Pucci fabrics that have been inspiring millions since the 1950s.

Also featured at FLY is Le Formiche, a capsule collection created by FUA-AUF president Gabriella Ganugi. It pays homage to early decades and memories of light-filled, carefree summers. The liberating nature of Pucci fabrics were a natural choice for a series of one-of-a-kind pieces available in the collection. The unique collection features one-of-a-kind pieces that are meticulously sourced from vintage markets and textile retailers. The collection includes dresses, tank tops, pants, shorts, bathrobes, swimsuits and accessories such as silver jewelry, scarves, and bags. The collection can be viewed at the FLY store, located at 20 Borgo Pinti in Florence, Italy.



Katie Ferguson, FUA-AUF Alumni Interview

By the FUA-AUF Alumni Association



Introduce yourself

My name is Katie Ferguson and I am from Woodstock, Illinois. I went to the University of Missouri where I studied Mass Media Communication, Spanish, and History. I graduated in May 2020.

When did you study at FUA-AUF?

I had the privilege of studying at FUA-AUF in the Spring of 2019, the second semester of my junior year.

Why did you choose to study here?

Not only did the institution offer plenty of courses to supplement my communication major and history minor, but they were interesting classes that I wanted to take. Additionally, the lure of Florence and all of its beauty was irresistible. I am so grateful I chose FUA-AUF and Firenze to be my home for a semester.

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

After I graduated in May, I hit the road as an Oscar Mayer Hotdogger. This means I am one of twelve lucky college grads who get to drive the iconic Wienermobile across the hot dog highways of America! We drive to a new city every

week, doing fun events and media interviews at every stop, in an effort to deliver miles of smiles across the country. It truly is the adventure of a lifetime.

What is the most incredible thing you've seen while on the road?

It has been amazing to see just how similar people are across America. I have been far and wide, but I have found that people from the West Coast to the Deep South to the northern part of the US all share common interests, goals, and dreams. We aren't so different after all, and everyone has very similar reactions to seeing the Wienermobile. Other than that, I have been able to visit seven National Parks since being on the road, all of which have been breathtaking! My favorite park was definitely Grand Teton National Park, where we went cliff jumping into a glacial lake and saw five bears on our hike!

What did you do at FUA-AUF that helped you in your career and/or in your personal growth? In which way studying abroad changed your life/professional path/career?

Studying at FUA-AUF gave me an insight into different perspectives and education styles. I loved how hands-on my classes were from field trips to palaces for my Renaissance

History class to photographing Florentine street art for my Social Media class and cooking traditional Italian dishes in the lab for my Anthropology class. These new perspectives helped me become a more well-rounded scholar and also taught me that I enjoy doing work in the field rather than in an office setting. That is certainly true for my current occupation!

How did traveling abroad help you for a life on the road?

Traveling abroad taught me how to be independent, confident, and flexible. I had to be okay with doing things alone since I knew virtually no one in an entirely new country, and I quickly grew to enjoy being by myself. That was one of the most valuable things that going abroad gave me: the ability to be content with my own company. This experience definitely prepared me for life on the road in the Wienermobile, as I am in a new city every week where I likely only know one person, my coworker, and I have to adjust quickly and enjoy the newness around me before I leave again.

What are your favorite campus memories?

Some of my favorite memories include my daily snack breaks on the beautiful terraces of the classroom buildings. I would bring an orange and a cup of coffee and sit outside to enjoy the sunshine under the hanging wisteria strands. I also have fond memories of class field trips, as I got to experience Florence on a much deeper level than I would have if I visited those places outside of class. I also really enjoyed my Social Media class. Even though it was late on a Monday night, we all had fun discussing popular trends and creating content. :)

Are you still friends/in contact with someone you have met in Florence?

I still keep in touch with my roommates Savannah, Hal, and Sabrina. They went to Mizzou with me as well, so we would hang out around campus sometimes when we returned to the US. They're all wonderful. Noah, someone who I knew from college but reconnected with abroad, became one



of my best friends because of the fun we had in Florence. Additionally, I ended up living with a girl named Marielle, who I met in my Ethics class. I also keep in touch with my friend Riley from New York, with whom I had three or four classes.

What would you say to any future students looking into a term at FUA-AUF?

DO IT. FUA-AUF is such a unique educational experience with incredible faculty who really wants you to learn and have a well-rounded experience. Plus, the campus is in one of the most enchanting cities in the entire world, what's not to love?

Describe your FUA-AUF experience with a word.

Idyllic. :)

What are your plans for the future?

I am planning on moving to Denver, Colorado this summer once I finish driving the Wienermobile. I hope to work in the outdoor industry, doing something with marketing and communications. I would also love to work with adaptive sports or a non-profit of some sort.



