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THE
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Classroom

...issance may be the least about the concept of e, broadly defined as the or computers to think, mians.

...ated by the prospect of gine that the possibility ss machines was on his l source for his drawings —the precursor to mod- ings the *Mona Lisa*, *The* which recently sold for s auction, and countless Rather, his ideas were issance, a spirit of reju- imentation grounded in remise that, in the words i, "man is the measure of ized in Leonardo's sym- i, based on correlations According to Vitruvius, ing the first century BCE, source of proportion in

...gine a world without AI. - lives. It shops, cooks, rg partners, invests, de- lans trips and more. But rithms—logical calcula- human feelings that are problem solving.

...ge, U.S. American sociol- that a society's norms, adapt to technological ag, as he defined it, can er than ever before. Will ur humanity in our per- hips? Will our individual tively, passionately and ably most on people's omputers and robots?

...on in the *Age of Artificial* in, president of North- ys that, on the contrary, irst, he argues, we have education. "Because the ned largely to meet the / of the nineteenth and "...often it pushes stu- uage, science and other i the liberal arts, creative art), and metacognitive skills." Hard skills are still ests, competing in the ty should be at the core maximize our uniquely abilities: critical think- assumptions; systems cross different contexts; oundaries of discovery ty, adjusting to the nu- ple globally. These are



"Consider your origins: you were not made to live as brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge."

What better place than Florence to break down these boundaries between classroom and real life? Students studying abroad and professionals seeking career development are immersed daily in the experiences that nurture the soft skills necessary for excelling in skills yet unattainable by AI. The literature of Dante, the architecture of Brunelleschi, the art of Leonardo and Michelangelo, the passion for arts and business of the Medici are part of the inescapable presence every day in the city of the Renaissance.

Antonio Vanni, Academic Director of AEF, School of Arts and Italian Culture, commented, "In Florence, we come face to face every day not only with the art of the Renaissance and contemporary art, but also with the art of living. Florence is built around man; it's a unique city, small and precious for the world. Here, Italian culture, style and identity manifest themselves clearly as a synergy and concert of the arts, architecture, music, fashion, food. Studying in Florence means being immersed in the harmony of all of its parts and being invited to love it more deeply."

Connecting to human emotions and sensibilities is integral to education in Florence. While it's true that other great world cities are centers for the arts, the unique topography, architecture, size, history, identity and overwhelming presence of the Renaissance—in addition to the ubiquitous essence of the *Vitruvian Man*—make the experience of art and creativity unavoidable.

Vanni feels that to study in Florence means to understand the words of Dante. From the *Divine Comedy*: "Consider your origins: you were not made to live as brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge." The virtue, knowledge and soft skills gained through experiential education in Florence may be our best defense against becoming irrelevant in a world of AI. Paradoxically, living in an age of artificial intelligence may be the precursor to a new Renaissance in which humans again "become the measure of all things."

Larry Basirico is professor of sociology, former chair of the department of sociology and anthropology, and former dean of international programs at Elon University. In fall 2013 he served as Elon's study abroad faculty-in-residence at Accademia Europea di Firenze (AEF): International School of Arts and Italian Culture. He has published articles on family issues and identity and is an author of introductory sociology textbooks.

3 locations to learn the art of Florence living



- 1/ Join the pack and become a sun-set watcher on the steps of piazzale Michelangelo with the city as
- 2/ Everything good about life in Florence converges in piazza Tasso. There's the tabernacles, the proxim-
- 3/ Ambié in piazzetta dei Del Bene strikes me as a wonderful place for watching Italian life. It's character-

6 experiences you simply have to try in Florence

A one-day tour to experience the city differently

Michele Bricci, a born-and-bred Florentine and general manager of **FH Hotel Calzaiuoli**, reveals his tips & tricks to explore unexpected Florence, a side of the city that often stays in the shadows of its more famous monuments.



TF x FH Hotel Calzaiuoli

A museum in the oldest hospital in the world

Just 500 metres from FH Hotel Calzaiuoli stands **Santa Maria Nuova**, the oldest hospital in the world still operational and the only one to have a museum boasting **700+ exhibits**. Established by Folco Portinari in 1288, this year the hospital celebrates its 730th anniversary. It is supposed that Leonardo Da Vinci dissected corpses here to study their anatomy. Today Santa Maria Nuova makes for a fascinating walk among **cloisters, the church of Sant'Egidio, and semi-hidden halls and rooms** where you can discover artistic masterpieces by the likes of Alessandro Allori, Piero della Francesca, Buontalenti, Bicci di Lorenzo and Lorenzo Ghiberti.

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9am-1pm/2-6pm; Saturday 9am-1pm. Guided tours in Italian and English. Duration: 1 hour. Max. 20 people.

Reservations: 055 2001586 Info@exclusiveconnection.it

Cost: € 15 per person, by way of a donation

Piazza Santa Maria Nuova, 1

Perfume-making masterclass in Santa Croce

Ready for a scent-filled adventure? Devote an afternoon to the **perfume-making workshop** at Aquaflor. Nestled in the Renaissance cellars of the perfumery parlour, an olfactory expert will introduce you to the techniques used to **design a custom fragrance**. Equipped with beakers, pipettes and a raft of scents, you'll train your nose how to distinguish the nuances of an essence in order to find the perfect formula for your very own perfume. The end result? A 100 ml bottle of scent made by you.

Workshop times: Monday to Friday at 11am or 3pm. Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes. Max. 15 people.

Calendar and buy online: www.aquaflorexperience.com

Cost: € 150 per person

Private workshops on request: workshops@aquafior.it

Borgo Santa Croce, 6



Sleep in a room with a view of the Duomo

What better way to end the day than relaxing in a **prestige room with a Duomo view** at **FH Hotel Calzaiuoli**? The hotel is situated halfway along via Calzaiuoli.



Dinner at an Oltrarno fashion atelier

Imagine dining among **patterns, fabrics and haute couture**. It's something that happens naturally at Atelier via Maggio, a workshop-cum-club that tailors **exclusive experiences**: private breakfasts and lunches, style advice and custom clothing. Every month the atelier holds *Stelle in Atelier*, a **dinner series with renowned chefs** by reservation only. On 25 May, it's the turn of Floriano Pellegrino and Isabella Potì from Lecce's Bros' restaurant, the holder of 3 "hats" from Le Guide dell'Espresso.

Next event: 25 May 8.45pm. Max. 25 people.

Reservations: 055 2399093

An old-world Florentine art workshop

The next stop on our tour of Florence is the **Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore Restoration Workshop**, once situated behind the cathedral apse and founded 722 years ago to craft the sculptural and architectural decorations of Florence Cathedral and Bell Tower. Michelangelo and Brunelleschi both worked here. Now visitors can be wowed by **master stone-cutters and restorers** who, with the same tools as in the past, work to preserve this unique world heritage.

Opening hours: Monday - Wednesday - Friday at noon. Guided tour in English of the Workshop + Cathedral + Baptistry. Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes. Max. 20 people.

Buy online: www.operaduomo.firenze.it

Cost: € 30 per person - Tours in Italian or at different times on request (min. 10 people).

Via dello Studio, 23A rosso

Iris in bloom, the symbol of Florence

A green expanse stretching 2.5 hectares beneath piazzale Michelangelo, which vaunts stunning views over the city. Florence's **Iris Garden**, only open in the spring, shows itself in its best light in the late afternoon. A wonderful **walk that winds along stone paths, down steps and beside a little lake** to gaze at the **2,000 iris hybrid varieties**. Mark the following dates in your diary: *Shakespeare a colazione*, a theatrical matinée on 20 and 27 May at 10am and 11am, organized by Perelandra Teatro. (Tickets cost 15€ per person including breakfast. Reservations: 333 2284784)

Opening hours: 25 April to 20 May, Monday to Friday 10am-1pm/3-7:30pm; Saturday and Sunday 10am-7:30pm. Free.

Guided tours in Italian and English on request: 055 483112 - segreteria@iris-firenze.it

Getting there: ATAF bus routes 12 and 13 (from Santa Maria Novella train station)

Viale Michelangelo, 82

1. *Museum of the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova Matroneo - Azienda USL Toscana Centro*