INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIONS
FLORENCE, ITALY

SACI Community Outreach and Interdisciplinary Projects with Italian Museums, Institutions, and Industries
SACI COLLABORATIONS

STUDIO ARTS COLLEGE INTERNATIONAL FLORENCE IS EXTENDING THE CLASSROOM INTO WORLD-RENOWNED MUSEUMS, INSTITUTIONS, AND INDUSTRIES WITH NEW COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES IN ART AND DESIGN. KNOWN AROUND THE WORLD AS THE HEART OF THE RENAISSANCE, FLORENCE, ITALY, IS A MIX OF OLD AND NEW, TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY. FLORENCE’S RICH AND LAYERED HISTORY EMBODIES A MOMENT THAT DEFINED ART AS WE KNOW IT, AND ITS MULTICULTURAL CONTEMPORARY CULTURE CONTINUES TO INSPIRE INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS, WRITERS, AND THINKERS TODAY.

SACI IS AT THE CENTER OF THIS INNOVATION. IN US-ACCREDITED PROGRAMS AND COURSES Merging INDIVIDUAL ARTISTIC PRACTICE IN A CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT WITH FLORENCE. STUDENTS CHOOSE FROM 68 COURSES RANGING FROM FASHION DESIGN, FRESCO PAINTING AND SCULPTURE TO INTERACTIVE ART & DESIGN. BEYOND THE CLASSROOM, INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATIONS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH ARE THE STAPLES OF SACI LIFE AND LEARNING. OUR COLLABORATIONS CONNECT STUDENTS WITH SOME OF ITALY’S MOST RENOWNED MUSEUMS, INSTITUTIONS, AND INDUSTRIES. PROPELLING AN ALREADY LIFECHANGING OPPORTUNITY TO NEW HEIGHTS, THESE COLLABORATIONS BREAK DOWN BOUNDARIES BETWEEN ART, DESIGN, FASHION, ANTHROPOLOGY, SCIENCE, AND HISTORY TO DEVELOP INDEPENDENT AND INNOVATIVE ARTIST’S SOLUTIONS WITH VITAL KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORICAL CULTURE IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD.

COVER: WOMEN’S SPACE SUIT PROTOTYPE FOR MARS
THIS PAGE: A SACI_MX STUDENT DESIGNING FOR THE GALLERIA DELL’ACCADEMIA
Purpose is Given to Learning by Connecting SACI Students to the Real World

Interdisciplinary project-based learning allows students to connect to the real world by tackling multiple social, political, environmental, and economic issues and challenges in order to find solutions for the common good. Across different disciplines, SACI students and faculty work in unison incorporating separate skills and integrating creative ideas to achieve positive shared outcomes. These multidisciplinary, hands-on projects are structured with a purpose of building techniques and skills, and gaining experience in a realistic manner. This project-based learning helps to build students’ portfolios and anticipate future professional career challenges.

SACI’s Interdisciplinary projects spark enthusiasm for learning and encourage students to go beyond the traditional way of thinking. They make connections between ideas and concepts across different disciplinary boundaries, creating new skills and opening minds to alternative career paths.

Over the years, SACI students have collaborated on many fascinating interdisciplinary projects in association with local organizations and institutions. Below are just a few examples.

**WITHOUT LIMITS: NEW DESIGNS FOR ACTIVE AGING**

The ongoing Without Limits project, an interdisciplinary project developed in collaboration with Dainese’s D-Air Lab, challenges students to rethink fashion while simultaneously integrating protective, smart wearable clothing for the aging population. Without Limits brings together theoretical and practical approaches through collective interdisciplinary problem-solving in a studio format with a human-centered approach to Design. Students are exposed to the research, technology, and development conducted by Dainese (famous the world over for their design of protective motorcycle racing suits for MotoGP), and apply research, design and entrepreneurial thinking to develop their ideas towards the realization of protective clothing for the elderly.

**SACI MX – DESIGNING THE MUSEUM EXPERIENCE**

The rich history of Florence makes it the natural home of some of the world’s most remarkable museums.

SACI students have worked with museum professionals at the Galleria dell’Accademia, the Musei del Bargello, La Specola, the Museo del Tessuto (Prato), and the Museo degli Innocenti to design brand identity and to create wayfinding solutions for improving visitor experiences while utilizing technological advancements.

**FLORENCE BIENNALE**

In October 2019, SACI faculty members together with Graphic Design, Animation, and Interior Design students participated in the 12th edition of the International Contemporary Art and Design Biennial of Florence at the Fortezza da Basso. In collaboration with EarthDNA, Studio RF, and Anughea Studios, SACI presented an interactive project to provide insight into the data and resources that help us understand the complexity and challenges of climate change. An opportunity for visitors to immerse themselves in and interact with the content that climate scientists are grappling with, SACI’s stand offered a way to visualize and understand environmental data by digitally illustrating the impact of global climate change in our everyday lives. SACI instructor, Roberto Fazio, and his Studio RF, won the 1st Prize Leonardo da Vinci International Award for the best installation in the technology and games category.

**U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL FLORENCE— RESEARCH, PUBLICATION, AND PAINTING RESTORATION**

In collaboration with the U.S. Consulate General Florence, SACI’s Art History Department developed and published
a guidebook in both Italian and English for Palazzo Canevaro, the Consulate’s home in Florence. The collaboration was part of #Insieme200, a celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Consulate’s establishment in the city and was an important contribution by SACI in providing a better understanding of a part of Italy and the U.S.’s historical relationship.

After extensive research beginning in the fall of 2018, SACI’s MA in Art History students, with instructors Maria Antonia Rinaldi and Alice Parri, produced the guidebook detailing the art, architecture, and history of the palazzo, which was presented at the Consulate’s Independence Day reception in 2019.

The SACI Conservation Department, led by SACI instructors Dr. Roberta Lapucci, Nora Marosi, and Alice Parri, also collaborated with the Consulate to restore two paintings: Still Life and Landscape, which decorate the walls of Palazzo Canevaro and are part of the State Department Permanent Cultural Heritage Collection.

The cultural asset manager at the U.S. Department of State’s Overseas Buildings Operations in Rome worked with SACI on this collaboration, and arrangements are being made to have the students restore more paintings during future academic terms.

FERRAGAMO MUSEUM—FASHIONING SPACES & SUSTAINABLE THINKING

Fashioning Spaces was an interdisciplinary program developed through a collaboration between SACI and the Ferragamo Foundation and Museum in Florence. In 2017, students in the Fashioning Spaces program developed work based on “1927 The Return to Italy,” a year-long exhibition celebrating the 90th anniversary of Salvatore Ferragamo’s return to his homeland. The program approached the Ferragamo exhibition strategy and implementation of “1927 The Return to Italy” as a case-study for effective storefront and museum display and design. Students in Fashion Design, Interior Design, Visual Design, and Museology learned how to develop their own team-based designs for possible pop-up installations in Ferragamo’s flagship stores.

The resulting works ranged from interactive maps, videos, posters to apps, and projection mapping installations, combining mediums to represent the creative genius of the Italian fashion icon and the importance of this renowned museum. The project focused on brand identity challenges facing the museum today and how to incorporate new technologies into the museum experience.

In 2018, students worked with Museo Salvatore Ferragamo designers, historians, curators, and video/multimedia experts on projects relating to the museum’s May 2018 “Italy in Hollywood” exhibition. Multidisciplinary approaches were utilized to assist in the creation and curation of the museum’s exhibition.

In 2019, students in SACI’s Fashion Design course had the unique opportunity to create a capsule collection of sustainable fashion along the lines of the theme of the Sustainable Thinking exhibition organized by the Museo Salvatore Ferragamo, showing from April 2019 to March 2020 in Florence.

PALAZZO STROZZI

Continuing SACI’s tradition of collaboration with the Palazzo Strozzi Foundation, Florence’s leading foundation and museum...
for contemporary art, SACI students and faculty members work with the Education Department of the CCC Strozzina on diverse exhibitions. In response to current themes in contemporary art, students take part in city-wide dialogues with artists and scholars at multiple art and academic institutions. For example, in 2016, students in SACI’s MFA in Studio Art and MFA in Photography programs took part in Oggetti Politici/Political Objects in response to Ai Weiwei. Libero, an exhibition of work by the controversial political artist Ai Weiwei.

**THE PERGOLA THEATER – RESTORATION OF MURAL PAINTINGS & WOODEN MODEL**

Since 2011, SACI Mural Conservation students have been restoring mural paintings in the scenographer’s rooms at the Pergola Theater, considered the oldest opera house in Italy, having occupied the same site for more than 350 years. The Conservation department has also restored a wooden model of the theater’s entrance hall and three small wooden models for ballet scenography.

**CONSERVATORIO DI SANTA MARIA DEGLI ANGELI**

From 1996 to 2006, SACI students undertook a 10-year-long restoration project of the Baroque chapel of Santa Maria degli Angeli, severely damaged during the Florence flood of 1966. Students worked with professional restorers in the restoration of the mural paintings, the stuccoes, the altars, and the decorated and polychrome surfaces in the church—returning these beautiful works to their original splendor.

**WELLS OF WONDER – CONSERVATION OF ETRUSCAN AND ROMAN ARTIFACTS**

Over a period of 6 years (2010-2016), 100 SACI conservation students in collaboration with the professor and Etruscan scholar Dr. Nancy T. de Grummond of Florida State University conserved approximately 180 Etruscan, Roman, and Late Antique artifacts, dating between 3rd century BCE and 4th CE, using Italian approaches to clean, dry, reassemble, and reconstruct the artifacts for display. Artifacts made of ceramic, metals (iron, bronze, lead, silver), wood, and bone were studied, conserved, restored, and documented. The effort culminated in an exhibition of these objects held in September 2017 at the National Archaeological Museum of Florence.

SACI Design students created the entirety of the show’s promotion and marketing materials, including design identity for banners, posters, animated invitations, and labels. This crossover between the Conservation Department and the Design Department represents SACI’s ongoing goal to unite diverse fields in broadening the impact of art and design.

Authorities are currently working on opening a permanent museum in Gaiole in Chianti for the restored artifacts excavated from the wells of Cetamura by Nancy De Grummond and conserved by SACI.

**BODY ARCHIVES**

Proving that art is perhaps most valuable when it crosses into other fields, students in the Body Archives course respond to important themes in science, history, anthropology, and psychology to create engaging contemporary work for some of Florence’s oldest and most prestigious institutions. Students in this course regularly exhibit in the Museum of Anthropology and the Museum of Natural History, La Specola, while students pursuing Directed Independent Studies have the opportunity to conduct independent research within the museum archives.

Body Archives revolves around the representation of the body throughout history. Students in the course utilize the Biomedical Collection at Careggi Hospital in Florence, the Museum of Anthropology, the Museum of Natural History, La Specola, and other institutions for their research.
SACI IS
A United States non-profit 501(c)(3) educational entity incorporated in 1976
A directly accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD)
Affiliated with Bowling Green State University (BGSU) in Ohio, which is accredited by NASAD and by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools
Authorized by the Delaware Department of Education to confer an MFA in Studio Art, MFA in Photography, and MA in Art History
Recognized by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Italian Ministry of Universities as a foreign non-profit university-level program

Students who would like to receive a copy of SACI’s accreditation, licensure, and/or approval should send a signed request for such material to SACI’s Dean.

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