

## 2008/11: Florence Institute of Design International

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The Florence Institute is an international school of Italian design located in the heart of the Renaissance city of Florence. With an artistic heritage that includes Botticelli, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, Florence is one of the most inspiring and culturally exciting cities in the world. The institute is the ideal place to study design, where the legacy of the world's most renowned artists fuses with the innovative creations of modern Italy.

"...the Institute's philosophy is to provide a first class facility offering the highest level of education and resources to design students around the world";

### Academics

The Florence Institute focuses attention on providing a first class education with unique courses in Interior and Graphic Design, as well as allowing students to explore History of Art and basic Architecture. With both Masters and Academic level classes, the students are creatively encouraged and supported to develop their skills, which are honed through tutorials and specialized projects.

The Interior Design programs at the Florence Institute focus on themes and techniques that are used by Italy's Interior Design profession. The courses are specially integrated to allow exploration of all areas of Interior Design, Interior Decoration and Furniture Design, and to provide the student with a strong foundation of knowledge and skills.

Whilst form and functionality are studied within the Studio Design courses, virtual 3D models of interiors and furniture are created in computer classes to further examine the visual aspects and presentation of the scheme. The Interior Design programs offer instruction in the most prevalently used programs in the professional world today – AutoCAD, 3D Studio Max and Adobe Photoshop, amongst others.

The main focus of the Interior design program is the Studio Design Course. Major themes such as space planning, Furniture Design, Interior Decoration, textures, color schemes and lighting are addressed each semester. The class is organized into three different components: lectures, desk critiques and presentations. Design school lectures cover many design topics, technical data and theory.

### Environment

The Florence Institute is situated in the heart of Florence, Italy. Florence is a perfect destination for design students as it contains a rich collection of Renaissance works and a history of art that is perhaps unrivalled anywhere else in the world. The institute is situated in a historic palazzo within one of Florence's most vibrant sections of town.

The interior has been transformed into an international school with an elegant décor and spacious design. The refined ambiance creates an inspirational environment that is ideal for creative thinking.

The entry hall to the institute, the 'Sala degli Angeli', is a unique example of interior design and art. Covered with plaster decorations, large colourful paintings and vaulted fresco ceilings, the hall is the signature space for the institute. Each of the paintings and vaults depicts celestial scenes with cherubs and mythological characters in vividly animated compositions.

Both the hall and the palazzo date back to the Baroque design era of the 1700's, and because examples of Baroque architecture are so rare in the Florence centre, the entire palazzo is historically certified and protected by the Italian Minister of Culture.

### Distinction

As a result of the location of the institute, many of the lecture courses include field trips to nearby monuments, museums and important buildings with regards to architecture. In this way, students can better absorb the influences around them. In addition, the Institute provides courses in History of Art, which allows students to explore the city of Florence and gain a better understanding of the political, social and economical climate that gave birth to some of the world's most renowned art. This source of inspiration is perhaps one of the most wonderful aspects of studying within Florence.

The school focuses on a new style of boutique academics, with a focus on individual development and tailored learning. Each member of staff is highly specialized in their field, and there is a strong emphasis on providing a complete foundation and grounding in design. According to one student, the teachers are one of the best aspects of the school: &ldquo;Great teachers! I am impressed by the quality of your instructors.&rdquo;

The school also houses a library, which contains a select collection of books, periodicals and digital resources to support creative thought and provide technical solutions. The Florence Institute&rsquo;s courses teach the foundation of Italian design by combining modern technologies with Italy&rsquo;s imaginative culture. Through combining tradition and technology, the program gives a detailed understanding of the Italian creative process. The course format is inspirational rather than institutional in the way it juxtaposes the concepts of new with traditional to stimulate thinking about how different periods can be integrated.

## Vision

The Institute is totally international, and as such allows for a unique style of education and experience. As the city of Florence has become an international crossroads for design students, The Florence Institute of Design International will build upon this rich history of art, culture and design, while providing students with a unique international learning experience where methodology and curriculum is designed for the broad and diverse set of students and focused on personalization of studies.

This year the institute is working predominantly with international graduate students, whilst next year we will be expanding our study abroad and Academic programs to cater for students who are already studying in the design field in their own countries, or those who have chosen a design path after high school.

According to founder and director Architect Marc DiDomenico, &ldquo;The key to this institute is the diversity and understanding of the student set. By expanding to encompass students from all over the world, the multi-cultured backgrounds of the students create an elevated level of complexity and need for varied methods of teaching.&rdquo;

Marc goes on to explain: &ldquo;As most applicants to the Florence Institute have studied at the finest schools in their own countries, we strive to create the same level of academic excellence, offering the highest standard in design education abroad. We look forward to providing the design foundation to lead this next generation of international designers.&rdquo;