

## **ART INCONTRO SICILIA SAMPLE ITINERARY**

This sample itinerary illustrates the range of activities which are included in a typical week of the ART INCONTRO SICILIA program. To receive the complete 18 day itinerary, current prices and booking conditions, email [lucia@artincontro.com.au](mailto:lucia@artincontro.com.au)

### **Day 1 ORTIGIA**

#### **MORNING: PIAZZA DUOMO AND ORTIGIA MARKETS**

We meet for breakfast in Piazza Duomo, a beautiful square which is built on the highest part of Ortigia and has been a place of civic and religious life since the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Towering majestically over the square, the Duomo conveys something of Siracusa's rich history through its many architectural layers. Originally a Doric temple dedicated to Athena in 480BC, the structure was transformed into a mosque during the Arab reign and later gained beautiful mosaics during Norman times. Its present day façade is a magnificent example of Sicilian Baroque architecture. After visiting the cathedral we continue our exploration of Ortigia with a stroll to the nearby markets. In this colourful atmosphere, we'll find an amazing array of local fruit and vegetables; fish, cheeses, nuts and spices: an ideal opportunity to stock our pantries with local produce.

#### **AFTERNOON: INCONTRO WITH ANGELA MATERA, ARTIST-PRINTMAKER**

After lunch, we meet artist-printmaker Angela Matera at her studio in Ortigia. Angela will talk to us about her work and show examples of her prints, highlighting different techniques, ideas and influences. Angela will also provide us with a practical orientation to the facilities in the studio, which will be the base for the practical art component during our stay. This session is also an opportunity to discuss and share project ideas and organise our space and materials.

### **Day 2 ORTIGIA**

#### **MORNING: FOLDED BOOKS AND FROTTAGE DRAWINGS**

Lucia will demonstrate two simple folded-book constructions, which can be adapted for drawing, writing or printing activities. We can start with a series of layered frottage drawings (rubblings), exploring and mapping the textures and surfaces of Ortigia, using graphite and wax-resist techniques. Alternatively, you can pursue your own self-directed project in drawing, painting or any other creative activity.

#### **AFTERNOON: GALLERIA REGIONALE DI PALAZZO BELLOMO**

After lunch we visit the regional art gallery and museum in Palazzo Bellomo. This striking Swabian building was erected in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and extended 300 years later. The ground level has the appearance of a fortress, while the first floor extension features elegant windows separated by slender columns. The painting by Antonello da Messina is arguably the most outstanding exhibit in the collection, despite extensive deterioration. Painted in 1474, the Annunciation demonstrates a wonderful balance between the intricacy of Flemish influences and the formality of Italian Renaissance aesthetics. On the same floor, Caravaggio's Burial of Santa Lucia may have been inspired by the saint's actual tomb in the nearby catacombs of Siracusa. It was painted in 1608 during the artist's brief stay in the city and is characteristic of Caravaggio's mature work, both in its provocative placement of the central characters and its dramatic handling of light and shadow.

#### **EVENING: BOAT CRUISE ON SIRACUSA PORTO GRANDE**

In the evening, we'll take a boat cruise around Porto Grande (Main Port) and the waters off Ortigia island; looking back onto the illuminated spectacle of Siracusa's historic centre.

### **Day 3 SIRACUSA NEOPOLIS**

#### **MORNING: DRAWING FIELD TRIP MUSEO ARCHEOLOGICO REGIONALE**

The Museo Archeologico will provide a wealth of inspiration for this morning's drawing session. Open to the public 1988, this impressive museum houses the most important archaeological collection in Sicily. The museum is divided into prehistoric, Classical and regional sections from Siracusa and its colonies. Among the exhibits are two strikingly different works; a seated fertility goddess suckling her twins found in Megara Hybaea and a beautiful marble and terracotta statue dating from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, representing the goddess Persephone.

#### **AFTERNOON: PARCO ARCHEOLOGICO DELLA NEAPOLIS**

After a picnic lunch, we visit the nearby Archeological Park of Neapolis, which contains one of the most important ancient theatres anywhere in the world. Built in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, the Greek Theatre of Siracusa was completely cut out from the bedrock, taking advantage of the natural slope of the hill. The date of construction has been established largely on the basis of factual reports documenting the first performance of Aeschylus' play, The Persians. Behind the theatre is the mysterious Grotta del Ninfeo (Nymph's Cave) and to the left the Via dei Sepolcri, a fascinating ancient street lined with a series of Byzantine tombs and votive niches.

### **Day 4 ORTIGIA AND NOTO**

#### **MORNING: MONO-PRINTING AND DRAWING WORKSHOP**

Using the drawings from our field trip to the Archaeological Museum as inspiration, we will experiment with mono-printing and mixed media techniques. A mono-print, as the name implies, is a one-off impression made by applying printing ink or oil paints to a flat surface and transferring it to paper, either by hand or by using a printing press. Mono-prints allow us to work quickly and obtain a range of expressive textures and marks; they can be monochrome or multi-coloured images. Alternatively, you can continue working on your own creative project.

#### **AFTERNOON: NOTO**

Noto is famous for its stunning baroque architecture and the golden stone used in its buildings which give the town a warm luminous glow. The consistent beauty of its architectural style has led to Noto being designated a European Heritage site. Sicilians simply call it "a garden of stone". Accompanied by our local guide, we visit Noto's splendid historic centre, stopping to explore some of the town's architectural highlights, including Palazzo Nicolaci, renowned for its richly carved balconies ornamented with fantastical creation. Mandolfinore, a chic pasticceria and gelateria, is a good spot to stop for a break. Here, we can admire the effects of the changing light on the town's majestic streetscape.

### **Day 5 FREE DAY**

This is a free day for relaxing, drawing, writing, reading or independent travel.

### **Day 6 ORTIGIA AND PALAZZOLO ACREIDE**

#### **MORNING: WOODBLOCK WORKSHOP**

The natural pattern and grain of wood can be beautifully exploited in woodcut printing. Woodcuts allow a wide range of expressive variations. They are associated with the both the aggressive, jagged graphics of the European Expressionists and the clarity and formality of Japanese colour prints. Alternatively, you can continue working on your own creative project.

#### **AFTERNOON: DRAWING FIELD TRIP TO PALAZZOLO ACREIDE**

The Casa Museo in Palazzolo Acreide is a unique museum, created by Antonio Uccello, a poet and scholar of Sicilian folklore. For more than thirty years, Uccello studied, collected and documented the rapidly changing lives of the rural communities of Southern Sicily. The Casa Museo recreates a typical rural house. The museum includes a wonderful collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century votive paintings on

glass, displayed alongside wax and clay religious sculptures. In the old stable, with its rough cobbled-stone floor, we'll find an extraordinary array of toys, theatre posters, painted wrought iron carts and hand-made Sicilian puppets. The town of Palazzolo Acreide is built on the site of the ancient Greek city Akrai and was once an important centre of Christianity, before it was destroyed by the Saracens in 827AD. It was rebuilt in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and has many beautiful baroque buildings lining its main thoroughfares. We can appreciate some of these graceful buildings as we stop for a drink in Piazza del Popolo, before returning home to Ortigia.

### **Day 7 MOUNT ETNA AND RANDAZZO**

**MORNING: BORGO CATANIA – CIRCUMETNEA**

Today we take an extraordinary train trip around the circumference of Europe's largest volcano, Mount Etna. The train journey begins at Borgo Catania, where we board the carriages of the Ferrovia Circumetnea. This delightful route will take us back to an era when travel was much slower than today. Climbing up the slopes of Mount Etna, we will join local commuters as we pass through tiny villages, barren stretches of landscape covered in black lava and luxuriant vegetation. We will enjoy magnificent views of terraced vineyards, almond and pistachio groves, as well as the awe-inspiring view of the volcano itself.

**AFTERNOON: RANDAZZO**

Halfway through our train journey, we stop for a light lunch at Randazzo, the closest town to the craters of Mount Etna. Randazzo is often called the "black town" because lava was used to pave its streets and built its principle monuments. We will explore the town centre and its narrow side streets, which have many examples of medieval architecture. The most characteristic of these is Via Degli Archi, which has a lovely pointed arch and black lava cobblestone paving.

### **Day 8 ORTIGIA AND PANTALICA**

**MORNING: PERSPEX ENGRAVING WORKSHOP**

In this session, we will prepare a small Perspex engraving, ready for printing in the next session. Perspex engraving (or dry point) is one of the most direct and expressive forms of printmaking and consists of scratching or engraving into the surface of a Perspex plate using a sharp point. The resulting burr holds a lot of ink and contributes to the rich velvety impression when a dry point print is taken off the plate. Alternatively, you can continue working on your own creative project.

**AFTERNOON: WALKING THROUGH THE PANTALICA NECROPOLIS**

After lunch we take a fascinating walk through the lush, dramatic landscape of Pantalica. Apart from the natural beauty of this site, Pantalica offers a slice of Sicily's earliest history. Following a walking path along a disused railway track, we will see rock-cut tombs; dwellings and temples lining the steep walls of the verdant limestone gorges. Pantalica is Sicily's largest Bronze and Iron Age cemetery, containing over 5,000 tombs dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. The tombs lie at the end of a gorge studded with citrus trees and wild flowers. Tradition claims that Pantalica was the heart of the ancient kingdom of Hybla, the capital of the Siculi king. The city was conquered by the Greeks in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC but Pantalica became important again during the Middle-Ages, when Arab invasions led the locals to seek refuge in its inaccessible canyons. The cave-dwellings and hermitages date from this period.

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