

# ART RESTORATION PROGRAMS SUMMER

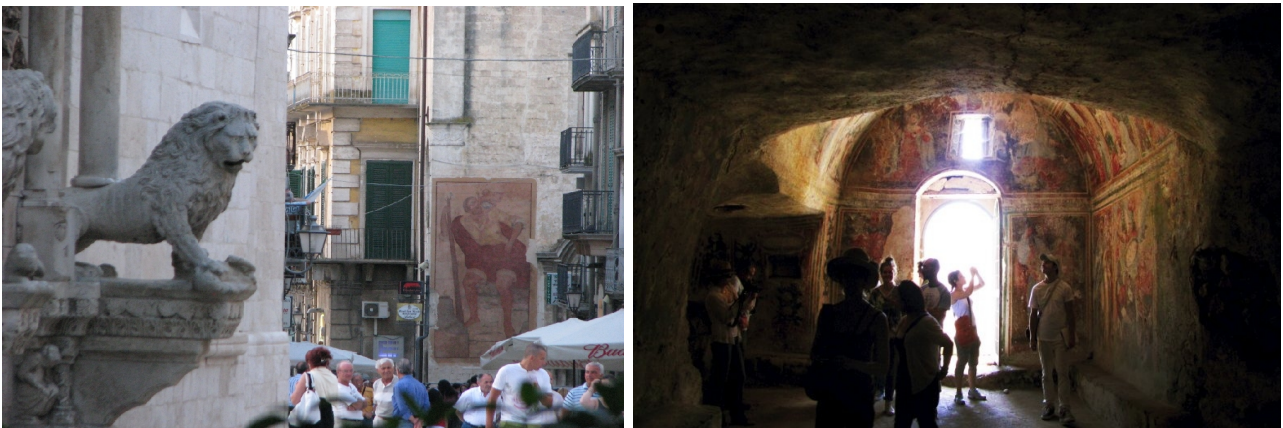
## Fresco & Canvas Restoration and Conservation

### Altamura, Puglia, Italy

MESSORS is offering an 15-day course located in the rich cultural and historical setting of Southern Italy.

Dates: <http://www.messors.com/art-restoration-conservation-workshop>

The session will include the practices of Fresco and Painting on canvas restoration. It will begin with an introduction to the principals, standards and guidelines for art restoration and conservation, practical hands-on experience, excursions and lectures.



There are no prerequisites required to participate to our workshops

The Frescoes are part of the *rupestral* settlements (underground habitations) located in the Alta Murgia area in the Puglia region of Italy. Canvases are provided by local churches and private collectors. A fresco making session will be focusing on learning how to create new decorative patterns and painting using natural materials such as lime base mortars and pigments. The courses provide a practical focus, allowing students ample opportunity for participation in restoration technique. The courses are complemented by seminars in Art History, Geomorphological Studies and Iconography. The courses also include several site visits, including visits to Sassi of Matera (Unesco World Heritage site), a visit to the *rupestral* churches of the Alta Murgia and museums; visit to frescoes of Pompeii and Cappella San Severo in Naples with an overnight in the Parthenopean capital.

The courses are led by Tonio Creanza director of Messors and guest lectures and hands-on works session will be given by restorer Filip Petcu (Faculty of Arts, Conservation and Restoration Department, University of Timisoara - Romania).

## **Program Contents**

Common to all areas of workshops will include:

- Overview of the historical eras (prehistoric, Roman, medieval, modern) and their related artistic currents. Introduction to the history of Italian art and, specifically, the arts in the Alta Murgia region.
- Iconography.
- Geology and traditional natural materials used in antique arts and decoration.
- Physics and chemistry as they are applied during the scientific research and restoration processes.
- Techniques of documenting the research: writing reports, photo and video documentation.
- Preliminary techniques in the conservation process.
- Analysis of the pictorial pigments and structures.
- Common types of degradation and alteration.
- Planning restoration and conservation projects.
- Laboratory: practical restoration work.
- Italian classes

### **COURSE FIELD TRIPS**

- Walking tour in Altamura. Historical district, Museums
- Park of the *rupestral* churches of Matera and the Museum of Art Palazzo Lanfranchi.
- Restoration lab Soprintendenza dei Beni Artistici e Storici.
- 2 Day trip to Pompeii and Naples.
- Civic museum foundation "E Pomarici – Santomasi" at Gravina in Puglia
- A day trip to the beach or a coastal town for a break and fun.

## LODGING/ACCOMMODATION

Our workshop home is located in the small southern town of Gravina in Puglia. The town, built of golden tufa stone, crops up over a thread of rupestrian dwellings and ravine that winds towards open wheat fields and the sounds of evening swallows.

With its ancient roots in the Peucetii culture and its position on the Appian way from Rome to the Mediterranean sea, Gravina is dense with history, archaeology and the arts. Emperor Frederick II chose the surrounding plateaus as his personal hunting grounds, referring to the area as “*Grana dat et Vina*”- meaning the land of *wheat and wine*.

An hour inland from the Adriatic coast and neighbour to the Unesco World Heritage site of Matera, Gravina has been ruled through history by the Byzantines, Lombards, Normans, Swabians and North Africans and one of its native residents Vincenzo Maria Orsini, went on to become the Pope Benedict XIII.

The Ponte Acquedotto, a stone foot bridge spanning the ravine and flanked by two fountains on either side, links the open countryside with a wealth of archaeological sites to the historic heart of the town we’ll call home.

The local residents of Gravina will be sharing their crops for our kitchen, their company during our conservation work and their local dialect, stories, and family recipes at our table.



Our private residence is in a 15th-century building in the historic town centre. The *palazzo* has retained some of its original features, however, it has been largely updated with modern amenities. Meals will be prepared in our kitchen and shared in the dining room, which leads to salons, bedrooms, bathrooms, and a balcony overlooking one of the narrow residential streets. From our front door, walk to the piazza for a Peroni, and from the balcony, listen to the animated conversations that have inevitably turned to food. The region is home to seas of olive groves, almonds, durum wheat, Nero di Troia & Primitivo grapes and a foraging culture that brings wild oregano, fennel, and chicory to the local market. The town is a honeycomb of artisanal shops- cheese, focaccia, bread, cured meats, and osterias.

\*Shared bedrooms - dorm style - and bathroom facilities.\*



We have set our restoration studio in the local convent where we will work on paintings and wood statuary, and continue our hands-on work and research onsite on the underground Byzantine frescos of Fornello, Carpentino, and Jesce. The barn at Masseria La Selva will be our bottega for practice with lime plaster fresco making and decorative moulding work during our Art Restoration workshop.

Rising with the morning church bells we head out of town with the farmers' procession of tractors on their way to the orchards, caves, and fields to our open school of history and gastronomical knowledge.

## PROGRAM HISTORY

Messors is the series of workshops branched out from Sinergie-Servizi per i Beni Culturali. Sinergie was established in 1989 under the direction of Art Restorer and Cultural Heritage Conservationist Tonio Creanza in conjunction with the City of Altamura and the regional government. It's mandate has been to preserve the cultural heritage of the Altamurgia region. At its inception Sinergie worked on the research and restoration of the Masseria Jesce Site, a rural rupestal and archaeological site with frescoes dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> century.



From 2004 to 2009 Sinergie, with the collaboration of Dr. Joan Walker, formed a highly successful alliance with James Madison University in Virginia, which ran credited study programs through Sinergie. Throughout its existence the organization has also run open, non-credit programs for participants from around the world who are not affiliated with a University but wish to learn more about the area's cultural heritage and techniques of preservation. The program is now working with local parishes in the preservation of church statues and canvases. Beyond the mere preservation of the rupestal settlements and local historical artworks, Messors' ultimate goal is to revitalize and restore these sites so that they may once again be centres for social and cultural interaction. This has already begun at the restored Jesce Masseria where a number of cultural activities such as concerts and children's educational programs have been conducted.

## Paintings on Canvas Restoration and Conservation

### THE PAINTINGS



The paintings selected for the program date from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century, and represent saints and other religious subjects. While the painters themselves are not very well known, the patronage they received from nobility and the church congregations inculcated with a strong devotional culture, allowed them to create works of notable artistry.

## Fresco Restoration and Conservation



First, discussions will be held on the current state of frescoes conservation located in the underground caves in the Alta Murgia. Secondly, students will participate in an ongoing program of fresco restoration. These frescoes are part of the *rupestral* settlements which include the masseria ("farmhouse") of Jesce, the Masseria of Carpentino, the Masseria of Fornello, the Crypt of San Michele delle Grotte, and Grotta dell' Angelo from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century.



In these rural settings, the *ipogei* settlements represented important centers of social and religious activities. The communities of this area created their own cultural identity, finding artistic expression in works of religious iconographic art. Later, development of urban centers located near the sea and an economy linked more towards commerce caused these centers to lose importance. A slow process of decay and abandonment began, resulting in the complete disuse of the area as a center for habitation.

Between the eighth and the twelfth centuries, small monastic and lay communities emigrated to Southern Italy. The high *Murgia* was one of the places of major activity due to it being the point of contact between two religious currents: the Latin Monastic tradition and the Basilian monks from Cappadocia (Turkey) and Armenia, of Greek Orthodox origin. The communities lived side-by-side for centuries, importing their own ethical, political, cultural, and religious values and applying them in the development of their churches, the decoration of their architecture and their iconography. From the use of the *Ipogeo* as places of isolation and ascension (or hermitages), monastic communities were developed that were characterized by the presence of monks and surrounded by an architecture rich with fresco iconography.



It was apparent that the "*ipogei*" settlements had remained marginalized in terms of efforts for promoting their preservation because of the geo-topographical context of the settlements. Through the actions of time, lack of care and vandalism the sites had suffered profound degradation, including a complete alteration of their original environmental conditions. Given their significance throughout this area's history, Sinergie/Messors established a program to preserve and restore these important historical resources.



**LANGUAGE:** The courses are taught in English. Guest lectures will be translated.

## **PROGRAM DETAILS AND COSTS**

See: <http://www.messors.com/art-restoration-conservation-workshop>

Program costs includes:

- Shared occupancy accommodation
- Sheets and blankets
- Meals (wine and beverages included ) - exception of 3 dinners, 3 lunches and 2 breakfast
- Local transport
- Teaching Materials, Supplies, Tools
- Guided Field Trips to Museums and Archeological Parks
- 2-day trip to Pompeii and Naples
- Day Trip to Beach

Exclusions

- Personal costs such as airfare, trainfare or spending money
- Health Insurance

## **REGISTRATION**

Groups size is limited to max 12 participants for each course. A € 1000 EUR deposit must be received in order to reserve your space in the program. The deposit is non-refundable in the case of non-attendance but will be reimbursed should the course be cancelled or if minimum enrollment is not met.

All courses are subject to a minimum enrollment. The minimum enrollment for each course is 8 participants. Messors shall not be held responsible for any loss or damage of any kind suffered by the applicant in relation to the cancellation of a course and/or program or to a student participant.

Although every effort will be made to provide students with a safe and pleasant experience in Italy, Messors cannot be held responsible for any inconvenience that may occur.

## **GETTING TO GRAVINA IN PUGLIA**

Gravina is located in the Puglia region in the south of Italy, approximately 440 kilometres south of Rome (5 hrs drive) and 60 kilometres west of the city of Bari and the Adriatic Sea (1 hr drive). International and domestic air service is available to the Bari International Airport (Bari Palese - BRI). Train service is also available to Bari.

Messors will provide pick-up and shuttling for all participants arriving in Bari (and back at the end of the session). Transport will also be provided during the session to and from our workshop residence to archaeological sites, laboratories and for any guided tours.

For those participants wishing to plan travel before and after their programs there are several interesting destinations they may desire consider such as: Rome, Napoli, Pompei, Amalfi Coast, Salento Coast. These destinations are all within 2 to 5 hrs away by car.

## **CONTACTS**

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