



Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

Report Title: "La Meridiana" Ceramic School **Name:** elahe Shahideh
Other Team Members:
Program: San Francisco Program
Trip Dates: 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001 **Location Visited:** Tuscany, Italy
Post Fellowship Reporting Template: PFR Template 0

Project Summary: Italians have been making ceramics for centuries; in particular, the Tuscans have been famous for representing the core of Italian handmade ceramic art. La Meridiana is one of the best ceramic schools in Italy, located in the heart of the Tuscan hills. This past summer I attended two very interesting courses at La Meridiana with a composed group of potters. Smoke Firing, taught by Luca Tripaldi, and Sculpture from the Life Model, by Lucianne Lassalle. The courses met 7 hours a day, 5 days a week, from July 27th to August 2nd and August 4th to August 10th. Stimulating and developing my creativity in clay through an exchange of ideas, skills, philosophies and techniques, La Meridiana is located in a restored 15th century farmhouse in the very center of Tuscany, the land of Etruscan and Roman cultures, and home of medieval architecture and Renaissance. To start, the students were instructed to take a train from Florence to the closest town, Certaldo, where a representative from La Meridiana picked us up on Sunday July 27th between 3 to 7 p.m. I was placed in a villa 45 minutes away from the school, sharing a room with an Italian woman. The first night we were invited to a dinner where we met the other students, who were from all over the world: Greece, Spain, Columbia, France, Germany, Asia, Canada, and, of course, Italy. The school had also scheduled field trips for its students to cities and towns nearby; for example, we visited the aforementioned Certaldo, a charming medieval town built almost entirely of brick, which was well preserved despite some damage during the Second World War. We also attended two concerts in that town, an evening of jazz, and later a symphony. In addition, we traveled to Florence, Siena and Venice. Currently, I am working as an art teacher at an urban high school. In the past 6 years I have worked very hard to bring the art department to where it is today: two art teachers teaching intro and advanced visual arts, glass fusing, ceramic, computer design, animation, and photography; we also have a part-time dance teacher and finally a class in drama and music. I am constantly abreast of the new technological and instructional advancements, for I educate myself by attending workshop classes, conferences (both local and national) and through online tutorials popular with many artists. My goal has always been to expose my students to as many artistic mediums as possible; for example, as in previous years, to make it possible for my students to experience working with clay, I arranged with a friend of mine employed at a local school access for my students to use their kiln. My students regularly contribute their work to the youth arts festival, winning gold metals, which encouraged me to be more persistent in finding ways to make money so that my school may have its own kiln.

Career Impact: • I've gained many new art making/ceramic techniques, practiced for centuries in other countries, which I can now introduce to my students in my classes; for example: pit firing, sawdust firing, saggar firing, etc.
• I also gained new perspectives in other cultural lifestyles to help me in creating new curriculums for my students.
• I gained new ideas for classroom lessons and activities.

Classroom/Community Impact:• I will use the knowledge I have gained to continue making ceramics.
• I am sharing the new techniques and styles of ceramic makings that I've learned during my fellowship with my advanced art class students, getting the students involved in few projects
• I am sharing all the new knowledge and notes I've gathered during my fellowship with the other art teacher at our school as well as the art teachers in our district.
• I am planning a presentation of slides of my Tuscan experience, along with my ceramic pieces, Italian music and food for my colleagues and students.

Open Response: I often get together with my colleagues to practice cross-curriculum in my classes. During this fellowship trip to Italy I came across many project ideas that I took note of for future use. Our students established a garden as a project in their Biochemistry class three years ago. I contacted Mr. Moore, our science teacher to suggest a collaborative project to make a bench from clay covered by large ceramic pieces, along with Mosaic tables. I am planning a porcelain project for my advance class. I've learned a clay mix recipe that mimics the look and feel of porcelain.

Quote: This trip gave me the experience that I will cherish for ever....

Photos:



St the entrance of "La Meridiana" ceramic school in Tuscany



At the end of a lecture/demo



At times I drove my teacher crazy!!



The scene during my daily one hour walk to school



When Italian horses get thirsty.....



Florence at the sunset



ceramics done by the instructors are on display at the gift shop



A day with my classmates at Florence