

## ART & ART

Recently, Italy has undergone a renaissance in artisan production. It has long been known that basic creative strength resides in handicrafts. In the last few years, these strengths have become well known thanks to a new generation of artists. Designers, architects, sculptors and painters have created new drawings, shapes, and styles. These new styles integrate the traditional handicrafts with modern ones, bringing to life a new set of products. As a result of these new ideas, traditional activities, which once faced extinction, have begun to flourish again. This rebirth has emerged from technical traditions inherited from the past integrated with new ideas. This new artistic heritage is a result of tradition and of the overcoming of an ancient antagonism between Major and Minor guilds. As a result of this extraordinary reunification of the artistic and handicraft worlds, and to celebrate the importance of these traditions, the Chamber of Commerce of Arezzo, Federimpresa and the Center for International Study Baldassarre Castiglione, have created a program of seminars and classes called ART&ART. The program will be offered to foreigners, especially of non-European countries, to promote the 'Made in Italy' label, which expresses Italy's unique regional identities. These regional identities will have a place in the current global market only if they are promoted with a specific program. We have created this program for foreign clients in order to understand the full range of local Italian products, with their unique deep historic, artistic and therefore economic meaning. This educational program builds a network between producers and consumers. The program promotes knowledge of the area and its specific products with classes given by experts where they discuss the cultural and technical understanding necessary to appreciate Italian artisan production. The program includes guided tours of museums where the participants will witness the evolution of specific topics. Finally, the participants will develop a first hand insight into the businesses that produce the "Made in Italy" product and its cultural environment. The goal of this program is to promote the "Made in Italy" label by using an innovative program that offers international consumers an opportunity to discover the quality and technology of the various products through education and by creating relationships between the producers and consumers.

### ARTISAN PRODUCTION FOR FURNISHINGS AND RELATED ACCESSORIES

#### IN THE PROJECT SEMINARS

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Italian artistic handicraft production of furnishings and related accessories is similar in all of the Italian regions. However, in TUSCANY and in the surrounding central Italian regions, it stands out for its exceptional production and for its stories that come to life in the museums. In this region, history seems to be indelible. Tuscany is multifaceted. Landscapes are varied: the sweet hills that cultivate vineyards and olive trees in Valdichiana and Chianti, the bare lunar gullies and high severe cypresses in the Siena area, the wild coast of Maremma, the millenarian forests of Appennino and the poplar woods of Versilia. Each corner of land is history, the Etruscans, the Romans, the archeological areas, the Middle ages, with its churches, abbeys and stronghold castles, the Renaissance, with its magnificent buildings, its fortresses and the nineteenth century with its rural architecture that even today is considered to be historic and artistic. Everything is the same as in the past and is alive because the Tuscan people are not different from those in the past. They are unique. In Tuscany, where there is a good balance between nature, art, culture and folklore, the ARTISTIC HANDICRAFTS are exceptional evidence of the artistic and versatile skills of these extraordinary people that connect the past to the present, ancient art to contemporary art.

During the Renaissance, the work of SILVER by silversmiths almost achieved perfection. The silverware at Palazzo Pitti in Florence is evidence of very high quality and esthetic research. Even today, this industry still expresses commitment, quality and creativity used to furnish, serve, and embellish the home. This silver

production, known worldwide, is used by craftsmen to preserve and hand down the technical and cultural heritage of Italian jewelry history.

Among Italy's expressions of art, we find the old and well-known tradition of the creation of WOOD FURNITURE based on old expertise in woodworking. These craftsmen include wood carvers, inlayers, lacquerers, blacksmiths, decorators and upholsterers that work in interior design. Italian handicraft objects are produced in the same way they were during the Renaissance, in the workshops in many Italian regions and in particular in Tuscany. They produce carved and gilded frames, country-style, linear and rigorous furniture or furniture with carvings or inlaid work carried out on rich wood with varied gradations of color. This work comes to life thanks to the skills and creativity of the artisans. Tradition can be found in the harmonious shapes of objects and in the ever-lasting glamour and unique style of the furniture. Restoration of the old furniture and wooden artifacts reaches a higher artisan level of the craft.

MAJOLICA has been used in Italy since the Middle Ages, but during the Renaissance this handicraft production reached a golden age. The Florence and Faenza workshops marked a turning point towards modern style. Plates and majolica jars often included portraits of ladies and young people in period costumes. Italian factories still produce high quality majolica, both for the table and as ornaments that compliment interior furnishings. Majolica is still produced in the same historic locations. Nevertheless, this activity is also characterized by creativity and the desire to create new art forms. Majolica production is connected, as in the Renaissance, to the artists' freedom of expression and its language.

Along with ceramics, GLASS MAKING is one of the most specialized sectors of Italian handicrafts. Glass making originated in the Middle East and was imported by Etruscans. During the Imperial Roman period, glassware began to be shaped into rare and beautiful forms. The exceptional mosaics in Ravenna are evidence of the most beautiful work that mosaic art has given to Christendom. During the Renaissance, Venice resurrected this art that seemed to be dying. Elegant and refined glasses created by the Murano glassmakers are the pride of many collections. The ancient colors and shapes are reflected in the work of artisans and designers that still work in the Laguna area. Skilled glass and crystal makers produce objects for furnishings, gifts and tableware. These items are currently produced in well-known glass workshops in Altare in the region of Liguria and in Empoli, San Giovanni Valdarno and Colle Val D'Elsa in Tuscany. Glass also finds its place in architecture with glass as a light source through the transparency of its tints of colors. In the fourteenth century, artists from Murano began to take interest in the art of stained glass windows and in the sixteenth century this art reached its highest peak with Marcillat. This stained glass artist, who developed his work in Italy but was born in France, expressed the best of his work in a series of masterpieces in the city of Arezzo. Contemporary Tuscan artisan manufacturing and decoration of stained glass allows for real artwork to be created as an expression of light and color but also as an element of interior design.

Traditionally, at least until the last century, girls prepared a trousseau for their weddings. By the Middle Ages, the trousseau was considered a precious good and became customized through several EMBROIDERY techniques. Trapunto Fiorentino (Florence embroidery) and Punto Caterina de' Medici (point Caterina de' Medici) date to the late Middle Ages, when at court, workshops were organized by the landlady: table and bed linens made of snow-white linen were embodied with drawn-thread work. During the Renaissance, Embroidery created in Florence, Milan, Venice and Palermo took on an artistic value as the art of painting was expanded to include embroidery. Antonio Pollaiuolo, Sandro Botticelli and Raffaello drew embodied patterns to decorate furnishings and sacred vestments. The embroiderer achieved such a technical and chromatic perfection that the art of embroidery has been known as "painting with a needle" ever since. During the Renaissance, in Venice, the artistic production of LACE was born. Venice boasts the pre-eminence in the refinement of lace manufacturing and in an amazing variety of Lace drawings. This artistic production has developed in other Italian regions such as Tuscany, Liguria, Lombardia, Abruzzo and Umbria. Even today, based on old traditions, lace for trousseaus and clothes is created following the patterns set by the Minor guilds.

The Italian heritage of WEAVING is substantial and rich. Among the evidence of this heritage, there are collections that have given life to several ancient cloths. Public, private and ecclesiastic collections illustrate the historic path of a very rich artisan sector. In addition to this "ancient weaving", the current production includes table linens, linens for trousseaus, and beautiful fabrics for drapes and coverings. In the current production, artisans try to be faithful to tradition, to an experience that cannot be substituted for. Yet, artisans, also, welcome new trends that come from Italian designers.

It is important to give special attention to WROUGHT STEEL and its use in modern furnishings. Wrought steel is light and is appropriate both for classical and modern items of production. It is fashionable in homes, because these products can be elegantly positioned in any room. This art achieved its height during the Renaissance and Baroque periods. In Tuscany, there are very important examples of architectural work connected to the religious and civil environments. The leaders in this art were artisans in Florence, Siena and Lucca.

Designers and architects are interested in wrought steel because of its versatility. It can be used to create beds, tables, chairs for interiors and it can also be used outdoors. Today, artisans with technical and artistic experience create high-end products that are the result of the kind of design and taste typical of Italian tradition.

TERRA COTTA is an integral part of Etruscan civilization, both as a building material and as furnishing ornaments. During the Renaissance, it took on a high artistic value, especially in Tuscany. The artisans achieved such a high skill level that they were asked to decorate the most famous gardens and to create ornamental sculptures made of terra cotta. As in the past, the production in artisan workshops was divided into three sectors: food, interior design and furnishings. This humble material is full of charm due to its warm colors and is still created using old techniques. It is used to create jars that contain oil and wine and bowls for cheese. It is also used to produce bricks to restore ancient houses or to build new houses based on the old style. Terra cotta is also used to create vases, statues, crockery and ornaments for gardens and interiors.