



Italians, Visitors and the Streets of Florence©

A research fellowship portfolio from the Summer of 2025

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Notification

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There has been absolutely no use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the creation of this body of work. While AI will transform academia, science, business and other other facets of life, it must have boundaries in the creative process, or we will lose our humanity and purpose. I will never use AI in my photography, as images must reflect the human condition and intellect. Altered reality and falsehoods in art diminish our spirituality and sense of being. Life is weird enough without distorting it further. 😊

Individuals appearing in these photographs were located in the public domain and were not posed or compensated in any manner. Most individuals were unaware that they were being photographed.

The photographer would like to acknowledge his deep appreciation for the support of Marist University for his research fellowship that made this project possible.

Research Fellowship Portfolio

This research fellowship portfolio represents photographs taken during Summer of 2025 in Florence, Italy. This work demonstrates how fine art photography can document our world through the observation of people and how they interact with each other and the environment of this city.

In fine art photography, street photography is a unique genre that is practiced with great discipline and passion by photographers who are intent on observing the human condition and documenting it to preserve a better understanding of humankind at that moment in time. It involves capturing interactions between people and the social and physical landscape that they are present in. The essence is to observe interesting visual elements of culture, architecture, nature and people and create a thoughtful image that documents a fleeting moment in time and place. Notable photographic artists who have practiced street photography include Eugene Atget, Walker Evans, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Frank, Joel Meyerowitz, Vivian Mair, Helen Levitt, Elliot Erwitt and Garry Winogrand.

The objective of this project was to observe and learn how the citizens of Florence, and visitors interact within their own group and between the identified groups in the environment of the city.

Passion for fine art photography flows through my inner being and I constantly reinforce this, by reading about and studying the masters of the medium. In my first few days of this project, I found myself rushing and not being as deliberate as I typically approach my work. Perhaps it was the overwhelming newness and intensity of Florence to me or what I would describe as a challenging lighting. Luckily, I had intentionally brought a copy *The Mind's Eye: Writings on Photography and Photographers* by Henri Cartier-Bresson for inspiration and it helped me improve my focus on previsualization of the intended photographic images that I intended to create. Cartier-Bresson is considered the seminal figure in street photography and developed the concept of the decisive moment when all the elements in a photograph need to line up to create the most compelling image possible. This is easier said than done but it reinforced what I already knew and practiced with insight from the master helped me to be patient and purposeful in creating my work.

The ensuing portfolio is a compilation of the most meaningful images that I created over a two-week period. My accompanying writing reflects some observations and analysis of what I learned from this grand adventure!

Edward L. Linde II- July 2025

Observations

Florence, Italy is one of the most beautiful and culturally rich places in the world. It was a privilege and life-changing experience to photograph here. The renaissance started in Florence, creating an environment in which art and architecture is revered and well preserved throughout the centuries. In America, something that is 100 years old is considered old, whereas in Florence many things are thousands of years old. However, tourism and globalism has manifested a blend of old and new in both the culture and the visual landscape of the streets and its inhabitants. In the center of Florence, global brands, technology, consumerism, commercialization and modern culture compete with tradition and history. It is very interesting to observe and photograph this mosaic and contradiction.

Art is everywhere in Florence. Statues, museums, architecture, talented street artists and seriously good and pervasive graffiti permeate the cityscape. It was very interesting to observe and photograph people engaging with this immersive artistic experience. Art enriches the human condition, and one could see how this is the essence of Florence for both visitors and citizens.

As in America, mobile phones seem to be genetically attached to both local Italians and tourists. Italians tended to stop in the middle of the street to engage with their devices, oblivious to the crowded and narrow sidewalks, while the tourists were absorbed in taking selfies with their phones. It never ceases to amaze me how visitors to a locale are more interested in proving that they were there instead of appreciating the beauty and grandeur of the thing, itself. While this has accelerated due to the ability to post images on social media, historical images from the earliest days of consumer photography indicate that this not a necessarily new phenomena. I have observed and photographed human behavior in many locations in my photography career and it just seemed that the “selfie” activity was way more intense in Florence. No matter what country or culture we come from, we humans are weird-right?



Florence is absolutely about amore or love, and you see it in the interactions and activities of both Italians and visitors. It seems that couples are everywhere and showing affection. It's really nice. There are weddings, bachelorette celebrations, embraces, hand-holding, honeymoons and kisses galore in Florence. Quite a few of my images captured this and reinforce that this city is a romantic place. The Italian culture, especially the wine and amazing cuisine perhaps contribute to this. If you want to find love, Florence is the place to be.

Early June is the beginning of the Summer tourist season, and it was apparent by the crowded, chaotic and noisy nature of the streets. Walking can be a challenge with ancient cobblestones, narrow sidewalks and the intense interplay of motor scooters, cars, pedestrians and motorcycles competing to get somewhere. But it was fun. For a photographer, the crowded environment is both a blessing and a competing factor as one attempts to isolate the right elements into a clean composition.

Observations

Lighting is one of the most important elements in a well-executed photograph. I found the light in Florence, Italy to be somewhat different than what I expected and sometimes frustrating. A photographer, especially one who works in monochrome, learns how to read light. This is important in terms of previsualizing the final image, even in a dynamic genre such as street photography.

The lighting in Florence tends to be bright, but contains a certain degree of haze in it, due to the summer temperatures and high humidity. The city sits in a valley, similar to Poughkeepsie and this explains the nature of the natural light. On our visit to Fiesole, I had to wait for the afternoon for the humidity to burn off, in order to have suitable details in the sky. Overall, the characteristics of the lighting suppressed the contrast and dynamic range of my exposures, but I was able to compensate for this in post-exposure workflow. In all my exposures, I used a red filter to accentuate contrast prior to making exposures. Modern digital cameras have wonderful technology to perform in any environment, but in the end, light is the master that controls the outcome of the final image.

Perhaps due to the atmosphere of amore in Florence, everyone was quite friendly- tourists and Italians alike. People seemed to want to engage and help when I approached them. 90% of my images were captured candidly, but when I asked for permission to create a formal portrait, people were happy and flattered to be a subject.

Tourism is a big industry in Florence and everyone seems to be selling things whether it be dining, leather goods or souvenirs. There are quite a few stores and open air markets in Florence. I enjoyed a number of rather large bookstores that had a decent selection of fine art photography books and made several purchases of work from Italian photographers. I would have never encountered these books in the U.S. and it deepened my learning and appreciation of Italian photography.

Despite the busy nature of the streets and the hustle of commerce, Florence is truly a happy place with a positive vibe. It was refreshing.

Smoking appears to be much more pervasive in Italy than in the U.S. I am not sure why this is, because the Italians have many healthy habits in their walking and more wholesome foods. I just found this interesting.

During our visit to the Istituto Lorenzo de' Medici (LdM), I was able to tour the expansive and well-equipped analog darkroom facilities. Since our Poughkeepsie campus does not have a traditional darkroom, I see the great potential for conducting a three-week silver halide-based photography workshop during winter break sessions. Certainly, a cross-discipline sculpture, illustration and photography workshop could be held as well. I think that this concept could enhance Marist University program and provide a culturally rich experience for students unable to attend a full semester or year abroad.

Observations

The environment of Florence is conducive to art and the creative process in all mediums.

It was very interesting and insightful to observe the interactions between individuals in the social and physical landscape of Florence, Italy. While these interactions were harmonious, it was readily apparent to determine who was an Italian and who was a tourist. The locals could certainly ascertain this and used it in their approach to soliciting business. While the locals tended to be quiet and reserved, the tourists certainly seemed to be a bit more colorful in their demeanor and approach to things.

Florence appeared to be quite diverse from an ethnic perspective and different nationalities and ethnic groups blended together. Segmenting tourist out of my observations, it appeared that this city is more youthful than most. Overall, I found it interesting to observe Asians speaking fluent Italian and totally assimilated in the culture. You expect this in America, but this reinforced how similar the world is in western countries.

In conclusion, Florence is a unique place to photograph people in the social and visual landscape. It's rich heritage, cultural significance, artistic foundations and ambience provide an excellent opportunity to photograph the human condition. It was an outstanding experience both professionally and personally and something that should become a component of the Marist experience for any student studying photography or any field. I was enriched and productive in my two-week research fellowship. I hope that you engage with my body of work and judge for your self.

Images



Bride and groom- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Family- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Lois Lane and Superman- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



The Kiss- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Street Corner- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Museum Personnel- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Graffiti Area- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Romani women- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Two days before their wedding- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



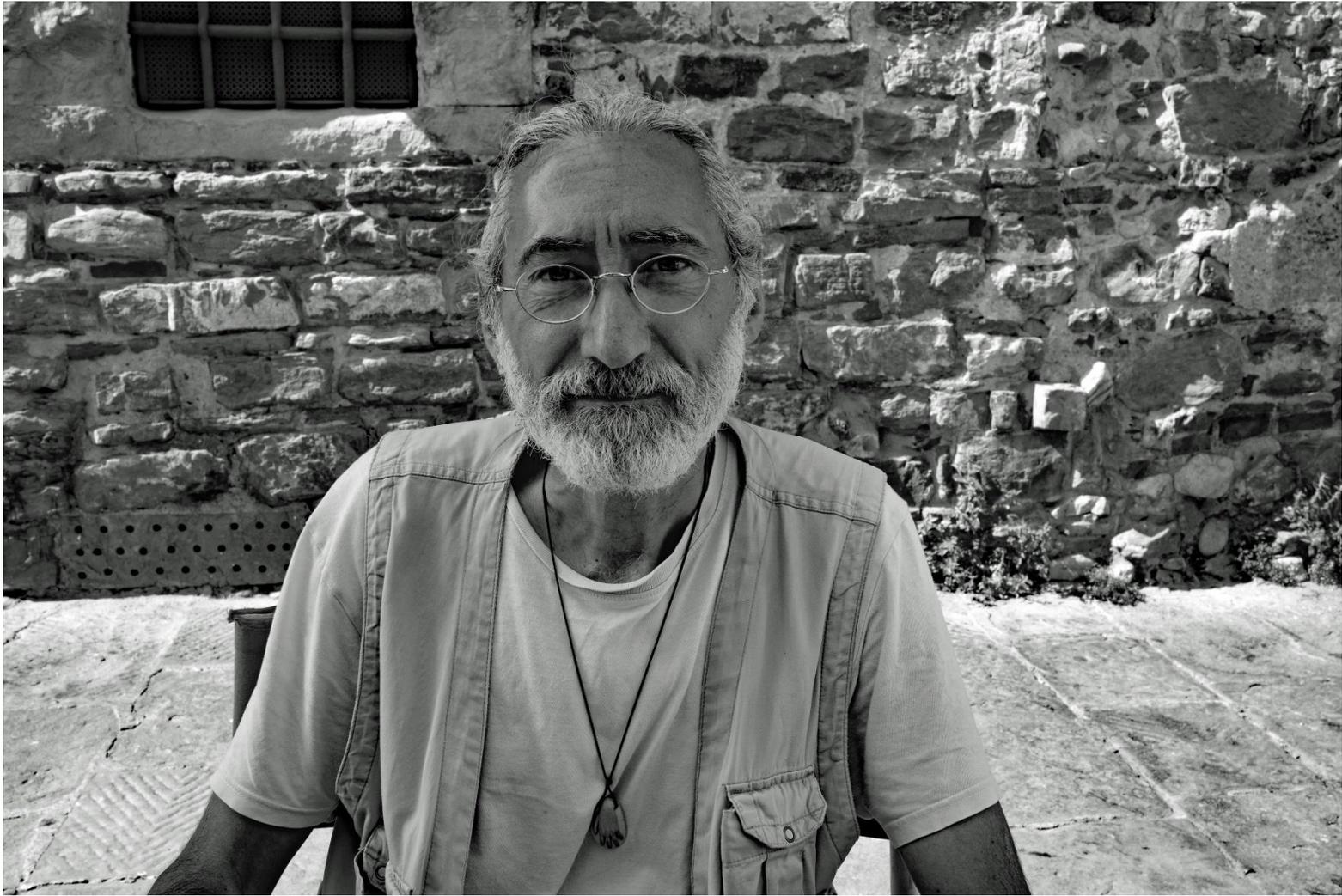
Bachelorette party- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Marco of Antonio Leather- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Stone Artisan- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Yoko, Portrait Artist- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Steven Dana, Artist and Professor- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Street Musician- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Street Artist- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Duomo Cathedral Scene- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



On the museum steps- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Taking a selfie- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Archaeological ruins- Fiesole, Italy 2025

Images



Clouds- Fiesole, Italy 2025

Images



Church- Fiesole, Italy 2025

Images



Car- Fiesole, Italy 2025

Images



Couple- Fiesole, Italy 2025

Images



Protesters- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Graffiti Park- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Street Conversation - Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Couple and their dog- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Cigarette break at the Trattoria Za Za- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Listening to their tour guide- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Tourists at the Duomo Cathedral- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Tour group- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Piazza Santa Maria Novella- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Hotel Minerva- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Statue- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Italian Women- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Over there- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Couple- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Husband and wife- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Rowmance- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Romani woman outside Duomo Cathedral- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Il Nuovo Museo Del Bigallo- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Man shopping- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Street Scene- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Piazza San Lorenzo- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Statue near San Marco University- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Inside the statue gallery- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Monument at Boboli Gardens- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Outside Boboli Gardens- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Boboli Gardens- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



King Neptune- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Statue and tourists- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Ponte Santa Trinita #1 over the Arno River- Florence, Italy 2025

Images



Ponte Santa Trinita #2 over the Arno River- Florence, Italy 2025

About the Faculty Member

Edward L. Linde II has been an Adjunct Instructor of Marketing at the Marist University School of Management since 2016. He has been a marketing practitioner for over 40 years and is graduate of Marist University and Binghamton University. He is passionate about teaching and delivering value to his students.

Edward L. Linde II is also a fine art black & white photographer who specializes in documenting the changing social and visual landscape of America. He has been photographing for over fifty years and was commissioned to historically document the Dater School in Ramsey, NJ during its last year in operation. He has worked on other similar projects throughout the years.

Ed works in the tradition of photographers such as David Plowden, Walker Evans, Edward Weston, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Ansel Adams, Robert Frank, Vivian Maier, Elliott Erwitt and many others. He practices straight photography which means that he pre-visualizes and composes the final image before an exposure is made. This school of photography focuses on solid technical execution in addition to artistic expression. Ed has practiced photography since he was fourteen and until recently worked exclusively in a traditional darkroom. He switched to digital media using Nikon and Fujifilm cameras because of time considerations. The use of digital technology has not changed his deliberate and straightforward approach to creating visual images.

Ed conceived this project to help Marist University tell a compelling visual story about the people interacting with the visual and social landscape of Florence, Italy and to understand the human behavior in this environment.