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# DRAWING FROM LIFE

Workshop  
With Saied Dai  
At Rignana Estate

29<sup>th</sup> August to 5<sup>th</sup> September 2026

*'Without language, there is no expression'*

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# COURSE DESCRIPTION

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An intensive course with the aid of a model, for those who are keen to learn and are seeking to establish a firm and intelligent foundation for a lifetime of creative practice. The subject is presented so that real benefit will be available to the least experienced, whilst also extending the most gifted.

# INTRODUCTION

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Trying to make sense of the bewildering and contradictory world of Art, which is really a reflection of the world at large and to find a firm place in a sea of opinion, is no mean task.

The program is designed to foster intelligent self-critical awareness and objectivity, by the understanding of fundamental principles, rather than through the cultivation of opinions, styles and mannerisms.

We will explore the common links between our experiences and ideas, coupled with the difficulty of expressing them.

Drawing is seen to be the ability to make visual relationships in all its aspects, the ramifications of which are common to all disciplines and not just an activity reserved for the life-room. It reveals the way an artist thinks.

It will be presented as a means to achieve high standards in visual comprehension, judgment and expression.

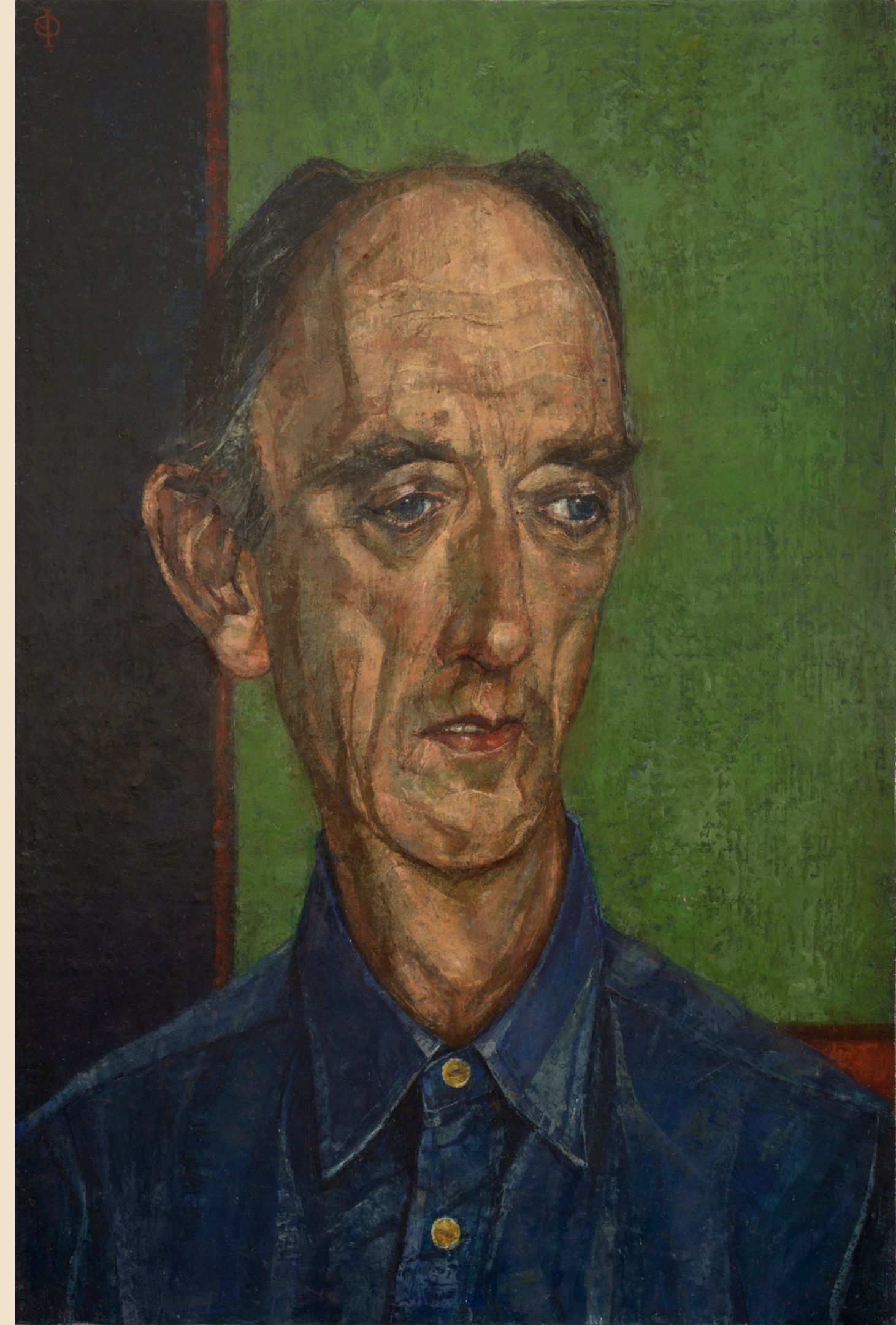
The procedures of critical visual thinking will bring you into contact with many concepts, which have wide application in virtually all aspects of Art and Design. Group revisions and criticisms will provide a platform to share and discuss practical and philosophical questions that arise in the light of practice.

Ultimately, the course encourages you to apply these principles and attitudes to your parallel studies and integrate them with your own work. It will help in the journey of individuals, to 'become a light unto themselves'.

# TOPICS

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- The 'how's' of drawing and painting are relatively simple - not so, the 'why's'.
- Different schools/ approaches/ systems - advantages and limitations; virtues and follies.
- Objective versus subjective - analytical and intuitive approaches.
- The paradoxical nature of 'accuracy'.
- Real freedom is the outcome of discipline.
- Generalisation or particularisation?
- Spontaneity - what does it mean?
- Beauty in ugliness and ugliness in beauty.
- Searching and finding.
- Finish and resolution.
- Decoration or construction?
- Stylism or mannerism?
- Authenticity and fakery.
- Interpretation.
- Inspiration.
- Finding one's voice.



# ABOUT SAIED DAI



Persian by birth, Saied Dai's seven years of art training culminated at The Royal Academy of Arts for his postgraduate studies. He was invited back to the RA Schools to teach under Leonard McComb's Keepership, where drawing was seen to be the cornerstone of all the disciplines. He has also taught at the Prince of Wales Institute of Architecture.

After being elected to the Royal Society of Portrait Painters in 2004, he won the prestigious Ondaatje Prize and gold medal for Portraiture twice, in 2006 and 2022. He was also the recipient of the national William Lock Prize in 2023. He was elected member of The New English Art Club in 2009.

He exhibits widely in London, provinces and abroad with examples in The National Portrait Gallery, Palace of Westminster and other public institutions.

His work focuses on atmospheric and timeless figure compositions, portraits, still lives and landscapes.

# DAILY SCHEDULE

## Daily Rhythm

### Each day includes:

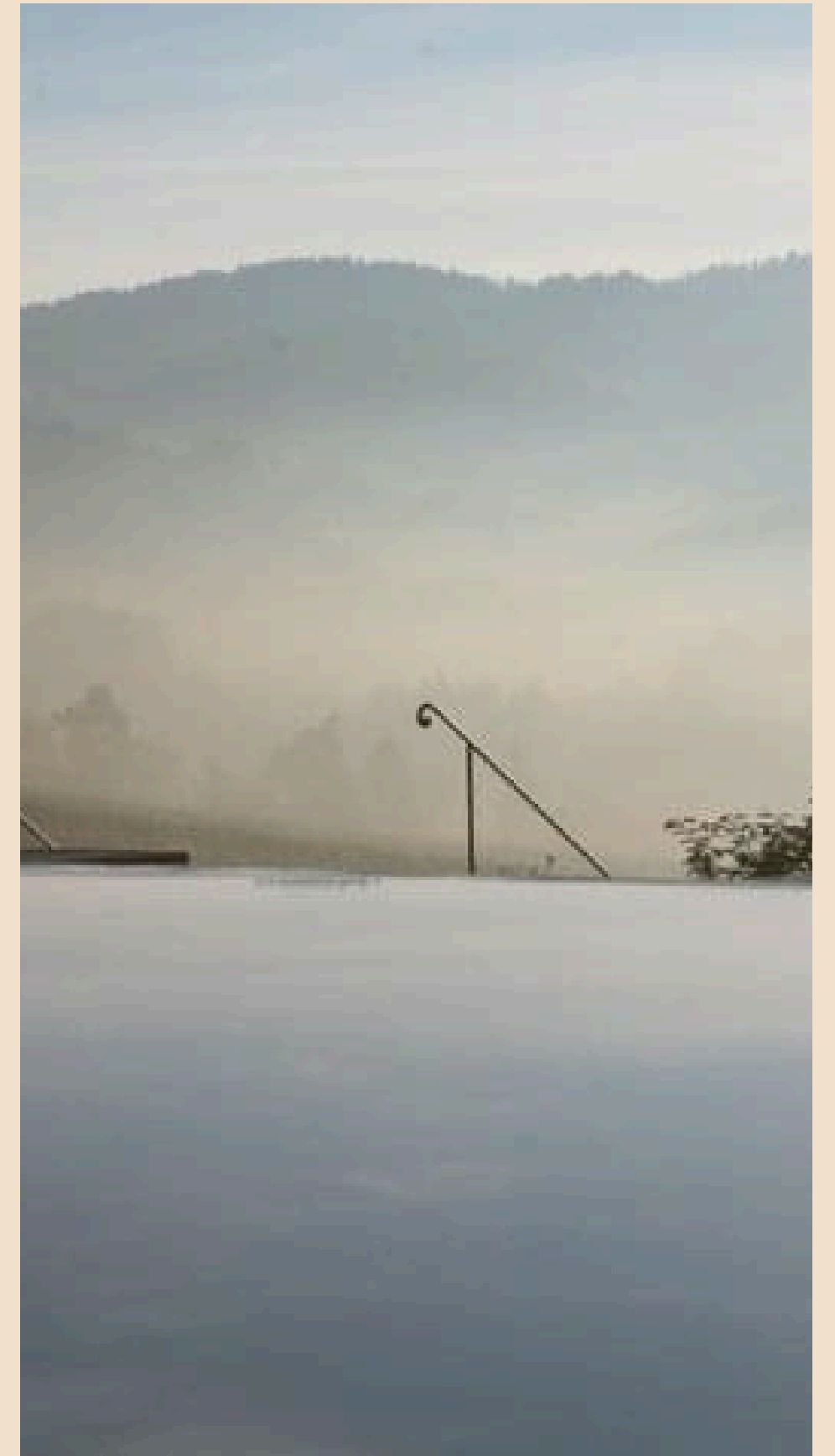
**8:30– 9:30** Breakfast

**10:00-13:00** Workshop Session

**13:00–14:00** Farm to table lunch at Rignana

**14:30-16:30** Workshop Session

**19:00** Wine Aperitivo followed by dinner



# RETREAT TIMETABLE

## Saturday

**16:00** Check in & estate tour

**18:00** Welcome dinner at Rignana

## Day 1 - Sunday

(With model)

The visual language and vocabulary.

Drawing is approached as a means of learning 'to see' as opposed to 'recognise'. Priority is given to making accurate and true visual judgments, rather than uncritical picture-making. The process of observed analytical drawing is analogous to the procedures of all other aspects of drawing, whether the subject-matter is based on internal or external sources. The object is to render ideas, observations and feelings intelligently in graphic form.

- General observation.
- Position, interval and axes.
- Line, plane and shape.
- Form.
- Space

## Day 2 - Monday

(With model)

Building on Day 1, also exploring the dynamics of what constitutes the living quality and energy of a piece of work. The nature and significance of speed through faster drawing -the essence of simplification and distillation.

- Movement.
- Rhythm.
- Musicality.
- Parallelism and visual rhymes.
- Flow and energy.

## Day 3 - Tuesday

(With model)

Illumination. Understanding the nature of light and shadow and its effect on form, space and colour.

- Tonal drawing - different types.
- Full colour-tone.
- Form-tone.
- Aerial perspective.
- Texture gradient.

## Day 4 - Wednesday

**8:30– 9:30** Italian breakfast

FREE BREAK DAY. Optional trip to Florence.

## Day 5 - Thursday

Composition - The relationship to the 2 dimensional format. The single most important factor in establishing the quality, impact and success of a piece of work. We will explore this theme working outside, in the rich surrounding landscape.

- Linear composition.
- Tonal composition and its crucial role in colour.
- Geometry.

## Day 6 - Friday

The Portrait. This is the most complex of all the visual idioms, both structurally and psychologically, and consequently the most fascinating. It is also a microcosm in which to explore almost all the problems within drawing, painting and sculpture.

- Particularisation versus generalisation.
- Asymmetry.
- Characterisation.
- Interpretation.
- Selection.
- Caricature - the elasticity of proportion.

## Day 7 - Saturday

**8:30– 9:30** Italian breakfast

**10:00** Checkout

# MATERIALS TO BRING

- A2 size cartridge paper
- A4 sketchbook.
- Selection of graphite pencils HB to 6B.
- Charcoal.
- Conte - red / sepia / black.
- Erasers - hard rubber / kneaded rubber.
- A ruler and Sharpener.
- Masking tape / clips for securing paper.
- A note-book - very important.
- Any other materials of your choice



# ACCOMMODATION



RIGNANA ESTATE

# IN THE HEART OF TUSCANY

We would be delighted to welcome you to our home, **Rignana Estate**, an 150-acre estate surrounded by **vineyards** and **olive groves**, where **alpacas** and **horses** graze freely. Our retreats are an immersive experience where you can cultivate your creativity with like minded people, connect with the natural world and taste the flavours of Tuscany through our **farm-to-table meals** paired with wine from our vineyards.



Pool



Tiki Bar



# THE ESTATE MAP



Church House



Dining Area



Church Courtyard



Tennis Court



Art Studio



Stone Cottage



Horses & Machu and Picchu





FACILITIES

# RENAISSANCE CHURCH

Refine your technique in our  
Renaissance church.



## FACILITIES

# TENNIS COURT

An astroturf tennis court with a view, providing the perfect opportunity for both recreational and competitive play. Sit on the stone wall and watch a tennis tournament.



## FACILITIES

# INFINITY POOL

The 18x8m marble pool with large spaces to sunbathe or practice yoga, a vine pergola that provides ample shade. By the pool, a Tiki bar offers a relaxed setting for refreshments.



THE KITCHEN

# ORGANIC LIVING

Authentic Tuscan meals are prepared by Alessandra using organic ingredients from Rignana Estate's garden and local farms. Enjoy seasonal, farm-to-table dishes alongside organic wine, olive oil and fresh eggs, produced on-site.

Experience the art of pizza making with a pizza party by the pool.





# BEDROOMS

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August 29th - September 5<sup>th</sup> 2026 (7 nights)

**Suite** - Master bedroom, Living room, mezzanine bedroom & bathroom:

**Two people:** €3,990

**Extra person:** €1,000 each

**Superior bedroom with ensuite:**

**Single occupancy:** €2,890

**Shared occupancy:** €3,890 for two people

**Bedroom with ensuite:**

**Single occupancy:** €2,590

**Shared occupancy:** €3,590 for two people

**Bedroom with shared bathroom:**

**Single occupancy:** €2,295

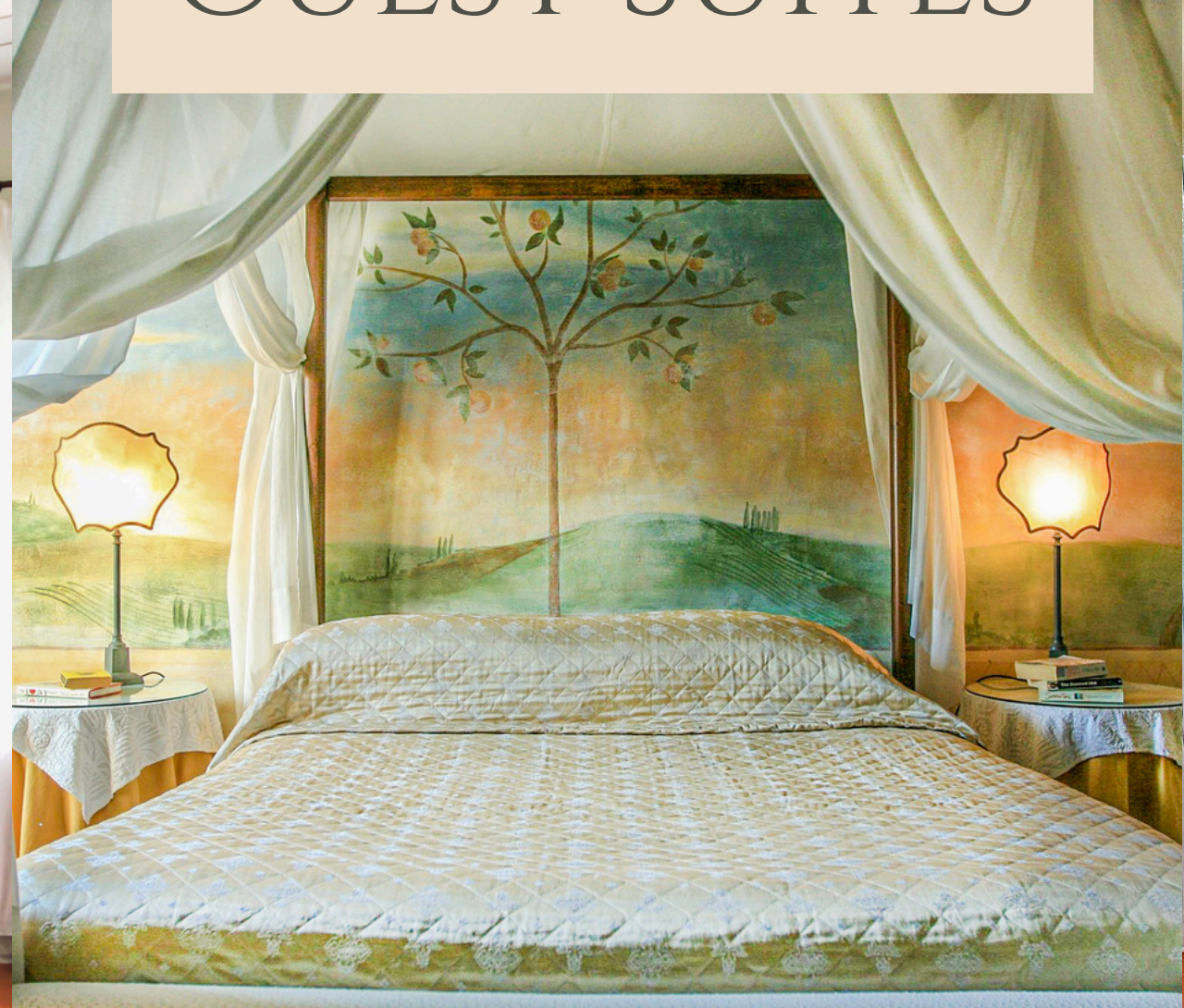
**Shared occupancy:** €3,295 for two people

**Workshop fee for participants:** €650

Important Note: The accommodation fee and the tuition fee are separate.



# GUEST SUITES



# WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 7 nights accommodation
- Daily breakfast, 5 lunches, 6 dinners
- Daily Aperitivo
- Pizza making experience
- Towels & Linens
- Transfers
- Infinity pool
- Tennis court
- Wifi
- Laundry facilities
- VAT tax



# WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Wine Tours
- City tax (€2.50 per person per day to be paid in cash on arrival)

## OPTIONAL ADD-ONS

- Treatments (Massage) - these can be requested
- Wine Tours

# PRACTICAL INFORMATION

## Dates

29 August - 5 September 2026

## Check-in and check-out

On 29 August you are very welcome at Rignana Estate from 16:00.

Check-out on 5 September is before 10:00.

## Address

Rignana Estate, Rignana 8, Greve, in Chianti  
Toscana, Italy 50022 Firenze

## Travel

Our transfer to the venue will collect you on the first day of the workshop from Florence Santa Maria Novella train station, you must confirm in advance if you plan to meet the transfer. Our transfer from the venue will take you back on the final day of the workshop to Florence Santa Maria Novella train station, departing from the venue at 10am.



# HOW TO GET TO RIGNANA ESTATE

## Travel to Italy

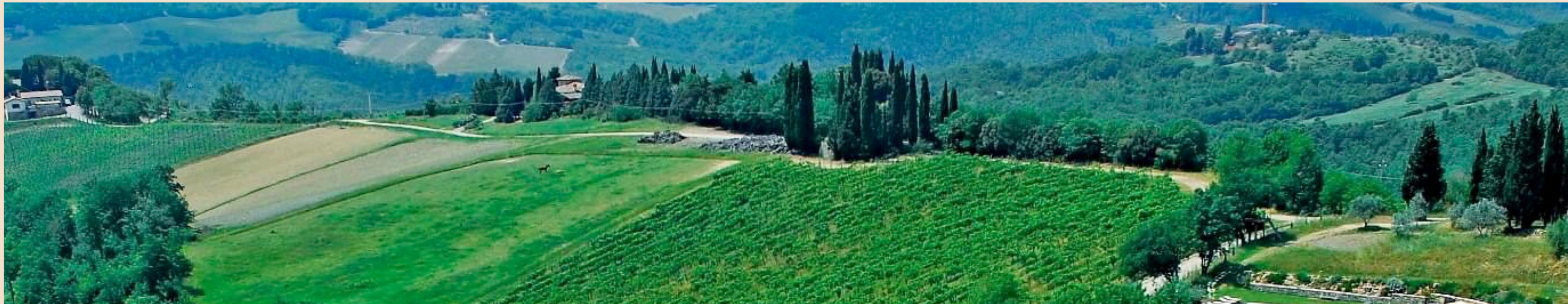
By Air to **Florence**: Florence Airport (Peretola) is the closest airport to Rignana Estate. The estate is a 50minute drive from Florence airport

By Air to **Pisa**: Alternatively, you can fly into Pisa International Airport. From Pisa, you can connect to Florence by bus, train, or taxi.

## From Florence to Rignana Estate

By Car: Renting a car is the most convenient way to reach Rignana Estate. From Florence, it's an approximately 40-minute drive to the Estate.

Alternatively, we can search for the most convenient price for a taxi or minibus taxi service for you.



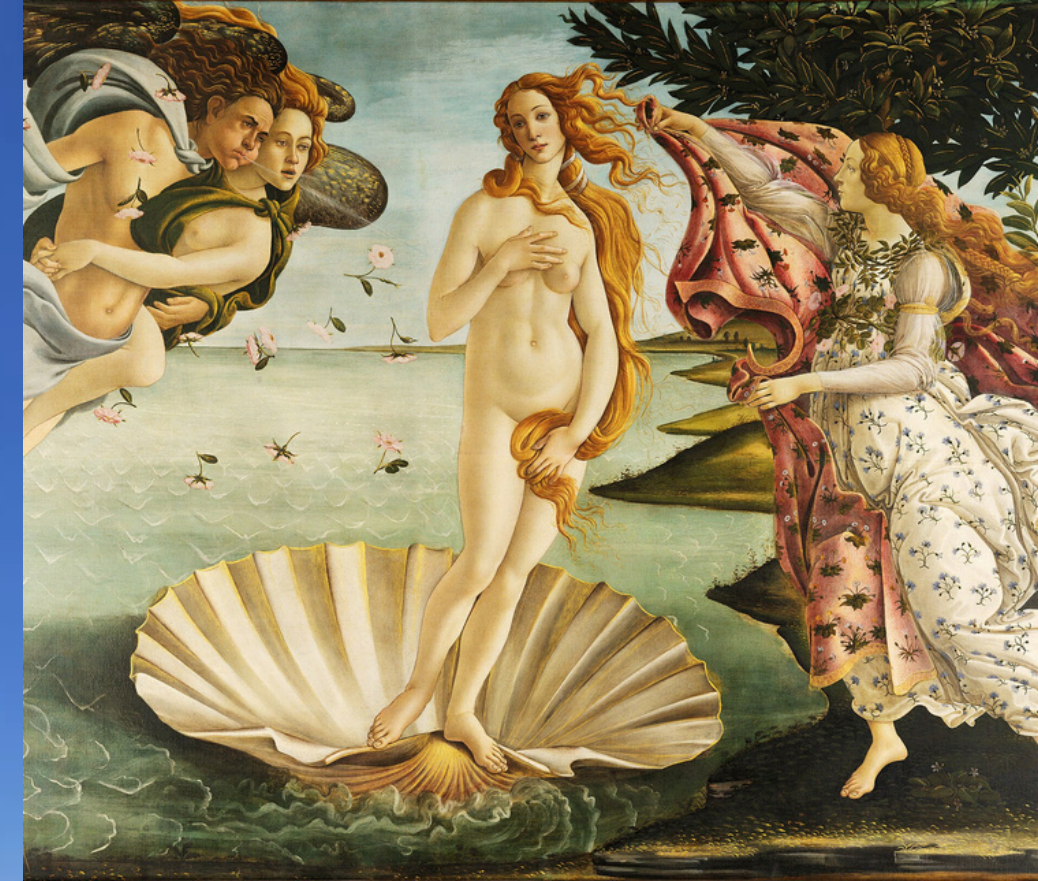
# PRIME LOCATION HIGHLIGHTS

Just 30 minutes from Florence, Rignana Estate offers the perfect balance of tranquility and accessibility.

Nearby, charming villages like Greve and Panzano invite exploration, while world-class wineries such as Antinori nel Chianti Classico provide unforgettable tasting experiences.

We highly recommend a visit to the monastery of Badia A Passignano, home to Ghirlandaio's Last Supper. A tour with one of the monks is a must!

Walking and cycling is popular in the area. The primary walking route passing through the Rignana area is the historic Via Sanese, a leg of the ancient pilgrimage route leading to the Via Francigena, offering hilly treks through vineyards and olive groves.



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# CONTACT US

ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE GET IN TOUCH!

ACCOMMODATION

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WE HOPE TO WELCOME YOU SOON

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