

Portrait Painting Workshop

With Rogier Willems
At Rignana Estate

23rd to 29th August 2026



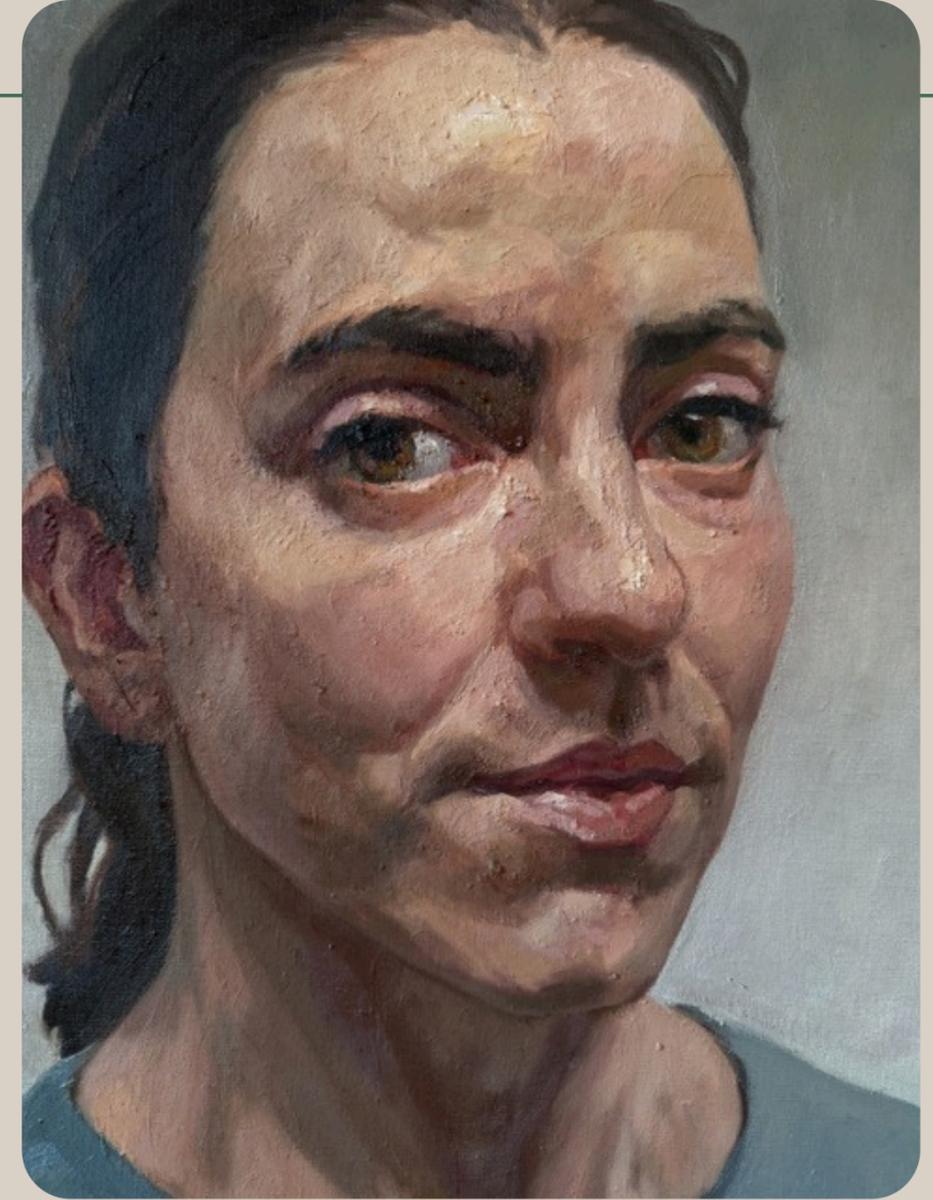
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About the Workshop

In this 5 days course we explore the human face by quick sketches, technical challenges, focused studies and a full understanding of how to approach the art of portrait painting artistically. Inspired by several different local models you make sketches, quick portraits, tonal studies and some more elaborated portraits, all in oils.

On the one hand, this course discusses important (technical) aspects of portrait painting, such as tone, construction, composition and brushwork. In addition, a lot of attention is paid to the way you personally paint; I encourage a loose, free approach with an emphasis on expression. Participants are challenged to take risks and deviate from the beaten track and to strive for powerful paintings with as much individuality as possible.

The course is in English and Dutch. Best suited for painters with some experience. Material is oil paint on linen or oil paint paper.



About Rogier Willems



Willems' oeuvre predominantly consists of portraits, rendered in the classical medium of oil paint. The subjects of his compositions are those who personally captivate him – individuals he holds in high regard or those who exert a magnetic allure. Willems finds himself particularly drawn to the complexity and duality inherent within these individuals.

Possessing an unconventional stance towards the conventional art scene, Willems rarely participates in exhibitions and holds an innate resistance towards commission-based work. His motivations for creating art are not driven by accolades or public recognition. Although he did win the William Lock Prize for best Portrait, an honour given to him by the Royal Society of Portrait Painters in 2025 and was long listed twice for the BP Award by the National Portrait Gallery London. Recently he was shortlisted for the Almenara Prize 2025 in Spain. But rather, he finds himself more engaged with the journey of creation and the quest for artistic mastery. The works of his fellow artists, though, hold a special place in his heart, serving as a wellspring of inspiration and a mirror reflecting his artistic journey.

The act of painting, for Willems, is synonymous with liberation—a process that offers him boundless freedom and a platform to articulate his thoughts and emotions. He cherishes this personal exploration and chooses to maintain a sense of privacy around it, an approach that mirrors his personality and resonates with his artistic principles.

Born in Dordrecht 1969, raised and still lives in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Self-taught painter. Worked for 25 years as a set designer for the theatre for numerous companies. For many years he worked as art teacher at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague and at the Wackers Academy in Amsterdam. Used to work in series with specific themes concerning politics and religion. Now focussing on just the portrait and nudes without further narrative context. He teaches often abroad, in Belgium, the UK, Portugal, Swiss and France.

He lives and works near Amsterdam with his girlfriend and two young daughters. In his spacious studio (Studio Willems) he paints and teaches with the help of Pieterlin Linssen, his assisting companion in business.

Daily Schedule

Daily Rhythm (Monday–Friday)

Each day includes:

8:30– 9:30 Breakfast

10:00–13:00 Workshop Session

13:00–14:00 Lunch

14:30–16:30 Workshop Session

19:00 Wine Aperitivo followed by dinner



Workshop Timetable

DAY 1 — Form, Proportions & Tone

Session 1: First, a short keynote about the construction of the head. After that, draw the model in charcoal in 3 small studies: one in a single continuous line, one with geometrical, angular planes and one made only with charcoal stains and a kneaded eraser. Then, on toned paper you draw with white and black chalk, making one completed drawing of the same model in about 1.5 hours. Start very lightly with charcoal, sparingly add white. You practise the construction and placement of the eyes, nose, and mouth. How do you determine proportions, lines, and directions?

Session 2: Rogier will do a quick demo of the set-up and you make one small portrait painting with a limited palette: cadmium red, ultramarine blue, yellow ochre, and mixed white, focussing on tone and construction to create volume.

DAY 2 — Mixing Colours

Session 3: First, a short demonstration of the first pass and the mixing possibilities. Make two small portraits of the same model on 1 sheet with blue, carmine, white and ochre from two viewpoints (painters swap places). Only LARGE planes, no detail at all! Practise light-dark contrasts and proportions. Also, the background tone/colour will need your attention now.

Session 4: You make one portrait in the same colours but now with cadmium red and yellow added, which you develop further. We put more emphasis on a complementary colour contrast. Use only a large brush, at least 1cm. Increase the tempo!

DAY 3 — Proportions

Session 5: Painters move two positions clockwise. Today, as far as possible, you make one portrait, we use the full palette now. Emphasis lies on expression and interpretation of the model. First, you briefly explore the model by repeating the singular-line study from day 1. Then take time for the construction of the head and explore the tonality.

Session 6: Continue the portrait focusing on details and brushwork; discover how firm mark-making brushwork can enhance the expression of your painting.

Workshop Timetable

Day 4 — Composition

Session 7: Today you start a portrait (of a new model) that you will finish tomorrow. First, briefly make some quick sketches to explore the model. Then make a very small but fast tonal study in burnt sienna, white, and blue. Now we start our final painting, first focussing on the right proportions. We zoom out a little and include one hand, so you must think more about composition and the background's negative shape.

Session 8: Once the construction is firm and you fully understand the tonality of the head you start applying the paint in a powerful markmaking colours; use really big strokes. Be bold!



DAY 5 — Details

Session 9: Today you continue and finish the portrait which you started yesterday. Focus on spatial relationships, dynamics, brushwork, details, and the focal points, and how to handle the background.

Session 10: Time for the details but keep painting in a bold and daring way. Don't avoid risks. We discuss the works after the painting session.

Materials to bring

Oil paints

- Burned Siena
- Ultramarine blue
- Raw umber
- Green earth
- Carmine red/rose madder
- Yellow ochre
- Cadmium red medium
- Titanium white
- Mixed white
- Cadmium yellow.

Equipment

- Linseed oil
- Sturdy pig bristle brushes, at least 1 cm wide but also a few wider ones.
- Pieces of cloth to wipe your brushes with.
- Only organic and odorless thinners are allowed, or Gamsol
- Charcoal
- A white soft crayon or pastel
- Oil-painting paper, canvasses or canvas-boards and some toned paper to draw on.



Accommodation



THE ESTATE

In the Heart of Tuscany

We would be delighted to welcome you to our home, 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.



A Sanctuary for Artists

Develop your technique in our Renaissance Church and amongst the Tuscan Countryside.





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 trusted local producers. Guests enjoy seasonal, farm-to-table dishes alongside organic wine, olive oil, fresh eggs, and honey produced on-site, all in the spirit of the Slow Food movement, where quality, tradition, and natural flavours come together.





Accommodation Rates

August 23rd – 29th 2026 (6 nights)

Suite (Master bedroom, Living room, mezzanine bedroom & bathroom):

Two people: €3,770

Extra person: €1,000 each

Superior bedroom with ensuite:

Single occupancy: €2,480

Shared occupancy: €3,480 for two people

Bedroom with ensuite:

Single occupancy: €2,220

Shared occupancy: €3,220 for two people

Bedroom with shared bathroom:

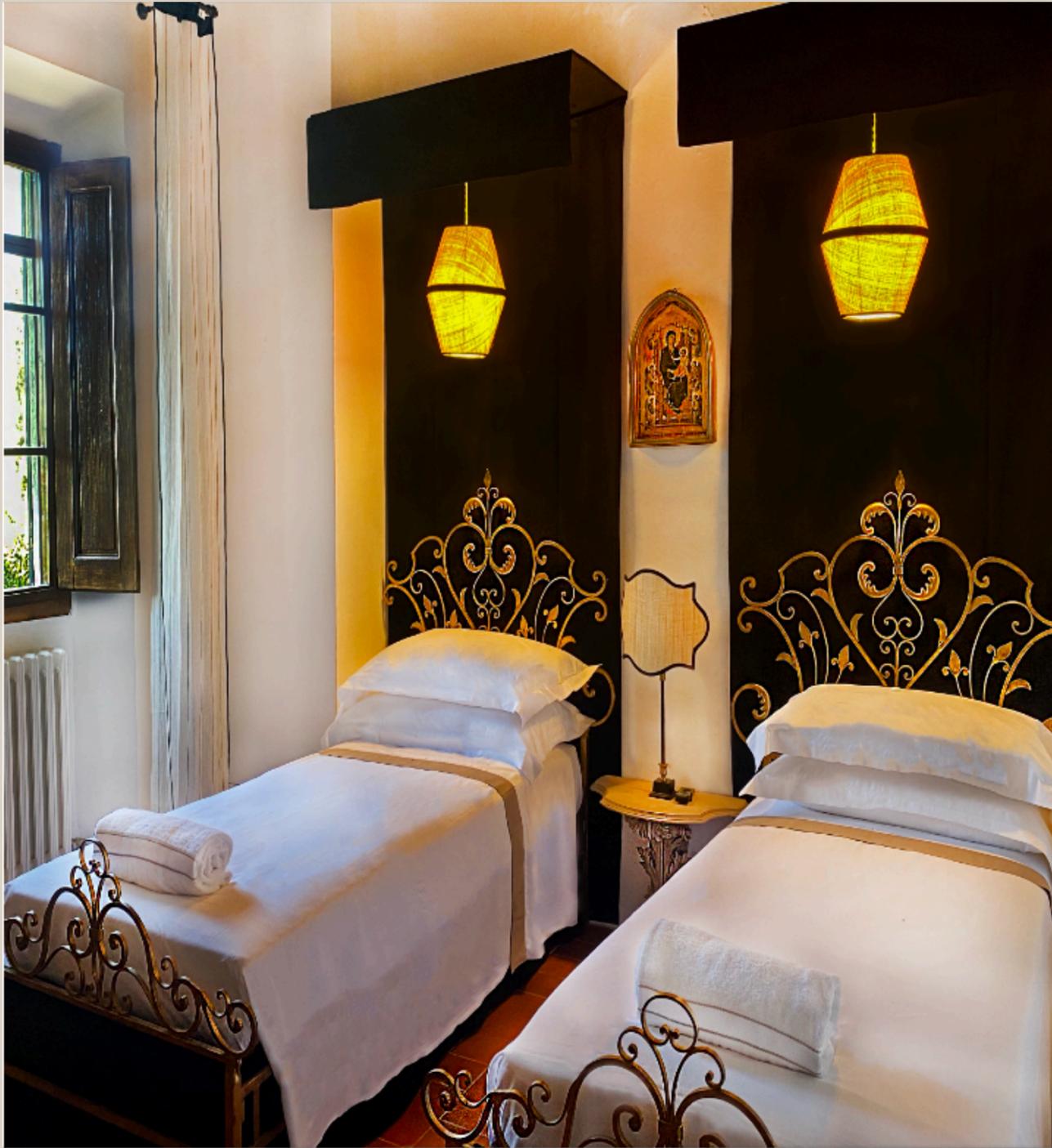
Single occupancy: €1,970

Shared occupancy: €2,970 for two people

Workshop fee for participants: €500

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

ACCOMODATION



What's included

- 6 nights accomodation
- Daily breakfast, 5 lunches & 5 dinners
- Daily Aperitivo
- Pizza making experience
- Transfers
- Easel & table
- Towels & linens
- Infinity pool
- Tennis court
- Wifi
- Laundry facilities
- VAT tax



What's not included

- One dinner (at famous local resturant La Cantinetta Di Rignana)
- City tax (€2.50 per person per day to be paid in cash on arrival)
- Painting Materials

Optional Add-Ons

- Massage
- Wine tasting

Practical Information

Dates

23-29 August 2026

Check-in and check-out

On 23 August you are very welcome at Rignana Estate from 16:00.
Check-out on 29 August is before 10:00.

Address

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

Travel

You organise your own journey. When traveling from Florence we encourage you to travel by taxi or carpool with other participants. Before the trip, you will receive a travel coordination schedule to help you align your plans with your fellow participants.



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.



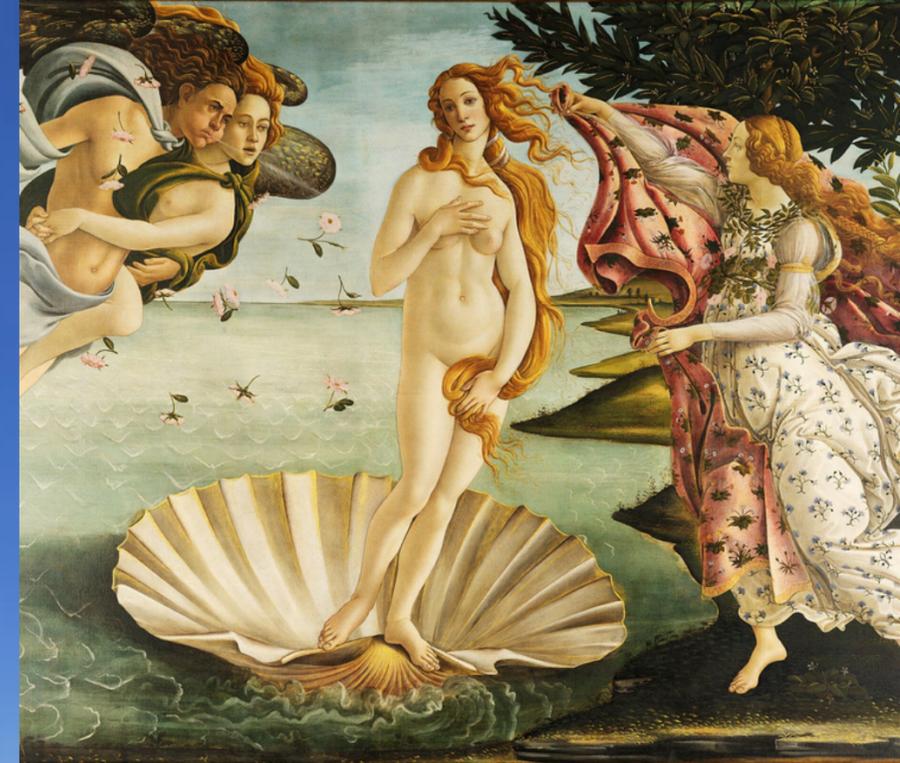
Prime Location Highlights

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.



Contact us

Any questions please get in touch!

Accommodation

Philippa

book@rignana.estate
+39 393 620 2164



Workshop

Rogier

info@rogierwillems.nl



We hope to welcome you soon

Martino and Alessandra
Rignana Estate