

Art and Culture of Northern Italy

22 September to 6 October 2024

Venice and La Biennale, Padua, Ferrara, Bologna,
Mantua, Bergamo and Milan with Claire Chamberlain



DAY 1. Sunday 22 September

Arrival



Welcome to Venice, La Serenissima. Today you are welcome to arrive at any time.

Your home for the next week is the **Hotel Sant'Antonin***, a boutique hotel located in the Castello area of Venice and surrounded by a mediaeval court and one of the largest private gardens in Venice.

It is in a quieter area of Castello, but an easy walk both from Piazza San Marco and the Arsenale and Giardini of the Biennale, but close to excellent restaurants and bars. It is also a short walk from the closest vaporetto (water bus) stop of San Marco-San Zaccaria located an easy five minutes away. The Alilaguna airport service also arrives and departs from here. Water taxi can land right outside the hotel.

An overview of the Biennale is available to those who arrive early or prior to Sunday.

Check in is from 3pm, and we will convene for a drink and introductions at 6pm at the hotel. For those whose body clocks have adjusted, we will have an orientation walk to help you find what's in the neighbourhood.

Suggested Hotel

Hotel Sant'Antonin

Fondamenta dei Furlani, 3299
30122, Venice

DAY 2. Monday 23 September

Venice Museums

Please be ready to depart at 8.45 am. Enjoy breakfast at the hotel this morning before meeting in the hotel reception.

Depart by ACTV vaporetto from San Marco-San Zaccaria to the Accademia stop on the Dorsoduro side of the Grand Canal.

We will start our day's activities by visiting the **Galleria d'Accademia**, where Claire will lead us on a tour of some of the highlights of the Venetian Renaissance.



Next, we take a short walk to the **Peggy Guggenheim Museum**, which like the Accademia, flanks the Grand Canal. We will have a short break for morning tea in the museum cafe and then proceed to the museum exhibitions, where we hope to have a tour with one of the New Zealand interns from the University of Auckland (to be confirmed in early 2024).

After stopping for a quick lunch outside the museum, we will take a short walk to **Punta della Dogana**, a contemporary art museum in one of Venice's old customs buildings. We will be visiting '*PIERRE HUYGHE*'. Huyghe is a preeminent French artist who works in a variety of media from films and sculptures to public interventions and living systems.

The exhibition will be the artist's largest exhibition to date and will 'transform the Punta della Dogana into a dynamic environment where everything and everyone that enters becomes part of the work to explore the relationship between human and nonhuman. Before returning to our hotel, we have the opportunity to visit **Santa Maria del Salute** and the masterpieces by Titian and Tintoretto in the Sacristy. Your evening is free.

DAY 3. Tuesday 24 September

Biennale di Venezia - Giardini

Please be ready to depart at 8.45 am. Enjoy breakfast at the hotel this morning before meeting the rest of the group in the reception. This morning we begin our visit to the 60th **La Biennale di Venezia**.

We will walk from Hotel Antonin along Riva degli Schiavoni alongside the lagoon to the **Giardini** (gardens). We should arrive by 10am and after an introduction to La Biennale and the Giardini, we will head straight to the main pavilion, the location of the central exhibition curated by the Brazilian Adriano Pedrosa. Entitled 'Stranieri Ovunque - Foreigners Everywhere', it is a wide-ranging exhibition and the first in the Biennale's 128 year history to be curated by someone from the Global South.

Pedrosa has included five artists from Aotearoa/New Zealand in his exhibition. They will be announced in February 2024.

For the remainder of the day, we will explore the Giardini and some of the pavilions of the approximately 30 countries hosted here. We will include the Australian, French, English and American pavilions and visit the Carlo Scarpa garden for some calm. We will head back to the hotel at around 4 pm. If you have sore feet, you are welcome to hop on the vaporetto to the San Marco-San Zaccaria stop to get a little closer to the hotel.

The Biennale is open until 6 pm today if you wish to stay on though. Alternatively, en route home, you can cross by vaporetto from the Giardini stop to the island of **San Giorgio di Maggiore** for exhibitions on the island and to visit the Basilica di San Giorgio, a church by the famous architect Andrea Palladio.

There is also an optional extra of enjoying an operatic performance at **Musica a Palazzo** which takes place at a palazzo overlooking the Grand Canal. Instead of the opera being performed in a theatre, the audience move with the performers through the different rooms of the palazzo where each act takes place in an appropriate setting. Tonight's opera is La Traviata which begins at 8.30 pm. You can travel to and from the palazzo via vaporetto. Otherwise, enjoy a free night.

DAY 4. Wednesday 25 September

Biennale di Venezia - Arsenale

Please be ready to depart at 9.00 am after breakfast at the hotel.

This morning we will be walking to the Arsenale section of the **Biennale di Venezia** which is towards the eastern end of Castello and a gentle 20 minute walk. The Arsenale is the historic ship building area of Venice - the inner harbour still operates as a naval facility.

We will start with the second half of Adriano Pedrosa's curated exhibition, 'Stranieri Ovunque - Foreigners Everywhere', in the Corderie before moving through selected national pavilions.



Pedrosa has included five Aotearoa/New Zealand artists in his exhibition and we will be paying particular attention to these works. We will have a morning tea in one of the Arsenale café and then exit via Giardino delle Vergini across Ponte dei Pensieri and then to the small island of San Pietro di Castello.

We will make a brief pit-stop at the historic Basilica of San Pietro and its leaning tower before walking around the island to the vaporetto stop of San Pietro di Castello where we will catch the water bus to the island of **Mazzorbo**. We will then have a late lunch at Trattoria alla Maddalena on the island.

After lunch, we will walk around Parco Mazzorbo and across the footbridge, Ponte Longo to the island of **Burano**. Burano is known for its colourful houses and lace work. You have free time on the island.

We will catch the vaporetto from Burano at 5.30 pm and enjoy a sunset "cruise" en route back to the main islands.

The choice is yours to return to the hotel before dinner or stop for a spritz in Via Giuseppe Garibaldi which lies between the Giardini and Arsenale. There are numerous good restaurants in the area.

DAY 5. Thursday 26 September

Padua Tour

Please be ready to depart for the day at 7.55 am.

Today we escape Venice and head, first by vaporetto and then by train, to the beautiful and historic city of Padua. The city has claim to be the oldest city in northern Italy. According to a tradition which goes back at least to Virgil's Aeneid, it was founded in 1183 BC by the Trojan prince Antenor.

Padua is also a vibrant university town with a long history. The University of Padua was founded in 1222 and became known for the study of optics. In the Renaissance, key artistic figures from Florence were drawn to the city for major commissions and influenced local artists, such as Andrea Mantegna.

We will first visit the renowned **Scrovegni Chapel** frescoed by the Florentine artist Giotto in the early fourteenth century. The fresco cycle covers the walls and ceiling with a vivid narrative of episodes from the Virgin Mary's and Christ's lives around the themes of charity and redemption.

Then we will take the short walk to the neighbouring church of the Eremitani to view **Mantegna's Ovetari Chapel frescoes**. The Church and Chapel were partially destroyed in Allied bombing raids in 1944 which left Mantegna's frescoes shattered, but have been reconstructed from the tiny pieces that remained and still offer insight into Mantegna's mastery.

Highlights today include the historic **Pedrocchi Cafe**, civic buildings in the city and the **Basilica of St Anthony** with pulpit and sculptures by the Florentine sculptor Donatello. The artist's other important Paduan commission was the bronze equestrian monument known as 'Gattamelata', a captain-general of the Venetian army which stands outside the church. This is the earliest surviving equestrian statue from the Renaissance. We will have free time in Padua to have lunch and do a spot of shopping for which the city is also justly famous.

The University of Padua botanic gardens (founded 1545) and Prato della Valle will offer some fresh air before we return to Venice.

Your evening is free.

DAY 6. Friday 27 September

Palazzo Grassi, Museo Fortuny and Piazza San Marco

Please be ready to depart at 8.45 am.

This morning we will take the vaporetto to Palazzo Grassi, the second of the two Pinault Foundation exhibition venues.

We will be viewing an exhibition by Ethiopian-American contemporary visual artist Julie Mehretu. She is known for her multi-layered paintings of abstracted landscapes on a large scale which make political comment. Mehretu also works collaboratively and the exhibition will also include paintings by her contemporaries.

Next, we will walk to Campo Santo Stefano for a quick lunch and then carry on to **Museo Fortuny**. The Fortuny is a large Gothic palazzo in Campo San Beneto, transformed by Mariano Fortuny into an atelier of photography, stage design and textiles. The exhibition programme for 2024 has yet to be announced, but they will likely offer an exhibition in conjunction with La Biennale.

We will continue to explore the area which houses several external Biennale pavilions (and an Aperol Spritz bar!). En route back to the hotel, if wished for, we can stop at Harry's Bar and Caffè Florian (sitting at the rear bar) and then visit the beautiful Olivetti Showroom designed by Carlo Scarpa found on the opposite side of the Piazza San Marco.

We have time for a final visit and will enter the Church of San Zaccaria which houses a beautiful altarpiece by Giovanni Bellini before we reach the hotel and put our feet up. There is also an optional extra of visiting **Basilica di San Marco** after hours and enjoying a night tour of the crypt and a 'lights-off-on-mosaics' experience.

Otherwise, enjoy a free night.

DAY 7. Saturday 28 September

Please be ready to depart at 9 am.

We will take the vaporetto to the Rialto Market and then cross the Rialto Bridge to **Fondaco dei Tedeschi** to take in the view from the rooftop of the Tedeschi. Then we will make our way to Campo Santa Maria del Formosa.

We will then visit the Foundation Querini Stampalia to one side of the campo with a break in the coffee bar first. The Foundation houses contemporary and historic galleries, including a renowned panel by Giovanni Bellini of 'The Presentation of Christ' along with works by Palma il Vecchio, Longhi, Tiepolo, Tintoretto and Caneletto and downstairs, the wonderful Carlo Scarpa watergate and garden.

There is also a newspaper room that has a selection of global newspaper everyday which you can visit each morning.



After our visit, we have a quick lunch in the Campo, before taking the short walk to Palazzo Grimani, a former Doge's palace, for a Biennale collateral exhibition. It's a hop, skip and a jump from here to Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo and the Basilica filled with Renaissance art works. In the Campo, is the equestrian monument by Andrea del Verrocchio to the condottiere (mercenary) Bartolomeo Colleoni.

We will then meander back the way we came visiting the Acqua Alta bookshop en route to our hotel. Tonight we dine together at a local restaurant and celebrate La Serenissima.

DAY 8. Sunday 29 September

Venice - Ferrara – Bologna

Today we leave Venice for Bologna. Please be ready to depart at * and meet in the reception with your luggage.

A private water taxi will collect us from just outside the hotel and take us to Tronchetto where we will catch a private bus to Bologna across the Emilia-Romana plains. En route, we will stop at **Ferrara** which is only a short distance from Bologna.

Ferrara is known for the buildings erected by its Renaissance rulers, the Este family. These include the moated Este Castle, with its lavish private chambers. The family also built the Diamanti Palace, which is clad in diamond-shaped marble blocks and home to the National Picture Gallery.

Our first stop is the **Palazzo Schifanoia** built by the Este as a sort of pleasure palace. Schifanoia means to escape from boredom, so we will do just this in the Salone dei Mesi (Hall of the Months).



We will then stop for a rest in the neighbouring garden of the Caffeteria Ristoro Schifanoia for coffee/pastry before carrying on by bus to the **Este Castle** where we will walk around the exterior and environs.

Next we will walk to Osteria al Brindisi - "oldest wine merchant in the world" - established 1435 and try our luck for lunch.

You can't make a booking though, so Hostaria Savonarola - opposite the Este Castle - is another option.

We can go into the neighbouring Duomo and then we visit the **Palazzo dei Diamanti** (we will go if there is a special exhibition on). After hopping back on the bus, we will depart for **Bologna** at 3 pm.

It is only a short bus ride, so we will arrive before 4 pm at our centrally located hotel. Bologna is known for its warm and welcoming atmosphere and its immense cultural, historical and artistic heritage. Breathtaking churches, museums and gardens, the famous porticoes and mediaeval squares, not to mention the delicious Bolognese cuisine. Yet it's only recently that tourists have started to visit in greater numbers.



After checking into the hotel, we will have an orientation tour and explore the neighbouring Piazza Maggiore which is flanked by the unfinished Gothic facade of San Petronio and Palazzo Accursia. Nearby are the Two Towers of Garisenda and Asinelli and Piazza della Mercanzia with all its food and goods stores. Next we will explore the seven churches in the **Basilica di San Stefano** complex which are known collectively by the same name. There is

also a shopping and food complex in the historic Corte Isolani and a very good vintage design store on the periphery of the square that are both worth a visit.



Before returning to our hotel, we can enjoy a spritz in one of the many bars that line Piazza San Stefano.

We will then walk back to the hotel via colonnaded Strada Maggiore.

Your evening is free.

Accommodation – 4 star – to be confirmed

DAY 9. Monday 30 September

Sanctuary of the Madonna di San Luca, The Anatomical Theatre of the Archiginnasio and the Pinacoteca Nazionale

Please be ready to depart at 9.00 am. Enjoy breakfast at the hotel this morning before meeting the rest of the group in the reception.



A private bus will collect us for the drive up to the **Sanctuary of the Madonna di San Luca** which sits atop the forested hill of Monte della Guardia, some 300 metres above the city plain, just outside the historical centre of the city. The Sanctuary site has a long history that goes back to 1192, but its construction began in 1674.

We are cheating a bit as there is a covered portico that goes all the way from the city up to the

Sanctuary.

You are welcome to start the walk from 7 am from the hotel and we will meet you on top of the hill.

If you would like to walk back down from the Sanctuary along the Portico di San Luca down to our hotel it will take a little over an hour. Our private bus is also available to return everyone back to our hotel.

Enjoy a leisurely lunch and a chance to shop or sample the delights of the historic centre of Bologna until we reconvene for the short hop to **The Anatomical Theatre of the Archiginnasio**. Please meet on the stairs of San Petronio at 2 pm.



The theatre, so-called because it is shaped like an amphitheatre, was once part of the School of Medicine at the University of Bologna, founded in 1088. It is carved from wood and filled with wooden sculptures concerning anatomy and allegory.

Nearby is Caffè Zanarini, an elegant pasticceria serving up pastries, coffee and other liquid refreshments. We will stop here for a little of whatever takes our fancy.

After refreshments, we will walk to the Pinocoteca Nazionale, the National Gallery of Bologna which is located in the city's University district and about 15 minutes away on foot. The collection holds works by Giotto, Guido Reni and Raphael from the 14th to the 18th centuries by Giotto, Guido Reni and Raphael among a vast number of others.

We will finish our day as we started with fresh air in the University of Bologna Botanical Garden and Herbarium (Orto Botanico ed Erbario) before walking back to our hotel.

Your evening is free to enjoy as you wish.

DAY 10. Tuesday 1 October

Contemporary Art Galleries and Museo d'Arte Moderna Bologna (MAMBo)

Please be ready to depart at 9 am. Enjoy breakfast at the hotel this morning before meeting in the hotel reception.

Today we will be visiting an array of contemporary galleries. Most reopen today after the weekend and will involve a bit of footwork to get to as they are tucked away throughout the historic centre of the city. They include P420, AF Gallery and LABS Contemporary Art.



En route around the city, we will stop for lunch and also stop at Pasticceria Gamberini, one of the oldest pasticceria in Bologna.

We will work our way over to The Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna which is usefully abbreviated to MAMBo. It opens today at 2 pm and we will spend the afternoon here.

The museum is widely considered one of the best modern art institutions in Italy and shows works from 1945 to the present along with special exhibitions.

The Museo Morandi, which displays a large collection of works by Giorgio Morandi (1890 - 1964 Bologna), is

temporarily housed in a part of it.

Claire will provide you with more information about Morandi and the exhibitions that we see at the private galleries and at **MAMBo** in your final travel pack.

There is the option to dine together on our last night in Bologna.



Please make sure you pack your suitcase ready for departure tomorrow morning.

DAY 11. Wednesday 2 October

Bologna to Milan via Mantua

Today we leave Bologna for Milan. Please be ready to depart at 9.30 am and meet in the reception with your luggage.



We will travel on a private bus via Mantua, but will stop en route to visit **MAST** (MANIFATTURA di ARTI, SPERIMENTAZIONE e TECNOLOGIA) a museum of contemporary Arts, Experience and Technology which is on the outskirts of the city.

There will be the chance to view the current exhibition, enjoy a coffee and use the bathroom before we hop on the bus for our next leg.

Mantua is a gorgeous city surrounded by three artificial lakes in the northern Italian region of Lombardy. It's known for the architectural legacy of the Renaissance Gonzaga rulers, who built the Ducal Palace. This imposing building houses the Bridal Chamber or **Camera degli Sposi**, famously decorated with Andrea Mantegna frescoes. Mantegna left Padua in 1460 after marrying the daughter of Jacopo Bellini for Mantua at the behest of the Gonzaga.



We will also visit Leon Battista Alberti's **Sant'Andrea** which is widely considered the most perfect of the Renaissance architect's designs and the nearby 11th century church of Rotonda di San Lorenzo which sits on Roman ruins.

We will grab a quick lunch in the small historic centre of Mantua before our bus takes us past **Casa Mantegna**, the home that Mantegna designed for himself according to classical principles which was built upon a geometric, three-storey brick-and-stone square with a huge circular atrium plunging through its core, open to the skies.



Next, we are back on the bus and off to **Milan** where we will arrive at approximately 5 pm.

After we have checked into our hotel and freshened up, we will have a walk around to see what's in the neighbourhood, including **Galleria Vittorio Emanuele** where we will visit the **Prada Foundation** before having enjoying Aperol spritz alongside the flying buttresses of the neighbouring Duomo.

We will then have a tour of the roof top terraces of Italy's largest Gothic church, the **Duomo di Milano** (ascending first via the lift) before the evening is your own to dine or to sleep.

DAY 12. Thursday 3 October

Santa Maria delle Grazie, Fondazione Prada and the Brera Museum

Please be ready to depart at 9 am. Enjoy breakfast at the hotel this morning before meeting the rest of the group in the reception.



This morning we are meeting our private coach at the hotel and making our way to the church of **Santa Maria delle Grazie** and the refectory where Leonardo painted his renowned, but experimental fresco of 'The Last Supper'. We have a timed short visit, but Claire will explain the work and its wider context before we enter the church complex.

The coach will then take us to **Fondazione Prada**, Milan's largest contemporary art space.

We will either have lunch at the Foundation or wait until the coach will return us to our hotel where you have free time until the early evening.

Please meet in the hotel reception where Claire introduces our visit to the **Brera Museum**. The works are largely plundered from the rest of Italy when Napoleon Bonaparte declared himself King of Italy in 1795. Highlights include works by Antonio Canova, Andrea Mantegna, Piero della Francesca and Caravaggio.

The choice is yours to return to the hotel before dinner or stop for an aperitivo in the Brera District where there are plentiful dining options (not to mention great shopping). There is also an optional extra of attending a performance at Teatro alla Scala.

DAY 13. Friday 4 October

Day Trip to Bergamo

Please be ready to depart from our hotel after breakfast at a time to be confirmed, but likely between 8 and 9 am.



Today we escape Milan and head via private coach to the beautiful and historic hilltop town of **Bergamo** which will take only about 60 minutes.

Bergamo is northeast of Milan, in the Lombardy region. It was originally part of the Venice Republic.

Its older upper district, called Città Alta, is characterised by cobblestone streets, encircled by Venetian walls and is accessible by funicular. It's home to the

Duomo di Bergamo, the city cathedral. Also here are the Romanesque Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore and the grand Cappella Colleoni, a chapel with 18th-century frescoes by Tiepolo, a Venetian artist called to the former Venetian dominion.



We will begin our tour in the lower town where our coach will drop us at **Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Bergamo (GAMeC)**. The gallery is housed in a 15th-century convent, showing 20th-century Italian art and work by emerging artists.

Just across the road is the historic art museum of the **Accademia Carrara** which exhibits works from the 15th–19th centuries by celebrated artists. We will have a break for morning tea in or near one of these museum complexes.

The coach will then take us closer to the funicular access to the upper historic centre where we will have a brief walking tour before experiencing the Palazzo di Ragione and the neighbouring Palazzo del Podestà.

In the **Palazzo di Ragione**, an exhibition of works by British artist **Sonia Boyce** who represented Great Britain at the 59th La Biennale di Venezia in 2022 and received the



Golden Lion for her pavilion will be presented. Entitled 'The Benevolence Project', it will be part of the broader biennial program at GAMeC called 'Thinking like a mountain'. Across the central Piazza Duomo, the **Palazzo del Podestà** tells an interactive story that begins with the archaeological excavations of Roman Bergamo on the ground floor and continues to the marvellous frescoes of the Renaissance atrium along with the history of Venetian Bergamo.

After a break for lunch in the upper town, we will walk to the neighbouring **Capella Colleoni** in the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore with its Tiepolo frescoes.

We will dine in the historic centre before returning by funicular to our coach and travelling back our hotel in Milan.

DAY 14. Saturday 5 October

Pirelli HangarBicocca and Museo Poldi Pezzoli

Please meet in the hotel reception at 10 am after breakfast. Our private coach will collect us and take us to the **Pirelli HangarBicocca** which opens at 10.30.



While the programming for later in 2024 has yet to be launched, exhibitions characteristically involve both established and emerging international artists and include both existing works as well as new commissions.

The complex also permanently houses one of Anselm Kiefer's most important site-specific works, 'The Seven Heavenly Palaces', a monumental permanent installation.

There is a single restaurant onsite, Jute Bistrot which offers sandwiches at lunchtime alongside fuller options and cocktails created by a resident mixologist until late in the day. The coach will return us to the centre of Milan and our hotel.

You can spend the afternoon relaxing, shopping or sleeping before meeting later in the day for our last visit on this tour, the small and jewel-like house museum of **Museo Poldi Pezzoli** which is only a short walk from our hotel and open until 6 pm..

The collection was begun by a noble Milanese Gian Giacomo Poldi Pezzoli (1822-1879). The Poldi Pezzoli is one of the most important and famous house-museums in the world and it opened in 1881.

The rooms of the museum are fascinating in themselves, but it also fascinates because of the variety and richness of its collections.

There are masterpieces by Old Masters from the Dutch and Netherlandish schools along with works by Italian greats from Raphael, Botticelli and Giotto and significant women painters, such as Sofonisba Anguissola plus sculptures, carpets, lace and embroidery, arms and armour, jewels, porcelain, glass, furniture, sundials and clocks.

Something for everyone.

After returning to our hotel and changing for dinner, we can dine together for our last supper in Italy.

DAY 15. Sunday 6 October

Today we check-out from our hotel and conclude our tour of Northern Italy.

We will meet in the reception before beginning our return journeys to New Zealand or carrying on our travels in Italy or Europe.

Transfers to airports and train stations can be arranged.

Arrivederci and Thanks for joining us