Experiential Dimension of Design

A Watercolor and Drawing Workshop

in Collaboration with The Civita Institute in Civita di Bagnoregio, Italy

May 26 – May 31, 2027

CONTINUING EDUCATION AIA

THE CIVITA INSTITUTE

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Introduction

Drawing and watercolor offer more than a way to record what we see. They ask us to slow down, pay attention, and enter into a more deliberate relationship with a place. When practiced directly within a landscape, street, or interior, they become ways of observing light, scale, atmosphere, material, movement, and the passing of time.

This workshop approaches drawing and watercolor as practices of seeing. Civita di Bagnoregio provides an extraordinary setting for this kind of work. Its narrow streets, stone walls, changing light, distant landscape, and intimate relationship between architecture and terrain invite sustained observation. Rather than moving quickly from one subject to another, participants will spend time looking carefully, drawing, painting, and returning to what they see.

Watercolor allows atmosphere, time, and uncertainty to remain present.

Throughout the workshop, we will work both outdoors and in the Civita Institute studio. Drawing exercises will develop an understanding of proportion, perspective, tonal value, edges, and spatial relationships. Watercolor will introduce another dimension: color, atmosphere, transparency, layering, and the possibility of allowing uncertainty and immediacy to remain present in the work. Technical instruction will be combined with demonstrations, individual feedback, and repeated practice.

The goal is not simply to produce finished drawings or paintings. It is to develop greater confidence in seeing, interpreting, and responding to the world through drawing and watercolor. Participants are encouraged to become more attentive to how a place is experienced through the body and senses, and to discover how observation can gradually become personal expression.

The workshop welcomes participants with different levels of experience. A small group of six to eight participants allows for individual instruction, conversation, critique, and an informal community of practice. Participants will also receive preparatory materials before arriving in Civita to become familiar with basic perspective, drawing, and watercolor techniques.

In-situ watercolor practice, 2024.

The workshop is offered in collaboration with The Civita Institute, whose historic facilities provide both studio space and direct access to the extraordinary architectural and natural environment of Civita di Bagnoregio.

For more information about The Civita Institute, please visit the website at www.civitainstitute.org.

This workshop is approved by the American Institute of Architects for 8 Learning Units. The Civita Institute is an approved AIA education provider.

Itinerary

5 nights with 4 full days of instruction and practice

DAY 1: Arrival in Civita (May 26)

4 pm:	Arrive in Civita
7:30 pm:	Welcome Dinner at Osteria al Forno di Agnese

DAY 2: Workshop (May 27)

8:30 am:	Group Coffee
9 am – 12 pm:	Workshop Introduction and Studio Practice
2 – 5 pm:	Studio watercolor lessons, exploring watercolor consistencies and conditions.
	Dinner on your own

DAY 3: Workshop (May 28)

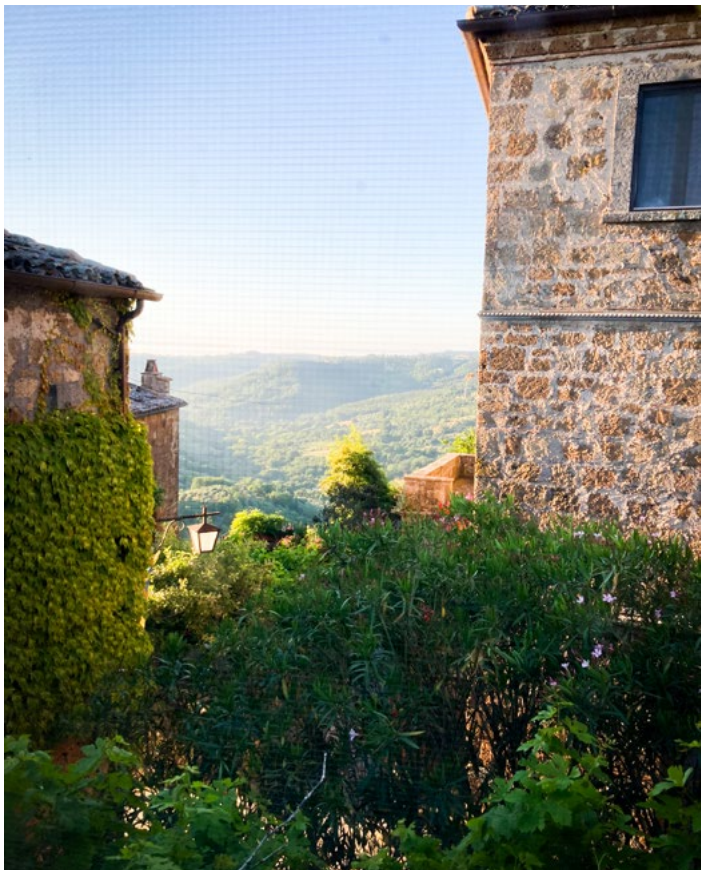
8 – 10 am:	On-Site Graphite Drawing Lessons in Civita
11 am:	Studio Graphite Drawing practice: tonal values, edges, focus and peripheral vision.
12 pm:	Lunch on your own
2 – 4 pm:	Studio watercolor lessons, exploring watercolor layering process
6:00 pm:	On-site Monochrome lessons in Civita, focusing on one–point perspective and tonal values in painting
8:00 pm:	Dinner on your own

DAY 4: Workshop (May 29)

8 – 10 am:	On-Site Watercolor Lesson in Civita
10:30 am:	Studio practice: evocative expression in watercolor painting
12 pm:	Lunch on your own
2 – 4 pm:	Studio watercolor lessons, loose painting, focus and peripheral vision in painting.
5 pm:	On-site monochrome painting lessons in Civita
8 pm:	Dinner on your own

DAY 5: Workshop (May 30)

7:30 – 9 am:	On-Site Watercolor Lesson in Civita
10 am:	Studio watercolor final practice: evocative expression.
12 pm:	Lunch on your own
2 – 5 pm:	Lesson reviews, presentation and final discussion
7 pm:	Farewell Dinner as a group



View from a window of Lo Studio Apartment on the second floor.

DAY 6: Departure (May 31)

8:30 am:	Farewell coffee
9 am:	Walk to Bagnoregio taxi/bus, transfer to Orvieto bus or train

Each workshop participant is required to enroll in a one-year membership with The Civita Institute, costing $75.

Workshop Testimonials

Amy Corner-Murphy, 2026 Workshop Participant

"Otto's skillful and thoughtful way of teaching and of sharing his nuanced expression of sketching and painting with us has inspired me to make art part of my everyday journey."

Bill Bourque, RA
2024 Workshop Participant

"It was one of the best times of my life to spend time with you all. I learned a great deal about drawing and painting, and I would highly recommend the workshop to anyone."

Real-time watercolor demonstration and guided practice

Studio practice at The Civita Institute, 2026 workshop

Final review and discussion, 2024 workshop

In-situ watercolor practice in Piazza San Donato

Workshop Lodging & Contributions

The workshop will utilize The Civita Institute's beautiful facilities, including both studio space and residential apartments. Based in Seattle, Washington, and Civita di Bagnoregio, Italy, The Civita Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to architecture, the arts, and education.

Workshop tuition and lodging contributions are paid separately. Because The Civita Institute is a nonprofit membership organization, it does not provide lodging on a commercial basis. Members may stay at the Institute's facilities based on the level of their membership contribution, as described in this program booklet. Lodging contributions will be paid to the instructor, who will forward them to The Civita Institute.

Only members of The Civita Institute may stay in its facilities. Each workshop participant is therefore required to enroll online as a member of The Civita Institute at the $75 annual membership level at least two weeks before the workshop begins.

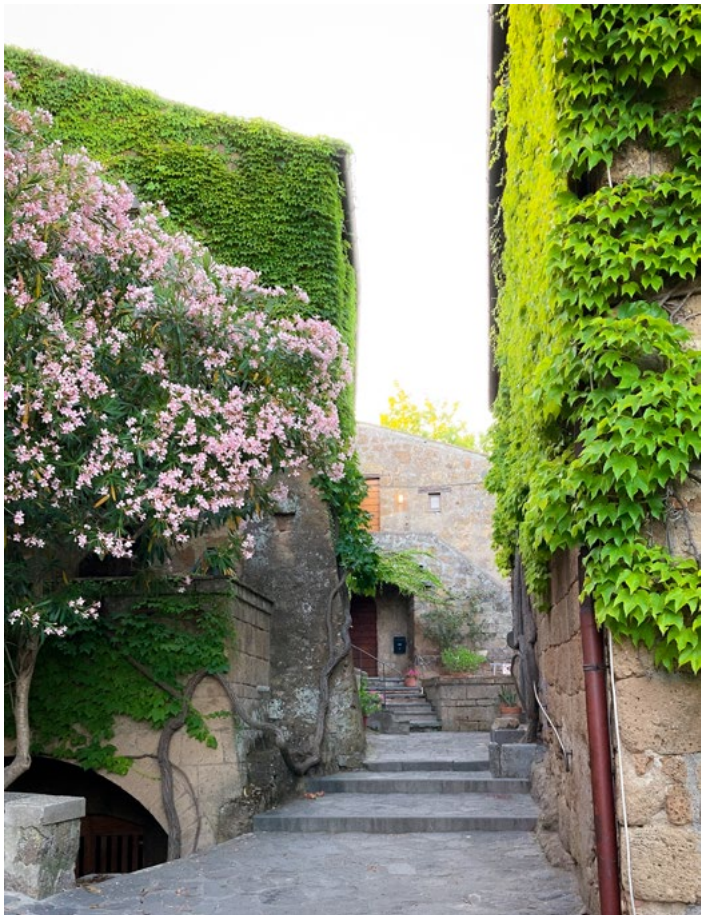
Four apartments are available for workshop participants and guests: Lo Studio, Il Ruderino, Il Giardino, and Il Nuovo. Please see the following pages for details. The apartments are fully furnished and include kitchens, bathrooms, linens, and basic grocery items. Additional groceries may be purchased in Bagnoregio, approximately a 30-minute walk from Civita. Please keep in mind that groceries will need to be carried back to Civita. The walk between Civita and Bagnoregio can also be a pleasant part of the experience, particularly in the late afternoon. Civita itself has several restaurants offering breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Apartments are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. Please contact Otto as soon as possible to reserve your preferred lodging.

**Note: The Civita Institute operates under NIAUSI (the Northwest Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in Italy), and is a U.S. 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.*

LO STUDIO

This house can accommodate four guests in the upstairs bedroom, with either four single beds or two singles plus a matrimonial. The kitchen, living room (with fireplace) and half bathroom are on the ground level, with bathroom and shower on the bedroom level. There is a small terrace with a vine-covered arbor overlooking the pedestrian street and beautiful views of adjacent buildings and the distant landscape from the second level.



View of the main entrance to the Civita Institute's apartment facilities.

Workshop Lodging & Contributions

LO STUDIO, Photos

Note: All images on this page were retrieved from the Civita Institute webpage.

View of Lo Studio's Bedroom on the second floor

View of Lo Studio's Kitchen

Workshop Lodging & Contributions

IL NUOVO

Note: All images on this page were retrieved from the Civita Institute webpage.

Il Nuovo accommodates up to three guests.

A 2-story, fully furnished apartment with a kitchen, a living room with a fireplace, and a drawing/painting space. The apartment can accommodate up to three guests on the upper floor. The kitchen will be stocked with basic groceries upon your arrival. Wi-Fi and laundry facilities are included. The apartment does not have air-conditioning, but fans are available, and there are adequate windows for cross ventilation, and the thick tufa stone walls keep the apartment cool during the summer months.

IL Nuovo is a great option for a single traveler who is willing to share space and reduce lodging costs. If you are interested in sharing IL Nuovo with other workshop participants, please let Otto know as soon as possible.

Kitchen View 1 on the main floor

Bedroom View 1 on the upper floor

Bedroom View 2 on the upper floor

Back stair to outside from kitchen

Kitchen View 2 on the main floor

IL Nuovo bathroom

Workshop Lodging & Contributions

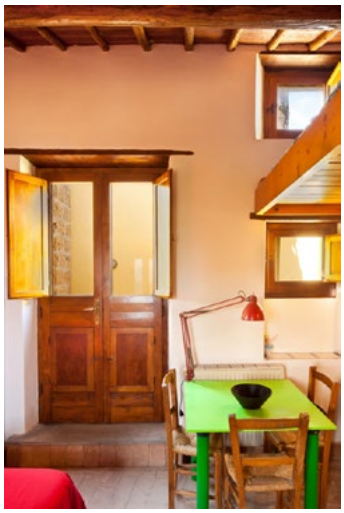
Civita night atmosphere

IL RUDERINO

Note: All apartment images on this page were retrieved from the Civita Institute webpage.

IL Ruderino can accommodate up to two guests.

This charming one-room studio apartment is located on the second floor of the Civita Institute facilities. The apartment's window overlooks a beautiful garden and provides a picturesque view of the Civita landscape. It features two twin beds, making it suitable for a couple or two individuals. The kitchen will be stocked with essential groceries upon your arrival. Wi-Fi and laundry facilities are included. Please note that the apartment does not have air-conditioning, but fans are available, and there are windows for cross ventilation and light. The thick tufa stone walls help maintain a comfortable temperature inside, keeping the apartment cool during the summer months.



A charming one-room studio apartment

Workshop Lodging & Contributions

The main courtyard at the Civita Institute during summer 2025.

The Giardino Residence

Note: All apartment images on this page were retrieved from the Civita Institute webpage.

The Giardino Residence can accommodate up to two guests.

The Giardino (Garden) residence is a restored historic suite of rooms, including a small private kitchen, bathroom with walk-in shower, and bedroom, all surrounded by a terrace and garden with wonderful views of the valley and distant landscapes. This one-bedroom residence is most suitable for a couple or a single person.

The Giardino Residence and garden.

Workshop Lodging & Contributions

Charcoal drawing by Instructor

LODGING CONTRIBUTIONS:

The instructor will forward all lodging contributions directly to The Civita Institute.

Please select your preferred apartment and notify the instructor, Otto. If the selected apartment is available, you will be notified and may reserve your lodging through Venmo, Zelle, or by mailing a check to Otto Chanyakorn. Mailing information will be provided upon registration.

If the Civita Institute's apartments are filled during the workshop duration, please indicate that you are open for alternative lodging options in Civita.

Lodging contribution options:

• **Lo Studio:** accommodates up to 4 guests. Four people sharing for 5 nights: US$375 per person. Three people sharing: US$500 per person. Two people sharing: US$750 per person. One person: US$1,500.

• **IL Nuovo**: accommodates up to 3 guests. Three people sharing for 5 nights: US$395 per person. Two people sharing: US$590 per person. One person: US$1,175.

• **IL Ruderino**: accommodates 1–2 guests. Total lodging contribution for 5 nights: US$825.

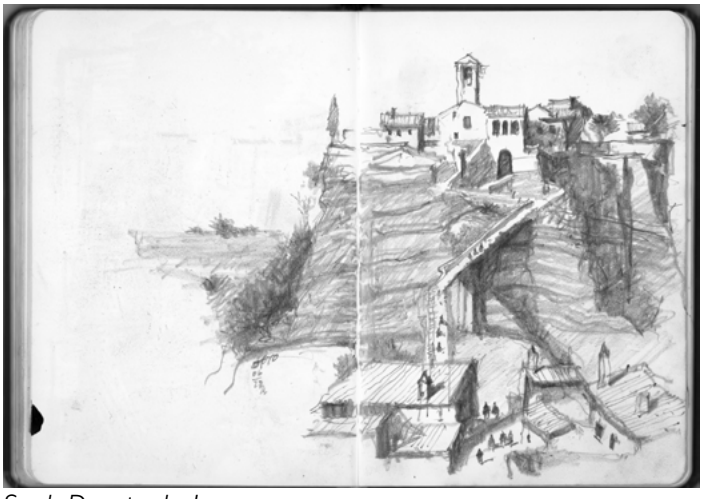
• **The Giardino Residence:** accommodates up to 2 guests. Two people sharing for 5 nights: US$440 per person. One person: US$875.

Each workshop member who participates in the workshop is required to enroll online for a one-year membership, costing $75, with the Civita Institute as further described above.

Lodging Contribution Deadline:

Please reserve a spot ASAP. Space is limited.

Lodging payment for 5 nights is due by **March 1, 2027,** and may be paid to the instructor by check, Venmo, or Zelle.



Study Drawing by Instructor

Workshop Tuition

Workshop Cost & Lodging Contributions:

Paid directly to the Instructor

Cost of the workshop is $1,100 per person. To reserve a spot, a nonrefundable deposit of $500 must be paid to the Instructor. The additional $600 workshop fee plus the entire lodging contribution must be received by the instructor by **March 1, 2027.** No refund will be issued if a participant cancels unless a replacement participant is secured to cover the associated costs. **We strongly recommend** that participant(s) purchase trip insurance to cover the costs of airfare, lodging, and the workshop fee.

Workshop tuition includes:

- Four full days of instruction and practice
- Instructor demonstrations
- Individual critiques and feedback
- Small-group discussions (limited to 6–8 participants) to support effective learning and constructive feedback.
- Preparatory learning materials before the workshop.

You are responsible for:

- Transportation to Italy and to Civita. Detailed instructions on how to travel from Rome to Orvieto by train and then take a bus from Orvieto to Civita will be provided.
- Meals: Each participant will be responsible for his/her own breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. The apartment's kitchen is a great option for preparing your meals, especially for breakfast. Alternatively, there are excellent restaurants in Civita for lunches and dinners. During my 2023 summer fellowship in Civita, walking to Bagnoregio for dinner and getting groceries in the late afternoon are among my favorite activities.
- Workshop supplies such as a watercolor painting set, graphite drawing set, and paper. The list of required supplies will be provided after you enroll in the workshop.
- Medical insurance coverage while traveling, as well as any required vaccinations.
- Civita is accessible via a walking bridge, so walking is necessary to travel from Bagnoregio to Civita and vice versa. It's advisable to have a good pair of walking shoes.

Watercolor by Instructor

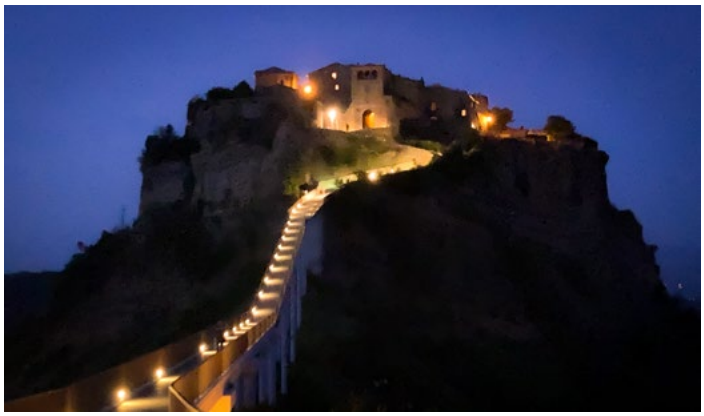
Getting There

Civita di Bagnoregio is located in Lazio and is a well-known destination among Italian and international travelers, set within a picturesque landscape.

For international visitors, you may choose to fly into either Rome or Florence, and then take a train to Orvieto. From Orvieto train station, you can catch a regional Cotral Bus to Bagnoregio. Taxi services are also available from Orvieto and can take you to the belvedere at the top of the hill. Detailed instructions on how to reach Civita will be provided to participants upon workshop registration.

All participants are required to have medical insurance that covers accidents or hospitalization in Italy. Short-term travel insurance is available through several providers.

All participants are also required to sign and comply with the Civita Institute's Visitor Conditions, which will be provided to each applicant.



Civita night atmosphere

Please be prepared for some intensive walking, especially going up and down the hill between Civita and Bagnoregio. It's advisable to bring a comfortable pair of walking shoes. Packing lightly is recommended. Since the workshop takes place in the summer, make sure to bring items such as a sun hat, insect repellent, sunscreen, earplugs, and other related necessities.

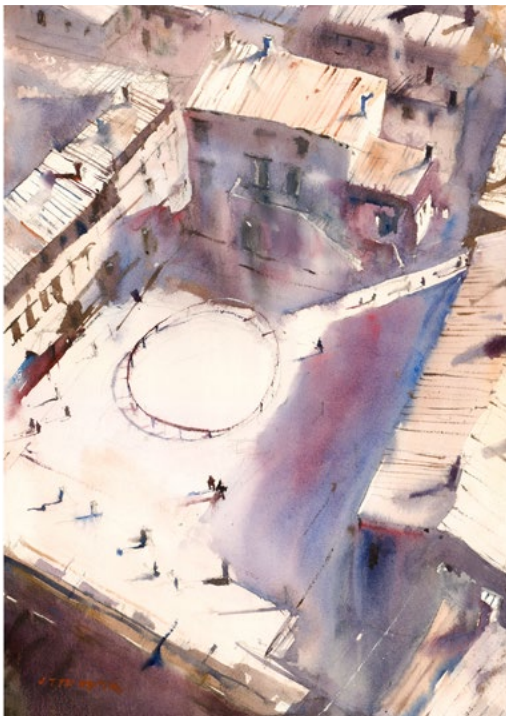
Watercolor & Drawing by Instructor

About the Instructor

Otto Chanyakorn is an Associate Professor of Architecture and Director of the Environmental Design Program at Kansas State University's College of Architecture, Planning & Design. Trained as an architect in Thailand and the United States, his teaching and creative work explore how travel, place, observation, drawing, and watercolor can deepen the way people see and understand architecture and the built environment.

Drawing and painting have long been central to Otto's teaching practice. Rather than approaching them solely as representational skills, he uses them as methods of observation and inquiry. His instruction emphasizes careful looking, spatial understanding, atmosphere, light, proportion, and the experience of place. Through demonstrations, guided practice, individual critique, and sustained observation, he encourages participants to develop both technical confidence and a more personal way of seeing.

Otto was born in rural northeast Thailand, where much of his childhood was spent outdoors on his family's farmland. These early experiences shaped his lasting interest in landscape, atmosphere, material, and the relationship between people and place. His architectural background continues to inform the way he teaches drawing and watercolor through attention to space, scale, perspective, and lived experience.



Watercolor study, Civita di Bagnoregio.

Since 2022, Otto has returned to central Italy each year for teaching, study, fellowships, and drawing and watercolor workshops. His sustained engagement with Italy has deepened his understanding of its architecture, landscapes, public spaces, and rhythms of everyday life.

Civita di Bagnoregio has become an especially important setting for his work because of the close relationship between architecture, landscape, history, and atmosphere found within the town.

In 2020, Otto received the Gabriel Prize from the Western European Architecture Foundation, which supported an extended period of architectural study and drawing in Paris. In 2023, he was awarded the Drexler Family Diversity Fellowship by The Civita Institute, allowing him to further develop his research and creative practice in Civita di Bagnoregio.

In addition to his university teaching, Otto regularly leads drawing and watercolor workshops for students, educators, designers, and others interested in developing a deeper relationship with observation and place. His drawings and paintings can be viewed at www.minimaldrawing.com.