

My Rome



Kelly Medford

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American *plein air* painter Kelly Medford has lived and worked as a full-time artist in Italy since 2005. She has won multiple awards and her works are collected internationally. She started Sketching Rome Tours in 2012, a fun and creative way for tourists to see Rome.

Which three adjectives best describe Rome?

Wild, alive, alluring.

What is your relationship with the city? Is there a place in Rome that connects to a particular moment of your life?

Even though I have been in Italy for over a decade, I still feel like an explorer setting off on a mission each day. Going to work for me can often mean looking at a map and deciding to go to a place in the city I've never been, just to see what's there. So my

relationship is one of unending curiosity. If there's a place I return to again and again, it's the Aqueduct Park (Via Lemonia, 256). I love it for many reasons: it's a place that has been painted throughout history by artists of every nationality and to this day it looks mostly the same. Going there feels like stepping back in time. I bring a picnic lunch and paint all day, waiting for the shepherds to come through the aqueducts with their sheep and goats. I am awed by this sight each time I visit



Where do you take your students in order to teach them how to capture Rome in watercolor?

We always go to a park frequented by locals such as Pincio, Villa Celimontana, or Colle Oppio. Parks are the perfect place to learn about life in Rome, get away from the crowded tourist spots, and get some cool shade. I always make sure we have different subject matters to work from like paths, buildings, sculpture, people and views, and are a little off the beaten path but still centrally located and easy to get to.

Is there a particular Roman dish you have a weakness for?

I love Roman food because it's simple so the ingredients have to be the highest quality for it to be really good. Romans love fried food, so I would say the fried food here that I have a serious weakness for is *carciofi alla giudia*, the flattened fried artichoke. There is nothing like it in the world: so amazing, so simple and so good.

it. The light there is never the same twice, so it always offers something new and exciting to paint.

Which aspects of the city inspire you most as an artist?

Aesthetically, the visible layers of history fascinate me, as well as the rose-colored light. The light in Rome is like nowhere else: pink, warm, and uniquely Roman. The sunsets here are spectacular.

MY PERFECT DAY

9 a.m.

Painting the Tiber

After having a perfect cappuccino and *cornetto* at Necci (Via Fanfulla da Lodi, 68) in my neighborhood Pigneto, I set out on my bike to the day's painting location. One spot I love to go is down the stairs from Ponte Sisto along the river to paint a view of the Tiber looking through the bridge where you can get a sneak peek of St. Peter's dome and see William Kentridge's new murals *Triumphs and Laments* on the history of Rome.

12 p.m.

Picnic in the Park

Heading back in the direction of my studio, I'd have lunch at Vivi Bistrot (Via Vitellia, 102), a fabulous outdoor café in Rome's largest park, Villa Pamphili. I might decide to stay and paint in the park, in which case I'd order a picnic and have it delivered to me where I'm painting, especially if I'm painting with friends.

5 p.m.

An Afternoon Pint

I'd head to the other side of Villa Pamphili to meet friends for a drink and gossip at Litro (Via Fratelli Bonnet, 5), where they have an amazing selection of regional wines and home-crafted beers from around Italy.

9 p.m.

Outdoor Cinema

I'd pick up dinner from Suppli (Via Francesco Ripa in Trastevere, 37) in Trastevere. They have the best *pizza rossa* in the city and a selection of *suppli*, *filetti di baccalà*, and other fried street food. I'd grab it to go and head to meet friends for a movie in Piazza San Cosimato, where they show classic Italian films for free every night all summer.

