

## Reconsidering a Western Centre / Investigating the Indigenous Histories of Italy

Jason Baerg, Florence Coordinator, Fall 2020

I propose we consider the Florence program from an Indigenous perspective. What does it mean to be a good guest on foreign soil? Can we look to the local Indigenous peoples and histories of Italy to discover and learn more about this place, their societies, its politics, their art, and cultures?

The Etruscans are considered, the Indigenous peoples of Tuscany. The National Archaeological Museum, in Florence also holds the Etruscan collections. However, there were many other Indigenous peoples in Italy, such as the Oscans, Ligures (15 tribes), the Apuli (3 tribes), the Secani, Ancient Greek tribes, Samnitics (7 tribes) and even the Celts (7 tribes).<sup>1</sup> There is something to learn from their histories and their ancestral objects.

If we dig deep, what can we learn from these histories and their people? How did the Etruscans impact contemporary culture? Are there ancestors of the Etruscans people alive today that we could meet? How are the land and the Indigenous animals participating in contemporary Tuscan Italian culture today? Do some of these tribal traditions live on? If we engage producing art in this place as visitors with a sensitivity to history and the impact it has had on the land and all living beings, then we can begin to pan out to also consider how these histories potentially impacted the planet, while spending time in Florence. Place should provide a dial or context for art production. Grounding ourselves with awareness will allow an integral platform to make works that move beyond a site-specificity to legitimately support time in journey as artists visiting and producing art.



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<sup>1</sup> Vallone, Elizabeth. "Indigenous Tribes of Italy." L'Idea Magazine, 27 Nov. 2014, [http://lideamagazine.com/indigenous\\_tribes\\_of\\_italy/](http://lideamagazine.com/indigenous_tribes_of_italy/).

Developing Reading List:

Wilson, Shawn. *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Langara College, 2019.

Vallone, Elizabeth. "Indigenous Tribes of Italy." *L'Idea Magazine*, 27 Nov. 2014, [http://lideamagazine.com/indigenous\\_tribes\\_of\\_italy/](http://lideamagazine.com/indigenous_tribes_of_italy/).

Rubinstein, Nicolai. "The Beginnings of Political Thought in Florence. A Study in Mediaeval Historiography." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 5, 1942, pp. 198–227., doi:10.2307/750453.

Bignall, Simone, et al. "Three Ecosophies for the Anthropocene: Environmental Governance, Continental Posthumanism and Indigenous Expressivism." *Deleuze Studies*, vol. 10, no. 4, 2016, pp. 455–478., doi:10.3366/dls.2016.0239.