

Mylene's memories of Tuscany.

My first visit to the Verrocchio Arts Centre in the little hilltop town of Casole d'Elsa was in 1989 and I have been every year since.

The courses run for two weeks with the painting and sculpture courses running concurrently, sculpture is taught by the owner Nigel Konstam who is a brilliant sculptor and teacher.

Every year I learn a new technique, but I always have a piece of alabaster carving, sometimes I leave them there and return to finish them the next year or two.

Over the years I have worked in wax, clay, and even marble as well as alabaster. Most recently I have become enamoured of Paper Mache, which I prefer to call Carta Pesta. I have also done quite a lot of life drawing as there is at least one session per course. It took some time but I was eventually persuaded to get into the landscape.



The view across the valley from the sculpture terrace.

This was me in 1989 working on my very first alabaster carving, my little Aphrodite. I still have her. She isn't finished and never will be.



<p>My friend Ba studies the landscape. Pastel</p>	<p>Moonlight over the Tuscan Hills. 2013 Pastel landscape</p>	<p>Face Two Face Marble sculpture.</p>	<p>The View across the valley to San Gimignano. Ipad painting</p>

Several friends have joined me, taking part in either the painting or sculpture courses and I see colleagues from year to year. We take trips to other towns and places of interest such as San Gimignano, Siena, Volterra and Grossetto. There have been visits to the houses of great artists and beautiful palazzos. Picnics by the river and on the hill outside San Gimignano before watching an opera in the square there. Casole d'Elsa itself is a very lively town and there are many events taking place in and around the main square, the Palio horse race is legendary. A favourite memory is of the night when Italy won the World Cup, what a party! Another great celebration was for Rembrandt's 400th birthday when we all dressed to look like characters in his paintings. I am really looking forward to my 28th trip this summer.



In 1996 Shirley (Binkie) came. Here we are at the last night party. Some years the sculpture terrace is very full of chippers. In 2016 Linda Lipinski came and here we are with Maestro Nigel at the last night party where I showed my Head of Nefertiti, in Carta Pesta.