

CONTEMPORARY TUSCANY

An itinerary through Valdelsa Valdicecina for photographers, art lovers and curious ones.

This itinerary will lead you to discover numerous contemporary art projects that have transformed the Valdelsa Valdicecina area into a realm dedicated to experimentation and creativity, where world-renowned artists have created extraordinary works. Strolling through the streets and squares of these villages, you will come across curious site-specific installations that interact with the surrounding landscape, weaving the languages of innovation with the region's rich historical heritage.

The main destinations of this itinerary are: **Poggibonsi**, where street art dominates public spaces; **Colle Val d'Elsa**, where the city centre blends history and innovation; **San Gimignano**, dotted with galleries and contemporary works; and finally, **Volterra**, home to land art pieces that reveal themselves curve after curve.

This unique itinerary is designed not only for art enthusiasts, but also for anyone with a strong passion for photography.

To make navigation easier, digital maps have been provided for each destination.

Programme

Poggibonsi

Poggibonsi boasts world-renowned artists who have helped transform this ancient village into a showcase for modern works.

Among these: Antony Gormley, who placed a series of pixelated human sculptures in key locations throughout the historic center; Mimmo Paladino, who donated his work "I Dormienti" (*The Sleepers*) to the medieval Fonte delle Fate; Sarkis, who created a "relational" fountain in Piazza Matteotti; and Kiki Smith, who placed a "silent" female figure at the Medicean Fortress.

In addition, Poggibonsi features numerous graffiti murals scattered across the city, such as:

- ★ *Urban Connection*, a project that has involved, and continues to involve, young generations and artists in the urban renewal of the Vallone parking lot;
- ★ An anamorphic mural and visionary journey in the Largo Gramsci underpass;
- ★ *La natura regna sovrana (Nature Reigns Supreme)* in Via Pieraccini;
- ★ *Dots 2016* in the garden of the "G. Pieraccini" private primary school.

Map: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/rzuEh9bHhsbsJLs16>

Colle Val d'Elsa

A short distance from Poggibonsi, the journey continues with the discovery of Colle Val d'Elsa. Known for its crystal production, this town has given a voice to contemporary art, allowing it to spread throughout the city centre. An example is Piazza Arnolfo di Cambio, redesigned by architect Jean Nouvel with artistic interventions by Daniel Buren and Alessandra Tesi.

Following the international art exhibition *Arte all'Arte*, the town permanently features:

- ★ Alberto Garutti's memorandum in Via Meoni;
- ★ Marisa Merz's intervention on the door of an ancient cistern at the entrance to the town;
- ★ Ilya Kabakov's text column at the Bastione della Sapia;
- ★ Cai Guo-Qiang's UMoCA project under the arches of the San Francesco Bridge;
- ★ A figure by Kiki Smith beneath the ancient Rampart;
- ★ Tadashi Kawamata's installation at Porta Nuova;
- ★ Loris Cecchini's Sonar project in Località Molinuzzo;
- ★ *Concrete Block* by Sol LeWitt near the Archaeological Museum.

Map: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/Fc6frtZ9mGKkUKWt9>

San Gimignano

The penultimate destination is San Gimignano, the "Medieval Manhattan," where tradition and innovation blend.

A must-visit site is the Rocca di Montestaffoli, near which you will find the striking "Yellow Girl" by Kiki Smith and "Equilibrio compresso" (*Compressed Balance*), where the horizontal and elusive lightness of the installation contrasts with the severe, vertical structure of the towers, heightening a sense of precariousness and vertigo.

Continuing through the alleyways, the town reveals itself as an open-air museum. Searching for public art becomes a pleasant treasure hunt: you will encounter Giulio Paolini's "Meridiana" (*Sundial*) in Piazza Sant'Agostino, Luisa Rabbia's "Il riposo del Tempo" (*The Rest of Time*) at the medieval fountain in Via delle Fonti, Luciano Fabro's "L'Italia all'Asta" (*Italy at Auction*) inside Palazzo del Podestà, Jannis Kounellis's "Concrete Block" at the Church of San Jacopo al Tempio, and Joseph Kosuth's "Sedia davanti alla porta" (*Chair in Front of the Door*) in Piazza del Bagolaro.

Modern and contemporary painting and sculpture have become an important part of San Gimignano. The town houses numerous prestigious galleries, making it an international crossroads for the avant-garde art world, from Beijing and Cuba to France and across Italy.

We recommend visiting the **"Raffaele De Grada" Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art**, named in honour of the Milanese painter whose works depicting San Gimignano as his city of choice are preserved in the museum. The permanent collection also features works by 20th-century painters such as Renato Guttuso, Sergio Vacchi, Ugo Nespolo, and Marco Gastini.

Also noteworthy are **Galleria Continua** and **Galleria Gagliardi**, featuring exhibition and sales spaces for contemporary works. Lastly, the new location of **the Nous Art Gallery** offers a carefully designed space served not only for display, but as a meeting point for contemporary art, architecture, and international collecting.

Village installations map: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/REKytjVeuijhjU7J6>

Volterra

Arriving in Volterra by car along the road from Colle Val d'Elsa, remember to slow down to admire and photograph the iconic environmental installations by **Mauro Staccioli**. A Volterra native, Staccioli is internationally renowned for his geometric works (in order: *Indicatore*, *Ellisse*, *Al bimbo che non*

vide crescere il bosco, Anello), which are fully integrated into the surrounding landscape that inspired them.

Once you reach the centre, take a stroll through the historic town with one eye on the past and the other on contemporary Volterra.

The **Santa Maria Maddalena exhibition centre** and the **Kalpa Art Gallery** feature innovative photographic exhibitions and artwork that are well worth a stop.

However, talking about Volterra means talking about **alabaster**: the stone carved here since Etruscan times, which remains one of the defining features of this ancient hill town. A visit to the **Oasi's shop** is essential, offering a unique selection of designer alabaster objects.

The tour continues toward Borgo San Giusto, a neighbourhood that has preserved a strong local identity with its local club and neighbourhood shops. Here, you will find **Nico Lopez's mural** depicting Aulo Grandoli, known as "Il Pupo," one of the most famous alabaster artisans who passed away a few years ago.

When open, the **Consortini House Museum**, located in front of the beautiful Church of San Giusto, is also fascinating, housing numerous bronze, wood, and stone sculptures by the artist.

Map: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/oWkOmpgsTrAANodU7>

INFO AND BOOKING

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