

TAPPING INTO CREATIVITY AS A TRAVELING ARTIST IN RESIDENCE, NOEL SUAREZ

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I've been preparing for my travels throughout the Mediterranean and I wanted to share some of the ways I tap into creativity and find inspiration – before, during and after traveling. What better place to discover inspiration than the beautiful Mediterranean?

In fact, the Mediterranean is my absolute favorite part of the world – so many beautiful places and so much history. There is Italia with Roma, Firenze and Venezia, the South of France, which is always magical with Monte Carlo, Cannes, Saint-Tropez. Then we have Spain with Barcelona, Málaga and Sevilla, all places that I never get tired of returning to. It amazes me that after visiting the Mediterranean so many times there are still places that I haven't explored yet. Next up, I'm looking forward to experiencing three cities in Croatia that I've been wanting to visit: Korcula, Zadar and Split, which we'll be visiting aboard *Riviera*.



Artist in Residence Noel Suarez in Rome at Piazza Navona in front of the Fountain of Four Rivers

Setting the Stage for Creativity

As I mentioned, I actually start preparing well in advance of my trip, before I even depart for the ship. I research artists, styles and the history of the cities I'll be visiting and explore references that relate to the paintings or collections that I'm working on. I find that this helps me maximize my time in port and the connections and inspiration flows much more naturally. Oftentimes, I encounter these references in the midst of traveling too, just by walking through the cities – and especially the Old Towns.

When you go ashore in these places, you never know when inspiration will strike. As soon as I start walking through these cities, their energy and history grabs me and takes over. Even if I knew of these cities or whatever I learned during previous travels, being there creates this mental radar that guides me in the right direction. I follow my intuition.

With that said, architecture is a major source of inspiration for me. The churches and cathedrals, regardless of the religion, in the Mediterranean are incredible as well as the ornate fountains in piazzas and the variety of beautiful facades on the surrounding buildings. Art and design were priorities in the Old World and you feel that everywhere you go in the Mediterranean. Find what you connect with and make note of it – maybe it's different sources of water, mosaics or different statue forms, the play of light and shadow, and so on. These elements can become a thread in your own creative process and a continual source of inspiration.

Connecting with the Locals

Interacting with the locals is my favorite part of traveling. In fact, it's actually how I acquired a great deal of my friends and even gallery representation around the world. There is nothing like connecting with the locals – it is truly the best way to find out about the history, customs, food, art, and the people from these places. What an amazing source of inspiration. Just walk the city streets, explore the outdoor markets, and visit different neighborhoods to encounter friendly locals and their insights. You will be surprised how easy it can be to strike up a conversation with them and how welcoming everyone is.

The Five Senses: A World of Inspiration

It is often said that traveling awakens the senses. Traveling is such an enriching experience for me in this way. All of our senses are part of the creative process – sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. Each one enhances our experience and taps into creativity, and traveling is a beautiful way to reconnect with your senses and become more aware of them. I think of the colors and vistas I notice when arriving in a new town, the hum of the local streets and markets, the scents emerging from restaurants and street carts, the burst of new flavors experienced for the first time, the textures of exotic fabrics at the market and elaborate stone facades. I have discovered great inspiration and found specific textures and color tonalities that I've used in artworks after dining experiences and by wandering markets, especially in cities such as Istanbul, Tangier and Marrakesh. Their amazingly colorful spices become beautiful fabric dyes.

New Fresh Elements at Artist Loft

Each residency, I always bring a new fresh element to [Artist Loft](#). The experience needs to be fresh and exciting for me in order to make it special and exciting for our guests, especially when we have so many [Oceania Club](#) members joining us again and again. This time I'll be doing a new class about the transfer process, a very exciting and fun technique that I know our guests will enjoy and find very interesting.



Artist in Residence Noel Suarez in Barcelona at Plaza Catalunya

Reflection & New Perspectives

As I travel through all these amazing places, I capture as much as I can with photos and videos that not only remind me of the experiences I've had, but also become my artistic references and inspirations for new bodies of work. It allows me to come back to these moments, sights and experiences with new perspective after returning home, so that is really valuable.

Of course, there are always exciting new projects ahead to prepare for. My 2023 Artist in Residence schedule is quite exciting, packed with amazing countries and itineraries. In addition, I will be participating in several art shows throughout Europe, the Middle East and Asia with Crisolart Gallery, my representation in Barcelona. I am also looking forward to participating in Miami's annual Art Basel soon after returning home in November from *Marina*.

I hope to see you at Artist Loft or on board during my upcoming voyages this summer and fall or in 2023. Below are the *Marina* and *Vista* voyages that I'll be joining as Artist in Residence at the very end of 2022 and 2023.