

FRANCE 2026

PHOTOGRAPHING THE FEMALE FIGURE
A FULL-IMMERSION ARTIST RETREAT IN PROVENCE
MAY 3 THROUGH 9



WITH ARTIST JENNIFER THORESON

PORTFOLIO: WWW.JENNIFERTHORESON.COM

I've dreamed of pulling this retreat together for nearly 20 years—and finally, FINALLY, the day has come! A big part of this dream is having ample time to dive into discussions and demonstrations on the topic of photographic figure study, but also to deeply invigorate the spirit, stir up the dust by touching every sense, and to profoundly inspire the heart.

Think of this retreat as an all-in, beauty-soaked, sensory rich, deep and wide, full-stop, art-heart immersion.

curriculum

Dive Into an intensive study.

Within the ancient stone walls of our home for the week, the Château Saint-Pierre de Mejans, we'll gather for rich instruction and discussions each day. With ample time to divide the content into bite-sized, thematic pieces, we will unpack and fully explore the subject of figure study. I'll prepare topical presentations full of inspiring images, practice exercises, and prompts to help you internalize the material, translate it into your own visual language, and utilize it in your own practice.

We'll begin with the structure of the body, learning to understand proportions, strength, mobility, balance, and form. We'll then expand on this foundation, discovering how certain shapes, lines, and gestures hold conceptual meaning and stir an emotional response. I'll share my methods for poetic communication and collaboration with models—techniques for creating a highly intentional, harmonic duet between two souls. We will then dig into placing the figure within space, how architecture, shape, light, color, and tonality communicate meaning in powerful ways. We'll learn to let the building be sensitively heard, and how to add counterpoint to its voice with the human figure. We will explore the use of meaningful objects, wardrobe, and styling of models to impart meaning and narrative. Lastly, we will embrace the whole-woman approach, how the figure reflects the human story, both in the personal and universal.

photoshoots

Play and Experiment.

Enjoy four unique photoshoots, each carefully crafted to echo a specific theme of the curriculum and provide an inspiring space for photographic practice. We'll have access to four unique locations, each full of history, and brimming with opportunity to create stunning photographs. Models will be professionally styled by a talented makeup artist, and an exciting wardrobe selection will be provided.

I want to be sure each person has time with models to create without being frantic and rushed, so I have budgeted for several hours at each location and plenty of models so everyone has time to work calmly and thoughtfully. We will be working with natural light only, keenly observing each location and allowing its character to be an active participant in the photographs. Meaningful, rewarding photoshoots will be a key focus of the retreat. I aim to curate a canvas for you to work within—once-in-a-lifetime spaces for expressive, imaginative experimentation.

enrichment

Engage more deeply.

To further deepen our understanding of the subject of figure study, we will engage with other creative thinkers and their artistic processes. Getting out from behind the camera and learning to envision the body in new ways is essential to growth and maturation in your practice. We'll learn from a yoga instructor how the body can be pushed to create intensity and tension in photographs, and how particular poses and gestures express specific symbols, ideas, and feelings. In a mini-class at the chateau, we will learn from a local artist to draw the female figure with basic shapes, helping us to internalize lines, forms, and proportions. (Don't panic--no prior experience needed!) Further, we'll learn from other creatives outside the field of visual art--brilliant chefs, musicians, dancers, writers, storytellers, farmers, and craftspeople. By witnessing and engaging with their disciplines, we can dip into fresh wells of inspiration to encourage complexity in our own practices. And plus--we're going to have a whole heap of fun!

Outings

Enrich your art-heart

Each outing will be selected to echo the theme of each day, deepening the concepts we approach in discussions, allowing them to expand and take root. We will travel to several villages in the region of Provence to intertwine with communities, visit local curiosities, peruse beautiful outdoor markets, and taste fresh cuisine in remarkable restaurants. We will visit museums with incredible collections only accessible in France, and stand in places full of ghosts—complex and captivating human histories. The region of Provence is home to the stories of some of the world's best-loved artists, such as Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Vincent Van Gogh, and Paul Cezanne. On guided tours, we'll walk in the footsteps of some of these ground-breaking artists and intimately view their works. You'll even have the opportunity to stand inside Cezanne's studio and fill your lungs with all sorts of kindred-spirit magic! All in all, I hope for our outings to light up your artist soul, bringing renewal, tuned awareness, and fresh ideas to the surface.



location

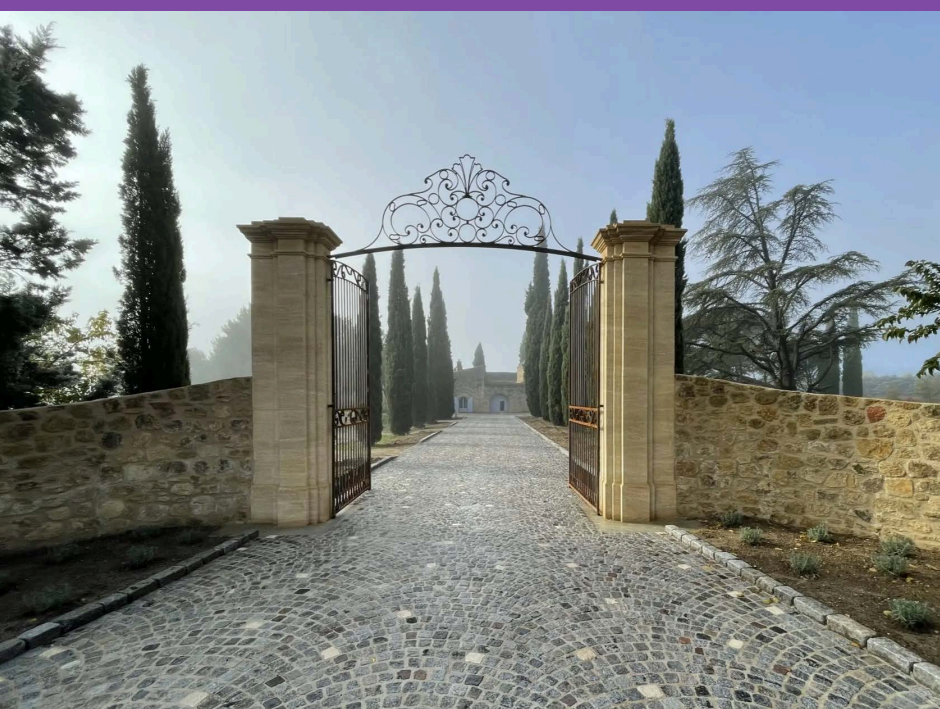
Paradise found.

Situated on over 25 acres, Chateau Saint Pierre Mejans is a 12th-century wine estate, flourishing with vines, olive groves and lavender. This enchanting space will provide a meditative, private setting full of fascinating history to inspire us. I am an avid lover of old buildings—we can tap into the legacies and energies of those who occupied the space before us--there is even an ancient chapel on the property! One evening, the chateau will become the backdrop for photographs; we'll freely roam the grounds and interior spaces, working with models to make stunning photographs.

Enjoy an outdoor pool, a fantastic wine selection, expansive grounds, and a variety of art and antiques. The first mention of the priory of Saint-Pierre de Mejans dates back to 1118, when it became part of the possessions of the Abbey of Saint André de Villeneuve-lès-Avignon, confirmed by Pope Gelasius II. This place is rife with stories and humanity—the perfect context for an artist's mind to marvel and play.

Click on the link below to have a look at the Chateau!

<https://saintpierredemejans.com/en/the-castle/>







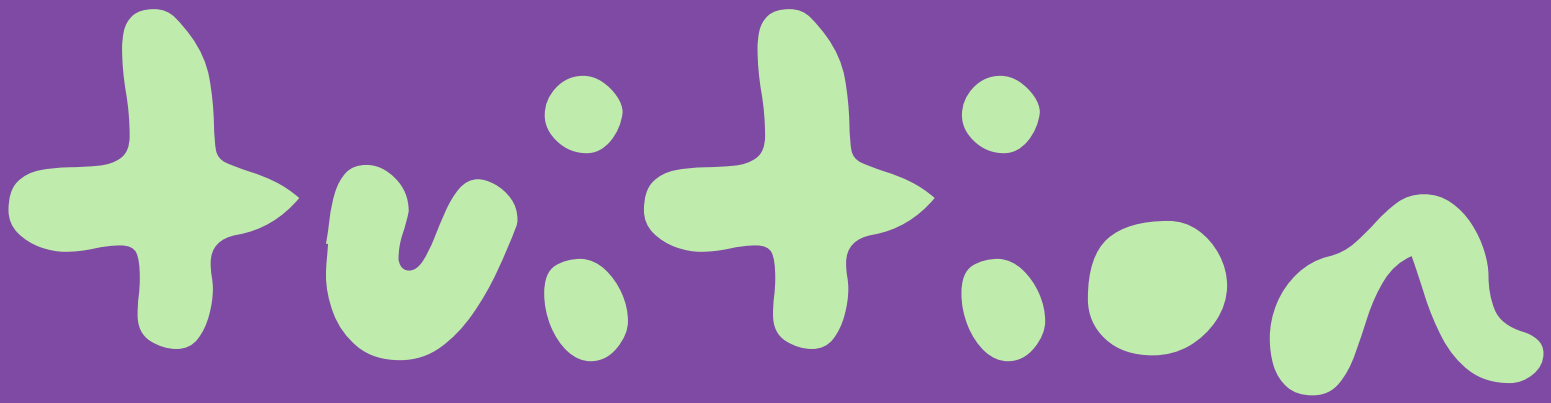
Travel Information

We will be touring the region of Provence. The nearest cities to the chateau are Aix-en-Provence and Marseille. We will be voyaging into several villages, such as Arles, Cavallion, and Saint-Remy-de-Provence for markets and tours.

Participants may choose to fly into Paris and take the train south to Aix en Provence, or rent a car for a leisurely drive. There are several options for train travel, including a high speed train which makes the journey in only three hours. You can also opt to fly into Marseille and take an uber to the Chateau. We will coordinate with you, try to arrange carpools with other participants, and assist you with planning your journey to the Chateau.

It is recommended to arrive in France a day or two before the retreat begins if you are able. We will formally begin the retreat at 3pm on May 3rd, and end the retreat at 1pm on May 9th.





YOUR TUITION INCLUDES:

- A private portfolio review and goal preparation session via Zoom approximately one month prior to the retreat
- Meticulously prepared lectures and practice studies on focused themes each day
- Lodging at the Chateau Saint Pierre de Mejans for six nights
- Chef-prepared meals at the chateau and picnic lunches (alcoholic beverages are not included with meal costs and can be billed individually. A few meals will be out-to-eat and are not included in the tuition cost)
- Admission to all museums, classes, and tours
- Model fees and licenses for four unique photoshoots
- Location fees and licenses for four unique photoshoots
- Professional hair and makeup services for all photoshoots
- Beautiful vintage and contemporary wardrobe selections for models
- A professional driver for safe, reliable transportation around Provence
- A few special surprises (I can't spill the beans, but you'll love them)
- A sharing/critique session via Zoom one month after the workshop

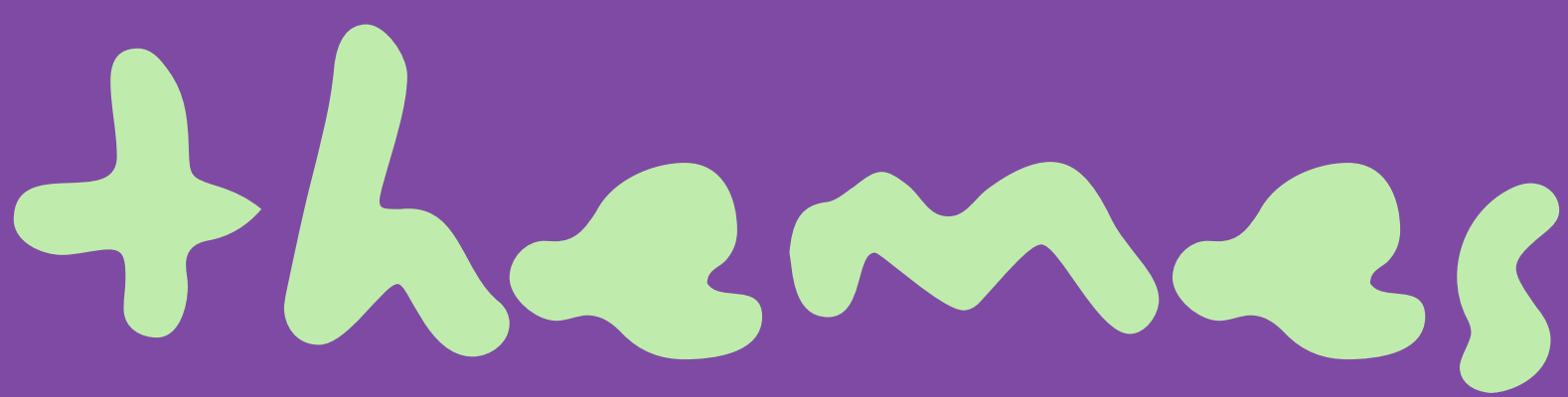
Tuition does not include airfare, train travel, or Uber fares to the Chateau.

TUITION COSTS:

Private, single-occupancy room: one double bed and private bath
\$6500 per person

Shared room: two twin beds, no private bath (bath is located near the room)
\$5800 per person (there is only one twin room, two spaces available)

Bring a friend or partner: Shared double bed with a private bath
\$5500 per person (three spaces for friends/partners available)



(still in the dreaming-up phase and subject to change)

May 3: Arrival

Check-in, 3:00pm

Private guided historic tour of the castle

Introductions, and a relaxing evening by the poolside

May 4: The Maestro

Focus: the art of poetic communication and resonant collaboration between photographer and model.

May 5: The Lion and the Lamb

Focus: the body, body language, how to shape the figure to communicate conceptual ideas and strong emotion. Learn how the brain interprets certain shapes, lines, angles, poses, and gestures--both consciously and subconsciously.

May 6: Gifts

Focus: Learn to use objects, clothing, styling, and location to impart powerful ideas. We'll study the language of symbolism, and how to maximize every choice in a photograph to make meaning. Find a treasure at a local market and use it to make a meaningful photograph.

May 7: Homage

Walk in the steps of heroes, occupy their sacred spaces, and stand only a few feet from their works. Fill your spirit with the stories of artists who paved the way for us.

May 8: Ghosts

Draw inspiration directly from the histories of women who worked, lived, mothered, created, and suffered in stirring spaces with complex and weighty histories.

May 9: Departure

A tranquil time of reflection and community before re-entry into the real world.

register

Join us!

To register, please follow the link below and fill out the online form. Once your form is submitted, I will send a separate invoice through Quickbooks. A deposit of \$1500 will reserve your seat. The remaining balance will be due one month before the retreat. Seats are reserved on a first-come first-served basis.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)

Reach out! jenniferbthoreson@gmail.com