

I went on exchange on my 6th semester while studying Jewellery, technology and business at KEA. I went to study the Jewellery Arts programme at George Brown College in Toronto, Canada. It was on the very first day of school we were introduced to the possibility of taking a semester abroad during our education and it was on our second semester when we had a visit from Paul McClure a professor/coordinator from *Jewellery Studies Centre for Arts and Design* at George Brown College I knew where I wanted to go. He gave a presentation of the college in our class, he described the school, the courses, the city and the study environment. He told us that the college had over 30 years of experience within the field of Jewellery and showed pictures of the school and its cool facilities. The Jewellery Arts program at George Brown focuses on goldsmithing techniques and all the aspects of jewellery making - sawing, filing, soldering, casting, forging, decorative metal techniques and more. At KEA the focus is on modern technology and the business oriented part of jewellery, i.e. conceptualization, marketing and sales and not so much about the craftsmanship and the making of jewellery. At GBC they encourage their students to work to the highest goldsmithing standards which for me was the primary reason for choosing this school. I wanted to challenge my professional skills at the bench, learn new goldsmithing techniques and learn in a new and different way than at KEA.

It was myself and another student from my class at KEA who was accepted to GBC and we went together. Before going we were in contact with Paul McClure on email, he helped us choosing classes and provided us with answers to any questions we had about them. During our semester at GBC we took the following classes:

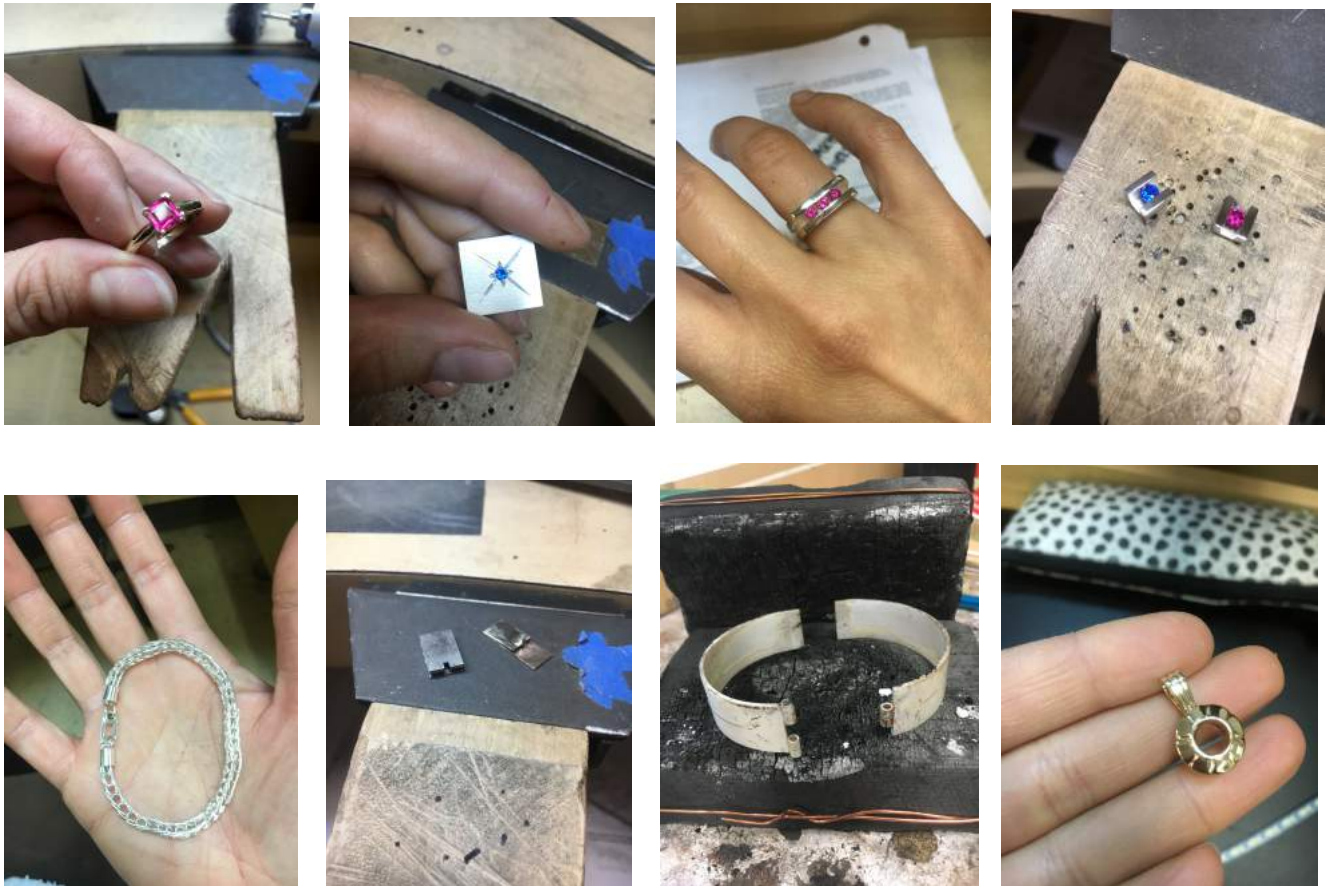
Gemsetting II:

Students build upon their knowledge from Gemsetting 1 through hands-on experience working on gypsy, bead(star) and channel settings. Students are introduced to pavé, flush, illusion, star settings, irregular settings and fancy claw settings. Students will prepare gravers and specialty tools for gemsetting.

Industry skills II:

Students demonstrate skill, precision, speed and fluency while completing projects that address common industry situations such as screw threads, mechanical catches and findings, wire manipulation and assembly, constructed hinges, bracelet blanks, wire settings and advanced chain construction.

The classes gemsetting and industry skills were definitely the most challenging for me, but at the same time the most rewarding. In these classes it is all about precision and technique and you can really follow your own development. The tasks given are all related to situations that could occur in the industry and these are not the classes where you can be creative. I would still warmly recommend them if you want to become a better goldsmith.



Jewellery Projects B:

In this course students are required to address all aspects of the creation of a piece of jewellery. From idea, to design and through completion the student assumes responsibility for the production of a unique piece of jewellery. Project topics will include function, technique, materials, and design strategy. Topics of importance to the studio goldsmith will be introduced including documentation, working with custom and commission clients; extending a design.

In Jewellery projects on the other hand you can be creative and design. I think this class reminded me mostly of what we learn at KEA. Here you can draw use from the Design thinking process. We had to sketch, make prototypes, mood boards, technical drawings, work plans and do metal calculations so we could price our designs. Off course there is restrictions on the different projects but you get to design and be creative and it was a really fun class. The last project is to make a 14k gold ring for a special occasion. This was the project I enjoyed the most out of them all, in my time at GBC.



Enamelling:

Enamelling is the process of fusing transparent and opaque glass to metal using high temperatures. Enamel provides unique colour, surface, pattern and distinction to jewellery and metalwork. In Enamelling 1, students will attain a comprehensive understanding of enamel using multiple dry and wet techniques including sifting, stencil, and sgraffito, drawing with underglaze, painting techniques, basse-taille, fine silver and copper cloisonné. The correct use of tools and equipment will be emphasized.

Enamelling was something I had never done before, a totally new goldsmithing technique that I now have learned. Here it was all about playing with colour and being abstract in our designs, a really nice counterpoint to the stricter classes mentioned earlier. I have nothing but good recommendations for this class.



Production techniques:

Students explore the possibilities and issues relating to the multiple production of jewellery through lecture, project work and discussion. Casting and digital manufacturing (laser cutting) are the processes utilized in this course to create jewellery. Production design strategies, manufacturing

strategies, digital manufacturing (3D printing) and pricing are discussed.

In this class we were introduced to laser cutting and had to make laser cut jewellery with the use of Rhino. The class and the projects were fun but I think these were the least challenging for me, since we already used the laser cutter at KEA.

Overall being an exchange student at GBC has been a greater experience than I ever could have hoped for. We were the first exchange students to join the Jewellery Arts programme and were therefore guinea pigs, but it did not feel like it at all. From beginning to end we were warmly received both by teachers and by students. My professional skills have definitely been challenged and the academic reward and what I have learned during my time at GBC is indispensable. The most rewarding thing was to see my personal development throughout my stay, because you sit at the work bench every day it becomes clear how you get more confident and better each time you do something over. I have nothing but positive things to say about the teachers and professors at GBC. They are so very committed, helpful and competent at what they do and because they have worked together for so long they are like a little family. If you want to become a better goldsmith and sit at the bench every day you should definitely take a semester at the Jewellery Arts programme at GBC.

If I should mention one thing to have in mind it is that our school semesters do not begin and end at the same time. This meant that the first month we were in Canada, we still had our Danish exam to write and to do an oral skype exam. This was quite tough trying to settle in, adjusting to a new home, a new school, many new people and just trying to keep up in school while writing an exam as well. But then again the teachers were very overbearing with us and took it easy on us, with the assignments we had to hand in and so on.

Before going we were in contact with Hanne the exchange coordinator at KEA and Kristina Miller (KK) who is the administrator of the exchange students at GBC. It was really nice to have a contact person from GBC before going, who could help out with questions and practical stuff. She was very helpful and friendly and she assisted us through the process of applying to the school, providing information about health insurance, classes and links to housing possibilities in Toronto. Unfortunately, we were told too late to sign up for campus housing so it was full when we applied. Even though we were provided with links to different housing sites it was a bit difficult to navigate in. Toronto is a big city and GBC has 3 different campuses in town. In the end we found a nice and cheap space to live on the top floor of a house a woman rented out. The space was really nice but we had to commute an hour to get to school, which is not abnormal for Toronto but when you are used to biking around in Copenhagen it was a bit far. I would recommend you to start your housing search early and if you

want to apply for the campus housing you have to do it before you even know if you are accepted to the school.

The space we rented was usually rented out to one person for 900CAD\$ which is about 4500kr. We sat up a Skype call with the woman, which I would recommend doing. This gave a good impression of the house and the woman and she ended up renting the space to us both for 1000CAD\$, so our rent was only 2500kr. per person per month, which is really cheap for Toronto. Other expenses you should think of is off course food which I think is quite similar compared to prices in Denmark if you go grocery shopping. It is definitely more cheap to go out to restaurants which is really nice! Other is transportation and material expenses. At GBC there you pay for all the material you have signed out throughout the semester at the end of the year. Here you can choose to buy the stuff you have made or sell it back to the school and they will give you some money for the metal. This is not a lot, taking into consideration how long you have spent on doing it and I would recommend you to buy it and take it home with you for future reference. My bill at the end was approximately 1600CAD\$ so about 8000kr. A tip is to apply for funding's or/and save money if you know you want to go on exchange, make an estimated budget of the expenses and calculate in extra - because you will always use a little extra 😊.

In general, I think Canada is an amazing and huge country! Toronto is bigger than the capital city and a real metropolitan. Here there is diversity and many different people with different backgrounds and cultures. I felt safe and welcome throughout my stay, because of the nice and warm people. The only thing to mention is if you don't like the cold, maybe Canada is not the place for you. The semester went from January to April and it was very cold! Even more cold than in Denmark, but when April come it starts to become more warm and nice and suddenly people spend time outside sitting on restaurant porches having a good time!