

Erasmus+ Final Report 2020

My name is Josephine Ryholt and I study (BA) Jewellery, Technology and Business at KEA - Copenhagen school of Design and Technology.

In my exchange period from 30th of January to 19th of June in 2020 (or at least some of it) I went to London to study at the ual: University of the Art, London where I studied at the BA (HONS) Fashion Jewellery at LCF - London College of Fashion.

I had different units whilst I was abroad:

1. **Sustainable Futures Unit** which was a unit with focus on collaborating and making a project together in groups, supporting the future thinking to respond to the changing markets and aspirations and the development of proposals for a fashion jewellery collection that challenges the system as we know it. It challenged you to think in a sustainable way and out of the box what came to materials.
2. **The Cultural and Historical Studies Unit** which was a very informative unit introducing cultural and historical studies acquaints you to fashion theory through critical research and analysis skills through the writing of an essay. In the essay I wrote I had to find some different examples of the topic I would like to write about (I chose Feminism in Jewellery) that represented the topic in different ways, analyse and discuss the examples and then make a conclusion to my findings in the research.
3. **Better Lives Unit** was a College wide options unit based on the idea that fashion can change lives. You could choose a module from the School of Business or the School of Media to gain knowledge and experience in a different fashion discipline to suit your personal interests and development. In this unit we all had to make individual blog posts with reflective writing (only for the other students and teachers to see) about self-chosen subjects of the ones presented in the Better Lives modules. The 4th blog post we had to make, we were to write feedback to another students blog 1, 2 or 3 and write a constructive criticism comment on their blog post.

Academic Experience

1. How helpful was the receiving school in the process of choosing classes and settling you in?

The school's induction that took place before school started was a bit confusing and was mostly a powerpoint briefly about the schools different campuses and most of all a way to meet and greet the other students from abroad. It was nice to attend, but not very informative. When I started school later on, The Fashion Jewellery at LCF already had its courses planned, and I started in a class that had been going on for half a year already. So in my case I had no classes/units to choose from.

The school counselor Bernadette gave me a tour around my main campus at Mare street where I would be the most. The Sustainable Futures Unit was a small class unit with only Fashion jewellery students and my teachers in that class were also very helpful introducing me to the courses and my classmates. The Better Lives Unit and The Cultural and Historical studies were both lectures with all kinds of students attending. When I went to these lectures my classmates from SF were very helpful.

I was always welcome to go to either Bernadette or my teachers if I had any questions, which was nice and comforting.

2. What classes/study experiences did you find the most rewarding? Why?

I would say that the different units were very different from each other in both how we were taught in either class with small tasks along the way or at the big lectures where we were much more on our own and writing notes. The SF unit was the unit that was most reminiscent of the way I'm used to at KEA and maybe that is why I think I found the way of teaching most rewarding. In the class we were to create a collection of jewellery, a concept and storytelling about the products, it is always rewarding working with other students in a collaboration, and because of our differences and the circumstances we were challenged in a way that made the outcome for me very valuable.

3. What classes/study experiences did you find least relevant or least valuable to you? Why?

The Better Lives Unit was very informative, but it didn't give me as much knowledge and challenge as the other courses. The blog post was a creative way of trying to write down what you have learned but it had its limitations. The designing process in groups was very fun, but after the pandemic started and we had to split up it seemed like the study groups (or at least mine) were also split up and nobody was really interested in working together as a team, which made it hard to complete the tasks fulfilling.

Cultural/Personal Experience

1. What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad? How helpful was the receiving school in this process?

I didn't know this at first, but later on I realised that I went away at a time where the UK class compatible with my class in DK would be out in work experience and the class one year ahead of me would be in progress with their bachelor, so I was put in the class further back and therefore my classmates were younger than me. Some of them were approximately 19-20 years old, and I was 25 at the time. Therefore they were still living at home and were in (other than school-wise) in a different place in life than me.

I wouldn't say that there was a cultural barrier but the age difference made it hard to connect with some of my classmates. Also because they still lived at home, they had maybe 1-1,5 hours transport back and forth which made it hard to do anything after school, when we sometimes had time off from school at 4 or 5 PM. So the students from my class didn't hang out a lot but went separate ways after classes.

I would also say that it seemed like the community in my class was divided. I went to a class with a lot of students abroad from China, that took all 3,5 years away from home and it seemed like they liked each other's company better than the student from UK and me from DK, and spoke chinese/mandarin to each other a lot.

The school didn't do much about it, but after we were put into study groups we were recommended to meet up in our groups at least once a week.

2. What was the best cultural/personal experience during your studies abroad?

We were 5 people in my study group and one of the girls named Hope was very welcoming from day one and we ate lunch together and went to the school library once in a while.

She was very sweet and we talked about both personal stuff but she was also very supportive and motivating in our group project and it wouldn't have been the same if it wasn't for her.

3. What advice would you give other KEA students going to study abroad at the receiving school?

If you get in a class that is not as social as you are used to, go out and seek it yourself and enjoy that you are in London with a lot of interesting things and places to see. I went on a lot of single-sightseeing and it was very rewarding.

I wasn't away for as long as I wanted but I was planning on looking up the social clubs on LCF to see if there were any interesting ones to join.

Practical Experience

1. How was the application process?

I think it was very smooth and easy to navigate in. The LCF were at the time changing their exchange counselor so they were a bit long to answer questions, but besides that there were no problems.

The International Mobility Coordinator at KEA Hanne Vang Hansen helped me with a lot of things in the process of applying for exchange in London. Even if I had the smallest problems or questions I wrote her an email and she would reply me with an answer.

2. Did you have any practical difficulties settling down at your destination?

I had a bit of trouble finding a place to stay, and the school housing was a bit expensive so I took it in my own hands. Fortunately when I was asking my network for help one of my classmates from KEA had a friend who lived in a Danish housing association, where I could get a shared room with 4 other girls from DK who was studying and working in London themselves. It was very cozy to live in this accommodation and not as frightening as I thought it would be. Here I was never alone and it cost me approximately 4000 danish kroner every month.

3. Expenses

Because we didn't have our own kitchen but had to either buy meals in the house canteen or "fast food" it was not possible to store much food and I couldn't make my own lunch from home, so I had to buy lunch at school which was more expensive. Other than that the transportation is more expensive than it is in DK, but it is very easy and necessary to take the Tube under- and overground because of the size of the city and the commute to school. My other expenses were schoolbooks, tools and materials for school projects and visits to museums for school research but also in my own time for fun and experience.

Of Course I also used the money from Erasmus+ to pay for my plane tickets and Travel insurance which was very important and necessary to have in place for the trip.

I used most of the money on necessities for the trip and it made it possible to not worry about the important things for the travel and how to get throughout the exchange.

Wherever I came home earlier than expected because of the pandemic and therefore it's hard to say if I would have spent more or less money than I budgeted with, but I had made a very clear budget and I had made room for unforeseen expenses.