

EXCHANGE PROGRAM REPORT

OTIS College of Art and Design, Los Angeles

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1) Where and when did you study abroad?

I studied at Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles, USA during the Spring semester. School started on the 13th of January but I had to be there earlier for orientation days. I arrived on the 8th of January and the first orientation day was on the 9th. I suggest to really make sure and ask someone from Otis which orientation days are required for you to attend, before you buy your flight tickets :)



2) What KEA program did you attend at the time?

I'm enrolled in Design & Business - Brand Design.

3) What classes did you take during your semester abroad? Please briefly explain what each class was about.

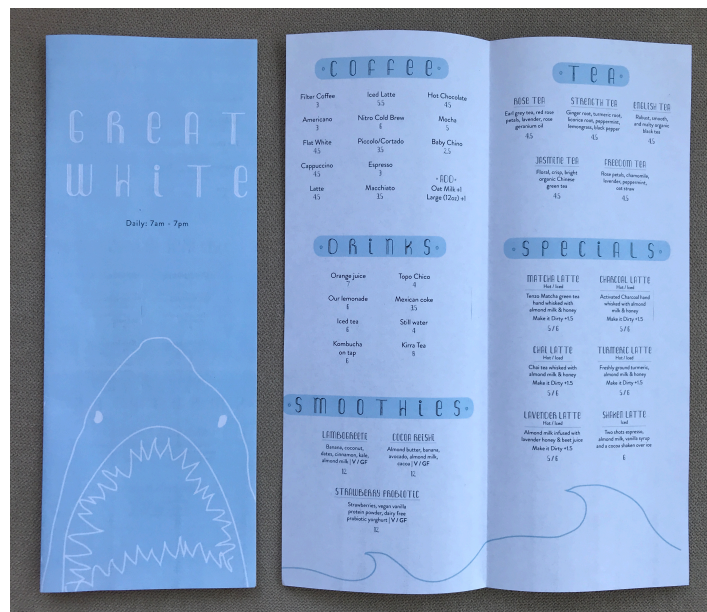
I took 6 classes - Typography II, Communication Studio II: Graphic Design, Scientific Illustration, History of Graphic Design and Illustration, Copywriting and Practicum.

Typography II

This class was absolutely one of my favourite ones. Even though it requires to work hard on your projects, the topics they choose for them are fun and make sense! In this class you are taught to pay attention to the detail of fonts and all the projects were basically about your ability to combine typesetting with graphics and pictures. Our projects were: Creating an experimental alphabet, designing a booklet about a designer's life and career, designing a menu for a restaurant of your choice, designing a booklet with a theme of your choice,

designing a type specimen and as a last project we were required to create a process book including all of the projects we have done with an explanation of the process and photo documentation.

Tip: Be prepared to spend a lot of \$\$\$ for printing your projects. The B&W is for free but sometimes I was required to print stuff in color (\$0.50 for a letter size paper - A4, \$1 for a tabloid size - cca A3 size...Yeah, you also have to get used to their paper formats because they don't use A4, A3, etc. at all + learn **inches**, they don't use **cm** and it was kinda annoying hah). And you have to count with some error prints because it doesn't always work how you expected it would - especially the booklet project where you have to print 20 pages in color and make sure they are all in order, etc. Also, for the critique it is not usually just one print but you have a lot of iterations that you have to present (for instance, I had to print 3 tabloids and 3 letters in color for the critique but it always varies from a project to another...And for the final versions you usually have to print in bigger formats which is way more expensive - again it differs but I remember I paid \$7 and \$12 for the big ones + it takes way more time to print so you should do it a day before your critique and you have to print them in the Photography room in the 6th floor! And I always **did** mess up something haha so I wish you a good luck with that! (the same applies to a CommStudio class)

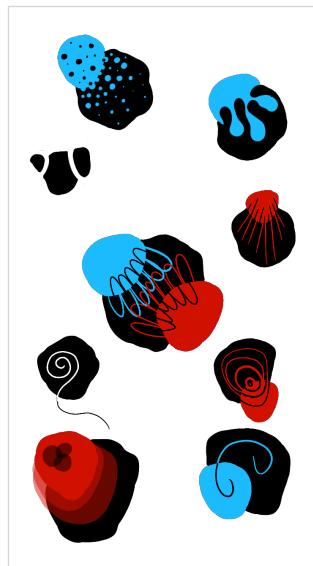
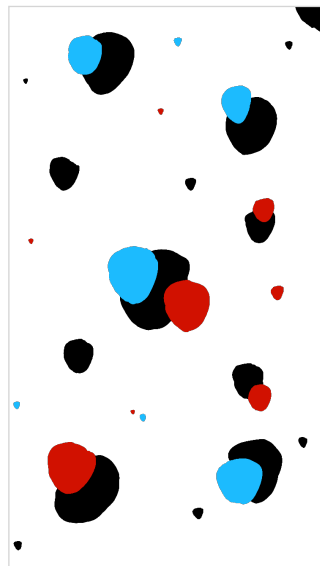
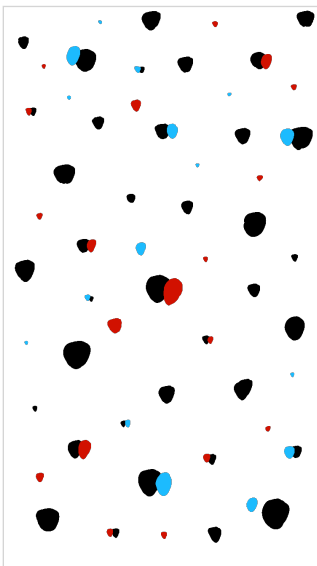
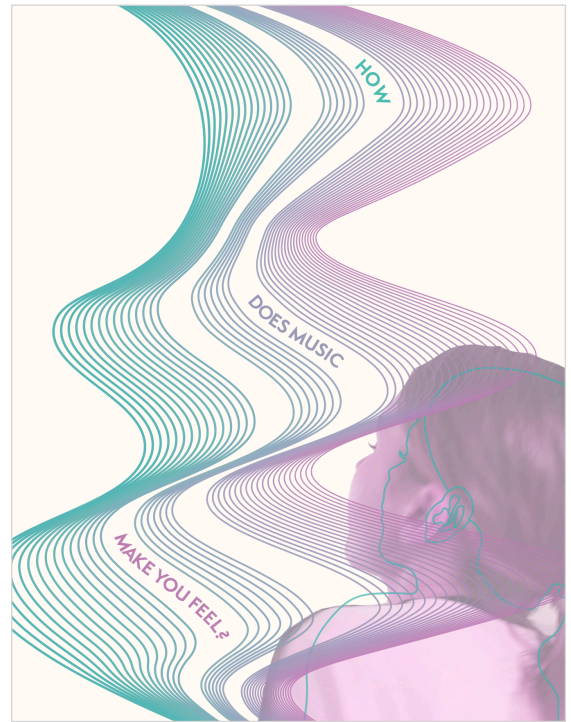


Communication Studio II: Graphic Design

This class was pretty similar to the Typography class but was focused mainly on graphic design and the composition of your work. Each project was about 4 weeks long (the same applies for Typography class) and you do refinements of your work each week. Every class starts with a critique session where you have to present your work describing your idea and process and then the teacher and classmates give you a constructive feedback. We did projects such as: Designing a flag for a community of your choice, a Guide To... project with a topic of your choice and a motion project focused on a human connection (during the extraordinary time of our lives - quarantine), and a process book.



A Guide To... project - in my case a guide to find out how music becomes part of our identity.



A motion project - I created a GIF in ProCreate app on iPad.

Scientific Illustration

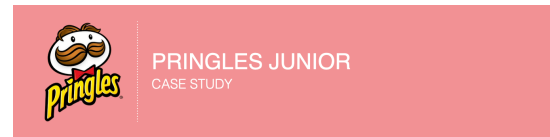
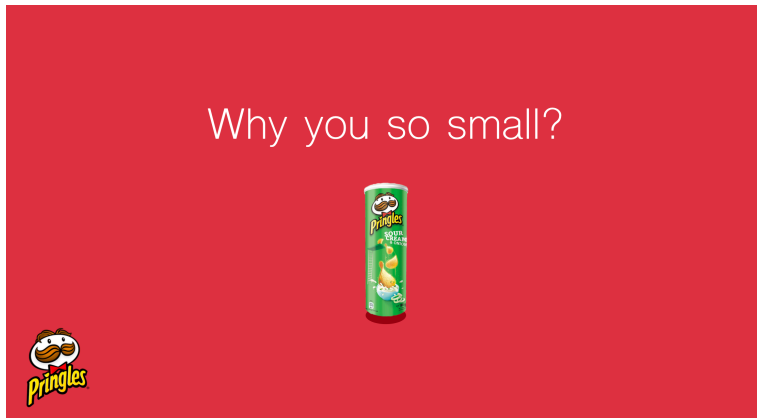
Even though this class is mainly for students whose major is an illustration, I chose it because I really enjoy drawing and I was very curious what projects we will work on. Our topic of this class for the whole semester was Wildfires in California and we used watercolors for most of the time. I had to buy some tools for this class as I didn't know I will take it because there wasn't any spot left for me for another class I wanted so I took this one and I don't regret at all !! I bought watercolor kit, brushes, mixing palette, color pencils, sharpies and markers, pencils, sketch books and special papers for final projects (the format was around 60x40cm and it cost \$10). I suggest to buy markers, pencils and sketch books in advance in Denmark or your home country because it is very expensive in LA. You can buy all you need at the art store directly at school or in a store called Dick Blick (the closest one is on the way from school to Venice Beach/Santa Monica). Some of the things were cheaper at school but the others at the store. There was a special deal for sketch books so I got 2 for 10 bucks.

We had 3 projects: Taxonomy, Diagram and Subject focusing on flora and fauna affected by a fire in a particular place in California.



Copywriting

Even though this was an evening class (19-22) and we did a lot of writing, I really enjoyed it! My teacher was Kevin Thomas and he knows what he is doing! I think that our final project was a bit affected by corona virus so we didn't finish it how he expected to but it was still fun. We continuously worked on a brand campaign of our choice - I came up with a new Pringles line - Pringles Junior (we designed and wrote a text for billboards, we wrote a press release, etc.).



SALES INCREASED BY 60% WITH LAUNCHING PRINGLES JUNIOR IN CERTAIN GROCERY STORES.

OVERVIEW

Pringles Junior is a new line of this potato chips fantasy targeting new audience - the youngest one, the children. But the important part is that it addresses another audience at the same time - parents of the children.

When Pringles stopped coming up with new exciting and enticing flavors for the customer, the sales started decreasing and there was a must to come up with something very new and special. Thanks to that sales started increasing rapidly again. The 60% sales increase happened within a month and it is still growing.

THE CHALLENGE

As already said before, Pringles stopped coming up with new flavors so logically they prevented being interesting for new potential customers and people stopped buying them even though there are plenty of favorite flavors.

The need of coming with something new was bigger and bigger day by day. Another problem was that according to our study a lot of people feel uncomfortable with the ingredients used for the chips production. Even more when their kids ask to buy Pringles. Therefore the new line Pringles Junior had to come up with completely new product concept.

SOLUTION

Pringles solved its problems by very simple but sophisticated concept. Once one target audience wasn't enough they added a new one. While they are both closely connected together but one of them - adults, can still work separately as an independent audience.

The important part of the solution are the new ingredients used for a production of this line. They are all organic and healthy so parents don't have to worry about their children to get fat. At the same time the taste remained almost the same, so kids are unable to recognize the difference. Another great thing is that the new packaging is adapted especially for children and their tiny hands so they can always reach their desired potato chip in the can.

RESULTS

- Sales in certain grocery stores increased by 60% within a month.

- Children's excitement about the whole Pringles Junior experience is trending now on Twitter with a worldwide hashtag #WeLovePringlesJunior.

- Even though it is a brand new campaign, the costs of marketing were lower by 10% than launching any other Pringles campaigns.

Let me just show you one of our customer's thoughts about Pringles Junior when shopping at our store:

Since Pringles Junior is out, my kids always go grocery shopping with me because they know that I say yes if they ask me to buy a few cans of Pringles. And furthermore, they want more than just Pringles! They want ice-cream, snacks, chocolate, cookies etc. so I always spend around \$25 more than normally when I go shopping alone. But I am happy as long as they are so I don't care about those 25 bucks.

- Christina Smith
Store manager at Target

Practicum

Practicum is not an ordinary class. It works more like a study hall. You just stay in the classroom with your classmates and you can work on your projects. Then there is required to be part of few field trips to museums in LA and also to attend few workshops of your choice, how cool! I did screen printing and oil painting but I didn't have a chance to attend more because of corona virus :(I also went to one museum only in Downtown LA and it wasn't that great but after the visit we just explored the downtown and that was great!



Academic Experience

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

The communication with school was very smooth and they were always willing to help and deliver the best answer with solving my problem.

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

I think that the overall system of the classes was very good, although every class requires a lot of preparation and discipline. Sometimes it felt like it was really too much to get everything ready but I always managed it eventually. I think it was rewarding in every direction. I learned how to manage my time to prepare everything for each class, how to work on iterations and keep making changes and trying different ideas. I learned to talk about my ideas more thanks to the teacher's feedback and also to listening to others students talking about their works. The most rewarding classes for me were Typography, CommStudio, Illustration and Copywriting.

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

How I said above, unfortunately the History class didn't give me what I really expected. Also the homework from Typography class and CommStudio was sometimes too much, even unnecessary I would say.

4) What classes would you advice other KEA students going to the receiving school to choose or not to choose?

Definitely take Typography and CommStudio because I think that these two are a requirement anyways, but it has helped me the most to improve as a graphic designer. If you like drawing and you want to make your experience more diverse then I definitely recommend the Scientific illustration (there are more illustration classes you can choose from I think so you don't have to choose this one in particular). Copywriting was definitely helpful as an extra bonus for improving your skills as a professional graphic designer so if you feel you lack in that subject, then go for it! Practicum might be mandatory too, I am not sure, but it was nice and relaxing time!

Cultural/Personal Experience

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

I must say it was the best experience in my life! I think I was very lucky with my roommates because I experienced the most thanks to them. Honestly, I didn't find any friend at school except another exchange student from Canada but we only had two classes together...I was a bit sad about it because I felt a bit lonely in the classroom. Those students have been classmates since their freshman year and they already knew each other very well so they didn't really try to find a new friend and talk to me. Also, I expected that there will be most of the students from USA but the majority of them were Asians and what surprised me was that they couldn't speak English that well. And I expected to talk to Americans so my English would improve, I guess your goal might be the same. So fortunately, I was lucky to live with Americans and got to learn some new words and phrases and I could also see more from their culture which was amazing!

Some challenges may come in grocery stores when you try to find some ingredients you are used to from home. Or the groceries are too expensive. The USA is expensive in general, from living expenses to buying food and supplies for school. You also have to count with paying for public transport/Uber/Lyft to get to school. I was so lucky that I lived 25 mins by walk from school so I saved a lot of money thanks to that.

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

Absolutely the most awesome thing I've done in LA was surfing! I took some lessons in Venice Beach and then I just went surfing with my roommates regularly. Another great thing I was able to do despite the global pandemic a lot of hiking (in Malibu hills, to Hollywood sign, somewhere out of LA, ...). I also had a chance to explore the exotic part of the USA - I went to Maui, Hawaii during my spring break for a week and that was absolutely the best of the best. Fortunately, it was right before the whole corona virus chaos. I suggest to use that break for traveling out of LA.

Another cool thing was that it was my birthday in the end of January so they prepared a party for me and we went out so they also showed me the real LA night life.

Sometimes we also went just for a drive and they drove me across the most beautiful parts of LA with all the amazing houses and villas where the rich and famous people live! I think I found my dream house haha!



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

USA finances

WHAT	\$
NOVEMBER - JANUARY	
• flight tickets	3800 DKK
+ overweight bag +	340 DKK
• VISA fee (350\$)	2424 DKK
→ visa delivery	95 DKK
→ embassy fee (140\$)	1100 DKK
• Forex Bank - USD exchange	4530 DKK
• 1. rent (570\$)	3800 DKK
• Lyft (10,32\$)	74 DKK
• Mint mobile (89\$)	563 DKK
• Ralph's - groceries (35\$)	245 DKK
• 2x Lyft (2x 55\$)	78 DKK
• 6x bus ticket	59 DKK
• Chipotle (11,7\$)	80 DKK
• cafe & pastry (16\$)	110 DKK
• VS & PINK (50\$)	350 DKK
• Amazon Fresh (56\$)	395 DKK
• 3x food at school (15\$)	90 DKK
• 2x Lime scooter (6\$)	44 DKK
• Costco (17\$)	120 DKK
• Art supplies (43\$)	300 DKK
• Art supplies (37\$)	258 DKK
• Ralph's	180 DKK
• KFC (6\$)	40 DKK
• travel insurance from Czech Republic	827 DKK
• Pier Burger	100 DKK
• VS & Pink	245 DKK
• Surfing lesson (2hrs.)	314 DKK
• important	
• public transport • groceries	
FEBRUARY	
• Amazon Food (45\$)	306 DKK
• school food in cafeteria	43 DKK
• 5x bus ticket	43 DKK
• breakfast in restaurant	98 DKK
• dinner in Venice Beach	124 DKK
• Ralph's (39\$)	268 DKK
• school food in cafeteria	36 DKK
Nov-Jan expenses: 14.560 DKK	

I advice to make sure you will be good with your finances because it really isn't cheap. I don't wanna say it was extremely expensive but there might be some things that you didn't expect and you have to pay for them. I will attach here my finances overview from the first month of my stay in LA to give you the idea of how much I spent on things there. I recommend to apply for a scholarship from **Nordea Fonden**. You are required to write two letters in Danish and also fill up the form in Danish, but I am sure that your Danish friends will help you with that the same as my friends did! It is worth it. I received 10,000DKK for the semester and it almost covered the rent for two months in LA!

I bought my flight tickets with SAS and I can't say I was satisfied with that. They didn't even let me bring my backpack on a plane even though I didn't have the cheapest economy class! I bought it in November and it was pretty cheap. It cost 3800DKK but I had to pay 340DKK extra for the backpack at the airport. However, due to the corona virus, my flight back home

was canceled and I had to buy a new ticket with Delta for \$590... I'm still waiting for the refund from SAS for my returning flight.

I recommend to start searching for the housing in advance but also don't rush and make sure it is not a scam! It is very common for LA that scams are listed on FB or Craigslist. Join a lot of groups on FB like Los Angeles Housing and Living etc. and make sure those people don't lie. NEVER send money before your arrival and ALWAYS videocall with the landlord or person subleasing their room! This part of the process is the most difficult and important one. The school has a special page on their website about housing but I think it is too expensive. They don't help you finding the housing besides that page... Also make sure you fill out the form for VISA correctly and that you make an appointment in time. I had it on 16th of December and it was alright.

The school will require from you to send them your bank statement to prove you have enough finances for the semester. It has to be an official letter from the bank written in English with the amount in USD (I think it must be around \$12,000) and you can provide more bank statements from different bank accounts - for example yours, your mom's and dad's.

Another thing you should know is to have prepared a paper confirming what your travel health insurance covers - if you have one from your home (they have the requirements to waive the school's insurance on their website - <https://www.otis.edu/student-health-wellness-center/waiving-health-insurance>), otherwise you have to pay for the school's health insurance which is \$1,200 !

They will also ask you to provide your immunization record translated to English (it is enough if you take pictures of your record with specific vaccines they ask for and translate it by yourself).

Practical Experience

1. How was the application process?

a. What did KEA help you with?

b. What help did you receive from your school abroad?

The application process was very smooth thanks to the best exchange coordinator Hanne! Anytime I had some issue, she was always willing to help and she always solved it. Otis wasn't really involved in that process but it takes them some time to send you the acceptance letter but Hanne pushed them a little bit so they sent it pretty early (the end of October). Right after that it was all on me to take care of VISA and the other duties.

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

a. How helpful was the receiving school in this process?

I don't think so. If I had a question I asked someone at school and they would always help me. I really can't remember any huge issue I struggles with.

3. Where did you live?

a. Was it difficult to find accommodation? b. Was it expensive?

I lived very close to the school and also to the bus station. I lived in Playa Vista in The Ventana Apartments. It really was difficult to find the housing for me and I started early (in the first half of November). However, I found my place on 25th of December !! And before that, there were 2 or 3 times I thought I really found something but the people eventually told me they found someone else who can stay longer, etc. In the end, I couldn't be happier with any other place, this was the best place I could find!

I joined a lot of FB groups and I was literally checking it out every day. It is a good idea to turn on notifications for posts in those groups so you always see if someone posted something. Also look into a Marketplace on FB - that's where I eventually found mine. I shared a room with another girl in a big apartment where other 3 people lived. One of them had a private room and the others shared too. All young people in my age (around 22) - some of them students of Loyola Uni and some of them working people. The sharing was really okay so don't be scared about that. I know it really depends on the people you share with but if you videocall with them first I believe it should be fine! I paid \$750 for that spot.



4. What kind of expenses did you have in general?

a. Did you spend more or less money than you budgeted with?

I think I mentioned it above in a pretty detailed description and I believe that the picture I attached will help you to imagine that pretty well! :) And I think I expected to spend less.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions on my Instagram or FaceBook! I also shared some pictures and posted a lot on my story so you can check it out to see what to expect! :)

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