



**Kristine Krog Skovgård**

**kris53m1@stud.kea.dk**

**Otis College of Art & Design spring 22**

**Ricardo Estrada**

**Communication Arts - Graphic Design**



# Introduction

## 1. Where and when did you study abroad?

I went to Otis College of Art & Design in Los Angeles, California for the spring 2022 term. I was away for six months, from early January until late June.

## 2. What KEA program did you attend at the time?

I am studying Multimedia design

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

At Otis I studied graphic design. Specifically, I was enrolled in their Communication Arts program, with emphasis on graphic design. I was enrolled as a sophomore and joined the regular students on their 4th semester. My classes were as follows...

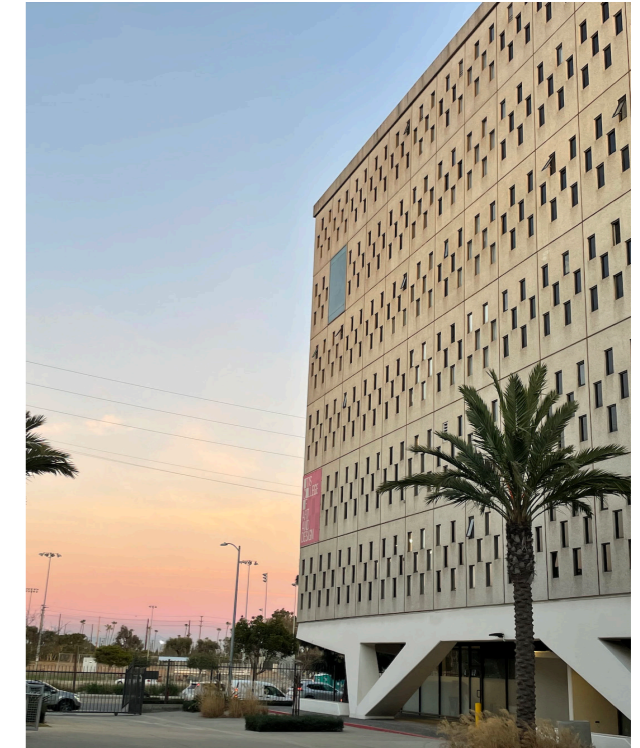
### Communication Studio II

- It's hard to say what comm studio is about as it's a very broad class. We made our own flags/symbols, books as well as playing with motion pieces. It was very fundamental.

### Typography II

- Typography is simply put about typography of all types. In this class we made journals, created our own typography, made a calendar and typeset lengthy books.

# Introduction



### Practicum

- Practicum is a mandatory after school activity, consisting of workshops, field trips and lectures from exciting designers or speakers. Through practicum you will earn extra credits.

### Advanced Imagemaking

- Perhaps one of my favourite classes. I accidentally ended up in this class, since it was a senior class and I was only sophomore level. Advanced imagemaking is about creating images in both analog and digital ways. I created everything from collages, posters, my own photographic filters etc.

### Interactive Branding

- Another higher level class, where it was mostly me and seniors. My smallest class, as we were only five students, making it very intimate and thorough. I learned about fundamentals of design, as we created our own brands, the branding, marketing strategies and motion pieces for it.



# Academic experince

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

Otis faculty is very friendly and helpful, however also busy. You can expect that you might have to repeatedly reach out about an issue sometimes. But not always, it was mostly easy to ask for help.

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

For me it was the electives that really inspired me. My electives were interactive branding and advanced imagemaking. Advanced imagemaking was at first very intimidating as it was a senior class with very talented people, but luckily I quickly saw the advantage, which was that I was so inspired by my fellow students and encouraging professors that I just started to create. I somehow connected with a voice I didn't realize I had and got to explore that on a deeper level. Something I really gained from this class was a piece of advice from one of my professors - more creating, less reflecting.

For my interactive branding class, my teacher was a very talented, established designer, who was passionate and curious which just really set a good tone for a learning environment. The classes were very thorough and originality was always encouraged. I feel like I've really learned to think outside of the box.

**Fun fact: A huge donation was made for my senior classmates by Evan Spiegel and Miranda Kerr to pay off the graduating class' student debts. This made headlines across the US and was just a wonderful gesture.**

Example of an image I made



Los Angeles Times



## California Snapchat co-founder pays off college debt of new graduates at L.A. art and design school



More than 200 graduates of Otis College of Arts and Design react to the surprise announcement Sunday that their college debts will be paid off. (Robert Gauthier / Los Angeles Times)

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# Academic experince

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

I didn't like comm studio II as there was just bad chemistry between the professors and the students. The topics were also not that exciting and I would say it was my least favourite class of them all.

I also sometimes felt overlooked in this class.



Cover of a book I made for Comm Studio II



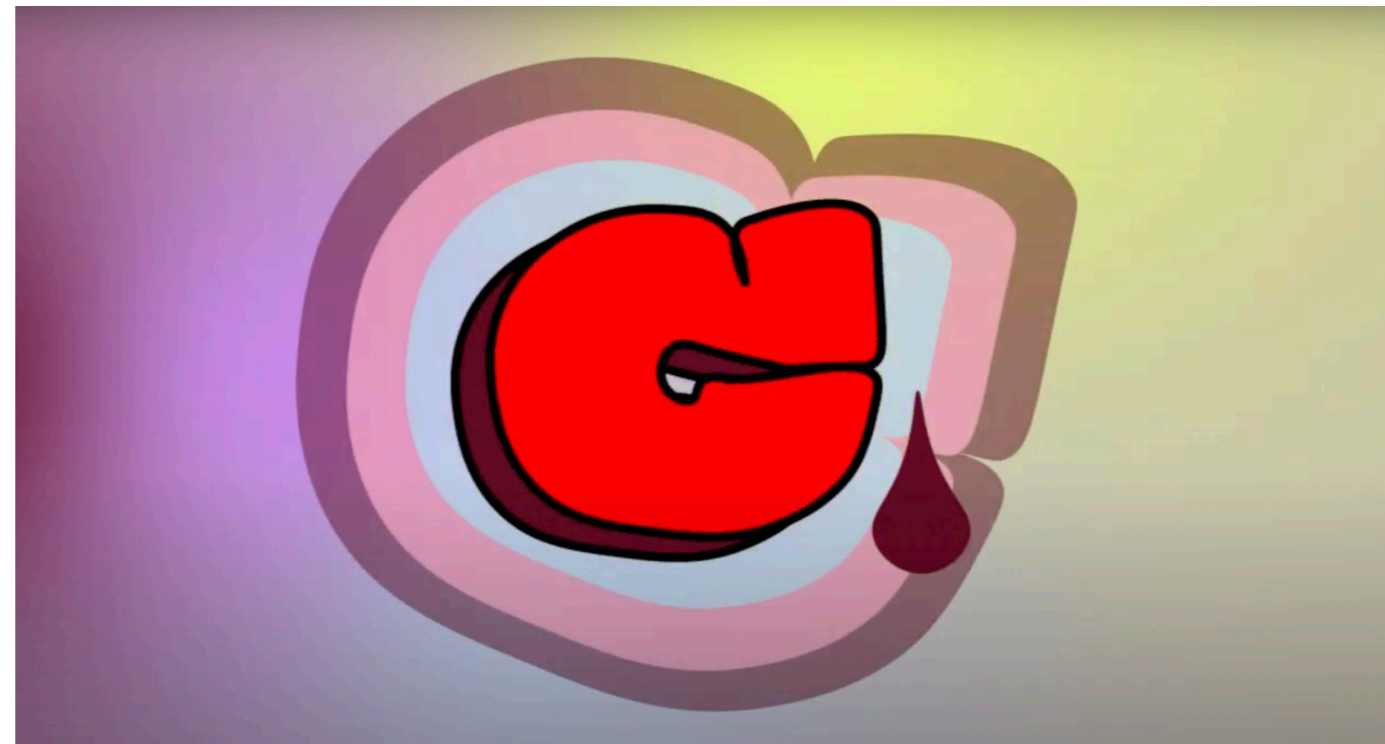
# Academic experince

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

It can be overwhelming to pick your classes just because you'll be new to Otis' system. Make sure to speak to an advisor that can help guide you through it but also don't be scared to go back and look at it yourself and change some classes, as that was what led me to the classes that became my favourite.

I would advice other KEA students to look for something that's relevant for your studies but also don't neglect something that intrigues you. I wish I had also chosen **letterpress**, which is a bookbinding class that takes place in the Otis lab press in the basement. You learn so much and it's a fun skill to have. Also, it's something you can't do just everywhere. Otis is great in the sense as they have almost every topic or curiosity covered.

Otis is great at making you feel welcome!



Still from a motionpiece I made in Interactive design





# Cultural experince

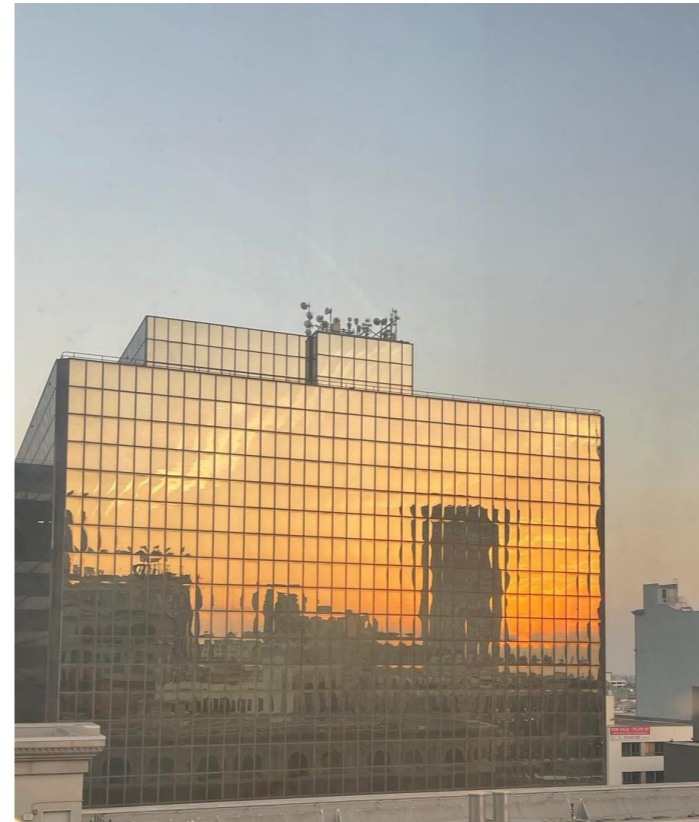
## 1. What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad?

As a young woman, you feel much more unsafe. You are constantly alert and aware - I also made sure to uber/lyft everywhere and didn't really do public transportation.

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

Otis was very helpful with everything. They helped me find housing, the health center also helped me out with some sudden issues and the faculty was overall curious, open-minded and more than happy to share their knowledge with a newbie.

# Cultural experince





# Cultural experince

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

I wouldn't even know where to begin, so let me try and list some briefly

- Queer environment in Weho (drag bars etc, very vibrant + hedonistic)
- Malibu
- Practicum field trips
- Dating (very different from dating in Copenhagen)
- Silver lake
- I joined the facebook group 'Danes in LA' where I befriended some Danish girls which led to a lot of fun experiences
- Disneyland! Truly a magical place.
- San Diego!



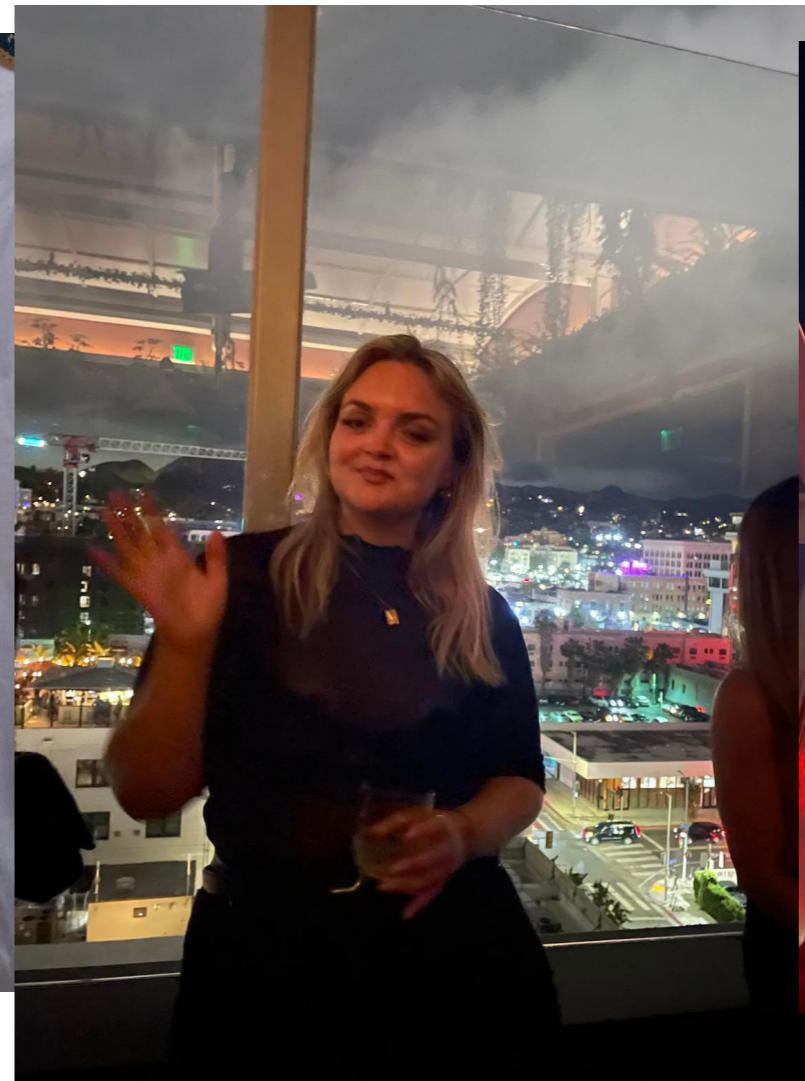
# Cultural experince

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

Prepare for a crazy, chaotic city where everything will turn out even crazier than expected. Take in the good experiences with the bad and be ready to take care of yourself. Stay friendly and curious - other exchange/international students were the closest friends I made. Maybe make a list of things you want to experience - LA is so huge, you can live there your whole life and still have something to explore.

My favourite areas were Playa Vista (close to Otis), Manhattan Beach, Downtown fashion district, Venice, Malibu, Weho, Melrose, Silverlake, Echo Park.

There are a lot of cool schools in LA, you can also meet other college/uni students from loads of other schools, like FIDM, UCLA, LMU etc.





# Practical experience

## 1. How was the application process?

Mine was a mess from start to finish. Sometimes Otis would be quite late with their replies and I struggled a lot to even get a visa appointment. I ended up not getting a Visa in time and had to attend the following semester instead. Very bad luck. Make sure you stay on top of things, because you can't always expect it from others.

### a. What did KEA help you with?

My advisor/coordinator, Anne, was very helpful and followed along every step of the way. Definitely ask your assigned coordinator for help if you get overwhelmed.

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

Otis were very helpful with getting me settled and helped out with all my questions regarding practical concerns. They helped me housing and doctor visits, etc.

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

Yes I struggled to find housing, since I kept getting rejected by potential apartments - finally I contacted Otis and they set me up in their housing, right next to campus.



# Practical experience

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

Otis were very helpful with getting me settled in LA.

## 3. Where did you live?

Park west apartments right next to Campus. Not the best place but it was easy with school.

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

It was both difficult and expensive. Make sure to find accommodation before you leave for LA.

## 4. What kind of expenses did you have in general? a. Did you spend more or less money than you budgeted with?

Spend much more money than anticipated and took an SU-lån. My biggest expenses were food and transportation. You can definitely save on both but I was fond of takeout and didn't have a car, so I had to Uber/lyft everywhere.



# Conclusion

I would say my expectations were definitely met - I will also be grateful for having my six months in California for the rest of my life. At Otis they encourage you to find a voice you didn't realize you had and the amount of stuff I've learned is beyond what I imagined. It's hard work of course and it can be very intimidating but you must not be afraid to go for the big fish. I'm so happy to look back and say that this past semester and full experience of living in Los Angeles has more than exceeded my expectations. It fully got me outside my comfort zone and I wouldn't go without this experience. I'm a better student, I've gained a fresh perspective and I've discovered a side of myself that was hidden away. Even if it scares you, I highly encourage you to try and go for it! You might surprise yourself :)

