

EXCHANGE REPORT

by

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Host Institution, IED Milano

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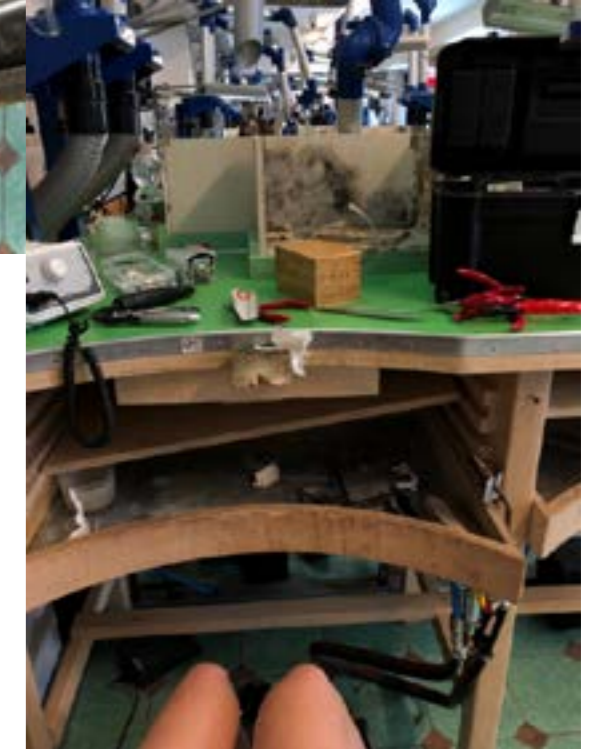
Period of study,  
01.03.2022 - 04.06.2022

## Introduction

My name is Signe Kjær Andersen and in February 2022 - July 2022 I went to Milan, Italy to attend the Jewelry Design Course at IED, Via Bezzacca. I chose to study abroad, because this gave me the opportunity to do two of the things I really love; to travel and make jewelry. As I'm studying to become a jewelry designer I thought that Milan was the perfect city to go to, since it's home to a lot of big and international fashion houses. Also, I have always been in love with Italy in general. My impression of Italy has always been very good and dreamy. My goal with going on exchange was to learn a lot more about jewelry design and the craftsmanship behind. Other than that I considered it a good opportunity to become even more independent and to meet other motivated young people to share my passion and interests with.

## Experiences at the host university

I started attending courses at IED on March 1st. I joined a small class of 5 students from different countries. They all welcomed and included me, which was super nice, as everything was new to me. During my stay I had a lot of different lessons within the jewelry design field, but also some lessons that weren't super relevant to jewelry design. My favorite courses were Fine Jewelry with Maria Grazia Rodi and Public Speaking with Fran Lotti. The two courses were very interesting and taught me a lot. Also, these two teachers were very good at motivating and guiding me and the other students, whereas I feel that most of the other teachers felt the need to do the opposite, unfortunately. Also, some teachers didn't speak English, which made it difficult for me to communicate with them.



Me working at the bench



IED

### Social and cultural experiences

During classes I quickly discovered cultural differences. IED is known for being an international design school, but they are not very openminded to other cultures, despite their own. I have had a lot of uncomfortable experiences as a student at IED and I have been on the verge of collapsing mentally in multiple situations, because I haven't been able to express myself openly. I even tried to contact the coordinators of the school in order to explain how I felt, but they neglected me and my feelings. This was very uncomfortable, because it made me feel totally exposed and alone. In Denmark I'm usually able to use my freedom of speech, but at IED I quickly discovered that you're not allowed to discuss any personal or professional issues about the courses or the teachers. The teachers are always right and if you disagree, you'll end up in trouble. An Italian co-student even told me that it's better to keep your mouth shut, otherwise you'll end up with troubles or you'll even receive a bad grade for the exams. Other than that I have had approximately 8 individual exams, which has been super intense and much more demanding than what I'm used to in Copenhagen. Luckily I managed to do well with the exams, even though this required all my time - and no sleep for almost three weeks.



My beautiful view from my apartment

### Practical experiences

When I first went to Milan it was super difficult to find an affordable place to live, because it's a much more expensive city to live in, even compared to Copenhagen. The first weeks I lived in different Airbnb's that I could afford. Luckily I teamed up with another Danish student and together we found a good, yet expensive apartment close to our university.

I ended up spending a lot more money than first expected. I have been traveling a lot in Italy during my life, but Milan is surprisingly expensive, compared to other Italian cities. This is something I didn't know before moving there. The only thing you really get good value for money is the good Italian coffee! I was also able to find a few really good and affordable restaurants in my neighborhood. Other than that it's super easy to get around by public transportation in Milan. Of course you'll experience a lot more of the city by foot, which I preferred, during my stay in Milan. My personal favorite area is Brera, which is a really chill area close to the center of Milan. It has a lot of good restaurants, cafes and art stores. During Sundays you'll discover a local market with secondhand clothes, jewelry, Murano glass and much more! I also really loved Ticinese and Porta Venezia! There is a lot of amazing small spots in these areas.

## Conclusion

To the exchange students to be, I would like to say that studying abroad is a really good opportunity to travel and study at the same time. To me it has been a journey of a lot of different things, mostly personally. I don't think I have realized yet how much knowledge and experience I have gained from my stay. The Italian education system that I have been experiencing has been very unstable and disorganized, compared to what I'm used to in Denmark. It has been super difficult for me to accept how IED is dealing with young students from all over the world. The environment is super stressful, people are struggling with mental issues and IED doesn't take responsibility for their actions. I'm so sad and disappointed with the school. If I had known how this university really worked, I wouldn't have gone there. I hope that you'll choose to go on exchange, but please go to another university. Good luck!