

Exchange Report - Rafael Shergill
Paris College of Art
Autumn 2024



Introduction

1. Where and when did you study abroad?

Paris College of Art (PCA) in Paris, France. From August 2024 to December 2024.

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

Entrepreneurship and Design

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

Project Fundamentals 1 (Interior Design)

This is a very interesting, but abstract class where you learn about the human-senses and how they affect modern architecture. The first half of the semester we week by week went through the five senses, and through different exercises were supposed to extract a single word for every sense. We then made architectural models for the specific self-chosen word (I know, very abstract).



We then started the final project which lasted over 7 weeks, and consisted of designing a library space for the school's terrace. We had to make plan-drawings, several sections, and lastly a model, all in 1:50 scale. Compared to the first half of the semester, the last half was very technical and literal. This class was very time-consuming and became a little expensive, as you had to bring all your own materials.



Portfolio Development and Professional Identity (Communication Design)

This class is all about developing your portfolio and learning about how to present yourself professionally (as in the name). It was a very inductive class, where we first had to make a digital portfolio, then a website and a printed book with our works. This was my most time-consuming class, as the teacher expected a lot, but also because layout-work and photo-editing generally takes a long time. The classes were at times very harsh, as we had “critiques and feedback” of the work we had done since last class every following class, and teacher was VERY direct. At the same time, she really taught us about how harsh the creative industry can be.

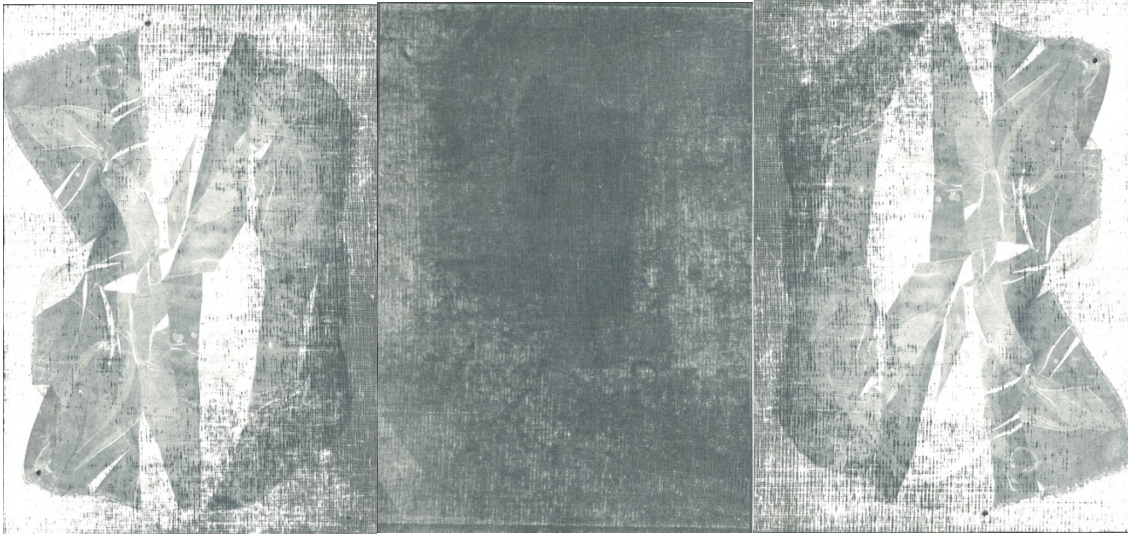


I made the printed piece using a RISO-printer.

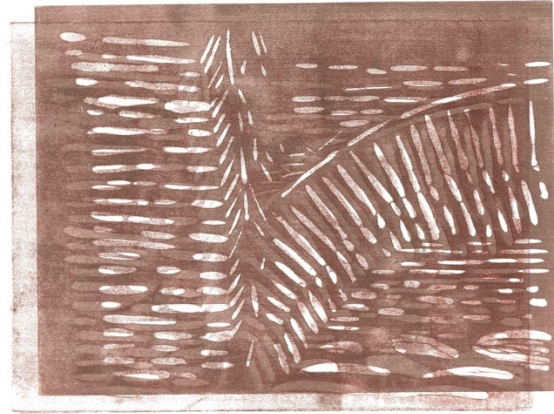
Print Matters: Introduction (Fine Arts)

This class is a printing class for beginners, where you learn the basics of manual printmaking using a traditional printing press. We explored several printing methods like monoprint, CMYK-layered print, lino-/woodcut and drypoint. This is a well-structured class where we had assignments due for each week. The class is a lot of work – the teacher expects that we work 6 hours in the studio out of class every week, but it's very fun work and instructive. I personally did not work THAT much in this class, but that was also clear in some of my prints, compared to other peers.

Monoprint:



Woodcut:



CMYK-print (Magenta layer):

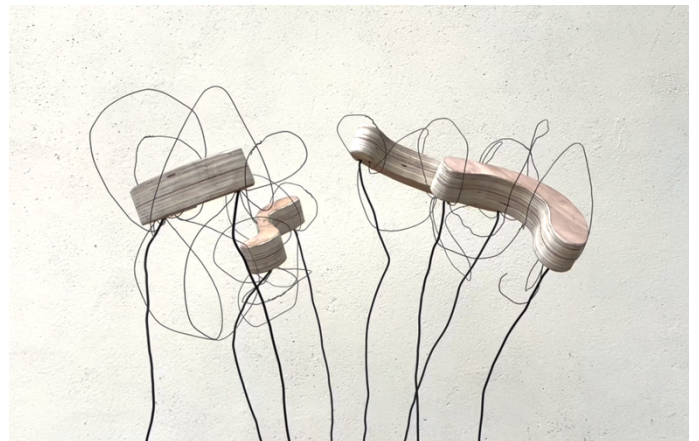


Block print on textile:



Sculpture (Fine Arts)

This class is very abstract and free. Even though it's called "sculpture" we could also paint, make videos, take pictures etc. We usually got an assignment, then had a couple of weeks to make a sculpture piece. There are very few inductions - you really just had to start somewhere with your ideas. The teacher is very French, and can seem stuck up sometimes, but I really liked him at the end as he was very helpful and knowledgeable. He really wanted to push me to have a more free and artistic approach to making sculptures (as I usually have more of a design approach).



Multimedia Textiles (Fine Arts)

This was a very fun and interesting class where we made art using textiles. We only had two major projects in this class, which meant you could spend more time on each project. The first 4 weeks we focused on embroidery, then the last 8 consisted of work for the final project. The final project was creating an art piece based on a photo. Occasionally we did fieldtrips to galleries or museums showing textile artists. It's a very open class where you basically can do whatever you want, as long as you show progress. The teacher is super cute and its very clear she really wants every student to succeed.



Academic Experience

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

PCA was very helpful when choosing classes. They even offered to arrange an online-meeting if I had any questions etc. The “biggest” issue was getting every class accepted by KEA. There are so many cool options you can choose at PCA, but at least half of the classes you choose have to be “similar” to the classes KEA offers. The good thing with being a visiting student at PCA is that you can choose classes in every department. I was officially in the “communication design” department, but had most of my classes outside the department.

Since the school is so small, they really follow up every student and you can get very close with your teachers. In most of my classes we were between 5-10 students. You really have the chance to work more practically and creatively, compared to KEA.

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

I found most of my classes rewarding. They were all very different from each other, which meant I had lot of variation during the week. All my teachers were very knowledgeable and really wanted every student to succeed. However, if I had to choose two, I would choose Portfolio Development and Sculpture.

Portfolio class really forced me to do a lot of work I knew had to do at one point. It was also more motivating when I received help from a teacher who knew what to focus on. I feel that the teacher also really prepared me for the creative industry and what to expect. Sculpture class was hard at times, as I find it difficult to be more abstract / conceptual. The teacher really helped me open up my mind and to think differently when approaching an assignment. It was also just fun being able to be in the workshop and building stuff every class.

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

I found none of my studies not relevant.

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

I would really recommend Portfolio development class. This is think everybody, no matter what area you interested in in the creative field, would benefit from. The other classes I feel like you should really tailor to what your interests are. Rather it be graphic design, art, interior dsign etc.

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 quite smooth. Applying through KEA is very straight forward. After your application has been accepted the host school has an application page online where it is written everything you need to apply. Luckily you have quite a bit of time for this, as you both have to send in a portfolio of your previous work and undergo an interview. This seems kind off intimidating, but they are very nice and honestly, the bar isn't that high.

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

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

I had zero issues with the school. Everything went as planned. Though if you are unhappy with any of your classes you have the possibility to change within the first two weeks. As mentioned, we did have problems with our apartment (bug infestation), but this got resolved fairly well. We were put up in another flat till the issue was fixed. I've heard that this problem sadly is quite common in Paris, we were just lucky that the landlord was so effective on the issue.

3. Where did you live?

a. **Was it difficult to find accommodation?**

b. **Was it expensive?**

I lived in a studio apartment with my best friend who was also on exchange. It was in the 6th close to Notre-Dame, which means it was VERY touristy and busy. We paid 650euros each, which is quite a lot seeing as we didn't have our own rooms. We also had a lot of problems with the apartment during our stay (like a bug infestation and our lock breaking), but managed to get help relatively fast from our landlord. It just took A LOT of phone calls and e-mails - the French are very slow when it comes to this type of stuff. It is very hard to find apartments / rooms to rent in Paris. We found our apartment through Spotahome.com, which was quite simple, but they are often a bit more expensive.

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

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

Paris is expensive, but it is not that hard to find cheaper options in the city. I didn't really set a budget for this exchange, but ended up using a lot more money than I expected (as I think is normal for studying abroad). Generally, grocery stores are a bit more expensive here, but eating out and drinking is quite the same as in Copenhagen (if you find the right places). Asian food is exceptionally cheap and good here!

5. What kind of income did you have during your exchange?

- a. **Did you receive SU and/or Erasmus**
- b. **Did you apply for any grants and did you receive any?**

I only received SU from the Norwegian state (as I am Norwegian). The school is not part of the Erasmus program, which means that you are not eligible for an Erasmus scholarship. Keep in mind that the school is paid (5500 euros), which I luckily also got a loan for from the Norwegian state. I tried applying for grants, but had a hard time finding some that I was eligible for, as most of them have very specific requirements.

Cultural/Personal Experience

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

I did not really get a lot of “culture shock” when moving to Paris. The only thing I was a bit bothered by was just how crowded and busy the city feels. It is so much bigger than any city I’ve lived in before, and there are so many people. Tourists and locals fill the streets, the metro, restaurants, bars and you never really get time for yourself. For me it became quite stressful at times, especially when school also was a lot of work. I was never really able to relax completely. However, I do think us living in a very busy area has a lot to do with it. We lived in one of the most touristy centers of Paris. I really enjoyed being in the more lowkey “trendy” areas like the 10th/11th.

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

Paris is a beautiful city with so much to do. There are so many cool bars, restaurants, stores, galleries to see. Every other street you walk past a beautiful old monument appears. Most museums are free for EU-residents under 26 – a super opportunity! Paris is a lot more diverse than any Scandinavian city I’ve been in, which means there are so many interesting people you can meet. All in all, just a lot of good moments that really made the whole stay amazing.

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

I really recommend PCA for those who want to work more creatively and hands-on than what KEA can offer – especially if you have an interest within art or design. If you are looking for a normal “erasmus exchange” with a lot of free time and being able to chill in the city - I would not recommend this school! The teachers expect A LOT of work. Most weeks I was at school from 9-17 Monday to Friday. Sometimes we had make-up classes scheduled on Saturdays also. Of course you do not have to work this much, but most critiques are in front of the entire class, and it is often quite clear when someone does not put in any effort into their projects.

I should also mention that the school IS NOT a social school. There are very few intro-events like we have in Denmark. Very few social events during the semester. It was therefore quite hard to get to know people in the start, especially when I had class with most of my peers only once a week. I ended up really only getting one good friend at the school, which for me was enough, as I just spent most of my time with them.