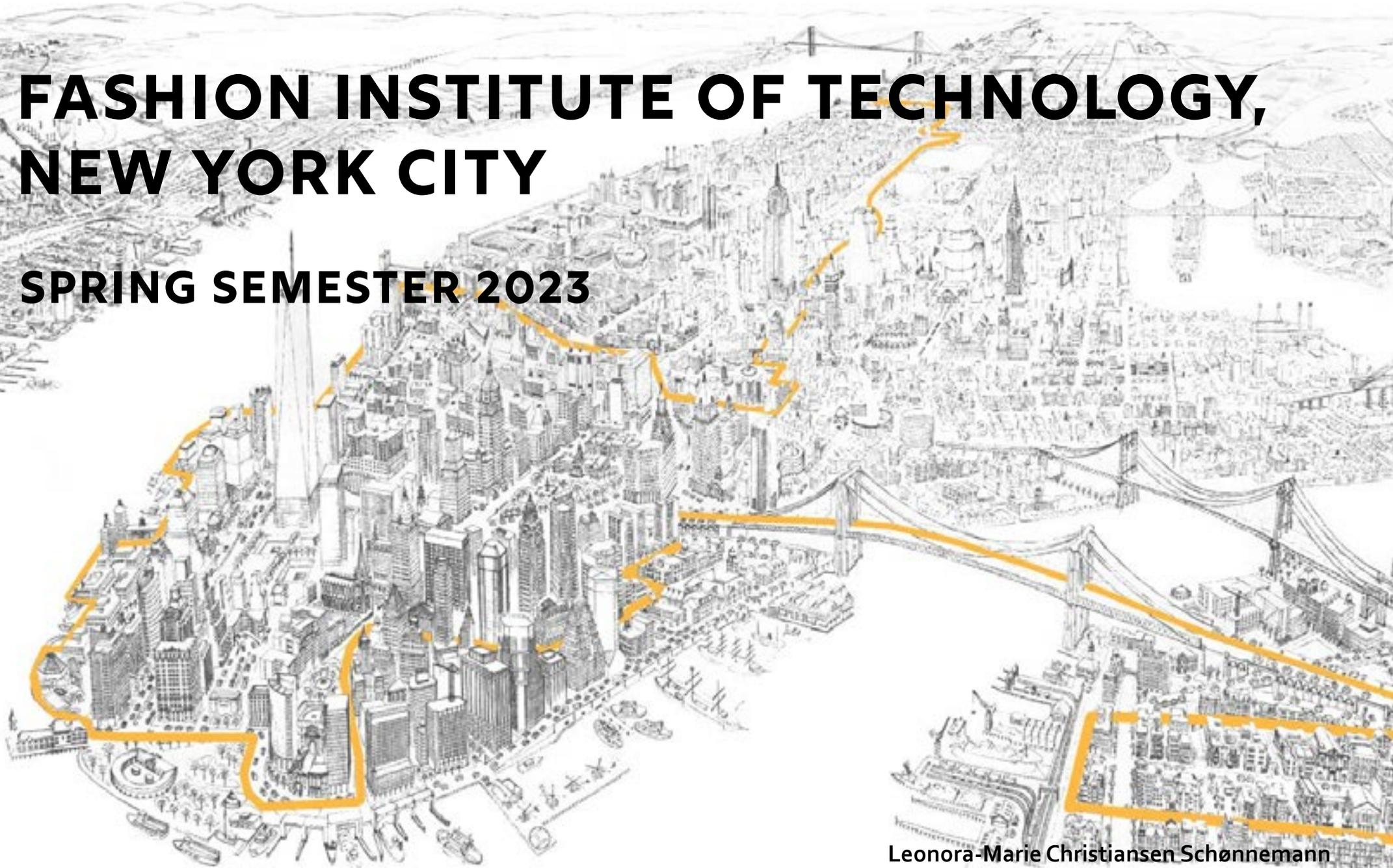


# EXCHANGE REPORT

**FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY,  
NEW YORK CITY**

**SPRING SEMESTER 2023**



# PREFACE

**SENDING SCHOOL** - KEA, Copenhagen School of Design and Technology.

**KEA PROGRAM** - Professionsbachelor, Design & Business, Brand Design, 2022-24.

**RECEIVING SCHOOL** - FIT, Fashion Institute of Technology, Suny.

**FIT PROGRAM** - Direct and Interactive marketing, January - May 2023.

## **COURSES ATTENDED ABROAD -**

- **Direct Marketing Communication, DM433** - Prof. Noelle Sinclair.
- **Workshop in Direct Marketing, DM221** - Prof. Paula Wang.
- **Direct Response Copywriting, DM331** - Prof. Stephen Jankowski.
- **Internet Marketing, DM435** - Prof. George Coppola.

# INTRODUCTION

In September 2022, during my first semester of the top-up program in Design & Business - Brand Design, I was presented with the opportunity to study abroad, an opportunity that soon became a reality and turned out to be one of the most inspiring experiences I have ever had.

Initially, I had doubts about my ability to do a semester abroad as it meant being alone in a new country 3,844.99 miles (6,187.91 km) away from my loved ones. However, I reminded myself about an important value I learned during a previous internship in Stockholm, Sweden, which was encapsulated in the Swedish saying, "Den som vågar vinner," that translates to "He who dares, wins." This saying inspired me not to shy away from challenges due to the fear of failure and to jump right into applying for studying abroad. My first priority was the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York, and second was ISCOM in Paris. Luckily, I got nominated and accepted to FIT.

So here I am, with only one week remaining in my exchange program, in the city that has entranced my heart, seated on a sunny bench in Central Park, taking in the panoramic view of green oak trees surrounded by skyscrapers and reflecting upon the incredible experiences and knowledge that have grown within me. And as I sit here, I come to the conclusion that this is just the beginning of a greater adventure.

# ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE



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

FIT was helpful when it came to choosing my classes and getting settled. About a month before we had to select our courses, I attended a meeting on Microsoft Teams organized by the international coordinators at FIT. They introduced us to the different platforms that FIT students use, which are important for studying at the school. During the meeting, they took us through the step-by-step process of signing up and picking the right classes.

At first, it was a bit challenging to figure out which courses were available for me as an exchange student. I had to reach out to the Registration Office several times before they finally made the necessary adjustments to my profile, allowing me to register for the correct classes. There were so many courses to choose from, offered at different times and on different days, with multiple professors for each course.

DM (Direct Marketing) is a smaller and more specialized degree. As a DM student, I had only 5-6 different courses to choose from within the degree. This made the process of selecting courses a little easier but, unfortunately, also a bit less exciting.

Selecting courses was different from what I was used to in Denmark, where we usually select our main area of study and then choose the courses that interest us the most. In the US, it's a bit different. Students prioritize selecting the professors they prefer, and later on, I realized why this choice is so important. Many professors have their own unique teaching methods, and this makes a significant difference in terms of learning and the overall outcome of their courses.

### What Classes/study experiences did you find the most rewarding? Why?

DM 331 — Direct Response Copywriting and DM 433 — Direct Marketing Communications.

The first one was DM 331 — Direct Response Copywriting. It was like a creative playground for me, where I could let my imagination run wild. We learned how to develop direct marketing copy and design, covering a wide range of mediums like direct mail, catalogs, print ads, radio, TV, and even interactive media. It was an exciting experience to craft persuasive messages and create eye-catching layouts. This class rewarded me with new skills and a deeper understanding of how powerful words can be in marketing. Also the Professor, Stephen Jankowski, made a significant impact on the class and the learning experience. As an inspiring and highly engaging professor, he always incorporated relevant examples from his experience. He ensured active participation and utilized various teaching methods to keep everyone engaged and invested in the subject matter.

The second class I found rewarding was DM 433 — Direct Marketing Communications. This class was like a mix of everything in becoming a marketing expert. Our main task was to create comprehensive business plans and campaigns for major well-known companies. We covered everything from administration and brand hierarchy to marketing plans, sales projections, economy, and in the end presenting the plan to our fellow classmates. We also had a lot of valuable guest speakers that introduced us to their careers and journey to get there. I got the opportunity to be a group leader in one of the projects. So this class not only taught me the ins and outs of direct marketing and how to critically analyze companies but also ignited my entrepreneurial spirit. It was a rewarding experience that gave me confidence to take more responsibility.

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

Personally, I found the class DM435 - Internet Marketing to be the least relevant and valuable to me. The reason for this is that the teaching approach lacked creativity and engagement. The class mostly consisted of monotonous lectures without much interaction. The instructor struggled to captivate our interest as they solely relied on one teaching method without incorporating any variations. Additionally, the instructor failed to create a positive social environment within the class, which hindered the learning experience.

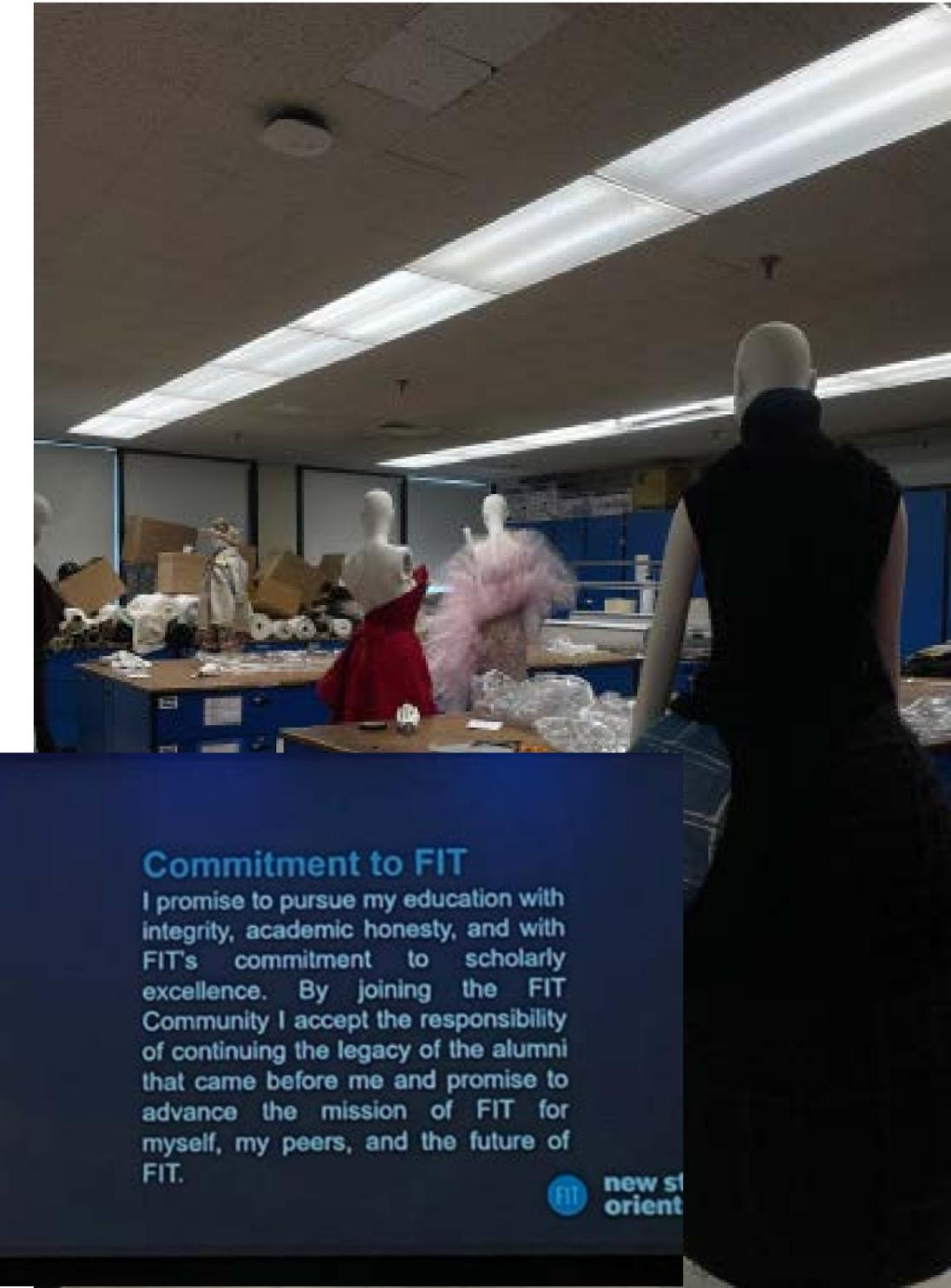
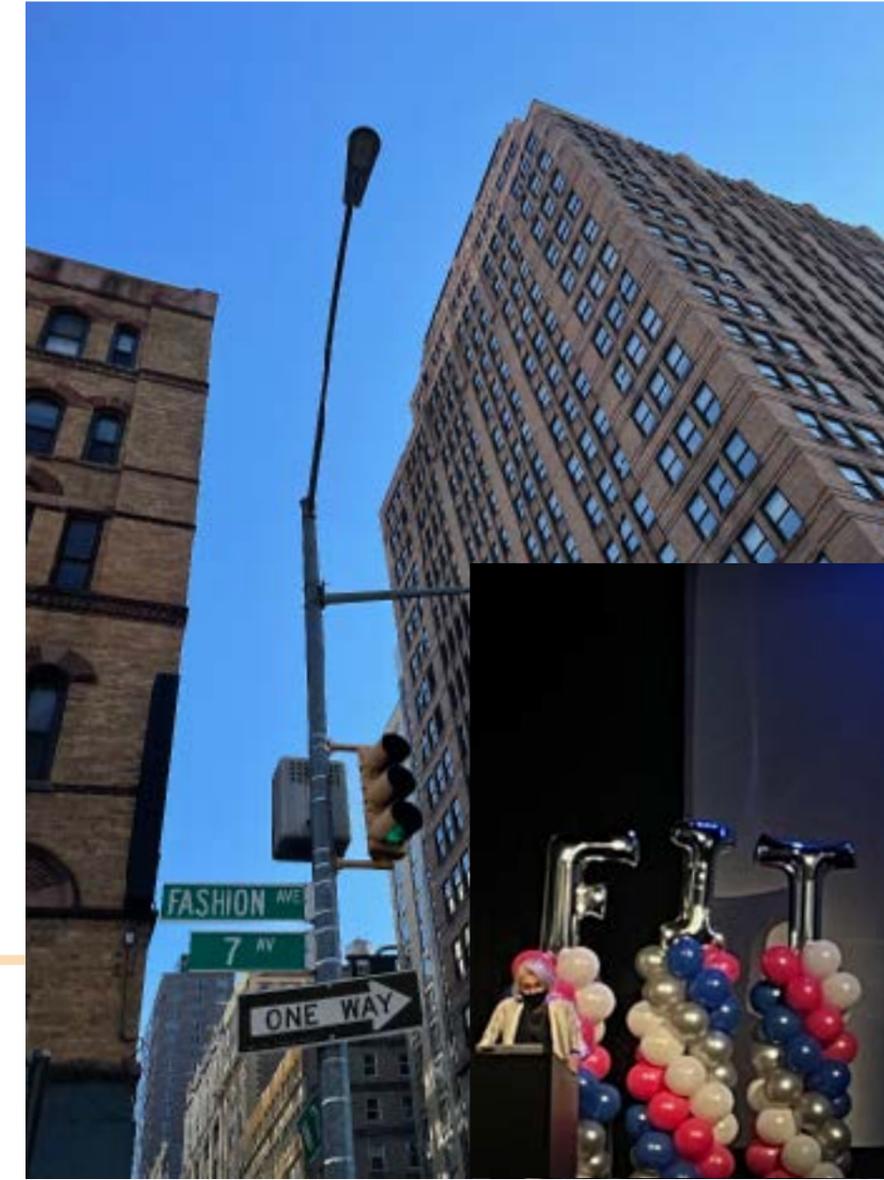
Also I would not recommend classes that are entirely online (referred to as OL) or classes that are split 50% in-person and 50% online (referred to as BL). While it may sound appealing to have more free time and less time spent in the classroom, it can be quite challenging when it comes to group work and addressing project-related questions. Coordinating among four-six group members can be difficult, leading to complications and delays. Being physically present in a class allows for easier collaboration and immediate resolution of any queries or concerns.

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

To choose: I would advise selecting classes that align with your academic program and goals. Look for courses that contribute to your desired skill set and knowledge base. It's generally easier to go with the recommended courses. Additionally, consider choosing earlier classes to have the afternoon free, and try to keep one weekday free from classes to dedicate time to homework and other school-related activities.

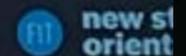
Not to choose: I would recommend avoiding OL (online) or BL (blended) classes, as they can present challenges in terms of coordination and group work. In my experience, the Direct Marketing Communication class (DM433) with Professor Noelle Sinclair was challenging as she didn't fully accommodate exchange students or the challenges we faced being in a different country with different teaching methods. The Workshop in Direct Marketing class (DM221) with Professor Paula Wang was difficult due to a strong foreign accent, making it hard to grasp the content. Internet Marketing (DM435) with Professor George Coppola lacked engagement which made the classes a bit challenging to complete.

But remember, these recommendations are based on my personal experiences and preferences, so it's essential to research and gather input from other students or advisors before you make any decisions.

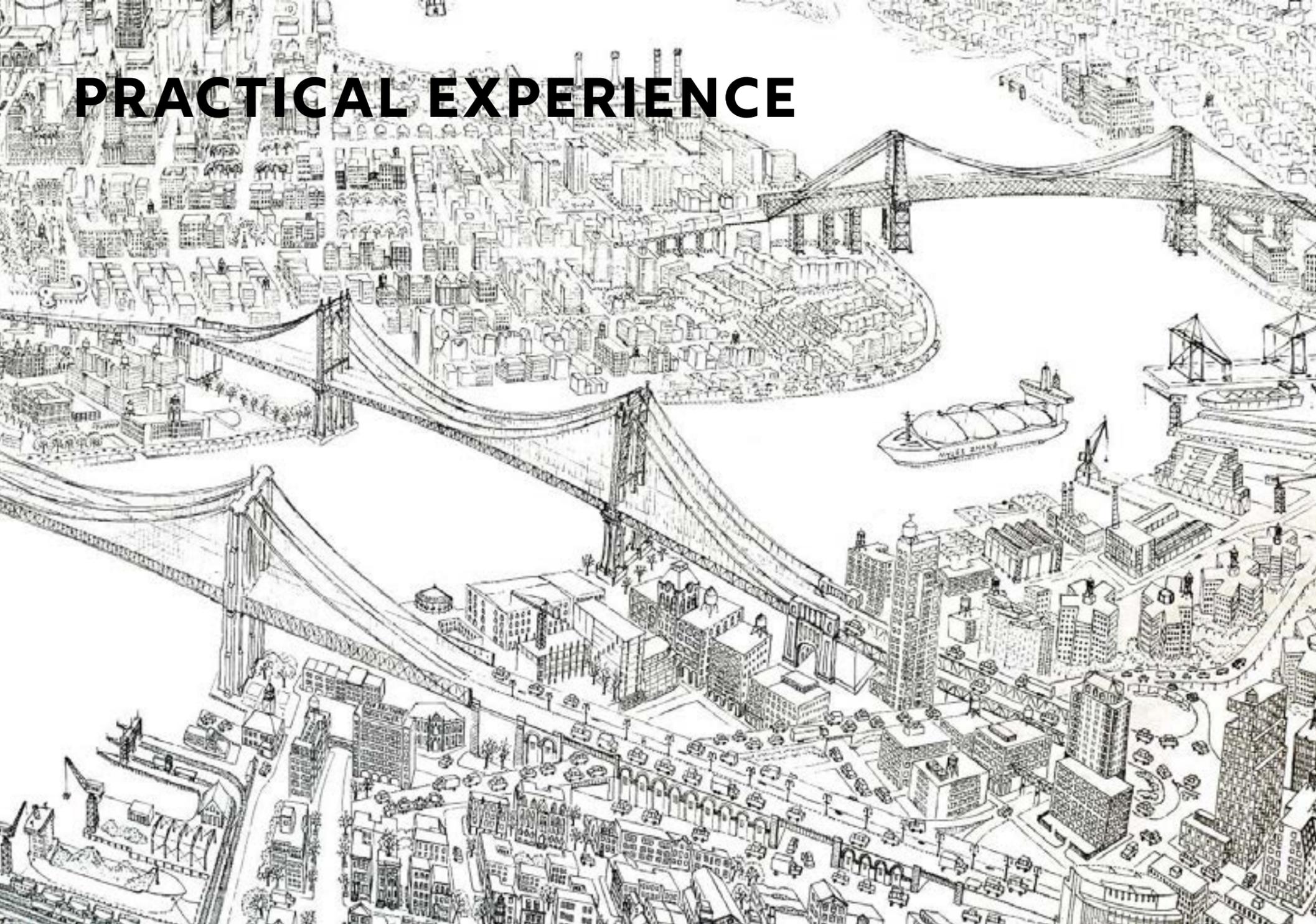


### Commitment to FIT

I promise to pursue my education with integrity, academic honesty, and with FIT's commitment to scholarly excellence. By joining the FIT Community I accept the responsibility of continuing the legacy of the alumni that came before me and promise to advance the mission of FIT for myself, my peers, and the future of FIT.



# PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE



## How Was The Application Process?

The application process to the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) was actually quite straightforward. We utilized the Mobility Online platform from KEA and the MyFIT portal from FIT, where we followed step-by-step instructions and uploaded various documents. Throughout the process, we maintained close contact with our international coordinators from both the sending school and the receiving school. They provided guidance and support, ensuring a smooth and efficient application experience. I utilized FIT Registrar and Help Tech a couple of times, as I experienced some smaller errors with my registration.

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

I did not experience any significant practical difficulties in settling down at my destination. At FIT, we were introduced to the FIT Counseling Center, where we could seek assistance if we encountered any challenges during our stay. The receiving school was helpful in providing resources and support to ensure a smooth transition and address any concerns that may arise during our time there.

**Where did you live? Was it difficult to find accommodation? Was it expensive?**

I lived on Manhattan, Midtown East 40th St, during my stay. Finding accommodation in New York can be quite challenging as the city is known for its competitive rental market. My best advice is to start searching early and explore various resources such as Facebook groups, Instagram, websites like Zillow, StudentHousing.org, AmberStudent.com, and HarringtonHousing.com, as well as reaching out to friends and family.

I ended up booking through Harrington Housing, where I found a hotel room with a small kitchenette and a private bathroom. There were shared kitchens and common areas available as well. While it worked well for me in the short term, having just a small hotel room for a longer stay is not ideal as it limits your space, comfort and socializing. The cost was approximately \$595 per week, resulting in a total rent of \$12,986 for six months.



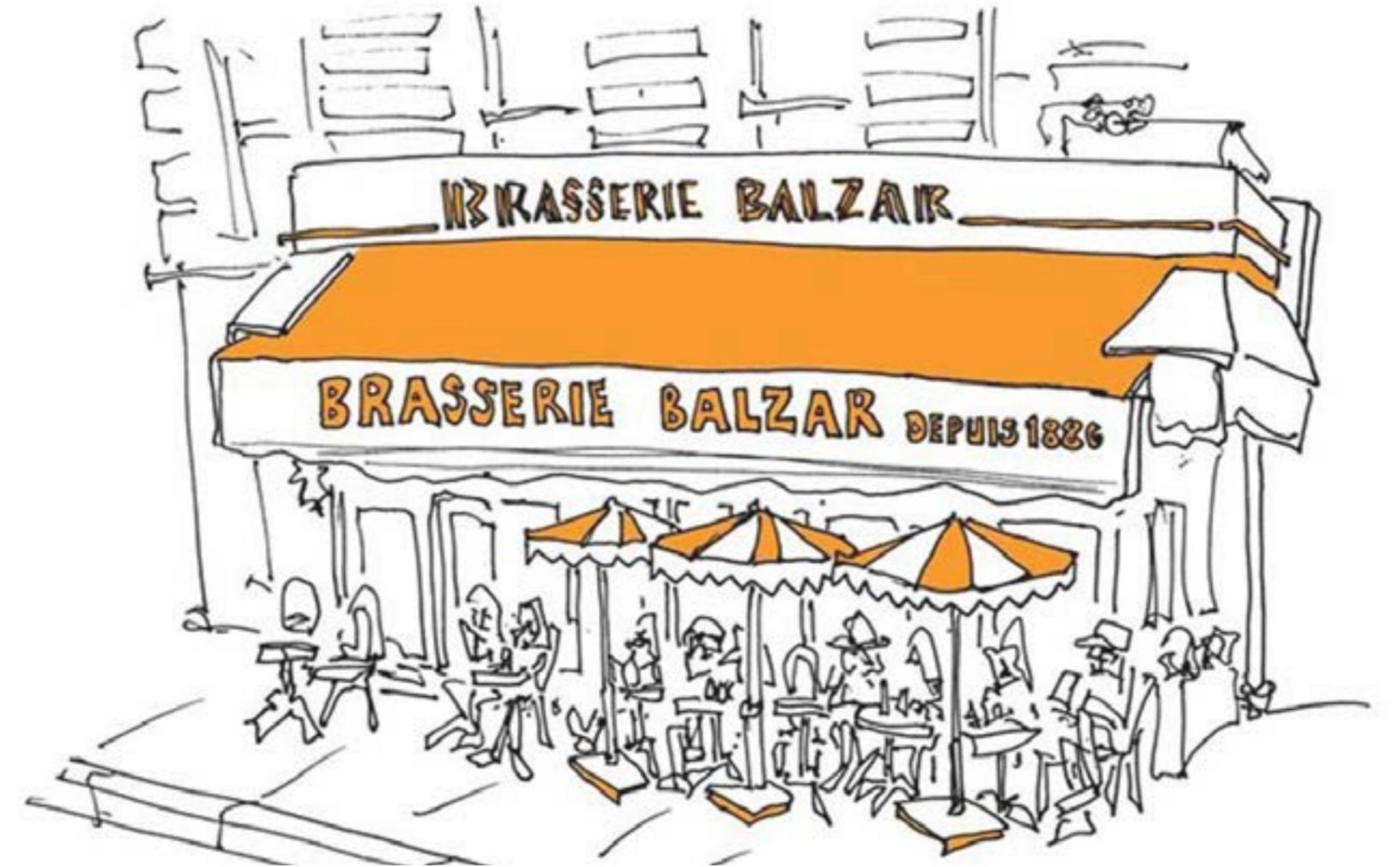
What kind of expenses did you have in general?

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

In general, I had several expenses during my time abroad. These expenses can vary depending on individual lifestyle choices and personal circumstances. I ended up staying within my budget of \$14,000.

Some of my expenses were:

- Books and Supplies \$1,850
- Personal \$1,600
- Transportation/Subway \$1,730
- Phone/Internet \$300
- Travel and health insurance \$2000
- Coffee, Bars & Restaurants \$unknown



# CULTURAL/PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad?

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

I didn't experience significant cultural challenges during my time abroad as New York City is known for being one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world. Instantly, I felt at home and that I fit in among the hundreds of thousands of people from around the world. The challenges I did encounter were mainly related to language barriers and occasional misunderstandings in fast-paced conversations. Additionally, there is a strong focus on ethnicity, race, gender, and pronouns in NYC and the US in general. During the initial days at FIT, we were taught about sex and genders and also gained an understanding of the history of racial segregation in the USA.

Regarding the assistance provided by my receiving school, FIT, was quite helpful in facilitating cultural integration. They organized various events, workshops, and discussions that allowed students to explore different cultures. Additionally, they provided resources and support to address any cultural challenges or questions that arose during our time there. Overall, my receiving school played a supportive role in helping students navigate and understand the cultural aspects of living and studying in New York City.



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

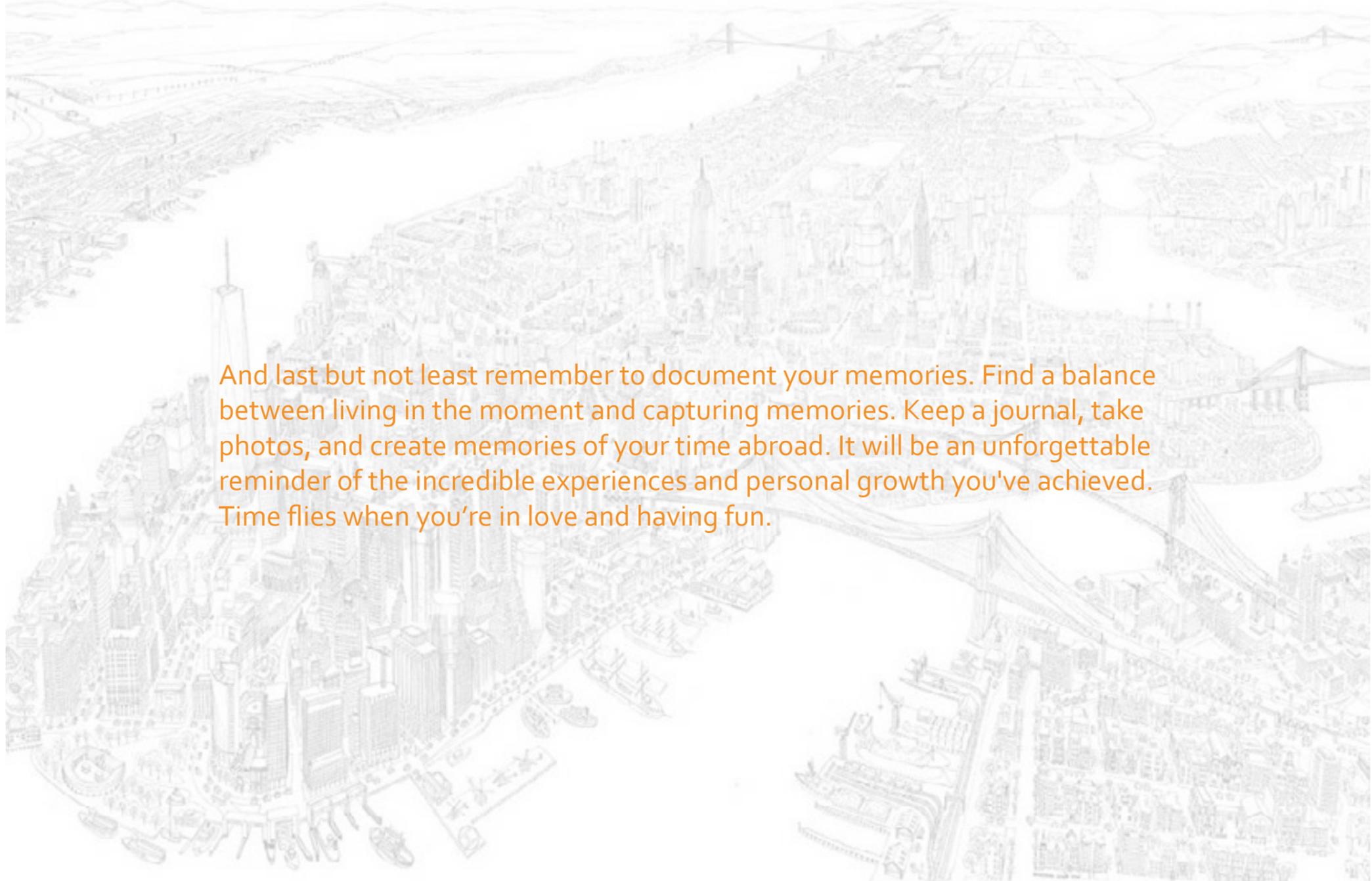
The best cultural and personal experience during my studies abroad in NYC was the incredible diversity of people and cultures I experienced. I made lifelong friends from all over the world, including the UK, Mexico, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Israel, and Germany. We shared our unique backgrounds, traditions, and perspectives, creating a vibrant and enhancing environment. Exploring the city, trying different cuisines, attending cultural (and not-so-cultural) events, exchanging stories and creating lasting memories together. We now share a common dream of reuniting in New York City to continue our adventures and create new memories together. The experience of connecting with people from diverse backgrounds broadened my horizons, fostered understanding, and ignited a sense of wanderlust. It fueled my desire to explore the world and seek out new experiences.



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

I would give these 3 top advises for KEA students going to study abroad:

1. Embrace cultural diversity: Make the most of your time abroad by immersing yourself in different cultures and building connections with people from various backgrounds. Embrace the opportunity to learn from their perspectives and expand your understanding of the world. New York has so many amazing cultures and small communities. Within a five-minute subway ride, you can find yourself immersed in a completely different cultural community, each with its unique traditions, cuisine, and atmosphere.
2. Step out of your comfort zone: Don't be afraid to try new things and explore your surroundings. Take advantage of the city's offerings, attend local events, and engage in activities that interest you. Stepping out of your comfort zone will lead to exciting discoveries and memorable experiences and you meeting a lot of new people. New York is perfect for networking.
3. Be open-minded and adaptable: Understand that there may be cultural differences and be willing to adapt to new environments, traditions, and ways of doing things. Approach situations with an open mind, be respectful of others' perspectives, and embrace the opportunity for personal growth. I came home a lot stronger than when I left.



And last but not least remember to document your memories. Find a balance between living in the moment and capturing memories. Keep a journal, take photos, and create memories of your time abroad. It will be an unforgettable reminder of the incredible experiences and personal growth you've achieved. Time flies when you're in love and having fun.