

EXCHANGE REPORT

By Fie Lauenborg Sund

Host Institution: George Brown College

Host Institution contact person: Ving-Ki Chan

Study period: January 2020 - April 2020

1. Where and when did you study abroad?

- In the spring of 2020 (on my 6th semester) I went on exchange to George Brown College (GBC) in Toronto, Canada, to study their Jewellery Arts program. The Jewellery Arts program at George Brown focuses on goldsmithing techniques and all the aspects within jewellery making, such as filing, soldering, sawing, casting, decorative metal techniques, forging, setting stones etc. At George Brown they always encourage and push their students to work to the highest goldsmithing standards, which I think is very inspiring.
- Due to the corona virus / covid-19 I unfortunately had to leave Toronto approximately 1 month before planned and I finished the courses virtually.

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

- I'm currently studying Jewellery, technology and business at KEA.

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

The classes I chose was:

Industry Skills

In this course students demonstrate skills, precision, speed and fluency while completing projects that address common industry situations such as screw threads, mechanical catches and findings, wire manipulation and assembly, constructed wire settings, constructed hollow objects and advanced chain construction. Through a series of set projects, students advance the skills acquired in Industry Skills 1. An introduction to laser welding expands the technical skill set of the student. (From course description)

Since this class was about precision and the more mechanical part of Jewellery making I found it very challenging, but at the same time very fun and educational. I think this was one of the courses where I learned the most. And also, this class gave me exactly what KEA don't, in terms of the more technical and basics of Jewellery making.

Production Techniques

In Production Techniques Students explore the possibilities and issues relating to the multiple production of jewellery through lecture, project work and discussion. Digital manufacturing (laser cutting), hydraulic die forming, and etching are the processes utilized in this course. Production design strategies, manufacturing strategies, digital manufacturing and sustainable practices are discussed. (From course description)

This class started out with laser cutting which we have already learned at KEA but afterwards we moved on to doing etching in different ways which we later on used for roller printing. Because we got a lot of time to explore and play around with it, I came up with some cool textures that I will take with me and use

at a later time in my career. We also got to play around with the hydraulic die forming and that might be the best part, because you can use it for making hollow formed jewellery in a quick way, and this was really something I didn't know anything about.

Gemsetting II

in Gemsetting we were introduced to pavé, flush, illusion, star settings, irregular settings and fancy claw settings. We also learned how to prepare gravers and speciality tools for gemsetting. In almost every class we had to do some kind of setting on time, and that was pretty hard when you hadn't done any gemsetting before. But it was a very fun experience and I learned a lot by getting thrown into just doing it.

Jewellery Projects B

In Jewellery Projects B students are required to address all aspects of the creation of a piece of jewellery. From idea, to design and through completion the student assumes responsibility for the production of a unique piece of jewellery. Project topics will include function, technique, materials, and design strategy. Topics of importance to the studio goldsmith will be introduced including documentation, working with custom and commission clients; extending a design. (From course description)

Jewellery Design II

In Jewellery design students complete project work focused on series and sets of jewellery, thematic competitions, historical interpretations and material explorations.

This course was a lot about the ideation and the processes of how you get to your design. In the end of every project we did, we had to do a booklet explaining how we had come to the chosen design. In the booklet we went over ideation, research, translation (technical drawings etc.) and refinement.

Academic Experience

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

- The school were very helpful when I was in the process of choosing classes and being there for me at school. They helped me with almost everything I asked for, e.g. when I wanted to skip one course (I had too many courses in the beginning) they helped me choose which one to skip. One thing they however couldn't help me with was arranging housing for the semester.

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

- The most rewarding study experiences for we were to be able to work so much with the craftsmanship. The professors are goldsmiths and I really enjoyed the practical classes.

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

- In opposite to the question above the design course I took were least relevant to me, since I have had a lot of courses like that on KEA. On the other hand, it was also nice to have a course in which I felt that I easily could keep up with the course load.

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

- As outlined above I would highly recommend the practical courses.

Cultural/Personal Experience

What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad?

- Actually, the cultural challenges weren't that great. I have travelled to USA several times before and Toronto is very much an American city. Additionally, I got the opportunity to rent a room in an apartment together with a local girl on my age, which also made me feel at home.
- As I describe later the corona virus / covid-19 pandemic hit whilst I was in Toronto, which of course was very unfortunate, but everything worked out well.
- **How helpful was the receiving school in this process?**
 - I did not consult the school in any issues of this character while being at GBC.

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

- I really enjoyed living in Toronto – the city is amazing. The cultural scene is great as well as restaurants, bars, etc. It is also relatively easy to travel from Copenhagen to Toronto (with a direct flight) which allowed both family and friends to come visit me during my stay in Toronto. The nature around Toronto is great, so it was also a great experience renting a car and drive around in Ontario. Additionally, it is also not very far from New York City (approximately a one-hour flight) – which makes it possible to travel to NYC as well.

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

- I would advice them to plan their stay and make sure to have enough time to also travel around in Ontario and maybe to USA. I would also encourage them to research on which part of the city to live in – also considering that it is a big city so one will appreciate having decent commuting to school.

Practical Experience

1. How was the application process?

- The application process was quite easy, and it followed a very logical website which explained and guided me through the process step-by-step. Additionally, I didn't need any visa or similar, which also was nice.
- **What did KEA help you with?**
 - KEA facilitated the application process and put me in contact with GBC, which was very nice. KEA was "cc'ed" on all my initial correspondence with GBC which also felt very good.
- **What help did you receive from your school abroad?**
 - GBC was also very helpful and provided me with all information needed regarding compulsory insurance (which one need to pay to the school), information about the courses, etc.

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

- No, I had not.
- However, unfortunately the corona virus / covid-19 pandemic hit the world whilst I was in Toronto, resulting in that I needed to leave approximately 1 month before planned, since the school locked down. All classes were then finished virtually.
- **How helpful was the receiving school in this process?**
 - The school and the individual teachers were very nice in general and took good care of me in all the uncertainty that arise when the school were locked down. Several teachers reached out to me directly to make sure I was ok.
 - When the courses were finished virtually, they also showed me flexibility in terms of some deadlines etc., considering the time zone difference between Denmark and Toronto.

3. Where did you live?

- I lived in Queen Street East / Broadview which is a very nice place. Not fancy or anything but with plenty of restaurants / bars / cafeés around. Going around in the city is easy by tram / metro and Uber.
- **Was it difficult to find accommodation?**
 - No, I think it was rather easy – however the school couldn't help me but provided me with links to a couple of websites where I could try to find accommodation (which I did). However (just like home), be observant so you don't get frauded.
- **Was it expensive?**
 - I would say housing is quite expensive (similar to Copenhagen) – I paid around what corresponds to DKK 6,000 a month for a room in a newly built apartment. However, I think restaurants / bars / cafeés etc. was cheaper than home.

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

- Basically, everything I have at home (housing, telephone, public transportation, etc.) and in addition to that I was required to have an insurance through the school as well as an extra insurance from my Danish insurance company. We were also required to pay for all materials used in class.
- **Did you spend more or less money than you budgeted with?**
 - I probably spent a bit more than budgeted. I think that was mainly because I was visited by friends and family 3 times, and during the visits we travelled around in Ontario and also visited New York City, etc.