

The choice for the Royal Academy of Arts (Koninklijke Academie van Beeldende Kunsten (KABK)) in Den Haag was simply based on my interest in their culture and design attitude. Besides, it is the oldest art academy in the Netherlands and the city is directly located at the sea. Dutch Design is worldwide known and very different from the course content you are learning here, so this seemed to me also a perfect base to enhance my experience.

The application process for my studies was not easy, but also very interesting, because you can be sure if you will be accepted by them you belong there and this helps you a lot during the time there.

The first days were quite easy ones, because you first get an introduction about the academy and how things work there. You get a tour through a labyrinth of corridors and see all the different workshops and administration offices, but I easily got used to it. Also, there is going to be a little city tour around the KABK because the academy is located very centrally between the central station and Binnenhof.

A great aspect which I did not mention yet is cycling. Everywhere you want to go you cycle. You definitely have to get used to it, especially to the Dutch "Fiets" but it is totally worth it. It is the most simple way and the cycle paths are huge so you won't have a problem at all. Besides it is also the best way to explore The Hague.

From the first day on there have been always exhibitions or any occasions to meet new people from the KABK, but also you get an impression how they create, design, paint etc., but you also gain a lot of inspiration for your courses there, which you will definitely need.

The first weeks have nothing in common with the introduction because you get a short one like everyone else and you are supposed to catch up with the other students in your class and understand what the assignments are about. If you are struggling both students and teachers are willing to help you. The situation that you have got a own studio with your fellow students, which provides you with a steady workspace helps therefore a lot and I did appreciate it a lot during my time there, also as a place to exchange ideas. Besides, this is also the room where the lectures take place. By the way it is mandatory to participate the classes every week and it is indeed very helpful to stay on track through the feedback you get.

After the first weeks everything seems easier. You speak the first words Dutch, your English improved from B to C and you managed to find some new friends with who you are hanging out together if you are not too busy studying.

Also, it will be easier to communicate with your teacher, because you have been used to their assignments and attitude and know therefore what is important to them in your presentations.

Around midterms you may start to struggle and ask yourself if this all really make sense, but remember that they did choose you and accepted your application so it was just a short talk with one of the mentors necessary to focus your mind again. Besides, it is highly appreciated if there are controversial different ideas, because they also know that nobody is the same when it is about their personality, work and interests.

A highlight in between was also the short trip to Athens which is mandatory for everyone and should be used to open your mind for a different culture and design attitude. Besides it was really good to get out of the academy and to see something else.

The last weeks were very stressful. You just worked for the individual assessments and refined your work afterwards for the collective assessments. These presentations have been also a new experience because you were given the chance to present the work of all of the teachers and also get feedback from them which is in most cases an important positive input for you. The best part after the assessments were that you could go surfing to the beach, travel around the Netherlands, visit all the exhibitions you were not capable before and do a lot more.

It has been definitely one of the best experiences in my life. Not only on a professional basis, but also on a personal. The KABK for itself is a very interesting place to learn about Dutch design in an artistic environment and you going to have great opportunities to practice it within the courses.