

The Estonian Academy of Arts (EKA) in Tallinn is a vivid, creative, diverse, open and supporting Art School. I had a great time studying for one semester at EKA.

It is a small university with a rather family like vibe. After a while you know many people from your and other departments and as soon as you enter the school building or walk around Kalamaja (the district in which the school is located) you will see someone you recognize or even greet and have a short talk with. Especially the relatively low number of international students led to a good group dynamic with all the exchange students. The welcome event (in my case bog hike plus sauna in February) as well as several buddy events organized by the Erasmus+ coordinator and the Estonian buddies offered great opportunities to experience both the Estonian Culture and surrounding of Tallinn as well as strengthening the bond among us Erasmus people.



Tallinn city wall



Bog hike

The communication with the Erasmus coordinator was really easy and casual, especially since the coordinator was a graduation student herself. Whenever there was a problem or misunderstanding, help was offered and a solution was found.

In general the vibe at EKA is a really supporting one. All the teachers and staff try to help you as much as possible to make your vision become reality. Whether it is with building something or simply find materials or technical supplies, I experienced people helping me in the best possible way.

As soon as you have an idea what you want to learn or try out in one of the many workshops or labs you can for sure make it happen. In order to do so it is also beneficial to have all the equipment EKA offers. The wood workshop, metal workshop, prototyping lab, technical rental, studios of all the different professions (jewelry, fashion, textile, graphic design, graphic art, architecture, sculpture, photography, painting etc.) are all packed with technical supplies and materials and the professional help of the technicians and other staff.

The amazing chance you will get at EKA as an exchange student is the freedom to choose from courses not only in your department but in all de-

partments. So you might as well design sandals as an Urbanist or learn about book binding or typography as an architecture student. Of course it has to fit your learning agreement and the goal of courses you want to achieve at home but EKA lets you choose completely freely. In my mind this was one of the best parts of the program because especially in architecture it is so valuable to learn and practice artistic and creative subjects. It is such a great way to broaden your professional horizon. Apart from that the courses from architecture department are not crazy innovative. Nevertheless it is always interesting to exchange thoughts with new teachers and other students and in that sense you will for sure learn something in that otherwise more basic architecture design studio course.

In school as well as outside you can tell that Estonians are more private and at least initially not very open or extroverted people. Take your time and after a while they will probably open up and great friendships can occur. Most people are also speaking English very well and most people wouldn't expect you learning their very difficult language for just one semester.

Another really enjoyable fact for me was the duality of both nature with bogs, forests, lakes or the Baltic sea in and around Tallinn in contrast to the active cultural/art scene. There are so many museums about a vast variety of topics and art galleries. Also exhibition openings are happening all the time. You will always find some event to get even deeper into the creative, artsy vibes you get to know at EKA.



Saaremaa Island



Rummu Quarry