

REPORT AL RIENTRO DELL'ESPERIENZA DI SCAMBIO -
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Testo

I left Milan on the 1st of February together with my ERASMUS mate to get to Dublin, capital of Ireland and the smallest capital I've ever seen. Our semester was already started couple of days before at the National College of Art and Design, one of the most well known universities in Ireland to study Design, fine arts, printing, ceramics, fashion and others. I have to accept it, we were a little bit lost, but it is normal whenever you get to a place you know nothing about. On our first day of University we had a meeting with this very nice woman, Berna Scalan who is the person in charge of the ERASMUS students. She took us for a tour of the installations of the university and taught us everything we should know like, how the classes work in there, the difference between a lecture and a laboratory which were practically the classes we would be following that semester; and as the name suggests one is 100% practical and the other 100% theoretic. There were other things to know as where to eat, the library, the different buildings all divided depending on the courses, the common areas, etc.

On the second day we were introduced to our teacher and classmates. We were situated at the building of design, at the underground level in a huge room sub-divided in four areas, but it was one whole space where all the students of product design from first to fourth year were together. Each class was made by an average of 20 to 25 students. By the third day classes were going normally and classmates and teachers were always prone to help and explain anything we needed.

The NCAD university was built over an old distillery and until today they conserve some of the rooms and tanks used by them to produce the Whiskey, personally I found this very particular and charming, it gives the whole place an informal Irish atmosphere. Then there is the canteen, one of my favourite places. Me and other ERASMUS students used to go there for lunch, they have a variety of healthy food, soups, vegetarian sandwiches and some of the traditional Irish bakery which I think is as good as dangerous because they bake the best brownies ever, difficult to resist.

Talking about the ERASMUS, we were a group of about 20. People from Switzerland, Germany, Poland, France, Czech Republic, Italy, Finland and Canada. Even though in Dublin isn't a group like ESEG or other Erasmus organizations we got to know nearly everybody thanks to Berna, couple of classes we had together or hanging out. It's always nice to make friendship with other Erasmus because they are exactly in the same situation you are, in a different country, speaking in a language and looking forward to discover new places, the culture, learn different and new things and travel. In fact every time the university schedule would allow us we organized some getaways to places like Galway, Malahide, Connemara and even outside the country like Scotland. All this been aware that the priority was studying and we'll have to do it well.

At the university although there weren't Erasmus groups as I said before, there was the Student Union, in charge of all the extracurricular activities in the campus; and there were lots of them like movie Mondays, the Raag week, some trips, charity markets and others. They were responsible of making the people from all the different departments to get to know each other

Some things I would like to highlight from the university are the laboratories, the infrastructure and the machinery. The laboratory of Product design was divided in couple of sections, where you could find from manual tools and raw materials to work with, to laser cutters and 3D printers. Each department has its own machinery and if you were working in a project that required other departments materials you were allowed, after asking to the head of the department of course to go and work with them. In my case I needed some pieces of ceramic for my second project so I went to their building and both, the assistants and students were so prone to help in whatever I needed.

The courses of Product Design were basically divided in two, Lectures and Studio. Lectures were two per week, two hours each and it was developed with videos, slides and books. Not much participation due to the big groups, basically just listening and taking notes which were very helpful for the essay we had to present at the end of the semester. On the other side was the studio, which goes on four days per week from nine in the morning to six in the afternoon. There instead of having many courses, you have one subdivided in periods and by the end of the semester you will develop between three or four projects. One of the things I liked the most was the fact that for each project our head of the department Sam Russel, brought somebody from outside, people who work in the world of design in Ireland or England. They were the tutors in charge of guiding us during the process, from the brief to the final product. That was such a nice experience because they would tell us how things actually work in the real business.

About the lifestyle in Dublin I would say is incredible, it is true that it is a very rainy city and the sky is gray ninety percent of the time, but all this goes to a second plane once you start knowing all the places, the variety of environments, everything it has to offer. It is a small city, but is part of its beauty, is full of students and workers from all around the world and knowing new people is as easy as going to a park on your own with a book. Thanks to its multiethnic culture in the streets you can find restaurants, shops and markets from every nationality; but something whoever goes should do is get into a really Irish pub to listen some traditional Irish music alive, while eating mussels and drinking a pint of Guinness.

My perception of the city was a place full of opportunities, the price of the life in general is high but so it is what people earns. And it ain't difficult to find a job, because is a place full of students there is many people who comes and goes so bakeries, coffees, restaurants and shops are continously looking for new staff. I actually got a job in a burger place near my house called Bunsen and it was amazing, every single person who works in there was special, they will made your day and so the customers. It was a great experience and helped me a lot loosing the fear of talking with native english speakers whom wouldn't now you were foreigner, so they will speak at natural speed and I would say Irish accent is not that easy to understand.

To conclude I'll say my ERASMUS experience in Dublin is been one of the best things that had happened to me. It helped me to have a wider view of my life, my expectations for the future, the opportunities I have and helped me to grow a lot as a person. I had the chance to know many many many people from all over the world, people I'm still in contact with and I'll always remember. This is an experience that brings nothing but positive things.

Autorizzo al trattamento dei miei dati personali ai sensi del Decreto Legislativo n. 196/03 da parte del Politecnico di Milano.

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