

# My exchange Semester in Copenhagen at the KADK in Copenhagen

I decided to spend a semester abroad in Copenhagen because I've always been drawn to northern countries, I've wanted to live in Copenhagen for a long time and I've heard a lot of good things about the Royal Academy of Arts (KADK).

## Accommodation

I have heard from many people that it is not easy to find an apartment in Copenhagen because the demand for accommodation as well as the rental prices are high. There is no dormitory for KADK students only, but there are numerous dormitories in the city, the one closest to the university is in Amager. If you want to rent a room in the city, there is a facebook page of the university where rooms are offered and some other platforms that offer rooms and apartments in Copenhagen. Since I don't have Facebook, I registered with the internet platform boligportal (boligportal.dk) to find accommodation. Here, you pay a monthly fee (as with any real estate platform), but there is a quite large selection of apartments on offer and you can cancel the subscription at any time. I was lucky and found a room in a shared flat in Nørrebro in the first month of my search.

Vesterbro and Nørrebro are the rather hip districts of Copenhagen in which there is a lot of life, there are numerous beautiful cafés and small shops.

There are many young families living in Østerbro, a rather quiet, well-kept neighbourhood with an ecological attitude. Amager is located right next to Holmen (the location of the university). A not very touristy, beautiful, very green quarter.

## Means of transportation

Copenhagen is a bicycle city! I strongly recommend to buy a bike soon after arrival. For me my bike was the best purchase of the whole semester abroad. Used bikes are offered on dba.dk, the Danish eBay. But there are also numerous shops in the city that sell used bicycles. I bought my bike from buddhabikes. A super cool shop where old bikes are collected, reassembled and sold from 1000 DKK. Within the first two months you can bring the bike for free maintenance, which is great, because it wears out very quickly due to the constant use in wind and weather. If guests come, or if you want to rent a bike only temporarily, I recommend the donkeybikes. These are orange bicycles, which are spread all over the city and can be rented with the help of an app.



My beloved Buddhabike.



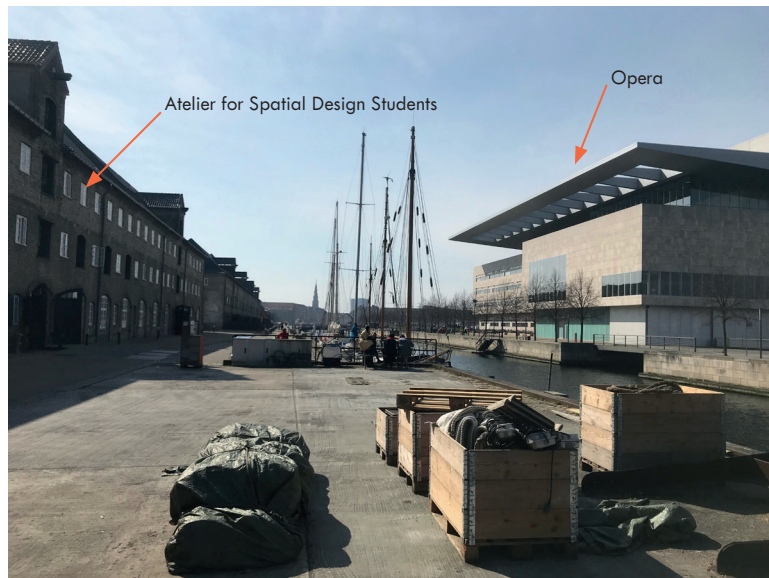
Waiting at the open bridge on the daily bikeride to university.

## University

First of all, I was totally excited about the university. The location directly on the water, the campus, the many industrial military buildings and above all the workshops! Two three-storey buildings with a workshop for ceramics, textiles, metal and wood on each floor. Machines from circular saws to sewing machines, potter's wheels to welding machines, 3D ceramic printers and vacuum presses. There seem to be no limits to the possibilities here. However, I quickly realized that the semester and therefore the time is limited and that it takes time to get acquainted with a workshop. Since I decided for the architecture department "Spatial Design", I was lucky to get to know the ceramics workshop better, because in the first three weeks of the semester we had a workshop together with the ceramics students, in which we dealt intensively with different materials and spent a lot of time in the workshop. After the three weeks we turned to the project, which was divided into two briefs. Each student dealt with the same brief, but was very free in his project and the choice of topics. In total there were five tutors to choose from and you were assigned one tutor for the whole semester. Each student got his own place, with table, desk lamp and small shelf. The weekly table reviews also took place there. Four times a semester we had reviews where we presented our state of affairs to the students who had the same tutor, our tutor and another teacher. The atmosphere here has never been very strict, you showed what you have done so far, the quantity didn't play the primary role. All in all I never had the feeling of pressure to perform and yet there is a busy atmosphere at the university that makes you work a lot on the project. But you are very free, nobody tells you what to do, you work very independently, which can be very nice and sometimes very exhausting. What I missed very much were lectures. Unlike at the University of Liechtenstein, there were no weekly, obligatory lectures at the KADK. Sometimes there were lectures or speeches that were open to all students, but it was not always easy to find out when and where they took place. As a result, I lacked theoretical input, especially in terms of advancing my project.



University building with a huge printing workshop.



At the campus.



Ceramic workshop



Wood workshop

## Social environment

Since the university is not very big, we were a rather small group of exchange students. Around fifteen people from France, Canada, China, Belgium, Germany, Iceland, New Zealand and Norway, including graphic design, furniture design, architecture and game design students. We quickly made friends and spent a lot of time together both on campus and outside. Since my course of studies in Spatial Design is held in English, the group of students there was also very international. Here I made friends especially with people from China and Japan. The cliché says that it is rather difficult to make close contact with the Danes, which has been confirmed for me in my half year in Copenhagen. Although everyone is always friendly and very open, I don't think that half a year is enough time to make real friends.

## Costs

Copenhagen is expensive! I quickly noticed here that I run out of money, despite ERASMUS+ funding and despite saving. In the beginning I tried very hard to find a part-time job, which is very difficult as a foreigner in Copenhagen, or almost impossible if you stay only half a year, as it turned out for me. I gave up looking for a job after some time, lived on a very small budget, which was not always easy, but (in retrospect) a good experience.