

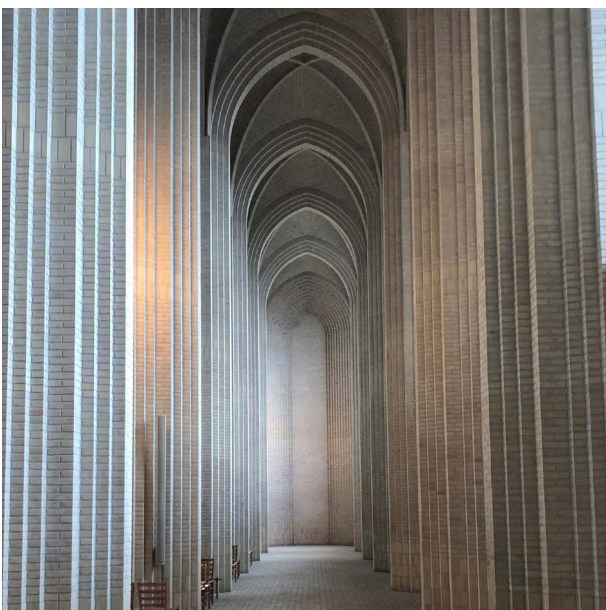
# An exchange semester in Copenhagen

Arriving here in Copenhagen everything seemed to be very normal. On the first day at school I got to know the other exchange students from across the globe. Going for drinks in the evening and trying to get in touch with them from the beginning on helped me a lot to get some social contacts for my stay in the new surrounding. Very soon also the actual courses started and I was very happy to finally see how the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, the KADK works as an institution. Luckily the semester started with a group work so I was able to get to know my fellow students in Spatial Design a bit better. While working with our hands in the workshop doing ceramics we spent a lot of time together. The result of these first three weeks was an exhibition in a church in the city centre which was open to the public. The thoughts in our heads were that locals as tourists would come to see our pieces and enjoy the work of us students.

In these first three to four weeks I also tried to start getting to know the city a bit better. Living with two Danish girls I luckily was always able to ask them for help with anything. They recommended me the best museums, restaurants and clubs. On this way I very soon had some connection to the city which was not only the one a tourist would have from personal research. Concluding the first part of my exchange semester I would say I had an intense time with lots of new people and places, not to forget the omnipresent rain. The reason why there is a need for this first conclusion is Corona.

About five weeks after my arrival the Corona-pandemic also hit Denmark. Tourists coming back home from their skiing trips brought the virus to the country and everything happened very quickly. After one week a complete shutdown started, of course also including the school. From this day on the teaching immediately

changed from physical to digital. The plan of the school was just to go on as we were used to - but from home. As an architecture student I am used to have a tutorial with my teacher every week, talking about my process and new ideas. Expecting that I have to say I was not disappointed at all. From the very first week on I saw my teacher every week until the end of the semester and I got my input on this way. Some general lectures had to be cancelled but some were still happening. In terms of taught input I do not think that this online semester had a big disadvantage for me. At the same time the missing contact with the other students hit me hard. Studying architecture you always talk to fellow students about your project and always get some input from them. Seeing what others do and working in such a creative surrounding helps to keep up the workflow. In these times it was hard to keep up the productivity pretty often so it was not always





easy to move on a lot between the tutorials with the teacher. Coming closer to the end of the semester I realised more and more that I missed the workshops and the other students the most. Another thing I realised was that it is not very easy to come into a group of students who know each other from studying together already. In my first weeks at school I got to know some fellow students and everyone was very welcoming. Friend-groups are already made though because they know each other and the exchange person is always the new one. So studying with them I am sure I would have made some close friends but again the Corona-virus changed this situation a lot. In this moment I was lucky to have my roommates and not to live alone. Social contacts and conversations were more important than ever because they became so rare in the everyday life. Coming to the conclusion of this second part of the semester, which actually lasted until the end of the studies at KADK, it all worked out in the end - not as expected though. The school proved that it is a great institution from the beginning on but I missed out in terms of using the workshops and getting to know fellow students closely.

During that whole time and especially now in the end I was very lucky that I had made some friends in the group of exchange students in the very beginning of the semester. After the peak of the crisis when everything slowly opened up again I started meeting them again doing trips to tourist things or drinking beers in the parks of the city. Summer started around the beginning of June. At that point it started to get really warm and the long days were really enjoyable outside. After the semester ended and the final presentation was done I was able just to enjoy the summer in the city. This includes swimming under the roof of the Royal Opera in the harbour and trips to museums and the coast outside the city. Getting to know people and making friends lead me through this whole weird semester and brought up the possibility to still enjoy the time away from home a lot.

