

KEA EXCHANGE REPORT

VILNIUS COLLEGE OF DESIGN



INTRODUCTION

I studied in Vilnius at Vilnius College of Design (VDK) during the autumn semester 2024, more precisely from the 3rd of September to the 17th of January. Back in Denmark I study Entrepreneurship and Design.

I chose to study in Vilnius because the school seemed like the most creative one of those KEA could offer. Also the country attracted me, as I've never been to the baltics and wanted to explore that side of the world.

I could choose between courses from the graphic design and macromedia design programs. There were also some mandatory courses we had to attend as Erasmus students. Here is a list and short description of the courses I had:

Packaging design:

During the semester we had three bigger individual projects, where the focus was on construction, graphic design and rebranding.

Visual expression:

In this class we used a lot of different materials (ink, watercolor, pencil etc.). Very technical, but fun if you love to draw and paint.

Visual motion design:

In this class we worked with animations on Adobe After Effects. We had a short introduction, and after that it was mostly self-study where we worked on our individual work. Very technical and a little difficult if you're a beginner.



Drawing:

Technical drawing with pencil where we focused on perspective and shading.

Intercultural communication (mandatory):

Online class that focused on communication strategies, brands and target groups. All of it were more or less things I had already learned about at KEA.

Lithuanian Culture and History (mandatory):

Online class where we learned about culture and history of the country with a special focus on art.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

The school was very helpful and good to give us all the practical information about courses, dates etc. before arrival. A day before starting the actual classes we were invited to a “welcoming day” at the school, where we met the other Erasmus students and our coordinator, Viktorija.

During the semester I experienced the school/teachers as kind of unstructured of what we are used to in Denmark - especially during mid-term review and the final exams. The teachers are almost always late and I just experienced a lot of waiting time and confusion. I got used to it, but in the beginning it frustrated me a lot.

From the classes I attended I liked *visual expression* and *drawing* the most, because it was very creative and artistic, which was what I was hoping for when applying to VDK. Even though I feel like I learned the most in *visual motion design*, because it was new to me and I learned a new skill that I can use for future projects.

The least relevant class was probably *intercultural communication* as it was online and just a theoretical and kind of boring class to be honest.

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process was actually really easy, even though there's a lot of steps you have to go through. But I think both KEA and the host institution were fast at answering questions and organized in terms of sending documents back and forth and so on.

VDK is a really small school, and I got kind of disappointed about the school facilities (as there's almost nothing), considering that it's a design school. Also we didn't get an adequate tour of the school. For example I found out very late that the school had a room with a good printer and a laser cutter. Kind of a shame...

ACCOMMODATION

I lived in an apartment in The Old Town (center of Vilnius) with a classmate from KEA. We found it through a Facebook group some months before arriving to Vilnius, so the process was very smooth and easy. We payed 375 euro per person (without utilities), so it was very cheap as our apartment was big and spacious and the location was on point.

Compared to Copenhagen, living in Vilnius is way cheaper. Both when it comes to public transport, grocery shopping and drinking beer. Just to give an example, public transport only costs 0.65 euro for a 30 minute ticket and 0.90 euro for 1 hour ticket. and you can get a big beer for 3-4 euro. In general I spend less money than I expected, and my SU and Erasmus was more than enough.



CULTURAL AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Vilnius is a very nice and vibrant city, and I think the size of the city is perfect for an exchange semester - not too big, not too small. There's a lot of parks, lakes and in general green areas in and around the city that are worth visiting. Vilnius also has a lot of interesting architecture and old churches, which are open to the public. The night-life is vibrant and there's a lot of bars (like the danish bodega), which I loved. It was also a good way to meet new people.

The local people in Vilnius (mostly the elder generation) can seem very cold and reserved, even more than in Denmark. As long as you are prepared for that, it won't be such a shock, but do not expect kind service in for example the grocery stores or in the bus.

Another thing to be aware of is that the school is not a part of the "big" Erasmus network, so you have to do a bigger effort your social life if you want to get to know other Erasmus students (outside of VDK).

VILNIUS RECOMMENDATIONS

- I would recommend downloading the **Trafi** app for public transport in Vilnius - on the app you can buy bus tickets and see the itinerary.
- If you have the opportunity visit other parts of Lithuania and or even go to Poland, Estonia or/and Latvia. A bus trip to Riga only takes around 4-5 hours.
- Basketball is a huge sport in the Baltics, so if you like sports go to a basketball match in Kaunas (the second biggest city in Lithuania).
- Follow **esn_vu** on Instagram if you want to join the events arranged by the big Erasmus network and meet new people.
- Go to **El gato negro** (best mexican restaurant) and in general explore restaurants in the city. There're some very good ones.

