

Report about Erasmus+ internship

Student

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Luksia, Artisan of interior textiles, ARTE13

Company

Ateliers Pinton

9 rue Preville Felletin, France

<http://www.ateliers-pinton.com/> /uk-us/

I spent at Ateliers Pinton 8 weeks. The company has two profiles: making tapestry from contemporary artists' paintings and designing and making hand tufted rugs for order.

I worked at the hand tufting department and my task was to design a small collection which the company can promote if they like the designs.

On the first day I was showed the company, the workshops. I found it really interesting as these two techniques are not very common, for example there is no tapestry industry in Finland, neither in my home country, Hungary. I didn't know what my tasks would be but I thought it can be anything as the company is so special and interesting. I was quite surprised about my task as I didn't expect such confidence from the company. I mean designers usually graduate from university while I am studying to be an artisan in a secondary school. When I was looking for an internship place I sent my portfolio full of photos about all the works I have made in the school and at home during school period. As later I heard the owner (and director) of this small family owned company was looking for something different to broaden their rug collection. So the task I got was really beyond my expectations.

The company is in Centre France, in a tiny town where people rarely speak English so with most of the employees I had to speak French. I understand and speak a little French but it was challenging because I know only everyday phrases. Fortunately I didn't have to talk to clients and my work was mostly independent so it was ok. Now I am more confident in French and I can solve much more situations than earlier.

There is a big difference in working culture in Finland and France. In France people work more quickly and they stress much more. I prefer something between the two. Work at the workshops starts at 6.30 while at the offices at 9. Lunchtime is between 12-13 which is half an hour shorter than in other parts of France. Except from lunchtime there are no real breaks held in offices. Greeting each other in the morning is completely different than in Finland. They shake hands or give kisses every single morning. When dealing with a problem they don't spend so much time on it, they are quite in a hurry.

My accommodation was in a student hostel of the local secondary school. The rent was approximately 300 euros per month which is really cheap comparing to other places in France. It was cheap because the area is quite poor, there are many abandoned houses everywhere.

The student hostel is about 1-1,5 kms from the company, it was a 15 minutes walk. There is no real public transport there as it is a small town with 2000 inhabitants.

Luckily my husband could join me so I wasn't alone. It was hard to find leisure activities there. Without a car it could have been very difficult and boring. As we travelled there by car we could often go to the nearest town which is still not big and quite empty but something still can be found. At weekends we visited bigger towns - as the nearest was 100 kms far we travelled a lot.

I have been to France several times earlier but in other parts. There, in the centre people are told to be less open and friendly but I haven't noticed it. Maybe because I am a foreigner in Finland as well

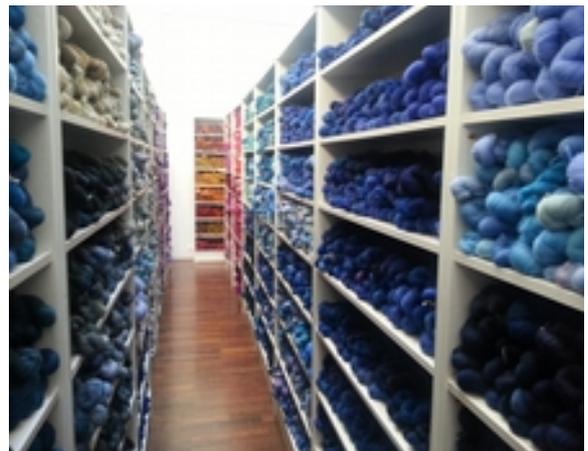
where people are very closed comparing to Europeans. There are prejudices (also) about French that they are big-headed and don't like foreigners. I haven't experienced any of these. At the company there are people from other countries, e.g. England, Lithuania, Spain.

I learnt a new technique in France and I become more confident both in my profession and in everyday life. As I continuously live abroad for over 7 years I knew that spending time abroad other than as a tourist would be a very good experience. However, I am surprised how well this apprenticeship went and how well I feel after this. The company liked my designs so we agreed that they will promote it and if they can sell them our co-operation continues. They promised me to send the contract by post – the director was very busy, he had important clients and he is at the company only a few days a week so he didn't have time to make the contract (which has to be in English instead of French).

I strongly recommend for every students to go abroad as they can get such experiences abroad which are not possible to get at their home country. Living and working abroad is more difficult – if someone has done it it gives confidence – wow, I've done it! - and the next challenge will be easier. I recommend going to France for those who are interested in its rich culture and for those who study in the field of tourism, catering and for artisan students, especially clothes making.

A few photos about the company:

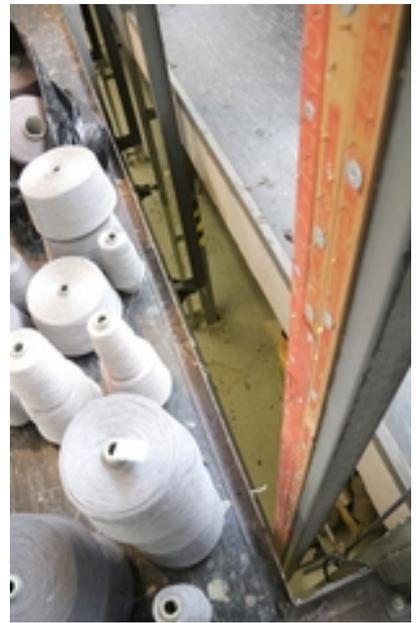
Yarn stock:



Tapestries:



Tufting workshop:



About my work:



