

Erasmus, Lithuania

In June 2023, I had the opportunity to participate in a selection process for an Erasmus trip. I successfully passed and got the chance to travel to Lithuania in March 2024.

We departed on March 9th, and the journey was pleasant, although we had to wait nearly 10 hours for a connecting flight from Frankfurt to Kaunas. We were accommodated for two weeks at the Domus Pacis monastery, which is almost in the center of Kaunas. We had the first day off to explore the accommodation and surroundings and to get to know the other students.

During the rest of the week, we got to know the mentors, especially Peeter Krosmann, an artist from Estonia, who helped us to open up creatively. He held daily lectures on art and inspired us to continue drawing. The studio where we had our classes and creative tasks was always bustling, and everyone was working on something most of the time.

We also met a very friendly mentor, Mindaugas Juodisas, with whom we mostly communicated through a translation app, which everyone found amusing. Still, he genuinely tried to explain the tasks as best as possible despite the language barriers. We also worked with a third mentor, Tadas Vosylius.

Our first excursion (on the third day after arrival) was to the M.K. Čiurlionis Museum, after which we visited Peeter's studio. On the fifth day, we visited the Art Academy in Kaunas, located near our accommodation. We got acquainted with all the academy's departments, and I must say the academy is very tidy, almost as if there are no artists there. The next day, we took a trip to Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, where we visited a museum and toured the Old Town. Sunday was a free day for us to rest and explore the city on our own. And with that, the first week was over!

Of course, we had daily lessons with the mentors. But they didn't always just lecture; they allowed us to work on our own projects and would step in if we needed advice or help. On Monday, after lessons and lunch, we visited Mindaugas's studio, where he explained how he sells his work, what mediums he uses, etc. On Wednesday, we visited the Pažaislis Museum.

During those two weeks, we also prepared for an exhibition held on Friday evening. We set up the studio and displayed our work on the walls. All the mentors and some other people staying at the monastery attended.

That Friday, without much thought, I greeted two Lithuanians on the street, and we ended up arranging to go for coffee the next day. We met up with them and spent almost five hours exploring the city together.

Not only was it wonderful to see a new country and culture, but this trip also truly changed me as a person. I met people from another school who are now some of my best friends, I bonded with the girls from my class, and most surprisingly, I met Lithuanians with whom I'm still in contact, and we are planning for them to visit Croatia next year.

It was truly the best trip that could have ever happened to me.