

Crafts and Design

10.11 - 20.12. 2017

K-Design

FIRST DAY IN ESTONIA

I was supposed to arrive in Tallinn exactly at 14.00pm, so I wasn't really worried about catching the 14.07 bus that would take me to the bus station, but the ship was over 10 minutes late so I had to run with my big bag through a crowd of slow people.

I took the 14.45 bus from Tallinn to Tartu. I arrived at 17.10 and met up with a friend to grab a bite and she showed me how to get to the apartment where I was supposed to stay.

When I arrived at the apartment that I was supposed to rent for 200€, the owner told me that another girl also rented a room in that apartment, but I was supposed to live there alone. Then later that evening another girl moved into the apartment, I was kind of confused but because it was late and I had my first work day the next day I just went to sleep.

FIRST DAY OF WORK

For my first day of work I had a family friend drive me to "sepa keskus" where the atelier was located. It was actually located at the side of the building inside of a dance studio called "respect". The atelier had 2 armchairs, a dressing room, a table for cutting smaller details and cluing on details, a table for cutting out patterns, a sewing machine, a overlock machine, coverlock machine and a big shelf of velvet fabrics that are used for tracksuits. K-design makes dresses for competitive dancers (like Latina and classical and so forth). An Estonian designer and dancer (Kaisa Oja) designs the dresses and Airi (my boss makes them). The fabrics for each dress are ordered from England.

Besides there were two more workers in there – one was a professional at sewing and the other one helped more with cutting the fabric and sewing straight lines and hand stitching smaller details. They also made sports shirts, leggings, and bodysuits for a company called "slonny"

The first thing I could do was redesign a detail for a gymnastic team costume. I spent most of my morning drawing different versions of the detail. Around 1pm the client came and chose one of my designs and that made me feel real proud and gave me a lot of motivation to do my best. After lunch I helped the other worker with unrolling 50 meters of dark blue velvet, then we folded it in half and rolled it again. For the rest of the day I cleaned and cut off loose threads from sports shirts and then packed them.



WHAT I LEARNED TURNING MY TRAINING PERIOD

I learned a lot of new things and I also learned new sewing terms in Estonian.

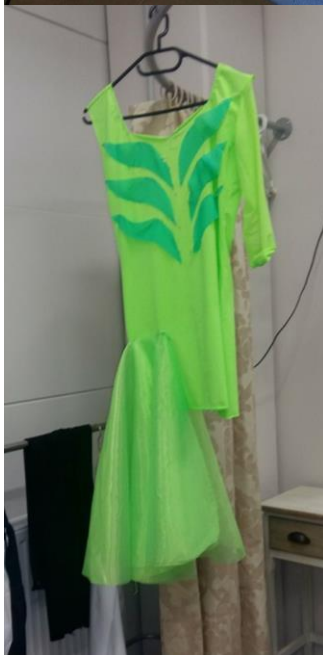
I learned how to

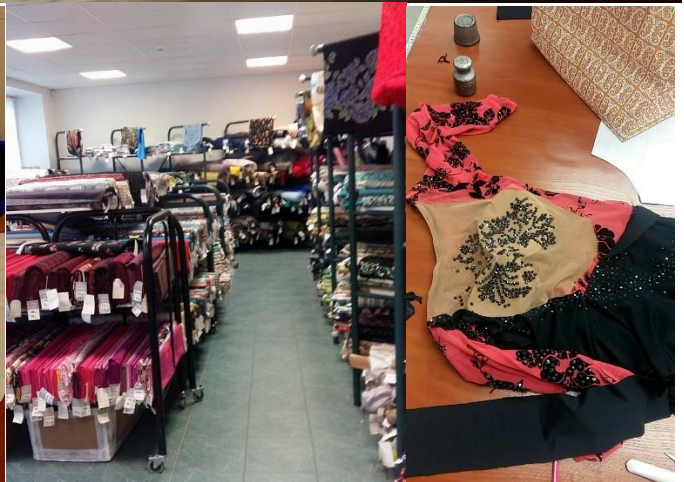
- Iron velvet
- Sew velvet

- Easily sew a zipper on to a velvet hoodie
 - Shorten a zipper
 - Use a coverlock
 - Clue Swarovski crystals
 - Identify a fake Swarovski crystal
 - Hand stitch details to stretchy fabric so that the fabric still stretches and the detail stays in place
 - Easily make a pattern longer if needed
 - sew and manipulate horsehair braid (crinoline)
 - correctly sew in an elastic waistband
 - sew elastic leg openings for bodysuits
 - sew a perfect sharp corner on a mesh detail
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- I also learned some rules about what dancing dresses can and can't have and what materials you can and can't use.

AVERAGE WORK DAY

I would take the bus from "annelinn" to the city centrum and another bus from there to "sepa turg" and I'd arrive at work around 8am. If I didn't have task that I had to finish, then I would help my co-worker with whatever she needed help with (cleaning the sports clothes, sewing elastic together, sewing on labels) or if she didn't need my help then I would make velvet hair ties from scrap fabric (I designed a few new ones). When Airi arrived at work around 9.30am, she would tell me what she needed me to do that day, most days I cut out details for the gymnastic costumes (14 big ones , 14 smaller ones, and 182 small ones, 28pink skirt tails and 28 yellow ones) , it took me at least 2 weeks to cut out all of the details, and after that I spent a week and a half hand stitching them onto the costumes, after the costumes were done I would usually clue crystals to a dress. We had lunch around 12pm – 1pm , I bought my lunch from a burger kiosk downstairs or from the grocery store (my lunch usually cost me under 3€). Some days I would help with fittings and some days Airi would take me with her to the fabric store to get some supplies. On one Saturday I went with Airi to a dance competition to help set up the track suits for sale.









CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

There isn't a big difference in work culture (or maybe it's because I have had very little working experience in Finland and I don't know better), but there were a few differences that I noticed between this and my last internship. First of all, the workers were a lot more hardworking and cared more about the quality of the product, the work was a lot more fast paced and they let me as an intern actually help with the customers work and for my ideas. one of the biggest differences is the salary. The average monthly salary for a dressmaker in Estonia is 573€ and it's even less in smaller places while the average salary in Finland is 1600€. One of the workers at K-design was paid 4€/h and the other one was paid 3€/h because she has less skills and works less (This is actually a pretty good salary considering that the minimum wage per hour is 2.78€).

PROBLEMS I HAD AND HOW I SOLVED THEM

The only real problem I had while I was in Estonia was the apartment that I was supposed to rent for 200€. I was prepared to live there alone but for some reason there were 2 University students and the owner with her 3year old child, who would go around and touch my stuff. And on the third night there was also a man with a small boy in the apartment and that made me uncomfortable, so I talked with mom and we decided that it would be better for me to live at her godfather's place. I told the owner that I wanted to stay at another place and I wanted my money back because I stayed there only for 3 days, she said okay and gave me back only 150€ instead of the 200€. The next morning (Monday) my moms friend picked up my suitcase and drove me to work and picked me up again after work to drive me to my moms godfathers place. I was going to pay them rent but they insisted on not taking any of my money.

A very small problem was the fact that it took me so long to get to work with 2 buses, but then I realized that from the same bus station in "annelinn" went another bus straight to "sepaturg" in only 10minutes, that helped a lot. At the beginning it was hard driving the bus cause I forgot to register the bus card, but I got the hang of it very quickly.

I bought the bus card from R-kiosk for 1€ and a ticket for one month cost 15€, but if you are a student in Tartu then it would cost only 5€.

The fact that Estonian is my native language was a very big plus and because of that I didn't have any language problems.

WHY SHOULD YOU INTERN ABROAD

There are a lot of reasons to intern abroad

- You get to travel
- You learn new communication skills
- You learn about different cultures
- You can learn new words in a new language
- You can make great new friends
- Life experience
- Etc

Overall I really enjoyed the experience and learned a lot of new skills and my co-workers were very pleased with me, and they actually offered me summer job there so I might go back turning the summer.