

“Participating in ArtCamp 2019”

Hanako Kudlic (3rd year of Tokyo University of the Arts)

Having participated in ArtCamp last year, this has been my second experience at the Ladislav Sutnar Faculty of Design and Art. From September, I will be studying at this university for six months as an international student. My deepest gratitude goes to the staff of Youkobou Art Space and Professor O JUN of Tokyo University of the Arts, for introducing me to this programme.

Unlike the previous year, I had been checking the ArtCamp website for new information since mid-April. I applied in advance because my intended courses were small in class size. During the first week's lithography course, participants had the privilege of laying hands on a 150-year- old printing press. As this old technology was new to me, operating such machinery was a challenge - the mere turning of its handle required skill (and strength). Making sure not to overlook any small step, I documented the entire process. Participants included a local high school teacher, a Ukrainian schoolgirl aiming to study at the faculty and a Chinese family. A result of Artcamp's popularity and welcoming atmosphere.

The second week was a serigraphy (silkscreen printing) course. Having received careful instructions from the same professor over two weeks, I was able to produce satisfactory works within a limited period of time. Our professor took great interest in students' work, so it was helpful to bring a portfolio as a tool to convey my works and future goals. This professor is currently (as of September 2019) working with an original screen printing technique. From an aerial work platform, he is printing geometric patterns on the facade of the Faculty of Fine Arts. I am overwhelmed by his energy.

In the third and final week, I participated in an illustration course held by a guest professor from Iran. We experimented with a variety of printmaking techniques which could also be done at home. We used materials such as plants, linoleum, plastic films and aluminium foil.

Generally speaking, Czechs are very natural in the way they speak and act. You can feel that time flows differently in Pilsen, a desolate city, from the busy life of Tokyo. Although it may not be as sophisticated as Prague, I felt my imagination being revitalised in this unpretentious city. For me, leaving Japan and changing my work environment put a halt to immersing myself in a daily routine.

Of course, it is crucial to prepare necessary art materials beforehand. Although there are three art supply stores in the city centre, the selection may not be enough, which would then result in a shopping trip to Prague (three hours altogether by train). Basic art supplies are provided by the university, but I recommend that you have purchased any special item in Japan.

ArtCamp is not just about working on-campus. The after-school activities are a nice touch - you can explore Pilsen's historical sites, galleries, second-hand bookstores and so on. A farewell concert is held during the final week, and without knowing it the three weeks are over. What seems to be a minor life event may then lead to major changes in the future. ArtCamp enables you to become aware of your standing position and turn to a new direction.

