Ulla Niskanen, Erasmus+ staff mobility report Escola Árvore Porto, Portugali



Saudações de Portugal

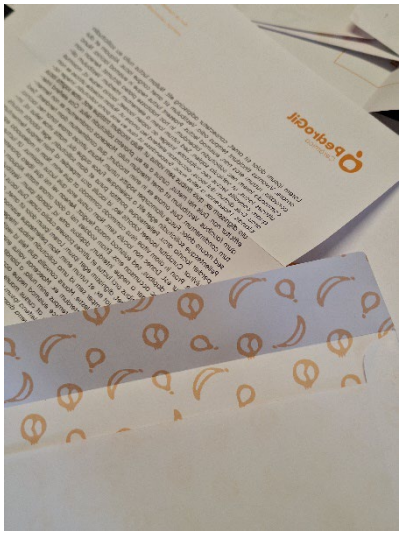


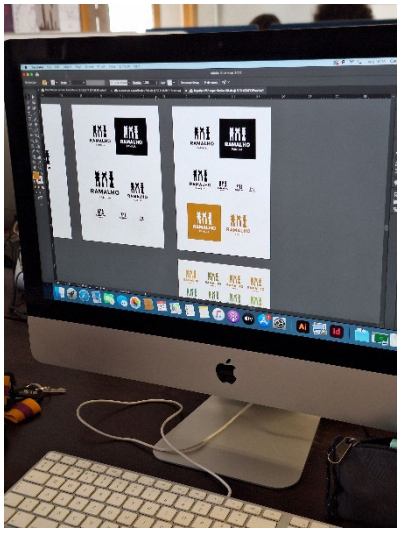
On Sunday, April 21st, we arrived in the Porto. The city is located in the northern part of Portugal and is the country's fourth largest city. However, the metropolitan area of Porto is home to about 1.7 million people, making it the second largest urban area in Portugal.

We had the opportunity to explore Escola Árvore, a vocational school focused on education requiring artistic skills and utilizing new technology, for a week. The school has about 450 students. Our contact was the charming Rita Amado, who is as the Erasmus+ coordinator at the school. She had prepared an interesting program for us for the week.

On Monday, April 22nd, we explored the school's facilities and met the staff. We participated in a class on fashion coordination and production technology. Teacher Rita Carneiro and the students presented various styling and photography projects they had made over the year. In projects carried out with local fashion and jewelry designers, students styled entire outfits, designed shooting locations, handled makeup and photography themselves, and also served as photo models in the pictures. The outcome of the shoots carried out over a weekend in a small village was a fabulous collection of beautifully executed fashion shoots!



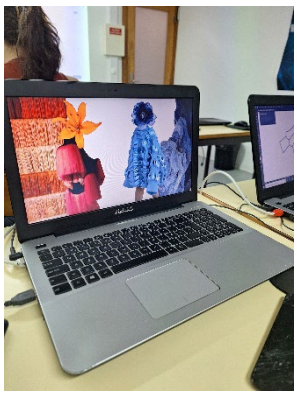




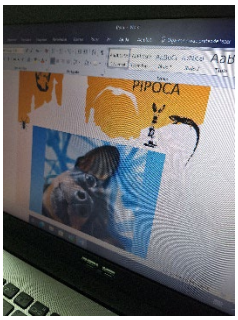
In the afternoon, we attended a graphic design class taught by Raquel Morais. Second-year students were working on designing corporate identities for companies they had chosen themselves. They had familiarized themselves with the companies and listened to the entrepreneur's wishes as a basis for their designs. Many students were working on designing the look of a family business, a friend's, or a relative's company. The design package included a logo, business card, letterhead, envelope, and a graphic manual. We saw very innovative and high-quality graphic design work from the students' computer screens. They presented their work with clear pride and in good English.



On Tuesday, April 23rd, we participated in a class in the library, where students were introduced to poems by female authors, and they read their chosen poems aloud to each other. The event was related to World Book and Freedom Day, organized by the first-year courses in digital design and multimedia. The event also included a book donation drive for a community library.



The program also included a fashion design lesson, with teacher Sara Lopes. The students presented their design projects, which they had executed as group work. Their task was based on an international fashion designer, whom they had got to know and from whom they had drawn inspiration for their own designs. They were required to create their own outfit using predetermined materials. The work progressed from sketches to color choices, after which they had to create technical drawings of the outfits for production. We saw wonderful outfits, several of which also considered sustainable development in fashion design.

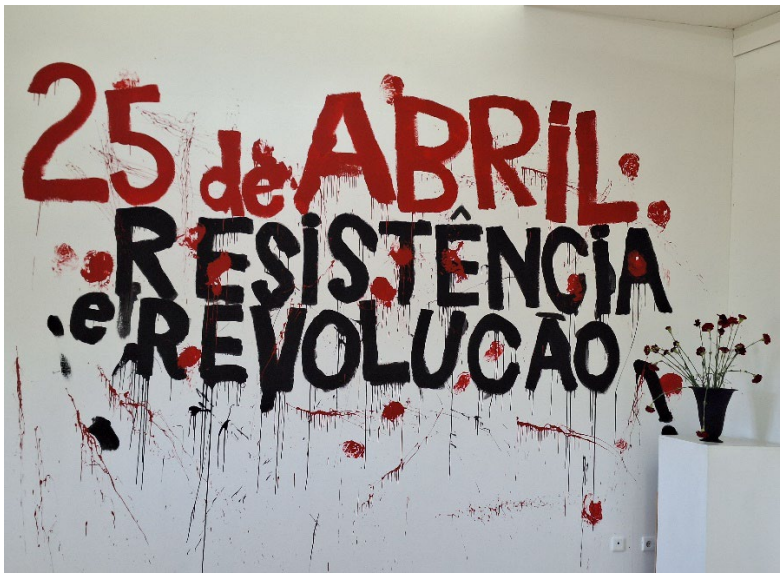


On Wednesday, April 24th, we participated in a 2D and 3D animation class taught by Regina Geraldo. We followed the students' work as they compiled materials they had designed over the year into their own websites on the Wix platform. We saw fun video implementations and short animated films. The students told their implementation process. We had discussions with Regina and Rita about artificial intelligence becoming part of design in the future. We talked about how we use AI in our work at YSAO for designing images, among other things.



During a marketing class, we watched and participated as a group of fashion design students played a marketing-themed board game with teacher Carla Queiros. Playing is a fun way to learn marketing concepts and vocabulary, communication, as well as knowledge of international brands. The game was designed for educational use by Portuguese marketing students. Carla gifted us a beautifully executed book about the city of Porto.

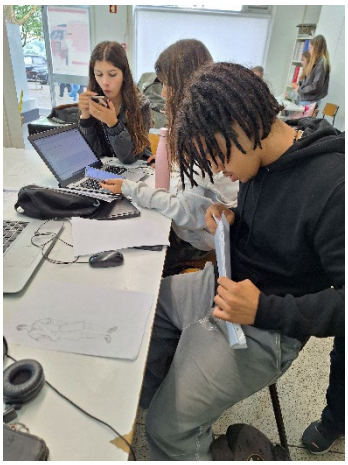
After lunch, we met with administrative director Andre Pascoal, who manages the marketing for Escola Árvore. He shared that they focus on organic growth in their marketing through search engine marketing, in collaboration with Google. They achieve their goals by carefully selecting their target audience and the right keywords in search engine marketing. They focus their marketing primarily on the parents and guardians of young people and on school counselors in primary schools. They perform detailed Google Analytics tracking of how visitors move on their website. We also discussed the interest of foreign students in studying at our schools and the use of social media channels in marketing.





On Thursday, April 25th, National Holiday in Portugal, the longest-lasting authoritarian regime in Western Europe was overthrown almost bloodlessly in just one day on April 25, 1974, ending over ten years of wars in Portugal's colonies. The revolution, Revolução dos Cravos, is named after the carnation, which a young woman handed to one of the rebel soldiers. He placed it in the barrel of his rifle, and this peaceful gesture quickly spread among the soldiers.

In the city of Porto, the festivities started on Wednesday with a concert and fireworks on Avenida dos Aliados and continued Thursday morning with children's events, concerts, and a parade. The memorial day is very important to the Portuguese, and the theme was also prominently featured at Escola Árvore throughout the past week. We were fortunate to have the opportunity to follow the events and experience the holiday with the local people.



On Friday, April 26th, we observed a graphic design course led by teacher Sara Lopes, where students finalized and printed their designed end products.

We also got to explore the world of fashion design. In the group project, the students' task was to conceive a clothing collection, sketch the outfits, select the materials, create technical drawings, draw patterns for the clothes, and make prototypes. After this, they produced the final clothes, and the collections were displayed and exhibited in the exhibition space in May.



We met Tomas, who teaches the manufacture of prints using lithographic techniques. In the workshop, he presented projects he had implemented, and we saw beautiful graphic artworks as well as the tools and limestone used in the process. Unfortunately, no students had enrolled in his course this semester. Computers and graphic design through them are more interesting to young people. It is really sad if his fine work does not find continuer.

On Saturday, April 27th, we visited the Portuguese Photography Center, housed in a beautifully restored 18th-century former prison building. We saw two impressive temporary exhibitions there: Leonel de Castro's Spoils of War memorial collection of Portuguese army veterans injured in the colonial wars (1961-1974) and Israeli Eldad Rafael's The Way to the High Mountain exhibition.







We also visited Cooperativa Artística Árvore, a cultural cooperative recognized by the Portuguese state as a non-profit entity and works closely with Escola Árvore. The cooperative's main building is located in the heart of Jardim das Virtudes park, which offers a beautiful view of the Douro River. The facilities include exhibition spaces, a shop and art gallery, as well as an auditorium and restaurant. The facilities also include workshops and production spaces for screen printing, lithography, engraving, ceramics, photography, and multimedia. The cooperative aims to offer young people new opportunities, new challenges for creators, and new experiences for the audience.



On Sunday, April 28th, before heading home, we went for a morning walk along the Douro River. The riverside promenade was bustling with life, with tourists and locals enjoying the beautiful weather and stunning river views.

It was an absolutely fantastic trip! We were warmly welcomed and had the opportunity to meet the school's staff and students. We saw and experienced many things during the exchange that inspired our own work and had interesting discussions. Hopefully, one day we will have guests from Escola Árvore visit us, so we can better present our curses and campuses.

During the job shadowing period abroad I had the opportunity to practice my language skills and get to know a culture of Portugal. I got to know students and teachers from Escola Árvore. I got new ideas and insights into the marketing of vocational education and educational fields related to my work. I also learned new methods that I can use in my own work.



Obrigado e adeus!