

## **Student Voices transcripts: Catarina**

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### **Catarina Interview 2020**

Academic Support 0:00

Catarina, I haven't seen you for a year. Thank you so much for taking part again. Perhaps if you could just introduce yourself and say what's been going on in the last year?

Catarina 0:12

Yes. So I am Catarina. I'm from Portugal. And I'm studying Product Design in Central Saint Martins. This year has been very good. And I finished my foundation. And then I decided to study product design. And it has been a very interesting course. Really, I'm learning a lot. So I'm just enjoying every day. That way I can learn more. And so I'm very excited to do the next two years and keep learning.

Academic Support 0:46

Perhaps you could talk a little bit about lockdown how you experienced it and what happened.

Catarina 0:52

So, for me, lockdown was something that happened very quickly because I finished my classes in March, I came to Portugal and then when I arrived here, lockdown started. So in the positive way, there was a time to be with my family. We were all closed in the house, but at least we could be with each other because I didn't see them for a while. And then, after the spring break, the classes started again. I was hopeful the classes would be in university because I thought, my course could not be online, because obviously, it's a practical course and we need the workshops. And I thought it would be important to be there and we couldn't do anything if we were not in the workshops. Fortunately, we could adapt and it ended up being a term online. And it was very good, also, we learned a lot and we could do our projects by ourselves, but still, with the feedback from the tutors and from other colleagues, so in the end I can see that it was very good, and that I learned a lot.

Academic Support 2:11

Okay, so what, what are the advantages and the disadvantages of online learning for you and your course?

Catarina 2:18

So, in my course, I think the lectures online were more interactive. So even if we were not in person with the tutors, we were facing the situation. For example, sustainability lectures, and then we could put them in action and see what are the consequences and see what are the development that we are seeing everyday around us. Also, the advantage of having a small group for presentations or for feedback, so you get to know those people they get to know your project. And then we can help each other. Also, I can see a very great advantage when we are doing the project by ourselves. We need to make decisions, make decisions by ourselves instead of relying on the opinion of other people. And maybe if I was never in this situation of lockdown and working by myself, maybe I would never had a chance to do all those decisions by myself. I would always rely on someone else. So it was a great challenge. And now I see as a great opportunity.

Catarina 2:18

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So now the disadvantages were a lot because we, we couldn't see the people we couldn't see our teachers and our colleagues. So in the end, it felt like we were doing the course by ourselves, instead of doing it in the class and with the people. So, not being able to be with my friends and my colleagues, not being able to ask them what they thought about my idea, I think that was a big disadvantage of online learning. And also the way that we cannot just show something to our tutors in the corridor, or ask them for help. We will need to book a meeting and then in 15 minutes we show them everything and then they quickly feedback obviously it's different. And as I said before, it's not always bad, but communication is easier when we are together.

Academic Support 4:39

Did you feel disadvantaged at all by being in Portugal rather than being in the UK?

Catarina 4:45

Yes, and so being in Portugal was a challenge. And because I felt I was in one country and then studying in the other. It was not just a bad challenge. Back in the beginning, I was very happy saying that I could study in one place and live the other. So it was good. But then obviously, we didn't have access to the same resources as we would have if we were in London. And here I could have some more materials.

So for my course it was good, because I had the materials that my parents have used for their models. So for the first time I wasn't on the phone with my mom asking for the materials, I was actually with her so it was a very different project because of that. It was like my whole family was involved. So yeah, it's like I could have the good of both worlds, studying in London but living in Portugal.

Academic Support 5:52

And how about use of technology? How easy was it to move into the digital world? And what does it feel like being there rather than face to face?

Catarina 6:05

I think it was very difficult for many people to adapt to the digital learning, specially in my course. We have very specific software's to use to finish our products. And we relied on the computers in university. And now we were faced just having our own laptop, or some people just had their phone, obviously no printers. So for many people, it was difficult to present the projects that way. And for me, I can say, I had to use my laptop and then use my brother's laptop because the software was on before windows. It was a challenge, but actually we end up sharing so that's also good.

And it was everything was possible. And I think that's what these time of lockdown also showed is that everything is possible if we want, and if we work to do it. So this idea of online learning, and the advantages and disadvantages, umm they are all part of an adaptation. And as my course director said, 'we are all in this together'. So it means that it's like a community that is building these new way of looking at not only product design, but design and the world. So I think this is my opinion about this, in my experience.

Academic Support 7:39

So do you feel there's been .. do you feel more united as a group or have you always been like that or your course has things changed in that way?

Catarina 7:49

I think things have changed. In one point, we are more separate because it's more difficult to actually find ways to talk with people if they are eight hours away, like in the time zone. It's not easy. But in terms of course, I think we are more united because we have more classes that join all the. the years together. We have more opportunities to collaborate, and talk about our ideas outside of university, to listen to other designers, professional designers. So, I think these are the two different ways that I think communities are being built, but at the same time being split because I feel like it's already difficult to keep in touch with my colleagues.

Academic Support 8:43

What do you think the students say that in China where they are a long way away in terms of time zones, how have they remained part of communication.

Catarina 8:55

So in in my course, the times for our classes are dependent on our time zone. That was something that I had never thought before, but it makes all the sense. They asked us what was our timezone, and then they created forum groups according to these, and then every week we would have one class that's only for our time zone. And then from most of the lectures, they do one in the morning and one in the afternoon, east and west students.

Academic Support 9:28

If you were to give your views to a new or potential student thinking of coming to UAL, what sort of advice would you give having been through what you've been through?

Catarina 9:40

And as I would say to my friends I, I tell you, studying at UAL is really studying in the future of art and design. And if we are in the situation of uncertainty... or if we were in just a normal year it would be the same, you will learn the same just maybe in different ways. I think everything is worth to try. And I would say, if you have the opportunity to come, you should come and see what happens. Your future is important, but also so is the present. So, try to live the present instead of thinking about what are the consequences of coming to UAL because it's always going to be something great.

(10.34) I would say that people are important. So, when we can, you're going to open doors at UAL. I would say you should, you should come because this could be one big opportunity.

And if we say no, it's just not going to happen. And if we say yes, maybe it's going to happen.

I think we always need to be open minded, and especially in this situation of uncertainty. We need to be ready for anything. Creativity shows different solutions that the world is not think about. So, if we have a creative mind and we want to find solutions and think about them, it's a great attitude to have towards this situation in general, and in the situation of applying or coming to UAL. So, I think this is also what I have done before. We were not in this situation, but I was already having an open mind. I think, in UAL, we with everything. We are in the corridor and we are learning with each other. So it's that idea of being creative, open minded and also hardworking that brings us yeah, to the future.

For me, UAL is a different university because everything you need makes a lot of sense. So everything is together as like a thread. So, all the courses are organised to complement each other. This idea of everyone being together in one building at Central Saint Martins. It doesn't feel overwhelming, it feels a creative hotspot. Every student can go to their lives and they will still remember this. So, it's like a connection that we have between us. And I don't think people are afraid of sharing and teaching to each other. They know that this is how we learn. And I think that that's what makes UAL amazing. So it's different and amazing.

Academic Support 12:52

Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you for your patience and your positivity. You're such a positive person. I wish you every success in the future.

Catarina 13:05 Thank you

## Catarina Interview 2019 (long version)

Catarina 0:00

I am Catrina and I'm in foundation in art and design in Central Saint Martins. Three years ago, I really wanted to come to this course but I didn't get the place in the first time I applied.

Neither the second time, but I really wanted to study the course. So, in the meantime, I studied different things. But I always wanted to try again. And this year I applied again, and because my work was stronger, because I learned more in the years that follow the first time I applied. So now, I arrived to these amazing course. And it really changed my life.

Catarina 0:41

I am from Portugal, and there, we don't have stronger education in design and art for high school. Only a degree. You finish high school and then you have to choose one area of design or art, if you want to study. I didn't know what I wanted to study, but I knew I wanted to do art and design. So, since the beginning, I thought the course would be my opportunity to try and then realised what I wanted to do. That's why I wanted to come. And that was what the course gave to me. It gave me experimentation, and then learning how to be creative, and then learning how to make my own decisions as a designer. When I got the place, I thought I wouldn't be in the standard of the course, I don't know, I thought everyone would be just an amazing student and maybe I wasn't creative enough. I knew I wanted to be a designer, but I didn't know what I wanted to do inside design and I thought I wasn't creative in terms of having ideas. So I was worried. But since the first week in this course, we learned how to be really creative because we had to make so many quick choices, and so many quick ....So, I started just exploring them, lots of areas that I didn't know they existed, and then all my worries about not being good enough, they just were repast for the amazing project I had to do, so I just had to worry about the projects not about not being good enough. And everyone was really nice.

Catarina 2:28

What I used to tell my family, when I go back home, and I tell them, I would like to study here, I say, in the first day I arrived, and in my table was someone from Australia, someone from Hong Kong and someone who said, oh, I am from New Zealand, but I studied in the US and now I'm studying in London. I had studied in in Portugal, and everyone in Portugal studies in Portugal. So it was just amazing to in a new world. Because everyone was from different backgrounds. So they had different ways to do art and design. That was what actually made me feel comfortable and creative.

Catarina 3:14

In this course, the tutors gave us briefs for us to explore, sometimes with limits and sometimes with just a broad area that we could explore. And those were really fast paced projects. So, they helped me become a better decision maker. I didn't have time to think so I just had to make. And, in my life before, I wasn't like that, I would

always think before. So, all those projects, all those ideas that I had in the moment, and I had to choose that one, they made me feel more creative, so more secure about it. Sometimes we don't need to think too much when we are designing. We can allow our hands to draw and our head not to think because when we when we are drawing, it's something else that is working, not our brain. And then in the end, we can reflect and then we can choose something and then we can find the reasons for the drawings we made. And we can start a design process after that. But in the beginning, I think, we have to be really open minded and then just take information from the world around us ... all the time researching.

Catarina 4:48

When it came to the first assessment, I felt like I just needed to put everything together everything that I had made before. But it was in a formal way. So before, I could just put all my drawings in the sketch book but then for the first time, I had to create some formal presentation. And I was worried that because we were so many students in my course, we all could feed back each other and we could exchange ideas. And we understood quickly that everyone was stressed in the same way. So it wasn't as stressful as it would have been if I was alone. We get the feedback after the assessment, so we could see a detailed feedback on what we did wrong and what we could improve next time. And it helped me preparing the second segment. It was really good.

Catarina 5:47

My friends from the beginning, they are still my friends now, maybe we would go to exhibitions together. Or we would prepare our portfolio together. Even if there are different areas in UAL, we feel encouraged to be together. And I feel like we are in a great university. So everyone is right in their own way. And when we look at their work, we can learn so much. And we cannot be afraid of asking them how they did it or why they did it because it's not like we are going to take their idea. But we can learn so much with their idea or their design.

Catarina 6:33

We had to present our first project in the first week. And it was like our college transformed in a gallery. So 500 students could see my project. Obviously, I was so worried. Because I had done my project in one day, we had one day to do it. And in the end, I got chosen in my class to speak to everyone. And I knew how to speak English, but it wasn't my first language, so it was difficult. But, I had prepared the text so I could practice. And then they were all smiling when I was talking, so it was easier. And then, when we got to the public view, where we could go to other students, when other students came to my work, they gave me really good feedback. And it was... I don't know the word... it could be something like, it was the moment I needed to feel confident. Yeah. And it was even by other students, so it was amazing.

### Catarina 7:51

When I chose to, to do the pathway that I'm doing now, Product Design, I started knowing that people who I was working with, my colleagues and also my tutors. So, they helped me a lot when I didn't know, the decisions I should do because I was really undecided. And I've never shared all of what I should do, but they just helped me understanding that the decisions are mine, because it's my design. So they helped me understanding and verbalising what I was thinking, but all the decisions I had to do them by myself. And it was just amazing because I felt confident again, and I could become a designer one day.

### Catarina 8:43

So, every course has a different way of teaching and way of assessing. In my course, it was really fast paced, and we had to do several projects, but they were straightforward in some terms, because your life is more than just university. So you need to make sure that you do your best in university, but you also have so many other things inside and outside of university that you can do. And, if you come to London, you have so many things to do. So, you just need to make sure that we manage our time. So I just tried to look in advance to my commitments, and my school work, and my priorities, and always give time to try to do everything. Not all the time is possible but most of the times it's possible. And we just need to know what is important, in that moment. So, in UAL, in most courses, we don't have lessons all day, every day. It's good that we know the days that we don't have lessons so we can concentrate some work in those days. I have a job on weekends, and then it leaves me three days to go to university, that we have lessons in three days. And then we have two other days that usually we need them to.. to think further in the project or to do more research. You have amazing libraries in UAL. So, it's nice to spend some time there and think about how we can further our research. And then, usually UAL societies, there are so many societies, and they are all in the evening. So, anyone from any course could join. And, one was on a Monday, the other was Tuesday and the other was Thursday. So they were.. it was nice because it was after my school days as well. So, my week would be three full days but then two empty days that I could work or also relax or wander around London. And then two days in the weekend where I would work in my job. I joined Arts Active - throughout the week, they have different lessons, and you can choose, so I went to some of those. And then I did the drama society as well, and Christian union. Part time jobs here are really nice for students because we can change our shifts or our availability, depending, or according to university. So my availability was only Saturday and Sunday, but sometimes, if it was my interview month, like was January in February, I asked them little work one day a week and so things can be changed and adapted.

Catarina 12:08

So before I came here, I was I was worried. And I think if I could go back now I would say don't worry. Because if you are now like all summer, just waiting for September, I don't think it's good. I think you just should just enjoy your own town while you are there. And then you come and you live a new life, you start a new life here. And over worrying is not the best solution. You should just try to enjoy the moments and live when you are there. And everyone is in the same situation when you start the first year. So everyone will... they don't know each other, and they don't know anyone, so you will find friends easily.

Catarina 13:03

When I came to London to do the enrollment, but then we didn't have one week of lessons. And in that week, the Students Union, they organise some programmes. And it was nice to go some of those programmes like gallery exhibitions or picnics. Because in those moments, I could meet new people. And I started knowing people who had come to my course. So when we first came, we already knew each other. And those people are still the ones I spend my time nowadays. So, it was nice that those people in the first week and we are together doing the work. So, even when we choose different courses and next year, we will choose different courses but we will always be friends, I think.

Catarina 13:58

I just want students to feel confident and to enjoy the opportunity. Yeah.

Academic Support 14:08

Great. Thank you so much for your time, Catherina. I'm so pleased you've had such a positive experience. And that you are staying. Yeah. Great. Thank you.

Catarina Thank you.