

Lourdes 0:00

So my name is Lourdes and I studied my BA in London. I did graphic design but I always knew that I wanted to work within the field of art. And I was considering doing curating and UAL obviously was a really good option. I already knew people who had done this masters before me. And I came to the interview and then I got the good news. And now I'm here and the course it's a MA in Curating and Collections at Chelsea College of Art, UAL.

Academic Support 0:31

So, what did you think it was going to be like?

Lourdes 0:34

Um, I knew it was going to be a one-year course. So I knew probably was going to be pretty intense. So we learn a lot. And one of the things that I really like about the course is that you have both sides. You do theory and you do a lot of research. But at the same time, you have the opportunity to work doing exhibitions, which was something that I really enjoyed and I was interested in doing also practical side of curating. And I think in that side, the course is great because you can work with both hands. So David, which is our course leader, always says that to be a good curator you have to know how to play the piano with both hands. So, do a lot of research, but at the same time you have to practice doing exhibitions and working with artists.

Academic Support 1:21

What are your fears? And what were your hopes before you came here?

Lourdes 1:26

I think one of my biggest fears was the critical research paper, which is a paper that we have to submit at the end of the course. Because I don't come from a background of history of art like most of my mates do, I come from graphic design and especially since English is not my first language I was a bit afraid of how would that work, if it would be easy to adapt to the new system, knowing how to do all the referencing, know how to write in academic English and I think that was one of my biggest fears. But it's great because in UAL we have a big support as we have the Language Support Centre so we can go there and have tutorials. And I think one of my biggest fears was that part of writing mostly. But then once I was here, I saw that I didn't have to be afraid of it because it's really organic and it works perfectly fine. If you like what you do, it's all right.

Academic Support 2:23

Could you talk a little bit about the challenges of doing a one year MA?

Lourdes 2:27

I think the biggest challenge is that you have to learn a lot in a really short time. But I think there is also positive side of it. Because you learn by doing and you learn by doing really fast. So once you go out there in the real world, you will have like six months to prepare an exhibition, while here maybe we have one. So once you learn how to do it really fast, and then obviously when you have more time you can be more relaxed and perhaps you can be more specific. So I think the biggest challenge of doing one year MA is the timeframe, everything has to be really quick. I think I would say that.

Academic Support 3:08  
How do you cope with that?

Lourdes 3:10

I think we always work in teams, which is really good because we always divide the work. And sometimes we choose perhaps a part that we are more comfortable with. And then for another project, maybe we choose a part that we haven't done before. So that way you can divide the work and you can work in different parts and then you you don't have to do everything by yourself, which is really good. You can rely on your team and you can work with other people. It always works much better.

Academic Support 3:38

Tell me about collaboration and teamwork. What are the challenges and what are the what's great about it?

Lourdes 3:45

I think the biggest challenge if you do something creative is that everyone has a really strong opinion. And everyone has completely different ideas and completely different, maybe, tastes. All of us have different interests and then perhaps we choose one and then yours is not chosen. So when you're a bit upset by it, but then I think that's also a really important part of the process, you have to learn to work with other people. And you have to learn that not always your idea is going to be chosen. And you still have to work with it. And you still have to give the most and try to make a great exhibition out of it. So I think that would be one of the biggest challenge. But I think there is also a really positive reinforcement in working with other people because you're always going to learn from them. And sometimes when you do something creative, you're really focused on what you like and what your interested in and you don't see the rest of it. When you work with other people then you have your pushed to know the other side of it, which also is really positive for our development.

Academic Support 4:49

And how to deal with crises and lack of confidence and demoralisation and disappointment? Where do you get your support?

Lourdes 4:58

I think there is great sources at university. But most of the times, I would always talk with my friends. I think I feel more confident talking with a friend and you know that everyone is going through the same thing. And probably, a friend of yours has had to deal with the same thing that you're dealing at the moment. So I think it's always good to have that kind of support.

Academic Support 5:21

And talk about developing relationships with the tutors and with your fellow students?

Lourdes 5:28

I think that's one of the biggest differences that I see here in London compared to when I was studying in Spain and is that you really create relationships with your tutors and with your like really close relationships with your with your friends. While

in Spain, perhaps we were more colleagues like work colleagues here, you know how it's important to develop that networking. So it's really important to go to all the events that are taking part in the university. So you know, not only people from your course, but people from other courses and then you perhaps go to events like Chelsea Space where you know your tutors are going to be there, and also events outside university, which is really great because that network is important. And when you work, you know that probably some of your mates are going to be working in other galleries around the world. So it's always important to keep in touch. So every time that you need to... maybe someone from a gallery in Vienna, we have friends from my course that will probably be working there, which is really great. And also the tutors are really close. And it's a really... I would say it's a really good relationship, it's not just a tutor and teacher, but you also become friends. And you can always go to them whenever you need help and they will always be happy to help you.

Academic Support 6:39

Assessment, marking, judgments, presentations, tell me about ...how do you approach that?

Lourdes 6:50

Okay, that was one of my fears as well. I didn't mention it before. One of my fears was assessment because obviously that the system is completely different here as it was in Spain. But I have to say that it's really easy to get used to it. Because it's a really fair system. And you know, if you work hard, chances are you're going to get a good grade. And for me it was because the system allows you to have an A, which is between 80% and 100%. While in Spain, you can only get an A if you get 100%, which is really difficult. And here, I've been told that nobody can be perfect, it's really difficult to get 100% because it's, it's almost impossible to do everything perfect. But if you work hard, you can get to an 80% or 90%. So I think if you love what you do, you don't have to worry about assessment because it's going to come really easily. You have to keep on working really consistently. So don't leave everything till the last minute because if you do that it's gonna go wrong. But if you work consistently and you organise your time you can definitely do it, you don't have to worry about it.

Lourdes 8:03

I think criticism, it's something that we usually regarded as being negative. While I think most of the learning comes from criticism, and here in the UK is great, because when we do an exhibition two days after the opening, we have a crit session. And the tutors in other people from other courses would come in would say what they think about our exhibition. And I think you can learn the most from that. Because sometimes you are really focused on what you're doing that you don't consider other options, other things that could have been done. And it's great when someone comes and tells you, have you considered this or have you looked at that, or have you seen someone who has done something similar to yours, but in that way? So I think criticism is always something positive because it's what is going to make you grow is going to make you be more considerate of others people's opinion, which is always something important to them.

Academic Support 8:58

So if you were to give a few suggestions to somebody thinking of coming to study at UAL, what suggestions would you offer based on your experience?

Lourdes 9:09

I would say don't be afraid and do it, you will regret if you don't do it. But if you do it, you will never regret about it. It's a great university that you learn a lot. And you can really get a network and you can see how we work together with people from the arts course, with people from completely different courses. And the great thing about UAL is that, being a big university, I'm in the Chelsea campus, but I always come here [LCC] to the library, and it's not a problem. It's like a big family and becomes a big family. So I would say if someone has a lot of fears or think that they're are not confident with their English or they're not confident because they don't know if they're going to meet their marking criteria and things like that. I would tell them to apply and do it because once they're here, they will see that it's really easy. You get a lot of support. And you can definitely do it if you're passionate about it. Do it.

Academic Support 10:05

Are there any things that you feel you'd like to particularly talk about?

Lourdes 10:12

Not... well, maybe about living in London?

Academic Support 10:14

Yeah.

Lourdes 10:15

Okay, well, in relation to stay in something creative, I think it's a great place to be because even if I have lectures, almost every day, I always go to exhibitions. There is a big cultural programme and there's always something going on. So I think studying here is something creative. It's great because you can meet a lot of people from the industry. And if you are proactive and do things and go to events and go to exhibitions, London is the place to be because you have so many things happening at the same time. You can almost feel a bit overwhelmed because it's like 'oh my god, I have all of these things that I want to go and I want to do but I don't know if I will have time'. But then if you organise yourself it's great because you can really take advantage of being in a city like this, that there is opportunities everywhere. That was what made me decide to come to London, mainly. Yeah.

Academic Support 11:07

And what are your plans for the future?

Lourdes 11:10

I don't like that question. I think that's a really tricky question.

Academic Support 11:16

Okay, what are your thoughts about my next steps?

Lourdes 11:19

My thoughts? So we will finish the course on July. And my idea in the short term, it's to apply to as many many galleries as possible and try and get an internship in a gallery that I like. I'd like to experiment a lot and if I am able to work a bit within the design team, that would be really great. So I don't know if I have a plan long term. I

want to stay in London and I want to work here. Well my plan like a short time for August would be to find a job in a gallery here.

Academic Support 11:55

Well, really best of luck.

Lourdes 11:57

Thank you.

Academic Support 11:58

Thank you so much for talking to us.

Lourdes 12:00

Thank you. It was great.