

Rose 0:00

My name is Rose, I'm from Brighton. I did my foundation in Leeds. And then I came down to London to study Textile Design at Chelsea. So, I was there during first year. And then, for the beginning of second year, I went away and did Erasmus in Berlin, which was amazing. And then came back and completed my studies. And during my last year, I had 'extenuating circumstances'. So, I took the summer out and then finished my degree in September. And although it was a textile design degree, I kind of did more like graphics and animation. That's a good thing, I think, about the course is that if you want to stray away from the discipline that you're studying, it's totally fine to, they kind of almost celebrate that. And there's a lot of freedom. But at the same time, like for something like graphics, you have to kind of coordinate that yourself. Because obviously, if you're studying textile design, you've got the looms, you've got the sewing machine, you've got all of that setup, but they don't have the specialist knowledge for like another discipline. So it's very free, which is amazing. And there's a kind of quite a lot of conversations between the different disciplines as well, which is nice.

Academic Support 1:13

You mention 'extenuating circumstances'. Can you explain to someone what that means and how you get them and what happens?

Rose 1:21

Sure, so obviously, it depends at what point in the year, it happens. But for me, it happened just before finals. So, it was after I handed in my dissertation. EC stands for extenuating circumstances. It's basically if something happens, which is too explosive in your personal life, that you can't continue, or that you need a bit of extra support or a bit of extra time. And then the third option is that you can defer the whole year and you can start again in September. So, there's a kind of an application process. You have to fill out a form and supply evidence. So, in my case, it was so extreme that they were like, okay, that's fine, don't worry about it. And then you either get it confirmed or rejected. But I think most of the time, they're really, really empathetic and understanding.

Academic Support 2:14

So, you're now an alumni, you've now completed your degree. Can you reflect back on your three years, really to tell somebody new, or potential student, your journey and the reflections you have on what you learned and what you would pass on to somebody thinking about coming up? Big Question.

Rose 2:34

Oh, yeah, very big question. Um, first of all, the people that you meet there will just be your best mates probably for the rest of your life because you've been through such a huge thing together. And I mean, I would literally pay those fees just to have the people that I have in my life now. I'm so grateful for that. And you're kind of like slugging through it together. And it's a real feeling of community, which is amazing. I think that you just need to yeah, stay really strong in times of stress. Like, for example, the run up to the dissertation was very, very intense, but we were all kind of leaning on each other. And I went in thinking that I was really, really into print, which I am still really into. But like I said, before, you can kind of manipulate that to how you want. But they also ... they educate you in how to think like a designer, and

how to kind of, for example, view an object and how to transfer that into an art piece or research in different ways. And ...so then those skills get to be carried on. But I feel maybe they didn't prepare me enough for industry. For example, we never really got taught how to do repeat print, even though we were studying textiles, which, to me is pretty crazy. And I would say, before you decide on a course, just make sure that you really know that that's right for you. And don't just think about it ... kind of as what you want to learn, but how that's going to carry you into your future and where that's going to take you. And what skills you're going to learn and is it going to be too small of a subject to then extend back out, or the other way around? Like, I don't know, if you're going to be studying fine art, maybe you want to be studying sculpture and drawing? Just really, really consider it basically, I think. Because I don't know if I did that much. I think I just thought I wanted to do surface design. And I did that and then I kind of changed my mind. So, yeah, just really think it through before you head off to do your degree, I guess.

Academic Support 4:50

Could you talk a bit about the dissertation. What is it? And what do you think about it? And if someone is really scared about writing, what would you say to them?

Rose 4:59

So, you'll have three main deadlines...on my course anyway. The first was at the end of second year, where you have to write your kind of plan. And then the next one is in October of third year, where you have to hand in... I think we had like 3000 words. And then the final hand-in was in end of January, or like mid January. And that was the full 6000-8000 words. I was really scared about the writing aspect and the academic aspect. And the way that I tackled that is that I just started really early. Like a lot of students on my course, they kind of forgot about it until October. Whereas me, I was freaking out about it. So, I started in August, like researching, I was at LCC because it's got a really good library And it's a really kind of good environment. So, I was just in here in the summer studyingand because your dissertation will change so much throughout the course.... like when I started, it was one thing, when I handed it in, it was something completely different.

6:00

Make sure you reference from the very beginning. That's so important. There's nothing worse than leaving it till the end and then just completely, like losing one of your references and having to replace it with something else because you can't reference it properly. And make sure it's something that you're really interested in. And not something that ...I don't know ... you've just come up with the last minute. I think that's what happened to me as well. We had like a meeting session and I hadn't thought of anything. So I kind of just came up with something on the spot. And then that's where my dissertation came from. I had a lot of fun with it, you do, because when you're working really hard towards a deadline, it feels amazing. It feels really, really hard. And at the time you hate it. But then when it's all over, it feels amazing. And yeah, just don't leave it to the last minute, I guess it's the same with anything, it is easier said than done. But I'm really glad that I made that decision.

Academic Support 6:48

And what's the value of writing a dissertation?

Rose 6:50

What writing my dissertation gave me was more of an understanding of the context of my creative discourse and research. Because I was writing it about like online identity, it also gave me a bit more of an understanding of, like, my own place within my dissertation, if you know what I mean. So, I was ... I was researching for myself as well as for my dissertation. And yeah, I think it's also really good to have this kind of like academic deadline because you are going to have to do that kind of thing in industry and in the real world. So it's good to have that challenge set for you and know that you can do it and you can finish it.

Academic Support 7:38

What value that offers to be finding out about other people and other ideas? How does that fit into your own work?

Rose 7:49

I guess it just contextualises why you're doing your practice. I mean, the thing is, for me, like, my practice wasn't necessarily ideas-based. It wasn't kind of revolving around a certain message or anything like that. Because it doesn't have to be. I was just having a lot of fun with it. For some people, it was really important, but for me, it wasn't necessarily. And that's also the other good thing about uni... or like about my course, in textile design at Chelsea is that you didn't have to take it really seriously, you didn't kind of have to go really deep. I mean, go and study fine art if you want to do that. But on textiles, you could just have loads of fun and, you know, create nonsense, which is what I did. So, yeah, maybe I'm not the best person to answer that question.

Academic Support 8:34

Assessment and grades and critiques and all those areas... reflecting back, tell us about how you felt and what you think now.

Rose 8:49

I think it really depends on where you are, in your own personal life, and where you are in your kind of creative output. I think, for me, and first year, it was a bit of a struggle, you're kind of finding your way a little bit ...not just in terms of the studies but also being in a new city and being around loads of new people. So yeah, you work as hard as you can, in your current kind of situation. Then after a while, when you kind of learn how things go, it's very good to get feedback and to have your one-on-one tutorials with your tutors, because they help a lot ...and they do understand you and like try to be on the same page as you, quite a lot. For me, I don't think the assessment was as important. I think more of the struggle was like an internal one and trying to force creativity out of your brain, when it wasn't happening. Yeah, for me, I'm more of ...the way that I work, is I'll work a lot over a long period of time, whereas for some people, they wouldn't. And they would be off doing other things... and then right before deadline, or like a week before deadline, they would be completely cramming. So, assessments for me weren't a major thing ... but I mean, obviously they are and in terms of the dissertation, like, yeah, it was it was huge for me. I mean, if you can hand-in your dissertation, 10 minutes before the deadline, which is what I did, then you try and do that. But yeah....

You mentioned it was quite tough in the first year, you were just new and everything was quite... you're quite vulnerable. So how did you come to view being assessed by your peers, by your other students, by teachers criticising your work? Is there a value in that? And what value? And how do you deal with criticism that perhaps you don't agree with?

Rose 10:38

I think it's always really important to listen to any criticism that people have. And don't let your ego get in the way and just take notes and listen and try to step out of your own creative bubble. And, like I say, just absorb any constructive criticism that you get given. For me, the critics or the tutorials, they were less of a feedback and more of a conversation, to try and draw out everything that's going on underneath. And what do you really want to do? And what are you really trying to make and what you're really trying to say. And then, a lot of the time you would come up with something that you hadn't even realised was happening, through through that conversation, rather than a tutor looking at your work and saying 'this is good, this is not good', which may happen to you at school, but it doesn't happen, so much, in my experience, at Chelsea or at university. Yeah, I mean, your relationship with your tutor, is less of a teacher/student role and more casual... yeah, slightly more casual than what you may have experienced before.

Academic Support 11:47

If you were to look back on the journey of ... the three years. Are there definite phases? Was the first year very different to the second year?

Rose 11:57

Yeah, I mean, like as I say, my case was a special one, because I was in first year and then second year I was doing Erasmus, for most of the year. And then third year, I had my extenuating circumstances. So yeah, it was quite an unusual experience for me. Like, it's not what most people experience from university, I don't think. And, I mean, first year was pretty crazy as well, because you're trying to adjust to this way of life and being in the capital city and trying to navigate yourself, in all senses. I do think, you have to step up to the mark, which makes you grow. That's across the board in any aspect of life, you've got to carry on doing things that make you uncomfortable and carry on stretching your comfort zone, because otherwise you're never going to grow and learn. So yeah, ...you just kind of ...you just managed to keep up most of the time and push yourself learn ...and you know, stay as late as you can at university until they chuck you out at 9pm, or whatever. And, it's a good feeling... it feels very healthy and productive andyeah, pushing yourself like that, it feels good. So yeah.

Academic Support 12:21

And now?

Rose 13:12

Looking back on it, I definitely would have done things differently. But you, you can't really you can't really speculate. I think, I probably would have tried to learn more of the technical-like side of things.. maybe ...like you know, ...make use of the facilities that you have, like, for example,you've got like a woodworking shop downstairs, and you've got the looms, and you've got the digital

embroidery machine. And I didn't learn to use any of that ...you've got ceramics and, you know, really make the most of it, because after uni, you're going to have to be paying a lot of money to have access to that kind of thing. And even if you just spend a day there, just messing around, or, you know, working out how things work, I would say definitely make the most of that.

Academic Support 14:02
Anything else?

Rose 14:05
Anything else? I think, maybe don't get too carried away in what you think you want, like visually ... what you think you want the outcome to be, or like the road... don't get too carried away with the concept. But just try to make something that you're going to be proud of and you're going to want to have in your portfolio and that demonstrate your skills and abilities and that will look good for an employer.

I mean, this is the point that we're going to university, right, so that we can have something to show our future employers. So think about that as well. Yeah. And spend time doing things...don't give up. If you start to do one drawing and it looks awful, do another one and another one and another one and if you've done 100 of them, together they might look amazing, for example. Or, I don't know, just push on and keep creating.

Academic Support 15:00
Thank you very much indeed and best of luck in your career.

Rose 15:04
Thank you