UAL Student Voices: Dongha

SPEAKERS
Dongha, Victoria (Academic Support),

Victoria 00:00
So, hello, welcome Dongha.

Dongha 00:03
Hello.

Victoria 00:04
I'm really interested to find out your observations coming to UAL and coming to the UK. So, over to you really...

Dongha 00:15
Thank you very much. My name is Dongha Kim. I'm from South Korea. Currently I'm studying at LCF. BA Hair & Make-up and Prosthetics for Performance. Right now, I'm heading to almost the end of my first year, and also my first experience in the UK.

[00:37]
I recognise myself as a mature student. So, I'm a bit like seven or eight years older than my classmate. I have been doing freelancing in the film or independent film, or some like K-Pop industry, as a hair and makeup artist. And basically, I was like a backstage girl on the shooting field. I haven't had any like art background before. So, I haven't had any like proper teacher who taught me how to do makeup or hair. So, I was like a little bit straight cut. So, the first time when I came to LCF, the approach was absolutely different. I just have my working experience, like it should be more commercial. Like everything should be very well organised. And also, teamwork. But like here is a bit more like a training myself to have a view as an artist, not really like a technician. That, of course, we got trained to have a good technique. But here is more like I become a designer. So, that was a shocking moment for me.

[01:54]
Like I haven't imagined myself that I could confidently do drawing. Drawing was kind of main communication here to design and also showcase my design also to do collaboration with the other students. I feel like I sometimes feel lost, because I haven't done like that kind of art things before, I feel a little bit difficult to catch up with the other student who has done Art Foundation or art things from A Level. So, during first few months, I need a little bit more time to get used to how to do like sketch journal and how to make an art portfolio and how to do technical drawing. So, organising my artwork, it takes a little bit more time for me to do it. But after looking through my friends' work, or the other courses work, I naturally got used to how it works.

[03:04]
So, what I would say is like, just try to get a lot of references, and don't be afraid of asking for help. So, sometimes I feel like asking a question or asking for help is a bit reluctant... sometimes I feel reluctant to ask it. But there are a lot of academic support, and also there is a mentoring session between the tutors. During the collaboration with the other course student, you can ask a question, like how you do it, and also talk with the tutors. I think that's the most important one, but university here, we have a very strong community. So, if you knock the door to ask for the help, there are so many people willing to help you. So don't be afraid of like doing failure. So, I did a lot of failure working on my project, like from very simple drawing. But here I found that reflection work is very important in terms of my development and also in terms of artwork. So, each of the failure or like success during my experimentation that become my asset of myself.

[04:32]
So basically, just try and do a lot. Experiment is the key. Yeah, that's the thing that I really want to... I really want to say and as an international student and also mature student, it was a bit tricky to get used to the culture here. Like for example, like what I knew was WhatsApp for the messenger. But I found out Snapchat was also very widespread. So, it's a bit tricky to understand, like what was the real trend in the culture, or was the main issue in the unique culture. So, it'd be really helpful for you to get used to the culture.

[05:20]
Also, like as a makeup student, Netflix series are a very good key for the reference of like makeup or hair and the trendy fashion style and costumes, and also the films' performances. Also, London is such a big culture city. So, I would say, making a bucket list would be helpful, because after you come here, you might be really, really busy to get used to like how to settle here, how to organise everything, like from visa to like study. But I recommend that it might be tricky, but try to spare your time like to go to a lot of galleries and museums, and performances and that experience will definitely give you such a good inspiration, and broader view. And also, immersive theatre, which is not really common where I came from, that gave me such a good like inspiration.

[06:31]
I've never imagined that as a makeup student, I would to get access to 3D printing or any other type of new, like savvy techniques. But when I try it, and when I studied it, I found myself that I also could do it. And also, there are a lot of workshops and technician tutors that might help you for your project. So don't be afraid of using new techniques or skills. Right now, I got really interested in 3D printing for prosthetics, which I've never ever imagined. So, the environment basically made me think about the new ways to achieve my experimental process. Like basically don't be afraid of trying it. I think that's the key.

Victoria 07:25
There is such wealth of information that you've just given. I've got so many questions, really. I mean, as somebody who's worked a career in the industry, and then comes to study here, in what way, is it different? And what do you have to get used to?

Dongha 07:42
I think the basic key is, here, there are no fixed answers. So, here is more like emphasising the process of my thinking, rather than a result. So, if I have done something very nice picture, or something very nice makeup, here is basically, you need to explain what makes you inspired. And why did you use this formula? Or this texture? What character did you design and why this multi touch is here? So, for the first stuff that I did, I just like very vaguely did it. I just basically approached the way that I used to work because I need to get it done within the limited time. But here, I have more responsibility to design some of my work. So basically, you need to become a storyteller about your design. So, if one of the random audiences asked me, like, why did you choose this texture? Why did you use this colour? And why did you like, draw the eyebrow like that? I need to answer that question. So, you need to basically make a book about the story about your design. I think that was the huge difference.

Victoria 09:04
And how has it changed your perspective and your understanding of your craft and yourself as a designer in your practice?

Dongha 09:12
In terms of practice, I always think about how to deliver it to the audience. Right now I'm trying to make it more understandable to the audience. So, I don't try to make myself just feel satisfied and get it. But it's not basically just in terms of aesthetic, as a designer, like we think about our community, society, and also the whole industry and how to make a movement. So, having like, more like heavy shoulder (I'm not sure if it is the right expression). Having more responsibility upon myself. I think that's the biggest change for me.

Victoria 10:03
Earlier on, you talked about failure. And I wondered if you have an example of what the failure had taught you.

Dongha 10:10
So, since I studied prosthetics, what I used to know is about like just using the silicone or just using gelatins and get the moulds done. But I found another like experimental technique. The software software called Blender for 3D printing. So, to understand very basic thing, it takes like whole day, or even like more than whole day, I need to like ask for the tutors, ask my technician teacher how to use it properly. So, for the first time, I don't know how to like reset the whole page, sometimes I just like blow up all of the work, but I just try to, I try not to, like give up.

[11:02]
And also, I found that if you invest certain amount of time, like also including Photoshop or like Adobe programme, I know that it's very, very difficult for the first stage, but if you get used to it, and you've played with the programme, and then you have another path to document your inspiration and the design, in addition to just a paper and the pen. So, one of my favourites was like using Blender and just blow away every work that I have done because I didn't know how to use it properly. But like after I give it a try and made several mistakes and several failures, I knew myself that in this area, I need a professional view to ask what should I have done like to improve my skills or my design? That kind of,
inspiration and the view, was the thing that I gained from the failure. So yeah, you will get an insight after the failure.

**Victoria** 12:17
Who you very influenced by now that perhaps are new to you? New designers, new ideas.

**Dongha** 12:23
My favourite artists used to be Damien Hirst, and still he is very inspiring. Right now, I think I suddenly forgot the name... oh, yeah. Yeah, the one is called Extraweg, so he's like a 3D animation designer. So, if you just type Extraweg, I think he's a German designer, but he affected our emotions and a very hilarious way with texture. So, which I felt very interested in. And also, as a prosthetic student, texture is one of the most important things to depict. So basically, inspiration comes from everywhere, I would never imagine that I would get the inspiration from that short clip from the animation.

**Victoria** 13:19
There's something very brave and courageous about coming from a totally different culture. And then starting a course, in another language, how was it for you? What are the biggest challenges that you found? And how did you deal with them?

**Dongha** 13:37
I'd say, like in terms of language, since it is not a mother tongue. Although I study a lot, like after coming here, like I feel very difficult in terms of the accent, and also in terms of getting used to some of the terminology that we use. And also, one of the most difficult things is understanding British joke. I still am kind of struggling sometimes during the lecture, I needed to Google some of the pronunciations or some terminologies. But I think the best way is just like if you're really not sure, just like ask the tutors like what it really means and also the terminology. And in terms of the British show, I think like just looking through like Netflix and get used to it. Everyone's said that it takes time.

[14:34]
Also, there are a lot of times that you should give a presentation. Honestly, I faced performance phobia after I came here because I think that because of my pronunciation, my accent is a bit heavy, I was afraid of like speaking out in English in front of people. But I always just say, don't think like that, like... to be confident is the key. I think for me to overcome that kind of anxiety and that kind of phobia... I just like... voluntarily, try to get engaged in a lot of speaking stuff, like LCC students or LCF student, they just pop off with the interview, like in the canteen, or their student work. So, make your opportunity to speak, and then get more confidence about it. Like sometimes for the international students, it is easy to speak with, just with the mother tongue, and just get stuck with the culture that I I got used to, but don't be afraid of like getting away from the comfort zone. I think that's the main key.

**Victoria** 15:52
Are there other things that you think would be useful to express?

**Dongha** 16:14
I think like, having a working experience in advance, it could be your advantage also disadvantage. I felt that I got a bad habit when I do my makeup or designing my work. But I found that if you have a work experience, you have a fully understand how collaboration work is going and how the collaboration should go and how you would know if it is on the right track or not, how collaborative stuff should be improved. So use the skill that you have efficiently. I think that's also a good asset of myself too.

Victoria 16:49
Do you have many other mature student friends that you talk to? Is it necessary? Is it important to do you feel that your experience is very different to a lot of the people around you?

Dongha 17:01
For the first time, I feel a bit like very isolated and sometimes really hard to understand what is going on. But, but in terms of the experience, like I'm a student wrapped in my course right now. If there's like issues or any feedbacks, I can like organise what the issues are deliver it to my course. One of the good things is you can also, like get along with the MA students too. And then your pool would be more broader, too. So don't feel too isolated. Like nobody would care about your age. I really want to say this one. Yeah.

Victoria 17:47
Use it to your advantage.

Dongha 18:04
Yeah, sure.

Victoria 18:05
Anything else you want to say? Because it's such an interesting perspective.

Dongha 17:56
Just be confident and don't be afraid of failure. Like even though there was a bad feedback and that becomes such a good asset and also good fertilizer of your development. There are a lot of support from the university to the student. It could be an academic support when you're struggling with the writing or English. Or if you have any like issues with your mental health, you can register the session with the mental health advisor teachers. So, when you have something that makes you really feel anxious or feel really sometimes could be very frustrated and depressed, please don't be afraid to ask for the help, knock the door to ask for the help. A lot of international students, because they are away from the family and comfort zone, make them feel isolated. But the university stands for [you] also and do remember that there are a lot of support. Don't be afraid to ask for the help.

Victoria 19:24
Thank you so much.