

## Art & Design Inspiration

### Summer Study Abroad Programme, University of Sunderland , UK \*

**\*Stella Maris College (Autonomous) , Department of Fine Arts under the aegis of Dr. Margaret Thomas collaborated with the University of Sunderland , UK to create the summer study programme for 2017. Nineteen students from across the department, accompanied by Associate Professor, Dr. Lakshmi Priya Daniel, were selected to attend the academic programme for two weeks from 16 to 30 July 2017.**



### **Dr. Lakshmi Priya Daniel recalls:**

Even as the memories become hazy like the beautiful *Waterlilies* painting of Monet, the heightened sense of focus on certain aspects of the summer study in the UK are etched in the heart and mind. We reached UK to find ourselves surrounded by the warmth of the faculty in the University of Sunderland as they literally took us under their wings. As we worked our way through the nuances of registering and library orientation, Mr. Gurpreet Singh who had organised the entire programme, taught us the ropes and gave us the impetus to launch ourselves straightaway into the world of learning.

Our tutor for the art inspiration, Mr. Peter Wolland, was truly a motivating force who doggedly led us through studio sessions and gallery visits in Newcastle. The Tyne riverfront which houses the huge Baltic Gallery was one of the first of many forays into the world of contemporary art which was followed up by art making exercises in the Sunderland university studios housed in the Priestman building. The following days were even more exciting: a visit to the National Glass Centre where we sand cast a fish form and saw a glass blowing demonstration. The afternoon was spent in the media centre where we did interviews in the local community radio station hosted by the University of Sunderland. These academic and fun-filled days were interspersed with field visits to the gorgeous Durham Cathedral and the Beamish village which is a living museum filled with artifacts from 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century England.

One of the highlights of our sojourn was the visit to Alnwick Castle acclaimed for the filming of the Harry Potter movies and its fantastic gardens! Enroute to the castle in the company of art professor and acclaimed artist, Ms. Virginia Bodman, we also stopped by to see the Angel of the North, a gigantic metal sculpture. The next day being a Sunday, a few of us chose to visit Scotland, a mere three- hour journey into the magical city of Edinburgh.

A week had already flown by and we were ready to for the final leg of our academic activity with Mr. Manny Ling who held us in thrall for two days, working our way through letterforms and calligraphy to finally create our own booklets which recorded our days in the UK. All the works done were exhibited in the Priestman gallery and an evaluative critique was held where the students' enthusiastic presentation of their works were well received by the art and design professors. This finale was not the end of our journey for the next three days were to be spent in the bustling city of London accompanied by artist couple, Professor James Hutchinson and his wife Ms. Helena Hutchinson. There we spent our days visiting the world famous galleries and museums such as the National Gallery at Trafalgar Square, Tate Britain and Tate Modern, Contemporary Design Museum, amongst others, which satiated our quest for art and design inspiration. As we said our goodbyes to our artist professors and friends we came to realize that the entire duration of the two- week long trip had gone by like a long held dream which will be cherished by each and every one for all time to come.



**And as we hear some students' voices we understand the tremendous impact the trip has had on them:**

....Our first studio session with Mr. Peter Wolland was based on idea generation in art where we were asked to sketch subjects that capture our attention within a few minutes. This helped us a great deal in making confident and bold sketches in the next few classes. We then started to walk around the city capturing photographs of anything that attracted our eyes. Alongside, we also developed the habit of sketching visuals of interest. Visiting heritage sites such as Durham Cathedral, Millenium Bridge, Sage Gateshead , Laing Gallery, Baltic Gallery, Beamish Live Museum and Alnwick Castle enriched our knowledge on the cultural and artistic significance of the regions around the north eastern part of the country. Inbetween these visits, were the series of workshops on figure painting, clay modeling, sand casting, glass blowing, typography and collage that served as an eye opener to look at various contemporary ideas coming up these days.

-Adhvaiha Ravindran

We really cherished our classes at the University and enjoyed our stay at Sunderland. We had a couple of theory sessions about art and conceptual ideas which were very informative and interesting.

- Aishwarya Gurusamy

Overall my UK experience was one of the best I could ever ask for. I had really learnt a lot of things, which changed me, and now I am concentrating more on what I want to do to succeed in life.

-Ankitha Jagdish Prasad Chouhan

My days were packed with both indoor and outdoor study sessions. I was introduced to different activities and forms of art like sculpture making and glass blowing. Discussions about the various designs and concepts and the brainstorming were educational. During the sessions, I had to make a collage book – and I chose to experiment with digits and designs while I created this travelogue-like scrapbook. My glass casting workshop resulted in a Van Gogh's *Starry Night* - inspired sculpture of a fish.

I also gave my first radio interview with the university's in house radio channel Spark FM. I visited some typical country side buildings like the Baltic Gallery and Laing Gallery in Newcastle; I was left awe-struck with the trams and vintage garages at the Beamish Living Museum; I stood admiring the magnificent Durham Cathedral for hours;I was fascinated with the one day trip to Edinburgh where the Bagpipers and the Scottish museum kept me company; and I pinched myself back to reality when I was at the Alnwick Castle (where most Harry Potter movies were shot).

The study session culminated in an art exhibition and a critique session with the professors. At the end of the assessment, to my utter surprise, I was adjudged the Best Student who had actively participated in all avenues during the study programme. This feeling is still sinking in. It's all so surreal. I feel thrilled even now. As a trophy, I was given the glass bowl that was blown in the national glass center studio that day in our presence. Yes, it was a difficult task to bring it back home safely, but I hand-carried it carefully, arriving safely with no cracks at all!

- Lakshmi Olagammai Ramanathan

Apart from the academics we had much fun playing, cooking, chatting, .etc. The dining room was filled with the smell of over toasted bread every morning, as we had to rush to catch the bus. Busy mornings, tired afternoons, hungry evenings and sleepless nights were part of my story all day. There was much more to learn other than from the syllabus, each sight taught me something. The way the flowers were being arranged

on the roadside, the colour combinations, everything taught me some lesson which I had to take back with me.

- Carolyn Susanna Paul

When in London we saw many museums.....Among them, I really liked the National Gallery. This was one of the best galleries I have ever seen. Most of the paintings of the artists that I have studied in college were put up on the wall. I couldn't believe that these were the actual paintings! ....I thought that this would be my last chance to see all these great works, so I looked at each and every painting carefully and took photos of the details. My experience of the UK trip was something special because I know that this opportunity is not something easy to get.... I have learned a lot apart from academics, team work and self-confidence.

- Hannarae Yang

It is said that every artist needs to have talent and creativity. But according to me, more importantly, an artist needs a muse, an inspiration. I'm blessed to say that this magnificent trip to the fabulous land of Britain has given me immense inspiration that I'm sure will last for a lifetime, thanks to the renowned University of Sunderland and my college, Stella Maris.

-Kirtana Jawahar

The 15-day UK Summer Study Programme was a fun-filled yet academically enriching trip. The itinerary of the trip was planned in such a manner that we got a taste of the UK culture in true style and their working pattern in design and painting. We visited the Baltic Museum for contemporary art and visited installations set up by local artists. ...Every time I saw a painting or a sculpture that I had studied about, I was awe struck and I was taken back to my art history classes in college....the trip was an enriching one filled with fun, excitement and learning. It has also given me a bag-full of memories which I can cherish always.

- Sneha Chakrapani

