

Erasmus at the HZT in Berlin Mareike Dobewall

I did my Erasmus during the spring term 2013. To arrange this exchange was quite difficult since it was with the very new part of the UdK in Berlin, the HZT (Hochschulübergreifendes Zentrum für Tanz). Even though the Hiof has an agreement with the UdK it does not have one with the HZT. After a lot of e-mails and a thorough application to the HZT, they decided to give me a chance for this semester. It may be interesting for students who want to go to this school to know that it is almost impossible to exchange in autumn due to the very intense program they have in that period and the amount of students. In the spring term there are quite a few of the students on exchanges themselves, which gives space for foreign students.

The Udk (= the University of Arts) has over 4600 students and is to date the biggest university of arts in Europe. This brings a lot of possibilities to exchange with people from different fields in the arts. A lot of collaborations are being held. As an Erasmus student at this university one gets invited to many happenings and lectures that are very interesting. However it is sometimes difficult to keep an overview over all these things. Therefore I concentrated mostly on the happening that were at the HZT or directly connected to it. The HZT Berlin offers three study programs: „Dance, Context, Choreography“ (Bachelor of Arts), „Solo/ Dance/ Authorship“ (Master of Arts) and „Choreography“ (Master of Arts). It provides a practice led and research driven education in contemporary dance, choreography and performance. It is located in Wedding, in the north of Berlin.



The students can choose their workshops before the term starts. I also had this opportunity. Besides the variety of workshops one can also select from different morning trainings and theory classes. The school was quite open if one was not happy with a morning course to change it since several courses are running parallel. I made the mistake to double-book some days since it was not clear to me what days of the week what morning training would take place but with a little help from the students I got introduced to the google calendar which the whole school shares and with this things got much easier. I

recommend to ask for your HZT-gmail-account as soon as you arrive.

Since we are already talking about practicalities: The studios can be entered with a chip that one can get at the Uferstudio-Office for 10 Euros refund. There is also the possibility to get a key for some rooms like the seminar room or the study room. With this one can enter them outside of the opening hours. This costs 40 Euros I think. I did not do it and did not need it since most of the rooms are accessible with the chip.

The studios at the Uferstudios are great. There is a possibility to book the studios for your own training and rehearsals for your own project outside of the morning training and workshops. This gives the students great opportunities and most students use this

possibility and have their own project that they also show at the many festivals all over Germany.

This is very nice for the productivity of the students does however cause the side-effect of many absences and makes it difficult for the Erasmus students to connect to the HZT-BA-students. I recommend to take some courses with the Master students. They work much more at the Uferstudios and are therefore more accessible. These students can also help you to select from the many things to do in Berlin. The locals know best.

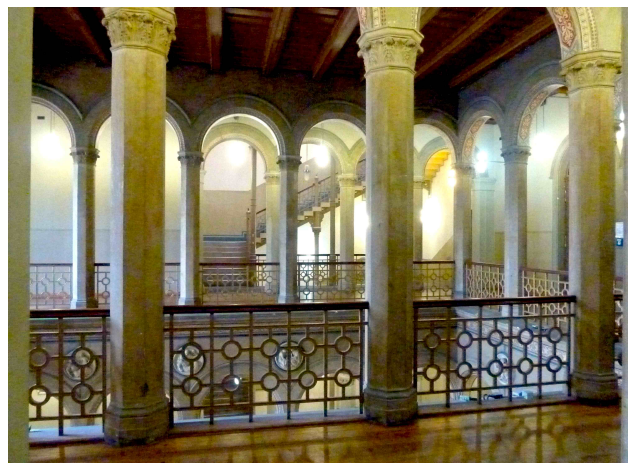


This may come as a surprise but in Berlin one can feel quite lonely. I did not have this problem since I already had some friends in Berlin but to come in new it is really hard to find regulars, people you meet more often than once. The program for the Erasmus students at the UdK is great. There is a language course and trips and cultural excursions are organized. This is a great way to get to know Berlin and beyond and to spend some time with the other Erasmus students. To meet the Berliners I recommend to go to the many festivals that take place in spring. Karnival der Kulturen, Fete de la musique etc. Here people

are in a great mood and open to meet.

Finding a place to live in Berlin can be easy and hard. You just have to be lucky. I would recommend to contact the students from the HZT as early as you know that you are coming. They know if someone is on exchange and could rent out their place to you. Fishing in the big pond of rooms in Berlin is really hard. People know that there is a lot of people looking for a place. Inviting more than 20 people to look at the rooms for rent is normal, it is a big casting. So try to get something through the university or friends and friends of friends. One can get quite cheap and nice places in Berlin.

Getting around in Berlin is very easy. As a students in Berlin one is obliged to buy the semester ticket. It is valid for the whole term and permits to travel in all zones in Berlin. I recommend to bring the money already with you when you go to the first meeting with the international office at the UdK. They give you the necessary papers to go to another office of the UdK where



you receive the ticket. At the international office they are very used to Erasmus students. They are well-prepared and you will receive a folder with all the information and forms you will need.

To finish of I would like to recommend to you things I think you should not miss when you are in the capital of Germany:

- festivals

Join the crowd. They are for free and may spread over a whole district.

- flea markets

During the weekend you can find them all over Berlin. Some are actual second hand markets, some give space for young designers, others specialize on ecological things.

- theatre.

In my opinion Schaubühne is the most interesting stage in Berlin at the moment. Also Berliner Ensemble and Volksbühne offer high quality without being too conservative. In spring and summer all kinds of places become theatre spaces. Keep your eyes open and you may find a treat.

- bars

Find your favorite

- hidden places.

Don't be shy to enter open buildings and backyards.

- the foreign food

Eating out is delicious and cheap in multicultural Berlin.

- swimming in the lakes

Wannsee is worth a visit. If you are in Wedding the Flughafensee is very nice.

- buying a beer in a Kiosk, walk to the next park and enjoy

Priceless.

- buy bio

Good quality and reasonable prices.

- art

Galleries, museums, street art, artists students, showings at the university - there is no end.

- be yourself!

