

Auslands-Studienaufenthalt an der

Universität: AALTO University

Stadt/Land: Helsinki / Espoo, Finland

besuchte Studienrichtung an der Gastuniversität: Media Lab

Aufenthaltssemester / -jahr: WS 2017

Studienrichtung an der KUNI: Interface Cultures

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### Meine Erfahrungen

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- about the study (courses / professors / students / exchange office)

I went to Finland to study the master program Media Lab at Aalto University in the winter semester of 2017. I was very enthusiastic by it. The classes started at the end of August (1 month earlier than the master in Kunstuni) and ended on 22<sup>nd</sup> of December (1 month earlier). The second semester supposed to start immediately after NYE, beginning of January. My program was only for one semester and most of the classes sounded very interesting; there was a small problem with the calendar as it wasn't a complete one on google calendar; the only complete calendar was in the school building on touch screens where you could select the class rooms and check the courses.

After officially registering to the system, I registered to media classes using 2 platforms: MyCourses where it's possible to check the courses from any Aalto university and WebOodi where it's possible to register. The great part is the range of classes is almost maximum and it's possible to register to any class from any university; I was very happy to additionally register to Machine Learning in the Computer Science dept.

The master program of Media Lab is divided in more directions called "majors": sound design, web design, game design etc. There were also "workshop weeks" containing great classes starting at 9am and finishing at 4pm (one-hour lunch break – btw, as a student it's possible to eat very well at the mensa with only 2,60 euros!). A class I highly recommend is "From data to pixels" which was object-oriented programming in Processing with Markku Reunanen - very prepared for the task. There were classes with great connections; for example, the Experimental Performance and Installation which was in collaboration with Parsons New York. The staff in Media Lab is very helpful and the dept is very well provided with equipment.

The university is quite big and the campus is huge; it contains a lot of universities from computer science to biology etc. I had a course in collaboration with the sculpture department called "Sonic Sculptures" that lasted for 3 weeks from 9to4; was pretty intense and it finished with an exhibition that received great feedback.

A great place to work for the projects is the FabLab in the center of the campus; it's provided with few 3D printers, laser cutters and very well-trained personnel eager to teach you how to work with the equipment.

Overall, the Media Lab from Aalto university is based on creative industries being more interested in art projects that are practical (for example mobile apps, VR etc). The students are taught to program, create video games or VR, 3D modelling, sound engineering. There is also the high possibility to build a start-up which is quite easy to officially register. There is also the SLUSH festival which is a yearly festival presenting the newest and the most successful start-ups in the industry.

- about the staying (culture / accommodation / food/ transport/ living costs/ language)

There is a great sense of esthetic especially in interior or product design. The Finnish people speak very well English and they will happily help you with information. The transportation is great but very expensive; although it's very easy to visit the Baltic countries by boat (Estonia, Latvia etc). Also, I recommend the Finnish city of Turku which has one of the greatest libraries in the world. It's easy to find rent using specific groups on Facebook. The food in supermarket is little more expensive than in Austria, but not very expensive. The language is very hard to learn; I only know how to say "Hi" and "Bye" which is "Moi Moi!".

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