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Fall 2018 Study Abroad at Trinity College Dublin – Outcome Report

Chances are, if you've ever encountered someone who has studied abroad they'll likely describe the experience as "life changing." They might even gush about how much it altered their perspective on things, or maybe try their best to convince you to travel abroad yourself. I'm almost surprised at what I'm about to confess, but when it came to my own experience abroad I found all of these common praises to be absolutely true. Admittedly, the quiet skeptic in the back of my head wondered if spending a mere semester in Dublin could truly impact me. But my time at Trinity College Dublin during the fall semester of my fourth year turned out to be genuinely inspiring and reinvigorating.

Despite the rather extensive amount of online research I did on Trinity College before my arrival, I didn't really know what to expect once I got there. I'm incredibly lucky to have already visited Ireland before. However, those trips usually involved a crowded rental car and daily trips around the country to visit various family members. This time, I was visiting Dublin on my own, eager to explore what the city had to offer in terms of theatre, art, and overall culture. As I'd expected, I approached the "Fresher's Week" activities fair with excited vigor and signed up for a number of Trinity's societies. Notably, I got most involved in two particular societies – the DU Film Society and the Trinity Fashion Society. Not only did these societies help me forge meaningful friendships while in Ireland, but they also allowed me to develop my costume design skills and fashion knowledge. I became the Head of the Art Department for the DU Film Society's short film. Under this role, I was responsible for the film's costume and production design and led a group of two other team members. It was certainly challenging at times, but this role taught me so much about production design and allowed me to flex my costume design skills. I also gained valuable insight on Irish film production and film sets in general. In addition to the DU Film Society, I was elected to serve as a committee member for the Trinity Fashion Society. This commitment involved weekly meetings and work on various society events throughout the semester. My work and discussions within this society gave me useful insight into the particular fashion trends and preferences of modern Irish culture. And overall,

both of these society involvements allowed me to really immerse myself in the atmosphere of Trinity College and Dublin in general.

While in Dublin, I also took advantage of all the theatre opportunities the city has to offer. Luckily, I was in Dublin during both the Dublin Fringe Festival and the Dublin Theatre Festival. I was able to attend some seriously amazing performances under these festivals. During the Dublin Fringe Festival, I went on an immersive bus tour during “The Sound of Phoenix” production by Shanna May Breen. And during the Dublin Theatre Festival, I went to a number of plays, including a production of “Company” by Samuel Beckett, “St. Nicholas” starring Brendan Coyle, and a production of “Hamlet” starring Ruth Negga at the famous Gate Theatre. Living in Dublin gave me incredible access to the city’s vibrant theatre scene, and I found myself genuinely inspired by all of the shows I saw. The city is full of incredible theatre and film makers who lend a uniquely Irish perspective to their art. Being Irish myself, this has motivated me to tap into my heritage and incorporate certain artistic and expressive elements into my own work.

In addition, the courses I took at Trinity College Dublin expanded my knowledge of Irish theatre and history. I took a series of Drama courses, one of which focused on Irish theatre history. This course was my personal favorite, as it taught me so much about Irish theatre and the way it interacted with the country’s culture and impact on the rest of the world. I read many wonderful plays by Irish playwrights, such as Lady Augusta Gregory and WB Yeats. Without this course and abroad experience, I would likely have never read most of these plays or been exposed to their impact. But I’m so glad I was, as the history and ideas imbedded in this course inspired me and will likely stay with me and my art for years to come.

Overall, there are so many lessons and experiences I gained from my time abroad that I couldn’t possibly list them all in one report. However, I know their positive influence will certainly show great significance in my future work, and I can’t wait to see where my newfound knowledge will develop. Therefore, I would like to sincerely thank the Miller Arts Scholars program and its donors for generously supporting my study abroad experience.

Below are some photos from my time abroad in Dublin.



Left: A view of Trinity College Dublin's front square.

Right: Inside one of Trinity College's buildings.



Left: Photos during Trinity's "Freshers' Week" activities fair.



Left: The immersive bus production titled “The Sound of Phoenix,” by Shanna May Breen, as part of the Dublin Fringe Festival.



Left: “St. Nicholas” starring Brendan Coyle, as part of the Dublin Theatre Festival.

Right: Inside of Dublin’s Gate Theatre before the start of “Hamlet,” starring Ruth Negga, as part of the Dublin Theatre Festival.





Left: Behind the scenes filming with the DU Film Society.

Right: Setting up an event for the Trinity Fashion Society.



Right: A discussion with Sinead Burke and the Trinity Fashion Society.

(Photo courtesy of trinitynews.ie)

