

# Relazione di fine scambio

Scuola del Design

## Istruzioni

Indicare di seguito tutte le informazioni che possano essere utili ad altri studenti che parteciperanno a uno scambio. Preferibilmente in lingua inglese, lunghezza min. 2500 parole + possibili immagini, file di max. dimensione 2 MB in formato PDF. Questo documento sarà pubblicato nel sito web della Scuola.

## Informazioni generiche

Anno Accademico di Scambio: 2020	Nome della Sede in scambio: Shenkar College of Engineering, Design and Art
Cognome e Nome: Didero Rachele	Stato: Israel
Matricola: 915094	Codice Sede: ISR SHENKAR01
Corso di Studio: Design for the Fashion System	Tipo di scambio: Semplice
Anno di Corso: Magistrale, 2nd year	Semestre di Scambio: 2nd semester
Email: rachele.didero@mail.polimi.it	Docente Promotore: Chiara Colombi

## Racconta la tua esperienza di scambio:

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I flew to Israel towards the end of February.

I decided to go to Israel and attend Shenkar, first of all, to realize my final project in the textile workshops in Shenkar.

The second reason why I chose Israel is because I had two dear friends living in Tel Aviv, met during my first Erasmus in Barcelona.

I arrived on one of the last possible flights from Italy, without being aware of it. For instance, the other student from Politecnico who was supposed to do her exchange with me in Shenkar wasn't able to fly. They closed the borders for non-citizens a few days after my flight.

My friends came to pick me up at the airport and the plan was to stay with them until I would have found an apartment. I tried to look for an apartment in Tel Aviv already from Italy without succeeding. My suggestion is to look for house renting and subletting on Facebook groups and go to visit the apartments once arrived in Tel Aviv. Sometimes it could be complicated considering that most of the apartments have a one year lease and that the owners want to be paid with checks from Israeli bank accounts. My apartment doesn't have any lease and it's perfect for students since it doesn't require an Israeli bank account and it has two weeks notice before leaving. I found it after 4 days in which I visited many apartments, but I could move there only after my ten days of isolation at my friends' house. Rental prices may vary depending on the residential area. In Shapira, Jaffa or Florentin you are still close to the center walking or by bike and with a bit of luck it's possible to find a room in a shared apartment for 2500 ILS (-615

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€). The more central the apartment, the higher the rental prices, of course. I have chosen an apartment in the heart of Tel Aviv. The price range for a single room in a nice apartment, in a central area, starts from 700 euros per month. I love my apartment and I was really lucky with my flatmates. I live with international and Israeli workers and students. We are many, considering there are two apartments connected. The solution resulted in being optimal especially for the period of lockdown. At least two-thirds of the exchange students in Shenkar decided to go back to their own countries when the restrictions for the Corona Virus started. I decided to stay since, as I said, I wanted to work on my final project, and I had the hope to be able to go back to the workshops in Shenkar. I'm really happy I took that decision and stayed in Israel for my exchange. The one in Tel Aviv has been my third exchange in 5 years, after Barcelona and New York. I can't compare it to the previous ones because I lived in Israel during a global crisis. I love Tel Aviv and I've been enjoying my time here, but, indeed, I've never lived in the city as it was without corona. I've rarely been to a party, I always have to walk in the street with my mask, constantly ready to adapt to new government restrictions. I couldn't travel in Israel as much as I wanted and I was never really able to build a relationship with my schoolmates since the majority of the classes were on Zoom. My friends and family couldn't come visit me and I wasn't able to go back to Italy for seven months, of course not even for emergencies.

Even though all the obstacles and the delicate moment I lived through while staying in Tel Aviv, I was able to fully live my exchange experience. I've grown a lot personally and I cultivated amazing relationships. The fact there were almost no tourists and no foreigners gave me the possibility to fully mix with people from the territory, celebrating holidays with them, spending time with the families of my friends, and observing their culture and religions.

In my apartment, there were Christians and Jews. We have been constantly exchanging traditions and knowledge. We spent Pesach in quarantine, preparing the traditional meal and reading along with the Passover Haggadah, not even one week later we painted the Easter eggs and we organized a treasure hunt. But in Israel there are not just different religious coliving together, the main contrast perceived is between Arabs and non-Arabs. Living in this territory for seven months allowed me to better understand this conflict, interacting with both sides, listening to different opinions, building strong friendships with Palestinians and Israelis, Arabs, Christians, and Jews. Probably one of the most valid experiences that I lived during these months, the one that made me reconsider my perspective and my preconceptions, was the one I had traveling in the West Bank.

Regarding my education in Shenkar, as I mentioned, I didn't experience a regular semester. As the majority of Universities in the world, also Shenkar had to rethink the way of teaching. The semester started late and as exchange students, we had some problems with communication between the exchange office, the professors, and the heads of the departments. I had to reconsider the classes I wanted to attend, at the beginning I was just taking classes within the textile departments, in all of them the workshops were required. We, as exchange students, were recommended to take three to four courses. Besides, we were allowed to select all courses of study, i.e. courses from the other departments could also be selected. We were given some time to look at all the courses and then decide. It is a bit unfortunate and important to know that there were a lot of courses that we as exchange students could not take part in from the start, due to the high number of participants or because they were courses based on the previous semester.

Ultimately, however, the COVID19 pandemic turned everything upside down. After just a few days at the university, the campus was closed and all students were quarantined home. That was the beginning of the first lockdown and a semester on Zoom. Of course, many interesting courses from the catalog did not take place because they were practical and dependent on the university's workshops. Since I came to Shenkar College primarily for these courses and to work in the workshops, I had to reschedule and improvise. Ultimately, my choice was as follows: I took the "FASHION DRAWING (4)" course with Amiran Erez, which belongs to the Fashion Design Department and has a practical focus, but could be realized from home; the "THEMATIC STUDIO 2" course with Jonathan Gold, which is part of the Art Department, a painting class in which we experienced many different techniques from acrylics, to temperas, to building our

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own canvases; and then the course “ROUTINE AND DISTURBANCE” with Davidi Gilad and Siegel Nir, which belongs to the Industrial Design Department and was also adapted to the online study situation.

I’m happy with the classes I took and they allowed me to develop new skills and enrich my approach to study. For example, I especially enjoyed the painting class I attended, and I discovered a passion I didn’t know I had. In this course we were able to attend from Shenkar the last month and a half of class.

Shenkar is a College of Engineering, Design and Art. There are different departments in the Design section for the Bachelor Degree: Fashion Design, Textile Design, Jewelry Design, Visual Communication, Industrial Design and Interior Building and Environment. The Bachelor Degree lasts four years. The last year is mainly dedicated for the realization of the final project. A very extensive range of courses is offered, which focuses on the development of innovative design concepts.

In the Textile Department there are three subcategories: Woven, Knitting and Fabric Painting. I didn't take any classes in the Textile Department but I’m working on my final project in the Knitting workshop. In fact, at the beginning of the summer, I was able to use the knitting workshops in Shenkar. I can say they are advanced and the technicians are willing to help and extremely nice. They have electric Stoll machines: there are two machines E12 with 8 yarn carriers, there’s one E7 with 8 yarn carriers and recently has been installed a new Stoll machine with 36 yarn carriers. There is also the possibility to dye the white yarns to obtain a specific color, I would have taken that class if I had the possibility. There are no “rimaglio” and all the stitches are made with either linears or overlocks. There’s a computer lab with many computers in which the students can learn and practice the program M1 for Stoll machines.

At the end of the year there has been an exposition with all the works of the graduating students from the design departments in Shenkar. Some students from the Fashion Department worked in the Textile workshops to create their fabrics, but in general, the textile and the fashion departments are two separated ones.

Shenkar is a well-known design University in Israel, there’s a strict selection for the students who want to attend. The textile department is also famous for being one of the best in the world, I can compare it to the one in Politecnico, at Esdi in Barcelona, and the FIT in New York and at Shenkar they have the most advanced machinery.

Even if I almost didn’t go to Shenkar during the semester, I got to know many students from there, especially from the Industrial Design department. Israel has a vivid and expanding design scene, unfortunately I couldn’t attend to many expositions, canceled for the CoronaVirus, but I had the opportunity to interact and became friend with many designers also from other design Universities: Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem and the Holon Institute of Technology (HIT). In particular in Bezalel, they are trying to export the education of design and art to the Arab culture in which it’s still mainly not appreciated and not considered as a profession.

Unfortunately, I couldn't get all of the experiences at Shenkar College as I had hoped. Everything turned out differently than planned and I wasn't able to implement all of my plans. But in every change there are also new opportunities and I still learned a lot. Looking back, I am very satisfied with my choice of course and have been able to participate in stimulating projects and achieve great results. I would have loved to experience real “Shenkar campus life” as the campus has a lot to offer. Apart from the great equipment in the workshops, the great teachers and exciting projects, Shenkar College also invites you to linger and chat. The atmosphere is casual, good vibes and it is teeming with talented people.

Shenkar is in Ramat Gan, a city on the north-east border of Tel Aviv. I am living in a central area in the southwest of Tel Aviv, 30 min by bike or by bus. I always go to Shenkar with my bike, even though sometimes the heat could be prickly. Already in May this year the temperature reached 40 degrees. Tel Aviv is a small city, compared to Milan for example, the average population is young, everyone is moving across the city with scooters or bikes and public transportations are not needed. There’s not even the subway. In the evening the seawalk is crowded with people jogging and exercising and the wide beaches are full of young people playing soccer and Matkot. Another common sport is surf, Jaffa and Hilton beaches are the two spots with most

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surfers. The waves and currents could be really strong and it's better not to swim without a lifeguard, many people drown every year.

Tel Aviv is a safe city, it feels to be in a bubble compared to the rest of the country. The conflict is not as felt as in the rest of Israel, the population is not particularly religious and there's a European lifestyle with middle eastern influences, starting from the food. There are many good restaurants, the typical dishes are Arabs, including hummus, falafel, pitot, thrina, many vegetables and spices. The majority of the restaurants is not Kosher, contrary to everyone's expectations. Tel Aviv is expensive, I found it more expensive than New York, excluding the cheaper rent. It's better to go buy food at the shuk or in the markets before the beginning of Shabbat, on Friday mornings, when there are many offers. The clothes in general are really expensive, not particularly high quality and designed and it's hard to find something with a good quality-price ratio. Most Israelis in Tel Aviv wear flip flops, shorts and tank tops due to the heat. In some cities outside Tel Aviv or in the West Bank it's important to cover up, especially as women. The routine in Tel Aviv doesn't stop for Shabbat, at least not for everyone. While in Jerusalem or in the other cities in Israel, everything is shut down during Shabbat.

In Israel, religious holidays and Jewish traditions are very important in the daily life of almost all residents. This is great for exchange students too. It not only means days off, but also the opportunity to get to know the culture peculiarly.

Part of the Israeli experience are the Jews holidays, I had the chance to experience the following:

**Purim:** A three-day spring masquerade. This holiday can be compared to Carnival. Everyone wears a costume and the whole city is turned into a party. In Tel Aviv everyone takes part: children, adults, religious and non-religious people. The religious background of Purim is the triumph of the Jews over Haman.

**Passover:** The Passover festival commemorates the Jewish people who left Egypt, where they were kept as slaves, and came to the promised land of Israel. Jews have a Passover seder, where dinner is a step-by-step retelling of the Passover story. During the period of Passover, ordinary bread is replaced with an unleavened bread called matzah.

**Yom Ha'atzmaut - Independence Day:** This is Israel's national day commemorating the 1948 Israeli declaration of independence.

**Shavuot:** this year it was on the 29th of May. In the Bible, Shavuot marks the wheat harvest in the Land of Israel and according to the Sages, it also commemorates the anniversary of the giving of the Torah by God to the Children of Israel at Mount Sinai. Everyone wears white, eats cheese, and wears flower crowns.

**Rosh Hashanah:** the literal meaning is the "head [of] the year", is the Jewish New Year. (18 September 2020 to 20 September 2020). We celebrated eating a sweet meal symbolizing the sweetness of the following year. Apples with honey, pomegranate and the cake with nuts, apples and honey.

In Tel Aviv almost everyone speaks English, I never had big problems with communication, even though sometimes it is good to know some words in Hebrew. During my period in Israel I naturally learned some Hebrew and Arabic, but, I believe, to improve them, it's good to take some Ulpan classes. In the supermarkets not everything is written in English, and, at least at the beginning, the Google Translate App was necessary.

Prejudice against Israel, fear of security and unrest, clashes and the Middle East conflict. These are often the first thoughts people and travelers associate with Israel.

The sense of community is very strong in Israel. Israelis are an open and hospitable people, even if their informality can sometimes be misunderstood as roughness. They generally have very strong opinions on just about anything, and are not afraid to express them.

I would describe the people here as very sociable and direct. It's really easy to make friends as most people are casual. In Tel Aviv in particular, the mentality is very open and cheerful. Tel Aviv is a very international city with a huge foreign population and that makes the city a culturally vibrant place to live. After living in Israel and getting to know and befriend the locals, it's easy to understand they are incredibly warm and open people.

In conclusion, the experience in Tel Aviv was enormously rich and formative. It is a territory in which different ethnic groups and religions have coexisted for centuries and where even today

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it has been possible for me to get to know a huge number of traditions, thoughts and different origins.

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Data: 21.09.2020