

# Summer in Düsseldorf

Victoria Kubyshko, 2018



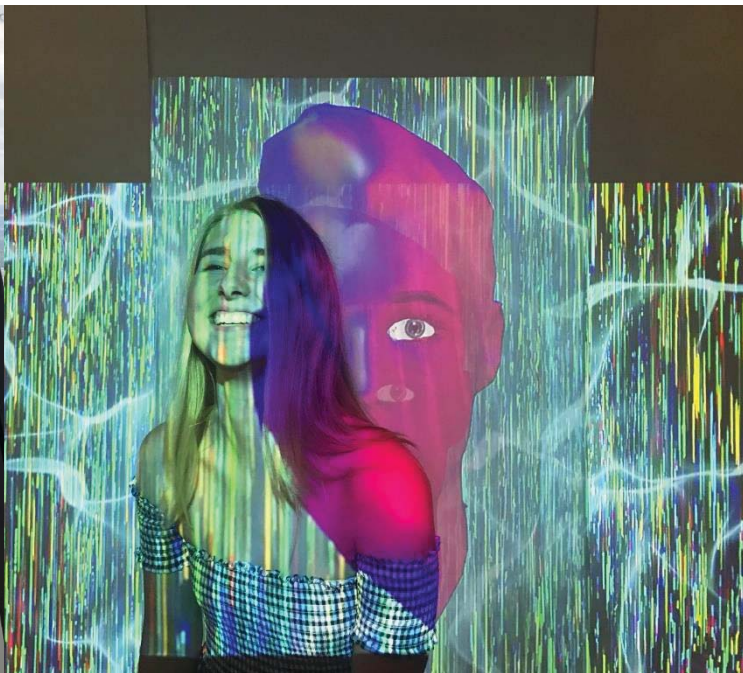
This summer I spent four weeks in Düsseldorf, Germany in a German-intensive language course at the Goethe-Institute. I was fortunate enough to have the morning classes, from 8:30am-1pm, leaving plenty of room after class to go explore the beautiful city!



Top: Königsallee, the famous shopping street in the city with high fashion

Left to right: me and my new friends, kids playing in bubbles in the city center, a beach on the Rhine River

I stayed with a host mom a 15-minute metro ride from the main station. She encouraged me to practice my German every day and I got plenty of practice speaking German in the surrounding restaurants and grocery stores. I knew no German coming into this program, so I was in the A1.1 class. Most of the other people in the class had basic knowledge of numbers, letters, Guten Tag, etc. I had a lot to catch up on and, from the first day, the teacher talked exclusively in German (for 5 hours straight)! This was exhausting for my brain and I contributed to my culture shock, but alas the method worked and by the second week I was doing well in the class and my head no longer hurt listening to this foreign language!



A few of my favorite memories were visiting the NRW-Forum Museum, which had a second floor dedicated to virtual reality art, going to the Altstadt to grab a locally made Alt beer, getting lunch with other students and some Düsseldorf natives at an authentic German restaurant, and sitting on the steps overlooking the Rhine River watching the sunset with my new friends! Not only was I immersed in a foreign country, but the students at the Goethe Institute were from all over the place. In fact, my best friends came from

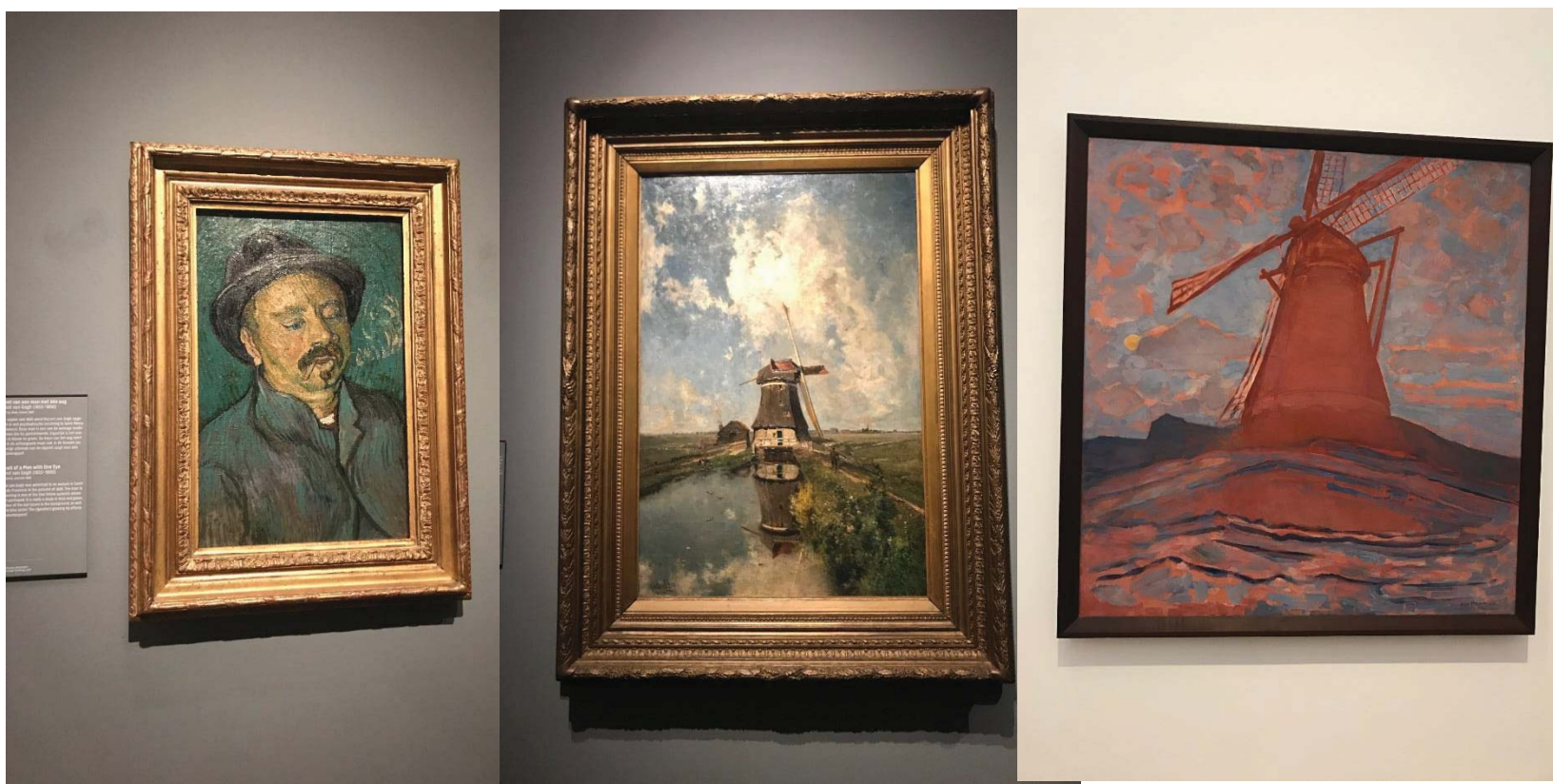
Top left/right: Me at the top of the Rheinturm - a 240.5m tall tower overlooking the river and city, me at the NRW-Forum Museum  
Bottom left/right: Schloss Benrath, some food at the local market (featuring my favorite words in German are Obst und Gemüse!)

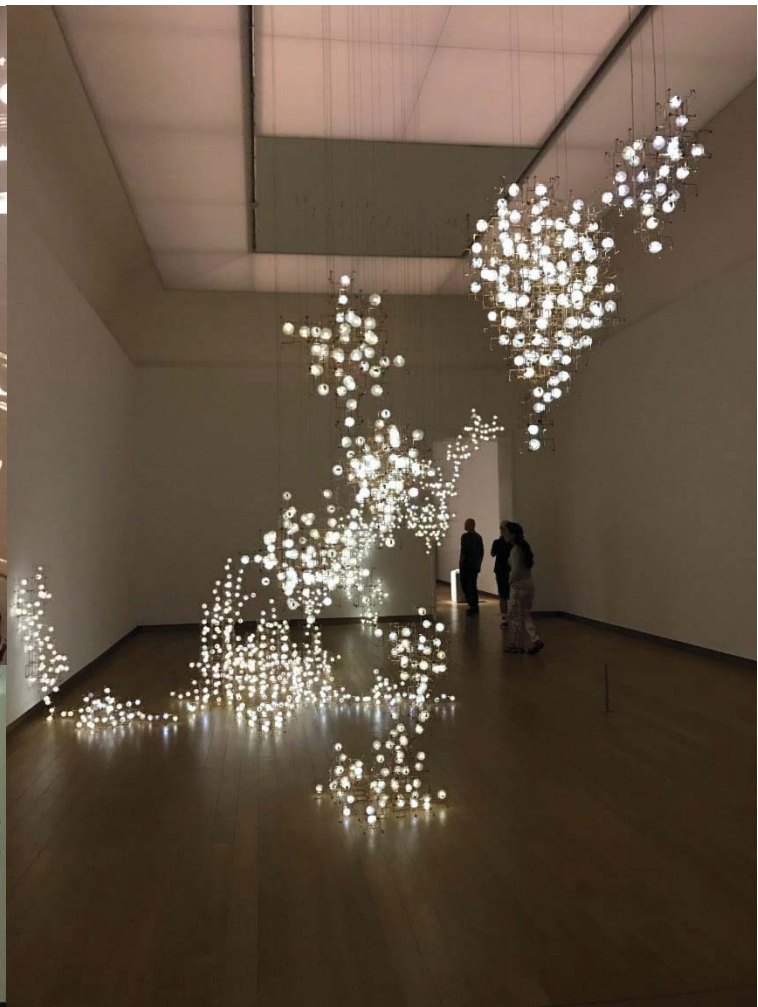
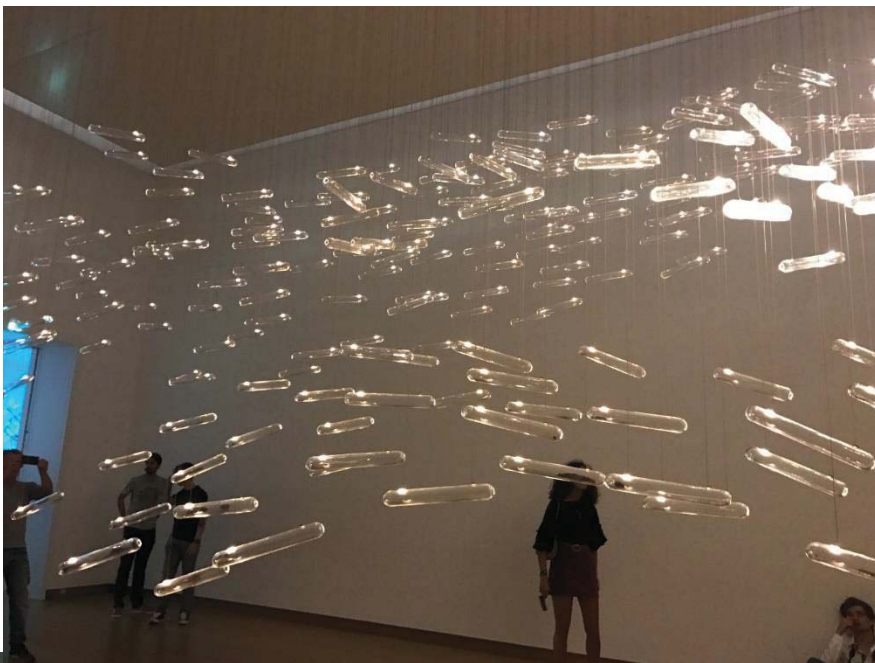




Not only was I able to explore Germany in my four weeks, but I was also able to travel to other countries on the weekends. This was a dream come true for me as I got to mark off the top 3 places on my bucket-list: Germany, London, and Amsterdam!

Top left/right: My friend and I by the canals, the I Amsterdam sign  
Bottom: the various pieces and windmills in the Rijksmuseum





The first weekend, I met up with my (current) roommate from Carnegie Mellon, who was also doing a study abroad. She came into Düsseldorf on a Thursday night and on Friday, as soon as my class ended, we hopped on a train to Amsterdam. It's amazing how close and convenient it is to travel between places in Europe. We had the whole weekend planned, including hitting up the museums, walking along the canals, and going to all the best food markets.

In our attempts to explore the city as locals, we rented bikes to ride around the city. In a series of unfortunate events, my friend fell off her bike within the first 5 minutes, but it was a smooth ride otherwise!





We went on a boat ride through the canals where we had to pedal ourselves. It was much harder than it looked!



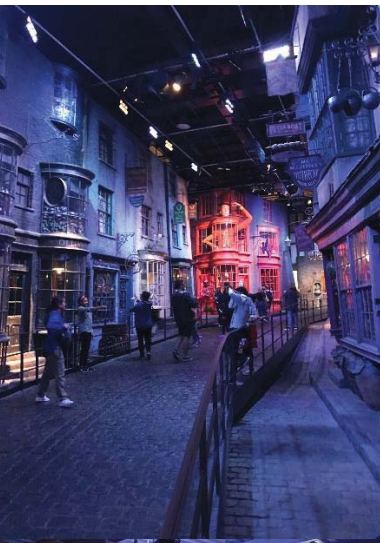
The second weekend I spontaneously went back to Amsterdam with the friends I made from Goethe Institute. It's only 3 and a half hours away by bus! Amsterdam has so much to do that even 2 weekends were not enough to explore the city, but I did see a lot of amazing things while I was there.



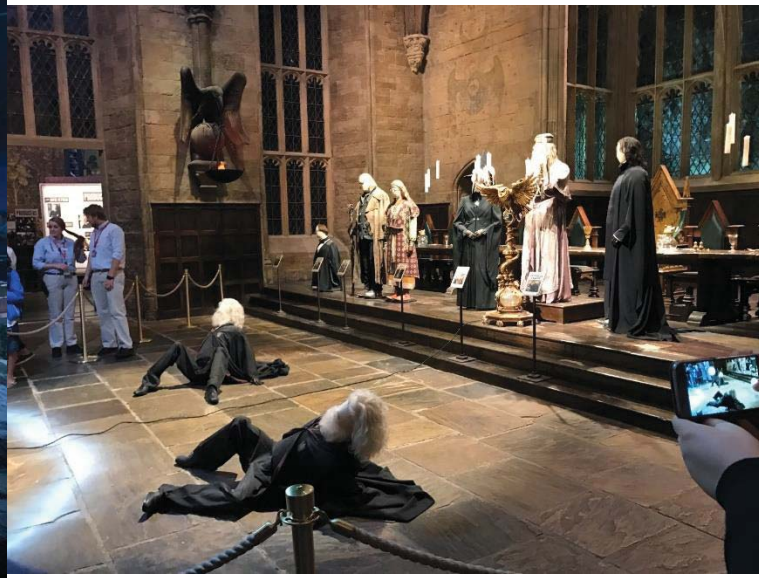
The final weekend, I flew to London where I met my mom. It was both of our first times in England, so we had to check off as many tourist locations as possible.







I arrived on Thursday and the first attraction we went to was Harry Potter World! I'm a huge fan so this was super exciting for me. I learned a lot about how the movies were made, saw an unreal number of props, and even got a picture in front of Privet Drive! The second day Sadly, the Big Ben was under-construction and I didn't even recognize it.





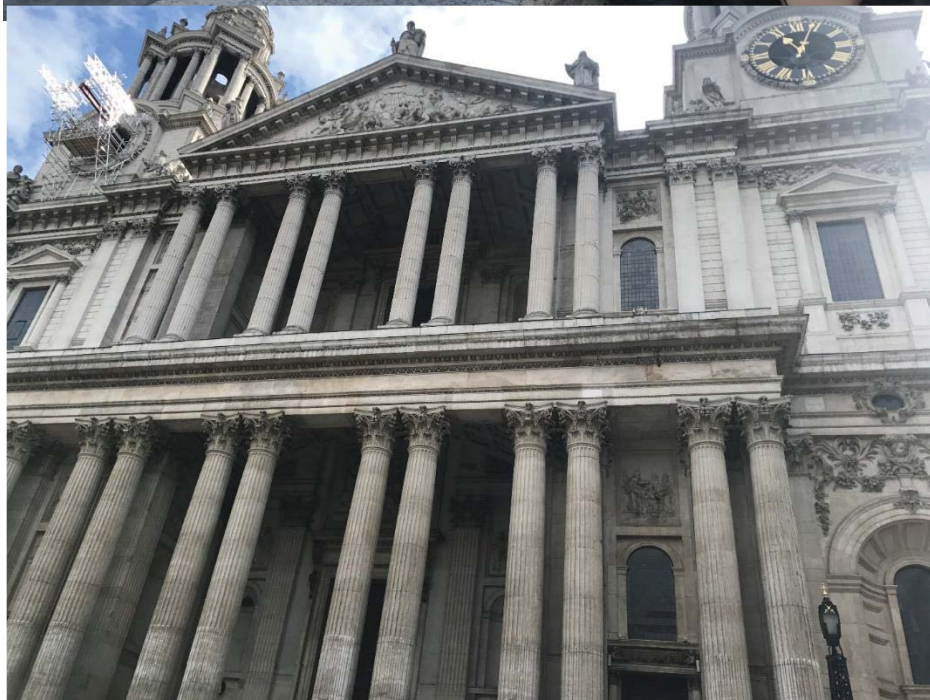
The second day we went to Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament, the London Eye, and Big Ben.



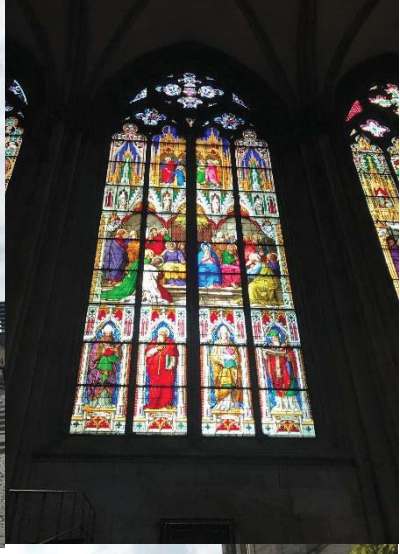


The third day we went to Shakespeare's Globe Theater (pictured above) and watched Love's Labour's Lost, a comedy. We also got afternoon tea at a lovely place next door that was Midsummer Nights. I read this play for the first time in my freshman Shakespeare class and loved it. This was my favorite part of the day.





Day 3



Cologne, or Köln, is another large city only 30 minutes away by train from Düsseldorf. These cities are said to have a rivalry over their beer; however, the cities are strongly linked as many people commute between the cities every day. In the middle of the city, across from the main station, is the Cathedral. It is a nice place to sit on the stairs and just relax on a nice day. I was able to take 2 day trips down and visit the Chocolate Museum!





My friends and I also took a day trip to Bonn, another town close by, and home to Beethoven. Pictured to the left is Beethoven's house – where he was born and spent his early life and career. On the bottom left is his statue in the center of the town and on the bottom right is the view of Beethoven's backyard from the second floor of the house.





On my last in Düsseldorf, my classes and exams were over and my friends had already left for home. I took a trip to Köln, walked around the museum, visited Schloss Augustusburg – the beautiful palace surrounded by flowers, tall trees, and so much nature – and lastly visited a WWII archive museum (pictured in the top right).

I will never forget how nice and accommodating everyone I met was and the new German friends I made. I was able to talk about languages, politics, culture, and more with locals, making my time more meaningful.