Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?: Existential and Practical Tips for Planning a Successful Study Abroad Experience

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- Rutherford, Elaine; College of Saint Benedict/Saint Johns University; (erutherford@csbsju.edu)
- “Art Space and Place: The Visual Journal as a Means of Engagement in the Study Abroad Experience”
- As a professor of art, study abroad trips have always held the promise and excitement for me of experiencing the uniqueness of a given culture through its art, architecture and design. This excitement has become the background for the various courses that I have taught on semester long programs in London, Rome and Athens and has been adapted to a short term (three week long) course that I teach in Scotland. Through experiencing a place via a reflective engagement with its art and architecture we can begin to understand something of the historical and contemporary social and political dynamics of the culture. Space and Place by Yi Fu Tuan and The art of travel by Alain De Botton, “serve as useful resources to help frame our dialogue around our relationship to place and our relationship to travel while the creation of a visual journal puts the student at the center of their experience as opposed to having their experience mediated through the lens of the camera. The journaling process cultivates the ability to be present in the moment and facilitates a reflective engagement in ones own unique study abroad experience.

- Kan, Koon Hwee and Jack McWhorter; Kent State University; (kkan@kent.edu; jmcwhort@kent.edu)
- “Travel-Study to China in Perspective: Program Planning and Course Design”
- The presenters share personal experiences and challenges with organizing a travel–study program to China (Beijing and Xi’an). One course in the program, PAINTING CHINA STUDY, focused on contemporary and historical Chinese art and ways that travel can influence and shape artistic vision. The other course, EXPERIENCE THE ARTS AND CULTURE OF CHINA, enhanced and deepened participants’ intercultural understanding through meaningful experiential learning as well as intensive interaction with Chinese college students. Both courses in the program comprise three unique components:
  1. Two videoconferences prepared participants to develop a mindset for interglobal collaboration and intercultural communication.
  2. A 12-day travel–study component expanded participants’ horizons and enriched their understanding of the dynamics of the Chinese cultural landscape through the examination of cultural artifacts at heritage sites and collaboration with university students to develop in-situ research and plans for an art installation.
3. A post-travel exhibition to showcase how participants anchored meanings and embodied the complexity of their study-abroad experience through visual narrative and artistic representation and to demonstrate a contextualized understanding of Chinese art forms, cultural symbols, and architectural and communal spaces. Instructional guidelines with recommendations of initial planning and set up will be discussed.

- Anderson, Scott and David Hannon; Ball State University; (sanderso@bsu.edu; dthannon@bsu.edu)
- “‘Non parlo italiano che è una brutta cosa’: Art in Italy Field Study”
- Our talk will focus on lessons learned from the studio driven Art in Italy Field Study. We will begin with strategies for pre planning and on site flexibility. We will discuss itineraries that make the most of your travel and create international connections for accommodations and transportation. We will cover ideas for recruiting art students including tips on organizing payment structures and collection and distributing of funds. Editing luggage will be highlighted as will guidelines for lodging and meals with approaches to keeping costs low and your trip authentic. A critical concern is to pre-book your most important attractions and student preparation from passports to safety information. We will focus on the experience and reaction of visiting significant art by developing artists. During Art in Italy we witness students’ physical and artistic reaction to art history, as everyone takes away something tangible from these encounters. This connection is vital to the progress of art. Art in Italy’s studio and exhibition component forces students to confront these experiences proactively and to make artistic sense of their significance. These reactions and exhibition of artwork are a challenge but the outcome for some is a graduation from student of art to artist.