

Glimpses From My Summer With LISS

By Eduard Hessels



When I was asked if I would return to Lithuania to join the 2014 LISS program after attending the 2013 edition, I didn't have to think twice and happily applied.

In 2012, I attended the Refresh in Lithuania summer program of Vytautas Magnus University, which was aimed at international students of Lithuanian descent and gave an insight into the history of the country as well as the economic, social and cultural situation of contemporary Lithuania. That summer I first got introduced to the LISS program through friendships with LISS students. I subsequently was accepted into the program for the 2013 summer.

I grew up in The Hague, Netherlands. However, my maternal grandmother is Lithuanian, born in Kaunas. She has made sure that our family will never forget our roots. She raised my mother with the same love and appreciation for Lithuania that I have been brought up with as well.

This year, I interned at Valdovų Rūmai, where my project consisted of writing an excursion, to be used in the museum's education center, covering a variety of paintings. As I attended college at the Radboud University in Nijmegen, Netherlands, where my major study field has been History of Art and where I specialized in the artistic relations between Eastern and Western European painting and architecture in the 18th- and 19th century, Valdovų Rūmai fit my field of study perfectly. Last year I interned at the Kasiulis Museum, where I studied and helped with the archiving of the artist's progression of works from the pre-World War II period to his time as a displaced person in France.

The 2014 LISS program started out in Kaunas on June 24, 2014, with an introduction program arranged by Vytautas Magnus University. There were classes and seminars, and we were introduced to the breadth of the university. The actual internships in Vilnius started on June 30, when we all went for interviews at our employers, got introduced to our workplace and colleagues, and discussed our job assignments. For me, getting



Top: LISS students visit Seimas. Photo: Algis Norvila. Above, Eduard gives a museum tour to high school students.

assigned to write the excursion felt like a very responsible job, and it really gave me the opportunity to put my art history experience to use.

Besides our internships, this year's LISS program came with the opportunity to see a lot of Lithuania, including some special events. It started out with the celebration of Dainų šventė (the Song Festival) in Vilnius, and we visited Seimas, swam in the lake at Trakai, went on a kayak trip on the Vilnelė and Neris, and spent a weekend in Klaipėda where Jūros šventė (Sea Festival) was being hosted. That weekend we also got to travel to Palanga and Nida to truly enjoy the Lithuanian summer.

This summer's LISS program provided an excellent balance among gaining work experience, enjoying a great summer and getting more in touch with the county of my ancestry. I would like to thank the Lithuanian-American Community, the Lithuanian Foundation and the Kazickas Family Foundation, who provide the financing that make the LISS program possible. I would strongly encourage all Lithuanian-American and Canadian-American college students to apply for LISS to experience a really memorable and rewarding Lithuanian internship.