

## Deborah's Home

Parsons Paris is an international school with students from all around the world. Each student here has a different definition of the word "home" and unique criteria that should be met so that they can call a place home. So I decided to begin my visit to Deborah's home with two questions: What are the necessary ingredients that make you feel as if you're home? Do you feel like you are at home in Paris? She is from India. It is a country which is far away from France and her culture is really different from mine so I was curious to hear her answers. 'I feel like I need to be completely comfortable in a place for it to feel like home' she said. Apparently, she doesn't feel like at home in Paris. She said that the building materials felt very different and she hated her small apartment. 'It is very different from what it was like back home'.

After her answers I got confused and didn't know what to expect from her apartment. She was really cold about her place here, so distant, and it looked like she missed her home in India a lot. I also learnt that she has three roommates and shares her room with Beryl who is also in our class. That information made everything more complicated. It was going to be hard to find her personal objects and see her personality with the other roommate's presence there.

I entered the building and her apartment was on the first floor. Their door was plain white, reminded me of a hotel room door. I entered and the first thing I saw was a 'Please be quiet!' sign next to the door. I guessed that their landlord left it because they are four girls in one small apartment after all.

Then I looked down and saw that the whole apartment had wooden floors. She told me that she hated the wooden floor in their apartment. 'They are so creaky. We are not allowed to wear shoes inside our apartment because the neighbors can hear us walk' she explained. The house had a dark atmosphere in general. 'I like it dark'. She said that she found Paris depressing in a way and that's why she was more drawn to the dark. But on the other hand, she told me that she couldn't sleep in complete darkness so she always left a small light on in her room.

The first room she showed me was the living room. It was a small rectangular room surrounded by a sofa and chairs, a coffee table in the middle and photos on the wall. A typical living room. It was pretty neat for four people. On the left side there was a grey sofa and a red armchair next to it. There were pillows and blankets on the sofa. On the coffee table, there were some food leftovers from the night before. A Redbull bottle, which I am sure belongs to Deborah, an orange juice bottle, an empty pack of chips, an empty ice cream container, dirty bowls, glasses, and napkins. It was obvious that they had some fun last night. A very typical student housing scene right in front of me. Despite the rubbish on the desk, the room smelled really fresh and clean. Next to the sitting area, there was a white fireplace but it looked more like decoration than a real one. On the top of fireplace there was a small television. In the right corner of the room, there was a dining table which looked almost too small for four people to eat on it. The final object in the living room was a bookshelf facing the dining table. It was filled with their art supplies: sketchbooks, acrylic paints, fixative spray, brushes, rulers...

Only by seeing that bookshelf, a stranger could understand that art students lived in this apartment.

I moved on to her bedroom which she shared with Beryl. Deborah's side was on the left. There was a wardrobe between her side and Beryl's side like a border. If I were to compare the two sides, I could say that Deborah's looked a lot tidier than Beryl's. Her bed was right next to the wall. She pointed out to the three important objects for her: A fur blanket, her pillow case and Givenchy teddy bear. 'I am obsessed with anything fur' she said. She liked this blanket a lot because it felt very warm and cosy. The pillow case had face sketches on it. Very minimalistic. It was in beige and black. The bear was from a children's store near her house in Paris. It was a black Teddy bear with Givenchy logo on it. Her name was Chaos. Why Chaos? 'For the longest time I was into very funny names for my stuffed toys but since I came to Paris everything has been kind of difficult and different for me. That's why I wanted to name it something darker.'

On the wall on top of her bed there was a bulletin board. She didn't put a lot on it. There were two things: a card and a Polaroid picture. The card was from her parents wishing her luck for Paris and the polaroid was a photo of her and her ex-boyfriend in the 11th grade banquet. She said that the photo made her sad now since he recently wanted to break up with her because of the long distance.

On the right side of the bed, there was a bedside table. She explained that it was originally plain white but she bought marble covering to make it look more like the way she wanted. 'Our house in India has marble floors. It is a small thing but makes an impact for me.' I knew from our previous project that she was addicted to Redbull, so I wasn't shocked when I saw a Redbull can on the bedside table next to her lamp and jewelry box.

Next to bedside table, there was a table for studying. There were earphones and AirPods on the table. Deborah said that she liked having convenient access to her music. When her phone was charging she used AirPods, otherwise she used the earphones. She didn't like sharing her music since she found it very personal. In front of the earphones, there was a spice bottle from India. It was the only thing she had from her hometown. She had a stock of spice that she brought from India. 'Sometimes I transfer it to small containers so it can be easier to take it with me everywhere I go.' I asked if the spicy food was traditional in India. Apparently, she was from a state called Nagaland and they eat a lot of spicy food there.

The most remarkable object in her room was her bag collection. There were hooks on her side of the wardrobe and she hanged her bags there. It was obvious that she liked to collect bags, especially black ones. The reason was that black bags don't get dirty easily. The Dior bag was her favorite one. It was a small black bag with a gold 'Dior' writing on it.

In general, she didn't have a lot of personal items at her place. Maybe that's why she didn't feel like home or maybe she really didn't feel comfortable around her surroundings. It was really hard to see her personality through objects but this trip gave me an idea of her life.

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