

I love my... Second Hand Shop

Last year, Jesse Bambino decided to leave Bristol in the UK to follow her German boyfriend to Leipzig. Lucky for us, because her newly opened second hand shop FooFoo near Lindenauer Markt is one of a kind.

What kind of items do you sell?

I sell fashionable second hand clothes, shoes, jewellery and accessories, I also have a selection of new items. Most of them are sourced from the UK and include well known labels, which are not readily available in Germany. I choose everything myself and buy things, that catch my eyes from different places. Some of the items are bought from other countries that I visit and other times, I bring them back from the UK when I go to visit my family and friends.

Do you think second hand culture is different in the UK?

Very much so! Having volunteered in different charity shops in the UK, I have seen that second hand clothing has become more popular than ever before, which makes me believe, that having the same concept in Leipzig will be an advantage for the community. There is a lack of well managed shops in Leipzig that sell good quality brand name second hand clothing. And I wanted to fill that gap.

What advantages do you see in buying second hand?

I believe in the environmental benefit of buying second-hand, as fewer natural resources are used and environmental damage is minimised. This is a form of recycling which also reduces the amount of waste going to landfill sites. In the UK there are a lot of charity shops. so as well as buying things for a fraction of the price, you're also helping raise money for much needed causes.

Where did the idea come from to sell everything there is in the shop, even the lampshades?

The idea behind FooFoo was that I wanted it to be more than just another second hand clothes shop. The aim was to create an environment which was a cool shop, a friendly meeting place, the host of Super8 film nights and through the use of innovative lighting, a work of art in its own right. The vintage lampshades were provided by a very good friend of mine, who is an avid collector. The lighting display he put together creates a warm and interesting ambience which everybody who comes into the shop loves!

You also exhibit and sell art in your shop...

The concept behind placing art in my shop was that I wanted to give local artists the opportunity to have their work seen and sold in a relaxed and friendly environment. The idea is to also encourage more people, especially those local to the area, to come into contact with and appreciate art, encouraging a sense of community and participation. Most recently, I have been having Doppeldenk artwork in my shop, whose work I love and who are also based in Leipzig.

Where does your interest in fashion come from?

I've always had an interest in fashion ever since I was a teenager. I used to buy lots of fashion magazines and always wished I had the money to afford all the beautiful clothes that the models had on. As I got older, my interest in fashion grew and I decided that I wanted to work in the fashion industry. My first job was working for a popular clothing company which was great because we were given generous discounts on any clothes that we bought. It was a match made in heaven! I then went on to work as a booker in a model agency which gave me the opportunity to work on lots of great photoshoots and numerous fashion shows, sometimes modelling clothes and other times as a photographer.

When you first came to Leipzig, you did not speak any German. Did you ever feel uneasy about that?

Not really, if anything, it was exciting and also a big challenge which I was ready for. Since opening FooFoo, I've been very lucky because most of the people who come in are able to speak some English. For the few who don't speak any English at all, they have been kind enough not to laugh at my terrible broken German...The next thing I plan to do is learn German this year!

What has been your most memorable moment in Leipzig so far?

My most memorable moment was when I went to my first outdoor party in Leipzig which took place in a big field somewhere. It was dark when I arrived but when I left the most beautiful sunset had started to rise...it was breathtaking!

I love the people in Leipzig, the mellow vibe and the fact that there is always something interesting going on, day and night!