As Nadya Stryuk prepared her college applications, Yale represented several unknowns: A student from Voronezh, Russia, she had never been to the United States, and she didn’t know what she wanted to study. “The flexibility of the liberal arts attracted me to Yale,” she says.

Now halfway through her Yale career, Nadya has found her focus. She has settled on architecture as a major and spends most of her time in Rudolph Hall, where she practices sketching, modeling, and rendering her design ideas. “I especially like working in the studio, where I can constantly interact with my peers and learn from them on a daily basis,” she says.

While mastering the skills required of an architect, Nadya also considers the built environment more broadly. As co-president of the Urban Collective, she joins like-minded peers in hosting speakers and participating in local planning meetings. Her summer activities have reinforced this interest: After freshman year, she studied Italian in Siena, visiting architectural masterpieces in her free time, and this summer she is conducting independent research on green urban spaces in Beijing, Bangkok, and Kuala Lumpur. After Yale, she would like to earn a master’s degree in architecture, though she is also considering law school, where she could learn more about zoning and real estate law as tools of urban planning.

Yale’s reputation, sense of community, and resources made it her first choice. “The generous financial aid also played a crucial role in my decision,” Nadya says. “My choice was partially blind. But now I feel like I’ve made one of the best decisions of my life.”

A robust financial aid program brings exceptional students like Nadya to Yale, regardless of their financial circumstances. To learn more about ways to support these students, please visit giving.yale.edu or call 800.395.7646.