

# Case study

## Elizabeth Willing

### Details

**What:**

Elizabeth is a visual artist whose practice examines gastronomy with an emphasis on the collective experience of food—how and what we eat.

In 2014, Elizabeth undertook eight weeks work experience with Thomas Rentmeister in Berlin and eight weeks self-directed research in Germany, Paris and Italy. Thomas is a leading German artist who employs everyday materials in his work.

Through working with Thomas, Elizabeth gained skills in the production, packing, documentation and the storing of artwork—particularly ephemeral artworks. Elizabeth also learned how ephemeral pieces are displayed and sold.

Elizabeth was fortunate to spend time with Thomas and his gallerist while they installed his show in Amsterdam and then in Cologne. The experience gave Elizabeth an insight into the commercial art world in Europe and the opportunity to present her work to other artists and curators.

Elizabeth's self-directed research led her to meet with artists and designers whose work she has long admired or whose projects are relevant to her own work. These meetings have continued her education in the food/art field and its strengths and weaknesses.

These contacts and knowledge will be of advantage to Elizabeth in her upcoming Australia Council residency at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin from July 2014 to June 2015.



Elizabeth at the entrance to the 'third best restaurant in the world', Osteria Francescana in Modena, Italy. Photo provided by Elizabeth Willing.

**When:**

January to May 2014

**Where:**

Berlin, Reims, Paris, Milan

**Arts Queensland contribution:**

\$4000 – Individuals Fund

**Contact for further information:**

Website: [www.elizabethwilling.com](http://www.elizabethwilling.com)

**Links:**

<http://www.bethanien.de/en/artists/elizabeth-willing/>

## Outcomes

- An opportunity to exhibit with the Contemporary Food Lab—a food art gallery/project in Berlin. This opportunity was made possible through the connections developed through Thomas Rentmeister.
- One of Elizabeth's new contacts, French food designer, Marc Brettilot, has invited her to be part of his *Thinking about Food Design* project.
- Developing a relationship with Thomas Rentmeister—an enthusiastic boss, mentor and friend. Thomas has offered to take Elizabeth on as a studio assistant.
- A visit to the Oesteria Francescana restaurant in Modena, Italy influenced Elizabeth's ideas on food design. The restaurant is ranked third in the world and known for its iconoclastic and theatrical approach to its food creations.
- Elizabeth started learning to speak German. This will enable her to communicate more easily and effectively with local artists during her Berlin residency. She will also be able to absorb more of the local culture through attending events in German and reading German magazines and newspapers.



Food art: A dish from the Oesteria Francescana restaurant in Modena, Italy. Photo provided by Elizabeth Willing.

## Learnings and reflections

Elizabeth's time in Berlin has helped her develop some advice for those wishing to pursue a similar learning experience:

*'It's important to do very thorough research before visiting another city. I only did this in a few of the cities I visited and I had a much better experience of those places, whereas when I did not do enough research I missed things and regretted it.*

*Meet with as many people in your field as possible, especially if it is very niche, and if you like them/or their projects— try to get involved.*

*Offer to work for free for a period of time—it opens up many doors, opportunities for meeting people, job opportunities, free dinners, and conversation. The 'free intern' thing might be frowned on at the moment, but nothing works best when moving to a new place.*

*Make business cards, and always have them with you'.*