

Case study

Bridgette Shepherd

Details

What:

Bridgette Shepherd is an emerging artist whose practice has focused on the creation of contemporary jewellery. With the assistance of Individuals Funding, Bridgette undertook an internship with internationally renowned contemporary jewellery gallery and online forum, Klimt02, in Barcelona, Spain.

At Klimt02, Bridgette was responsible for publishing website content and database management. Working alongside Klimt02 staff, Bridgette was also involved in conducting research and developing proposals for improvements to the new website's format, functionality and memberships.

Through her work at Klimt02, Bridgette gained valuable knowledge on the international art jewellery community, fostered international professional networks and connected with European audiences of contemporary jewellery. This significant opportunity has advanced the development of her career as a creative practitioner and industry professional.

When:

December 2014 to February 2015

Where:

Barcelona, Spain



Bridgette Shepherd at Genesis Exhibition Opening Night at Klimt02 Gallery. Photographer: Terry Halle

Arts Queensland contribution:

\$6000 – Individuals Fund

Contact for further information:

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Website: <http://www.bridgetteshepherd.wordpress.com>

Links:

The blog on Bridgette's website documents her Klimt02 internship and other Spanish adventures:

<http://bridgetteshepherd.wordpress.com/spanish-klimt02-experience/>

Outcomes

- Bridgette developed her knowledge of the international art jewellery community and increased her understanding of the skills necessary for networking within this community.
- While at Klimt02, Bridgette studied extensive collections of works by contemporary jewelers and engaged in exchanges with other artists. The handling of exhibited works and image editing for website publication informed her awareness of the styles and techniques distinctive to certain countries or specific schools.
- Bridgette immersed herself in the international art jewellery community and as a result of her work with Klimt02 and attendance at every possible jewellery event, she developed connections with numerous active members of the local, Barcelona, and international jewellery communities. This led to an increased and diverse viewing of her website, blog and social media accounts.

Learnings and reflections

Bridgette found that she was able to gain useful experience by seeking out opportunities:

Although an association with the Klimt02 name was advantageous, I established the connections and took advantage of all the opportunities I could to immerse myself in the international contemporary jewellery community. Therefore, my advice is that you cannot be disheartened by an experience, the experience is only as rewarding as the effort you put into it.

The Klimt02 experience also gave Bridgette a useful perspective on contemporary Australian jewellery practice:

Reflecting on the knowledge I gained of international practices, it is apparent the standard of contemporary jewellery in Australia is in no way less than what is occurring in Europe. Although I personally believe Australia has a greater commercial representation of contemporary

jewellery rather than works of art jewellery, there is potential for emerging Australian jewellery artists to make an impact abroad. I am aware of the hesitation to enter international juried exhibitions, but I believe there is no reason for hesitation when you have a considered and resolved series of work. International competitions and juried exhibitions are ideal opportunities for expanding exhibiting experience and developing one's skills as a practitioner, both through the application process and creation of new work.

Bridgette offered this advice to other emerging artists:

Be respectfully assertive and resourceful when contacting galleries. The 'big' names in jewellery are extremely busy and not always able to look for emerging names in the field, so you have to put yourself on their radar! Working with a gallery is a partnership. For that reason, when approaching a gallery for representation, it is worthwhile to research the institution and in your inquiry propose why your affiliation would be beneficial to both parties. As an emerging artist, it is imperative that you do not make contact until you have a strong artistic voice relating to your work. This was a view reiterated in a number of my exchanges as it was understood one must take time to develop their work after university.



Genesis Exhibition Opening Night at Klimt02 Gallery
Photographer: Terry Halle