

# Profile: Marie Holdaway



**Tell us about where you lived and worked in the USA?**

I live in a very chilled out, inspiring area in Brooklyn, New York City. The neighbourhood has predominately industrial (proper!) lofts with so many creative people, who roam and cycle around the unique and welcoming shops and bars.

I came to NYC for a change, I was getting restless at home and getting frustrated at the lack of work opportunities in my industry. So my time in NYC was based a lot around work—you've got to work hard to get by in NYC. I was hoping to find work in my field (Graphic Design), but was going to be open minded about any work. I think you have to be when moving somewhere new, you can't expect everything to fall into place perfectly. There's a lot of competition, but there's also a lot of people willing to help you get a job in your industry. You've just got to show initiative and self determination.

2 months after applying to 60-70 different jobs, I was offered work. I found my internships through people I had met randomly in Brooklyn. It's the same everywhere though, quite often it's who you know in the industry, not what you know. Both the internships are in Manhattan, and it's so great being surrounded by creative people and working in an industry I studied for.

The employer told me that what made me different from all the other interns, was that I had come all the way from NZ, by myself, to pursue my career, and that I kept contacting them. The experience I'm gaining is so invaluable, and to get it overseas, in NYC just makes it that much more great.

**What are some of the experiences that you had which made an impact on you?**

A good experience which impacted me was my first walk around Manhattan and Brooklyn, taking it all in. I just remember being so dumbstruck by the art everywhere, and the accents and cultural differences. And the sheer amount of people.

**What are your 3 favourite memories of living and working in the USA?**

1. Numerous inspiring concerts with insanely talented musicians performing, surrounded by cool people, all practically free.
2. Getting emails from the places I applied for internships telling me I got the job. I remember thinking "I'm in NYC, and I've got two Graphic Design internships." Felt like a dream.
3. Being caught by surprise by so many things that make NYC so crazy and captivating. The art, the clothes, the music, the culture.

**Were there any times that were hard?**

Definitely. Finding apartments was frustrating, you apply for 100's of places and don't get any replies.

Also applying for work with the same problem. I think it's hard at times to not be effected by the poverty and the pollution of NYC, it makes you really appreciate how good things are in New Zealand.

**What is something unexpected/different/strange about the USA compared with other places you have lived?**

Everything! It's like you've entered a whole new world. I guess the one thing that really makes NYC different, is the insane amount of people everywhere. It can be overwhelming sometimes, you sort of take a step back and need a moment to take it all in. Also the different communities throughout NYC, you walk down some streets and it could honestly be like you've just stepped into Mexico, or Italy, or China.



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## How did you find employment in the USA?

Once you have a job, it's fine. The pays not too bad, not all internships pay—which is the same everywhere. It's just finding a job that can be tricky. You've really got to try and network as much as you can, meet as many people in the industry and go to events. You've got to stay positive and keep trying to get work, people will see your determination when you apply for jobs – and that's what employer's want. Work in NYC, like the city itself, is extremely fast paced. It can be pretty cut-throat, sometimes you need to be thick skinned and also show your initiative a lot.

## Has working in the USA benefited your career work experience?

Without a doubt. I tried for months to gain experience in the industry in NZ, without much success. So gaining work experience, especially from overseas, is a huge help for when I get back to New Zealand. The experience I gained here will separate me from other employees when I apply for work back home.

## What is your advice for someone who wants an American adventure?

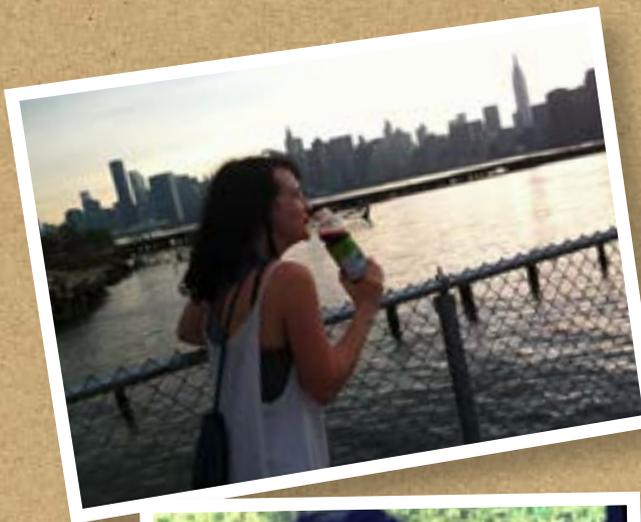
First of all, DO IT. Second, be open minded and patient – don't expect everything to work out straight away. Third, make the most of it! USA is an amazing country with many opportunities – you've just got to find them.

## What did you find valuable in going to the USA on an IEP program?

The help that was constantly there from the lovely IEP staff. The advice they give you before your trip is so helpful, and they're always there to answer your annoying questions, they're very patient!

## What next? Where to next?

Return back to clean green NZ, to recharge my batteries and save some money, then travel. I hope to get sponsorship for an H1B visa to go back to NYC, otherwise head to London or elsewhere. Having the opportunity to get this Visa and spend a year in USA has made me realise how much we have to learn from different cultures, and given me the travel bug.



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