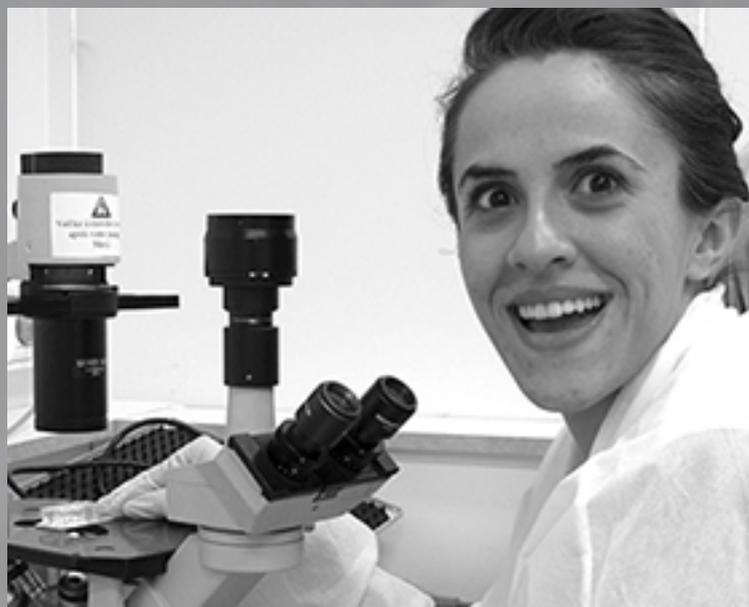


## Interview with **Vittoria PANDOLFI**

PhD student at the *University of Technology of Compiègne*  
France



“ I come from Italy, from a small town in the Calabria region. When I was 19, I decided to move to the north of the country to embark on studies in the field of biomedical engineering. I pursued a Master’s degree in Tissue Engineering which got me very enthusiastic about research.

Thanks to a first scientific experience in the United States, I clearly understood I wanted to enrich my knowledge by doing a PhD back to Europe. And here I am... Carrying out my PhD as a “BIOARTist” at the University of Technology of Compiègne.”

### **W**elcome in the BIOART project Vittoria. What is your PhD project about? What objectives do you have to reach?

My PhD falls into the third BIOART work orientation which focuses on the development of a bioartificial liver for liver failure patients. The aim of my project is to realize co-cultures between different hepatic cell types in order to improve and maintain the hepatocytes-specific functions following their encapsulation and application in the fluidized bed bioartificial liver device which is developed in my lab.

### **H**ow challenging is it to undertake a PhD? Does your daily work turns out to be different than you had anticipated?

Undertaking a PhD requires lots of energy. Having a plan B at every step of the PhD is crucial and mandatory, since more often than not, things don’t turn out the way we’d like them to. However, it is an extraordinary

life-pathway along which positive and negative findings add something to my personality. My work is exactly how I expected it to be at the beginning; and I’m not talking about the results but about the challenges that it daily offers me.

### **Y**ou participated in BIOART’s meeting and training sessions in January 2014. What did you learn there?

I had such a good time at Radboud University! Even though the training sessions focused on topics quite different from those of my PhD, namely on kidney topics, I got some useful and practical tips from the expert researchers’ lectures (i.e. optimization of the immunohistochemistry protocol). The whole event was very well organized. It was also a great occasion to combine scientific and social aspects. I met all the BIOART fellows for the first time and started to know them better.



**The programme for BIOART's training session next September has been released: what is of specific interest to you in this programme?**

I checked the program and... I'm getting more excited about the coming BIOART workshop every passing day. Since it will mainly deal with several aspects of the bioartificial liver, I'm sure I will learn a lot from the lectures scheduled. It will add some fundamental bricks to the "construction" of my PhD. Moreover, I'm finding particularly interesting the Thursday plan with a few hours dedicated to complementary skills.

**Secondments are planned for all BIOART's PhD students and post-doc researchers. You went to ITM-CNR in January 2014. What was the point of the visit and what did you learn there?**

My secondment at ITM-CNR was very fine. ITM-CNR researchers' expertise allowed me to identify promising solutions to technical issues I had before going there (about the immunocytochemistry protocol for spheroids staining and confocal microscopy observation). They were really helpful and patient from the first day I arrived there. They made all lab facilities available to me. I felt totally involved in the lab-life.

**What is appealing to you in being a researcher?**

What I'm about to say might sound weird... Feeling my brain is always on... That's what is appealing to me in working as a researcher. Beyond this, being a researcher gives me the opportunity to contribute to the evolution and improvement of common health problems, getting people's attention on what I am daily working on.

**Do you have any plans after completing the PhD?**

I would use the word "ideas" instead of "plans" at the moment. For sure, I take a keen interest in discovering how research works in companies. Let's see!

**Thanks for answering my questions Vittoria, and all the best for your PhD!**

**BIOART in brief**

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**Multidisciplinary training**

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