

My internship at the Dallas Museum of Art, which filled the ten weeks between early June and August (and to which I will refer in the present tense, where appropriate, from now on, as I still have a week left on the job), has entailed a range of tasks. I report to two teams, Arts and Letters Live and Adult Programming, within the DMA's Education Department. My responsibilities for Arts and Letters Live consist of answering the public ticketing line, soliciting and screening submissions for the Texas Bound series of readings and anthologies, and assisting with the execution of Arts and Letters Live events. For the Adult Programming team, I help with the logistical aspects of the weekly Gallery Talks and monthly Late Night programs. For both teams, I research potential speakers and performers for future events, and assist in the organization of data from event surveys.

My main responsibility for Arts and Letters Live is the search for material for the Texas Bound series. Every year, the DMA sponsors two readings of stories that relate to Texas either through narrative material or through the author's biography and/or home address, and then compiles those stories into anthologies. While many of the pieces that feature in Texas Bound are drawn from the pool of stories that accumulates in response to the DMA's call for submissions, others come from previously published novels and anthologies. Wherever their source, all the stories under consideration must pass my editorial eye before moving on to the table-reading committee for further evaluation. I read all of the stories submitted (around sixty-five in number, of varying lengths), a number of submissions from previous years that had been deferred for later consideration, and by the end of the internship will have finished nineteen

other books by authors ranging from Katherine Anne Porter to Cormac McCarthy. While reading such a large volume of material in a fairly compressed period of time is not an unprecedented practice for me, choosing bits and pieces of that material that could both stand up to repeated readings and criticism and fit together with one another in a coherent series is certainly a challenge. For the first time, I find myself reading for the pleasure and critical attention of someone other than myself; as the review process has progressed, I have learned to place my own literary taste in dialogue with that of other readers, and to look at texts from the perspective of an editor, rather than that of a scholar or aesthete.

In addition to honing my critical reading skills, my time at the DMA has challenged my creative capacity. As part of my work with the Adult Programming team, I wrote the script for the July Late Night's Murder Mystery Game, an event in which museum patrons participate in a real-life game of Clue; actors scattered throughout the galleries portray seven artworks who are each under suspicion of killing an eighth, and the participants must ask them various questions to learn which of them did the murder, with what museum object, and in which gallery. At the beginning of the summer, my supervisors gave me a list of the artworks that would be 'suspects' this year, and tasked me with coming up with the mystery's plot, and the answers that each artwork would give to the most commonly posed questions (e.g. "Where were you at the time of the murder?" or "What was your relationship to the deceased?"). When I first learned about the project, I harbored serious doubts about my ability to do a credible job, but the process of breaking the task down, gallery by gallery and character by character, helped me see past my anxiety and actually enjoy the work. And when, during that Late Night, several thousand people

lined up to participate in an experience that I had been integral in creating, I felt that I had truly accomplished something that altered people's lives, if only for an evening.

Like anything worth doing, my time at the DMA has had some definite ups and downs. The brightest moments of my work here, including walking into an elevator full of actors dressed as the artworks whose characters I created, or discussing a promising short story with my Arts and Letters Live supervisors, came with the realization that I had produced a tangible, valuable experience for someone else, and that I had done so by working within the structured, supportive flow of professional life at the DMA. In my worst moments, which inevitably took place during a lull in my workload, I felt almost oppressed by the same structures that had helped me succeed at other times, stagnant and unproductive. Such feelings ebbed as soon as I was able to recommence work on a project, and perhaps relate more to my own uneasiness with idle time than to the working conditions at the DMA.

As I prepare to enter my final year at Sewanee, I am deeply grateful for this summer's experience at the DMA. Holding responsibilities in such a variety of areas has taught me that I possess a greater flexibility and cooperative ability than I had previously guessed; I also discovered that a remarkable amount of work becomes possible when one has a strict deadline and a sufficient pool of interpersonal and intellectual resources. I hope that this confidence will help carry me through the ever-approaching comps, an honors thesis, and a creative writing class that definitely falls outside of my academic comfort zone, and know that it will serve me well as I begin to construct a life outside the Domain. While life at the DMA has also taught me that museum work is not a career path that I intend to pursue further, my experience assisting with

Texas Bound indicates that a job in editing or publishing might be something to consider.

Whatever my ultimate career, I am exceedingly grateful to the Education Department at the DMA for providing this opportunity, and to the donors who permitted me to take advantage of it.