Summer Internship 2016: Guarisco Gallery

My summer internship at Guarisco Gallery was an eye-opening experience that put me face to face with “the real world” unlike any experience I’ve ever had before. I grew a new sense of professionalism working from ten o’clock in the morning until five o’clock in the evening. My responsibilities varied day to day, keeping me free from boredom. I never was stuck sitting at a desk. Whether I was filing, printing, unpacking supplies, handling the art works, communicating with clients, or taking a field trip with the intern supervisor, Grace West, I was always on my feet and fully engaged in my duties.

Guarisco Gallery features nineteenth and twentieth century paintings and sculptures ranging from traditional, Romantic styles to impressionist and post-impressionist styles. Recently, Guarisco Gallery has expanded its inventory to include modern and contemporary pieces as well. The gallery’s inventory consists of paintings and sculptures by artists such as Jean-Pierre Cassigneul, Claude Venard, and Hughes Claude Pissarro. Additionally, there are works by more famously known artists such as Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Mary Cassatt. The main gallery space is located on M and 22nd Street within the same building as the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. Guarisco Gallery is closely associated with the Ritz-Carlton Hotel because the gallery space was once part of the hotel. Now, the Ritz-Carlton often rents out the gallery space on occasion to host special events. This space holds the majority of the gallery’s inventory, including
mostly traditional and impressionists works. The second location, located in
Georgetown next to the Four Season Hotel, is much smaller, and holds primarily
modern and contemporary works. I worked at both locations depending on where they
needed my assistance. The two spaces are only a ten minute walk from one another,
making it easy to commute back and forth between the galleries during the day.
However, I spent most of my time at the main gallery space on the west end.

My primary duty was taking inventory of the packets and sheets within the artist's'
files. Each artist has a file which contains four folders. The folders are labeled
biography, high-quality images, history, and compensation. I was responsible for
keeping each folder stocked and up-to-date. Images and biographies are often pulled
for clients to take home with them. Therefore, printing and filing in order to restock the
folders was an important task and took up the majority of my time. Moreover, taking
inventory of the images allowed me to familiarize myself with the gallery’s collection.
Ultimately, I became more comfortable at my internship once I grew acquainted with the
works.

Another duty of mine was putting together marketing packets for clients
interested in a particular subjects. For example, if a client liked dogs, I gathered images
and the artists' biographies on ten different works that all pertain to dogs. Once that was
done, I sent it to the client. The idea is to personalize marketing packets for clients
which hopefully will encourage them to inquire or purchase a work of art from the
gallery. Creating marketing packets also contributed to memorizing the gallery
collection. I also learned how to make postage through this process.
Furthermore, I assisted in packing and unpacking paintings and sculptures. I used a power drill for the first time unpacking a very expensive Renoir painting. On top of the physical responsibilities I worked on documents relevant to the gallery’s clients. The project that took me the longest was creating a spreadsheet that included the names, addresses, and contact information of the top two hundred highest-paid CEOs. This task required research and investigative skills. Using the internet and WhitePages Premium, I found all their addresses and sent out the gallery’s catalogue.

Other responsibilities of mine included taking out the trash, answering the door, organizing closet space, upkeeping the gallery space, sending out mail, making postage, labeling images, writing artist biographies, and occasionally answering the phone when necessary.

In June, Grace took the interns to Charles’ frame shop. Charles crafts each frame that is used in the gallery. There we learned the steps to crafting a gold-leaf or metal-leaf frame. Most importantly we learned the difference between metal and gold leaf frames. The gold leaf appears smoother and shinier than the metal leaf. Metal leaf appears to have a more matte-like finish. Charles explained the process of preparing and priming frames before applying gold or metal-leaf.

We went on another field trip to the National Gallery where we saw the Hubert Robert exhibit. Hubert Robert was an eighteenth and nineteenth century painter who mostly depicted ruins. However, not all of his paintings were historically accurate. For example, using his imagination he painted important structural monuments such as the
Pantheon in Rome but, there are architectural inaccuracies. The imagined landscape is one of Hubert Robert most distinguishing qualities.

Overall, my internship at Guarisco Gallery introduced me to the business aspects of working in the field of art. I gained knowledge of how business and sales are conducted within a small, privately owned gallery. Guarisco Gallery is one of the largest and leading nineteenth and twentieth century galleries worldwide and I am honored to say that I spent my summer learning the business of buying and selling art alongside a group of intelligent and charismatic group of people. I believe that Guarisco Gallery has given me the assurance to pursue a career in the field marketing, particularly to be associated with the arts.