

Hollis McGregor
Summer 2015

This summer I was given the opportunity to intern with the Department of Prints and Drawings at the Art Institute of Chicago. Founded in 1879, the Art Institute of Chicago is the second largest art museum in the United States and houses a distinguished collection of over 260,000 works of art. Housing 11,500 drawings and 60,000 prints, the Department of Prints and Drawings comprises more than one fourth of the Art Institute's entire collection.

The internship began on June 4th and will end on August 14th. I was initially supposed to work two days every week from 9 o'clock in the morning to 5 o'clock in the afternoon, but I decided to work four days per week. I spent most of my time working alongside the other interns in the department's Glore Print and Drawing Study Room, where I could conduct research and examine works within the collection. I was very intimidated and overwhelmed during the first two weeks on my internship. The Prints and Drawings Department has a much larger staff and space than that of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. I quickly adapted to the rapid-paced environment and learned that the staff fully trusts the interns with assigned projects. These projects have helped me enhance my professional skills, including my ability to make personal deadlines, working with a partner, and balancing multiple tasks at once.

For the past two months I have been assisting two curators and the collection manager with projects relating to the art of Latin America. My other responsibilities include the daily monitoring of the works on paper study center, helping to pull and put away art, assisting other department staff with research and cataloging tasks as needed.

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My previous experiences with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and Sicardi Gallery have not only inspired me to pursue a career involving my passion for Art History and Spanish, but also prepared me for many of my responsibilities as an intern at the Art Institute.

Due to my fluency in Spanish and previous experience with twentieth-century Mexican printmakers, I have been updating object information records on the department's collection of twentieth-century Mexican works on paper. I have been lucky enough to work with another intern because this project requires two people. Because I have a partner, we are able to look at the works in person and verify all information provided in the museum's database at a very efficient pace. We are responsible for confirming and translating titles, measuring dimensions and transcribing inscriptions; we have catalogued 158 objects thus so far. The other assigned project requires extensive artist and object research for the department's future exhibition on modern and contemporary Latin American works on paper. Most of my research has surrounded two Argentine artists that I worked with at my previous internship with Sicardi Gallery: Antonio Berni and Leon Ferrari. This project has enhanced my knowledge surrounding modern printmaking techniques as well as political themes surrounding twentieth-century Latin American artists.

The institution receives millions of visitors every year due to its vast collection and central location in a touristy city. The facilities have received more attention this summer because TripAdvisor ranked the Art Institute of Chicago as the number one

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museum in the world this year. Although the museum is open to the public seven days a week, working at the Art Institute allowed me to wander the galleries before the crowds arrive, giving me a much more intimate experience with the works on display. Working at this institution comes with a lot of perks. With my Art Institute badge I am allowed to bring up to three guests with me inside the museum and I am also given free admission to many of Chicago's museums, allowing me to explore and share my passion for art outside of the office. Twice a week, the Prints and Drawings interns were given the opportunity to attend seminars and workshops with other departments throughout the museum. Meeting with staff from Publication, Education, Conservation and Security provides us with networking opportunities and also a better perspective for understanding how a museum functions.

This Fall, I plan to apply to graduate programs to pursue my interest in Spanish and Latin American art. Ultimately, I hope to receive my doctorate in modern and contemporary Latin American art so I can begin a career as a curator. My internship with the Department of Prints and Drawings at the Art Institute of Chicago was exactly what I hoped for in my efforts to gain more experience and knowledge in both Latin American art, works on paper, and the curatorial field.