

## Summer Internship Report 2017

### **Kit Sommi, C'18**

Hometown: Knoxville, Tennessee



### **The Dallas Museum of Art Dallas, Texas**

*(Kit is second from the right)*

**Provide an overview of the organization/research project and a summary of your responsibilities, tasks, and/or projects.**

This summer I had the opportunity to intern at the Dallas Museum of Art in the Adult Programming and Arts and Letters Live departments. As the intern for Adult Programming I assisted with weekly Gallery Talks, Late Nights at the museum (every third Friday of the month), and Second Thursdays With a Twist (every second Thursday at the museum). At these events I worked with the tour groups and assisted museum visitors. I attended weekly team logistical and brainstorming meetings where I was able to really get to know the teams I worked with for the summer and gained understanding of how the departments functioned so effectively. I also wrote and edited itineraries, event programs, and event itineraries for both of departments I worked with. With the Arts and Letters Live department I assisted in ticketing both on the phone and on the day-of the events. I also contributed to the overall execution of Arts and Letters Live events, such as lectures and book signings, which occur once or twice a week. Additionally, with the Arts and Letters Live team, I read submitted and published short stories by Texas authors, or centered around a Texas subject, for the Texas Bound series. This program is held at the museum during the spring season where actors read Texas-connected stories aloud. This project was my main responsibility when not working events for Adult Programming or Arts and Letters Live. I read many submitted stories from both local and nationally recognized authors. I was able to develop critical skills when considering a story and the ability to assess its strengths and weaknesses. Alongside the Arts and Letters Live team, we read many stories aloud to further narrow down our search for the stories for the 2018 season. I was able to interact with both museum visitors and outside authors on a daily basis. Working with both departments I had a variety of responsibilities which always kept me busy and engaged throughout the summer.

**During your internship, what did you accomplish or how did you make a difference? In what ways did you grow in your professional and technical skills?**

I was able to make a difference in the selection process for the Texas Bound series. I was responsible for vetting short story collections and choosing which stories were to be read aloud with an actor and the Arts and Letters Live team at meetings twice a week. By the end of the summer I left the team with some great options for the Texas Bound 2018 season. Through this experience, I learned to be discerning in my selections and saw how this selection process worked from start to finish. Additionally, I assisted in the execution of weekly events at the museum where I developed my skills with online ticketing platforms and professional interaction. The professional and technical skills I learned at the DMA are invaluable. From learning how to effectively work Excel and other computer programs to writing and leading an exhibition tour for museum visitors, I gained many varied and valuable skills.

**Describe a problem that you helped to solve at your internship. What skills or knowledge from your education at Sewanee helped you address the problem?**

One of the responsibilities of my internship was to assist with the ticketing phone line. Towards the end of the summer the Arts and Letters Live department announced the lineup for their Fall Programming Season. This fall they have so many great authors and artists coming to museum and the programs were instantly popular. There was an issue with some people being unable to buy tickets for certain programs online and I helped address the issue, provide the solution, and finally figure out what they needed tickets for and help secure them. At Sewanee, I have learned how to effectively communicate with many different people, from my peers to professors. This skill is invaluable, especially when working with the public everyday. I was able to address people's problems on the phone, through email, and in person at events because Sewanee has equipped me to do so both effectively and confidently.

**In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?**

I was constantly working alongside teams throughout my internship. I was very fortunate to work with fantastic teams of women who knew what worked and what did not in the museum environment and in regards to specific programs. I learned the power of teamwork when a positive environment is cultivated where the team members also challenge each other to improve everything they do. My teamwork skills were strengthened through working with such great teams because I saw the benefits of teamwork everyday and was immediately welcomed into those teams and encouraged to contribute. This made me want to push myself to contribute in a lasting way that would go beyond the limited time of the summer.

**How did your internship affect your career plans?**

I left Dallas knowing that I want to work with people and in a creative environment. My internship at the the Dallas Museum of Art allowed me the opportunity to not only recognize my desire to work with the public but also showed me that I want to pursue a career in publishing/editing. Although I am still not entirely certain of the career I want, this internship made me much more confident in my abilities and gave me the insight into a creative working environment that I cannot wait to find after Sewanee.

**In what ways did your internship cause you to encounter people of different backgrounds from your own? What steps did you take to communicate effectively with such persons? What did you learn from such persons' perspectives?**

At the museum I was constantly engaging and working with people of different backgrounds. Throughout the summer the museum had the Mexico: 1900-1950 exhibition. The Adult Programming department worked with this exhibition and I was able to assist in the programming that was centered around it. I encountered many people who came from different background as me and came to understand what this exhibition meant to them.

**Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:**

I cannot express my gratitude for making this summer internship possible for me. I had the best experience I can imagine, working with great people and on projects I was very excited about. I have no doubt that this experience has prepared me for my future career and I finished the summer excited about the future. Thank you!