Summer Internship Report 2017

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

One of my main projects was researching non-profit institutions which aligned with Pook & Pook's mission, and reaching out to them to explain what services they could be provided with. I also did research for the appraisers on anything they were curious about but didn't have time, from guns to swords to paintings to vases. I helped work both online and live auctions, assisted clients during the Preview days, and generally helping out wherever I could.

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?

It was rewarding when we got a response from some of the institutions I researched and contacted, who had heard about us through my work and were interested in doing business. Since that was a side project that only I had been working on, it was nice to know that my efforts were paying off. This also might seem minor, but I spent a lot of time sitting at the front desk helping to answer the phones when things got busy, and the practice talking to clients and answering questions was invaluable, especially for someone who does not like to talk on the phone.

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 busiest times at the auction house was around the time of an auction, when there was always something going on and something to do. My time at Sewanee interacting with many different types of people through my extracurriculars helped me to engage with clients and have positive
interactions even when the conversation was difficult. Helping new clients understand the bidding system or explaining to people why we couldn't do what they wanted was hard, but rewarding when we came away from the conversation with a positive resolution.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?
I was sent on some pick-up trips with the art handlers, where we were expected to work as a team to package things up and put them on the moving truck. Having had very little experience with art handling, I was (unfairly) amazed by how knowledgeable they are and how much care they take with the pieces. Working as a team I had to wrap small things a specific way and carry furniture a specific way, following best practices procedures which I didn't know existed. This experience showed me how important it is to listen and learn rather than going ahead and doing things the way I thought would be best.

How did your internship affect your career plans?
I was hired to stay on as a full-time employee, which is very exciting! I really enjoyed being in the auction house setting and in the future I will want to stay in this field, either as an appraiser or in a similar role.

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?
There are many kinds of clients at Pook & Pook, and a big part of my internship was interacting with them as they previewed the pieces that would be going up for auction. Some clients are private collectors, and some buy pieces solely to resell them on eBay. I learned that the best thing I could do was talk to them for a bit just to understand what kind of a client they were and what they were looking for, and then I would be better equipped to answer their questions and direct them to pieces they might be interested in.

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:
Thank you very much! Without the funding I would never have been able to do this internship and by extension would never have gotten this job, allowing me to start my career.