

Midterm Reflection

My experience with the Upstairs Artspace has been tremendously helpful in learning about how art galleries function from day to day. The Upstairs Artspace is a nonprofit, contemporary art gallery in Tryon, NC. As an intern, I directly assist the Gallery Manager. This could be anything from day to day operations or art events. This internship has helped me connect with the local community and network with experienced artists. This is especially important as an Art History/Studio Art major for guidance in my future career.

An important factor into running the gallery is connections with other people. This involves many things. The main component of a regular day at the gallery is greeting and tallying visitors. The tally lets the board and county know how much the surrounding community interacts with the gallery. I will try to greet each visitor and inform them of the exhibits that are currently up and answer any questions they may have. We also use social media to share and connect. I have sent out multiple email newsletters via Constant Contact (which keeps track of our contacts and enables us to send multiple things at once) which are usually sent out a few times a week. The newsletter contains updates about activities, events, upcoming exhibits, and other news. I use a small amount of graphic design knowledge to make it readable and organized. The Upstairs also advertises with posters, which I put up once a month. I take them through downtown Tryon and speak with other business owners. In my time at the gallery, I am pretty familiar with the business owners in town. Human connections like these help me to get out of my shell and participate in a local community.

Since I am able to interact with experienced artists, which mostly include people who have been in the industry for a long time, I am able to learn a few things from them. The gallery

shows contemporary art works of all mediums, sizes, and subjects. Something that the artists do is choose their own pricing and sell their artwork through the Upstairs, which we get a small commission from. The size and medium of the artwork usually factors into the pricing. It gives me an idea of how I might price my own work in the future when I eventually do start selling and collaborating with art galleries. When artworks do sell at the gallery, I can help initiate them. Being able to sell artwork is important because I am able to see more of the financial side to running a nonprofit. I'm not allowed to disclose information besides that monetarily wise, though.

The Upstairs Artspace has a new installation or exhibit every six weeks, which requires a lot of work from all of the board members. I have been able to work alongside and connect with some of these members, such as the treasurer, the board president, events coordinator, and other volunteers. We all work together to coordinate install and take down of exhibits. My job is to take down artwork, patch and paint walls, create artwork pricing labels, and any general labor that the artists or gallery manager need to install or take down the exhibits. Some of the other things I do is take inventory of the artwork, file papers, and make sure loan agreements are in order. Things like this ensure that artwork doesn't get lost and everyone is under an agreement with the gallery. I don't always do these things alone; Merry Beth Noble, the gallery manager, and another volunteer, Mack, are usually by my side.

In conclusion, being an intern at a gallery means that you are always in coordination with other people. It is definitely a group effort, not a solo project. Working as an intern at the Upstairs Artspace informs both of my majors. For Art History, I am now familiar with the day-to-day operations of an art gallery as well as installation, advertising, and networking. As for

Studio Art, I get to see things from the artists' perspective and inform myself on future career options as an artist.