

Final Internship Reflection

During this internship I was able to interview the grandson of August Cook, get primary sources about August and Irma from their family, see ReNewell Fine Art Conservation, and learn about the processes that are involved in the restoration and conservation of oil paintings. These experiences have taught me many things about the role of art historians and conservators, as well as gave me perspective on how I should take this knowledge with me in the future. With double majors of studio art and art history, I have been able to appreciate new perspectives of artists, their families, conservators, and how paintings change over time through aging and various damages.

The interview with Peter Cook, August Cook's grandson was extremely fruitful in allowing me to get an insider's perspective on August's personality and quirks. I was grateful for Peter Cook because he allowed me to see August Cook as the person, and not strictly as the artist. Familial stories and significant areas and homes that reflect how August and Irma Cook lived their lives and left an imprint on history. I paid special attention to the areas in and around the Spartanburg area such as Drayton Avenue, where the Cooks used to live, and Chesnee, where August Cook retired to after working at Converse College. I also learned more about the relationship between August and Irma Cook and how he always thought that she was the better artist even though she decided not to pursue a career in it. The overall message I got from Peter Cook was that August was a stern, but hardworking and intellectual man, while Irma was a skilled artist and sweet mother. They both made sure their house was filled with art, and their children and grandchildren grew up around art and nature.

Another event in the internship that was very enlightening was the visit to ReNewell Inc. the Fine Art Conservation in Columbia South Carolina. During this visit I had the opportunity to see

how oil paintings are restored and conserved and the various processes that go with it. The employees at ReNewell were in the middle of restoring an August Cook painting of Hazel B. Abbot's portrait. I learned so much about a side of art that I never knew anything about. I could definitely see myself pursuing a career in fine art conservation because of this experience!

Overall, I have learned so much during this internship such as different ways of curating and exhibiting pieces, how to do deep research, how to interview, and the processes of restoration and conservation of oil paintings. This internship was very relevant to my major because learning how to exhibit art in an art gallery and how to preserve it over time are necessary pieces of information for someone who majors in art history and studio art. Virginia Newell also doubled majored in studio art and art history! I plan to use the knowledge and information I learned this summer in future careers because I enjoyed everything I did so much and I hope to continue it later in life!