



Working in the List Gallery

Alumni Reflections

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Introduction

—Amanda Roessler '24

Located on Swarthmore College's campus, the List Gallery features an intimate 1,200 square-foot gallery space that offers unique opportunities for Swarthmore students to gain professional experience with List Gallery staff. The List Gallery presents multiple high-end art exhibitions throughout the school year for both the campus community and the general public. For more than 25 years, students have completed a variety of tasks, such as exhibition planning, installing and uninstalling works, designing marketing materials, and engaging with distinguished and emerging contemporary artists.

Each student collaborator who works in the gallery either as a monitor, assistant, or intern has a different experience. Formally created in 2006, the List Gallery internship program offers an introduction to curatorial practices and the opportunity to develop and implement an individualized project.

List Gallery Director Andrea Packard '85 and Exhibitions Manager Tess Wei '17 closely mentor List Gallery interns and associates as they design and implement their projects. Interns have created substantial catalogs, including *Alexis Petroff Floating Drawings* by Blake Oetting '18, *The Inn at Swarthmore Art Collection* by Zoë Wray '16, and *LIST GALLERY - 25 Years* by Tess Wei '17. Another notable intern project includes spatial-recollections.squarespace.com, a website which showcases art from the Swarthmore College permanent collection together with the works by recent List Gallery exhibitors.

While projects such as creating a catalog or curating an exhibition may bolster a student's résumé, alumni often observed that the soft skills they obtained had the most substantial impact on them. As a current List Gallery intern, I contacted some of the alumni who worked in the gallery to learn more about their journeys after

Swarthmore, how their List Gallery experience impacted them, and what advice they might give to current students.

The interviewed alumni demonstrate the wide range of career paths available to Swarthmore students after graduation. While some pursued graduate programs or worked in a variety of museums and galleries, others explored multiple fields as they developed the specific skills needed for their current occupation. The range of opportunities that alumni pursued includes work in curation, architecture, interior design, education, graphic design, culinary arts, creative directorship, user experience design, and psychiatry. Despite the twists and turns in individual journeys, their stories and advice reflect the applicability of the various skills they gained by working in the List Gallery and the consistency of their core interests over time.



Intern Amanda Roessler (at right) packaging an artwork following the closing of the fall 2022 exhibition, *Ubiquitous Presence: Selected Works by Barbara Bullock*.

A number of alumni took interest in seeing the labor involved in creating art, designing exhibitions, and curating. Both practicing psychiatrist Yuan Liu '09 and Rhode Island School of Design Professor Sean Nesselrode Moncanda '09 commented on how their work in the gallery helped them develop an awareness about diverse audiences, communities, and artistic perspectives. Yuan Liu '09 and designer Alicia Dewitt '11 also suggested that their experiences working in the gallery enhanced their ability to conduct professional interviews and to work with co-workers in a team environment—skills that remain crucial to their jobs and everyday lives. Interns especially gained project management skills as they assisted List Gallery staff in various exhibitions, worked on their individualized internship projects, and balanced such efforts with their rigorous courseloads. Some alumni said that the technical skills they learned while working at the List Gallery translate directly into their lives to-

day. For example, Alicia Dewitt '11 uses graphic design and installation skills she learned while working at the gallery, both in her career as a graphic designer and in her home.



Intern Jasmin Rodriguez-Schroeder '17 giving a gallery talk about the fall 2016 exhibition *Bruce Cratsley: Shifting Identities*.

Alumni provided valuable insight and advice for current and future Swarthmore students. Most of the alumni I interviewed highlighted three key observations: there are many more arts-related fields to explore besides museum work and academia, learning how to network is especially important in an arts-related field, and the List Gallery is unique place that can empower Swarthmore students.

Many alumni also commented on the need to value connections, ask questions, and take opportunities that unexpectedly arise. Skills learned through working at the List Gallery, either as an associate or an intern, can be useful in other career fields as well. The List Gallery is a space that provides students with a foundation for whatever passions they wish to pursue. Soomin Kim '13 and Yuan Liu '09 described the List Gallery as an example of how Swarthmore's liberal arts experience taught them to be "malleable" and "adapt-

able" as they explored their personal passions in a variety of different career paths. Reflecting on her internship experience, Liu wrote "Every day I am grateful for the work I did with Andrea Packard at the List. It deepened my passion for the arts and has helped shape me into the young professional I am today." No matter what students study at Swarthmore, working at the List Gallery provides the critical thinking ability and skill set which gives students the opportunity to succeed in whatever career they pursue.



Yuxiang Wu '22, one of the 2022 List Gallery Interns, giving a gallery talk about his senior thesis exhibition in the List Gallery.

Alumni Profiles

Katina Cardenas '06

Katina Cardenas '06 grew up in Matamoros, a city on the border between Mexico and the United States. At Swarthmore, Katina pursued her interest in art history through majoring in art history and completing an externship with List Gallery Director Andrea Packard in January 2005. After her externship, Katina asked Packard if she could continue to assist her on a volunteer basis. Katina's dedication, desire to learn more about curation, and invaluable help with varied gallery projects catalyzed Packard's efforts to secure funding to properly compensate such work. The internship program was formally established in the fall of 2006.

During her junior year at Swarthmore, Katina assisted with diverse List Gallery projects, including the installation of *Extraordinary Bodies: Photographs from the Mütter Museum*. She helped unpack photographs from crates, fill out condition reports, hang and light works, and arrange the 44 descriptive wall texts. She also attended the guest lecture, *Latin American Art 1492-*

1825: Making an Exhibition, presented by Joseph Rishel, who was then a senior curator of European Painting at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA). Rishel's lecture sparked Katina's strong interest in Latin American Art. She noted that the lecture "helped me appreciate objects I'd taken for granted and look at them in a new light." After the lecture, Katina applied for a summer position at the PMA, and asked to work directly with Rishel. Katina's art history coursework and List Gallery experience helped her secure the position and contribute to Rishel's work on a traveling exhibition, *The Arts in Latin America 1492-1820*.

After graduating from Swarthmore College in 2006, Katina worked as a summer camp counselor at the Penn Archaeological and Anthropological Museum, (now known as the Penn Museum). While working there, the PMA education department asked her to help develop educational materials and outreach in conjunction with *The Arts in Latin America 1492-1820*. After

completing that work, Katina traveled briefly and then moved to Boston, where she took museum certification classes at Tufts University. Katina particularly enjoyed taking classes with a Mexican Art professor and enrolled in Tufts's graduate program in museum studies. She also completed an internship at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where she helped with an exhibition focusing on Asian influences in Latin American Art. After completing her internship at the MFA, Boston, Katina was invited to continue helping with the exhibition and assisted as a volunteer for the next three years. In 2013, Katina graduated from Tufts' Museum Studies Program with both a certificate and a master's degree in Art History.

While in Boston, Katina also married and had a son. After she graduated from Tufts, she and her family moved to Houston, where she regularly visits museums and galleries and prioritizes family as a stay-at-home mother to her two children.

Reflecting on her experience at the List Gallery and comparing it with her work at major art museums, such as the PMA and the MFA, Boston, Katina observes that small museums and institutions can provide great opportunities because they allow one to look at varied areas of curatorial practice as opposed to one area of focus. She also advises students, "Take the opportunities that arise [and] seek out opportunities that interest you."



Yuan Liu '09

Yuan Liu '09 was born in China and raised in both Arkansas and Kansas. Yuan's interest in studio art first led her to work as a List Gallery security monitor and receptionist. Yuan applied to become an intern because she saw the List Gallery Director, Andrea Packard '85, as a role model. Andrea's role as an alumna, working mom, working artist, and supportive figure inspired Yuan to dedicate herself to the gallery through the internship opportunity.

Yuan performed a variety of tasks as an intern, such as overseeing gallery receptions, training other student workers, designing posters for on-campus publicity, writing press releases, filling out condition reports, visiting the art studio of Bill Freeland and inventorying his works, and helping to design Freeland's exhibition installation. In the fall of her senior year, Yuan researched, publicized, and independently gave two gallery lectures about the List Gallery exhibition, *Peter Paone: Creative Wellsprings*. In conjunction with her lectures, Yuan also gave

collage workshops in the Lang Performing Arts Center Lobby. During the spring semester, Yuan created two short films highlighting solo List Gallery exhibitions by both Hiroyuki Hamada and Michael Olszewski.



Yuan by a work in Hiroyuki Hamada 's 2008 List Gallery exhibition.

Yuan graduated from Swarthmore in 2009 with a double major in studio art and English literature. Following graduation, she pursued arts-related career opportunities while exploring her interest in ceramics. She completed an AmeriCorps VISTA fellowship in youth playwriting and then worked part-time as the marketing and communications consultant for Philadelphia Young Playwrights. She then worked full-time as an admissions coordinator for PennDesign at the University of Pennsylvania—all while pursuing a career in ceramics. Yuan also volunteered as an interpreter at a free clinic in Chinatown, where the dire need for physicians inspired her to pursue medicine.

Yuan completed the one-year post-baccalaureate pre-medical program at Bryn Mawr College and earned an M.D. degree from the University of Chicago's Pritzker Medical School in 2018. Yuan currently works as a psychiatrist in New York City.

Reflecting on her experience at List Gallery, Yuan feels privileged to have worked closely with the exhibiting artists while she made her exhibition videos. She believes the skills she acquired during her internship directly inform her day-to-day duties as a psychiatrist, such as interviewing people, learning about their stories, and attempting to understand different points of view.

Sean Nesselrode Moncada '09

Sean Nesselrode Moncada '09 became interested in art as a child through visiting numerous museums with his mother and sister. He planned to study English at Swarthmore, but his experience in Professor Michael Cothren's Western Survey course was "extremely formative and eye-opening," and introduced him to art history as an academic discipline. During his sophomore year, Professor Patricia Reilly convinced him of the benefits of an art history degree and helped him develop research experience and critical thinking skills, leading him to pursue a double major in art history and English literature.



Sean's deepening interest in art history and theory prompted him to work for the List Gallery as a monitor and to help with ad hoc projects as a List Gallery Associate. His work at the List Gallery enabled him to appreciate the requisite time and effort that often goes unnoticed when creating and showcasing art. Sean cherished the ability to meet with artists in person and speak with them about their creative processes, not just read about them in textbooks. Sean also learned more about the behind-the-scenes efforts of workers who design exhibitions, plan logistics, and install artworks in galleries.

During the spring of his senior year, Sean enrolled in a course entitled Latin American and Latinx Art and Architecture, taught by Kathryn O'Rourke, a visiting professor from the University of Pennsylvania. After graduating in 2009, Sean worked at a commercial art gallery in New York City, but that experience confirmed his preference for academic research and his desire to pursue graduate studies in art history.

Sean attended the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, where he earned a Masters in art history and archaeology in 2012. He earned a Ph.D. in art history and archaeology in 2017 with a specialization in modern and contemporary art of Latin America and the additional fields of modern and contemporary art of Europe and the U.S.A.

Sean currently lives in Philadelphia and commutes to Rhode Island School of Design, where he is an associate professor in the theory and history of art and design and specializes in Latin American and Latinx art, architecture, and visual culture.

Reflecting on his experience at the List Gallery, Sean values how working with the director provided him with a greater appreciation for the labor put into creating an exhibition, such as contacting artists, creating loan agreements, organizing travel, physically unpacking works, hanging pieces, filling out condition reports, de-

signing and distributing publicity materials, and so much more. Such knowledge is especially relevant at RISD, where most of his students are fine art or architecture majors and especially interested in the practical considerations related to making and exhibiting art.



Alicia Dewitt '11

Alicia DeWitt '11 was born and raised in a suburb of Chicago, Illinois. Upon enrolling at college, she believed biology would be her main focus, but she enjoyed her studio art courses so much that she decided to double major in both biology and studio art. She found that many of her peers also pursued interdisciplinary majors. In fact, three other students in her year majored in both biology and studio art.

After completing summer research in a biology lab, Alicia hoped to “balance the scales a bit” and find an art-related internship to supplement her study of art. Alicia worked as an intern for the List Gallery during her junior year and continued working there as a gallery associate during her senior year. Alicia loved talking to artists and designing marketing and publicity materials for the gallery using Adobe InDesign and Illustrator. During the fall of her junior year, she researched and presented a gallery talk about the work of the noted ceramic artist William Daley. Through creating and incorporating a Powerpoint pre-

sentation into her talk, she allowed visitors to understand complex aspects of his artistic process. She also created a brochure for *Artists in Wartime*, a symposium held in conjunction with concurrent exhibitions in McCabe Library and the List Gallery. In spring 2010, Alicia presented two short gallery talks to students from Children and Adult Disabilities Educational Services (CADES), which is located in Swarthmore Borough. Alicia went on to co-curate *Discovering Abilities*, an exhibition featuring artwork by CADES students that took place on Swarthmore College’s campus in the Kitao Gallery.



Alicia engaging with an exhibition at the List Gallery while in college.

After graduating from Swarthmore, Alicia explored creative job opportunities and worked at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County in arts communications. Alicia saw many parallels between her work at the List Gallery and her arts communications and publicity job, because she often interacted with artists and partnered with the designers of marketing and publicity materials. Alicia realized her strong interest in design and noted that it combined the aspects of being “organized and structural, but also artsy.”

Alicia furthered her interest in design by working as a freelance designer. As she explored the professional world, she became increasingly interested in the theory and history of design. Eventually, she pursued graduate studies to learn more and gain constructive feedback. In 2017, Alicia received a Masters in Fine Arts in graphic design from Boston University, where she was named a WorldStudio Scholar by The Professional Association for Design (AIGA) and a Student to Watch by Graphic Design USA.

Alicia became a designer for Simplisafe’s marketing department and currently lives in Raleigh, North Carolina. Recently, she has created web designs for SimpliSafe that increase conversion rates while also reducing purchase mistakes and customer complaints. More examples of her work can be found at aliciadewitt.com.

Alicia is grateful for her List Gallery internship experience, which introduced her to design platforms, such as Adobe InDesign and Illustrator, strengthened her communication skills, and provided her with installation principles and techniques that she uses in her daily life.



Alicia's professional portrait.

Soomin Kim '13

Soomin Kim '13 is from Seoul, Korea. At Swarthmore, Soomin majored in studio art and minored in film and media studies. Her interest in all aspects of the art industry led her to work as a List Gallery Associate during her junior and senior years.

In fall 2011, Soomin helped conduct both a gallery lecture and printmaking workshop related to *Resilience*, a List Gallery exhibition of works by the noted Israeli printmaker and installation artist Orit Hofshi. During her senior year, Soomin co-curated *Wildly Human*, an exhibition that took place in McCabe Library's atrium gallery and featured six established and emerging artists. The exhibition highlighted the use of animal imagery or motifs as a way of exploring aspects of the human condition. Collaborating closely with List Gallery Intern Elizabeth LaPlace '12 and List Gallery Associate Francesca Bolfo '12, Soomin helped develop the exhibition concept, write a grant proposal, complete loan agreements, publicize the exhibition, and install the artworks.



Soomin poses with a work from her senior art exhibition at the List Gallery in 2013.

Such experiences showed her some of the differences between creating art and curating exhibitions.

Soomin's experiences working at the List Gallery also gave her greater insight into the way the architecture of gallery spaces affects user experience and it sparked her interest in designing her own site-specific installation in the List Gallery, making it the centerpiece of her senior thesis exhibition.

After graduating from Swarthmore, Soomin worked providing tech support at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia and worked as an assistant in various art studios. Subsequently, she worked as a creative director for a tech start-up. Soomin then moved to Korea, where she worked as a professional cook for nearly four years. She then worked at several startups, where she worked on product design and helped develop a media newsletter for Korean millennials.

Soomin currently works as a project director for the Brian Impact Foundation, a non-profit foundation that utilizes various methods of philanthropy to support innovators in both science/technology and social sectors.

Looking back on her experience at the List Gallery, Soomin is grateful for the opportunity to develop the ability to manage complex projects, think critically, and pay attention to detail—foundational skills that she continues to build upon.

Nicole Vanchieri '13

Nicole Vanchieri '13 grew up in New York City. At Swarthmore, she double majored in art history and French and played on Swarthmore's women's lacrosse team, where she served as a captain. Nicole explored museum and design related careers throughout her undergraduate years. She first gained experience as an image library intern at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and as an administration and publication assistant at Knoedler Gallery in New York City. Such experiences informed Nicole's work as List Gallery intern during her senior year.

As a gallery intern, Nicole wrote and designed two exhibition catalogs, organized and implemented educational outreach programs, gave gallery talks, supervised gallery openings, trained student workers, publicized events, and installed artwork. Nicole most enjoyed helping with the curatorial planning, exhibition installation, and design decisions. She was particularly interested in considering how the placement of art may affect the movement of visitors through-

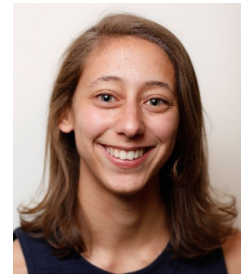
out the gallery. Nicole also collaborated Sarah Vogelmann '13, with a fellow senior art history major, who was a List Gallery Associate. Together, they curated an exhibition using books from McCabe's Rare Book Room. The experience forced them to ask themselves, "What stories do we want to tell—and how?" Paying attention to diverse details, such as choosing what book to display, which page to showcase, and where to position each book within the display space, gave them hands-on experience in visual storytelling.



Nicole (at right) giving a gallery talk in 2013 with Sarah Vogelmann '13 in the List Gallery.

Nicole also gained valuable experience designing accompanying pamphlets using InDesign and writing about the arts. In the spring of her senior year, Nicole balanced her coursework and List Gallery internship with her work as a Design Intern for CuetoKEARNEY design, LLC., an architectural firm in Swarthmore Borough. After graduating, she continued to explore architecture as an assistant project officer at the New York City School Construction Authority. Subsequently, she worked for two years as an exhibition production coordinator for the National September 11 Memorial & Museum. She then explored the field of user experience design, first as a consultant for the software development company, Authorea, and then as a user experience designer for MRM, a marketing agency. For the last four years, Nicole has lived in California, where she works as an Interaction Designer for Google.

Nicole explains that her work at both the List Gallery and major museums helped her develop critical skills as a designer and a keen awareness of how people may interact with objects, images, texts, and spaces. Nicole's work at the List Gallery especially reinforced her appreciation for visual storytelling. The research, persuasive storytelling, and presentation skills she gained through curating the rare book exhibition continue to inform her current design work at Google.



Nicole's professional portrait.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank List Gallery Director Andrea Packard '85 and List Gallery Exhibitions Manager Tess Wei '17 for their guidance in the creation and design of this booklet.

I am grateful to the alumni that took the time to be interviewed for this project: Katina Cardenas '06, Yuan Liu '09, Sean Nesselrode Moncada '09, Alicia DeWitt '11, Soomin Kim '13, and Nicole Vanchieri '13.

I am also grateful to the List Gallery donors, including Joan Gordon, Bennett Lorber '64, and Kaori Kitao, William R. Keenan, Jr., Professor Emerita of Art History.

—Amanda Roessler '24





This catalog was published by the List Gallery, Swarthmore College.

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