

## HUMANITIES REPORT SAMPLE

This summer I interned at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. My goals for this summer were to primarily familiarize myself with the inner workings of a contemporary art institution, network with other art world professionals, and learn about as many artists as I possibly could.

I learned the unique structure of the MCA's exhibitions and programming—I witnessed multiple exhibitions in different planning stages, and was able to note the small steps that bring an idea or concept for an exhibition to fruition—as well as how to write about contemporary art. The research involved in contemporary art is occasionally less academic or bookish than that of other fields. I learned this on one project where I had to call multiple Chicago area coffee shops and servers of hot chocolate to learn the origin of their coffee and cacao beans for a site-specific installation. I used my more conventional research methods on artists to write wall labels that would appear in upcoming exhibitions, sometimes having to embody a specific tone in the passage according to the curator's preference or overall message.

I networked and learned about hundreds of contemporary artists, some useful to my field of interest (contemporary Iranian art, which I will be working on in my thesis). Writing wall labels or going over object checklists exposed me to these artists, as well as a number of lending institutions all over the world. I wrote labels for upcoming exhibitions celebrating the MCA's 50 anniversary, and I not only learned about many artists I had never heard of before, I also gained a unique insight into the history of Chicago and its art.

Upon arriving, I was given a larger project that I worked on consistently throughout the internship. In this project, I was to update Howardena Pindell's Art World Racism Statistics, which she last updated in the 1990s. This project essentially involved noting all the exhibitions New York area institutions have put on in the past year or so, noting the race of each artist exhibited, and calculating overall percentages. In my findings, the percentage of white artists consistently outweighed that of minority artists. I presented my findings to a number of MCA staff, and privately with curator Naomi Beckwith.

This experience was extremely important to me and my field of study—which has included museology studies and contemporary art. I gained a greater familiarity with contemporary art and museums, as well as important professional experience in a major arts institution.