

# *Interning at the San Jose Museum of Art*

## *The Role of Interns at SJMA*

As defined by the American Association of Museums (AAM), an internship is an apprenticeship or training program for someone whose primary interest is in preparing for a career in Museums. Internships at SJMA are designed to provide a transition between student and professional life. This characteristic distinguishes interns from other museum volunteers who provide on-going support for various museum programs.

The value of an internship lies in the educational experience it provides for both students and Museum staff. Interns accomplish needed museum work while gaining insight and experience to guide their future career decisions. The intern supervisor develops management skills, while facilitating the completion of specific projects.

In short, the internship program at the SJMA will:

- Provide a mutually beneficial experience for both interns and staff;
- Allow the realization of special projects, while increasing staff productivity;
- Increase the level of professional preparation of potential Museum employees ;
- Offer SJMA an opportunity to increase the multicultural diversity of staff;
- Place SJMA in company with other museums and academic institutions.

Volunteers and interns have traditionally played and continue to play a vital and active role at SJMA in the achievement of its mission. Staff members should be supportive of volunteers and interns, receive them as co-workers, and willingly provide them with the appropriate training and opportunities for intellectual enrichment.

Access to SJMA's internal activities and information is a privilege. The lack of material compensation for efforts expended on behalf of SJMA in no way liberates a volunteer or intern from adhering to the highest of ethical standards. Volunteers and interns are trusted representatives of SJMA; thus they bear many of the same responsibilities and obligations as staff members.

Most notably, volunteers and interns must act towards the betterment of SJMA and not for their own personal gain in their work at SJMA (other than the inherent gratification of museum participation). They must fully and conscientiously fulfill the duties of their position, and avoid any conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest.

In the carrying out of their duties, volunteers and interns may become privy to privileged information regarding programs, collections, donors and administration. All non-public or non-scholarly information must be kept confidential both during and after SJMA affiliation. Volunteers and interns must not misuse SJMA's name, property or services, nor should they compromise the good will and reputation of SJMA in the community.

In addition to these general precepts, volunteers and interns must adhere to the other provisions outlined in SJMA's Ethics Code, distributed to each intern when they begin.

### ***Intern Projects***

The types of projects typically assigned to interns entail both specialized responsibilities necessary to complete a specific project, as well as day-to-day administrative tasks. While clerical duties may be a part of a project, the internship should not consist solely of clerical work. It is desirable for interns to complete the internship with a sample of some tangible product to take with them.

Some past projects have included:

- Arranging public programs in conjunction with a special exhibition
- Researching and securing image reproductions rights for catalogs, web site, and other publications;
- Developing various interpretation vehicles to complement a specific exhibition;
- Researching and developing exhibition-related teacher materials;
- Assisting with a marketing research project designed to attract new audiences;
- Researching works/artists in the permanent collection;
- Providing curatorial assistance for a special exhibition;
- Assist with maintaining membership database or preparing grant proposals.

### ***Compensation for Interns***

*SJMA does not offer paid internships.* Under certain circumstances, SJMA has provided interns reimbursement for commuting expenses. An unpaid internship can, however, provide an individual much needed experience and skills in a highly competitive job market. Approximately 50% of SJMA interns receive academic credit for their work. Students wishing to receive credit for their internship need to consult with their academic advisor or professor to obtain the necessary forms and procedures.

### ***The Internship Process***

#### ***Initial Contact by Intern***

When individuals contact the Museum about an internship, they should have an idea about which department they would like to work in. Typically, internships can be arranged on an as-needed basis in the following departments:

**Marketing & Communications** – Strong organization skills; ability to interact with the press and the general public

**Curatorial** – Strong research skills; organization skills; writing and communication skills; background in contemporary art

**Development** – Strong communication and organization skills; ability to interact with visitors and donors

**Education** – Background in contemporary art and/or museum or art education; teaching skills; organization and communication skills; ability to interact with young visitors

**Exhibitions** – 3-D, 2-D design skills; experience with carpentry and painting

**Visitor Experience** – Background or interest in museum education; strong organizational skills; art research and interpretive writing skills; customer service skills.

Upon receipt of an application and resume they will be referred to the appropriate Internship Coordinator. The resume should outline skills and work experience relevant to museum work. The Coordinator will then schedule a phone interview. The interview gives both the Coordinator and the candidate the opportunity to ask questions to determine how well their interests and needs match. Ideally, the interview allows applicants to identify the department they want to be placed in, or with whom they wish another interview. Following the phone interview, the candidate will be asked to interview in person with the project supervisor. Upon acceptance, a contract is drawn up.

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#### *Interviewing Tips*

- Confirm the appointment and get an idea of how long the interview will last.
  - Be as specific as possible about your expectations and qualifications
  - Ask for specific details about the available and upcoming projects
  - Determine what, exactly, will be expected of you during the internship
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#### ***Determining the Parameters of the Internship***

It is important for both the intern and SJMA to mutually agree upon the following:

- The starting and ending dates — eleven weeks is the accepted minimum
- A work schedule — the minimum requirement is one full eight-hour day per week, or the equivalent
- A job description that details specific goals and duties for the project, and who will supervise it
- A list of objectives describing the intern's duties in specific terms
- The amount of academic credit, if applicable
- Evaluation criteria and procedures

In cases where academic credit is to be received, the participating school often has its own forms, which should correspond to the intern's contract with the Museum.

Students should contact their advisor or Intern/Job Placement Office for their school's procedures. If the school does not have such a form, the Museum will include the school's role in the agreement, indicate the credit to be awarded, and ensure that the academic advisor from the school also signs the contract.

### **Orientation**

Once the internship begins, the Supervisor or Coordinator will arrange an orientation tour for the intern to meet staff members and become familiar with the facilities and building. The orientation will also include a review of SJMA policies and procedures, mission, general organization, and exhibition program, including security and general work practices.

The intern will receive a complete packet of Museum information including:

- Project description
- Exhibition calendar
- Museum programs
- Staff list and organization chart
- SJMA Ethics Code for Staff, Volunteers, and Interns\*

\* All staff, volunteers, and interns of SJMA are required to read SJMA's ethics code and sign an affirmation agreeing to abide by its terms. The affirmation reads: "I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the contents of the San Jose Museum of Art's Ethics Code for Staff, Volunteers and Interns as it applies to me in my duties as a volunteer or intern".

### **Intern Responsibility**

In addition to completion of the internship project, there are other responsibilities that the intern should undertake to ensure the success and relevance of the experience. First, the Intern should be professional, and treat the commitment like any other job. Any changes to the work schedule should be discussed in advance with the supervisor. While working on the assigned project, it is also recommended that interns:

- Maintain a file of daily activities, tasks to complete, deadlines, and observations about their experiences. Following the internship, a copy of this log is filed with the Internship Coordinator where it can be used to complete letters of recommendation, if requested;
- Arrange additional work experience, when possible, including reading about museum and curatorial work or interviewing staff members in departments other than the one in which they are working;
- Attend staff meetings and Museum functions as appropriate;
- Complete an evaluation of the internship including ideas for improvement. This evaluation will be kept in an *Internship Evaluation File* maintained by the intern's supervisor, and it will be used as part of the final internship report.

**SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART INTERNSHIP APPLICATION**

*(In addition to completing this form, please attach your current resume and a letter of recommendation from one who knows you academically or professionally.)*

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Email\_\_\_\_\_ Tel\_\_\_\_\_

University\_\_\_\_\_ Advisor\_\_\_\_\_

Tel\_\_\_\_\_ Email\_\_\_\_\_

Describe your area of interest:

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Describe specifically what you hope to learn from this internship:

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Describe your specific skills and experience relevant to museum work—paying particular attention to writing and communications:

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Do you read/speak any foreign languages? \_\_\_\_\_  
(Multilingual skills are often helpful for researching art history materials.)

Previous Internships (include name, phone and email of contact):

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Dates you are available \_\_\_\_\_

Time Commitment (hours per week) \_\_\_\_\_

References: (Name, title, phone and email)

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Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_