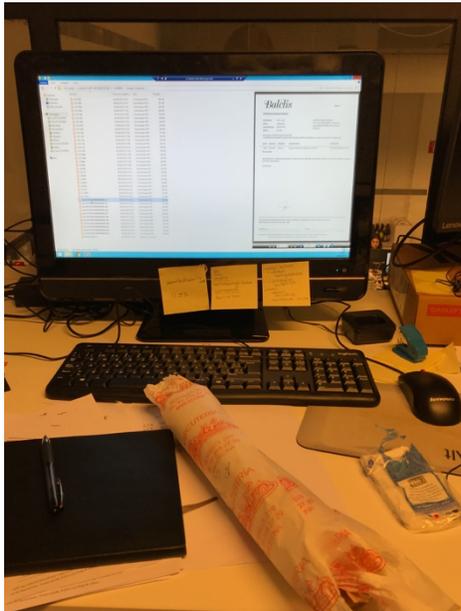


Outcome Report: Arts Administration in Barcelona

I used my fourth year award to support my travel expenses in order to participate in a program called Absolute Internship. I worked for two months as an intern with an art auction house called Balclis in Barcelona, Spain. Balclis specializes in fine art and antiquities, primarily from Spain, but they also sell jewelry, watches and furniture. Throughout my time in the program I got to express my love for both Spanish and the arts, as well as gain some valuable administrative skills that have aided me as I pursue a career in arts administration.



My desk at work (left) The front entrance to the main gallery (right)

My main administrative tasks included assisting with database transfer of secession contracts and translating blog posts from Spanish to English for the marketing department. I also translated some legal documents and text for their website. I learned a lot about how an art auction house runs. An auction took place the first week I was there. It was incredibly interesting to listen to the auctioneer rattle off numbers in Spanish. My Spanish was not

proficient enough to allow me to directly assist with the auction, but the following day I helped catalog all of the items that were sold and ensured that they were put in the proper location to be packed and shipped. I also learned a lot about how online auctions are conducted by helping translate their online bidding platform into English.



The live auction (left) Spanish movie posters that were auctioned off later in the month (right)

By the end of my two month stay, I also came to be very well acquainted with Balclis' data management software, Label. Because they had just recently started using this new software, one of my main projects was to transfer contracts from the physical desktop to Label. Additionally, I scanned paper copies of sales receipts and uploaded them to the cloud server. When new appraisals were made, I entered a description of each object into the system in a folder under the name of the owner, along with the estimated price, the name of the artist, and the category that the object belonged to. This was fun because I got to see the types of art objects that were being considered by the gallery for sale. Some of the most exciting objects I

encountered included an early painting by Salvador Dali and a figurine from the 1992 summer Olympics.

My favorite project that I assisted Balclis with was translating blog posts from Spanish to English for their website. I came to view translating as a creative act, because words and meanings don't always align perfectly. Additionally, sentence structure in Spanish is a bit different than in English. As a result there were several times in which I needed to take some creative liberties in order for the information to make sense in English. I also learned a lot about artists and the history of art in Barcelona. By the end of the summer I translated thirty blog posts, which can be viewed on the English version of the Balclis website by following this link:

<https://www.balclis.com/en/news/page/3/>

In addition to gaining experience in arts administration, I also got to interact with so many incredible art works by prominent Spanish artists. My time in Barcelona was really an immersive cultural experience because I visited many institutions that house the city's cultural treasures. I went to the Joan Miró foundation, the National Museum of Catalanian Art, the Picasso Museum, and the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary art. Absolute internship hosted one day trip and one overnight trip each month of the program. As a result, I also got to visit the Prado museum in Madrid and admire works by Goya and Velasquez. In addition to art museums, I visited a large number of historic houses constructed by famed architect Antoni Gaudi. I also had a chance to interact with public art works, some of which were relics of the 1992 Olympics which were hosted in Barcelona. Finally, I visited many churches throughout the city including Gaudi's Sagrada Familia and the temple at Tibidabo.



Antoni Gaudi's Park Guell (left) Sculpture depicting traditional Catalanian dance (right)

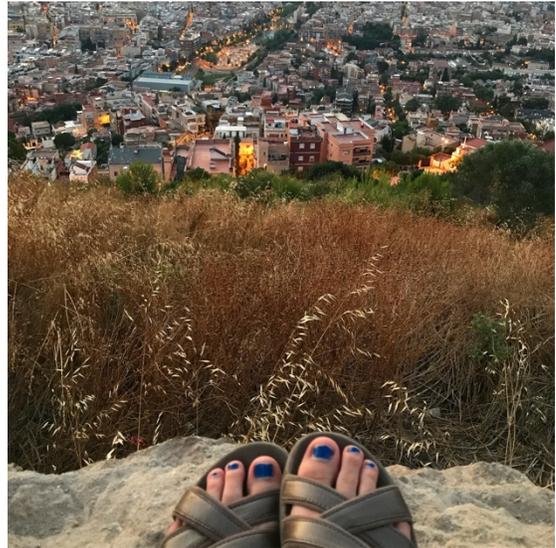
As someone who is interested in museum studies, the visits were not purely recreational for me. I paid close attention to the visitor experience. I observed what types of patrons visited the museums, as well as who was not there. While I was in each museum I took note of the layout of exhibits, the types of audio guides that were offered, and particularly the languages in which signs were posted in. It was a fun challenge for me to read the Spanish descriptions of the art pieces and then test my understanding by reading the English translation posted next to it. Some museums only had signage in Catalanian as a testament to the independence movement. My time in each museum gave me a glimpse into what Barcelona values.

While I can't say I have anywhere near a full understanding of what it means to be a "local" to Barcelona, through interacting with so many of its arts and cultural institutions I began to understand the story of the city. The two months I spent absorbing what the city had to offer reaffirmed my belief that while the stories we tell vary greatly from culture to culture, there are commonalities in the ways in which we tell them. An art museum in Barcelona felt very similar to an art museum in New York. I think this speaks to the power of the arts to bind us together.

In addition to my administrative work interning and my time exploring what the city had to offer, I wanted to engage in a creative exercise while abroad. As a result, I curated an Instagram account in which I posted a photo and brief description of each day in Spanish. This was a great way to both practice my Spanish and reflect on the activities of my day. The end result included fifty six photos and brief journal entries that documented my time abroad. It can be viewed online at the following url: https://www.instagram.com/cincuenta_y_seis_dias/



Views of the Barcelona city skyline



I grew both personally and professionally as a result of my experiences in Barcelona. I gained not only administrative skills and a new understanding of Spanish history and art, but also a personal sense of confidence in adapting to and navigating life in a big city, especially one in which I don't fully understand the language. Interning at Balclis was an incredibly fruitful way to spend the summer before my fourth year because it enabled me to practice living independently in a foreign place. I am incredibly grateful for the experience and everything that I learned. I'd like to thank Sandy Miller, the Colbert family, my advisor George Sampson, and everyone who helps to make the Miller Arts Scholars program possible. It truly changed the trajectory of my college career and helped me to discover the potential of who I could be as a person and artist.