Summer 2015 Internship Report

Founded in 1980, the Guarisco Gallery is one of the world’s largest galleries of 19th century works. Located next to the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in the west end of Washington, DC, the gallery holds over 600 paintings of Romantic, Barbizon, Victorian, Belle Epoque, Impressionist, and Post-Impressionist works from every major school in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Sculptures, paintings, and watercolors range in subject matter from marines, sporting pieces, landscapes, still-life, and genre works. Guarisco Gallery values quality, condition, aesthetics, and affordability with the utmost importance. They are able to offer high quality works at affordable prices by celebrating artists whose best work is still on the market and whose market prices have not yet reached their peak. Guarisco Gallery predicts that these are the artists who will increase in status in the near future. In following this philosophy, the gallery has experienced stable success regardless of fluctuations in the economy.

As an intern at Guarisco Gallery, I had a variety of responsibilities. One of my main ongoing responsibilities was maintaining the upkeep of the filing system so that materials were readily available upon request by a client. This involved using Photoshop to make “sheets” with multiple images of a work to be printed. These “sheets” included a full-sized image of the work, a perspective shot that reveals the size and framing of the work, and an image detailing the paint
application. I also helped with marketing by preparing presentations and brochures to be sent to clients. Making presentations required choosing works that the client might be interested in, pulling images and biographies from the filing system or printing them, providing “comps” to compare prices of similar works, and putting them all together in a binder to be sent to clients all over the country and even internationally. One of the bigger presentations I helped with this summer was sent to a client in Mexico.

We also created similar presentations digitally. This process similarly uses “sheets” created in Photoshop with the title, artist, dimensions, and price added. These sheets are put together in a FlipBook to create a digital catalog. An ongoing project I worked on was making horizontal “sheets” for each work so that they were ready to be put into FlipBook at a moment’s notice.

Another major responsibility was researching artists of newly acquired pieces and writing biographies to be given to interested clients. Although many of the artists represented in the gallery are very well known, like Mary Cassatt, Camille Pissarro, and Pierre August Renoir, some high quality artists simply are not as renowned. Research about these artists is especially important for showing potential clients an artist’s qualifications that they might not know about previously. Important information for biographies includes time period in which the artists worked, location of birth and work, style influences, education, exhibitions, and museums. I also helped prepare for an upcoming show in Baltimore by editing previously written biographies and making sure that they were up to date.

I learned how to do the paperwork to process new acquisitions and condition reports, which involved measuring the works, both in and out of their frames, recording any special
markings on both the works and their frames, and recording the conditions of both. I also learned about conservation of both the paintings and frames. This paperwork is important to ensure that the paintings are not damaged when they arrive.

I was able to look at a painting with a black light to see if all of the work was original. Areas that have been altered appear to glow in a purple color. The painting I examined only had small areas of alterations, probably to correct cracks in the paint.

I am so appreciative of the funding I received that allowed me to take this internship. I learned so much about the gallery business during my time at Guarisco Gallery. I am especially thankful for the exposure to so many different aspects of the business. The staff was very eager to show me the ropes of the gallery and always made sure that I had interesting and engaging projects to work on so that I was constantly learning. They were also extremely helpful towards the end of my internship with providing suggestions and encouragement with my job search process. I loved being in Washington, DC and being able to explore a new city, and I plan to utilize the skills I learned in whatever my next journey will be.