For eight weeks this summer, I worked as a communications intern at The Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville, Tennessee. The Frist Center is an art exhibition center in downtown Nashville. A fairly new addition to the city of Nashville, the Frist Center opened in 2001 to bring an art center to the city. The Frist Center occupies the building of the old city post office, and is still decorated in the art deco architectural style of the original post office. At the beginning of my internship, my supervisor and I wrote down a set of goals that I hoped to achieve during my time at the Frist.

Unlike most typical museums, the Frist Center does not have any permanent exhibitions. There are four galleries in the Frist Center and exhibitions rotate throughout the year, most of them staying for about three months. While I was interning at the Frist Center we opened three new exhibitions that will be on display until the fall: Italian Style, Fashion since 1945, Jaume Plensa: The Human Landscape, and Wiener Werkstatte: Postcards of the Leonard A. Lauder Collection. Because the exhibitions were opening while I was working at the Frist, I did not have much to do in terms of promoting them: a lot of that had been done prior to my starting in May. For these exhibitions I mainly helped with media previews.

At the Frist Center, media previews are held the day before an exhibition is opened to the public. In the case of Italian Style, the media preview was a big event with about 30 professionals from the press coming to get a sneak peek at the highly anticipated exhibition.
These members from the press are allowed (unlike regular visitors) to take pictures and ask for interviews with the curator’s, etc. The *Italian Style* exhibition was featured on two local Nashville news channels. The media preview for *Italian Style* coincided with *Jaume Plensa*, but because that is a smaller exhibition the focus was more on *Italian Style*. In the case of *Wiener Werkstatte*, the media preview was maybe only 15 people from the press. That exhibition has a more niche audience than *Italian Fashion*, so the smaller turnout was expected. My responsibilities for media previews were to make sure that everyone from the press received a parking pass and all of the brochures and literature for the exhibitions. These media previews were one of my favorite things about working in the communications department. This helped me to achieve my goal of learning how a communications department operates.

One of my biggest projects during my internship was working on a fall exhibition at the Frist Center, *Ink, Silk, and Gold: Islamic Art from the MFA Boston*. I spent a good bit of time working on the press release for this exhibition, which proved to be a great learning experience. I have never developed concise, journalistic writing skills, and this skill became one of my internship goals. After spending weeks researching, writing, and going through the editing process, I felt confident in my ability to write a concise article with a press audience. Using my experience working on this press release, I also wrote a couple of short pieces on upcoming exhibitions for the Frist Center’s 2016 media calendar release, and wrote an article for the Frist Center’s fall member newsletter on an upcoming exhibition, *Anthology*. 
Working on the *Anthology* article was probably my favorite project this summer. The Frist Center made a call to local printmaking artists in the area and asked them to submit various works that exemplified the printmaking industry that Nashville is so well known for. The works for the exhibition were chosen via a blind jury process, and I was lucky enough to get to sit in on the jury process. My newsletter article will be a short introduction to *Anthology* and will give members the background story on the judges and the exhibition. This project made me feel the most integrated during my experience as an intern at the Frist Center and also helped me to achieve my goal of becoming a better writer.

As an intern, I got to attend three big meetings at the Frist Center. The first was the quarterly meeting for the Community Outreach Committee. I had just begun my internship at the Frist Center, so I mostly sat and listened about how the Frist Center tries to interact with various cultural groups and organizations throughout the city. The second meeting was the strategy meeting for the fall exhibition, *Ink, Silk, and Gold*. This was the most interesting meeting to me because it met while I was beginning to work on my press release for the exhibition. I learned a lot about Islamic art by listening to the exhibition’s curator, and this was of particular interest to me as an art history major. Writing about Islamic art and trying to find ways to make it sound intriguing was a project I could put passion behind. I never felt like it was a boring chore to work on the press release.

Every August, the Frist Center sends out around 500 copies of their upcoming exhibition calendars to various people in the media. I helped to label envelopes and stuff the envelopes...
Maggie Irby, Summer 2015

during my last week at the Frist Center. This was among some of my many day-to-day tasks that were part of the job, but not my favorite things to do. Other day-to-day tasks included submitting the exhibition calendar to online websites such as NowPlayingNashville, Style Blueprint, and the local NPR website, WPLN, and making copies. Thankfully, I did not have to do things like this very often and spent much more time learning and observing. Another project that I worked on whenever I had free time was to build a media list for *Ink, Silk, and Gold*. I did a lot of research to find any groups that had even the smallest tie to works that are going to be displayed in the exhibition. These tasks helped me to achieve my goal of learning about the behind the scenes work and everyday tasks of a communications department.

As a whole, I really enjoyed my summer spent working as a communications intern at the Frist Center in Nashville. I learned a lot about myself. I learned that I am capable of achieving any goals I set for myself and that I like to work as a part of a team. As much as I enjoyed my summer, I do think that this internship helped me to realize that I do not want to work in PR or in communications, and that I want to work in a job where I do not sit at a desk as much or do as much computer work, only making me more confused about the job hunt as I enter my senior year at Sewanee!