

Kelsey Keith
UMW Gallery Intern
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Dr. Suzie Kim

Internship Overview

Over the course of the semester, I had the opportunity to take on the Gallery internship offered by UMW's Ridderhof and Dupont galleries. Scheduled nine hours out of the week, I learned and developed foundational skills within the gallery that have allowed me to see the inner workings of gallery management through exhibition preparation, deinstallation, promotional material and collections research.

The internship began with the introduction of a few overarching projects that would encompass the whole of the semester. This included restructuring and organizing the filing system and curating for the online *Melcher's Gray Purchase Award* exhibition. I took a strong interest in restructuring the filing system as it allowed for me to apply my own critical analysis of the information within the files, and I learned a great deal of what the gallery held in its permanent collection and how it came to obtain each item. I was also able to recognize if something was missing, misfiled, or, in one instance, never truly existed but was filed as having been accessed anyway. I indexed files by accession number and organized them chronologically.

The first exhibit-based project we interns undertook was the deinstalling of the *Mid-Atlantic New Painting* exhibition. I was tasked with ensuring the works were marked with the appropriate return labels and checking each one through their online tracking number. Some artists picked up their work personally and it was the job of the desk monitor to greet them, have them sign out their work, and assist them if needed.

When the Mid-Atlantic show had been fully removed, we did an immediate turn-over to install the next exhibition: *The Double Infinity of Jump!Star: Simmering*. This exhibition required a great deal of manual labor on the part of the interns, as the ropes that constituted the main element of the exhibition were roughly 50 lbs a piece. They also required the building of a platform and the painting of said platform to match the walls. We all worked to install the Tv's and headphones for the video that played.

To promote *The Double Infinity of Jump!Star: Simmering* exhibition, the other interns and I were prompted to create a participation element to draw in interest from outside the gallery. We came up with a bracelet making station that, when put together, resembled the actual Double Infinity ring on display. These bracelets were made from fabric we spent an afternoon tearing apart, that were then braided.

For this exhibition and all exhibitions forward, we were required to write a monitoring spiel. These consisted of brief, 75-100 word summaries of the exhibitions for those visiting. It was during this time that we also started delving into the *Melcher's Gray Purchase Award* exhibition. We were each given a total of nine works to locate in the collection, research, document, and produce object labels for. For some works, we were required to professionally scan and archive them as they had not been provided photographs of quality.

With the Melcher's Gray exhibition, I noticed each intern, including myself, was having some difficulty creating polished object labels as, while the school purchased these works off of the students, it had yet to formally collect any information on the artists and their process/intentions with their work since the award was created. It led to a dearth of information for some artists and an overwhelming amount for others. While this imbalance made the research process interesting, it affected the overall uniformity of the exhibition. In response, I used my

spare time to create a form for future award recipients to complete, ensuring that future interns have more consistent and comprehensive information about each artist and their work.

Concurrent with *The Double Infinity of Jump!Star: Simmering*, I assisted in the Dupont Gallery's installation of *The Class: If You're Asking the Question, You Already Know the Answer*. This exhibition was a retroactive look at UMW's professor emerita of sculpture, Carole Garmon's, legacy. It brought together pieces from twenty-four of her former students, and showcased her 25 years of instruction. Through this exhibition I got to meet multiple alumni and have the honor of assisting in creating the display of their work. I drilled, painted pedestals, measured grids, and leveled each work. I also attended the exhibition talk at its opening and greatly enjoyed hearing from previous studio artists and Carole herself.

Alongside the installation process for *The Class*, us interns were working on the social media side of things. We were required to brainstorm for and create multiple different posts on instagram, most notably for Valentines day and for Mary Wash Day. We created a large collage made out of multiple images from prior exhibitions to celebrate the gallery and its history for our Mary Wash Day post. For Valentine's day, we selected a work from Molly Sheldon, a UMW alumni and one of the artists whose work was on display in *The Class*. This work was perfect for the theme of the day as it included two, pink and white ceramic faces in motion to kiss one another.

The installations of the 2025 *Annual Student Art Exhibition* in DuPont alongside Ridderhof's *Self Adjacent* exhibition were by far the most labor-intensive and creatively engaging experience we interns had the opportunity to take part in. For the *Annual Student Art Exhibition* we assisted in displaying student work for the guest juror to make his selection. We then worked to assist in the installation of each piece, much like how we had done in the show

prior. However, this exhibition had far less helping hands and it was up to the interns, as well as Tracy and Shannon, to get everything in order on time.

Both of these exhibitions included a significant variety in mediums, and I gained skill in displaying each, including technology such as a television from the late 90's and multiple monitors for video works, textiles and multimedia grids.

For the *Self Adjacent* exhibition, the other interns and I were given the opportunity to create a participation and engagement element to coincide with the themes present in the body of work. Together, we thought up the idea to use a receipt paper camera so that visitors entering the gallery could take family pictures. This particular camera is generally a child's toy, which we believed spoke to the theme of children as part of the family unit. This participation element was extremely successful and was frequently engaged with and enjoyed by visitors.

Our final project as a team was to assist in the installing of the *Senior Student Art Exhibition* for all graduating studio art majors here at UMW. This exhibition was a way for the interns to put together the skills we learned through the semester in order to branch off and individually assist any of the graduating seniors with the installation of their work. We helped with measurements, drilling when needed, and aesthetic coordination between pieces. Overall this exhibition came together beautifully and being part of its creation was a wonderful experience.

Overall, I am grateful to have had the mentorship of Dr. Stonestreet and Shannon Petska during my internship for the Galleries. Their knowledge and guidance really served to provide practical experience in a gallery setting, and I appreciate their commitment to ensuring that we interns had the most hands-on work possible during our time.

