

## Speaker Notes

I'm Carina Pagotto and my internship was at the Judith and Norman Alix art gallery. I developed this internship as I wanted to stay in my hometown of Sarnia and work at the local art gallery. When I talked to Patrick about it, he told me that the director, Lisa Daniels was working to get her PhD here at Western. From there we set up a meeting with the three of us and this project really took off.

One of the goals of my internship was to understand the purpose and challenges facing public institutions. I learned this through articles about issues facing museums and galleries and how to facilitate a continuous relationship with visitors.

Another goal of my internship was to familiarize myself with the permanent collection as well as the artists of those works and the past exhibitions at the gallery.

With these goals in mind, I was able to build an exhibition for the gallery which is directly connected to my most important goal which is that it connects the community to art and educates the public, which is a part of the gallery's mandate.

One of the outcomes of my internship was this exhibition. In the past, representational art was taught in schools and valued by our society. As a result, abstraction would usually develop throughout an artist's career as little by little they would explore new possibilities. This exhibit explores the development of abstraction through artists in our permanent collection. I also developed a few other ideas, however, this proposal stood out in our Artistic Planning Meeting as the best idea with a collective agreement from curators and other interns.

Another outcome of my internship was Instagram posts for the gallery's Instagram account. I would pick a work that I loved and research the artist and the meaning behind the work. After writing up the proposed caption, I would send it to my supervisor, Sonya, who

would edit it with suggestions. After that, I would send it to Kathleen, who oversees community engagement. I would follow her into the vault to take a picture of the work on the rack and then post it on Instagram. These posts are a part of the new initiative by the gallery under the #vipvaultexperience. This directly relates to the gallery's responsibility as a category A gallery to make the permanent collection available and accessible to the public.

Here is a picture inside the Storage Collection Vault in the gallery. Behind me is a rack containing all the Group of Seven works we have in the permanent collection. Beside me are two works featured in The March Towards Abstraction exhibit. Alex Cameron is the artist of these works which shows representational works versus his later, more colour oriented, abstract works.

Similar to the Instagram posts, I also researched works from our current exhibition from the National Gallery of Canada and the Canadian Photography Institute. This research would become posts for the Featured Friday Artist to promote the exhibition to our online audiences. The process of development followed a similar process of the Instagram captions with editing and photographing the art in our space. However, the copyright with this exhibition is very particular as some artists have asked for their works not to be photographed and so I would have to check the artist's website to be able to use those images, with proper citation, in those instances.

One of the challenges I faced was the daunting task of reviewing and taking notes on all the exhibition catalogues. These catalogues span from 1965 to present day and document all the exhibitions that have taken place in the gallery. I also had the same struggle with going through the numerous artists files. (As you can see, the exhibition catalogues are on the shelves and the artist files are in the drawers below.) I was worried that if I didn't review all the exhibitions, then I would unknowingly propose an exhibition that has already taken place.

The people I met at the internship were welcoming and encouraging. My supervisors, Lisa and Sonya, told me what was expected and the deadlines and left me to experiment and be creative with my process. This helped me explore my possibilities as a student in an engaging way. I was also able to work with the other interns to develop my ideas for exhibitions and helped me with research. This collaboration with my peers opened the discussion about art and other topics as we are all passionate about which shows the power of art as a connective tool.

I believe that art is for everyone. It should not be judged as elite for only the privileged few. Art is all about breaking barriers and being more open and accepting of all people and all kinds of art. I once got in an argument with my brother debating whether physics or art was a universal language; I'm sure you can guess which side I took. Art is a march towards the unknown while discovering personal truths along the way.

The value I gained in this internship was that I now understand and deeply appreciate the work and care that goes into an exhibition and the use of art as a connective tool among strangers and friends alike. I took the initiative because of this requirement it gave me real world experience in a place that is close to my heart. As someone who is shy and has a hard time getting jobs, this internship gave me a foot in the door to my future career with valued experience.

## Results

- Improved Research Skills
- Community Outreach Experience
- Knowledge of Exhibition Development
- Content Development

- Improved Presentation Skills
- Learning How to Contribute in a Group Environment

Thank you all for listening.