

Contemporary Art in a Historic Club

Fri, 06/13/2014 - 00:00

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This summer I was given the amazing opportunity to intern at a unique art institution called The Arts Club of Chicago. The club was started in 1916, and was one of the first organizations dedicated to the collection and exhibition of modern art in America. The history of the club is an art history nerd's dream, which is why I was so interested in applying to be their intern. During its early years the club began to collect art that no one else was interested in and organized exhibitions for unknown artists who have since become household names. Although this makes the club an important institution in the history of modern art, it is its continued dedication to contemporary art that has allowed it to remain an innovative and respected art space.

So far working at the club has been extremely interesting especially because it has introduced me to an art space whose organization differs greatly from a traditional museum. The club is made up of paying members that enjoys perks like access to the dining room and members only events. However, their dues are used to finance free public exhibitions and events ranging from lectures given by leading scholars to dance performances.

As an intern I will be working on several projects including helping to launch a new database dedicated to documenting information about the club's members. The past two weeks I focused on organizing the club's exhibition and program files, which was a great way to learn about all the amazing programs the club has put on in the past. Next week I will help bring those files to the nearby Newberry Library, which houses the Art Club's archives.

Overall I think this internship will be a great way to learn about how art institutions are presenting contemporary art to the public. The closeness of the staff creates a great atmosphere, and I hope to learn from my coworkers about the ins and outs of running an art institution.