

Scarlett Walsh (History of Art)- New York, July-August 2016

For six weeks, from the beginning of July to mid-August, I worked at Christie's auction house, New York, in both the Special Events and Old Masters departments as part of the company's summer internship program.

Within the Special Events team I helped organise functions for clients that ran alongside and promoted upcoming sales. Whilst I was at Christie's, the primary focus was the 'First Open' online sale, a collection of contemporary art aimed at younger buyers. In association with this we ran several evening tours for companies and journalists and evening receptions. I was also responsible for assessing the use of social media, in this case 'instagram', to promote Christie's events to a wide base and its potential for generating relationships with new clients.

In the Old Masters department I was able to gain experience in the specialist side of the company. My primary task was to research paintings due to be auctioned at upcoming sales. I did this not only using the Christie's library but also external resources such as the Frick Collection and the Watson (Metropolitan Museum) libraries. A particular highlight for me was attending 'hilling' meetings in which the specialists discussed and valued works.

The Christie's summer internship program also includes bi-weekly lectures from individuals employed in all areas of the company. These were a hugely informative insight into how the company is run on a daily basis by both the operational and specialist sides. The speakers ranged from the chairman of the New York office, to the head of security, to the senior jewellery specialist. Interns were also invited to evening gallery viewings and given tours of both the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Cooper Hewitt Design Museum.

I also took the opportunity to visit the many museums in New York with friends and other interns at the weekends including the Guggenheim, the Met Breuer, MoMA, the Frick and the Metropolitan. The libraries that I used to research works for the Old Masters department were also invaluable for researching my third-year dissertation.