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Walsh Gallery Provides Learning Opportunities for Museum Professions Students

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By Hannah Gaston

One of the many gems of Seton Hall University is the [Walsh Gallery](#), located on the first floor of the



Walsh Library. For students in the [M.A. in Museum Professions](#) program, a graduate program within the [College of Communication and the Arts](#), this gallery serves as an exhibition space, a classroom, and – recently, a space where students can put their learned skills to the test. This past Spring semester students in two courses, Legal and Ethical Issues in Museums and Object Care, used the Walsh Gallery to put theory in practice.

The Walsh Gallery recently held an exhibit titled "[Strange Attractors](#)," which explored how the intersection of art and science have become increasingly connected. The exhibit encouraged visitors to consider ways in which an art-science alliance might contribute to the larger cultural discourse with an emphasis on how visual art can generate insight into subjects generally understood through other means. Students in the Legal and Ethical Issues in Museums course were invited to attend an interdisciplinary panel discussion exploring the

alliance between art and science. During the discussion, the artists and scientists on the panel debated topics including artistic value and bioethics, art's ability to visualize scientific issues such as ocean pollution and disease and the correlation between science, religion and poetics.

Jennifer Hochuli, a current student on the education track, attended the panel discussion and felt this discussion strengthened her understanding of how legal and ethical issues play a role in museum exhibits.

"During our Legal and Ethical course, we talked about how the mix of science and art in museums can create controversies, which often lead to censorship" she shared. "These panelists presented an argument as to how art and science can benefit from each another. Museum professionals need to recognize these benefits and be prepared to use these arguments in defending a controversial curatorial choice."

Following the Strange Attractors exhibit and panel discussion, students in the Object Care course took part in both the deinstallation and the installation processes in the gallery. Assisting with deinstallation, students worked with the gallery professionals to safely remove artwork, practicing the object handling techniques discussed in class. Nicholas Lambing, a student on the registration track, helped several artists remove their artwork from the walls.

"We discussed all the different techniques of how-to best handle artwork in class," Lambing shared, "but getting an opportunity to actually work with an artist and practice this techniques was incredibly beneficial. As a future collections manager, having these practical skills will help me better succeed in the field." Rachel Receuro, another museum registration student in the Object Care course, assisted with the installation process and appreciated the chance to gain hands-on experience in tasks she will be responsible for as a future museum professional.

"I helped catalogue the art as it was delivered to the gallery, decided where the works were going to be hung in the show, placed labels, and assisted with lighting," Receuro shared. "We

discussed this process in Object Care, but it is invaluable to have the chance to actually experience and apply all the things we learn and discuss in class."

The course Legal and Ethical Issues in Museums explores current legal and ethical issues in museums such as mission, vision and values, professional codes of ethics, roles and responsibilities of staff and boards, representation, decolonization and censorship. The Object Care course introduces students to issues associated with care, preservation, conservation, history and technique for objects in a wide variety of media including works on paper, paintings, sculptures, textiles, photographs, frames and ethnographic objects.

The Walsh Gallery hosts five shows a year. Students in the exhibition development track use the gallery as the exhibition space for the Producing an Exhibition course. As part of that experience, students curate an exhibition from conception to deinstallation. The previous two student-curated exhibits presented artistic expression of social injustices and the multiple meanings of the color red.

The M.A. in Museum Professions is designed for individuals interested in pursuing careers in museums or related cultural institutions. Students in the program select from one of four professional tracks, including Museum Education, Museum Registration, Museum Management, or Exhibition Development.

The College currently offers three Master's-level programs, including Museum Professions, Communication, and Public Relations. In addition, four dual-degree options, including three accelerated B.A./M.A. programs and a dual M.A. degree with the School of Diplomacy and International Relations are offered.

For more information about Graduate Studies within the College of Communication and the Arts, please contact Ryan Hudes, Ph.D.

Categories: Arts and Culture

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