

Name: Ashleigh Ward

Institution: Hong Kong Maritime Museum

Internship Report

During the summer following my second year majoring in Anthropology, I was honoured to be afforded the opportunity by the Anthropology Department to interview for and complete a six-week internship at the Hong Kong Maritime Museum in Central. I interned at the museum from the 3rd of July until the 10th of August, 2018, where I worked under the supervision of the museum's assistant curator in the Curatorial Department.

Throughout my six weeks at the museum, I was granted the opportunity to perform a variety of tasks. These tasks included doing inventory, conducting research, proofreading and editing and assisting in collection of artifacts for an exhibition. At times, certain tasks I was given, such as taking inventory of a collection of glass negatives and proofreading and editing captions for an exhibition, seemed tedious, however, upon completion of the tasks I was able to understand the importance of the tasks to the museum. The inventory taking of the glass negatives enabled the reduction of a backlog in the museum's inventory system and directly related to a planned future exhibition. Additionally, the proofreading and editing of exhibition captions were directly related to the visitors of the museum as captions are the main avenues through which the visitors are able to learn about the artifacts and the importance of various collections.



Fig.1 – An example of a glass negative in the inventory lot

Moreover, I was given the task to do research regarding the post-war maritime development in Hong Kong. This task, although at times tedious and quite time-consuming, was a vital and much needed resource for the preparation of a future exhibition. Not only did this task give me a small glimpse into the painstakingly long process of an exhibition preparation but it also allowed me to gain more knowledge about Hong Kong's history and therefore showcased how the work done in a museum does not only add to the knowledge of its visitors but also allows those 'behind the scenes' to obtain a greater knowledge for themselves about the collection as well as the society around them.

All the tasks I was given were of great importance to the work of the museum in presenting history to the public. However, to me, the most memorable task was partaking in the setup of a special exhibition at the museum entitled "East Meets West: Maritime Silk Routes in the 13th to 18th Centuries". The sheer amount of work necessary for the installation of the exhibition and the subsequent communication and cooperation between various departments, organisations, and people was surprising. Never once when visiting a museum, did I ever stop to consider the amount of work required for various exhibitions to be displayed: this included, but was not limited to, lighting, editing and proofreading captions, measuring spatial layouts, deciding which artifacts will be displayed where and also collecting the artifacts. In addition to assisting the installation of the exhibit, I was able to accompany the assistant curator to the location of the AMO archaeological archives in order to collect multiple artifacts that would be put on display as well as take part in the recording of the packing and unpacking process. Looking back on my internship, I can most definitely say that I learned much and I remain tremendously grateful for the opportunity.



Fig.2 – Recording the packing of AMO-lent artifacts



Fig. 3 – Some artifacts unpacked and placed in exhibition cases to be later organised



Fig. 4 – A team from the Guangdong Museum installing borrowed artifacts

Lastly, I would like to thank both the Anthropology Department and the Hong Kong Maritime Museum for allowing me to experience working in a field related to my major and allowing me to understand the inner workings of a museum. During and after the completion

of my internship, I have been able to better understand the large scope of work that is put into the upkeep of a museum as well as into the preparation and installation of an exhibition. The communication with various departments and organisations necessary to make each exhibition come to life, I have come to realise, is much greater than I previously thought and has made me more appreciative of the work in various museums that I have visited. The internship allowed me to better understand my reasons for majoring in Anthropology and minoring in Archaeology, as well as begin to develop the practical skills needed to work in museum-related fields. I would also like to thank the Maritime Museum's staff for being so welcoming and helpful during my internship. It truly was a pleasure to intern at the museum.