



## Shelby Crawford

### Wesley Paine Internship Summer 2023

Hi! My name is Shelby Crawford and I am the Wesley Paine Intern for Summer 2023. I travelled all the way from California to be here! During my eight weeks in Nashville, I have had tons of fun and great learning opportunities. The experience I have gained in just two short months is worth so much. I am grateful to have been able to join the Parthenon team this summer.

My first week here consisted of helping complete and put together *The Role of a Replica* exhibition in the West Gallery. The work included helping out with painting, lighting, putting up signage, and— most uniquely— boiling rocks for the interactive pebbles from the 1990s restoration display. While it was a lot of sweaty, heavy work, it all paid off to see the end result!

Seeing it all put together and completed was an amazing feeling. My favorite part of the process was the Opening Reception. Being able to see the large amount of people who enjoyed the hard work of the curatorial team was rewarding. Although I joined towards the end of production, I still felt I contributed. A few weeks later, I was surprised with my name added to the production credits! Seeing my name up there is one of my favorite things to notice when walking past. It makes all of the long sweaty days spent cleaning rocks or painting worth it!



Education and Curatorial Assistant Kaity Hinson and Wesley Paine Intern Shelby Crawford working Art Cart during *The Role of a Replica* Gallery Opening.

In the following weeks, I assisted the Registrar and Education Department in multiple projects which were not only a lot of fun, but also taught me important skills such as handling objects and researching and developing educational programs.

Some of my favorite projects with the Parthenon Registrar Bonnie Seymour was helping research and collect case studies on repatriation for a future exhibit about Pre-Columbian artifacts that ended up in the Parthenon collection, and are being sent back to Mexico! It was a great experience getting to be a part of the deaccessioning of artifacts that had a wary accession and that no longer suit the mission of the Parthenon. One of my favorite out of office projects we did was take a trip to the Vanderbilt Special Collections. Along with Bonnie, Curator Jennifer Richardson, and Education and Curatorial Assistant Kaity, we spent a couple days looking through all the boxes of letter, diaries, blueprints, and more written and received by Belle Kinney and Leopold Scholz, the sculptors of the Nashville Parthenon's pedimental statues and bronze doors. Being able to hold the diary and notebook of Belle Kinney was an experience I absolutely loved! While reading the handwriting and cursive from the 1920s was difficult at times, seeing her notes on anatomy or letters written about the pediments and bronze doors firsthand was really

special. Back in the office, I was able to go through our own archives of catalogs and photos for each collection piece and digitize them. I saw letters written back and forth about the provenance of paintings, conservation processes, and even information on the Pre-Columbian artifacts. My favorite file that I went through was about Benjamin West's *Venus and Cupid* and its provenance because there was some confusion surrounding if it was a copy or not. It was really interesting to read through the letters about that!

My time with Helen Sanders, Director of Education, consisted of running Art Carts, assisting in STEAM Nights, and developing a gallery talk. My favorite Art Cart program to lead is Polychromy. This activity involves setting up the Art Cart either in front of Athena or in the Treasury, and talking about how ancient Greece was actually quite a colorful and vibrant place! I love setting up the cart in front of Athena because I get to see people's amazed faces when they learn about how Greece actually was not the bare, white place we see today. After they learn about polychromy, they tend to feel more comfortable to ask questions about our Athena which I love to answer and talk about with visitors. My favorite is saying, "She is 41 feet 10 inches tall!" and seeing their faces, then saying, "Nike in her hand is 6'4!" and hearing their reactions, they tend to be, "That's taller than me!" and it's great to see their expressions.



Shelby giving her Cowan Gallery talk.

The major program that I put together was a Gallery Talk about four paintings in the Cowan Gallery. I am very proud of the amount of research, effort, and practice I put into this talk and how well it turned out. The theme of my talk is telling stories through textures and textiles. It involves really looking deeply into all the details that the artist wants you to see. From small details like the texture of fraying at the end of a tapestry, to the way clothing can tell us the status of a woman in society, they all tell different stories. From those details, we can either create our own story, or understand better what the artist is telling us. My favorite part is how interactive the talk is. I have a ring of eight fabric swatches

that correspond to the four paintings and I pass them around for people to feel and connect deeper with the paintings. I love the talk and I hope future docents and interns use it and enjoy it too!

That is everything I did during my time at the Parthenon-- two months really goes by so fast! Coming in, I knew I wanted to work in either education or curatorial positions in the future. I had little interest in the registration department, but leaving the internship I have a deep love for registrar work and I am grateful to everyone here who helped me discover that love! All of the work done during eight weeks has really helped me improve my skill set and understand how museums work. While I am sad to go, I am excited to use my new skills in my future endeavors. If any of this sounds appealing to you, I highly recommend you apply to the internship! It is an opportunity that will stick with you for a lifetime!