

Marketing & Communications Internship Reflection

By Thea Lega

The Swedish American Museum has provided an invaluable experience in building a strong foundation in marketing and communications. Coming from an extensive creative background, shaped by my family's deep appreciation for the arts, I have always been surrounded by artistic expression. So, when I had the opportunity to bring that creative side into a new environment, it felt like a natural blend of my passions.

As a Film and Television major at DePaul University, I entered this internship with a desire to explore how my skills could translate beyond the screen. I approached this opportunity with the goal of understanding what marketing truly entails and how to collaborate with someone to meet their vision. I quickly found that the core principles of storytelling, audience engagement, and visual communication are shared between marketing and film. This crossover changed how I view the film and television industry and think about the ways I connect with audiences. The Museum's commitment to engaging the Andersonville community with Swedish American heritage deeply resonated with me and inspired me to consider how my own work can serve similar purposes.

Working under the guidance of the Museum's Communications Manager, JJ, I had the opportunity to work on a wide range of projects that expanded my skills in graphic design, research, and creating marketing strategies. JJ provided clear expectations and encouraged my creative input, which allowed me to grow my skills while adhering to the Museum's core values. One assignment naturally led into the next, making it easy to keep track of my progress.

At the beginning of the internship, I had the chance to learn more about the photographer of the exhibition I was marketing, Allen Wheatcroft. I was provided with his photography book, interviews, and previous marketing material, which allowed me to dive deep into his background and work. This process taught me how to organize information into clear, compelling visuals that align with the artist and Museum vision. I worked on marketing materials such as posters, social graphics, and a mailing postcard.

One of the most valuable lessons I learned was how to work independently while still aligning with a larger team's goal. Much of my academic work at DePaul is highly collaborative, so the transition into a more independent role was an aspect I had to adapt to. That independence allowed me to bring new ideas to the table, marketing strategies and designs of which I could really take ownership. Looking ahead, this internship has opened my eyes to potential paths I had not fully considered before. Whether it is working in museums, marketing, or branded storytelling, I now feel more confident about applying my creative background in professional spaces. Most importantly, I am grateful to the Swedish American Museum and to JJ for her mentorship and willingness to allow me to explore and grow.