

Brianna Hopkins

Internship Written Reflection

Forest City Film Festival

My Experience Working at a Film Festival

The past three months I had the opportunity to intern at the Forest City Film Festival for their ninth annual run. My name is Brianna Hopkins, and I am a fourth-year student in the Arts and Humanities majoring in Art History and Studio Art. The Forest City Film Festival is a local nonprofit organization that celebrates the films and filmmakers connected to Southwestern Ontario. It is a juried competition of feature and short films and documentaries, but they also host conferences and workshops, including the Ontario Screen Creators Conference, as well as the Youth Film Festival celebrating high school filmmakers.

I was one of four “Concierge Interns” under the role of Public Relations and Communications. Together we were in charge of communications between a list of filmmakers and the festival, and we helped with the website creation and outreach for the festival. Each of us got a list of films, both shorts and features, to watch and become familiar with, and from there we were one of the main points of contact for those filmmakers. Any important information regarding festival programming and ticketing information for the filmmakers was sent out from us and we were their first point of contact for any questions. We strived to create a personal and welcoming experience for the filmmakers and their teams and make it easier to get the information they needed. On top of this, we also wrote the descriptions for each of our films for the website and printed programs and helped set up our film’s individual pages on the festival’s website. We also helped with marketing and outreach, specifically sending out targeted emails to local organizations and businesses that might be interested in attending, as well as writing blog posts for the website.



I was in charge of writing a blog post on one of the feature documentaries that was screenings at the festival, which was titled 999 – THE FORGOTTEN GIRLS. This documentary is about the first official Jewish transport to Auschwitz in 1942, where just under a thousand young



unmarried Slovakian girls and women were sent to the concentration camp. Being in charge of this film was a great honour. I really enjoyed researching this story and writing this short piece. I was able to watch the talk by Dr Magdalena Kubow, Graduate Programmer and Senior Writing Advisor at Western University and Rosette Rutman, daughter and niece of two of the survivors from that first transport, at the end of the screening which was incredible. The audience turn out too was very impressive, which I'm so glad because this film tells a very important story. One that is often unfortunately overlooked, and I am honoured to of been involved in any small

way of spreading the word of this documentary.

Working in this role I had the opportunity to try many things I had never done before. Creative writing is one I have not done outside of high school classes, so having the chance to write the descriptions for thirteen films for the festival's programming, as well as write a blog post for the website was so much fun. I found a way to express my creativity in a way I had barely considered before, which was so refreshing because being a student in the visual arts I always love finding new creative outlets. Similarly, we helped come up with marketing and outreach ideas, which again made me think creatively in ways I had never tried before. It showed me new ways of expressing my creativity and made me more confident in trying new things. Especially in a professional setting, it's okay to learn as you go and try new things on the job. While I'm not sure public relations and communications or marketing are potential career paths for me, this experience definitely eased any fears of giving them a go if I so choose to.

To any students thinking about doing an internship, go for it. There is so much out there to learn, and you aren't losing anything in trying. Don't limit yourself either to what internships you go after. I wasn't positive at first if I was interested in this role because the job description did not match my ideal career paths. But I loved the idea of being involved in the film industry in some small way and figured I would give it a go anyways, which I'm glad I did. I learnt so many new things through this experience and gained so many skills that I'll be able to use wherever I go. And while I still may not be looking for a career matching what I did here, I grew so much professionally and personally and will carry that experience with me. If you're thinking of doing an internship, be open. You may find the perfect job, but you may also find something similar but different than what you initially envisioned, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't consider giving it a shot. You never know what you'll learn!

I'm very grateful for my internship experience. Thank you to the Arts and Humanities Internship team for the opportunity and all the help you gave me and for Forest City Film Festival for the experience and guidance.