

**NATIONAL
MUSEUM^{OF THE}
AMERICAN
LATINO**

● Smithsonian

**LATINO MUSEUM STUDIES PROGRAM
UNDERGRADUATE INTERNSHIP**

Explore Museum Careers

**UNDERSTAND MUSEUM FOCUS AREAS OFFERED THROUGH OUR INTERNSHIP
TO SELECT PROJECTS BASED ON YOUR CAREER GOALS.**

Introduction

The **Latino Museum Studies Program (LMSP) Undergraduate Internship** helps participants explore museum career paths. Each internship project focuses on skill-building in one or more specific subfield.

While museums offer vast career possibilities, the **LMSP Undergraduate Internship focuses on the following museum practice areas (career pathways):**

- Collections Management
- Museum Conservation
- Exhibition Design
- Fabrication and Production
- Digital Culture
- Museum Education
- Museum Interpretation

Applicants select their top internship projects in their application. The most compelling applications **demonstrate a strong match between the applicant's career aspirations and their selected internship project's focus areas (career paths)**. This resource is meant to help you understand what each museum subfield entails so you can be better prepared to choose a practicum in the subfield that matches your career goals.

Q LMSP Undergrad Internship



Let's dive in!

Career Paths

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Q Collection Management



Q Museum Conservation



Q Exhibition Design



Q Fabrication & Production



Q Digital Culture



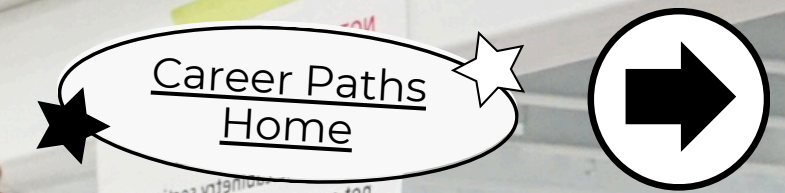
Q Museum Education



Q Museum Interpretation



Collections Management



Collections management is dedicated to the comprehensive stewardship and management of a museum's collection. Activities and responsibilities can include coordinating acquisitions, accessioning, deaccessioning, database management, documentation, life-cycle management, pest management, inventory, risk management, collections safety and security, access, storage, object loans, intellectual property management, and ethical stewardship and returns.

Job titles can include: Registrar, Museum Specialist, Collections Specialist, Collections Manager

Skills: Organization, design and follow processes, database use and management, keen attention to detail, ability to exercise care when handling and housing objects.



Collections Management

Dive Deeper:

Check out the Smithsonian's [National Collections Program](#) for a more comprehensive view of collections management.

For a preview of a museum registrar's responsibilities, [watch](#) the National Museum of the American Latino's registrar talk about object rotations.

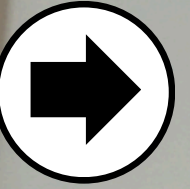
"[My] experience extended beyond the primary focus areas, encompassing tasks like exhibition preparation, collection processing, and digital capture, enhancing my proficiency in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques and The Museum System (TMS)."

-- Joharis R. LMSP 2023



Museum Conservation

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As defined by the [National Museum of the American Indian](#), “[Museum] conservators are responsible for ethical long-term preservation of cultural heritage collections. Conservation activities include documentation, treatment... analysis of pesticide residues on collections, collaborative investigations, and evaluation of materials for mountmaking, storage, and exhibits.” ¹

Job titles can include: Conservator, Museum Technician, Research Scientist

Some conservators specialize in specific materials or mediums and can hold titles such as Objects Conservator, Paper Conservator, Textile Conservator, Digital Media Conservator, etc. Specialized positions like imaging scientists can contribute to museum conservation efforts.

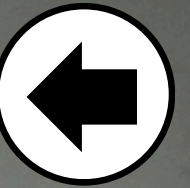
Skills: Attention to detail, research skills, problem-solving, dexterity in surveying, handling, and treating fragile objects or art, and ability to learn and implement new technology.

Museum conservation is a highly specialized field requiring professionals to develop knowledge and skills in three areas: fine arts, chemistry, and art history or anthropology.



Museum Conservation

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Dive Deeper:

Check out the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian's [Conservation page](#), where you can see what each conservation team member does.

Watch [this video](#) from the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Lunder Conservation Center to learn more about what art conservators do.



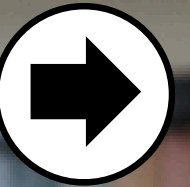
"My practicum helped me develop a set of technical skills within museum imaging acquisition and processing that could be valuable to future conservation projects. In acquiring images, I was able to practice forming various camera setups with different cameras and lighting systems, navigating around several software used during the capturing of images, and object handling with different materials. With processing images, I was able to use other software to practice data management and achieve new 2D and 3D views of various objects. "

-- Sebastian S. LMSP 2023



Exhibition Design

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Our colleagues at [Smithsonian Exhibits \(SIE\)](#) provide a helpful definition of what an exhibition designer does: “The designer advocates for the **physical and sensory design** of the space. [They] shape the exhibit’s design and ensures that it communicates its messages effectively and is engaging and accessible to all visitors.”

- Exhibition designers utilize skills such as:
- 3-D rendering and visualization
- Graphic design and design software
- Hand and digital illustration, drawing, and sketching
- Interactive experience development
- Design artifact displays

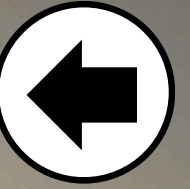
Job titles can include: Exhibit Designer, Exhibit Specialist, Graphic Designer, Visual Information Specialist

Skills: Creativity, architectural design, design software, visual planning



Exhibition Design

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Dive Deeper:

Check out this [Exhibit Development Guide](#) from [Smithsonian Exhibits](#) to learn more about what exhibit development teams do.

Watch this [video interview](#) to learn more about an Exhibition Designer's job.

“The program shaped my career goals by letting it expand my perspective on what I could do with my design degree. I worked with a variety of people with different backgrounds at SIE, and it was inspiring to see that I could be any one of them.”

-- Luiza S. LMSP 2023



Fabrication & Production

Fabrication and production teams turn design ideas into physical products.

The Exhibit Production team at the National Museum of American History, for example, "delivers exhibition fabrication, graphics production, object mount fabrication, historic restoration, and installation services, and provides a full range of maintenance and repair services, audiovisual design and support, and exhibition lighting design and installation."

Job titles can include: Exhibit Specialist, Fabricator, Model and Mount Maker

Skills: Craftsmanship - Ability to work with your hands, handle power tools, and work with construction materials, attention to detail, following safety procedures



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Fabrication & Production

Dive Deeper:

Learn how an exhibit fabricator built an interactive maze for the Panda House at the Smithsonian's National Zoo on this [blog](#).

See more job title examples by visiting the "[Our Team](#)" page of Smithsonian Exhibits.

"The program shaped my career goals by letting it expand my perspective on what I could do with my design degree. I worked with a variety of people with different backgrounds at SIE, and it was inspiring to see that I could be any one of them."

-- Luiza S. LMSP 2023



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Digital Culture

LMSP refers to digital culture as the variety of ways technology is used to enhance visitor engagement with museum collections in-gallery or on the web. Museums utilize various digital culture practices to increase accessibility to museum collections and programming including:

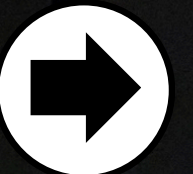
- Digital story-telling
- Interactive digital displays or installations
- Web-based education programs and resources
- Augmented or virtual reality
- Inclusive design features including tactile keypads, assistive listening devices, and more
- Digital culture can also include 2D or 3D digitization of collections, imaging, video production, and more!

Job titles can include: Digital Media Specialist, Digitization Specialist, Program Developer

Skills: digital technology skills, programming, creativity



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Digital Culture

Dive Deeper:

Watch this [video](#) from the Smithsonian's Digitization Program Office to learn about some of the ways that museum professionals leverage digital culture to make collections more accessible to all.

“Before LMSP I was very interested in digital archiving. [LMSP] had a big impact on my life because it allowed me to work on projects that got featured at the National Museum of Asian Art. That felt like a big accomplishment to have such a big role in something like that.”

-- Dani P. LMSP 2022

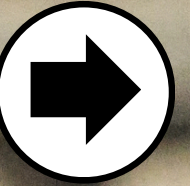


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Museum Education

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Museum educators facilitate informal and formal learning for the public through a museum's collections. Museum educators may:

- Lead public programs (tours, speaker/artist panels, film series, workshops, demonstrations, etc.)
- Develop curriculum, lesson plans, or other learning resources for K-12 and adult learners
- Provide professional development opportunities for teachers and educators

Job titles can include: Museum Educator, Program Coordinator, Public Programs Coordinator

Skills: Ability to work with the public (diverse k-12 or adult audiences), communication, collaboration, curriculum development



Museum Education

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Dive Deeper:

Check out the "[Learn](#)" page of the National Museum of the American Latino's website and see what programming our education team designs for the public.

Visit the education page of your favorite museum to see what programming they have available!

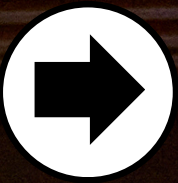
"My internship practicum helped me realize how much I enjoy artist research. It helped me hone that skill, as well as, creative skills, project management, and facilitation skills."

-- Hillary R. LMSP 2023



Museum Interpretation

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“Interpretation is an information design approach meant to help museum-goers make meaning out of their experiences. Interpretation teams use storytelling tools to bridge gaps between the infinite stories housed in museum collections and exhibitions, and what a museum-goer might learn about them without prior knowledge.” - Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum.

Museum professionals specializing in interpretation may develop and edit exhibition scripts in collaboration with curators, write object labels, develop exhibit guides or audio tours, and more.

In many museums, interpretation is embedded within the museum education department. Museum interpretation can also be considered a skill museum professionals develop and utilize in various functions. Larger museums may have specialized interpretation teams with job titles like those below.

Job titles can include: Museum Interpretation Specialist, Docent, Experience designers, Exhibit Copy Writer/Editor

Skills: Strong communication skills (written and oral), analytical skills



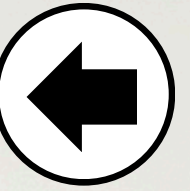
Museum Interpretation

Dive Deeper:

Check out the Smithsonian's [Guide to Interpretive Writing for Exhibitions](#).

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-- Hillary R. LMSP 2023



What museum careers are you inspired to pursue?

After exploring this Museum Career Paths Guide, think of the skills you would like to build and the activities you would enjoy to pinpoint museum careers of interest to you. Then, explore the 2024 practicum offerings and see what learning goals match your career aspirations.

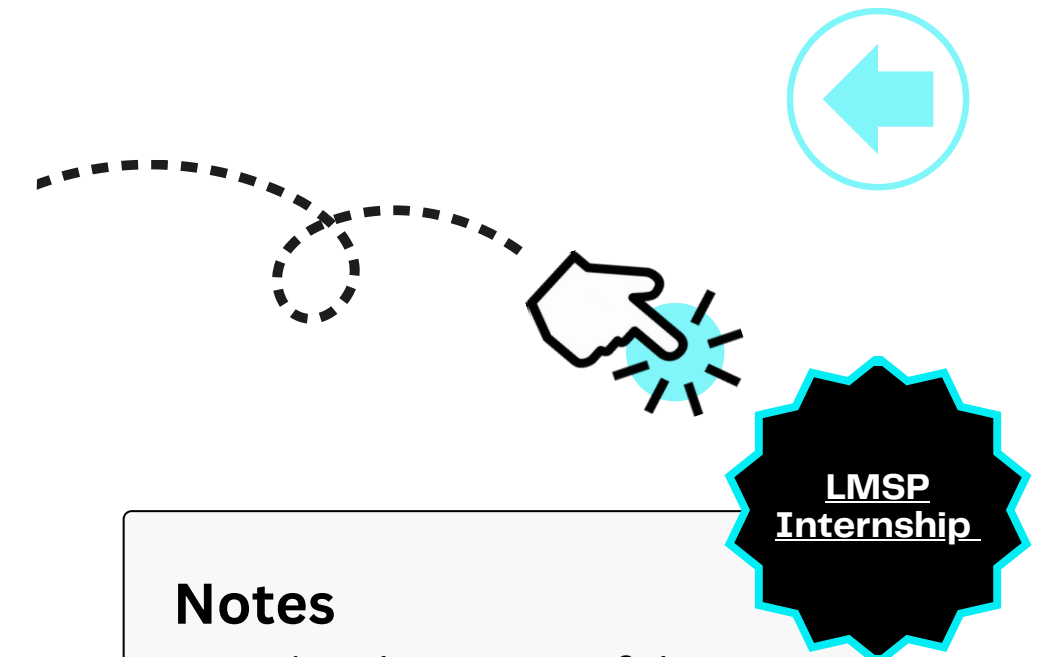
As you will have noticed, many museum focus areas intersect. This reflects the reality that many museum roles are interdisciplinary and collaborative.

This resource is a starting guide to museum careers designed specifically for the Latino Museum Studies Program Undergraduate Internship and is not an exhaustive handbook of museum careers.

Research museum careers further before choosing your top projects and submitting your application. This preparation will strengthen your application and maximize the internship experience if you are selected, setting a foundation for a career aligned with your genuine interests.

Recommended Resources to Explore Further:

- So You Want to Work in A Museum, by Tara Young
- ["Museum Careers," American Alliance of Museums](#)



Notes

- 1 National Museum of the American Indian, "Conservation," Smithsonian Institution, <https://americanindian.si.edu/explore/collections/conservation>
- 2 Smithsonian Exhibits, "A Guide to Exhibit Development," Smithsonian Institution, <https://exhibits.si.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Guide-to-Exhibit-Development.pdf>
- 3 National Museum of American History, "Exhibit Production," Smithsonian Institution <https://americanhistory.si.edu/about/departments/exhibit-production>