ALECZANDRIA "ALEC" QUINN

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EDUCATION

MA The George Washington University — May 2026
Museum Studies/Exhibitions and Visitor Experience

BS Appalachian State University — July 2024
Geology with Concentration in Paleontology
Graduated Magna Cum Laude

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Museum & Collections**: Exhibition design and installation (2D/3D), collections management, art handling, technical report writing, cataloguing (SOVA, Mimsy XG), event planning.
- **Paleontology & Geology**: Fossil prep/jacketing, molding/casting, fossil collections rehousing, fossil/rock/mineral identification, paleontological surveying, site excavation, stratigraphic mapping, geologic/paleo data collection; mechanical preparation (air scribes, air abrasion, microjacks, needles and pin vises, rock saws); chemical preparation (acetic acid, archival consolidants, adhesives); screening and sieving for microfossils; specimen repair and documentation of repair and conservation treatments; silicone rubber molds, acetate peels, and resin/plaster casts of vertebrate and invertebrate fossils for research and exhibition; design and construction of archival housing, including storage jackets for vertebrate fossils; invertebrate, paleobotanical, and microfossil specimens; lab health and safety (PPE, dust control).
- **Creative & Digital**: Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, Canva, 3D printing and modeling, scientific drawing, science communication and writing, public speaking, website design, social media management.
- **Education & Visitor Experience:** Inquiry-based facilitation, informal education, visitor engagement, age-appropriate programming, hands-on activity development, audience interpretation, training, supervising, and advising volunteers and students on fossil preparation, speaking with visitors about fossil preparation projects, tours of the fossil preparation lab, A/V equipment setup and troubleshooting.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Smithsonian NMAH, Washington DC — ***June 2026 - Present***
Facilitator

- Research and wrote a Smithsonian blog post on the museum's new acquisition of comedian Richard Lewis's signature outfit, sneakers, and glasses and interview Entertainment Curator Ryan Lintelman.
- Facilitated hands-on, inquiry-based activities to inspire visitor engagement with American history across age groups and learning styles.
- Ensured a positive visitor experience through conversation, experimentation, and age-appropriate engagement.

- Maintained materials, interactives, and equipment in collaboration with the Experience Development Team.
- Recommended improvements to activity materials and signage, and contributed ideas for new programming aligned with museum priorities.
- Prototyped new content, tested signage, and assessed the efficacy of learning experiences to improve visitor outcomes.

Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC ***April 2026 – June 2026***
Visitor Service Representative

- Welcomed and oriented visitors, providing information on exhibitions, programs, safety protocols, and institutional policies to ensure an accessible and engaging experience.
- Monitored visitor flow, conducted gallery walk-throughs, and reported safety, accessibility, or maintenance concerns to appropriate staff.
- Supported tours, educational programs, volunteer guidance, and digital interactive upkeep to enhance the overall visitor experience.
- Completed SI Cares Ambassador Training to enhance visitor experience and institutional impact.

Smithsonian Museum of American History, Washington DC ***Sept 2025 – May 2026***
Curatorial Exhibit Development Intern

- Gained hands-on experience across curatorial practice, from object research and collections management to conceptual exhibition development.
- Gained hands-on experience with object and exhibition interpretation
- Researched and drafted acquisition requests and object labels for current and upcoming exhibitions.
- Conducted historical and material cultural research to support exhibition narratives and curatorial interpretation.
- Researched underrepresented figures in American entertainment history, including S.H. Dudley and Bert Williams (Black Vaudeville performers), Jack Soo (Japanese American comedian), and Phyllis Diller (female comedian who challenged gender roles).
- Wrote web exhibits for Rodney Dangerfield, Moms Mabley, and Jim Henson and the Muppets object group.
- Wrote web exhibits descriptions and categories for the comedy collections.
- Collaborated with the supervisor to edit and enhance the visuals of the book *Funny Stuff: How Comedy Shaped American History.* The book is a collaboration with the National Comedy Center and the Smithsonian Institution.
- Catalogued collections using the SOVA Database System and Mimsy XG.

Smithsonian Museum of Natural History | Washington DC ***May 2025 – Sept 2025***
Paleobiology Intern

- Preparator for the Sundance Fossil Insect Collection: trimming, traying, numbering, databasing, and photographing specimens.

- Created 2D photographic images and slab-by-slab catalog records of invertebrate (fossil insect) specimens so researchers could locate and request individual fossils.

Smithsonian Museum of Natural History | Washington DC ***Dec 2024 - Present***
Fossils Lab Volunteer

- Fossil preparation and jacketing; scientific drawings using a pantograph.
- Design and build plaster and archival storage jackets, including for vertebrate fossils; speak with visitors about ongoing fossil preparation projects and give tours of the lab.
- Stabilize fragile fossils and rehouse them in acid-free, archival trays and cavity mounts; follow lab health and safety practices, including PPE use and dust control.

Smithsonian Museum of Natural History | Washington DC ***Sept 2024 – May 2025***
School Volunteer Assistant

- Facilitated inquiry-based learning for K-12 students, guiding them through hands-on activities in paleontology and geology, and adapting content for different age groups and learning styles.
- Handled collections and supported education programming.

ASU Museum/Outreach Intern | ASU, Boone, NC ***Jan 2023 – May 2024***

- Designed and installed paleontology and paleoart exhibits.
- Organized outreach events (fossil fairs, festivals) in collaboration with Schiele Museum and Virginia Museum of Natural History.
- Prepared invertebrate, paleobotanical, and microfossil specimens in the ASU fossil lab with air scribes, air abrasion, microjacks, needles and pin vises, and a rock saw; carried out acetic acid preparation; applied archival consolidants and adhesives; repaired broken specimens, documenting each repair and conservation treatment; screened and sieved sediment for microfossils; and guided volunteer and student preparators on these techniques.
- Led the Finding Fossils lab and developed its educational content, training, supervising, and advising volunteers and students on fossil preparation, handling, care, and identification.
- 3D printing, fossil molding/casting (silicone rubber molds and acetate peels; resin and plaster casts of vertebrate and invertebrate fossils for research and exhibition), and graphic design (Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop).

Paleo Research Undergrad Assistant ***July 2023 – Aug 2023***

- Collaborating on the accuracy of *Otodus megalodon* displays; created 3D model of a tooth file of *O. megalodon*

Publications / Articles

Smithsonian Voices

- Quinn, A. (2025, April 22). Meet the National Museum of Natural History Volunteer Preserving Prehistory One Microfossil at a Time.

Smithsonian Blog Post (forthcoming)

- "Richard Lewis: Opening the Door for Conversation About Mental Health and Personal Flaws."

Web exhibits – NMAH Entertainment Collections

- Wrote online exhibit content, descriptions, and categories for the comedy collections, including Rodney Dangerfield, Moms Mabley, and Jim Henson and the Muppets.

Book – NMAH Entertainment Collections

- Supported editing and visual development for *Funny Stuff: How Comedy Shaped American History*, a collaboration between the Smithsonian and the National Comedy Center.

Research Experience

Research Papers

- Factors that Contributed to the *Tyrannosaurus Rex* Arm Length.
- Analyzing Reconstructions of the Giant Fossil Shark *Otodus megalodon* and Proposing a New Process Behind "*megalodon*" Exhibit Development.
- How Can Natural History Museums Present Science Such as Evolution while Welcoming Visitors with Diverse Beliefs (Ethics paper, GWU).
- Exhibiting Nation (Exhibition Curatorial Research & Planning class, GWU).

Curatorial Projects

- Food Reveals the True American Identity — a five-stop visitor pathway through the National Museum of African American History and Culture, using foodways to examine African, African American, and immigrant contributions to American cuisine and identity. Developed for a graduate class taught by an NMAAHC Visitor and Guest Services Director (Museum Studies, GWU).
- Researched and wrote the interpretive text for each stop: African-origin plants in the Heritage Garden and the agricultural knowledge of enslaved people; the Creole and West African roots of red beans and rice in New Orleans (Cultural Expressions); Black stand-up comedy records as a vehicle for conversations about race; Sweet Home Cafe; and the Museum Store.
- Designed the accompanying visitor prompts, polls, and a dinner-party activity built on the museum's Family Recipe Oral History Tool Kit; drew on Jessica B. Harris, The Africa Cookbook: Tastes of a Continent, for the Museum Store stop.

Conference Papers and Presentations

Southeastern Geological Society of America Conference (Asheville, NC, April 2024)

- "Analyzing Reconstructions of the Giant Fossil Shark *Otodus megalodon* and Proposing a New Process Behind "*megalodon*" Exhibit Development."

Society of Vertebrate Paleontology Annual Conference (Minneapolis, MN, October 2024)

- "Analyzing Reconstructions of the Giant Fossil Shark *Otodus megalodon* and Proposing a New Process Behind "*megalodon*" Exhibit Development."

Field Study Experience

- ***Triassic Summer Field Study***: prospecting in TX, NM, UT, CO; data collection and museum behind-the-scenes.
- ***Geology Field Study*** (NC/TN): geological mapping and data collection.

- ***Italy Field Camp***: six-week field mapping and collaboration with Italian students and faculty.

Exhibitions

American Made, Corcoran School of the Arts & Design, George Washington University (2025–2026)

- Helped curate a year-long graduate exhibition using objects from the Corcoran School of the Arts & Design collection.
- Participated in all aspects of exhibition development, including exhibition design, curation, project management, interactive design, script writing, programming, interpretation, installation, and evaluation.
- As the United States commemorates its 250th anniversary, the exhibition critically examines how the nation is constructed and imagined.

Americas, George Washington University (2025)

- Worked with artist Wessam Al-Badry on an exhibition interrogating who constitutes as an American.
- The centerpiece, a U.S. flag constructed from long-sleeved shirts, t-shirts, and denim pants, drew on Emiliano Zapata's slogan, "The land belongs to those who work it."

History of Paleo Art, McKinney Teaching Museum, Appalachian State University (2023)

- Curated and designed an exhibit tracing how paleoart has evolved from the emergence of paleontology as a scientific discipline in the 19th century to today.
- Featured historical illustrations from the 19th and 20th centuries alongside original paleoart created with a fellow paleontology student.

Production and Photography

Freelance Photographer, DC-area comedy venues, Washington DC - Feb 2025 - Present

- Photograph stand-up performers and live shows for venue promotion, press, and social media

Producer, XMarks the Spot, Washington DC - Feb 2025 - Present
Chief Operating Officer, Capital Laughs, Washington DC - Sept 2025 - May 2026

- Produce weekly live comedy shows: booking, budgets, staffing, ticketing, promotion, and performer photography

Professional Development

- Museum Registration Methods, 6th Edition (2025)
- Exhibition Install: 2D/3D Art Workshop (GWU, 2024)
- Exhibition Planning Project Management Workshop (GWU, 2024)
- Print Identification Workshop (GWU, 2024)
- New Media: Tech/AV/Sound Design Workshop (GWU, 2024)

Professional Affiliations

- Society of American Archivists (2026 - Present)
- D.C. Science Writers Association (2025 – Present)
- Association of Materials and Methods in Paleontology (2025 – Present)
- AEG Foundation (2022 – Present)

- American Association for the Advancement of Science (2026- Present)
- Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (2022 – Present)
- Geological Society of America (2024 – Present)

Certifications, Honors and Awards

- SVP 2026 Calendar Cover Feature – (2026)
- University of the Arts Merit Scholarship (2024–25)
- Triassic Field Trip Scholarship (2022)
- ASU Academic Excellence Scholarship (2020–21)

Intercollegiate Athletics

Division I Collegiate Volleyball *- Appalachian State University's Volleyball Team*

Languages

English: Native Language

References

Smithsonian	**Professors**
Ryan Lintelman Smithsonian Museum of American History Entertainment Collection Curator lintelmanr@si.edu (202) 633-3912	***Dr. Suse Anderson*** George Washington University Corcoran School of the Arts and Design Museum Studies Program Head and Graduate Advisor suse@gwu.edu (202) 994-1700
Michael Nathan Smithsonian Office of Visitor Experience Visitor Experience Specialist NathanM@si.edu (205) 527-9519	***Dr. Andy Heckert*** Appalachian State University Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences Professor: Vertebrate Paleontology, Dinosaurs, Litho/Biostratigraphy heckertab@appstate.edu (828) 262 -7609
Dr. Conrad Labandeira Smithsonian Museum of Natural History Department of Paleobiology Senior Scientist and Curator of Fossil Arthropods labandec@si.edu (202) 633-1336	***Dr. Steven J. Hageman*** Appalachian State University Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences Professor: Invertebrate Paleontology, Paleoecology hagemansj@appstate.edu
Dr. Briana Pobiner Smithsonian Museum of Natural History Research Scientist and Museum Educator pobinerb@si.edu (202) 633-1985	***Dr. Jamie Levine*** Appalachian State University Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences Professor: Structure, Tectonics, and Metamorphic Petrology levinejs@appstate.edu (828) 262-2166

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