What exactly does a museum scientist do?

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No simple answer… what does a medical doctor do?
Museum Scientists in the UK

Science Sections/Departments:

A dedicated team of scientists working on collection-related issues

1 to 12 scientists (or more!)

Pure research and/or ad hoc services
Museum Scientists at the V&A

Who do we interact with, and who asks for our help?

Conservators  Estates  Marketing
Curators  Learning  Projects

Services and research:

New Galleries  Core Collection Care
Exhibitions  Loans
Physical spaces  Display and storage conditions
V&A Science Section: Staff specialism

**Scientist (Environment)**
Environmental monitoring, data

**Material scientist**
Colour, environment, data

**Polymer Scientist**
Modern materials

**Preventive Conservator**
IPM, risk management

**Scientist (Object Analysis)**
Analysis and technical examination
Equipment for Scientific Analysis: CSI V&A?
Why do we analyse objects?

Conservators

Curators

New acquisitions
Why do we analyse objects?

- **Labels**
- **Catalogues and publications**
- **Authenticity/date**
- **Research - unique objects**
Stewards of our past, looking to the future
Portrait miniatures
The Leman Album

- A collection of stunningly colourful early 18th century designs for woven silk textiles
- The Leman Album is being studied by scientists, conservators, curators, archivists, makers, social historians etc.

Check blog: https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/author/lucia-burgio
The Leman Album
The Leman Album

Leman album – V&A
The *barniz de Pasto* cabinet
Calomel
The *barniz de Pasto* cabinet
The *barniz de Pasto* cabinet
The *barniz de Pasto* cabinet
The *barniz de Pasto* cabinet

Titanium map
The *barniz de Pasto* cabinet
The *barniz de Pasto* cabinet

Mercury and lead map
The *barniz de Pasto* cabinet

Mercury map

Calcium map

Lead map
El barniz de Pasto
Trade routes: Jean Bourdichon

French Court painter:

Book of Hours for Louis XII

The Nativity

The Flight to Egypt
Trade routes: Jean Bourdichon

Bismuth particle (800x)
A ‘new’ pigment: spherical copper resinate
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The aim of the Heritage Science Expert Working Group is to promote the role and importance of analytical science in the cultural heritage sector. This involves improving the understanding of what each analysis method can deliver, and explaining the best approaches to data collection among other things.
Thank you

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