

# Discovery Phase Proposal

Exhibit Design · Interpretive Planning · Content Strategy

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# 1. Foreword: A Binational Visionary Museum

Item	Summary
<b>Vision</b>	MMSD as a cultural hub for San Diego, and the cross-border CaliBaja mega region.
<b>Opportunity</b>	Once-in-a-generation repositioning of a world-class maritime collection
<b>This Proposal</b>	3-week Discovery Phase informing schematic design start
<b>Lens</b>	Binational, multicultural, bilingual from inception

**San Diego stands at the crossroads of many things: the Sea, the border, dozens of cultures, blue economy innovation, the past, and the future.**

The Sea and sailing serve as bridges connecting people and culture. The Maritime Museum of San Diego should be a place where lovers of the Sea come together – to learn how we've always come together because of and by the Sea. People going to places. People fishing, patrolling, hauling, exploring. Families crossing oceans to start over. Sailors navigating by stars. The ocean is still the great frontier, and San Diego sits at its edge.

Situated between the airport, cruise ship ports, and downtown, the MMSD is positioned to become the centerpiece of the Embarcadero and highlight of the regional blue economy. It could be a museum where San Diegans – and the millions who visit each year – can ponder the past, present, and future together, next to and on the Sea.

The MMSD's fleet spans over 500 years of that seafaring history. Despite this, passersby may not know they can board. Many more have seen the Star of India than have boarded. Each vessel is not just an artifact but a living, breathing, portal into a distinct chapter of Pacific maritime history.

The proposed new building and new collection arrangement represent a rare opportunity to reposition this collection both literally and conceptually. Not to reinvent it – to enhance what's already extraordinary, give the collection room to grow, and frame it so the city can see it in all its glory.

This proposal outlines our approach to the Discovery Phase: a 3-week engagement designed to establish the collaborative relationship, interpretive framework, and spatial strategy that will inform the schematic design, aiming to limit delay from the original April 1, 2026 start date.

## 1.1 What Excites Us About This Project

Before entering Discovery, our team is already thinking about the stories and connections this collection can tell. While eager to learn more through research and consultation, our initial impressions include:

- The Star of India as a portal to 160 years of Pacific seafaring (and still sailing!) – immigrant journeys, cargo routes, working sailors' lives – told through the people who sailed her
- The San Salvador as the starting point for a binational narrative connecting Cabrillo's 1542 landing to today's cross-border blue economy
- The pre-Columbian and indigenous maritime heritage of the San Diego coast – from Kumeyaay fishing and coastal navigation to the earliest encounters with European vessels. We view this era as underexplored in the current museum and is ripe for interpretation. Elevating these stories demonstrates how maritime practices and technology evolved over millennia, not just centuries.
- The Berkeley's existing galleries as a prototype for what the new building can become – and a chance to rethink how land-based and vessel-based exhibits relate
- The upcoming "Take Me to the Water" exhibition (with UCSD) on Black mariners as a model for the kind of community-sourced storytelling the new museum can champion
- The Western Flyer's Steinbeck connection as a bridge between maritime history and literary/environmental narrative
- Opportunities for cross-border collaboration with entities like the Ports of San Diego and Ensenada, or the [iAlumbra Collective](#) (MuVaCa, related museums, and blue economy investments)
- A future-focus on the blue economy and San Diego's binational maritime future – naval innovation, marine science R&D, sustainable fisheries, offshore energy, cross-border maritime commerce – framing the museum not just as a place that remembers the past, but as a place that inspires the next generation of San Diegans to work on and with the Sea.
- Fully immersive sociocultural experiences – learning about the present and future through a tangible past

## 2. Who We Are

Item	Summary
<b>Firm</b>	MUSEUM DTE – Full-service exhibit design, interpretive planning, and content strategy ; founded over 15 years ago
<b>Based in</b>	Mexico City (CDMX), with cross-border project experience across the U.S. and Mexico
<b>Approach</b>	Anthropological: we interpret stories about people to engage people
<b>Differentiator</b>	Fully bilingual and bicultural from inception – not translated after the fact

### **We interpret stories about people to engage people.**

MUSEUM DTE is a full-service exhibit design and interpretive planning studio based in Mexico City. We specialize in designing cultural experiences for museums, heritage sites, and public institutions across Mexico and the United States.

Our approach is anthropological and relatable – rooted in the belief that every artifact, every ship, every gallery begins with a human story that visitors can see themselves in. We share stories about people in ways that other people are thrilled to engage with. We call this “relatable anthropology.”

Our team brings deep experience in museum interpretation, spatial design, bilingual content development, and community consultation. Our work spans scientific research, museographic script development, full exhibit production, installation, and assembly – from small traveling exhibitions to full-scale permanent museums.

### **2.1 What We Do**

MUSEUM DTE offers a full-stack range of services to make cultural projects iconic. Work with us end-to-end or alongside other teams:

#### **Strategy & Content**

- Executive project development and implementation
- Scientific research and museographic script development
- Audio and video content production
- Original musical composition

### **Spatial Design & Fabrication**

- Exhibition space design and manufacture
- Diorama design and manufacturing
- Graphic element design and production
- Lighting design and installation

### **Technology & Infrastructure**

- Custom hardware and software development
- Data and electrical network design and implementation
- Projection mapping onto architectural surfaces
- Collection management systems

### **Logistics & Installation**

- Large-format artwork movement and restoration coordination
- Traveling exhibit design and management
- Full installation and assembly

## **2.2 How We Work**

### **Every project begins with listening.**

We start with deep discovery – immersing ourselves in the community, the collection, and the stories that matter most to the people connected to them. From there, working sessions with your team at every stage keep everyone in the loop and on the same page – so nothing gets built that you haven't seen and approved. No surprises.

Our workshops are collaborative and hands-on. We bring subject-matter experts, curatorial staff, and community voices into the room together – not as reviewers after the fact, but as co-creators from the beginning.

We use this knowledge to reimagine stories as engaging exhibit experiences. As we co-develop exhibits, we work together to communicate your intended message in a format that visitors will love and remember.

The result is a process where the museum's community feels genuine ownership over the final experience – because they helped shape it from the start.

## 2.3 The Team

MUSEUM DTE's core team for the MMSD Discovery Phase brings together expertise across creative direction, spatial design, research, technology, and content:

Name	Role	Specialty	Bio
<b>Carlos Serrano</b>	Creative & Museographic Director, MUSEUM DTE co-founder	Overall creative vision, exhibition narrative	20 years leading museographic projects across Mexico. Creative director on MuVaCa, Francisco Villa Museum, and the Beckmann Cultural Center. Oversees narrative framework, visitor experience, and design coherence from concept through installation.
<b>Jesús Alcalá</b>	Executive Producer & Administration, MUSEUM DTE co-founder	Project management, budgeting, logistics	25 years in cultural project production and administration. Executive producer on MuVaCa and the Aloha Vaqueros traveling exhibition. Manages scope, budget, scheduling, vendor coordination, and cross-border logistics; former creative planner.
<b>Anel Punzo</b>	Research & Content Development	Scientific research, museographic scripting	25 years in curatorial research and content development for cultural institutions. Led scientific research and museographic script for MuVaCa and Aloha Vaqueros. Specializes in translating academic and archival material into accessible interpretive content.
<b>Mariana Alcalá</b>	Museographic Designer	Exhibit spatial layout, gallery design	10 years in museographic and spatial design. Led gallery layout for MuVaCa's permanent exhibition, including visitor circulation, display case specifications, and environmental graphics integration.
<b>Karen Cheirif</b>	Architectural Designer	Building-exhibit integration, architectural coordination	15 years in architectural design for cultural and public spaces. Coordinates between exhibit design and architectural teams to ensure structural, MEP, and code requirements are integrated into the museographic plan from the earliest stage.
<b>Karla Gutiérrez</b>	Spatial Designer	Exhibit environments, visitor flow, fabrication	15 years in spatial design and exhibit fabrication. Designs immersive exhibit environments, manages visitor flow analysis, and oversees fabrication specifications from prototype through installation.
<b>Dardano Bustamante</b>	Technology Director	Custom hardware/software, AV, interactives	10 years in technology development for museums and cultural spaces. Leads custom interactive design, AV system architecture, projection mapping, and collection management system implementation. Built the interactive installations at MuVaCa.

<b>Iván Méndez</b>	Audiovisual Producer	Video, audio, documentary content	20 years in audiovisual production for cultural institutions. Produced MuVaCa's introductory film and documentary content. Specializes in oral history capture, ambient soundscape design, and short-form exhibit video (under 3 minutes).
<b>Pedro Santoyo</b>	Graphic Designer	Signage, panels, infographics, wayfinding	18 years in graphic design for museums and public spaces. Designs interpretive panels, wayfinding systems, bilingual typography, infographics, and environmental graphics. Led graphic production for MuVaCa's bilingual panel system.
<b>Rafael Solís</b>	Industrial Designer	Exhibit furniture, custom fabrication, mountmaking	30+ years in industrial design and custom fabrication for exhibition environments. Sculptor and MFA with deep expertise in museum dioramas, materials, and fabrication – from display cases and furniture to tactile interactives.
<b>Jose Luis Punzo, PhD</b>	Anthropology and archeology Advisor	Anthropology, archeological research; content advisory	Archaeologist and researcher at INAH with a PhD from ENAH. Has directed major sites including the Museum of Northern Cultures at Paquimé, La Ferrería, Tingambato, and Tzintzuntzan. Member of the Society for American Archaeology and member of the board of directors of the Amerind Foundation in Arizona. Research spans earthen architecture, pre-Hispanic metallurgy, and geomatics applied to archaeological fieldwork.
<b>Derek Kiy</b>	Content Developer	Multicultural content strategy, multidisciplinary interpretation (design, writing, and research)	Background in politics and international relations (Oberlin College; London School of Economics). Former content coordinator at Ralph Appelbaum Associates. Bilingual (English/Spanish) content strategist specializing in cartography, GIS-driven storytelling, and multicultural exhibit interpretation. US/Mexico dual-national. Based in San Diego – the team's local presence for the MMSD engagement.

### 3. Why MUSEUM DTE

Item	Summary
<b>Convenient Logistics</b>	Bountiful domestic flights + CBX = ~3-4 hrs of travel time, door-to-door. Closer than the US East Coast.
<b>Binational Lens</b>	Native fluency in both cultures and languages – not translated, not outsourced
<b>Fresh Perspective</b>	Outside the conventions of U.S. maritime museum design
<b>Proven Method</b>	Integral production methodology tested across history, science, and cultural heritage

A new Maritime Museum of San Diego demands an exhibit partner that can work across the cultural, linguistic, and historical divides that define San Diego itself. Here is why MUSEUM DTE is that partner:

#### 3.1 Mexico City and San Diego Are Closer Than You Think

MUSEUM DTE’s location in Mexico City puts it in close proximity to San Diego:

- Convenient logistics (3-4 hrs of transit time)
  - **15+** direct non-stop flights a day between Mexico City and Tijuana
  - Access to the Cross-Border Express (CBX), allowing quick transfer from Tijuana International Airport to San Diego
- Similar timezones (1 or 2 hrs difference)
  - MUSEUM DTE operates primarily on UTC-6, with lots of morning and afternoon overlap for San Diego-based UTC-8 colleagues

#### 3.2 A Binational Team for a Visionary Museum

San Diego’s identity is multicultural; it spans borders, oceans – the entire Pacific. Its maritime story – from Cabrillo’s 1542 landing to today’s cross-border blue economy – cannot be told authentically from only one side of the border. MUSEUM DTE works natively in both English and Spanish, in both U.S. and Mexican cultural contexts. We don’t translate content after the fact; we conceive it bilingually from the first draft. This is not a capability we add on – it is how we think.

For MMSD, this means interpretive content that resonates with San Diego’s Spanish-speaking communities and Tijuana’s cross-border visitors as naturally as it does with English-speaking audiences. It means cultural nuance built into the design, not layered on as afterthought labels.

### **3.3 A Fresh Perspective on Maritime Storytelling**

Most U.S. maritime museums have been designed by the same small circle of American firms using the same conventions: naval chronology, ship taxonomy, and technology-forward narratives. These approaches have merit, but they risk producing a museum that looks and feels like every other maritime museum on the Eastern Seaboard.

MUSEUM DTE brings an outside perspective. Our methodology is anthropological – we start with people, not ships. We see the Star of India not as British Registration No.47617, but as the vessel that carried hundreds of emigrants from Britain to New Zealand, each with a name, a reason for leaving, and a story of arrival. This lens produces exhibits that surprise visitors rather than confirming what they already expect. As the Star of India approaches 60 years since its designation as a National Historic Landmark<sup>1</sup>, we believe this is exactly the right moment for an exhibition experience worthy of that legacy – and we hope to be the team that delivers it.

### **3.4 Integral Production, Proven Across Contexts**

Most of MUSEUM DTE's projects begin with scientific and historical research, leading to creative solutions that enhance the comprehensive design and production of all the elements that make up an exhibition, demonstrating our ability to deliver end-to-end.

Our ongoing work to develop the Museo de la Biodiversidad Regional (Regional Biodiversity Museum) – with its dual-track bilingual interpretation system – is directly relevant to the MMSD's audience.

We have not yet designed a San Diego maritime exhibit. We want to be honest and forthright. What we bring instead is a proven methodology that has worked across revolutionary history, cultural heritage, natural science, harsh conditions, and cross-Pacific vaquero traditions – and a team that is hungry to apply it to one of the world's great maritime collections.

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<sup>1</sup> National Park Service. "Star of India." National Register of Historic Places. November 13, 1966. <https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/9e2d6949-c13c-4169-8082-89471435b7ac>.

# 4. Past & Current Work

Item	Summary
Completed	MuVaCa, Francisco Villa Museum (Durango), Juan Beckmann Gallardo Cultural Center, Bicentennial Commemoration
Ongoing	Aloha Vaqueros (traveling exhibit; opening in Cheyenne, Wyoming on April 11th 2026)
In Development	Museo de la Tierra (BCS)
Expertise	Integral production: research, script, design, fabrication, installation

MUSEUM DTE has brought many stories to life across Mexico – from revolutionary history to cultural heritage, from natural science to cross-Pacific vaquero traditions.

## 4.1 Completed Projects

### MuVaCa – Museo del Vaquero de las Californias – El Triunfo, Baja California Sur

MUSEUM DTE's most comprehensive project to date: a complete bilingual, bicultural, multimedia museum telling over 300 years of vaquero and rancho history in the Californias. Located in the historic mining town of El Triunfo, Baja California Sur, MuVaCa – the Cowboy Museum of the Californias – reveals the deep connections between the founding vaquero families of Baja California Sur and the development of Alta California, including the cities of San Francisco and Monterey.

MUSEUM DTE led the full scope of the project: scientific research, museographic script development, spatial design, interactive installations, audiovisual content production (including an introductory film), graphic design, fabrication, and installation. The museum complex encompasses approximately 436 square meters of exhibit space – including permanent galleries, a temporary exhibition hall, and a projection room – organized around a 674-square-meter open-air courtyard with a traditional vaquero café. A gift shop completes the visitor experience.

MUSEUM DTE is fully bilingual (English and Spanish) from conception – not translated after the fact. Content was developed in parallel in both languages, with cultural nuance built into each version from the first draft. This approach is identical to the methodology we would bring to the MMSD engagement.

MuVaCa is an initiative of Ándale La Paz, A.C. – a nonprofit organization focused on STEAM education, culture, and sociocultural infrastructure in the municipality of La Paz – and is a member of the iAlumbra Collective, the same network that includes potential cross-border collaboration partners referenced in this proposal. The museum is open six days per week and has received press coverage from The Cabo Sun, El Sudcaliforniano, and international travel writers, along with strong visitor reviews on TripAdvisor and Google.

This project is directly relevant to the MMSD engagement: it demonstrates MUSEUM DTE's ability to deliver a complete museum from research through opening day, to design bilingual and bicultural content natively, and to tell a cross-border Californias story – the same historical and cultural territory that the Maritime Museum of San Diego inhabits.

### **Francisco Villa Museum – Durango**

Integral production of five rooms in the Francisco Villa Museum, housed in the old Municipal Palace in the historic center of Durango. The work included scientific research, museographic script, design, construction, installation, and assembly of museography. The museum tells the story of one of Mexico's most iconic revolutionary figures through personal artifacts, period documents, and immersive environments.

### **Juan Beckmann Gallardo Cultural Center**

To celebrate one of the oldest and most deeply rooted Mexican traditions, the exhibition "Charrería: Esencia de la Tierra" was inaugurated. MUSEUM DTE developed the audiovisual content, interactive installations, and a photographic production that gave rise to a companion book about the collection. The project required deep engagement with the charrería community to authentically represent the tradition.

### **Bicentennial of Mexican Independence – National Exhibition**

Among our most ambitious undertakings, MUSEUM DTE was selected to design and fabricate 16 large-scale interactive exhibits for Mexico's Bicentennial Independence celebration (2010) – one of the most significant commemorative events in the nation's history. Grounded in rigorous historical research spanning the deep roots of Mexican identity and nationhood, each exhibit was conceived to be as educational as it was experiential.

To deliver at this scale, MUSEUM DTE assembled and led a multidisciplinary team of over 300 professionals – historians, architects, designers, and builders – coordinating every

phase of production from concept through installation. The result was a cohesive, landmark exhibition worthy of a 200-year milestone.

## **4.2 Current Projects**

### **(Ongoing) Aloha Vaqueros – Traveling Exhibit**

A traveling exhibition exploring the deep historical connections between Hawaiian paniolo culture and Mexican vaquero traditions – a story that crosses the Pacific and connects two communities through shared horsemanship, ranching heritage, and cultural exchange. The exhibit is designed to travel between institutions in Mexico, Hawaii, and the mainland United States. It has completed its run at *MuVaCa* in El Triunfo, the *San Diego History Center*, the *Briscoe Western Art Museum* in San Antonio; it is now being set up at the *Cheyenne Frontier Days Old West Museum* in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

This project is particularly relevant to the MMSD engagement: it demonstrates our experience designing for cross-cultural narratives, traveling logistics, and the kind of binational storytelling that the Maritime Museum's collection demands.

### **(In-Development) Museo de la Tierra – Baja California Sur**

Full interpretive planning, exhibit design, and bilingual content strategy for a cultural institution in the Baja California Sur region. The project features a dual-track science interpretation system combining academic full-text panels and accessible public-facing panels – designed from the ground up in both English and Spanish.

## 5. Design Philosophy

Item	Summary
Principle 1	Human-centered storytelling – history becomes personal
Principle 2	Relational curation – visitor, object, and history in dialogue
Principle 3	Community consultation – co-creation and community-building
Principle 4	Multicultural interpretation – bilingual from inception

### **We interpret stories about people to engage people.**

Our approach meets people where they are – we believe that when visitors have a reference point they can relate to, they care more about the stories told, no matter how technical or historical the subject.

In other words, human-centered storytelling isn't a choice between technical accuracy or humanized approachability. Human stories are the vehicle technical history uses to

### **5.1 Human-Centered Storytelling**

#### **History is abstract until it becomes personal.**

People tell stories. People *are* stories. When interpreting history and cultural topics, we frame stories in terms of people's experiences because this makes even technical or esoteric topics approachable – every visitor is a person. We engage visitors' intellect while touching their emotions to help form lasting memories. We aim to strike a balance between technical detail and emotive stakes so that history becomes clearer. Not dumbed down – just told well.

For MMSD, over half a millennium of maritime history becomes meaningful when told through the sailor who slept in that bunk, the family who emigrated on that ship, the diver who explored that wreck. In the Discovery Phase, we would work together to determine which personal accounts, voices, names, and faces can serve as the interpretive scaffolding for the museum's primary educational messages.

*The artifacts become evidence of human stories – not the other way around.*

## 5.2 Relational Curation

### **Relationships drive culture.**

Relationships shape culture itself and create identities through shared experiences. Objects gain meaning when understood through the relationships they have fostered over time. Who walked the same deck? Who used the same bell? Who smelled the same sea? We want visitors and mariners to connect at MMSD.

We use a relational curation model that places three elements in dialogue: the visitor standing in the room, the object on display, and the historical person or society that created, used, or was shaped by that object. When all three are in an active relationship, the exhibit comes alive.

Consider a sextant in a glass case. Without relational curation, it is a brass instrument with a label: "Sextant, c. 1850, used for celestial navigation." With relational curation, it becomes a bridge:

- The object: its weight, its craftsmanship, the wear marks from a navigator's hands
- The historical person: the navigator who relied on this tool to cross the Pacific, the decision it helped make on a foggy night, the letter home that mentions it
- The visitor: invited to hold a replica, to try the calculation, to feel the gap between what they know (GPS) and what the navigator knew (stars and math)

Or consider the shift from sail to steam. A technology exhibit might display engine specs and tonnage charts. Our approach would start with the stoker shoveling coal in a 120-degree engine room – a job that didn't exist on sailing ships – and work outward to show how steam changed crew composition, port infrastructure, trade routes, and ultimately which cities grew and which didn't. Technology becomes impactful to visitors through the peoples' lives that changed.

This triangulation – visitor, object, history – is the engine of our interpretive design. It transforms passive viewing into active meaning-making. For MMSD, the relational model is especially powerful because the objects are ships – enormous, immersive, and physically boardable. Visitors don't just look at history; they stand inside it. Our job is to make sure they understand whose deck they're standing on, and what it means to be there.

*Bonds between people drive – and when acknowledged, elevate – the histories we retell.*

## 5.3 Community Consultation

### **The best stories come from the community itself.**

Communities make and hold onto memories. We believe museums should be a hub for remembrance and community. Museums work best when the community sees itself in the rooms. When that happens, visitors become advocates – and advocates become lifelong patrons, donors, and word-of-mouth.

When researching topics, we engage with subject-matter experts – whether via academia or lived experience – to authentically retell their stories. We bring the community closer to the museum, encouraging involvement in the creative process so that visitors feel at home and commit long-term.

We want to create a place where San Diego's diverse communities can connect and come together – a space for reflection and the exchange of ideas, experiences, knowledge, and stories. A place where everyone feels welcome.

*We want people to walk into a museum and feel like it belongs to them.*

## 5.4 Multicultural Interpretation

### **Multilingualism is a design principle, not an afterthought.**

Visitorship is varied. San Diego is a multicultural and biregional socioeconomy that sits at the intersection of many cultures, languages, and ways of seeing the world. The city serves international travelers, cruisers, The Maritime Museum's story – from Cabrillo's 1542 landing to today's naval presence – is inherently multicultural.

We conceive content bilingually from inception. English and Spanish are developed in parallel, not sequentially – so that cultural nuance, tone, and meaning are built into both versions from the first draft. This extends beyond text to visual design, media, and spatial cues that resonate across cultural contexts.

Visitors are diverse, dynamic, and unique in how they learn. We consider different learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and interests when creating experiences – ensuring that many visitors can engage with our content through multiple access points.

# 6. Design Approach

Item	Summary
Concept	The Super Diorama – the fleet as a walkable 3D panorama
Anchor Exhibits	Signature moments that orient visitors and create memory
Audiences	Layered experiences for families, scholars, tourists, and locals
Content Hierarchy	Text, graphics, interactive elements, and video in balance
3D Immersion	Spatial storytelling using architecture, light, sound, and material

## 6.1 The Super Diorama

**The collection is the star of the show. The building's job is to make sure everyone knows it.**

Repositioning your collection is a rare opportunity to create what we call a super diorama: a striking 3D visual you can both see and step aboard. The new building frames the fleet – Star of India, HMS Surprise, San Salvador, the Berkeley, and the entire collection – as a living, walkable panorama visible from the Embarcadero, the airport approach, and the bay.

As part of our discovery design study, we will talk, learn, and ideate ways to entice onlookers from afar and captivate visitors from up close.

Nailing the sightlines will be crucial. We'll map every sightline – who sees this museum, from where, and what entices them: visitors approaching on foot from the USS Midway, the tourists on a harbor cruise, the commuters glancing from the airport trolley, the office workers looking down from towers, cruise passengers scanning the waterfront from their balcony. Each of these vantage points is a chance to draw someone in. The super diorama is designed to work at every distance – iconic from across the bay, inviting from the promenade, immersive once you step inside.

This concept builds on what MMSD already does well. The fleet is already extraordinary. The waterfront location is already one of the best in American museum design. What the new building adds is framing, context, and room to grow: permanent gallery space that deepens the story the ships tell, temporary exhibition space that keeps the museum fresh and relevant season after season, and an operational dock that supports the museum's active fleet – because MMSD isn't a static collection behind glass. It's a working port with vessels that sail, tour, and welcome visiting ships.

At MuVaCa, we learned how to operate a world-class museum in a semi-permissible environment with brutal UV, limited power and water access, remote supply chains, and the realities of things breaking and going missing. We designed for that context and the museum thrives. In San Diego, we'd bring that same operationally-minded approach to a far more permissive environment – an indoor, climate-controlled building on a world-class waterfront. We know how to build museums that work beautifully in hard conditions. We're confident we can design for both paradise and the Sea.

During discovery, we look forward to exploring, testing, and developing the super diorama concept (and beyond) together with Carrier Johnson and the MMSD team – including how the building, the dock, and the fleet could function as an integrated whole that serves the museum's operational needs for decades to come.

## **6.2 Anchor & Interactive Exhibits**

### **Every gallery needs a North Star moment.**

Anchor exhibits are the signature experiences that orient visitors and create lasting memories. They are the moments people photograph, talk about, and bring their friends back to see. We complement anchor moments with hands-on interactive elements – tactile models, listening stations, digital interactives, and participatory installations.

For MMSD, the fleet itself is the anchor. The building's role is to frame, contextualize, and deepen the experience of the ships – enriching the story for visitors before or after they step aboard.

We also view the building as an exciting opportunity. It is a miniature city (store, restaurant, university) of the Sea. We can accommodate what the fleet cannot: climate-controlled galleries for sensitive collections, temporary exhibition space for rotating shows, and the infrastructure to host traveling exhibits and loaned objects.

In discovery, we'd want to learn more about the operational needs and vision for programming MMSD has for this space.

## 6.3 Exhibitions for Different Audiences

**One museum, many visitors. Each one deserves a way in.**

A maritime museum on San Diego's waterfront receives an extraordinarily diverse visitorship: local families on a Saturday outing, school groups on field trips, international cruise passengers with two hours to spare, naval veterans seeking personal connections, academic researchers, and tourists who wandered over from the USS Midway. Each arrives with different expectations, knowledge levels, and time budgets.

We design layered experiences that serve all of these audiences simultaneously without diluting the experience for any one of them:

- Orientation layers that give first-time visitors a clear entry point and narrative arc, while allowing repeat visitors and experts to skip ahead to deeper content
- Family-friendly pathways with tactile, sensory, and play-based elements that make complex history accessible to children – without patronizing the adults standing next to them
- Quick-hit experiences for time-limited visitors (cruise passengers, walk-ins) that deliver a complete, satisfying encounter in 30–45 minutes
- Deep-dive zones for researchers, enthusiasts, and students that reward extended engagement with primary sources, oral histories, and detailed technical content
- Bilingual and multicultural access points designed from inception, not added as afterthought labels

The goal is not separate tracks for separate audiences, but a single environment rich enough that each visitor swims at their own depth. The casual visitor and the maritime historian should both feel that the museum was built for them.

## 6.4 Content Hierarchy

**Every medium has a job. No medium should do another's work.**

We design content systems where each medium – text, graphics, interactives, and video – has a distinct role in the visitor experience. When media is deployed with discipline, each one amplifies the others. When they compete, the gallery becomes background noise. In every case, the guiding question is the same: "how does this affect people?" When the answer is clear, visitors don't perceive a difference between the story and science.

## **Text**

Text is the backbone of interpretation, but it must earn its reading time. We use a three-tier text system: headline labels (under 15 words, readable in 3 seconds from 5 feet away), body panels (50–100 words, one idea per panel), and extended captions for visitors who want scholarly depth. Bilingual text is developed in parallel, not translated – both languages are first-class.

## **Graphics & Illustration**

Graphics do what text cannot: show relationships, scale, geography, and change over time. We use maps, diagrams, timelines, illustrated cross-sections, and infographics as primary interpretive tools – not decoration. For a maritime museum, this means cutaway ship diagrams, trade route maps, port evolution timelines, and comparative vessel scales that make 500 years of seafaring legible at a glance.

## **Interactive Elements**

Interactives invite participation. They transform the visitor from observer to participant – whether through tactile models (feel the weight of a line, turn a capstan), mechanical interactives (raise a sail, plot a course), or digital interfaces (explore a 3D ship interior, hear a first-person account). We design interactives that serve the interpretation, not the technology. Every interactive must answer: what does the visitor understand after touching this that they could not have understood by reading?

## **Video & Audio**

Moving image and sound are the most emotionally powerful tools in the gallery – and the easiest to overuse. We deploy video and audio sparingly and with purpose: oral histories from people connected to the collection, ambient soundscapes that establish mood without competing with conversation, and short documentary moments (under 3 minutes) that bring a story to life when no artifact can. Video should never replace what an object in the room can do better.

The content hierarchy ensures that a visitor who reads nothing still has a meaningful experience (through spatial design, objects, and graphics), a visitor who reads selectively gets a rich story (through headline text and interactives), and a visitor who reads everything encounters a scholarly narrative (through extended captions, video, and deep-dive zones).

## 6.5 Immersion in 3D Space

**Visitors should feel the story before they read it.**

Spatial storytelling uses architecture, lighting, sound, and material to create environments – not just walls with objects on them. We design transitions between zones that mirror narrative transitions – from the open horizon of exploration to the claustrophobia of a submarine interior, from the bustle of a working port to the quiet contemplation of loss at sea.

At MMSD, the physical experience of boarding a ship already does this powerfully. The gallery building should extend that immersive logic onto land – so the transition from building to vessel feels like a continuation of the story, not a break from it.

During Discovery, we'd want to understand MMSD's priorities for educational messaging – particularly the balance between historical interpretation and future-facing content. A museum that connects pre-colonial examination, 16th-century navigation to 21st-century marine science R&D gives visitors a through-line that makes all eras more meaningful.

## 7. Design Logistics

Item	Summary
<b>Process</b>	6 phases across 3 stages (D, SD   DD, FD   PF, IN)
<b>Discovery</b>	3 weeks / 15 working days / 10 remote + 5 on-site
<b>Meetings</b>	3 in-person workshops + 9 digital meetings
<b>Deliverables</b>	Interpretive framework, spatial strategy, scope recommendation

### 7.1 RFP Alignment

The following matrix maps each of Carrier Johnson's stated Discovery Phase objectives to our specific deliverables and timeline:

RFP Objective	MUSEUM DTE Deliverable	Timeline
Develop a collaborative working relationship between design teams and the museum	Kickoff meeting, stakeholder introductions, 3 in-person workshops, 9 digital meetings, stakeholder alignment report	Weeks 1-3 (continuous)
Explore and develop goals, opportunities, and scope for galleries and exhibit opportunities on site	Interpretive framework document, preliminary gallery spatial strategy, anchor exhibit recommendations	Week 1 research; Week 2 workshops; Week 3 synthesis
Outline scope of work related to exhibits on/in existing vessels	Vessel exhibit scope outline (on-ship vs. in-building content recommendations), fleet walk-through documentation	Week 2 on-site; Week 3 deliverable
Synthesize the museum's objectives and narrative into a plan to realize those goals	Discovery report with narrative framework, spatial strategy, and scope of work recommendation for full engagement	Week 3 final deliverable

## 7.2 Project Process Narrative – 10 Phases

# Exhibition Development Process

10 phases · 3 stages · 3 concurrent workstreams

MUSEUM DTE uses a proven 10-phase project process, grouped into three stages. This structure provides clear decision points while maintaining creative flexibility:

- Stage 1: Conceptualization - Discovery & Interpretation, Narrative Framework, Experience Strategy, Concept Design
- Stage 2: Development – Schematic Design
- Stage 3: Production – Schematic Design, Design & Content Dev., Prototyping & Mockups, Final Design

## Stage 1: Conceptualization

*Purpose: Define the project's narrative direction, visitor experience strategy, and initial spatial concepts.*

Phase	Design & Spatial	Content & Research	Collection & Artifacts	Gate
<b>DI</b> Discovery & Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site survey &amp; spatial audit</li> <li>• Gallery condition assessment</li> <li>• View corridor mapping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder interviews</li> <li>• Institutional goals alignment</li> <li>• Preliminary research brief</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial object review</li> <li>• Archive &amp; media survey</li> </ul>	<b>Interpretive brief</b>
<b>NF</b> Narrative Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial zoning concepts</li> <li>• Building-to-fleet relationship study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thematic structure &amp; key messages</li> <li>• Curatorial tone definition</li> <li>• Learning objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objects mapped to narrative sections</li> <li>• Preliminary object list</li> </ul>	<b>Narrative framework</b>
<b>ES</b> Experience Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor circulation planning</li> <li>• Multimedia opportunity mapping</li> <li>• Audience pathway design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretive approach definition</li> <li>• Bilingual strategy confirmed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Object display feasibility flagged</li> </ul>	<b>Experience map</b>
<b>CD</b> Concept Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary layouts &amp; sketches</li> <li>• Visual identity &amp; atmosphere</li> <li>• Mood boards &amp; concept renders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content zone mapping</li> <li>• Text hierarchy draft</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display concept sketches for key objects</li> </ul>	<b>Concept layouts</b>

## Stage 2: Development

Refine design in detail, develop interpretive content, test key elements, and prepare production-ready documentation.

Phase	Design & Spatial	Content & Research	Collection & Artifacts	Gate
<b>SD</b> Schematic Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refined exhibition layout</li> <li>Display system specs</li> <li>Graphic &amp; media frameworks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content outlines by zone</li> <li>Word counts &amp; panel hierarchy</li> <li>Script structure for AV</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spatial &amp; conservation eval</li> <li>Refined object list</li> <li>Loan feasibility review</li> </ul>	<b>Schematic layouts</b>
<b>DD</b> Design Dev. & Content Dev.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed spatial layouts</li> <li>Exhibit furniture design</li> <li>Lighting design</li> <li>Interactive specs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full panel texts (EN/ES)</li> <li>Object labels written</li> <li>AV &amp; multimedia scripts</li> <li>Archival image selection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final object checklist</li> <li>Loan agreements executed</li> <li>Conservation plans finalized</li> </ul>	<b>Technical drawings &amp; content</b>
<b>PM</b> Prototyping & Mockups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graphic panel mockups</li> <li>Furniture samples</li> <li>Lighting tests</li> <li>Interactive prototypes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Readability testing</li> <li>Bilingual proofing at scale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mount testing</li> <li>Display condition trials</li> <li>On-vessel environment tests</li> </ul>	<b>Prototype evaluation</b>
<b>FD</b> Final Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Production-ready specs</li> <li>Final lighting plan</li> <li>Graphic production proofs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final text editing</li> <li>Content approval &amp; sign-off</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mount specs finalized</li> <li>Insurance &amp; transport confirmed</li> </ul>	<b>Final specs &amp; sign-off</b>

## Stage 3: Production

Fabricate, install, and open the exhibition.

Phase	Design & Spatial	Content & Research	Collection & Artifacts	Gate
<b>PF</b> Production & Fabrication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cases, furniture, panels fabricated</li> <li>Multimedia systems built</li> <li>Interactive installs produced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Print files released</li> <li>AV content finalized &amp; encoded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Artifact transport coordinated</li> <li>Insurance activated</li> <li>Conservation prep completed</li> </ul>	<b>All components fabricated</b>
<b>IO</b> Installation & Opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structures &amp; displays installed</li> <li>AV &amp; lighting calibrated</li> <li>Wayfinding installed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panels &amp; labels mounted</li> <li>Docent training materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Artifacts mounted per conservation reqs</li> <li>Final placement &amp; condition check</li> </ul>	<b>Soft opening → Public launch</b>

For MMSD: bilingual content (EN/ES) developed in parallel from Phase DI onward. Object selection accounts for both building galleries and on-vessel displays. Working language can be English, Spanish, or mixed based on your preference.

## Discovery & Interpretation Narrative

The Discovery and Interpretation phase establishes the intellectual foundation of the project. Its purpose is straightforward: before design begins, the project team and the **Maritime Museum of San Diego (MMSD)** need a shared understanding of what this exhibition is about, who it serves, and what stories are worth telling – across both the new building galleries and the Museum’s historic vessel fleet.

We propose a three-week hybrid engagement: remote work to build context, an intensive on-site week in the middle, and a remote close to synthesize findings. This structure is compressed from the four-week window outlined in the RFP, designed to build momentum early and align the project timeline with the schematic design start.

The phase begins remotely with document review, preliminary research, and digital working sessions with MMSD leadership, curatorial staff, and collections specialists. These are structured conversations, not presentations – we come prepared with research and questions; Museum staff bring institutional knowledge, curatorial priorities, and a sense of which stories resonate most with their audiences. The goal is to surface the themes, historical threads, and interpretive priorities that will anchor the exhibition narrative. Bilingual content development (English/Spanish) begins at this stage and continues through every subsequent phase.

During the on-site week, we conduct two full-day workshops with the MMSD team and a separate full-day workshop with **Carrier Johnson** to align interpretive and architectural intent. We walk the fleet, document vessel conditions and display opportunities, and survey the proposed building footprint. Vessel positioning and alignment are explored in coordination with the architectural team, along with view corridor analysis from building, promenade, and bay approaches. This on-site work directly informs one of the phase’s key deliverables: a scope outline distinguishing on-ship content from in-building content.

In parallel, we conduct an **initial review of the Museum’s collections and archival materials**. Working alongside MMSD curators and registrars, we identify artifacts, documents, photographs, and media that could support the emerging storyline—across both the floating collection and standard holdings. This is a survey, not a final selection; it establishes a preliminary relationship between the narrative direction and the collection, and tells us where the strongest object-driven stories lie.

The final remote week is devoted to synthesis. The deliverable for this phase is a **Discovery Report** comprising the interpretive framework (narrative themes, learning objectives, visitor journey map), a preliminary gallery spatial strategy, a vessel exhibit scope outline, stakeholder alignment documentation, and a scope-of-work recommendation for the full design engagement. This report becomes the reference point for every subsequent stage of development.

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## **Complete Proposed Process**

The accompanying phase tables (Section 7.2) detail our ten-phase process across three stages—Conceptualization, Development, and Production—with three concurrent workstreams running throughout: Design & Spatial, Content & Research, and Collection & Artifacts. What follows is the rationale behind that structure.

### **Why Three Concurrent Workstreams**

Exhibition projects fail most often when design, content, and collections operate in sequence rather than in parallel. A beautiful gallery designed around objects that cannot be loaned, or interpretive text written for spaces that don't exist, costs time and money to untangle. Our process runs all three workstreams simultaneously from Phase 1. Design decisions are informed by what the collection can actually support; content is written for spaces that have been measured and modeled; object selection reflects both curatorial ambition and conservation reality. The result is fewer late-stage surprises.

### **Stage Gates**

Each phase concludes with a defined gate—a deliverable that the project team reviews and approves before work advances. Gates serve two purposes: they give MMSD clear decision points with real authority over the project's direction, and they prevent downstream work from being built on unconfirmed assumptions. The framework is structured but not rigid; creative development continues within each phase, and gates are checkpoints, not roadblocks.

### **The MMSD-Specific Dimension**

Two factors distinguish this project from a conventional gallery exhibition. First, MMSD's collection includes a historic vessel fleet, which means the exhibition environment is not limited to a single controlled building – it extends across ships with variable conditions, access constraints, and conservation requirements. Our process accounts for this from Discovery onward, with vessel-specific scope, environmental testing during prototyping, and on-vessel installation logistics built into the production phases.

### **Coordination with Carrier Johnson**

Exhibition design and building design must evolve together. From Discovery through Final Design, our process includes regular coordination with Carrier Johnson's architectural and engineering teams. This covers the predictable integration points—lighting, electrical, data, structural mounting—but also the less obvious ones: how exhibit sightlines interact with architectural view corridors, how vessel-to-building transitions affect visitor circulation, and how the building's mechanical systems accommodate conservation-grade climate control for sensitive artifacts. Early and continuous coordination is how these issues get resolved on paper rather than on the construction floor.

## 7.3 Discovery Phase Timeline

**3-week engagement: 15 working days (10 remote + 5 on-site)**

	Days	Format	Primary Objectives
<b>Week 1</b>	5	Remote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Project Kick-off</li><li>● Initial knowledge transfer</li></ul>
<b>Week 2</b>	5	In-Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● 1 full-day workshop (Carrier Johnson)</li><li>● 2 full-day workshop (MMSD)</li><li>● Site visit and walkthrough</li></ul>
<b>Week 3</b>	5	Remote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Research report and synthesis</li><li>● Deliverable report</li></ul>
<b>Week 9</b>	30	Remote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Final Deliverable preparation</li><li>● Follow-up questions (as-needed-basis)</li></ul>

We propose a hybrid workshop structure: starting digitally to build context, moving to an intensive in-person workshop in the middle of the phase, and closing with a digital session to wrap up with renewed context. This is shorter than the 4-week window proposed in the RFP – designed to get the project back on schedule for the schematic design start.

### **Week 1 – Remote (5 days) | [Initial engagement]**

- Kickoff meeting and stakeholder introductions (digital)
- Document review: existing plans, curatorial materials, collection inventories
- Preliminary research into MMSD's narrative framework, visitor demographics, and operational needs
- 3 digital meetings with MMSD curatorial and leadership team

### **Week 2 – On-Site (5 days) | [Initial engagement]**

- 2 full-day in-person workshops with Maritime Museum of San Diego team
- 1 full-day in-person workshop with Carrier Johnson design team
- Fleet walk-through and site documentation (vessels, wharf, proposed building footprint)
- Vessel positioning and alignment exploration with architectural team
- View corridor analysis from building, promenade, and bay approaches

### **Week 3 – Remote (5 days) | [Initial engagement]**

- Synthesis and documentation of findings

- Draft discovery report with interpretive framework, spatial strategy, and recommendations
- 3 digital meetings with MMSD for review and refinement

#### **Weeks 4-9 – Remote (30 days) | [Discovery follow-up]**

- Museum DTE to ask follow-up questions directed to MMSD and Carrier Johnson on an as-needed-basis.
- Final discovery deliverable package

#### **Meeting Summary**

- MUSEUM DTE + Carrier Johnson: 1 full-day in-person workshop + 3 digital meetings
  - MUSEUM DTE + Maritime Museum of San Diego: 2 full-day in-person workshops + 6 digital meetings
- 

## **7.4 Discovery Phase Deliverables**

We estimate that it will take six (6) weeks to prepare the following deliverables. As such, the total time from start of Discovery Phase to delivery of Discovery deliverables is expected to take nine (9) weeks [*3 week initial engagement + 6 weeks of follow-up and deliverable preparation*].

- **Interpretive framework document** (narrative themes, learning objectives, visitor journey map)
- **Preliminary gallery spatial strategy** (content zones, circulation concepts, anchor exhibit locations)
- **Inventory of artifacts and exhibits** (Floating and standard collection; conservation needs)
- **Vessel exhibit scope outline** (on-ship vs. in-building content recommendations)
- **Vessel positioning and alignment recommendations** (informed by view corridor and visitor flow analysis)
- **Stakeholder alignment report** (goals, opportunities, constraints, and consensus points)
- **Scope of work** recommendation for the full exhibit design engagement
- **Preliminary budget** for project based on scope.

## 8. Costing

DISCOVERY PHASE INVESTMENT

# \$39,750.00 USD

All-inclusive fee for the full 3-week Discovery Phase engagement and the 6-week follow-up period to produce deliverables. This fee includes all remote and on-site workshops, research, documentation, travels, and the complete deliverable package.

### 8.1 Cost Breakdown

Line Item	Days
Remote research & preparation (Week 1)	5
Digital meetings with MMSD (Week 1)	3 mtgs
On-site workshops & field work (Week 2)	5
In-person workshop with Carrier Johnson	1 day
Local travel, lodging & per diem (San Diego)	5 nights
Travel (CDMX ↔ TIJ ↔ SAN)	4 pax
Remote synthesis & reporting (Week 3)	5
Digital meetings with MMSD (Week 3)	3 mtgs
Final deliverable package production	incl.
<b>TOTAL DISCOVERY PHASE: \$39,750.00</b>	

### Cost Notes

- All prices in USD; costed with current exchange rates (as of 03/16/26). Invoiced in two installments: 50% upon engagement, 50% upon deliverable acceptance.
- On-site costs represent the largest line item due to international travel (CDMX to San Diego), lodging, and intensive workshop facilitation.
- Remote weeks are labor-intensive but lower in direct cost – research, digital meetings, and synthesis work.
- Fee includes all internal project management, coordination, and communication throughout the 3-week engagement.
- Excludes: any subsequent design phases, fabrication, or production work beyond the Discovery Phase scope.

## 8.2 Budget Narrative

### **Professional Services (Labor) — \$27,750 (~70% of total)**

Professional services represent the largest share of the Discovery Phase investment and cover all staff time required to research, plan, facilitate, and deliver the 3-week engagement across 15 working days. This includes:

- Creative Director and Executive Producer: Overall creative vision, project management, budget oversight, and cross-border logistics coordination throughout all three weeks.
- Research & Content Development (2 staff): Preliminary historical research, stakeholder interview preparation, museographic scripting, and synthesis of findings into the interpretive framework document.
- Spatial and Museographic Design (2 staff): Site survey preparation, gallery condition assessment, view corridor mapping, visitor circulation concepts, and preliminary spatial zoning.
- Content Developer (San Diego-based): Local coordination, bilingual content strategy, and on-the-ground liaison between MUSEUM DTE, Carrier Johnson, and MMSD staff.

### **Travel & On-Site Costs — \$9,000 (~22% of total)**

On-site costs represent the second-largest line item, driven by international travel for four team members from Mexico City to San Diego during the Week 2 intensive. This includes:

- Round-trip airfare for 4 team members (CDMX → TIJ via domestic flight + Cross-Border Express to San Diego)
- Lodging for 5 nights in San Diego (4 team members) during the on-site workshop week
- Per diem and local ground transportation for site visits, fleet walk-throughs, and workshops at MMSD and Carrier Johnson offices

### **Workshops, Meetings & Deliverables — \$3,000 (~8% of total)**

Direct expenses cover workshop facilitation materials, digital meeting infrastructure, and final deliverable production. This includes:

- 3 full-day in-person workshops (2 with MMSD, 1 with Carrier Johnson): facilitation supplies, printed reference materials, and working session documentation
- 9 digital meetings across Weeks 1 and 3 (6 with MMSD, 3 with Carrier Johnson): videoconference coordination and follow-up documentation
- Final deliverable package production: interpretive framework, spatial strategy, vessel scope outline, stakeholder alignment report, and scope-of-work recommendation for the full exhibit design engagement

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### **Total Discovery Phase Investment: \$39,750.00 USD**

*All prices in USD. Invoiced in two installments: 50% upon engagement, 50% upon deliverable acceptance. Fee is all-inclusive and covers internal project management, coordination, and communication throughout the 3-week engagement. Excludes any subsequent design phases, fabrication, or production work beyond the Discovery Phase scope.*

# 9. Summary

AT A GLANCE – SHAREABLE ONE-PAGE REFERENCE

Item	Discovery Summary
<b>Design</b>	Balanced & human-centered · Relationally curated · Community-driven · Multicultural
<b>Firm</b>	MUSEUM DTE – CDMX-based, cross-border exhibit design studio
<b>Team</b>	11 specialists: creative direction, spatial design, content, technology, AV
<b>Cost</b>	\$39,750.00 USD (all-inclusive Discovery Phase)
<b>Duration</b>	15 working days (3 weeks: 10 remote + 5 on-site)
<b>Workshops</b>	3 in-person + 9 digital meetings
<b>Deliverables</b>	Interpretive framework, spatial strategy, vessel scope, full engagement SOW
<b>Schedule</b>	March 2026 → schematic design start

The Maritime Museum of San Diego deserves an exhibit partner that sees this project for what it is: not a renovation, but the birth of a binational cultural institution on one of America's most iconic waterfronts. A binational museum on the Embarcadero – telling stories that connect San Diego to the Pacific world and across time – would give MMSD a fundraising narrative that no other maritime museum in America can claim.

MUSEUM DTE brings a methodology proven at MuVaCa, a team that works natively across the border this museum sits on, and a design philosophy built around the people whose stories fill these ships. We are ready to begin.

We look forward to the opportunity to meet with the Carrier Johnson and MMSD teams. We'd like to schedule a 30-minute call with D. Mills Martin to discuss how our Discovery Phase timeline aligns with Carrier Johnson's schematic design schedule. Derek Kiy, our San Diego-based team member, is available to meet in person at your convenience.

# 10. Appendix

QUESTIONS, DISCUSSION POINTS, AND IMAGE REFERENCE

## 10.1 Initial Questions from the Team

We're excited to talk about everything in depth. After our initial review of the RFP and proposed conceptual plans, our team has the following questions:

### Operational Needs

#### Jesús Alcalá, Executive Producer

1. *What are MMSD's operational needs for the new building? Bathrooms by floor, maintenance procedures, on-site administration, office requirements – these inform spatial planning from the earliest stage. Understanding the day-to-day operations of the museum is essential before we begin designing the visitor experience around it.*
2. *What is MMSD's vision for programming? School visits, overnight visitors, tours, special events, community rentals – the programming model directly shapes the spatial and interpretive design.*
3. *Collections storage (bodega de obra): Does the plan include climate-controlled storage with temperature and humidity monitoring for artifacts and loan objects? This is a critical requirement for AAM accreditation and loan eligibility.*

#### Karla Gutiérrez, Spatial Designer

- *Museography storage (bodega de museografía): Is there dedicated storage for exhibit materials – glass, wood panels, furniture, hardware, and graphic elements? What about a museography workshop (taller de museografía) for carpentry, metalworking, and exhibit fabrication and maintenance?*

#### Anel Punzo, Research & Content

- *Conservation and restoration workshop (taller de restauración y conservación): Is there a dedicated space for artifact examination, condition reporting, and minor conservation treatment?*

## **Mariana Alcalá, Museographic Designer**

- *Cleaning service stations: Are small utility closets (brooms, buckets, rags, cleaning supplies) planned for each floor of the building? These are easy to overlook in early plans but essential for daily operations.*

## **Vessel Positioning & Fleet**

### **Karla Gutiérrez, Spatial Designer**

- *What are MMSD's guidelines and constraints for positioning the floating collection? Where can and can't ships be placed? Where can and can't pedestrian docks go? Understanding the maritime and port authority constraints is critical for our view corridor and visitor flow analysis.*

## **Derek Kiy, Content Developer**

- *Are on-ship exhibits within or outside the discovery scope? The RFP doesn't explicitly mention re-design of ship exhibitry. Will ship exhibits be within the redevelopment scope, or is design limited to positioning and alignments only? This significantly affects the interpretive framework.*

## **Climate-Controlled Exhibit Space**

### **Mariana Alcalá, Museographic Designer**

- *What are MMSD's needs for climate-controlled exhibit space? Square footage requirements, UV constraints, access needs for loan objects. The gallery walls appear to be primarily glass with exposed steel structure – what is the plan for UV mitigation, particularly for a special collections gallery?*

## **Anel Punzo, Content & Research Lead**

- *Has AAM accreditation been pursued previously? What specific facility gaps have been identified? The accreditation pathway directly informs what the permanent building must include for collections storage, environmental controls, and conservation space.*

## **Content & Curatorial Questions**

### **Anel Punzo, Content & Research Lead**

- *Has the MMSD curatorial staff already developed a content outline and learning objectives, or will this be part of the discovery phase? If existing materials exist, we'd like to review them in Week 1 to inform our workshop preparation.*

### **Derek Kiy, Content Developer**

- *Is there a desire to pursue a "Museum-beyond-the-walls"? Does MMSD want to interpret the greater San Diego fleet such as the modern Navy or R/V Sally Ride? Or should interpretation stay focused on MMSD's current collection?*

# 11. Deliverable Package

FILES INCLUDED IN THIS SUBMISSION

- MMSD\_Overview.pdf
- MMSD\_Narrative\_Vision.pdf
- MMSD\_Qualifications.pdf
- MMSD\_Proposal.pdf

Sent as a zip package in email. Digital version sent as a link.

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*This is a once-in-a-generation project. MUSEUM DTE is a once-in-a-generation fit for it. We are ready to begin and look forward to hearing from you.*