

# M/S

Museet *for Søfart*  
Maritime Museum of Denmark



## **M/S Maritime Museum of Denmark**

The M/S Maritime Museum of Denmark is located in Elsinore, just north of Copenhagen in a unique historical context adjacent to one of Denmark's most important historical buildings, the Kronborg Castle.

The iconic museum is built around an old dry dock and is designed by the internationally renowned architecture company BIG (Bjarke Ingels Group).

### **A beautiful hole in the ground**

Leaving the 60 year old dock walls untouched, the exhibitions are placed below ground and arranged in a continuous loop around the dry dock walls – making the dock the centerpiece of the exhibition – an open, outdoor area where visitors experience the scale of ship building.

The architecture and exhibitions aim for new horizons, making the museum relevant, inclusive and accessible to everyone. The architecture of the museum is iconic, guiding visitors through a continuous flow of spaces expanding across gently sloping floors at different levels before crossing the old dock 8 meter below the level of the sea.

The M/S Maritime Museum of Denmark has been nominated and has won a number of international awards since it opened in 2013, and has been called 'A cutting-edge cultural venue' by The New York Times, and 'One of the eight greatest new museums' by BBC.

In 2015 the museum was a finalist for the world's most prestigious architecture award 'Mies Van der Rohe', was declared the best cultural building on the world's biggest architectural site archdaily.com – on top of a whole host of other international awards and accolades amongst others a RIBA Award 2014, Architizer A + Award in the category Museum and AIANY Design Award.

### **About the exhibitions:**

The eight different exhibitions are developed in collaboration with the exhibition designers Kossmann.dejong from Amsterdam. The story of each exhibition is powerfully expressed in atmospheric and dramatic surroundings with large-scale film projections and evocative soundscapes that highlight and add perspective to the many exhibits on display. The museum is enhanced by interactive installations and games.

The permanent exhibitions are supplemented by changing, thematic exhibitions and an education department, with activities for schoolchildren and anyone else interested in learning more about shipping and navigation through the museums teaching program.

### **Facts about the museum and exhibitions:**

- Maritime Museum of Denmark opened the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 2013 in Elsinore.
- The opening hours are:  
Tuesday - Sunday 11 am – 5 pm  
July and August: Every day 10 am – 5 pm
- The building is designed by BIG, Bjarke Ingels Group, and has a total area of approx. 6.500 m<sup>2</sup>, 3500 of these are exhibition areas.

### **About the architecture:**

Placed within an old dry dock below ground, the museum seeks to reflect Denmark's historical and contemporary role as one of the world's leading maritime nations. By arranging the galleries in a continuous loop around the dry dock walls, the dock becomes the centerpiece of the exhibition - an open, outdoor area where visitors experience the size of the ship.

A series of three two level bridges span the dry dock, serving both as an urban connections, as well as providing visitors with short-cuts to different sections of the museum. The harbor bridge closes off the dock while serving as harbor promenade; the museum's auditorium serves as a bridge connecting the adjacent Culture wharf with the Kronborg Castle; and the sloping zig-zag bridge navigates visitors to the main entrance. This bridge creates a dynamic tension between old and new as the visitors descend into the museum space overlooking the majestic surroundings above and below ground. The long and noble history of the Danish Maritime unfolds in a continuous motion within and around the dock, 8 metres below the ground. All floors - connecting exhibition spaces with the auditorium, classroom, offices, café and the dock floor within the museum - slope gently creating dramatic and sculptural spaces.

Architect and founder of BIG, Bjarke Ingels:

“Prince Hamlet's Castle, with its fortifications, masonry, and tower skyline is one of Denmark's greatest tourist attractions. And due to preserving the views of the Castle's towers we were not allowed to even stick out a meter above the ground level. We considered it architectural suicide to fill the dry dock with program and therefore decided to empty the dry dock and wrap it with the museum, making it the centerpiece of the exhibition. Instead of drowning the dry dock with galleries we would leave it open. A new kind of urban space – open for new ideas and life.

David Zahle, Partner-in-Charge, BIG:

"Working for 5 years with the old concrete dock structure has been a mixture between archeology and space craft design. The old lady is both fragile and tough; the new bridges are light and elegant. Building a museum below sea level has taken construction techniques never used in Denmark before. The old concrete dock with its 1,5m thick walls and 2,5m thick floor has been cut open and reassembled as a modern and precise museum facility. The steel bridges were produced in giant sections on a Chinese steel wharf and transported to Denmark on the biggest ship that has ever docked in Elsinore. The steel sections weigh up to 100 tons a piece and are lifted on site by the two largest mobile cranes in northern Europe. I am truly proud of the work our team has carried out on this project and of the final result."

About BIG

BIG – Bjarke Ingels Group is a leading international partnership of architects, designers, builders and thinkers operating within the fields of architecture, urbanism, research and development. BIG is led by partners – Bjarke Ingels, Andreas Klok Pedersen, Finn Nørkjær, David Zahle, Jakob Lange, Thomas Christoffersen and Managing Partners, Sheela Maini Søgaard and Kai-Uwe Bergmann – with offices in Copenhagen and New York. In all our actions we try to move the focus from the little details to the BIG picture. [www.big.dk](http://www.big.dk)

#### **Facts about the building:**

- Maritime Museum of Denmark is built underground around a 150 meter long dock of the yard area in Elsinore.
- 461 ground anchors are drilled 42 meters into the ground to secure the floor – actually making the museum the tallest museum in Denmark, even though it's almost invisible from the outside.

#### **Contact:**

For further information and press photos in high resolution you are more than welcome to contact Head of Communications Siw Aldershvile Nielsen from the Maritime Museum of Denmark:

T: 0045 49 28 02 17

M : [san@mfs.dk](mailto:san@mfs.dk) W : [www.mfs.dk](http://www.mfs.dk)

A: M/S Museet for Søfart, Ny Kronborgvej 1, 3000 Elsinore