

"Hark, Now Hear The Sailors Cry"

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The clouds rolled in low over **Helsingør**. Tinted grey, but with no real malice. The seascape was perfect to visit a venue that had been highly recommended to me. I have just been waiting for this angry sky to put me in the mood. **The Maritime Museum Of Denmark**, some 50 kilometers north of Copenhagen opened its hatches in October 2013. The museum is a celebration of Denmark's impressive maritime global role, both past and present. Arriving at this historical **location**, with the Kronborg Castle as an imposing neighbor, the original dry dock greets you with a bench system inviting you to sit and take in the view. I later discovered that the bench system is designed as ship bollards and dispersed after the morse code system, a theme to be continued. The underground exhibition space is wrapped around the dry dock like a sailor's warm embrace.



And then began my voyage, witnessing the birth of this seafaring nation, from sail to steam and then to diesel, told with such intelligence and playfulness. The audio and visual tools used engaged and involved the visitor, regardless which generation they represented and that it was joy to study the visitor's interaction with the surroundings. The architectural and design team behind this inspiring project was a collaboration between **BIG (Bjarke Ingels Group)**, **KiBiSi** and the Dutch design office, **Kossmann.dejong**. BIG has firmly stamped its DNA on many complex international projects that create a positive connection with the architectural scheme and the user. The contrast between the active exhibition space and the reflective emptiness of the dry dock was powerful. Kossmann.dejong are no strangers to exhibition and spatial design, using humor which connects wonderfully with a broad audience. The 'Tattoo Bar' was a perfect example of this. The Maritime Museum Of Denmark has been showered with international accolades for its architectural and museum design and rightly so. I left Helsingør in awe of Denmark's maritime contribution and the power of storytelling. I do believe I heard sailors cry.

"Hark, now hear the sailors cry,
smell the sea, and feel the sky
let your soul & spirit fly, into the mystic..."

Van Morrison

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