

Migration Museum – Design Brief

Museum in a Box: Migration in Motion / The Moving Museum / A Suitcase of Stories

Introduction

We are seeking a designer or design team to help us bring to life the Migration Museum in a Box – a fully portable, self-contained museum output that combines storytelling, storage, and display in a single, transportable unit.

Housed within a bespoke suitcase/trunk, this moveable display will serve as both a functional display tool for outreach, education and engagement sessions with a wide range of different audiences, as well as acting as a symbol of migration itself.

A suitcase is a universal icon of movement. It carries personal belongings and memories, often the most important items someone can take when they leave one place for another. For migrants, it's not just luggage; it's a container of life's essentials, heritage, and hopes for the future. This portable museum draws on that symbolism, turning the suitcase into a vessel for collective stories rather than just personal ones.

Atop the suitcase will sit a miniature model of the Migration Museum's permanent home, due to open in the City of London in 2028. This scaled model will invite viewers to peer inside and explore the vision of our future space: galleries, learning zones, a café, and more. This playful model will reflect our future plans and build excitement for what's to come.

Together, these two components – the practical suitcase and the miniature museum – offer an engaging, tactile experience for audiences whilst the Migration Museum is between homes. These will be taken to a range of engagements – from small workshops to large scale festivals and events. The Museum in a Box will allow us to expand outreach during the museum's period of transition, reaching new audiences, and building momentum for our next chapter.

About the Migration Museum

The Migration Museum explores how the movement of people to and from the UK across the ages has shaped who we are – as individuals, as communities, and as nations.

We have been based in a series of temporary venues, most recently in Lewisham, south-east London, where we welcomed over 200,000 visitors between 2020 and March 2025. We are currently between homes. After closing our temporary space in Lewisham earlier this year, we continue to deliver pop-up events and programming ahead of opening our permanent home in 2028.

Our permanent museum will be Britain's missing museum, encompassing interactive temporary and permanent exhibition galleries, a learning suite and event space, outdoor areas, a cafe/restaurant and shop, enabling us to deliver a wide programme of activities.

The brief

We are looking for a designer or design team to develop and oversee fabrication of the Museum in a Box. This will involve two core components:

- A suitcase-based interactive display that can be carried and set up by one person
- A miniature architectural model representing the future Migration Museum, to sit on top of the suitcase in a separate box/bag

We have worked with designer Shania Saldi on the initial concept for the Museum in a Box – you can view and download the ideas pack here:

[Design Concept by Shania Saldi – The Moving Museum / Suitcase of Stories](#)

We need a designer to...

- Design the aesthetic, layout, and user experience of both the suitcase and the miniature model (A 2D model of the permanent home will be provided as reference)
- Ensure both elements can be adapted as and when needed to reflect the Migration Museum's new branding (our draft brand guidelines are still being finalised and will be shared with shortlisted designers)
- Create interactive components that can withstand regular use by a wide range of audiences
- Produce technical drawings and files required for fabrication, as well as a 3D render of the permanent home for digital use
- Liaise with selected fabricators to deliver the final product within budget

Key functional requirements

Suitcase

- The suitcase must be portable by one person, and both lightweight and durable
- The internal frame should be removable and expandable, functioning as a stand-alone mobile display. Shelving must be adjustable and robust enough for flexible configurations
- The structure should accommodate items ranging from CD-disc size to 40x40cm objects, and a maximum 5kg of total weight
- Area to store 1-2 collapsible pull-up banners, each measuring 90x12x12cm
- The suitcase should be able to neatly store materials required for engagement activities (e.g. migration story discs, display objects, iPad and charger, paper materials, stationery)

Miniature museum

- The miniature museum should be attached to the top of the suitcase in a separate box or bag
- It should be to scale, structurally sound, and visually detailed
- The architectural model should be lightweight and convey the vision of the future museum, offering an alternative to digital renderings
- Sturdy and able to withstand frequent public handling

Budget

- Designer Fee: Up to £3,000
- Fabrication Budget: Up to £3,500

Timeline

- October–December 2025 – Co-design phase with the Migration Museum team
- January 2026 – Oversee fabrication and production
- February 2026 – Final delivery and public launch

How to apply

Please send us a proposal of no more than 3 pages, including text and visuals, outlining:

- Your idea for the Museum in a Box
- How it meets the brief and design objectives
- Why you're a good fit for this project

You may also include examples of relevant work or a portfolio

Deadline

- Tuesday 21st October, 23:59

Please email submissions to Mona Jamil (Head of Civic Engagement) on mona@migrationmuseum.org.

If you have any questions or would like to arrange a 15-minute project briefing, please also email Mona directly.

We're excited to see how your creativity can help us
bring this ambitious idea to life.