

T/m THE NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF TOYS / MINIATURES™

***SATURDAY
MORNING
CARTOONS***

TOYS AND
ADVERTISING
IN THE 1980s

RFP FOR EXHIBITION DESIGN SERVICES

Saturday Morning Cartoons
The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures

Issued by: The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures

RFP Issue Date: June 5, 2026

Proposal Due Date: July 5, 2026

Project Period: August 2026–May 2027



INTRODUCTION

The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures (T/m) invites qualified exhibit designers or exhibit design firms to submit proposals for the **design and development of *Saturday Morning Cartoons***, a temporary exhibition scheduled to open in May 2027. The selected consultant will collaborate closely with T/m staff to create an immersive, accessible, educational, and visually compelling exhibition that aligns with T/m’s mission, interpretive goals, and audience needs.

T/m seeks a creative partner with demonstrated experience in museum exhibitions, interpretive planning, graphic and spatial design, and project management. The exhibition is anticipated to remain on view for approximately 9 months in T/m’s South Gallery.



About The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures

Since 1982, [The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures](https://www.toyandminiaturemuseum.org/) has delighted audiences with an extensive collection of historically significant toys and fine-scale miniatures. The Museum's co-founders, Mary Harris Francis and Barbara Hall Marshall, had amassed large personal collections when they had the idea to open a museum and share their collections.

T/m opened in the historic Tureman Mansion on the campus of the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC). The Museum's collection currently numbers more than 100,000 objects—and counting.



The mission of The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures is to educate, inspire, and delight people of all ages by collecting, displaying, and interpreting toys and miniatures that illuminate diverse narratives and cultural heritage.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

About the Exhibition

Care Bears, He-Man, Alvin and the Chipmunks, DuckTales, The Smurfs, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Transformers... the 1980s were a golden age of Saturday morning cartoons. Animated characters leapt from television screens into toy boxes, shaping how a generation played and imagined. For many children, cartoons didn't end when the TV was turned off; they continued on the living room floor through expansive imaginative worlds brought to life through toys.

Saturday Morning Cartoons explores this pivotal moment in American childhood, when television, toys, and marketing converged in powerful new ways. Drawing from The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures' nationally recognized collections, the exhibition examines how cartoons and toys worked together to create immersive play experiences, blurring boundaries between entertainment, advertising, and imagination.

Behind this explosion of character-driven play was a significant cultural and regulatory shift. During the 1980s, the Federal Communications Commission's deregulation of children's television allowed animated programs to be more directly tied to toy lines. As a result, many Saturday morning cartoons were developed alongside toys, transforming television into a powerful driver of play and consumer experience. The exhibition introduces this historical context in accessible ways, helping visitors understand how broader media and economic forces shaped everyday childhood.

Through iconic toys, original packaging, and media connections, the exhibition invites reflection on this era's legacy: how it influenced not only toy design and marketing but also the nature of play,



storytelling, and childhood memory. Comparisons with earlier and later toy-media relationships will encourage intergenerational conversations among children, parents, and grandparents.

By combining nostalgia, visual impact, and thoughtful interpretation, *Saturday Morning Cartoons* offers an engaging exploration of how popular culture shaped play in the 1980s—and why it still resonates today.

The selected exhibit designer will work with T/m leadership, curatorial staff, marketing, educators, and external vendors to guide the exhibition from concept development through final design production.

Services are expected to begin in August 2026, with final design deliverables completed in sufficient time to support fabrication and installation prior to the public opening in May 2027.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The selected consultant will provide comprehensive exhibition design services, including but not limited to:

Concept Development

- Participate in project kickoff meetings and stakeholder interviews
- Review interpretive plans, collections, and exhibition objectives
- Develop thematic and visual concepts for the exhibition



Exhibit Design

- Create schematic and final exhibit layouts
- Develop visitor flow and spatial organization plans
- Design exhibit components, casework concepts, and interactive elements based upon the exhibition's brand guidelines and assets
- Recommend materials, finishes, lighting concepts, and accessibility solutions
- Ensure compliance with ADA and applicable safety standards

Graphic and Interpretive Coordination

- Collaborate with T/m staff on interpretation, visual design, and graphic templates
- Capture the spirit of the 1980s utilizing the exhibition's brand assets developed by T/m

Documentation and Production Support

- Produce design development drawings and presentation materials
- Prepare fabrication-ready design documents
- Coordinate with fabricators and installation contractors during implementation
- Attend periodic project meetings, virtually or on site as required



Project Schedule

The anticipated project timeline is as follows:

Milestone

Target Date

Consultant Selection

July 2026

Project Start

August 2026

Concept Design Completion

November 2026

Schematic Design Completion

December 2026

Final Design Package

January 2027

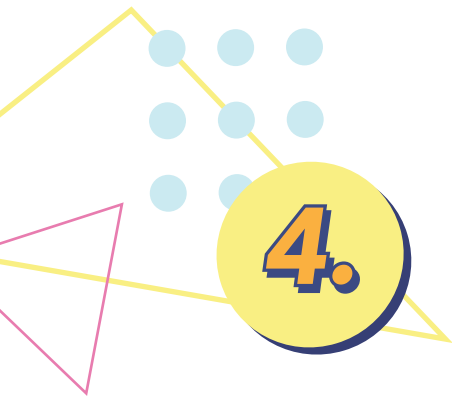
Fabrication & Installation Support

February–April 2027

Exhibition Opening

May 2027

T/m reserves the right to modify the schedule as necessary.



PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals should include the following information:

1. Cover Letter

- Brief introduction and statement of interest.

2. Firm or Consultant Qualifications

- Background and experience
- Relevant museum or cultural exhibition projects
- Résumés of key personnel

3. Project Approach

- Description of the proposed design process, collaboration methods, and project management approach.

4. Portfolio

- Examples of at least three relevant exhibit projects completed within the last five years. Include images, project descriptions, budgets, and client references if available.

5. Project Schedule

- Proposed timeline identifying major milestones and deliverables.

6. Fee Proposal

- Provide a detailed fee structure, including hourly rates, reimbursable expenses, and estimated total project cost.

7. References

- Minimum of three professional references for comparable projects.


8. Contact Information for Project Lead

- Name
- Title
- Phone Number
- Email
- Website



EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

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- Demonstrated experience with museum or interpretive exhibition design
 - Creativity and quality of past work
 - Understanding of the project goals and audience engagement strategies
 - Ability to meet schedule and budget requirements
 - Qualifications of proposed personnel
 - Overall value and responsiveness of the proposal

T/m may invite selected firms or individuals for interviews prior to final selection.



SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals must be **submitted electronically in PDF format no later than July 5, 2026 at 4:00PM** to:



Nichollette Haigler

Sr. Manager of Marketing and Communications
The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures
nichollettehaigler@toyandminiaturemuseum.org
816.235.8009

Questions regarding this RFP should be submitted by June 17, 2026. Responses to questions may be shared with all prospective respondents.



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive informalities, and accept the proposal deemed to be in T/m's best interest. Issuance of this RFP does not obligate T/m to award a contract or pay any costs incurred in proposal preparation.

The selected consultant will be required to enter into a professional services agreement with T/m and provide proof of appropriate insurance coverage prior to commencing work.