

# Storage Solutions

A VIKING METAL CABINET COMPANY CASE STUDY



The Museum has become the premier repository for Mexican art in the nation, containing more than 5,500 examples of historic and contemporary artwork. It's the nation's largest Latino arts institution and the only Latino museum accredited by the American Association of Museums.

## Project at a Glance:

- Viking designed, manufactured and installed the Model 238 cabinets - 18 on mobile carriages and 10 on static carriages.
- Cabinets were installed with the optional visual doors, a convenient option for Museum personnel.
- Each cabinet is designed to be mounted on mobile carriages. Viking worked closely with the mobile carriage supplier.
- 24 of the cabinets were equipped with six heavy-duty full width shelves each and four were configured with 1-1/2" high and 3-1/2" high full width drawers. Each cabinet has a magnetic fumigant pocket to hold desiccants for humidity control.
- Cabinet dimensions are 58-9/32" wide x 84" high x 30-3/8" deep.
- Cabinets are solid heavy-gauge steel, reinforced welded construction.
- Cabinets all feature Viking's unique closed-cell Elastomeric Seal™ around the cabinet door perimeters and WaterShield Cap™.

*Elastomeric Seal and WaterShield Cap are registered trademarks of Viking Metal.*

## Folk Art Storage at the National Museum of Mexican Art

To house their valuable folk art collection, the premier repository of Mexican art in the nation selected Viking Metal Cabinet Company.

Objects and figurines, bright and vibrant textiles, photography, documents and collectibles, all kinds of prints and drawings from hundreds of artists... The National Museum of Mexican Art (NMMA) is one of the largest such collections in the nation.

Located in Chicago, the Museum presents Mexican culture from ancient times to the present. It's a national leader and mentor for culturally grounded institutions and community based arts organizations.

### GROWING STRONG

In 2001, the Museum added state-of-the-art storage vaults and additional galleries to showcase its permanent collection of over 5,500 Mexican art objects, including more than 1000 folk art pieces. "We started the collection 21 years ago, casually collecting things that were donated.

It's grown from a handful to almost 6,000 items, with hundreds of pieces of folk art," said Rebecca Meyers, Registrar/Permanent Collection Director at the Museum. Artwork includes hand-made bark paper, papier-mâché, and beautiful and valuable ceramics — all extremely brittle.

The NMMA recently received a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services for new storage furniture. They needed a flexible system that could grow with their needs. They selected the cabinet of choice for many museums around the country, from Viking Metal.



Storage cabinets offer a unique closed-cell Elastomeric™ Seal around the perimeters. Elastomers are highly elastic, and can be stretched and deformed and quickly revert to their original state. They provide an excellent shock absorbing seal for each cabinet. A WaterShield Cap™ protects against water from above, as well.



The cabinets are positioned on a mobile carriage system in the Museum's storage areas.



One of Viking's most popular line of cabinets, the large-capacity Model 238 offers a full 68.9 cubic feet of storage, remarkable versatility, and can house virtually any type of collection.



Viking's Model 238 cabinets offer adjustable shelving to accommodate different size art pieces. Each is 84" high with a variety of options for handles, doors and latching systems.

*Folk Art Storage at the National Museum of Mexican Art, continued*

### THE VIKING ADVANTAGE

Viking Metal Cabinet Company is in Chicago, and is a premier national manufacturer of custom metal fabrications. The company has an excellent record of serving museums, universities, libraries and Fortune 100 companies.

Viking offers a full line of museum cabinetry for conservation, preservation, and archival storage. At NMMA, Viking specified the Model 238 cabinet; 18 of them placed on mobile carriages and the other 10 on static carriages along each sidewall. Cabinets were installed with visual doors so curators could easily recognize the contents.

### A LARGE-CAPACITY & VERSATILE SOLUTION

The Model 238 is in Viking's line of full height conservation cabinets. They're available with a wide range of options, so they are an ideal solution for a multitude of diverse collections. Because they are so versatile, they are one of Viking's most popular cabinets:

- Large capacity capability with a full 68.9 cubic feet of storage.
- Exceptional craftsmanship and a remarkably flexible design for virtually any type of collection.
- Easy to customize with options that include visual doors, locking handles, vents with sliding closures, heavy-duty shelving and Easy-glide drawers.

### BRINGING THE COLLECTION HOME

The NMMA's folk art had been kept in offsite storage. With the new storage systems, the Museum was able to bring most of the folk art collection back into the museum (some very large pieces are still in storage).

"We hadn't seen many of these items for more than a decade," said Meyers. "Most were stored in cardboard boxes in tissue,

styrofoam peanuts and bubble wrap. We used to rely on photos in a database to reference it all. Now we can free them of their wrappings, and just look in the new cabinets and find what we need."

### EXTRA CARE NEEDED

"We planned to maximize storage, and wanted a compact shelving system with a rail system that would give us an additional aisle of cabinets," said Meyers. "We didn't want to create a platform, because you don't want to move pieces like fragile ceramics on sloped surfaces."

The Museum had begun building storage facilities, but the contractor went out of business. "We were stuck with a poured cement floor with rails in it. So we worked with Viking and the carriage system supplier, and they meshed very well together."

Another consideration for curators was keeping artwork free of dust and not exposing it to any volatile chemicals. Viking manufacturing materials don't off-gas any chemicals from the cabinets, shelving or coatings, pointed out Meyers. So there are no fumes or volatile organic compounds (VOCs) to accumulate.

"These are things I need to take care of," said Rebecca Meyers. "And we're very happy with Viking Metal Cabinet Company."

“Our building was originally a public bath, then boat storage, then a gallery space and the Museum. But there was never any space to store artwork. So often storage is an afterthought, so you put stuff under stairwells, etc. It sure is nice to have a contemporary, flexible system for all these materials.”

Rebecca Meyers, Registrar/  
Permanent Collection Director,  
National Museum of Mexican Art

