



A LIVING
MEMORIAL
TO THE
HOLOCAUST

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EXHIBITIONS AT TWO JEWISH MUSEUMS HONORED BY THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

Daring to Resist: Jewish Defiance in the Holocaust
at the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust
in New York and Noah's Ark at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles

NEW YORK, NY – In an announcement made yesterday at the annual meeting held in Denver, Colorado, *Daring to Resist: Jewish Defiance in the Holocaust* and *Noah's Ark* were named as two of the four national honorees of the Excellence in Exhibition Competition organized by the American Association of Museums. Citing the exhibition's content, the judges felt that *Daring to Resist* told a difficult and important story. The judges were very impressed with the innovative and interactive design of *Noah's Ark*.

This is the second time the Museum of Jewish Heritage has entered the competition and the second award for the Museum. The Museum's first award was for *Ours to Fight For: American Jews in the Second World War* in 2005. A traveling version of *Ours to Fight For* is on view at the Jewish Museum of Maryland through July 27.

"Visitors, survivors, and critics alike have had a strong and gratifying response to *Daring to Resist*. We have succeeded in changing the way the public views the conduct of Jews during the Holocaust, and we are honored that a jury of museum professionals has recognized this accomplishment," Museum of Jewish Heritage Director Dr. David G. Marwell said.

The competition recognizes outstanding achievement across all types of museums, zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, and any other type of non-commercial institutions offering exhibitions to the public. This year 33 museums entered the competition — more than ever before. The other winners include the Science Museum of Minnesota for *Race: Are We So Different?*; and the Mariners' Museum in Virginia for *Iron Clad Revolution* in the *U.S.S. Monitor Center*.

The Museum of Jewish Heritage and the Skirball are both members of the Council of American Jewish Museums. Through training of museum staff and volunteers, information exchange, and advocacy on behalf of Jewish museums, CAJM assists its institutional and individual members as they educate and inspire diverse audiences on all aspects of Jewish culture and history.

Joanne Marks Kauvar, Executive Director of The Council of American Jewish Museums (CAJM), states, "CAJM proudly congratulates the Museum of Jewish Heritage and the Skirball Cultural Center for their well-deserved recognition by the American Association of Museums. That two of the four AAM awardees are CAJM members is a reflection of the significant role Jewish museums have assumed in American cultural life. CAJM's 80 institutional members are deeply inspired by the accomplishments of these two preeminent peers."

"We're honored that the American Association of Museums has recognized *Noah's Ark* at the Skirball," comments Dr. Uri D. Herscher, Founding President and CEO of the Skirball Cultural Center. "In developing this new interactive destination, we were intent on further fulfilling our inclusive mission to provide a tent of welcome where visitors of all generations and from all walks of life feel at home and part of a community." Herscher continues, "The exhibition's whimsical design helps engage children and families in the timely and universal lessons of the ancient flood story: that we must collaborate to survive and thrive, learn from the past, and appreciate the gift of new beginnings."

(More)

The Excellence in Exhibition competition is a joint project of the following AAM Standing Professional Committees: Curators Committee (CURCOM), the Committee on Audience Research and Evaluation (CARE), the Education Committee (EDCOM) and the National Association of Museum Exhibitions (NAME).

About the Museum of Jewish Heritage and *Daring to Resist*

The brave act of defying the Nazis — whether with words or with actions — is the subject of *Daring to Resist*, which the *New York Times* called, “an important exhibition.” The exhibit will be on view through September 1, 2008.

During the Holocaust, Jews throughout Europe, through individual and collective acts of resistance, sought to undermine the Nazi goal of the annihilation of the Jewish people. Jews engaged in a range of resistance activities with the aim of preserving Jewish life and dignity despite unimaginable difficulties. Their efforts powerfully refute the popular perception that Jews were passive victims. Through testimony, archival footage, and authentic artifacts, the exhibition helps visitors to understand the dilemmas that Jews faced under impossible circumstances. Whether praying clandestinely, documenting the experiences of Jews in the ghettos, or taking up arms to fight, these responses took many forms, but each and every one was a courageous act of resistance.

This exhibition is made possible through major funding from: Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, the Elizabeth Meyer Lorentz Fund of The New York Community Trust, the Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, as well as generous leadership gifts from: Frank and Cesia Blachman, Patti Askwith Kenner and Family, George and Adele Klein, Ingeborg and Ira Leon Rennert, and Shalom and Varda Yoran. Additional support from: The David Berg Foundation, Nancy Fisher, Robert I. Goldman Foundation, The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, L'Oréal USA, Righteous Persons Foundation, and Gil and Claire (Israelit) Zweig. Media sponsorship provided by The Jewish Week.

Since its doors opened in September 1997, more than one million men, women, and children from around the world have visited the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, and have left with a better understanding of the 20th-century Jewish experience. The three-floor Core Exhibition at the Museum goes beyond recounting the horrors of the Holocaust. Its mission is to educate people of all ages and backgrounds about the broad tapestry of Jewish life over the past century – before, during, and after the Holocaust. It transcends religious, ethnic, and denominational differences to raise to a new level of human comprehension the horror and tragedies of the Holocaust, while at the same time celebrating the richness of Jewish culture and the strength of the Jewish people.

Other current special exhibitions include *Sosúa: A Refuge for Jews in the Dominican Republic* and “*To Return to the Land...*” *Paul Goldman's Photographs of the Birth of Israel*. The Museum also offers visitors a vibrant public program schedule in its Edmond J. Safra Hall and is home to Andy Goldsworthy's memorial *Garden of Stones*, as well as James Carpenter's *Reflection Passage*, Gift of The Gruss Lipper Foundation. The Museum receives general operating support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and is a founding member of the *Museums of Lower Manhattan*.

About the Skirball Cultural Center and *Noah's Ark*

One of the world's most dynamic Jewish cultural institutions, the Skirball Cultural Center, located in Los Angeles, opened to the public in 1996. Its mission is to explore the connections between 4,000 years of Jewish heritage and the vitality of American democratic ideals. The Skirball seeks to welcome and inspire people of every ethnic and cultural identity, to build a society in which all of us can feel at home. In addition to Noah's Ark, the Skirball features an extraordinary museum—with the third largest collection of Judaica in the world—changing exhibitions, engaging music, theater, comedy, film, family and literary programs, classes, Zeidler's Café and Audrey's Museum Store—all in a hillside setting designed by Moshe Safdie.

Noah's Ark at the Skirball, the institution's new children's and family destination, designed for generations to enjoy together, opened to the public in June 2007 and will remain on view permanently. Inspired by the ancient flood story of Noah's Ark, which has parallels in hundreds of cultures around the world, this indoor and outdoor attraction offers a multi-sensory, interactive experience. Visitors board a gigantic wooden ark to play, climb, build and collaborate alongside handcrafted, fanciful animals—from life-sized elephants and giraffes to snow leopards, flamingos and iguanas. Together families imagine taking an ark voyage from stormy world to dry land and delight in working with one another for a brighter, more hopeful future.

