



Edmond J. Safra Plaza
36 Battery Place, New York, NY 10280
(646) 437-4200 www.mjhnyc.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 8, 2009

Contacts: Betsy Aldredge/ (646) 437-4337/ baldredge@mjhnyc.org
Jamie Kenney / (646) 437-4339/ jkenney@mjhnyc.org
Abby R. Spilka / (646) 437-4333 / aspilka@mjhnyc.org

New Interactive Heritage Installation *Keeping History Center* Opening in November at the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

NEW YORK, NY—The **Museum of Jewish Heritage — A Living Memorial to the Holocaust** is opening the **Keeping History Center**, which presents the Museum’s ideas and collections in a state-of-the-art, interactive, digital visitor experience. This is the first permanent addition to the Museum since the Robert M. Morgenthau Wing was opened in 2003. **The Center will open to the public on November 6.**

The Keeping History Center, which is being designed by **C&G Partners** and **Potion**, will occupy the space at the culmination of the special exhibition hall, a 2,200-square-foot area that has panoramic views of New York Harbor and the Statue of Liberty. Perhaps more than any other space in the building, the Keeping History Center is the link between the Museum’s subject matter and its powerful symbolic neighbors.

“Our Core Exhibition is a compelling and powerful, personal experience, but visitors need opportunities to actively participate in the stories it tells,” said Ivy L. Barsky, Deputy Director of the Museum. “The Keeping History Center will maintain the Museum’s groundbreaking approach of transmitting history through individual stories and voices. The Center will encourage visitors to add their own voices, and ‘curate’ experiences for themselves based on their own curiosity, interests, and family history,” Barsky said.

About the Keeping History Center

The Center will be created in two phases. With content accessible via multiple physical structures including touch tables, dynamic databases, electronic books, and MP3 players, each unit will encourage social interaction among visitors — teachers, students, families, and the general public — as they learn and create experiences together using state-of-the-art interactive tools.

Phase I

The first part, which will open to the public on November 6, includes *Voices of Liberty* and a virtual exploration of **Andy Goldsworthy’s *Garden of Stones***.

Voices of Liberty is a soundscape made up of diverse voices reacting to arriving in America for the first time. While overlooking the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, visitors will walk through the exhibition as they listen to the moving stories provided via an iPod Touch and triggered automatically by an electronic (RFID) system. The voices include Holocaust survivors who sought refuge here in the 1940s after having lost everything in Europe, Soviet *refuseniks* arriving here in the 1980s seeking religious freedom, and other individuals with pertinent stories. The emotional, moving testimony is culled from the USC Shoah Foundation Institute, the Museum’s collections, and other sources. It will include the capacity for visitors to add their own responses to seeing the harbor, or their own stories of arrival in the United States.

The other exhibit in Phase I explores **Andy Goldsworthy’s sculpture, *Garden of Stones***, the Museum’s memorial garden, which demonstrates how elements of nature can survive in seemingly impossible places. As a living memorial, the Garden helps remember those who perished and is a tribute to the struggle for survival,

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experienced by those who endured. This contemplative space is meant to be revisited and experienced differently over time as the Garden matures, and viewed as well as cared for by future generations.

The interactive, entitled **Garden of Stones *Timekeeper***, uses a time-lapse camera to record each moment in the sculpture's life. A dial on the display's interface allows visitors to move the screen image backwards and forwards, in order to watch the trees' growth through time and across seasons: from bare branches to lush leaves. Visitors will also be able to watch footage of Goldsworthy as he creates each element of the memorial.

Phase II

In 2011, the Keeping History Center will also include ***Mining the Collections*** and ***Family History***.

Mining the Collections will allow visitors to explore not only the stories and artifacts found in the Core Exhibition, but also objects, documents, photographs, and video testimonies that are usually unavailable to Museum visitors. Small "curated" digital exhibits will be created by staff and visitors alike. The program will allow for a variety of constituents to contribute their ideas and impressions about the subject matter.

Family History consists of personal timelines, extracted from the life histories featured in the Museum's book *To Life: 36 Stories of Memory and Hope* (a volume of powerful artifacts and stories from the Core Exhibition) as well as from JewishGen, the largest database of Jewish genealogy on the web. Visitors will contribute their own relevant data to the network. The result will resemble a tapestry that is interactive and searchable. Visitors are welcome to use touch screens to learn more about a specific individual, period in time, or country. This exploration, in the context of Jewish life before, during, and after the Holocaust, will offer individuals and families a starting point for piecing together their own history and how it relates to a larger historical continuum.

The Keeping History Center, dedicated by Morton Pickman in memory of Morris and Fannie Pickman, is made possible by a generous grant from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

About C&G Partners

C&G Partners was founded by Steff Geissbuhler, Keith Helmetag, Jonathan Alger, and Emanuela Frigerio. The partners' cumulative history includes the creation of some of the world's most recognizable experiences, images, spaces, and icons. Planning and design of exhibitions and environments is a particular specialty. Recently, they have completed major projects for Griffith Observatory, National Parks of New York Harbor, the Museum of American Finance, Voice of America, New York University, and the National Oceanographic & Atmospheric Administration. Currently, the firm is working with the World Trade Center Memorial Foundation, the New York Yankees, the Signature Theatre Company, American Express, and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, to name a few.

The firm employs an interdisciplinary team of exhibit designers, architects, graphic and signage designers, strategists, and interactive designers. In 2007, C&G Partners was a finalist for the National Design Award given by the Smithsonian. In 2006, partner Steff Geissbuhler was honored with the medal of the American Institute of Graphic Arts, the highest honor of the profession.

Jonathan Alger, a founding partner at C&G said, "C&G Partners is honored to be of service to the Museum of Jewish Heritage. We believe the Keeping History Center will be a new kind of museum space, an unprecedented, evolving, all-digital gallery. It will virtually link visitors, curators, and the collection, all in a physical space that itself carries immense potential."

Praise for C&G Partners

- “the [Griffith Observatory] exhibitions by C&G Partners rather courageously turn their back on contemporary pressures in the museum world ... all the exhibits remain deliberately human centered; they encourage observation and are about observation.” - *The New York Times*
- The [Star Spangled Banner Exhibit] center piece of the renovated museum — the American flag that inspired Francis Scott Key to write his famous poem — has never looked more magnificent. It’s inspiring as it sits behind a 35-foot glass wall in a theaterlike space, dimly lit to recall ‘dawn’s early light.’ *The Washington Post*

About Potion

Founded by graduates of the MIT Media Laboratory, Potion is a design and technology firm specializing in interactive installations. Potion's strength lies in the creation of aesthetic solutions that utilize the most recent technologies available. By seamlessly integrating digital processes into physical structures, Potion enables the design of spaces that inform, educate, and entertain. Their process is to translate clients' needs into dynamic, visual systems that can be presented at any scale. These solutions can take the form of a contemplative, interactive table or a stunning, five-story façade. At Potion, every surface is a potential display, every object a potential interface, and every gesture a potential command.

Potion’s clients include the National Museum of American History, the Museum at Eldridge Street, the University of Pennsylvania, the National World War I Museum, Clo Wine Bar, and Adour at the St. Regis.

“Potion is excited to be involved in the creation of the new Keeping History Center,” said Jared Schiffman, a partner at Potion. “The historic setting is a natural stage for connecting the past to the present and future through the combined effects of design and technology.”

Praise for Potion

- “With the presence of online networking so prevalent in contemporary society, it is sometimes hard to remember that technology has a place within physical space as well. Potion Design, an interactive installation design firm based in New York City, aims to alter that perception by designing, building, and installing largescale, social, interactive experiences.” - *Behance Magazine*
- “[The Museum at Eldridge Street is] engaging and elegant, a wonderful blend of interactive design and historic architecture.” - *Communication Arts* magazine

About the Museum of Jewish Heritage

The Museum’s three-floor Core Exhibition educates people of all ages and backgrounds about the rich tapestry of Jewish life over the past century—before, during, and after the Holocaust. Special exhibitions include *Beyond Swastika and Jim Crow: Jewish Refugee Scholars at Black Colleges*, on view through January 4 and *The Morgenthau: A Legacy of Service*, opening on November 16. The Museum offers visitors a vibrant public program schedule in its Edmond J. Safra Hall. It is also 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*.

