

Maltz Museum Sets Up *Project Mah Jongg* Community Preview and Tournament Just a Few of the Special Events Planned

(January 12, 2012) Cleveland, OH - Clever marketers claimed mah jongg dated back to Confucius and other regal origins – though the game we know actually took shape in the nineteenth century. More than 100 years later, the game made its trek to America where it has been part of the country’s gaming culture since 1922. Now in 2012, the game will be featured at the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage as it presents *Project Mah Jongg*.

Project Mah Jongg, an exhibition exploring the traditions, history, and meaning of the game, was created by the Museum of Jewish Heritage — A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in New York City. The exhibition was wildly popular and a traveling version was developed. Its only scheduled Midwest appearance will be January 24 to April 22, 2012 at the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage in Cleveland, Ohio, then it will go to the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles.

The colorful and entertaining exhibition includes original artwork by Christoph Niemann, Isaac Mizrahi, Maira Kalman and Bruce McCall; beautiful early game sets made of bone, Bakelite, and bamboo; vintage advertisements and household items, Chinoiserie, and instruction materials.

The Maltz Museum has added vintage mah jongg sets and rule cards from area Clevelanders, period costumes on loan from the Kent State University Museum, and a short film by area filmmakers Amy Wasserstrom Cummings and John Cummings. Titled *May the Tiles Be with You: Cleveland’s Love Affair with Mah Jongg*, the documentary records the mah jongg memories of Clevelanders. Visitors to the Museum’s website can submit their own stories about the game. Music for the exhibition has been provided by the Cleveland Chinese Music Ensemble.

The exhibition kicks off on Sunday, January 22 with a Private Opening and Chinese New Year’s Celebration. The following day, the Museum welcomes all to a Preview Community Event before *Project Mah Jongg* opens to the public on Tuesday, January 24. February brings the first Maltz Museum Mah Jongg Tournament. That month starts the first of three cross-cultural events with Li Wah restaurant in Cleveland’s Asia Plaza. Visitors will tour the Museum and eat Jewish delicacies while eastsiders spend the afternoon at Li Wah playing mahj and enjoying a light lunch.

Throughout the exhibition’s run, visitors will hear the sound of tiles clacking and people laughing as the Maltz Museum has added several game tables that can be reserved for play, and will be offering lessons every afternoon in February. Among the other public programs:

- screenings of *Mah-Jongg: The Tiles That Bind* and *Shanghai Ghetto*
- a reading of *A Brief History of Mah Jongg* - an original one-act play written to accompany the exhibition by local playwright Faye Sholiton
- an afternoon of games and art at Family Fun Day in February
- an evening of moonlight, music, mahj munchies and the ever famous mahj-tini (late March)



MALTZ MUSEUM OF JEWISH HERITAGE

Docent-led tours can be reserved daily for adult and student groups of ten or more, with discounts for groups of 15+ (reservations required). Packs of 35 or more tickets are available at a discounted price. Players Passes will be available for \$20 for those who want to visit the Museum unlimited times through the run of the exhibition. Pass holders will have the same benefits as Museum Members (store discounts, discounts on public programs).

The Museum Store, open whenever the Museum is, will carry mah jongg sets, jewelry, and related merchandise, in addition to the exhibition's companion publication *Mah Jongg: Crak, Bam, Dot*, edited by Abbott Miller and Patsy Tarr. The store offers free gift wrapping and free close-in parking with handicapped and alternative vehicle spaces; wheelchairs can be reserved in advance. The Museum is a stunning venue for a range of private events with exclusive viewing of the exhibition; details and pricing on request.

Learn more about the Maltz Museum at www.maltzmuseum.org, 216-593-0575, become a friend on Facebook, or follow us on Twitter @MaltzMuseum. To learn more about *Project Mah Jongg*, visit the official site at www.projectmahjongg.com

This exhibition is made possible through the generosity of the National Mah Jongg League. Additional support provided by Sylvia Hassenfeld and the Twice Arts Foundation. Exhibit design by Abbott Miller, Pentagram.

Local sponsors include BNY Mellon Wealth Management, Margaret Wong & Associates, Pearl of the Orient, Dollar Bank, and Li Wah. Media sponsor Cleveland Jewish News.

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About the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage: An American Story

Opened in 2005, the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage introduces visitors to the beauty and diversity of that heritage in the context of the American experience, promotes an understanding of Jewish history, religion and culture and builds bridges of tolerance and understanding with people of all religions, races, cultures and ethnic backgrounds. It includes An American Story, tracing Ohio's immigrant history and heritage, and The Temple-Tifereth Israel Gallery, an internationally-recognized collection of Judaica. One admission fee includes unlimited access, and all levels of membership include unlimited admission.

The Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage is generously funded by Cuyahoga County residents through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture.

About the Museum of Jewish Heritage

The Museum of Jewish Heritage — A Living Memorial to the Holocaust is located on the waterfront at 36 Battery Place in Manhattan's Battery Park City. Through groundbreaking award-winning exhibitions, world class education, and public programs, the Museum honors those who died by celebrating their lives—cherishing the civilization that they built and the vibrant Jewish community that is their legacy today, and learning from their history.

Crak! Bam! Dot! It's *Project Mah Jongg* Hot New York Exhibition Will Open at the Maltz Museum January 2012

(November 08, 2011, Cleveland, OH) - Enter a room where mah jongg is being played and the first thing you'll hear are the sounds of happiness – laughter and chatter, tiles clacking, “mah jongg!” cried out by an triumphant winner. Whether in Asia, where the game has been their most popular for decades, or in libraries, bookstores, community centers, country clubs, bookstores, grocery stores or homes around Ohio, the game is fascinating and energizing. People play anywhere four can fit around a card table.

Mah jongg was popularized in America in the 1920s when a Standard Oil executive began importing sets in bulk. Companies such as Abercrombie & Fitch, Milton Bradley, and Parker Brothers further fueled interest by selling affordable sets across America, setting a craze in motion. Later, when many Jewish families moved into the suburbs, the game became a cherished afternoon social activity among suburban women not yet in the workforce in great numbers.

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- screening of the documentary short *The Tiles That Bind*;
- reading of an original one-act play being written to accompany the exhibition by local playwright Faye Sholiton, *A Brief History of Mah Jongg*;
- an evening with local celebrity chef Doug Katz and others.

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