

From: Children's Museum of Manhattan

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For Immediate Release

**“AMERICA TO ZANZIBAR: MUSLIM CULTURES NEAR AND FAR”
EXHIBITION AT CHILDREN’S MUSEUM OF MANHATTAN
EXTENDED DUE TO PUBLIC DEMAND**

*Innovative, Interactive Exhibit Celebrating the Diversity of Muslim Cultures across
NYC and the World to Tour Cultural Institutions across the United States*

New York, NY – Feb. 13, 2017 – The Children’s Museum of Manhattan today announced it has extended the run of its *America to Zanzibar: Muslim Cultures Near and Far*, a groundbreaking, interactive exhibit for children and families that explores the diversity of Muslim cultures in New York City, the U.S. and abroad. The multimedia exhibit and programming at the Children’s Museum (212 West 83rd Street) showcases the cultural expressions of various Muslim communities around the world through age-appropriate experiences with art, architecture, travel, trade, design and more.

More than 350,000 visitors have viewed *America to Zanzibar* since it opened on February 13, 2016, making it one of the most popular exhibits ever hosted by the Museum. It will be on display at the Children’s Museum through December after which it will travel to cultural institutions across the United States.

“New York’s Muslim residents make up a vital part of our city’s rich and diverse communities, and we’re proud to have this exhibit in one of our city’s important cultural resources,” said Bill de Blasio, mayor of New York City. “With *America to Zanzibar*, children will have the chance to learn about Muslim cultures in an engaging and thoughtful way. We only grow stronger when we embrace and celebrate the multitude of cultural backgrounds that make up New York City.”

“We are thrilled at the public’s reception for *America to Zanzibar*,” noted Andrew Ackerman, the Children’s Museum’s executive director. “The Museum is committed to offering children and families joyous, educational experiences that celebrate the extraordinary diversity of our city, our country, and our world every day. We are also pleased that families across the country will be able to experience the exhibit for themselves beginning in 2018.”

“*America to Zanzibar* offers a compelling introduction to the great variety of Muslim visual art, architecture, and cultural experiences in the United States and globally,” said Bro Adams, the National Endowment for the Humanities chairman. “Guided by leading humanities scholars, this exhibit reflects the Children’s Museum of Manhattan’s ongoing commitment to exploring

international history and culture, and exemplifies NEH's support for educational exhibits on world cultures."

The 3,000-square-foot exhibit is the fourth in the museum's Global Cultural Exhibition Series, following exhibits about the cultures of Ancient Greece, China, and Japan. The series celebrates the diversity of cultural expression across our interdependent world. An important part of the museum's ongoing commitment to nurturing the next generation of global citizens, the series offers family-friendly, hands-on experiences designed to engage the senses and appeal to a wide variety of learning styles.

The exhibit

The exhibit, designed for children ages 2-10 and their families, consists of five major sections: an American Home area, a Global Marketplace, a Trade Routes area, an Architecture area, and a Courtyard.

The American Home area is a contemporary living room filled with objects donated by American Muslims. Visitors explore the wide variety of American and New York City Muslims' stories through their unique objects, clothing, art and books. They can also learn to write "My name is..." in 21 of the languages spoken by New York Muslims, view artistic works by emerging local American Muslim artists, and follow the history of Muslims in the U.S. through a visual timeline.

The Global Marketplace features stalls from around the world brimming with sounds, smells, and goods, where children can pretend to buy and sell spices from Egypt, ceramics from Turkey and rugs from Morocco. They can also weigh their fresh catch at the Zanzibari fish market, smell Indonesian fruits, serve Tajik tea, and design outfits inspired by the West African tailors on 116th Street.

Visitors learn about the exchange of culture across continents and centuries in the Trade Routes area. Children can climb aboard a replica of a multi-level Indian Ocean *dhow* (boat) and experiment with navigation techniques, travel to various ports, learn to bargain, and unload goods from around the world. Below deck, they can experience a multisensory exploration of the *dhow's* cargo. Children can also decorate a Pakistani truck, then hop in the cab and embark on a pretend trip through the Western Himalayas. They can also climb on top of a life-size camel and journey across the desert.

The Architecture area virtually transports visitors into a series of magnificent, international mosque architectural styles. Breathtaking panoramic images are projected onto a 21-foot curved screen and explore the wide range of aesthetic styles from Asia to Africa and America. Families can also try their hand at drafting structures complete with domes and arches, while gaining insight into architectural traditions from around the Muslim world.

The Courtyard features warm light flooding through a lattice roof. Families can explore key elements of design, water and geometric patterns that are central to a traditional Muslim courtyard. At a central fountain, visitors can sample verses from renowned Muslim poets and share how they would make the world a better place—one drop at a time. Children are also encouraged to make music with digital instruments and compete in a guessing game with authentic objects that illustrate the significance of geometric patterns in Muslim cultures.

America to Zanzibar features a selection of artifacts from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's renowned collection of Islamic art, objects from The Hispanic Society Museum and Library, and original art by five contemporary artists. The exhibit also includes music by five local musicians.

A range of workshops and programs will take place throughout the exhibit's run. Participation is free with admission.

Over the past five years, the Children's Museum has worked with an international network of advisors from academia, research, civil society, government and the arts in support of *America to Zanzibar*.

Funding has been provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, MetLife Foundation, Institute of Museum and Library Services, Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, Open Society Foundations, The Violet Jabara Charitable Trust, El-Hibri Foundation, The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, Goldman Sachs Gives, Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center, National Endowment for the Arts, Maison de l'Artisan in Morocco, the Children's Museum of Manhattan's Board of Directors and scores of individuals.

Support for the Children's Museum of Manhattan has been provided by the City of New York under the leadership of Mayor Bill de Blasio and Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl. In addition, citywide program funding has been provided by the New York City Council under the leadership of Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito.

After its run at the Children's Museum, the exhibit will travel to other cultural institutions around the country. The first stop on tour in early 2018 will be the Creative Discovery Museum in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Other venues will include Please Touch Museum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 2019.

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About Children's Museum of Manhattan

The Children's Museum of Manhattan – a citywide resource for children, families and educators – creates experiences at the intersection of the arts, sciences and humanities to help children thrive at home, at school and in the community. Based on West 83rd Street, the Museum creates hands-on learning environments, programs, and curricula built on evidence-based early research and the museum sciences. In addition to its commitment to delight and educate visitors, the Museum offers resources and strategies for parents, caregivers and educators to help children become lifelong learners. Thousands more New Yorkers also benefit from the Museum's offerings through its outreach programs at schools, Head Start centers, shelters, libraries and hospitals. www.cmom.org