



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
Humanities

DIVISION OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Narrative and Walkthrough Sample of a Successful Implementation Application

This document contains the narrative and walkthrough of a previously funded grant application for Exhibitions Implementation. Every successful application is different, and this application many have been prepared to meet a slightly different set of guidelines. Each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations, as well as the requirements in the current notice of funding opportunity (NOFO). Prospective applicants should consult the current Public Humanities Projects NOFOs at <https://www.neh.gov/grants/public/public-humanities-projects> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Public Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

The attached application is incomplete. Portions may have been deleted to protect the privacy interests of an individual, and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information, and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: *Muslim Cultures*

Institution: Children's Museum of Manhattan

Project Director: Andrew Ackerman

Grant Program: Public Humanities Projects: Exhibitions Implementation,
Traveling

**Children's Museum of Manhattan - Muslim Cultures
National Endowment for the Humanities**

NARRATIVE

Nature of the Request

The Children's Museum of Manhattan (CMOM)—a leading provider of cultural and educational experiences for families since 1973—respectfully requests a grant of \$400,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to implement an ambitious and important new museum exhibition and educational programming series entitled, *Muslim Cultures*. The goal of *Muslim Cultures* is to expand Americans' knowledge of the diversity of Muslim cultures and the role of Muslim societies as active participants in the global flow of people, ideas and materials. This project will be the first of its kind to explore the breadth and depth of Muslim cultures worldwide for a family audience in the United States.

CMOM is aware that *Muslim Cultures* is an ambitious project. In order to properly address the complex and nuanced challenge of creating an exhibition and accompanying educational programming series for families on what many consider charged subject matter, CMOM is requesting the maximum award amount from the NEH to support the development of a dynamic and interactive exhibition. The request to the NEH is for a two-year period of final design, exhibit fabrication and installation, educational program development and evaluation (August 2013-July 2015). The funding will follow a privately funded preliminary planning phase that began in 2010 and an NEH funded planning phase from October 2011 through September 2012.

There is a need for a thoughtful, educational and research-based platform by which families can better understand Muslim cultures—an understanding that continues to grow in importance. In developing this project, CMOM recognizes that it faces a twofold challenge: to combine an extraordinary range of humanities themes into a coherent story on the diversity of Muslim life *and* to make that story accessible to families and children. As an expert in translating complex subject matter for family audiences, CMOM will utilize its extensive experience gained through the development of two previous cultural exhibitions – *Monkey King: A Journey to China* (2004-present) and the NEH funded *Gods, Myths and Mortals: Discover Ancient Greece* (2007-present) – to create a traveling exhibition and series of complementary educational programs that explore the ways in which cultural traditions, faith and history have shaped the lives of Muslims. While the exhibition will certainly include a presentation of the tenets of Islam, it will not interpret the faith. Instead, *Muslim Cultures* will utilize developmentally appropriate interactive activities, as well as examples from art, architecture, classic literature and objects of everyday life, to illustrate for families the breadth of Muslim cultures throughout history and from around the world—from China and Indonesia to the Middle East, Africa and North America.

The 3,000 sq. ft. exhibition will be designed for families and children ages 6-12, with interpretation and activities equally weighted for both children and adults. An important aspect of the exhibition will be information focused at parents, educators and other adult caregivers offering strategies on how to discuss the diverse, and often misunderstood, subject of Muslim cultures with children. The exhibit's accompanying public programs, partnerships with educational institutions and cultural venues, and online presence will help to foster dialogue and extend opportunities for learning beyond the physical experience of the exhibit. The exhibition is scheduled to open at CMOM in November 2014 and will show in New York City for at least two years allowing for evaluation, curriculum development and any modifications. Afterwards, the exhibition will travel to up to four select institutions in the United States.

An Advisory Committee of scholars, educators and Muslim community leaders have been essential to the refinement of potential exhibit concepts and to conducting extensive audience research and evaluation in order to develop the most compelling messages for *Muslim Cultures*' audiences. An implementation grant from the NEH would provide CMOM with the vital financial resources necessary to implement this exhibition, which will, in turn, help families learn about Muslim cultures and the diverse world in which we all live.

Introduction

The spread of Islam into cultures around the world is a story of important historical significance and an extraordinary example of how one core belief system adapts to diverse cultures and creates varied expressions of those beliefs. It is also the story of individuals making personal decisions about faith, culture and their place in the world. Indeed, the genesis of the proposed project is a reflection of the marriage of historical perspective and individual voices.

The long history of Muslim adaptation to diverse cultures is experiencing a new chapter in the United States, building on indigenous Muslim customs and traditions brought to the U.S. before slavery, continuing through a renaissance of Muslim life among African Americans and a relatively recent period of immigration by Muslims from across the globe to the United States. Indeed, it is said that New York City is the first city in history to include representative populations from every Muslim culture in the world¹, making it the ideal city to host the opening of a family friendly exhibition about the Muslim world.

The world's 1.5 billion Muslims² are diverse ethnically, culturally, politically and socioeconomically, and reside in a vast number of countries ranging from Indonesia to Morocco to the Netherlands and the United States. A 2011 study by the Pew Research Center estimates that upward of 2.6 million Muslims live in the United States today. Recent surveys confirm that many non-Muslim Americans have limited, if any, knowledge about the views, beliefs and values of Muslims. Not surprisingly, a recent Gallup Poll in the United States found that 39% of these Americans admit to feeling at least some prejudice toward Muslims. In *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think*, Muslims around the world say that having respect for Islam and Muslim people is the single biggest issue for the West to address to improve relations with their societies.³

The September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States widened the chasm between Muslims and the West and ushered in an era of cultural stereotypes, intense conflict and political tensions, fear, rhetoric and extremism, often overshadowing our ability to understand a complex world civilization. As outlined in the *Muslim Voices: Arts & Ideas* post-conference report, "The global faith community of Islam embraces a diversity of religious, artistic, and institutional cultures that bear no resemblance to the degrading stereotypes that have gained circulation since 9/11" and goes on to ask the critical question, "—but how are Americans supposed to realize this?"

In his September 2009 presentation to the Carnegie Corporation of New York, NEH Chairman Jim Leach underscored the importance of bridging knowledge deficits by expanding Americans' understanding of Muslims and investing in initiatives that foster cultural literacy. Indeed, the humanities and creative disciplines are integral to bridging this gap to the Muslim world by enabling and encouraging audiences to access Muslim history and modern identity through the lens of widespread achievements and rich tapestry of traditions.

Humanities Content

In the United States and abroad, there is a growing need to include young children and families in dialogue and understanding of the cultural richness of Muslim countries and Muslim life in America. By the age of nine, most of a child's attitudes about race and cultural identity have been formed⁴. With children spending a large percentage of their waking hours outside of school, museums and other cultural

¹ Dr. Louis. Cristillo (2009). *The Muslim Population of New York City*, Columbia University Teacher's College.

² Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (2009). *Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population*. Pew Research Center.

³ John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed (2007). *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think*. Gallup, Inc.

⁴ Derman-Sparks, L., Higa, C., & Sparks, B. (1980). *Children, race and racism: How race awareness develops*. Interracial Books for Children, Bulletin, 11(3&4).

institutions play a critical role in developing children's cultural literacy and influencing the attitudes and interests of families. In the Fall 2008 issue of Association of Children's Museums' *Hand to Hand*, Annemies Broekgaarden, Director of Tropenmuseum Junior, discussed the changing role of children's museums in an era of globalization and their unique capacity to use developmentally appropriate techniques to educate children to be "world citizens."⁵ Children's museums, Broekgaarden's article poignantly suggests, are uniquely situated as "drivers of global awareness," whose influence "grows proportionally along with their capacity to make a difference in society" in a rapidly changing world. Many noteworthy national and international exhibits and programs have presented various aspects of the history of Islam and contributions of the Muslim world to adult audiences. However, few efforts have been specifically designed to educate children or families, and those intended for families have focused on the unique experiences of a *singular* Muslim country or period in time.

The goals of CMOM's *Muslim Cultures* project is to expand Americans' knowledge of the diversity of Muslims worldwide; the role of Muslim societies as active participants in the global flow of people, ideas and materials; and to have a meaningful and robust impact on how the current and next generation of Americans understands and interacts with its Muslim neighbors at home and globally. The process to determine the content of this exhibition was influenced by: consultation with scholars and other content experts to identify important humanities themes, educational priorities and approaches; CMOM's extensive experience in creating interpretive exhibitions; extensive consultation with diverse Muslim communities in America; and original audience research to measure prior knowledge and interest.

The sheer geographic scope and long history of Muslim cultures creates an interpretive challenge on two fronts: the need to be inclusive of diverse cultures across time periods, coupled with the need to help visitors understand the chronological and geographic origin of the exhibition content at hand. To address these two fundamental issues, the exhibition focuses on humanities themes that transcend issues of time and place *and* serve to improve the visitors' understandings of Muslim cultural history and the American Muslim experience. Through the exhibition planning process, a consistent strategy that emerged was to use the diversity of the New York City Muslim community to connect the past and present and to demonstrate unity and diversity of Muslim cultures worldwide. In this context, the exhibition need not devote space and attention to every Muslim culture to be successful. Rather, success is rooted in enabling visitors to understand broad humanities themes that are applicable to all Muslim cultures and time periods. CMOM will employ a recurring graphic that uses maps and timelines keyed to well known historical events and personages (e.g. Christopher Columbus) to help the audience navigate the exhibition as it weaves through broad themes and history creating a coherent story on the diversity of Muslim life.

By matching themes, age appropriate interpretive approaches and humanities research methods, the exhibition will provide learning experiences that are contextual, personal and generate high-level conversations between children and adults. This exhibition will explore select aspects of Muslim cultures through an interdisciplinary approach drawing upon history, anthropology, language and linguistics, the history of art and architecture and oral history and ethnomusicology. These disciplines are connected by five humanities themes that permeate the exhibition:

1. Unity within the diversity of Muslim cultures.
2. Transmission and expression of culture through art, objects and stories in both the home and communities.
3. Interrelationship of cultures throughout time.
4. Blending of knowledge from across the world evidenced by the scientific and artistic achievements in the Muslim world.
5. Rational inquiry of self and others, as the past informs the present within the continuity of cultural diffusion and exchange.

⁵ ACM Membership Survey (2007) reports an estimated 30 million children and families visit children's museums annually <http://www.childrensmuseums.org/about/facts.htm>. Association of Children's Museums.

The exhibition layout and components have been designed and organized around these five humanities themes. Each theme area features a core exhibit component supplemented by smaller displays and interactives and each one uses different interpretive strategies to provide divergent learning opportunities. Exhibit components range from large-scale structures for children to climb on (Dhow boat) to detail-oriented and content specific interactives (Moroccan style weaving) to original artifacts and role play areas (in the *Home Life* area).

The five core installations are complemented by a “pathway” marked by the letters of the alphabet, with letters A to Z representing different topics in seemingly random placement throughout the exhibition. In fact, the letters are clustered around each of the core areas to reinforce a humanities theme and also provide the type of fun exploratory approach to museum exhibitions that is engaging for children. The alphabet letters enable visitors to choose their own path through the exhibition allowing for an independent experience. As renowned museum research expert Beverly Serrell has found, “In contrast to the linear arguments that can be built up in textbooks or essays, museum exhibits cannot be based on strong assumptions about what visitors have seen or understood in an exhibition prior to viewing any particular element within it. Visitors choose their own path through exhibitions and, even when they follow what may be the desired flow, they rarely view every element (Serrell, 1997).”⁶

The core exhibit areas correlated to the five humanities themes are:

- *A is for Architecture* which features the exterior and interior of diverse mosque and Muslim building structures to emphasize the unity within the diversity of the Muslim world.
- *H is for Home Life* and *S is for Souk* offering families two intimate settings to explore the transmission of culture through art, objects and stories; explore clothing and oral traditions found in the privacy of the home; and engage in trading regional art and objects in the marketplace.
- A large-scale, climb-on *D is for Dhow* boat that encourages families to explore the interrelationship of cultures over time as children climb aboard and journey with goods and ideas to trade.
- *E is for Elephant Clock* emphasizing the blending and sharing of knowledge from across the world evidenced by the scientific and artistic achievements in the Muslim world.
- *N is for Neighbor* which helps children engage in a rational inquiry of themselves and others. This section is composed of a mosaic tile installation that illuminates the diversity of Muslim peoples in the world reflected in the Muslim populations of the NYC metro area. The tiles, which weave like a ribbon throughout the exhibition, are designed and fabricated by local Muslim mosaic artist, Haifa Bint-Kadi and include tiles created by American Muslim families that speak to their distinctive American Muslim experience.

To further the theme of unity within diverse Muslim cultures, *I is for Islam* signage is presented at a few stations around the exhibit to illuminate the religion’s core beliefs, the history of its origin and its present-day population centers. An object case attached to the signage features examples of Qur’ans from around the world.

Deeper and more specific inquiries into particular Muslim cultures will be accomplished through public programs at the Museum and at partner institutions (e.g. Lincoln Center and the New York Public Library). For example, CMOM is planning a Festival of Indonesian Culture after the opening of the exhibition to feature music, art and literature from the largest Muslim country in the world. Similar celebrations of the arts and humanities will be presented for culture areas from other regions of Africa, Asia, the Middle East and in the United States, to examine new and emerging traditions. Such programs will include scholarly presentations for adult audiences, including educators.

CMOM views the effort to create *Muslim Cultures* through the lens of an emerging body of research that points towards the necessity for young children to develop “global competence” in order to fully

⁶ Objects of Learning, Objects of Talk: Changing Minds in Museums article by Gaea Leinhardt & Kevin Crowley, Learning Research & Development Center at University of Pittsburgh

participate in the increasingly interdependent global society of the 21st century and the role the humanities play in providing young children with a global education. Susan Nall Bales, author of “How Americans Think About the World,” points out that in the United States, international education is seen as a luxury that is only addressed at the level of higher education. In order for American children to thrive in the 21st century global economy, cultural competence must become a fundamental part of every child’s *early* learning experience to complement efforts addressed at an older age. In the 21st century, raising children as global citizens will prove necessary on many fronts – from solving global concerns about the environment to preventing international conflict. Given this reality, the development of critical thinking analytical skills and multidimensional worldviews inherent in the study of humanities will make critical difference to such efforts. The importance of emphasizing a global education for children has been a core strategy for CMOM in previous cultural exhibitions (*Monkey King: A Story from China* and *Gods, Myths and Mortals: Discover Ancient Greece*) and has driven the development of *Muslim Cultures*.

For children, the humanities themes will be based on first-rate scholarship but need not be presented in esoteric terms. Indeed, the approach is to engage families in the process of inquiry using humanities’ methods of exploration, comparison and use of original resources to gain new knowledge and understandings, through which the core themes emerge. For adults, the exhibition seeks to help them understand how the humanities are essential learning tools to help children develop the intellectual and analytical tools necessary to be prepared for the 21st century global society. In addition, programs and online resources will provide adults with strategies to discuss media coverage of the Muslim world and ways to understand people from diverse cultures.

Project Formats

CMOM’s past cultural exhibitions and programs have shown that children are able to develop an understanding and appreciation for new perceptions about other cultures through developmentally appropriate interactive activities. In developing and producing major interpretive exhibitions about Chinese and Greek cultures, CMOM conducted extensive research on cultural programming in other museums, gathered audience research through subject specific focus groups with families and, upon their conclusion, received summative evaluations on their ability to educate children on cultural topics. CMOM will use a number of project formats successful in these past exhibits and introduce exciting new technology to conquer the challenges of time, geography and unknown cultures for families allowing them to grasp important humanities themes and knowledge in *Muslim Cultures*.

Many visitors will experience *Muslim Cultures* as part of a general visit to CMOM, hereby providing a unique opportunity for CMOM to reach new audiences who often self select not to go to history or art museums. The exhibition arrangement will combine interesting content, a sense of adventure, challenging tasks and opportunities to advance problem-solving skills. The use of new technology will enable CMOM to transport families to times and places in immersive experiences that dramatically challenge preconceived notions and provide opportunity for deeper illumination of humanities content for adults. The combination of techniques will allow different entry points for learning, juxtaposing traditional interpretive techniques, original artifacts and new technology to create the greatest learning potential for CMOM’s large and exceptionally diverse audience.

Original Artifacts: Primary sources such as texts and artifacts will be central to visitors’ exploration, providing opportunities for the construction of research-based knowledge. Analysis of artifacts will be a gateway for research that sharpens children’s reasoning skills and enthusiasm for the humanities. Primary sources gathered for the exhibition are intended to enable children to see Muslim cultures through the eyes of Muslims across time and throughout places around the world.

Hands-on Interactive Stations: The exhibition will feature a plethora of hands-on interactive activities including games played by Muslim children around the world, rug weaving, calligraphy and music making among many others.

Augmented Reality: The use of an innovative technology called Augmented Reality will allow for manipulation of objects, making what were once static artifacts come alive. Augmented reality is a live view of a physical, real-world object or text whose elements are augmented by computer-generated sensory input. As a result, the technology functions by enhancing one's current perception of reality. For example, a child will view a traditional oil jug from Iran in a traditional display case. Instead of just viewing the jug, they can manipulate a replica of it that then animates on a screen showing a scene of the jug being used in a home in Iran in the 12th century.

3-D Video Projection Mapping: A new projection technique, 3-D Video Projection Mapping, will be used to transform a space and give visitors the immersive feeling of standing in mosques from Indonesia, China, Mali, the Middle East and America—challenging preconceived notions of who Muslims are and where they live. Specialized software will be used to warp and mask the projected image to make it fit perfectly on irregularly shaped screens. The end result will be a dynamic projection installation that transcends ordinary video projection.

“First Person” Journeys: According to audience research conducted for *Gods, Myths and Mortals* by BLiP Research, children responded positively to activities where they became a character in the story. The prominence of oral history in the Muslim world provides great opportunity to understand how stories transmit values and cultural boundaries. For example, at the grandparent's dress station, children can assume the role of a Muslim child or adult from Turkey, Arabia or Indonesia and dress in clothing from those places. This approach to learning, addresses the educational needs of children for immersive role playing experiences to provide a meaningful context from which visitors examine specific areas of interest within the exhibition. It also underscores the theme of “unity within diversity” that explicates core values shared by Muslims but that are expressed in culturally specific ways.

Gross Motor Learning: For many children, kinesthetic experiences are essential to learning. The presence of a large, climb aboard a Dhow boat will provide a physical experience of traveling to port cities around the world to visit diverse Muslim cultures.

Public Programming and Educational Programming: CMOM will offer free workshops, performances and festivals for families with museum admission. Programs will focus on an array of topics including mosaic design, rug design, mapping and food. Regular performances, workshops and festivals will highlight the specific traditions of one Muslim country, covering a variety of countries from around the world throughout the run of the exhibit.

Website: To support continued exploration by children visiting the exhibition, museum staff and project scholars will develop a number of online resources complementary to the exhibition. The Museum will launch a website corresponding to the exhibition in conjunction with Islamic studies scholars. To extend the exhibition experience, the website will provide engaging on-line activities and links to age appropriate information on Islam and Muslim cultures.

Project Resources

CMOM has extensive experience borrowing objects from various public and private collections, aggregating creative resources including artists and production companies, and securing photography and video for use in exhibitions. For past exhibitions, CMOM has borrowed from the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York Historical Society, Gemini G.E.L. LLC (an artists' workshop and publisher of limited edition prints and sculptures), Andy Warhol Museum for *The Art of Andy Warhol* exhibit and the Michael Rosenfeld Gallery. CMOM has also hosted several artist installations supporting interpretive exhibitions including works by Faith Ringgold, Camille Utterbach, Elizabeth Murray and productions by the History Channel, Brad Larson Media, and ColorLightShadow Productions.

The project team has begun sourcing 2-D and 3-D objects, photographs and images, videos, technology components, curriculum resources and an artistic installation for *Muslim Cultures*. The following is a list of preliminary resources that will be added to during the final design period.

1. *Objects*: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Brooklyn Museum; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and private collections from the Muslim community
2. *Photographs and Images*: National Geographic, the Asia Society, Indonesian Consulate, Qatar Museum of Islamic Art
3. *Video*: Moroccan Consulate (flyover of the souk) and the History Channel
4. *Technology Elements*: Collab-Orators, Reactable, Camille Utterbach, and Brad Larson Media
5. *Curriculum Development*: Islamic Networks Group (ING)
6. *Installations*: Haifa Bint-Kadi, a mosaic tile artist

CMOM has selected Roto to design and fabricate the exhibition. They have partnered with CMOM on other humanities shows and have extensive experience working in the Middle East and other Muslim countries.

Project History

In 2009, CMOM Board Chair Mark Pearlman and Ambassador Nasser Nassir of Qatar were walking through CMOM's NEH-funded *Gods, Myths and Mortals: Discover Ancient Greece* exhibit with their young sons. They stopped while Aziz and Conrad climbed the Trojan Horse and took in the original artifacts on display from ancient Greece and the numerous educational environments. "This," Nasser said to his friend, "is what we must do to explain Muslim cultures." From that chance incident grew an idea to create a CMOM-based project to help families learn about the depth and diversity of Muslim culture.

Seed funds provided by the Museum's Board of Directors, an indication of their commitment to the project, helped leverage a planning grant from the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art allowing CMOM to conduct a needs assessment and engage scholars, community leaders and educators in key humanities issues and interpretive challenges surrounding the subject matter. During this time, CMOM engaged Zeyba Rahman, a cultural program development specialist, as Project Advisor/Community Liaison, to assist with the formation of the project's Advisory Committee of Scholars and Community Leaders. CMOM researched past and current cultural exhibits, as well as related programs and curricula in the United States and internationally. This process surfaced important findings related to audience attitudes and beliefs, prioritized content, and helped CMOM identify and engage leaders in the Muslim community around developing thematic approaches for the exhibition. In addition, CMOM evaluated best practices and lessons learned from *Muslim Voices: Arts & Ideas Festival* and its companion conference series, the recent exhibit *Islamic Science Rediscovered*, and the Tropenmuseum's *Urban Islam* and *Paradise Co* projects. Conversations with senior staff from the Tropenmuseum Junior confirmed the need to create fully immersive environments that could be integrated with programming, and to use personal storytelling and the arts to promote cultural understanding and convey sophisticated information in developmentally appropriate formats.

Planning sessions with scholars and community advisors guided the development of two exhibit concepts which promote the understanding of the diversity of Muslim cultures through specific lenses: 1) the art and artifacts they produced, and 2) the lives of children from five Muslim regions around the world.

An NEH Planning Grant enabled CMOM to further develop and decide upon an exhibit concept (October 2011 through September 2012). CMOM conducted four major roundtable discussions with *Muslim Cultures* advisors and scholars, and eight in-depth conversations with individual advisors to assist the project team in evaluating the exhibition concepts and strategies. The CMOM Project Team developed and implemented an audience research questionnaire to gather baseline information on the public's understanding of Muslim cultures to ensure the exhibit would achieve greatest impact. The survey was conducted in April 2012 with 68 individuals (most of whom did not identify as Muslim or as having Muslim heritage) who visited the Museum during CMOM's *Arts from Muslim Lands Festival*. An

overwhelming majority of visitors wanted to know more about Muslim cultures. Questions visitors had about Muslim cultures included: *Why is it so misunderstood? What do they follow in Islam? What are their views on modern fashion and women in power? Is Islam an evolving culture? Is it modern? How has it adapted? Does racism exist among different Muslim sects?* They also expressed interest in learning specifically about several different aspects of Muslim cultures including: art, music, food/cooking, clothing, textiles design, cultural traditions, literature, children's stories, dance, festivals, poetry, pottery, and architecture among others. The findings and feedback from these efforts have helped shape the exhibit design and ensure that the exhibit touches on a wide variety of subjects and themes of interest to the public.

As a result of input by scholars and research conducted, the two proposed concepts were reviewed and replaced with a new concept organized around the five humanities themes rooted in history and cultural anthropology and the A-Z alphabet layout described above. The core project team began identifying appropriate objects and content from a range of humanities disciplines and produced exhibit concept documents, including a storyboard and narrative walkthrough. The new concept was developed to combine innovative exhibition techniques to bridge time and geography through overriding humanities themes and to ensure the voices of contemporary Muslims in America were central to the plan.

With funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the CMOM Project Team project team further refined the exhibit concept, finalized the letter-based exhibit components and began creating graphic design elements. Beginning in October 2012, CMOM engaged consultants to begin working on marketing, technology and fundraising. BoomGen Studios, a transmedia marketing agency that uses multiple media platforms to promote stories from Middle Eastern communities both in the U.S. and abroad, is advising on positioning and messaging. Collab-Orators (Collab), a creative technology agency, began working on the development of innovative interactive exhibit elements that will use 3-D projection mapping and augmented reality to transport audiences and bring life to static objects. Sayyeda Mirza-Jafri led two roundtable discussions with members of the Arab-American and the African-American Muslim communities to inform exhibition and program planning and has coordinated a fundraising cultivation event at the home of CMOM Board member Raffiq Nathoo for January 2013.

Audience, Marketing and Promotion

The *primary* audience for *Muslim Cultures* will be the over 350,000 families and children ages 2-12 years who visit the Museum annually. The *secondary* audience, in terms of numbers, will be school groups and professionals who participate in professional development workshops. The design and content of the exhibition will be planned to engage different generations simultaneously, providing age appropriate activities for children while providing more in depth content for adults. The exhibition will be designed to appeal to a broad general audience, many of whom will encounter *Muslim Cultures* as a part of a general visit to CMOM. This provides a unique opportunity to serve families who would not normally define themselves as wanting to engage in a learning experience about the Muslim world. As such, the exhibition will serve those with limited prior knowledge of the Muslim world, Muslim audiences wishing to delve deeper into a wide range of their own traditions or to learn more about the traditions of neighboring communities, as well as general audiences.

CMOM places a high value on serving a diverse audience, achieved in part through our active partnerships with more than 50 community-based organizations. CMOM provides 50,000 free visits per year to low-income families—not including school groups. Annually, 65,000 students and teachers visit CMOM as part of a school group or through one of the Museum's community outreach partnerships (approximately 75% of school group visitors are children of color). Every week at the Museum, more than 80 public workshops, classes and performances are offered free with admission, connecting children to diverse cultural traditions, literature and the performing arts. Through these programs, the Museum reaches thousands of children and families who might not otherwise be able to benefit from our services.

For the national tour of *Muslim Cultures*, we will target communities with varying sizes of Muslim populations and varying degrees of exposure to Muslim cultures. In traveling the *Muslim Cultures* exhibition, it is important to reach children and adults of all backgrounds, and a balance between large urban hubs as well as smaller cities. Criteria for venues selected for the traveling tour include: diversity and understanding of audience needs; capacity to develop and sustain effective local partnerships; and commitment to educational programming. The presence of a major Muslim community is not necessarily a measure, since all communities will benefit, and our goal is to promote awareness and education in communities that have limited knowledge of Muslim culture. A number of museums have expressed interest in hosting *Muslim Cultures* including Boston Children's Museum, Children's Museum of Pittsburgh and Children's Museum of Houston (see letters of support in *Attachment 9*). Given that the show will not be available for travel until 2017, these museums and others cannot make a firm commitment.

Although CMOM is a children's museum, its audience is comprised of 50% children and 50% adults. As a result, the audience includes parents, other caregivers and educational professionals who accompany school groups or participate in CMOM-led professional development workshops. Evaluations of past CMOM exhibitions have highlighted the important role of parents and caregivers as facilitators, especially in exploration of less familiar cultures. Adults with little prior knowledge of the subject matter are more comfortable in a children's exhibit and, as a result, are more likely to absorb and retain new information. This allows a critical opportunity for the *Muslim Cultures* project to help shape children's appreciation of Muslim cultures, to help parents discuss these cultures with their children, and to provide both children and their caretakers with the knowledge and experiences necessary to correct misperceptions and challenge prevalent prejudices.

The exhibition will be promoted through a targeted advertising campaign including subway ads, phone kiosks, citywide parenting magazines, neighborhood newspapers and publications devoted to tourists and hotel concierge staff. Social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube will be used to build a buzz about the exhibit in the months leading up to the opening. The exhibit will be promoted through monthly e-blasts to CMOM members, friends and influencers along with special opening events for members, supporters and stakeholders in the Muslim community.

Project Evaluation

Research and evaluation are core to CMOM's mission and strategic plan. The Museum has completed four research studies on its latest health initiative, with a study of the health exhibition conducted by the Hunter College of Public Health. Two other universities, New York University and Barnard, conduct ongoing research at the Museum related to child development. Most recently, Barnard conducted a study of how young children self classify themselves related to gender, race and income level. Evaluation of the *Muslim Cultures* exhibition will be rooted by studies of CMOM's two prior cultural exhibitions, including formative and summative evaluation. The seasoned CMOM Project Team members have gained considerable expertise in evaluation and research following years of work with researchers such as BLiP Research, Michael Cohen Group, Mary Ellen Munley Associates, NYU, Barnard and Hunter.

CMOM also uses technology to track impact. In the permanent exhibition *PlayWorks*, parents visit an interactive computer kiosk where they can enter what they and their children have learned and email it home. CMOM tracks the entries to constantly evaluate the learning taking place in the exhibition. CMOM leads training programs with at-home care providers where the participants use smart phones to demonstrate that they are applying lessons learned at the Head Start centers where they work and at home so that the training leaders can assess program effectiveness and recalibrate as necessary. This type of evaluation using technology to glean what visitors/users have learned will be built into *Muslim Cultures* through a kiosk developed by Brad Larsen Media. As part of *R is for Rugs*, families will have the opportunity to design their own rug on a touch screen reflecting what they have learned in the exhibit. In addition to the rugs being displayed in rotation, visitors will be able to email the rug images home and share them using social media.

For *Muslim Cultures*, the CMOM Project Team will be assisted in evaluation efforts by experts from the Michael Cohen Group (MCG) on a pro bono basis (the principal serves on the CMOM Board of Directors) and BLiP Research. Together the CMOM Project Team, MCG and BLiP will develop clear measurable goals in conjunction with an evaluation plan. The evaluation plan will include critical formative assessment of exhibition components, daily reports of visitor experience by floor staff and formal studies that include focus groups, visitor surveys and expert feedback (in this case, feedback from Community Advisors). The evaluation of *Muslim Cultures* is already underway and the levels of evaluation include:

1. Original audience research in the planning stage to assess baseline understandings, attitudes and beliefs and literature search (*completed*).
2. Pre-opening formative assessment of individual exhibition components (*this has already begun using current public programming to test concepts*).
3. Pre-opening assessment criteria and protocol for use during the run of the exhibition lead by BLiP Research.
4. Built in longitudinal assessment through a computer kiosk for creating mosaic designs that can be used at home after the museum visit created by Brad Larson Media.
5. Focus groups with visitors to determine effectiveness based upon the criteria and goals with BLiP Research.
6. Assessment meetings with advisors conducted by staff to gauge effectiveness of exhibit components.
7. Exhibition and program modifications based on feedback.
8. A final report on the overall impact of the exhibit.

Assessment questions administered orally and through surveys will be linked to the five humanities themes. Surveys administered to adults will be more abstract and focused on what visitors have learned about unity and diversity, cultural adaptation and if they feel they have increased capacity to talk to children about themes in the exhibition. Surveys administered to children will determine their understanding of more concrete learnings such as differences in architecture, patterns in tapestries and the meaning of the tiles created by American Muslims. Separate tools will be developed for teachers bringing their classes to the exhibition or who participate in related professional development workshops.

Organizational Profile

The mission of the Children’s Museum of Manhattan (CMOM)—a leading provider of educational experiences for families since 1973—is to *inspire children and their families to learn about themselves and the culturally diverse world in which they live, through a unique environment of immersive interactive exhibitions and programs*. With five floors of interactive exhibitions and classrooms, CMOM emphasizes four key values for more than 350,000 visitors each year: creativity in the arts and sciences; cultural awareness and diversity; healthy lifestyles; and early childhood learning. With an operating budget of \$5 million, CMOM has the capacity to offer innovative exhibitions, exciting educational programming, performances and community outreach programs.

With this project, CMOM will leverage more than 30 years translating humanities scholarship and the display of original art and objects into accessible, compelling and developmentally appropriate interactive exhibitions for children and families. CMOM’s leadership stems from its creative exhibitions and educational programs and its strategic use of partnerships. With high-level collaboration in fields outside of CMOM’s purview, CMOM produces exhibits and programs that reflect impeccable scholarship and a uniquely effective medium of message delivery that ultimately bring even complicated subjects to young children and their parents. This is one of the Museum’s greatest attributes and will be one of the most important components of *Muslim Cultures*.

CMOM’s experience developing humanities-based exhibitions and programming has consistently brought a new level of intercultural understanding to children and families. Most recently, the celebrated *Gods*,

Myths & Mortals: Discover Ancient Greece exhibit (a \$2 million project supported by the NEH, the City of New York, American Express and private foundations) has brought the magnificent stories of mythology, the cultural and scientific contributions of Greek civilization, and the brilliance of Homer's *Odyssey* to one million visitors since it opened in 2007. *Monkey King: A Journey to China*, currently embarking on a second national tour, immerses families in the Chinese culture embedded in traditional literature. The Museum also offers multi-day festivals, such as the Ramadan Festival and the Arab Arts and Culture Festival, to celebrate cultural traditions and to help visitors recognize, respect and appreciate the power of diversity and the many common beliefs and customs that unite us. In 2009, CMOM launched *Raising Citizens*, a year-round programming series celebrating America's rich history and heritage. To ensure accuracy and cultural authenticity, CMOM's exhibitions and programs are developed drawing upon extensive research and in collaboration with consulting scholars, leading educators and other experts.

Project Team

Project Scholars

Peter Awn Ph.D., Dean of General Studies and Director of Middle East Institute, Professor of Islamic Religion and Comparative Religion, Columbia University. Dr. Awn serves as the chief curatorial consultant to the project with a specific focus on the accuracy of historical content.

Reza Aslan, Ph.D., Co-Founder and Chief Creative Officer, BoomGen Studios; Wallerstein Professor of Religion, Conflict, and Community at Drew University. Dr. Aslan will review content, messages and activities with a specific focus on cultural adaptation.

Rachel Cooper, Director of Cultural Programs and Performing Arts, Asia Society. Ms. Cooper is guiding the development of the public programs performance series.

Navina Haidar Ph.D., Curator and Administrator, Department of Islamic Art Metropolitan Museum of Art. Dr. Haidar has been involved with project for its entirety and will guide the choice of material objects.

Deborah Kapchan Ph.D., Associate Professor of Performance Studies, Affiliated Associate Professor for Anthropology, Middle Eastern Studies & Music, New York University. A specialist in poetics, Dr. Kapchan will provide input and conduct careful review of *Library* and *Birds* sections of the exhibit.

Hasan-Uddin Khan Ph.D., Professor of Architecture, Roger Williams University. Dr. Khan's research has focused on mosque building architecture and he will assist in the articulation of the design philosophy for the mosque structure in the *Architecture* section of the exhibit.

Theodore Levin Ph.D., M.F.A., Arthur R. Virgin Professor of Music, Dartmouth College, Senior Project Consultant, Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia, Chair, Arts and Culture sub-board, Soros Foundation's Open Society Institute. Dr. Levin will assist with the development of the *Music* station.

Hussein Rashid Ph.D., Adjunct Professor, Hofstra University and Fordham University. Dr. Rashid will advise on elements of the exhibit related to the American Muslim experience.

Project Consultants

Haifa Bint-Kadi, Mosaic tile artist. Ms. Bint-Kadi is leading mosaic tile workshops with Muslim community members from across New York City that will be incorporated into the *N is for Neighbor* exhibit component.

BLiP Research, a full-service research and consulting practice working in the areas of youth, media and technology. BLiP will conduct pre-opening assessment criteria and protocol for use during the run of the exhibition.

Brad Larsen Media, develops visitor storytelling kiosks for museums. Brad Larson will develop an interactive kiosk for the *Rug* area of the exhibition.

Collab-Orators (Collab), a creative technology firm. Collab is working with CMOM's in-house staff to develop the interactive technology for the exhibit including augmented reality and 3-D projection mapping.

Sayyeda Mirza-Jafri, Strategic Development Consultant. Ms. Mizra-Jafri is responsible for organizing, promoting and coordinating cultivation events with leaders of the Muslim community and prospective

fundes. She also reaches out to community leaders and cultural partners to involve them in engaging and promoting the project.

Zeyba Rahman, Cultural Consultant and Community Liaison. Known as a global culture leader, Ms. Rahman was Senior Advisor to *Muslim Voices: Arts & Ideas Festival* and is the Artistic Director for *Caravanserai: A Place Where Cultures Meet*. She has been involved with the project since the initial planning grant and is responsible for managing the Advisory Committee and providing educational programming and community outreach expertise.

Roto Studio, a full-service design and production firm specializing in first-hand experiences for museums and entertainment venues. Roto was hired in 2011 to work on concept development and planning. Working with the CMOM Project Team, Roto will be responsible for final design, fabrication and implementation of the exhibition.

Sonnet Takahisa, Education Consultant. Former Education Director, 9/11 Memorial Museum. Ms. Takahisa is an independent consultant with more than 30 years of experience in museums and education. Ms. Takahisa is overseeing the interpretive approach of the project and education and programming strategies for effectively interpreting the subject's complexity for children and adult audiences.

Project Advisors

Numerous other advisors have been instrumental to the exhibit development process, attending meetings and providing guidance on the exhibition concept and development process including: **Fatima Shama**, Commissioner, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs; **Suad Abdul Khabeer Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and African American Studies at Purdue University; **Hishaam Aidi**, School of International & Public Affairs Columbia University; **Sabiha Al Khemir** Founding Director, Qatar Museum of Islamic Art; **Maryam Ekhtiar**, Senior Research Associate Department of Islamic Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art; **Samina Quraeshi**, Fellow & Gardner, Visiting Artist, Peabody Museum, Harvard University; **Sarah Sayeed**, Program & Communication Associate, Interfaith Center of New York; **Debbie Al Montasser**, Founder Khalil Gibran International Academy; **Lena Al-Husseini**, CEO, Arab American Family Center; **Aliya Latif**, Research Associate, Islamic Center at NYU and **Saleemah Abdul-Ghafur**, Author, *Living Islam Out Loud: American Muslim Women Speak*.

CMOM Project Team

Andrew S. Ackerman, M.A., Executive Director, CMOM. Mr. Ackerman serves as Co-Project Director and responsible for overseeing the project and for integrating *Muslim Cultures* with the strategic plan for the Museum. Mr. Ackerman oversees community relations, strategic planning, fundraising and budgeting.

Tom Quaranta, B.F.A., Director of Exhibitions and Museum Operations, CMOM. Mr. Quaranta is Co-Project Director and responsible for management, overseeing all aspects of exhibition development, including administration, staffing, design, and activity development.

Leslie Bushara, M.A., Deputy Director of Education and Guest Services, CMOM. Ms. Bushara oversees the development of all educational programs associated with the exhibition including public programs, internships, school programs and outreach programs.

Cat Emil, B.A., Exhibition Services Manager. Ms. Emil is starting at CMOM on January 22, 2013 and will conduct content research, activities research and assist with project administration.

Rita London, M.A., Director of Public Programs. Ms. London is responsible for the development of public programs associated with this exhibition, including workshops, performances and festivals.

Lizzy Martin, M.A., Senior Exhibition Developer, CMOM. Ms. Martin leads content research, activities research and coordinates project administration.

Kristin Lilley, Lilliana Reyes, Alex Tiner and Prince Barron, Members of CMOM's Exhibition staff that will participate in final design, activity development and fabrication.

Board of Directors

CMOM's Board of Directors has assigned Board members **Raffiq Nathoo** and **Mark Pearlman** to work with staff to oversee fundraising, community relations and to review financial arrangements. The project team will update CMOM's Board of Directors periodically on the progress of the project.

Work Plan

Pre-NEH Grant Period, January – August 2013: Design phase of the project continues with feedback from scholars, community advisors, cost analysis and production planning. Focus groups with children on key topics will be conducted in late July. Interns and educators will conduct formative testing of individual exhibit components under the direction of consulting evaluators. The CMOM exhibition shop will create mockups and prototypes for testing. Information from testing and additional rounds of scholarly review will inform the development and final design of exhibit components and exhibition script. The design team will build a scale model of the exhibition and create design control drawings and specifications for components and collections cases for competitive bidding. CMOM will work with museum partners to source select original artifacts, and draft loan agreements and will continue to write exhibition and website text, and research and obtain rights for use of images. The graphic designers will create a complete graphics package outline including object labels, identification signage, directional signage, environmental graphics, and website graphics. The CMOM team will work with consultants such as Roto and Collab-Orators to further develop and begin logic/digital design on exhibit components that require lengthy production time. CMOM team members will continue to deepen the connection to the American Muslim community through a series of receptions held by the American Muslim artist Haifa Bint-Kadi and community advisory meetings over the next several months, continuing on through the exhibition opening.

PLAN OF WORK			
<i>Month/Phase</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Parties Responsible</i>	<i>Meeting Schedule</i>
Year 1 – Grant Period			
Final Design Phase August – December 2013	Finalize exhibit design	Andrew Ackerman, Tom Quaranta, Lizzy Martin, Roto Studios, Collab-Orators	Bi-weekly review meetings with core design/development team. Weekly meetings with extended design team. Finalize design/development of long lead items.
January 2013	Control drawings developed	Tom Quaranta	Bi-weekly review of control drawings
Fabrication February – July 2014	Review shop drawings	Tom Quaranta	As needed
	Fabricate exhibit components and collection cases	Tom Quaranta, In-house Exhibit Technicians	Weekly site visit to fabrication shop(s)
	Budget tracking; coordinate purchase of exhibit props	Tom Quaranta, Cat Emil	Weekly meetings
	Production of graphic elements	Kristin Lilley, Alex Tirer	Weekly meetings
	Prepare for delivery; installation of original artifacts	Lizzy Martin	As needed
	Final testing of interactive components w/children	Tom Quaranta, Lizzy Martin, Cat Emil	As needed
	Recruitment of CMOM docents	Director of School Programs (TBD), Supervisor Public Programs (TBD)	As scheduled
	Program planning and review	Leslie Bushara, Zeyba Rahman, Lizzy Martin	Weekly meetings, as needed

Year 2 - Grant Period			
Installation August – September 2014	Gallery preparation and painting	Tom Quaranta, Cat Emil, In-house Exhibition Techs, Consultants	As scheduled
	Exhibit element installation	Tom Quaranta, Cat Emil, In-house Exhibition Techs, Consultants	As scheduled
	Collection cases climatized; mounts created	Lizzy Martin, Cat Emil, Consultants	As scheduled
	Artifact delivery and installation	Lizzy Martin, Cat Emil	As scheduled
	Fine tuning of equipment	Tom Quaranta	As scheduled
	Lighting focused	Tom Quaranta	As scheduled
	CMOM Education and Visitor Services staff training	Rita London, Lizzy Martin	As scheduled
	Security staff walkthrough and technical training	Tom Quaranta	As scheduled
	Weekend CMOM docent walkthrough and training	Lizzy Martin, Cat Emil	As scheduled
	Prepare for soft opening	Tom Quaranta	Debrief meetings with floor staff
	Press event(s), Members' Opening Events, Special Opening Events	External Affairs Department	As needed
	Public programming begins	Leslie Bushara, Rita London, Director of School Programs (TBD), Supervisor Public Programs (TBD)	As scheduled
Soft Opening October 2014	Opening for educators	Director of School Programs (TBD), Supervisor Public Programs (TBD)	As scheduled
	Weekend docent tours begin	Director of School Programs (TBD), Supervisor Public Programs (TBD)	As scheduled
	Punchlist	Tom Quaranta, Lizzy Martin, Cat Emil	Weekly meeting to collect feedback and troubleshoot
	Exhibition review by Education staff and CMOM docents	Tom Quaranta, Lizzy Martin, Cat Emil	Meeting
	Summative exhibit evaluation planning	Tom Quaranta, Lizzy Martin, Cat Emil	Meeting with BLiP Research
	Adult lecture series, education programs and festivals scheduled	Rita London, Lizzy Martin, Director of School Programs (TBD), Supervisor Public Programs (TBD)	
Exhibition Opening and Programming November 2014 – July 2015	Intensive education programming and outreach plan realized	Leslie Bushara, Rita London, Director of School Programs (TBD), Supervisor Public Programs (TBD)	Daily, as scheduled
	Summative exhibit evaluation conducted	Tom Quaranta, Lizzy Martin, Rita London, Director of School Programs (TBD)	One Month - Bi-weekly review meetings

	Conduct professional development workshops for elementary and secondary teachers	Director of School Programs (TBD)	
	Evaluate professional development workshops	Director of Education (TBD)	Meetings with Michael Cohen Group as needed
	Remediate exhibition components	Tom Quaranta	Meetings and implementation as needed
	Evaluate teen docent program	Director of School Programs (TBD), Supervisor Public Programs (TBD)	As scheduled

Fundraising Plans

Contributed revenue for this project will be secured from a diverse mix of public and private sources. The fundraising process began in 2009 in order to secure planning funds. Additional research and prospecting for planning grants continued from 2009 to 2011. Seed money for the planning phase was successfully secured from Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art (\$45,900), the National Endowment for the Humanities (\$40,000) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (\$149,702). Additional funds were dedicated to planning by the CMOM Board of Directors

Solicitations for implementation funding began in the summer of 2012. Implantation proposals will be submitted to the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, the Jaharis Foundation and the El Hibri Charitable Trust. In addition, CMOM has engaged in extensive conversations with the MetLife Foundation and was invited to submit an initial inquiry request.

Funds will also be solicited from private individuals, particularly those with strong relationships within the Muslim community. A series of formal cultivation events will be held during 2013 and 2014 aimed at major donors. The first event will take place on January 22, 2013 at the home of CMOM Board Member Raffiq Nathoo. The event will showcase an example of the creative technology being developed for the exhibit by the technology agency Collab. Guests will experience 3-D projection technology to bring to life Mosque structures from around the world. The event will be followed by meetings with individuals and corporations to secure support. A second cultivation event will be held in June for additional prospects and donors, with follow-up to this event occurring in July. Several formal giving circles will be organized through a series of additional cultivation events held at the homes of CMOM Board and Advisory Board members, to further engage prospective donors in the project.

Finally, the Museum will seek corporate sponsors to provide financial resources. We are confident about securing corporate sponsorship based on our successful track record with a prestigious list of corporations including American Express, JetBlue, Merck, Target, and Fujifilm.

**Children’s Museum of Manhattan - Muslim Cultures
National Endowment for the Humanities**

PROJECT WALKTHROUGH

Exhibition Walkthrough

Interpretive Strategies and Design Philosophy

Visitor surveys and national research polls demonstrate that Americans have limited knowledge of Muslim cultures and history and that many of their impressions are driven by superficial representations of Muslim cultures in the media and commonly held stereotypes. Such embedded perceptions and misconceptions have also been noted by scholars at the university level and by educators at the K-12 levels. To a significant extent, this research and observations from scholars and community representatives have informed the core interpretive strategy of *Muslim Cultures*. In order to communicate the humanities themes of the exhibition, it is important that visitors have an initial experience that challenges preconceived notions about Muslims and Muslim culture. By literally opening their eyes to the diversity of Muslim cultures, the Museum will be able to proceed to a nuanced narrative that is based in scholarship, with first person narratives from within the American Muslim community and one that employs tested pedagogical techniques for engaging families and young audiences.

Hands-on, multi-sensory activities and high-tech environments excite all audiences, making the content accessible to all intellects, maturities and interests, and eliciting greater involvement from all types of visitors. These interpretive strategies are based on an understanding that learning takes place most effectively when visitors participate in an active process of assimilating information that engages them personally, socially and physically. Exhibition activities accommodate the learning styles and preferences of individuals and families, and provide multiple opportunities for personal engagement with the content. The exhibition also acknowledges the social nature of a museum visit and fosters family learning through a range of activities that include competitive and cooperative games, opportunities for teamwork, and group decision-making.



When visitors enter *Muslim Cultures*, they will be in for a surprise. Looming high above them in the Museum’s 16-foot gallery is an enormous photo realistic representation of the façade of a piece of Indonesian architecture that looks strikingly Chinese. Based on visitor studies, this will confound many of the children and adults who would expect an exhibition about Muslim cultures to focus on Middle Eastern architecture, objects and peoples. Visitors will learn that the structure is a mosque from Indonesia that uses Chinese architectural styles to honor

Zheng He, a Chinese Muslim explorer. This experience will encapsulate many of the core humanities themes of the exhibition, including unity and diversity and cultural adaptations.

The surprise continues when visitors move behind the façade and enter a three dimensional domed structure that immerses them in a setting that will further challenge their preconceptions and establish a broad cultural context for the rest of the exhibition. Through the use of 3-D video projection mapping within the dome, families will experience a changing set of mosque interiors from around the world. Imagine visitors surrounded by visuals that slowly move from the ceiling down along the sides of the structure. First to appear is the interior of a Beijing, China mosque, then on to one from Djenné, Mali, one from Mecca, Saudi Arabia, one from Cordoba, Spain and—finally—one from Brooklyn, New York. The surprise element of diverse architectural techniques is a key interpretive strategy to dispel common misconceptions and to help visitors begin their journey to learn about the “unity within the diversity” of Muslim cultures.

The exhibition is divided into five (5) sections. Each section represents one of the humanities themes (referenced in the Narrative) and is anchored by a large core exhibit component that is surrounded by smaller components. Original artifacts in display cases, object replicas, murals, and graphic reproductions of images and texts function as *primary sources*, the essential building blocks out of which each visitor is guided to construct an understanding of historical and contemporary Muslim life. The graphics and physical design provide cues to visitors that they are encountering multiple cultures and histories from around the world, an impression that is concretized through the repeated display of maps and timelines. In addition, the exhibit is designed with spaces for educator-led programs and engaging performances to deepen the visitors' experience at CMOM. Often times, trained college and graduate level interns who are representative of the Muslim communities lead the programs.

In order to successfully represent a variety of topics reflecting Muslim cultural diversity, the exhibition employs a familiar children's book practice: the English alphabet, whereby each letter from A to Z is keyed to a specific exhibit component. Using the familiar English alphabet enables American adults and children to comfortably navigate new or foreign information. The twenty-six specific topics have learning stations whose components vary in size and scope, from small interactives to immersive environments. The twenty-six alphabet letters may appear to be scattered randomly; however, they are grouped thematically around each of the core exhibit components to reinforce the primary humanities theme in each area. This is a deliberate process that will be extremely helpful as children learn.

The core components, supplemented by smaller exhibit elements and the alphabet arrangement reinforce the exhibit's five organizing humanities themes:

- *Section 1: A is for Architecture* features the exterior and interior of diverse mosque and Muslim building structures to emphasize the unity within the diversity of the Muslim world. To further the theme of unity within diverse Muslim cultures, *I is for Islam* signage is presented at a few stations around the exhibit to illuminate the religion's core beliefs, the history of its origin and its present-day population centers (Humanities Theme 1).
- *Section 2: H is for Home Life* and *S is for Souk* offers families two intimate settings to explore the transmission of culture through art, objects and stories, to explore clothing and oral traditions found in the privacy of the home, and to engage in trading regional art and objects in the marketplace (Humanities Theme 2).
- *Section 3: A large-scale, climb-on D is for Dhow* boat encourages families to explore the interrelationship of cultures over time as children climb aboard and journey with goods and ideas to trade (Humanities Theme 3).
- *Section 4: E is for Elephant clock* emphasizes the blending and sharing of knowledge from across the world, evidenced in the scientific and artistic achievements in the Muslim world (Humanities Theme 4).
- *Section 5: N is for Neighbor* helps children engage in a rational inquiry of themselves and others, as the past informs the present within the continuity of cultural diffusion and exchange. This section is composed of a mosaic tile installation that illuminates the diversity of Muslim peoples in the world reflected in the Muslim populations of the NYC metro area. The tiles, which weave like a ribbon throughout the exhibition, are designed and fabricated by local Muslim mosaic artist, Haifa Bint-Kadi and include tiles created by American Muslim families that speak to their distinctive American Muslim experience (Humanities Theme 5).

Because of the depth and variety of content covered in the exhibit, the major themes of the exhibition may be found throughout each area and topic. Moreover, activities throughout the exhibition deliver overlapping content at multiple points and employ a spectrum of interpretive strategies appropriate to the material itself.

The letters also serve as the basis for guided scavenger hunts. For example, a child picks up a scavenger hunt card with the word DATES and a picture of the fruit and seeks out the letters in the exhibition that

spell DATES. At each letter, there will be a “hidden” picture of a date, which the child must find to complete the hunt. *D* takes him to *D is for Dhow* where the journey begins and he can find evidence of dates eaten by sailors who lived centuries ago. *A* moves him to *A is for Architecture* where the child can find images of dates used as a decorative motif. At *T is for Trade Routes* the child learns how dates and other food products are exported around the world. *E for Elephant Clock* speaks to the interrelationships of cultures, and at *S is for Souk* he finds dates as a key food product bought and sold at the market. For extra credit, the child can find a hidden reference to dates used by Muslims in holiday celebrations.¹ Such exploration mirrors the movement of Muslims from the Middle East to other parts of the world through trade, and the rooting of Islam in everyday life throughout diverse cultures.

Role-playing enables visitors to integrate content in a personally meaningful context, whether they are in the roles of storytellers, heroes or historians. The *J is for Joker* component illuminates the Muslim jokester stories and is a key example of engaging role-play from which visitors make connections and construct understanding of other cultures.

While the exhibit’s interactive activities are designed to primarily target children aged 6-12, there will inevitably be siblings and children of all ages who come upon the exhibit as a part of a family visit to CMOM. The array of activities takes into account the multiple developmental levels and prior knowledge of all visitors. Activities designed for early childhood, visitors under age 6, include weaving and counting in the *S is for Souk* section, as well as creating sounds and rhythms in the *M is for Music* section. Elsewhere, activities enable children in the target ages of 6-12 years old, who are experimenting with independence, to attain mastery and even “teach” their parents.

Exhibition Walkthrough

As visitors enter the exhibition gallery they embark on an inspiring journey through contemporary and historical, local and global Muslim life and are immersed in a world both foreign and familiar. From the gallery entrance, children can glimpse a large, partially reconstructed boat; the façade of a towering Indonesian mosque; an oversized elephant with a snake, man and bird sitting on top; and a colorful, intricate mosaic weaving around the gallery.

Section 1: *Unity within the diversity of Muslim cultures features A is for Architecture as the main display, supplemented by O is for Ornaments, C is for Calligraphy, I is for Islam, and M is for Music.*

With an Asian-style building standing prominently in the gallery, *A is for Architecture* challenges visitors’ preconceived notions of Muslim communities. Families learn it is the façade of an Indonesian mosque, named in turn after a pioneering Chinese pious Muslim known as Zheng He from China.



Stepping behind the mosque’s majestic façade, visitors’ eyes are drawn upwards to a dome and to the far wall of the space as 3-D video projection mapping technology continuously transforms the interior of the structure into various mosques and Muslim buildings from around the world. For instance, visitors may find themselves in the Djenné Mosque in Mali, Africa, where earth and wooden beams are the traditional building material. Or they find themselves in the Alhambra Palace in Granada, Spain, where they witness the Moorish artistic influences that

¹ The game of letter identification, or word association linked to other letters or words echoes a historic literary game called “sher baazi,” which literary means playing with poems. In the subcontinent of South Asia it is also referred to as “bait bazi” or “antakshari”. It is common today in many Muslim homes and, even though this exhibition’s strategy is highly adapted, it transmits the core of the educational tradition. Of course, this is an altered form of the game suiting the needs of children.

spread through Spain and then Europe. Related signage highlights how each featured region of the Muslim world evolved a stylistic image of its own, in part as a result of local climatic conditions and the availability of building materials combined with related craft skills. In one corner of the mosque structure is a globe containing touch screens that enable families to explore architectural styles used by Muslim cultures around the world and over time. In the center of the space, **O is for Ornaments** displays original artifacts featuring the type of tile, metal work and calligraphy used to ornament various mosques. And at an adjacent magnetic board, children work to match patterns from three Muslim cultures – Persian, West African and South Asian – while exploring the use of repetition, geometry, color and vegetation, and celestial themes in Muslim patterns.



As the famous architect, I.M. Pei, said, “My feeling [is] that Islamic architecture often comes to life in an explosion of decorative elements...”²

Families learn and practice the ancient art of Arabic calligraphy at the **C is for Calligraphy** activity. A decoding game features small desks with the Arabic alphabet and the (rough) equivalent English letter. Using pencil and paper, children learn to write their transliterated name in Arabic, experimenting with diverse calligraphic styles from different times and places. Adjacent to **C is for Calligraphy** is **I is for Islam**, which reinforces the calligraphic section through a display of the Qur’an in different styles and with signage that explains the unifying concept among the diverse Muslim cultures mentioned throughout the exhibit. The explanatory text illuminates Islam’s core beliefs and includes a map pinpointing the religion’s origin and its present-day population centers.



Leading the visitor away from the **A is for Architecture** area is the **M is for Music** bridge, which has interpretive signage encouraging families to draw connections between the calligraphic art and music: “Indeed, one could compare a fully illuminated panel with a musical piece, with its mode or key, its themes, harmonies, variations, discords, counterpoint, silences, and movements, as in the layout and proportion of the panel...”- Zakariya³

Families climb over the **M is for Music** structural bridge to explore the unifying beats and rhythms found throughout the diverse music of Muslim cultures. With sound domes and earphones stationed along the bridge, children listen to the sounds of classical and contemporary music, even blues and hip-hop, from historical and contemporary, global and local Muslim artists. Displays of original instruments allow children to examine traditional instruments like the ‘*ud*, which is similar to a lute and used in Arab music, and the *ney*, which is similar to a flute and used in Persian and South Asian music.



At the base of the bridge, families can use a tabletop music generator, called a “Reactable,” a tech-savvy surface on which three-dimensional cubes can be placed. Each cube is decorated with colorful images and musical notes. Families place the side of the cube they are interested in exploring facedown on the tabletop to activate the rhythm it represents. They move the cube towards the center to increase the tempo. Informational rings appear around every cube placed on the table for users to learn the region, the people, the instruments and the messages behind each rhythm. Visitors can use any

² Jodidio, Philip. *Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar*. New York: Prestel. 2008

³ Mohamed Zakariya, author of *The Calligraphy of Islam: Reflections on the State of the Art*, as quoted in *Doors of the Kingdom* by Haajar Gouverneu.

number or combination of cubes, combining beats from Indonesia to Indiana and from the expected to the unexpected sounds of blues and hip-hop. Rhythms that visitors like may echo cultures a world away. Children can experience recent expressions through music from artists like Somalian Muslim K'Naan's singing about individual rights and responsibilities within the local and global community or American Muslim Native Deen's lyrics in "Not Afraid to Stand Alone."

Section 2: The transmission of culture through art, objects and stories section is anchored by H is for Home Life and S is for Souk. Home Life is supplemented by W is for Word, J is for Jokester and G is for Games. The Souk is supplemented by R is for Rugs, F is for Fruit, Q is for Qahwah and P is for Precious Metals.

The musical bridge leads families into the private realm of *H is for Home Life* where visitors encounter different expressions of culture and its transmission through the family. At the *Grandparents Dress* station, children delight in donning dress from Muslim cultures around the world. Related signage includes photos of American children each of whom is next to a photo of their grandparent. A quote accompanies each set of photos to describe their clothing's significance. Two kiosks accompany the dress-up station and feature short vignettes of American men and women discussing their clothing decisions in relation to their family's traditions. This section places women's dress—the subject of the most common question about Muslims in our surveys—in a cultural context and allows women to speak for themselves. It also allows for the arguably more secular communities in Eastern Europe, like those found in Albania, Serbia and Croatia, to share their customs and traditions.

An adjacent wall features four pairs of small *Magic Doors*. Each pair represents one family and consists of an American doorway and their ancestor's doorway. Included are doors from an: African American Muslim home and their ancestor's door in Africa; doors from Albanian families; Egyptian families and Afghan families. Each door invites a child to activate a Pepper's Ghost function (which "magically" changes images with the turn of a knob) and then peek into the home behind the door. Together, adults and children can look for similarities and differences between the doors within the interior of the homes behind the doors, and even with their own home. Signage explains the importance of thresholds, family, and traditions in Muslim cultures.

To give children the chance to view authentic examples of heirlooms representing Muslim life, original artifacts are featured in object cases around *H is for Home Life*. For instance, families can examine a delicate glass oil bottle from Iran on loan from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. At select stations, visitors can have the magical opportunity of touching the object (with an exact replica) as well as witnessing its use through augmented reality, an enhanced experience using computer-generated sensory input such as sound, video and graphics. For the oil bottle, As the visitor grasps and manually tilts the replica, a digital screen with an animated graphic mimics the behavior and depicts oil pouring from the spout. Through multi-sensory "travel" and object interaction, families discover diverse habits of the home and a range of family dynamics.



A unifying practice for many Muslims is the use of the Arabic phrase 'Assalamu Alaykum' as a greeting and the customary response 'Walaykum Assalam.' At *W is for Word* children engage with a special adaptation of an art form created by interactive installation artist Camille Utterbach. The installation projects Arabic words of greeting, with their English translations, on to a wall with the words seemingly floating down the wall. Children try to catch the falling words using their arms' shadows. When they successfully keep one set of words afloat they then wait for their neighbor to catch the response.

A small play area inside *H is for Home Life* features a Turkish-style stage set for reading and pretend play, as well as for daily educator-led storytelling programs. The *J is for Jokester* stage illuminates the oral history behind Nasreddin Hodja, a famous trickster from Turkey who is well known around the world and whose antics and stories provide an access point for all families to understand shared Muslim

values. As families read the stories together they come to appreciate the strength of folklore and stories that use humor and wit to transmit wisdom and core values within cultures



Why Did He Ride the Donkey Backwards?

One day when Hodja was going to the mosque with his mullahs, he decided to ride his donkey backwards. The mullahs asked, “Why are you riding your donkey backwards? You must be very uncomfortable?” He answered, “If I sat facing forward, you would be behind me. If you went in front of me, I would be behind you. Either way I would not be facing you. So, this is the most logical way!”⁴

Two tables in the *H is for Home Life* area showcase **G is for Games** and feature games played throughout various Muslim cultures. An example is Mangala from Turkey, (often called Mancala in other regions), which has been incorporated into mainstream American life and may be familiar to visiting families. Hanging on the wall at the end of the *H is for Home Life* environment are bright, colorful rugs from Iran. A small graphic scene depicts the home of a contemporary Iranian woman and features a child-sized interactive loom. As children take their turns weaving geometric patterns on the loom, adults read about the weaving traditions and symbols passed down through generations. A small area is reserved for live demonstrations of rug making by local Muslim artists. Such live demonstrations allow artists to discuss how they blend autochthonous cultural traditions that pre-date Islam with their Muslim practices.

A nearby threshold is decorated with rug patterns and invites families to exit the *H is for Home Life* area and be transported into **S is for Souk**. The **S is for Souk** area highlights transmission and expression of culture through materials. **R is for Rugs** is a market stall decorated with a selection of authentic rugs from around the world. Families compare the rugs’ patterns, shapes and functions. A scavenger hunt challenges visitors to find features in the rugs that include language symbols, patterns, vegetation, calligraphy and animals. Listening to personal stories from weavers around the world, visitors learn fun facts like how tapestry weaving arrived in the Middle East from the East through political connections, facilitated trade and the exchange of ideas, and that such connections brought the East Asian phoenix and *qilin* (deer-like animals of good fortune) into some designs.

A kiosk next to the rug area is an important part of the exhibition. Designed by Brad Larson Media, the kiosk encourages visitors to use a computer screen to create their own rug designs and to share them via social media or email. A similar interactive will be on CMOM’s website, enabling visitors to continue their *Muslim Cultures* experience and for others, who are unable to visit, to create their own rug and to become part of a growing online tapestry that illustrates the diversity of Muslim aesthetic styles with a modern twist.

Upon leaving the rug installation, families step onto a small ramp to peer down on a large screen. Together they watch a “fly over” video of a *souk* in Morocco, seeing the market place teeming with people, colors, rugs, spices and jewelry. Adjacent are small early-childhood stations to accommodate the needs of the youngest visitors (this also allows parents with multiple age children to stay with a young child while the older one explores more sophisticated parts of the exhibition). At **F is for Fruit** children open small smell boxes of spices and fruit from around the world, like frankincense, myrrh, figs, dates, cherries and oranges. A low, 3-D maze challenges children to work with their adult to trace the spices and fruit back to their country of origin. **Q is for Qahwah** allows children to play pretend as they practice counting and measuring scoops of coffee into coffee pots from Tunisia, Iran and America. Signage explains that *qahwah* is Arabic and quite literally means “strong.” **P is for Precious Metals** displays coins from around the world, highlighting their value and the meaning of each image. A memory game challenges adults and children to compete in memorizing values and matching images with their country

⁴ Kabacali, Alpay. *Nasreddin Hodja*. Illustrated by Fatih M. Durmus. Istanbul: Net Turistik: 1995. (<http://u.cs.biu.ac.il/~schiff/Net/front.html>)

of origin. Signage explains how the people of West Africa were skilled gold workers before the arrival of Islam and how Muslims put these skills to work to produce gold coinage.

Section 3: Interrelationship of cultures over time features **D is for Dhow**, supplemented by **T is for Trade Routes** and **Z is for Zheng He**



At ***D is for Dhow***, a large, two-story boat has children excited to embark on an imaginary journey of travel and trade. They can steer the boat and change the landscapes projected on the large screen surrounding the boat to see contemporary and historic landscapes around the Indian Ocean. Very large and prominently placed signage signals time periods and locations in order to help adults describe to their children where they are sailing. Families can help navigate their voyage using a compass or the historic astrolabe to read the stars. An astrolabe artifact accompanies the interactive, allowing families to investigate its beauty and skillfully executed inscriptions in both Latin and Arabic. Interpretive signage highlights the movement of knowledge from across many culture areas (this reinforces concepts present in the Elephant clock area that follows the Dhow). On-board is a digital map of past Dhow trade routes that allows families to select a port and view short vignettes from the traders like a sugar merchant in Zanzibar or a Yemeni sailor loading timber in South Asia. The vignettes illuminate how trade increased global and cultural exchange. Children also discover other aspects of the dhow culture and the factors that facilitated it, such as nautical expertise and knowledge of the monsoons, shores, and coastal regions. For instance, a knot station has children practicing their fine motor skills as they learn how to secure a Dhow sail. On the lower deck, children climb over and under the cargo: the timber, spices and textile boxes from South Asia; the ivory and timber from the Swahili coast; the Chinese pottery; and the dates and dried fish from Arabia. Through role-play, multi-sensory exploration and imaginative play, children come to understand how Muslim cultures were engaged in peaceful, international, cultural interactions for centuries.



Adjacent to the Dhow is ***T is for Trade Routes***. Children become a part of a historic and contemporary South Asian Muslim tradition as they sit in and “drive” a contemporary painted truck from Karachi, Pakistan. They can then step up to a digital screen to design their own truck. What phrases would they like to paint on their truck to wish their journey well? Children then take turns sitting behind the hump of a model, North African camel to learn how its memory is so strong that it can remember a path through the desert when there are no obvious markings. An adjacent magnet game challenges families to work together to help a caravan successfully travel over land, sea and desert. While moving enclosed samples of goods over trade routes, families must read a map, use a compass, exchange three goods and make a friend in order to win. Interpretive signage draws connections to the history of the Silk Road, to its exchanges and interactions, and to the Middle East’s central trading location. To further exemplify the interrelationship of cultures over vast expanses of land and water, a small component showcases a model ship from the powerful fleet of the Chinese explorer ***Z is for Zheng He***. Signage places his explorations some ninety years prior to Christopher Columbus and tells the stories of his fleet visiting more than fifty places in Asian and African countries with the goals of setting up close and friendly diplomatic relationships, developing cultural and trade exchanges, and establishing and strengthening maritime communications with other countries. Signage also refers to the large façade of the Indonesian mosque named after Zheng He to connect areas of the exhibition and reinforce core humanities themes.

Section 4: The blending and sharing of knowledge from across the world features **E is for Elephant Clock** supplemented by **L is for Library**, **B is for Birds** and **X is for Algebra**.

Departing from *D is for Dhow*, visitors find themselves standing under an eight foot tall *E is for Elephant Clock*, a large-scale replica of an elaborate water-powered clock with robotic and diverse time-telling figures representing countries from around the world. Al-Jazeri, a Kurdish-Muslim inventor, built the



clock in the 1200s in order to celebrate the diversity of mankind and the universal nature of Islam. Signage emphasizes the inventor's artistic choice to represent multicultural expression as well as each culture's unique symbols: the African/Indian elephant as a symbol of royalty, the Ancient Egyptian phoenix as rebirth and life, the Turban as Islamic, and the Chinese dragon as power and impregnability. The Elephant Clock's beauty and complexity stands as a vivid demonstration of the historical connections among cultures that facilitated new developments in science, literature and the arts. The model created for this exhibition does not function until family members work together to line up mechanical pieces using levers that fit pieces into place on the exterior of the clock. The challenge is heightened by having to fit the pieces in sequence and within a proscribed time period. Each piece represents a contribution from a

different culture, reinforcing the idea of the diversity of cultures coming together. This clock highlights Greek water principles, an Indian water-timing device and how Muslim cultures combined wisdom from all parts of the world, including Kurdish innovation by Al-Jazeri. When successful at the challenge, the clock springs into action and children watch as: the phoenix spins and sings on the half hour and the castle releases a ball that travels past the turban-wearing man onto a falcon through a dragon and towards the elephant.



Along the wall behind *E is for Elephant Clock* is a floor to ceiling scenically painted bookshelf for *L is for Library*. Interactive digital signage allows families to explore the scholarly exchange of cultures as they learn about the House of Wisdom in Baghdad, where scholars of many fields, from the humanities to mathematics to medicine and natural science, gathered to read, exchange ideas and gain knowledge from the ancient world. *B is for Birds* explores one book along the Library wall, *The Conference of the Birds* by

Farid Ud-Din Attar. Along the wall are short excerpts from the twelfth-century Sufi allegorical poem featuring the sparrow, the peacock and the owl. Flip panels challenge visitors to consider whether they share the human characteristics and traits of the *loquacious bird* and or the *hypocritical bird*. Copies of richly illustrated illuminations from Persian manuscripts accompany the text. Next to *B is for Birds* is a copy of an ancient map that hangs on the wall and highlights the University of al-Karaouine, a university located in Fes, Morocco that was founded by Fatima al-Fihri in 859 and has been, and continues to be, one of the leading spiritual and educational centers of the Muslim world.

A small station next to the Library is *X is for Algebra*, which challenges families to work together to problem solve. Families use scales to balance equations and shipments of goods. They learn how to say and read "this unknown thing" in Arabic after watching a fascinating clip on how the Arabic texts on algebra arrived in Spain. Because of different sounds among languages, the Spanish couldn't say "sh" and had to borrow the Greek "chi" or "x" only to then have the Latin replace it with "X", thereby forming the basis for mathematics text books that are used today.⁵

Section 5: The rational inquiry of the self and others features N is for Neighbor supplemented by V is for Views, K is for Kids, U is for Ummah and Y is for Year.

Weaving around the exhibit is a prominent art installation, *N is for Neighbor*. This colorful ribbon-like mosaic by local Muslim mosaic artist Haifa Bint-Kadi exemplifies how the past continues to inform the

⁵ Source: <http://www.wimp.com/xunknown/>

present by using the ubiquitous Muslim art form of decorated tiles. The motifs and styles of Muslim cultural tiles differ from country to country reflecting cultural influences over the course of centuries, but also unite Muslims from around the globe who have used decorative tiles to adorn their architecture from humble hearths to monumental buildings including the mosque. Bint-Kadi's installation is made from her own uniquely designed tiles as well as a collection of tiles designed by American Muslim families from New York City who attended one of a series of family art programs led by Bint-Kadi. Each tile depicts their unique American Muslim experience. Bint-Kadi weaves the tiles together into a masterful mosaic that represents the unity and diversity of Muslim voices found in CMOM's contemporary, global city. Along the mosaic path visitors encounter *V is for Views*, where they watch short video vignettes featuring American Muslims' views on American life and their experiences. Signage encourages adults to help their children develop an awareness of other citizens' perspectives, thereby helping the children develop an essential 21st century skill.

"Ummah" is the Arabic word for "nation" or "community" and refers to the Muslim community throughout the world. At *U is for Ummah*, visitors explore a large interactive map, lifting flaps to reveal acts of charity (zakat) that are an essential part of Muslim life. At *K is for Kids*, a photo montage of Muslim children from all backgrounds graphically depicts the extraordinary diversity of the Muslim world. To further the theme of the past informing the present, is *Y is for Year*, a wall mural that displays Muslim festivals from around the world.

Public Programs Walkthrough

Muslim Cultures programming extends the themes of the exhibition, delving deeper into culture specific areas and providing direct interaction with representatives of the Muslim community, including artists, scholars and community leaders. Programs have been selected and designed to showcase the breadth and diversity of Muslim cultures around the world through a more personal interaction with visitors. By partnering with Islamic Networks Group (ING), the developer of a curriculum for older children, CMOM will be able to learn from the experience of others and to apply their learning to our programs. As with all traveling exhibitions, CMOM will develop a formal guide outlining the public programs, curriculum and ideas for adapting programming to locations outside of New York City to provide travel venues. Major initiatives will be undertaken in the following areas:

- Cultural festivals and workshops
- Interpreters residency program (internships for college and graduate students)
- Lecture series for adults
- Professional development for educators
- School programs

All programs will reinforce the humanities themes that organize the exhibition:

1. Unity within the diversity of Muslim cultures.
2. Transmission and expression of culture through art, objects and stories in both the home and communities.
3. Interrelationship of cultures throughout time.
4. Blending of knowledge from across the world evidenced by the scientific and artistic achievements in the Muslim world.
5. Rational inquiry of self and others, as the past informs the present within the continuity of cultural diffusion and exchange.

Cultural Festivals and Workshops will be presented in CMOM's performance space and within the exhibit gallery. All programs for families are free with museum admission. Activity formats will include theater-style performances, demonstrations of storytelling and rug making in the exhibition, participatory experiences and arts workshops. Regularly scheduled festivals focused on a country or geographic region

will demonstrate cultural traditions and traditional art forms used by Muslims in specific areas of the world. In addition, CMOM will conduct a Souk Market Festival, a Silk Road Festival and Mosaic Tile Making Workshops on a regular basis. The Public Program staff will engage its leading educational and cultural partners to develop programming including New York Public Library, Asia Society, Teachers College and Lincoln Center, and will continue to cultivate new partners during the final design phase and throughout the run of the exhibition. Sample festivals include:

Indonesian Festival

- **Saung Budaya Indonesian Dance Group:** Saung Budaya will perform the *Saman* dance (also known as “Dance of the Thousand Hands”). This electrifying blend of Indonesian dance and music celebrates the harvest and the birth of the Prophet. Families will be invited to learn *Saman* dance steps following the performance. (Humanities Themes: 2 &3)
- **Beautiful Batik Art:** Families will learn about batik, an ancient Indonesian art form that uses wax resist techniques to create intricate designs on fabric. Children will create a batik pattern on fabric of their own design. (Humanities Themes: 2&3)
- **Javeneese Shadow Puppet:** Children will be inspired by examples of traditional Javeneese shadow puppets to make their own puppet. (Humanities Themes: 2&3)

Middle Eastern Festivals

- **Gaida Hannawi & Tareq Abboushi:** In a joyful interactive performance, singer Daida Hannawi and musician Tareq Abboushi will present songs from Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Yemen and Egypt for families to explore the wealth of musical styles and rhythms of the region. (Humanities Themes: 1-5)
- **J-Hoon Musical Ensemble:** Children ages 10-18 perform classical Kurdish songs and folk dances of Western Iran. (Humanities Themes: 2-5)
- **Egyptian Celebration Company:** Dancers perform the whirling dervish, the stick dance and the traditional horse dance. (Humanities Themes: 2-5)
- **Arabic Calligraphy:** Calligraphy is the primary visual art of Muslim cultures. Children learn to use a stencil and colored pencils to write *Salam*, the Arabic word for peace. Led by calligrapher Saleemah Ahamed. (Humanities Themes: 1-5)
- **Eight Point Star Courtyard:** The eight pointed star is a common symbol found in architecture from Muslim lands. Children create a mini model of a “courtyard” with the eight point star motif. (Humanities Themes: 1-5)

Souk Market Festival

The Souk Market Festival will take place up to four times a year. Families will explore the traditions of trade through a weekend-long festival dedicated to the marketplace, a central part of many Muslim communities. In the “market,” children will visit the various stands, barter for items, learn about silver smithing, taste foods from around the world, learn about the rich tradition of rug making and see examples of traditional clothing and personal objects. The festival will highlight diverse and wonderful foods from around the world. CMOM will continue its partnership with the James Beard Foundation to bring chefs to the Museum to demonstrate cooking styles from each of the cultural areas highlighted. (Humanities Themes: 1-5)

Journey Along the Silk Road Festival

From China all the way to the Mediterranean, the Silk Road trade routes facilitated the exchange of arts and ideas. Pathways along the Silk Road were inhabited by people who absorbed and exchanged new ideas through contact with incoming traders, caravan travelers and conquerors. The exchange of motifs and ideas in art traveled rapidly along the Silk Road and contained many reciprocal elements. For

example, gold and silver metalwork with Arabic calligraphy, a Middle Eastern specialty, was imported into China, while Chinese landscape motifs found their way into Persian illustrated miniatures. The legacy of the Silk Road is the blending of foreign ideas with existing cultural patterns. The Silk Road workshops will include:

- **Bright Bedouin Camel Bag:** Children are invited to create a colorful bag traditionally hung on a camel or donkey to store treasures while traveling along the Silk Road. These decorative bags have also been used throughout the Muslim world to hang on doors ready to receive gifts. (Humanities Themes: 1-3)
- **Creating a Monogram or Toghras:** Calligraphy means to write beautifully. Sultans and leaders across the Muslim world have used special Toghras or monograms as identification marks. Children will learn how to use a calligraphy pen to create a decorated and unique monogram with their own initials. (Humanities Themes: 1-3)
- **A Hammered Tray Fit for Royalty:** Throughout the Silk Road the ringing of hammers beating sheets of metal was heard and no matter where a traveler rested, they were likely to be served on a beautiful metal tray. The tradition of serving guests on a tray endures in the Muslim world today. Children will use intricate patterns and designs to create beautiful serving trays. (Humanities Themes: 1-3)

Mosaic Tile Art Ongoing Workshops Throughout the run of the exhibit, CMOM will offer regular Mosaic Art workshops. Mosaic tile artist Haifa Bint-Kadi, responsible for the *N is for Neighbor* component of the exhibit, will explore examples of mosaic art influenced by classic motifs and then show some of her own mosaic designs that incorporate her contemporary style. Families will be invited to make their own mini mosaic patterns with colorful tiles. (Humanities Themes: 1-5)

Interpreters Residency Program CMOM will recruit graduate students and college students to become interpreters in the exhibition during non-school days when attendance is the highest. CMOM will work through existing partnerships with universities and through a growing network of American Muslim community partners to recruit American Muslim students. Selected participants will act as museum guides and/or workshop facilitators and will be available to answer visitor questions on the exhibition floor. The students will have the opportunity to develop programs and lessons that expand on the themes illustrated in the exhibit. They will deliver historical, artistic and language based programs to visiting families along with providing their own perspective on the American Muslim experience. The *Interpreters Residency Program* will offer immersive, real work opportunities while utilizing the Museum's resources in family programming and professional development. (Humanities Themes: 1-5)

Lecture Series CMOM will host a lecture series focused on Global Competence in the 21st Century. CMOM will partner with Asia Society, NYU Wagner and NYU School of Continuing and Professional Studies to host this ongoing public education series to help parents, educators and other stakeholders understand how to foster global competence in young children, beginning in early childhood. The series will include topics on how to prepare children to be productive and active participants in an increasingly global society; how to use the arts to nurture curiosity, communication, creativity, and collaboration; and looking at 21st Century Skills Framework through the lens of developing early childhood literacy skills (social, cognitive, creative and linguistic).

Scheherazad Al-Salamin, a student at Sarah Lawrence College studying Middle Eastern Studies in Film and Literature is creating a documentary about the development of the *Muslim Cultures* exhibition. The documentary focuses on the lens through which Muslims in America have been previously viewed from institutional perspectives, the controversies surrounding "Islamic art" and the representation of Muslims in America. Her goal is to understand processes by exploring the way in which CMOM meets these

challenges with the opening of the *Muslim Cultures* exhibition. After the opening of the exhibit, CMOM will host a film screening of the documentary accompanied by a panel discussion with Ms. Al Salamin and Project Advisors. The film will serve not only as documentation of the creation of this specific project, but also as a model for other museums on the development of cultural exhibitions.

Additionally, consulting scholars will conduct a series of lectures for the general public. Proposed lecture topics include:

- Gender in the Muslim World: Panel presentation and discussion with Sayyeda Mizra-Jaffri, Strategic Development Consultant and Hussein Rashid, Adjunct Professor of Religion at Hofstra University.
- How to Understand Muslim Sects: Peter Awn, Dean of General Studies and Director of Middle East Institute, Professor of Islamic Religion and Comparative Religion, Columbia University.

Professional Development CMOM will partner with the Islamic Networks Group (ING) to develop a professional development curriculum to complement exhibition themes and educational programs featured in *Muslim Cultures*. The professional development program will be made available and marketed to educational professionals seeking to explore Muslim cultures, as well as those interested in creative solutions and techniques in developing programs for 21st century learners. The professional development curriculum will focus on elementary through middle school teaching professionals and will be accompanied by support materials to be used in both formal and informal educational environments for teachers, museum educators, after school professionals and by at-home caregivers. (Humanities Themes: 1-5)

School Programs CMOM will provide school programs both onsite and with our outreach partners featuring themes and concepts that align with those addressed in the *Muslim Cultures* exhibition. Students will gain critical thinking and observation skills through applied learning in exhibit spaces and hands-on-art based projects. The school programs curriculum will be developed in conjunction with the Islamic Networks Group (ING) and will conform to New York State and City Performance Standards. Programs will be developed to address key elements from the variety of humanities topics reflected in the exhibit including history, anthropology, language and linguistics, the history of art and architecture and oral history and ethnomusicology. (Humanities Themes: 1-5)

- *Guided Tours*: Over 900 school groups visit CMOM for a guided tour every year. Guided tours offer 90 minutes of educator led-inquiry based-exploration. Tours are led by trained educators and allow students to expand on their existing knowledge of Muslim cultures, while reflecting upon their own culture and family traditions.
- *Outreach Programs*: CMOM delivers outreach programs across New York City to over 35,000 children each year. Offsite outreach programs for *Muslim Cultures* will take place at local community based organizations, public schools, public housing community centers and libraries – mostly targeting a low-income audience. Program sessions led by trained educators will include inquiry-based discussions using objects, visual aids and storytelling and will culminate in a hands-on art based activity.