



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 29, 2015

MEDIA CONTACT  
Emily Kowalski | (919) 664-6795 | ekowalski@ncartmuseum.org

## North Carolina Museum of Art Judaic Art Gallery Reopens After Expansion Project

*Renovated gallery features new display cases and a larger selection of beautiful objects*

**Raleigh, N.C.**—The North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) announces that its [Judaic Art Gallery](#) will reopen July 1 after a five-month expansion project. The new gallery space features a larger display of Jewish ceremonial objects installed in custom-designed glass cases.

“Our Judaic art collection has been growing steadily since the Judaic Art Gallery first opened in 1983, and we realized the Museum needed a larger space and improved casework to optimally display this collection,” says John Coffey, the Museum’s deputy director for art and curator in charge of the Judaic Art Gallery. “Our principal goals with this project were to expand the gallery to accommodate a dynamic Judaic art collection and to display the objects in the finest quality cases sufficient for the next 25 years.”

Features of the renovated gallery include:

- **Expanded gallery space.** The NCMA’s Judaic Art Gallery has expanded to 1,728 square feet, a 50 percent increase. Decorative screens divide the expanded space into three thematic sections: introduction and highlights; Sabbath and festivals, home, and life cycle; and the synagogue.
- **Larger selection of Jewish ceremonial objects and art on view.** The expanded gallery space allows for a display of more pieces from the Museum’s Judaic art collection, complemented by significant loans from the collection of the Jewish Museum, New York. Highlights of the Museum’s collection now on view include a large *Standing Hanukkah Lamp* from an 18<sup>th</sup>-century Eastern European synagogue and a pair of mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century silver Torah finials that were once part of the treasury of the Great Synagogue in Amsterdam. Historical objects are matched with objects of modern and contemporary design.
- **New display cases.** Five Plexiglas display cases have been replaced with larger, custom-designed glass cases. “These new cases give us greater flexibility and security,” explains Eric Gaard, the NCMA’s curator of design. “They are also elegant and present the pieces as extraordinary works of art.”

“We are especially appreciative of the support received from Michael and Lisa Sandman of Raleigh,” says Coffey. “They provided the leadership gift that allowed us to quickly begin and complete this project.” Additional funding was provided by private foundations and individuals through the Museum’s [Friends of the Judaic Art Gallery](#), a statewide volunteer group formed to support the continued development of the Gallery and its related programs.

“We are proud to be one of only two art museums in the country with a permanent gallery dedicated to Jewish ceremonial art,” says Museum Director Lawrence J. Wheeler. “We endeavor not only to preserve and display these beautifully crafted objects, but also to serve as a forum for religious and cultural understanding. With the completion of this expansion project, we have a Judaic Art Gallery the size of our ambitions, and we look forward to seeing it grow even more.”

###

### About the North Carolina Museum of Art

The North Carolina Museum of Art’s permanent collection spans 5,000 years, from ancient Egypt to the present, making the institution one of the premier art museums in the South. The Museum’s collection provides educational, aesthetic, intellectual, and cultural experiences for the citizens of North Carolina and beyond. The 164-acre Museum Park showcases the connection between art and nature through site-specific works of environmental art. The Museum offers changing national touring exhibitions, classes, lectures, family activities, films, and concerts.

(continued)

The Museum opened West Building, home to the permanent collection, in 2010. The North Carolina Museum of Art, Lawrence J. Wheeler, director, is located at 2110 Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh. It is the art museum of the State of North Carolina, Pat McCrory, governor, and an agency of the Department of Cultural Resources, Susan Kluttz, secretary.