

PRESS RELEASE

NATIONAL HIDDUR MITZVAH CENTER GRAND OPENING EVENT

SPONSORED BY:

The Jewish Folk Art Festival

and

The Gary Rosenthal Collection Studio

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The Gary Rosenthal Collection Studio is proud and excited to announce the opening of the National Hiddur Mitzvah Center, in Kensington, MD, Saturday night, May 7 and Sunday, May 8, 2011. The opening will be celebrated with a weekend filled with events.

Hiddur means the beautification or the aesthetics of a mitzvah. The two-fold mission of the Center includes The Hiddur Mitzvah Project (www.hiddurmitzvah.org) which uses hands on Jewish art as a vehicle for social action. Examples of the mitzvah projects include 100 families in New Jersey who created Kiddush cups as gifts for Ethiopian Bar Mitzvah children in Israel and the donation of 1,000 menorah, handcrafted by volunteers, to New Orleans residents after Hurricane Katrina destroyed their homes. The Hiddur Mitzvah glass ribbon project is an active supporter of Sharsheret in its important work with young Jewish women touched by breast cancer. Most importantly, the Project is a vehicle to get people involved--and it's a Mitzvah!

The Hiddur Mitzvah Center, to showcase Jewish functional art and artists, is a dream come true for Washington, D.C. sculptor Gary Rosenthal. Mr. Rosenthal believes that creating Jewish functional art is a sacred mission celebrating his faith and to be enjoyed and used. "I have always wanted to encourage others to create and collect beautiful contemporary Judaica as well as to help other artists get the exposure they need to earn a living with their craft. I will hopefully use the Center to showcase the best in handcrafted Jewish art and benefit the community by introducing artists to an appreciative public both locally and nationally!"

On Saturday evening, May 7, the opening event will begin with an Arts Havdalah led by Rabbi David Shneyer in the new Hiddur Mitzvah Center Gallery followed by an evening of music, art, and conversation. Refreshments will be served. The event is free. The evening event will be a fundraiser for the Washington Jewish Folk Arts Festival and Mr. Rosenthal has generously agreed to donate a limited edition of original spice boxes – signed and numbered, available for a \$100 tax deductible contribution to The Jewish Folk Arts Festival.

On Sunday, May 8, the Hiddur Mitzvah Center will be open in the morning from 9am – noon to Hebrew Schools children to visit the gallery and create their own piece of Judaica. In the afternoon, from 2pm – 5pm, the gallery will offer an “alternative Mother’s Day” opportunity for families to create their own family heirlooms. From 1pm – 6pm, the art gallery is open for a group show and meet the artists, featuring Ronny Tabeka, Katherine Janus Kahn, Gary Rosenthal, and other artists.

Additionally, on Sunday, May 15, Artsites will have a group showing and the full gallery will be open for visitors.

About The Jewish Folk Arts Festival:

The Jewish Folk Arts Festival, a bi-annual event sponsored by Am Kolel, is a celebration of the talent and diversity of Jewish performing and visual arts in the Greater Washington DC/Baltimore region. The richness of Jewish values, culture and heritage is passed from generation to generation through singers, writers, dancers, visual artists, storytellers and craftspeople. The Jewish Folk Arts Festival offers a rare meeting place for all Jews in our community, young and old, secular and religious to celebrate our Jewish heritage together. All performers and workshop presenters donate their time to the festival.

About Gary Rosenthal:

Mr. Rosenthal has been one of the leading Judaica artists for over 35 years and is credited by many for having mainstreamed contemporary Judaica into the American Craft Movement. His work has shown in museum gift shops including the Smithsonian's Renwick Museum for American Crafts, the Corning Museum of Glass, the American Craft Museum, the Jewish Museum in N.Y. and many fine galleries and collections throughout the world.

To find out more about the Hiddur Mitzvah project and the new Hiddur Mitzvah Center please contact: Hamilton Whitney, Hamilton@collectgaryrosenthal.com 301 493-5577 www.hiddurmitzvah.org

Events planned for the grand opening:

Saturday May 7th

1. 8pm to 10pm - Arts Havdalah service with Rabbi David Shneyer followed by music, art, and conversation. Refreshments to be served.

Sunday May 8th

1. 9am to Noon - Open House for schools to visit and create Judaica.
2. 1pm to 6pm - Art gallery opening for group show featuring Katherine Janus Kahn, Ronny Tabeka, Gary Rosenthal, and other local artists.
3. 2pm to 5pm - Open Studio Mother's Day Alternative Program - "Keep the light alive." Generations creating their own family heirloom Shabbat candlesticks together

Sunday May 15th

1. Artsites group show - Gallery open Noon to 5pm.