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**The Revolving Museum opens “Toys and Games: More Than Amusement”
exhibition, exploring the art of toys and games while presenting
provocative commentaries on American popular culture**

LOWELL, Mass., January 25, 2008 –Celebrate the opening of the exhibition “Toys and Games: More than Amusement” on **Valentine’s Day, February 14th from 6 to 9 PM at The Revolving Museum, 22 Shattuck Street, Lowell MA.**

Toys and games, like other artifacts of material culture, can tell us a great deal about our evolving cultural attitudes, values, and challenges. The complexity and diversity of our amusements continues to progress rapidly. This unique exhibition will utilize toys and games as a lens to explore important social, cultural, political, economical, and environmental themes in our society.

This exhibit is especially relevant because of recent press regarding toxic issues, studies emphasizing the importance of certain types of play, and how big business continues to promote war and violence and how issues of fear are affecting the youth of today. Additionally, the exhibition will highlight how toys and game inspire us to have fun, learn, collaborate and follow our dreams.

For this exhibition, which will be open from February 14 to December 31, 2008, the entire museum space will emulate the aesthetic of games. The exhibits will include such genres as video and computer games, educational toys, board games, dolls, puzzles, sports, game shows, and more. Nearly all artworks in the exhibition will be created by young artists, grades 6 through college level, in conjunction with The Revolving Museum’s educational programs and neighboring educational institutions. More than 200 participants from Greater Lowell community are expected to be involved in the ambitious project. The highly interactive show will encourage the public to play, use its imagination, be challenged to solve problems, and possibly engage in physical exercise, storytelling, and teamwork. Our interaction with toys and games brings out the creativity and ingenuity in each of us.

Commenting on the genesis of the exhibit, Jerry Beck, founder and artistic director of The Revolving Museum, said, “As part of museum’s educational program, students examined connections with school subject areas such as math, science, English, social studies, science, art, and others to provide further insight and making learning fun and pleasurable. This show allows youth to offer their own ideas, concerns, and issues surrounding the theme of toys and games.”

Proposed projects span a vast array of ideas and media, including:

- New York photographer Nat Ward will present his provocative collection of photos from his book called *Buy Me Something*. He specifically focused his eye on the tools of play, the modern consumer experience, and how these entities provide children with an education in desire and culturally acceptable behavior. His hope is that these images challenge people to consider how toys and the mechanisms that facilitate their sale inform and reproduce a distinct set of culturally-defined values. Nat also worked with a group of teens that will showcase their work next to his offering another perspective.
- Sculptor Olivia Robinson and art students from Syracuse University have created a society of dolls who wear their insides on their outside. Using the motif of the doll as a vessel, the students playfully explored the complex and often conflicting nature of identity. Addressing issues of “normality” and identity, each doll expresses a hybrid of personalities, ages, or species.
- Ryan Ferdinand, Shannon Arel & students from the Innovation Academy Charter School in Chelmsford have designed a giant PEZ™ dispenser, incorporating video and interactive journals that will dispense information on various issues associated with the entertainment and educational aspects of toys and games. It also will underscore a commitment to learning the social justice issues of racism, sexism and violence that relate to our local environment and the larger community.
- The Revolving Museum educational team of Alison Nesbitt, Diana Coluntino, Jennifer Ehlert and Jerry Beck present artworks created by the young artists participating in the Museum’s educational programs with a series of games and toys including an assortment of colorful piñatas, the traditional symbol of the Mexican fiesta, kites, large-scale game boards, crossword puzzles, a 6-foot teddy bear and more.

Toys and Games: More Than Amusement exhibition is funded in part by Bank of America, The Boston Foundation, the City of Lowell, EdVestors Inc., Hunt Alternatives Fund, Lowell Cultural Council, Lowell Police Department, Lowell Public Schools, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Parker Family Fund, Trustees of the Ayer Home, the University of Massachusetts Lowell and our many members and friends.

About The Revolving Museum

Revolving Museum is an evolving laboratory of creative expression for people of all backgrounds, ages, and abilities who seek to experience the transformative power of art. Through public art, exhibitions, and educational programs, The Museum promotes artistic exploration and appreciation; encourages community participation and growth; and provides opportunities for empowerment and social change. The Museum is a winner of the 2007 Massachusetts Cultural Council’s Commonwealth Award in the Category of “Community”.

The Museum is located at 22 Shattuck St., Lowell, MA 01852. It is open, free of charge, Tuesday through Sunday from 11 am to 4 pm from February 14 to December 31, 2008. The Revolving Museum is a 501(c)(3), charitable organization. For more information, call 978-YES-ARTS (978/937-2787) or visit www.revolvingmuseum.org.

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