News Release

March 11, 2009
*** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

Contact: Christine Nichols
Communications & Events Coordinator
nicho357@msu.edu
(517) 353-9834
artmuseum.msu.edu

EXHIBIT: The Story of Exodus: The Passover Haggadah

DATES: March 21–April 5, 2009

OPENING RECEPTION: Tuesday, March 24, 5–7 p.m.
5:30 p.m. gallery talk with Illana Blumberg, Jewish Studies and James Madison College

LOCATION: Kresge Art Museum
Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Display of over Thirty-five Passover Haggadot Coincides with Jewish Holiday
Kresge Art Museum, MSU

EAST LANSING, MI — MSU hosts a collection of over thirty-five historical and modern Passover Haggadot in The Story of Exodus: The Passover Haggadah, on display March 21-April 15, 2009. An opening reception for the exhibition at Kresge Art Museum will be held on Tuesday, March 24, 5-7 p.m., including a 5:30 p.m. gallery talk by Illana Blumberg, Jewish Studies and James Madison College.

As the centerpiece of the Jewish holiday of Passover, commencing this year on April 9, the Haggadah is a Jewish religious text that sets out the order of the Passover Seder meal. Haggadah means “telling” and the text recounts the liberation of the Jews from slavery in Egypt as described in the Book of Exodus. According to Kresge Art Museum Director Susan J. Bandes, the exhibit is in to parts. “Those that are aesthetically significant are on view in Kresge. Others that are more engaging historically are at the MSU Library. This turned out to be a wonderful cross-campus and timely collaboration.”

“Passover is a great celebration of freedom and Jewish peoplehood”, explains Ken Waltzer, director of Jewish Studies at MSU. “Each year, we celebrate the exodus from slavery to freedom and we acknowledge the forging of a new fate and peoplehood. We recite the prayers as if we are the generation that escaped slavery. We thereby remind ourselves of our commitment to universal freedom and we affirm our connection with the common fate of the peoples forged near Mount Sinai.”

The Haggadot are on loan from the Jewish Heritage Collection, Special Collections, University of Michigan. Kresge Art Museum will exhibit the earliest Haggadot showing the influence of medieval Christian illustrations as well as more recent artistic endeavors by Ben Shahn and Davis Moss.

Continued on page 2
Continued from page 1

At the MSU Mail Library’s Special Collections, historically important 20th century examples will be on view ranging from consumer-product and feminist Haggadot to those from Israeli kibbutzim. “The exhibit provides insights into the modernization of Passover celebration with new art and new themes in the two new 20th century centers of global Jewish life, North America and Israel”, says Waltzer.

Related events are a discussion of Geraldine Brooks’ The People of the Book on Wednesday, April 1, at 5:30, led by Marc Bernstein, Jewish Studies and College of Arts & Letters, and a gallery talk on collecting Jewish heritage and illustrated Haggadot on Monday, April 13, 2009, at noon, led by Constance Harris, author, collector and donor of Haggadot.

The exhibition is sponsored by Michigan State University College of Arts and Letters.

For additional information questions please contact Christine Nichols, KAM Communications & Events Coordinator, at (517) 353-9834, or via email at nicho357@msu.edu.

Admission is free to Kresge Art Museum. The museum is open Mondays through Fridays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursdays until 8 p.m., weekends noon to 5 p.m. Kresge Art Museum is located on the first floor of Kresge Art Center at the intersection of Physics and Auditorium Roads on the campus of Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI. For information, call (517) 355-7631 or visit www.artmuseum.msu.edu.

The MSU Mail Library Special Collections is open Mondays through Fridays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sundays 1 p.m. – 5 p.m. Special Collections is located on the ground floor of the MSU Main Library.

# # #

Caption/Credit for attached image: Ben Shahn (American, born Lithuania 1898-1969), Haggadah, 1966, 1/92, signed original double page lithograph, bound and housed in original full vellum printed box, Trianon Press, Arches paper, Jewish Heritage Collection, Special Collections, University of Michigan.

# # #