

# ChicagoHistoryMuseum

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## **Magic**

### **Chicago's Magical Past Appears June 9, 2012**

(CHICAGO)- On June 9, 2012, the Chicago History Museum will open *Magic*, an exhibition for families that explores the history of magic and its ties to Chicago. The exhibition uses live magic performances, a display of significant artifacts and an interactive theater experience to bring to life magic history, how magicians learn their craft and why magic has secrets. *Magic* will be on display at the Chicago History Museum from June 9, 2012 through January 6, 2013.

"Magic will be a change of pace for the Museum. It's much more interactive, much more theatrical, but still with the dedication to the history of magic performance," said Chicago History Museum President Gary T. Johnson. "I hope visitors, young and old, see that museums are magical places where surprising things can happen."

Exhibition curator John Russick delved head first into the world of magic looking at the stories of real magicians past and present. His research found that most magicians were inspired at a young age, so *Magic* presents artifacts through the eyes of a young person investigating what it takes to become a magician.

"We have interpreted history through the eyes of a child to not only offer the enthusiasm and excitement kids bring to magic, but also to use that voice to guide visitors through the exhibition," said Russick. "At the same time we're using artifacts that capture important aspects of Chicago's magic performance history."

Perhaps the exhibition's most innovative element comes in the form of an interactive theater called *Lou's Magic Shop*, which uses dramatic stage effects to bring to life the tricks of the trade and the icons of the industry. The story of a kid who hopes to become a masterful

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magician is presented to visitors in a theater format with video, special effects and optical illusions to give viewers a new kind of exhibition experience.

*"Lou's Magic Shop* presents a very different sort of story, it is the first time we've ever created a theater experience with special effects, so people get a chance to not only hear and view a story, but experience the world of magic by being introduced to some of the tools that are used in becoming a magician," said Director of Exhibitions, Tamara Biggs. The theatrical performance lasts approximately 11 minutes and is on a pushbutton control giving visitors the opportunity to view the show on demand.

As the Chicago History Museum explores the history of magic, there has been a significant effort to present the history from a perspective that is uniquely Chicago while capturing magic's universal appeal. "Magic is largely the same all over the world. The mysterious, the unexplained, the amazing, can all inspire someone no matter what culture they come from," said Russick. "In the exhibition we present Chicago as a hub of magic commerce and stage performance, but it is a story that cannot be bound by culture or geography."

*Magic* offers live magic performances throughout the Museum daily. These demonstrations take place Monday–Friday 11 a.m.–3 p.m.; Saturdays 11 a.m.–4 p.m., and Sundays 1–4 p.m., and will be ongoing from June 10, 2012, through September 3, 2012, and then will occur only on weekends beginning on September 8, 2012; Saturdays 11 a.m.–4 p.m., and Sundays 1–4 p.m., until the end of the exhibition on January 6, 2013.

On opening day, magicians will perform close-up magic at tables stationed around the Museum from 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. The Museum's monthly *Second Saturdays for Families* with the Radio Disney Road Crew program turns magical with themed crafts, songs, games and a performance from local teen magician, Danny Dubin, at the end of the noon and 2 p.m. shows.

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*Magic* has been brought to life by a team of experts including Director of Exhibitions, Tamara Biggs; Senior Exhibition Designer, Dan Oliver; Director of Education, Lynn McRaney; and Director of Curatorial Affairs, John Russick.

*Magic* opens on June 9, 2012, and runs through January 6, 2013. For more information about *Magic* and the other Chicago History Museum programs and exhibitions please visit [chicagohistory.org](http://chicagohistory.org) or call 312-642-4600.

The Chicago History Museum is open Monday - Saturday 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., and Sunday 12 noon – 5 p.m. Free for Children 12 and under, \$14 for adults and \$12 for Seniors (65 +)/Students (13-22).

*Magic* is made possible by gifts from the *Kipper Family Foundation*, the *Crown Family Fund for Exhibitions and Programs* and the *Segal Family Foundation*.

*The object theater is provided through the generosity of The Jacob and Rosaline Cohn Foundation.*

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The Chicago History Museum, a major museum and research center for Chicago and American history, is located at 1601 N. Clark Street. The Museum can be reached by CTA buses 11, 22, 36, 72, 151, and 156. Parking is conveniently located one block north of the Museum at Clark and LaSalle Streets (enter on Stockton Drive). Admission to the Museum is \$14 for Adults with audio tour, \$12 for Seniors and Students with audio tour and free for Children 12 years and younger.