

AVAM 101

THE AMERICAN VISIONARY ART MUSEUM

THE AMERICAN VISIONARY ART MUSEUM is America's official national museum and education center for self-taught, intuitive artistry (deemed so by a unanimous vote of the U.S. Congress). **FOUNDED IN 1995**, the museum seeks to promote the recognition of intuitive, self-reliant, creative contribution as both an important historic and essential living piece of treasured human legacy. The **ONE-OF-A-KIND** American Visionary Art Museum is located on a **1.1 ACRE WONDERLAND CAMPUS** at 800 Key Highway, Baltimore Inner Harbor. Three renovated historic industrial buildings house wonders created by farmers, housewives, mechanics, retired folk, the disabled, the homeless, as well as the occasional neurosurgeon – all **INSPIRED BY THE FIRE WITHIN**. From carved roots to embroidered rags, tattoos to toothpicks, the visionary transforms dreams, loss, hopes, and ideals into **POWERFUL WORKS OF ART**.

WHAT IS A VISIONARY? Visionaries perceive potential and creative relationship where most of us don't. English writer Jonathan Swift put it simply, "Vision is the art of seeing things invisible." Such vision lies at the heart of all true invention, whether that special vision manifests as an astonishing work of art like those created by the intuitive artists featured at the American Visionary Art Museum or as a medical breakthrough, a melody never before sung, some deeper understanding of the cosmos, or as a way in which life could be better, more justly lived. Visionaries have always constituted human-kind's greatest "evolutionaries."

Without visionaries' willingness to be called fools, to make mistakes, to be wrong, few new "right" things would ever be birthed. Visionaries are brave scouts at the frontier of the unknown. They explore their visions with a passionate single-mindedness. Albert Einstein rightly observed, "Imagination is more important than knowledge."

Creative acts intended to uplift, defend, and enlighten fulfill every function that can be asked of a work of art. They inspire us, make us think in new ways, and birth new beauty and dignity into our world.

WHAT IS ART? The ancients—the Greeks, Egyptians, Hopis, and New Guinea tribesmen—were among earth's most prolific art-making peoples. Yet, none had any word for "art" in their respective languages. Rather, they each had a word that meant "well-made" or "beautifully performed."

Our American Visionary Art Museum believes that this view of what art really means is as perfect an understanding of art as ever was. It speaks to an art incumbent upon all its citizens, pervasive throughout all the acts of our daily life. Its emphasis is on process and consciousness, not mere artifact.

Martin Luther King, Jr. expressed his profound respect for the true artistry each member of a society can uniquely evidence to bless our communities, "If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the Hosts of Heaven and earth would pause to say, Here lived a great streetsweeper who did his job well."

CRITICAL PRAISE

FOR THE AMERICAN VISIONARY ART MUSEUM

"The Visionary Art Museum provides America with its most essential, innovative cultural experience. Baltimore is privileged to have such a great institution. All our cities should participate in the vital, invaluable, unique perspective it provides."

—COLIN EISLER, NYU INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS

"Many local art lovers think that Washington's best museum is in Baltimore, specifically the stockpile of offbeat genius and piercing obsessions known as the American Visionary Art Museum."

—WASHINGTON POST

AVAM is listed #1 in the "Top 10 places to see before you're 10" list—the only museum ranked alongside national treasures like Niagara Falls, Muir Redwood Forest, and the Grand Canyon.

—TRAVEL & LEISURE MAGAZINE

"Baltimore, home of the first American Museum in 1786, is since (November, 1995) home to the most innovative: the delightful American Visionary Art Museum."

—THE ECONOMIST

"The American Visionary Art Museum provides a stage, a space, for the sculptural and drawn evidence of self trained artists and gives us a glimpse into their interior view; the genius of autodidacts in all their myriad wisdoms, innocence, or admirable folly. The Visionary Art Museum has the genius to widely explore the manifestations of intensive ideation and labor and somehow have us all come out on top, even arrive at a higher, more joyful, state of mind than when we enter. Matt Groening and I have been invited to curate a show on the topic of SMILE and we are working to that end with Rebecca Hoffberger. It will be a pleasure to share our ideas and humor and laughter with the community of Baltimore and pilgrims to this looking glass into the visual psyche. It promises to be uplifting."

—GARY PANTER, "WHAT MAKES US SMILE" CO-CURATOR

"AVAM is more than a museum for untrained artists. It is even more than just a museum. It is an artistic vision of better people in a better world."

—HOWARD ROSENBLOOM, PHILANTHROPIST

"I was born and grew up in England, my parents are from India, I live part of the time in Santa Barbara, California and part of the time near Kyoto, Japan...and I have never found anywhere a place like this glorious museum . . . where there's a real sense of vision and such beauty, such vibrancy, such excitement, color and imagination."

—PICO IYER, TRAVEL WRITER AND JOURNALIST

"[AVAM] allows you to become intimate with the artwork in a profound way. The works on display give a concrete shape to the impermanent things such as dreams, imagination, and vision."

—ART & ANTIQUES MAGAZINE

"This IS a wonderful place, isn't it!"

—ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU

"This is a museum of infectious high spirits...a celebration of the infinite permutations of the creative spirit . . . a galloping success."

—CATHERINE FOX, ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION

Patricia Schultz. Author of 1,00 Places to See Before You Die, curates our global museum collection covering . . . AVAM is ranked among the top 30 Must-See Global Museums along with the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, The Hermitage in St. Petersburg, and Museum of Modern Art in New York.

—DELTA SKY MAGAZINE

HANDY INFO

OUR HOURS

Tuesday–Sunday (Closed on Mondays)
10 a.m.–6 p.m.

Open Monday, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
as AVAM’s tribute to teachers—Everyone is
Free!

Closed: Christmas Day & Thanksgiving Day

ADDRESS

800 Key Highway • Baltimore MD 21230

WEB SITE

www.avam.org

FACEBOOK FAN PAGE

www.facebook.com/theavam

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

@TheAVAM

ADMISSION

Adult	\$15.95
Senior (60 & up)	\$13.95
Student	\$9.95
Group of 10 or more	\$10 ea.
College Group	\$8 ea.
School Group K-12	\$6 ea.
Children 6 and under	Free!

PARKING

Abundant metered parking on Covington
Street and Key Highway.

Handicapped accessible

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

www.mtmaryland.com

www.charmcitycirculator.com

MEDIA CONTACT

Pete Hilsee

ABOUT OUR WONDERLAND CAMPUS

MAIN BUILDING: Critically acclaimed as
an “architectural jewel,” the 35,000 square-
foot main building combines a three-story
historic industrial building with a swirling,
curvilinear addition to contain galleries filled
with SPIRIT, ART and WONDER.

JIM ROUSE VISIONARY CENTER:

Housed in a 27,000 square foot historic
whiskey warehouse featuring: The top-floor
*Center for Visionary Thought Conference &
Performance Center* with capacity for 450 •
The Hall of Social Visionaries – the place to
link creative acts of social justice with the
real art of living. Located in the second-floor
lobby & catwalk • Blue-glass-walled “*Thou
Art Creative!*” Classrooms – one for hands-
on artmaking inspired by the techniques of
visionary artists & the other prepared for
exploration of the world’s best creative prac-
tices in community problem-solving of all
sorts • *Visionary Village* – main floor hosts
cavernous exhibition arena for large sculp-
tures, art cars & visionary environments

HUGHES FAMILY OUTDOOR MOVIE

THEATER: for free, family films during
warm-weather months. Seats more than
1,000 – *with* their picnics!

TALL SCULPTURE BARN: functions
as host-site for lectures, performances,
meetings, private receptions and cel-
ebrations. 45-foot ceilings accommodate
TOWERING sculptural works!

WILDFLOWER & SCULPTURE

GARDENS: Open spaces include an out-
door amphitheater, a Speaker’s Corner
trumpeting AVAM’s commitment to the
precious freedom of speech, the beloved
3-ton, 55 foot-tall wind-powered Whirligig
by Vollis Simpson, Andrew Logan’s 8-foot
Cosmic Space Egg, Dr. Evermor’s 40 foot
tall steel Phoenix, Ben Wilson’s wooden
meditation chapel/wedding altar and sea-
sonal wildflowers, aromatics and climb-
ing vines.



THE SIGHTS & WONDERS AT AVAM

WHAT MAKES US SMILE?*

Main Exhibition Space thru Sept 4, 2011

“What Makes Us Smile?” is the American Visionary Art Museum’s 16th year-long exhibition — a playful celebration of human joy that is co-curated by renowned creator of *The Simpson’s*, Matt Groening, artist Gary Panter – best known for his whimsy behind Pee Wee Herman’s Playhouse – and Museum founder Rebecca Hoffberger. “Smile” features the costumes, cartoons, out-loud & 3-D glee-filled surprises created by 90 artists, imps, and comedians with accompanying essays, factoids, quotes and blurbs that revel in the history and science behind the gift of laughter.

OUT OF THIS WORLD

Third Floor Gallery thru March 2, 2012

On the occasion of the Centennial of the birth of visionary artist Eugene Von Bruenchenhein — a baker from Wisconsin — 38 out-of-this-world paintings come to AVAM from the Von Bruenchenhein Collection and look simply dazzling en masse in our 3rd Floor Gallery.

SELECTIONS FROM AVAM'S PERMANENT COLLECTION

First Floor Gallery – ongoing

Works selected from a collection of over 4,000 pieces that includes visionaries such as Paul Darmafall (*The Baltimore Glass Man*), Martin Ramirez, Mary Proctor, James Harold Jennings, Wayne Kusy, Antonio Alberti and more.

CABARET MECHANICAL THEATRE

Jim Rouse Visionary Center

A collection of whimsical, interactive automata from the Cabaret Mechanical Theatre of London. Check out the visitor favorite, “How to Live No. 17: Spaghetti” by Paul Spooner!

SCREEN PAINTERS OF BALTIMORE

Jim Rouse Visionary Center

A celebration of screen painting—the uniquely Baltimore art form. Full-size replica rowhouses house screens painted by Baltimore’s finest. A documentary film, shown in a theater within the rowhomes, shines a light on the artists and their desire to paint.

PUBLIC ART

Throughout Museum Grounds

A three-ton, four-story Whirligig by Vollis Simpson; Nancy Josephson’s mirror-mosaic bus called “Gallery-A-Go-Go;” Andrew Logan’s Cosmic Space Egg; Adam Kurtzman’s Giant Golden Hand; David Hess’s Bird’s Nest Balcony; Dick Brown’s “Bluebird of Happiness”; the glittering Community Mosaic Wall – the work of a wonderful apprenticeship program for at-risk youth; Wildflower Sculpture Garden featuring Ben Wilson’s wooden meditation chapel/wedding altar; “critters” by Clyde Jones; Ted Ludwiczak’s stone fountain heads; and more.

***PAST THEMATIC MEGA-EXHIBITIONS**

1995: The Tree of Life **1996:** Wind in My Hair **1997:** The End is Near! Visions of Apocalypse, Millennium & Utopia **1998:** Love: Error & Eros: Love Profane and Divine **1999:** We Are Not Alone: Angels & Other Aliens **2000:** Treasures of the Soul: Who is Rich? **2001:** The Art of War & Peace: Toward an End to Hatred **2002:** High on Life: Transcending Addiction **2003:** Golden Blessings of Old Age/Out of the Mouths of Babes **2004:** Holy H2O: Fluid Universe **2005:** Race, Class, Gender ≠ (does not equal) CHARACTER **2006:** Home & Beast **2007:** All Faiths Beautiful **2008:** The Marriage of Art, Science & Philosophy **2009:** Life, Liberty & the Pursuit of Happiness

DO

AWARD-WINNING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Ours is truly a *muse*-eum, a spirit-infused space—one that is highly conducive to inspiring creative acts of kindness and deeper understanding. Our thoughtful, fun, original recurring programming is a celebration of these creative acts by all people.



KINETIC SCULPTURE RACE

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FLOCKS FROM THE HILL

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ANNUAL GALA & MONDO EXOTICA AFTERPARTY

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MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY - AVAM's salute to America's Teachers

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4TH OF JULY PET PARADE

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BAZAART HOLIDAY ART MARKET



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ARTCAR PARADE



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HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS BY VISIONARY ARTISTS



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AVAM'S 7 EDUCATION GOALS

1. Expand the definition of a worthwhile human life.
2. Engender respect for and delight in the gifts of others.
3. Increase awareness of the wide variety of choices available in life for all—particularly students.
4. Encourage each individual to build upon his or her special knowledge and inner strengths.
5. Promote the use of innate intelligence, intuition, self-exploration, and creative self-reliance.
6. Confirm the great hunger for finding out just what each of us can do best, in our own voice, at any age.
7. Empower the individual to choose to do that some

COMMUNITY

THE AMERICAN VISIONARY ART MUSEUM



THE COMMUNITY MOSAIC WALL PROJECT is but one of the myriad ways AVAM engages its community. The project is a multi-year, multi-disciplinary arts apprenticeship program that provides hands-on art experience with mentorship by accomplished artists. Over 250 of Baltimore City's youth have participated in the apprenticeship since its inception—hand-making each of the mosaic panels which now adorn the exterior walls of the museum. The expansive mirror, glass and ceramic mosaic is truly a glittering signature for the museum and a cool feature of the Baltimore City skyline. As the program continues, all of the concrete surfaces on the exterior of the museum's main building will be covered in mosaic.

“Phase I” of the project (2001-2003) was completed in conjunction with our neighboring Southern High School (now Digital Harbor High). “Phase II” (2006-2007) developed relationships with amazing young people from institutions such as the Maryland Youth Residence Center, the William Donald Schaefer House (substance abuse recovery center), FIT Unit (female probation unit), and YAP - Youth Advocacy Program. Together, they’ve created a gigantic, beautiful work which is now a permanent part of the architecture.