

AMERICAN VISIONARY ART MUSEUM

800 KEY HWY • BALTIMORE, MD • 21230 • USA • 410.244.1900 • AVAM.ORG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“A VERY VISIONARY STAR-SPANGLED SIDEWALK”

BALTIMORE, MD (February 20, 2013)—The American Visionary Art Museum (AVAM) is delighted to announce a free outdoor art celebration to be created upon the public pavement running alongside its historic Federal Hill location at 800 Key Highway. The project, entitled **“A Very Visionary Star-Spangled Sidewalk,”** will depict our nation’s beloved National Anthem in an engaging, family-fun and informative format that playfully welcomes both visitor feet and wheelchairs into an up-close and personal viewing experience. The project is made possible by a grant from the Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission.

Beginning this April, 520 linear feet of sidewalk along Key Highway—surrounding AVAM’s 1.1 acre Inner Harbor campus—will be transformed into a visually creative interpretation, line by line, of our National Anthem, and will be applied with the use of environmentally safe pigments and sealant. Projected completion date of **“A Very Visionary Star-Spangled Sidewalk”** is scheduled for **July 2013**, and once completed, will remain on display until **September 2014** as enticement for families and passersby to literally “stand and take part” in Maryland’s shining history. This history-linked creative project compliments AVAM’s current thematic exhibition, **“THE ART OF STORYTELLING: Lies, Enchantment, Humor & Truth.”** The element of Francis Scott Key’s eyewitness, “bombs bursting in air”, account of the British attack on Fort McHenry in September of 1814, perfectly expresses the exhibition’s theme of personal testimony.

AVAM’s project goal is to both popularize contemporary understanding of our local and national history in the context of The War of 1812, and inspire greater individualized reflection. Envisioned as both a tourist magnet, as well as a fun and free public access community project, the lead project artist working with AVAM and volunteer sidewalk painters is Lee Wheeler. The American Visionary Art Museum takes pride in its geographic proximity to historic sites like Fort McHenry, and for the traditional scholarship of both it and the Maryland Historical Society in helping the curator craft the lively, complimentary and decidedly pro-peace take on Baltimore’s and America’s extraordinary true history. The finished project will surprise and delight visitors of all ages with its creative visuals, encourage further discussion and creative learning through its message, and boldly engage in Maryland’s celebration of The War of 1812 Bicentennial.

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CALL FOR IDEAS: Visualizing The Star-Spangled Banner

The American Visionary Art Museum is making a call to all artists, historians, and the general public to submit their visual interpretations of the lyrics of the Star-Spangled Banner for possible inclusion in the design of its upcoming "A Very Visionary Star-Spangled Sidewalk" project. The overall design and theme of the giant public sidewalk art project will be decided by the project managers and lead project artist. AVAM encourages its members, neighbors, and the public to help us generate some visually rich, creative ideas on how to best illustrate our National Anthem, especially concepts that might lend themselves to 3-D interpretation (see lyrics below).

LYRICS:

*O say can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!*

TO SUBMIT YOUR IDEAS: please type a description—400 words or less, or create a sketch (pdf, jpg, or 8.5"x11" paper), and email to abby@avam.org, or mail to American Visionary Art Museum, Attn: Sidewalk Ideas, 800 Key Highway, Baltimore, MD 21230. All submissions must be received by 5pm on **Friday, March 8, 2013**. Submissions will be presented to project leaders to be used for inspiration and possible inclusion in the overall design. AVAM makes no guarantees that individual submissions will be accepted or included, and there are no prizes or awards given in exchange for submissions. Sketches and descriptions cannot be returned. This is not a call for submissions to the Museum, the AVAM collection, or possible future exhibitions.

PROJECT SCHEDULE:

- **April 1, 2013:** Anticipated installation start date.
- **July 4, 2013:** "A Very Visionary Star-Spangled Sidewalk" projected completion date. Sidewalk art will be open & on-display to the public.
- **September 30, 2014:** "A Very Visionary Star-Spangled Sidewalk" project closes.

PROJECT FUNDING:

AVAM's "A Very Visionary Star-Spangled Sidewalk" project has been financed in part with State Funds from the Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission, an instrumentality of the State of Maryland. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Maryland War or 1812 Bicentennial Commission. For more information on Maryland's "Star-Spangled 200" Bicentennial, visit <http://www.starspangled200.com/>.

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AMERICAN VISIONARY ART MUSEUM (AVAM) is America's official national museum and education center for self-taught, intuitive artistry. Since its opening in 1995, the museum has sought 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.

CURRENT EXHIBITION:

THE ART OF STORYTELLING: Lies, Enchantment, Humor & Truth

October 6, 2012–September 1, 2013 • From scripture to fairy tale, cartoons to cyber-bullying, the raw power of stories to inspire and enchant, spread lies or inform, simply has no equal. "THE ART OF STORYTELLING: Lies, Enchantment, Humor & Truth" is AVAM's brand-new, supremely original exhibition of embroidery, diorama, sculpture, film, graffiti, and PostSecret confession – promoting all manner of acute 'visual listening' and delight for the whole family.

MORE INFO: <http://avam.org/exhibitions/art-of-storytelling.shtml>

VISITOR INFORMATION:

AMERICAN VISIONARY ART MUSEUM (AVAM) is open Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m.–6 p.m. The museum is closed on Mondays,* Christmas Day and Thanksgiving Day. AVAM is located next to historic Federal Hill park at 800 Key Highway, Baltimore Inner Harbor, 21230. Admission prices, general museum info, directions, and parking info can be found online at www.avam.org or by calling 410.244.1900. **OPEN Monday Martin Luther King, Jr. Day as AVAM's celebration of all of life's possibilities! Free admission & special programming.*

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PRESS IMAGES are available on AVAM's website:

<http://avam.org/news-and-events/media-info.shtml>, email nick@avam.org for password.

PROGRAMS & EVENTS CALENDAR: For a complete list of AVAM's Programs & Events, please visit: <http://avam.org/news-and-events/calendar.shtml>.

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