Baltimore, MD—The American Visionary Art Museum (AVAM) is proud to present Donald Pass: The Hope We Seek, a celebration of the late British visionary artist's ethereal spirit paintings, inspired by his own life-changing glimpse into the afterworld. This retrospective will feature 13 of Pass' otherworldly works in watercolor, charcoal and other mixed media, along with a special presentation of author Rich Shapero's forthcoming multimedia story, with original artwork by the late Donald Pass, also titled The Hope We Seek. AVAM is pleased to open this yearlong commemorative exhibition in the 3rd floor gallery of our Zanvyl A. Krieger Main Building, starting February 28, 2014 and running through February 22, 2015.

As his artistic adult life took off, Donald Pass (1930–2010) was well-known for his lyrical abstract landscapes, until the late 1960s when he experienced a series of spiritual visions that radically and forever changed his view of reality, and subsequently, his artwork. Sir John Rothenstein, late Director of the Tate Gallery in London, described Donald Pass as “a spark of genius, a very rare talent.”

Donald Pass (1930–2010)
Biographical Timeline

• September 9, 1930, Donald Pass is born in Cheshire, England. While still a young and dreamy boy, Pass begins painting landscapes of the countryside near his home. “I have seen angels since I was twelve and occasionally since . . . I've always been psychic. It’s just another way of seeing.” His mother strongly disapproves and young Pass learns to keep his visions to himself.
• At age 15, on a beautiful sunlit day, Pass decides to play hooky from school. Walking carefree through the countryside, he sees a clear vision of a lion-faced angel with luminous wings standing by a row of green hedges. Pass paints his vision of this angel and wins a school prize.

• At 17, Pass happily leaves home to pursue art and its study. He learns to paint portraits, still lives and landscapes and begins to explore abstraction. He marries, fathers three children and divorces. Pass teaches at the Liverpool College of Art where one of his young students is the soon to become legendary Beatle, John Lennon.

• By the 1960s, Pass is widely exhibited and sells well among the top fashionable London abstract artists of his day. He also creates a few Christian-themed religious paintings that are bought by major museums.

• Valentine’s Day, 1967, Pass marries Jackie, the great love of his life.

• In 1969, Donald Pass lives in upscale Chelsea as a successful painter, exhibiting in London and internationally. All this will soon change.

• Late 1969, after a series of psychic events including a golden face that appeared at his window and whose light expanded to fill his Chelsea home, Pass is drawn to travel and sketch at the Cuckfield village cemetery in rural Sussex. Staring at a soldier’s grave affixed with a winged Royal Air Force pilot’s insignia, a great darkness descends and an intense light, unlike anything he had ever known, appears. Pass witnesses an all encompassing, animated Resurrection-like scene, accompanied by a sure sense of divine compassion for all beings. Donald Pass is never again personally or artistically the same.

• During the 1970s, unable to find meaning or desire to paint what is fashionable in the art market, Donald and Jackie fast become greatly impoverished. Jackie remains his partner as Pass takes on increasingly menial jobs.

• Forced to take lodging with Jackie’s daughter, Jenny, Pass and Jackie hang the only three paintings Pass has managed to create of his Resurrection experience. By 1984, the then Director of the Tate Gallery, Sir John Rothenstein, visits and sees enormous value in the work. Encouraged, Pass begins painting in earnest to better visually capture his life-changing Resurrection experience—an effort that will wholly occupy his imagination over the entire last quarter of his life.

• December 3, 2010, after a long illness, Donald Pass dies, surrounded by his loving wife Jacqueline and a dear friend at his side.
Although academically trained in art, Donald Pass has been warmly embraced by many in the visionary art world as a rare and true visionary, including Raw Vision magazine, the Henry Boxer Gallery, and collectors like Rich Shapero and musician Pete Townshend. His works have been likened in spirit to those created by William Blake. Donald Pass’ vision-inspired artistry will be proudly exhibited here at our national American Visionary Art Museum, and is also represented in our permanent collection.

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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.

VISITOR INFORMATION:
AVAM is open Tuesday through Sunday, 10:00am–6:00pm. 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 http://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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