



Dean Millien  
*Yogi*  
Photo by Dan Meyers

**ABUNDANCE**  
TOO MUCH... TOO LITTLE... JUST RIGHT.

# ABUNDANCE

TOO MUCH . . . TOO LITTLE . . . JUST RIGHT.

*"Too much of a good thing can be wonderful."* MAE WEST

*"A pile of rocks ceases to be a rock pile when somebody contemplates it with the idea of a cathedral in mind."* ANTOINE SAINT-EXUPÉRY



Welcome to our American Visionary Art Museum's (AVAM) 27th original thematic mega-exhibition, **ABUNDANCE: TOO MUCH, TOO LITTLE, JUST RIGHT**—a flagrantly joyful contemplation of just what constitutes real wealth by exploring what lies at the heart of deep satisfaction, productive happiness, and gratefulness—both individual and collective.

Nowhere is the quest for personal freedom in the joyful expression of work more evident than in the creations of visionaries who have wrought new worlds from modest, even discarded materials—equipped only with their hands, hearts, and fertile imaginations. This exhibition promotes the shift from a focus on a constant hunger for more things to connect the viewer to a creative, self-reliant, and satisfying power fueled by ingenuity, craft, and an appreciation for the gift of now. Philosopher Eckhart Tolle recommends, “Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance . . . In today’s rush, we all think too much, seek too much, want too much, and forget about the joy of just being.”

Take a reprieve, for a moment, from our focus on lack—of trust, civility, reliable resources, and even access to safe drinking water—to harness our energy towards what great good can be done with the steadfast will to do so. Jim Rouse advised, “The best way to attack any problem is to ask what things would be like if they worked well.”

Come celebrate our Visionaries, like Grandma Tressa Prisbrey, who built after the age of sixty, 15 houses out of glass bottles picked from her town dump, installing both plumbing and electricity, and completing her “Bottle Village” in her ninth decade. Prisbrey proudly preached, “Anybody can do something with a million dollars, but it takes somebody with really something, to make something out of nothing.”

We hope you will feel mightily inspired by our showcased visionary thinkers to have meaningful conversations within yourself; take measure of what you have, and reframe your point of view so that—even when faced with limitations—you recognize your own innate talents and gifts, sufficient to astonish yourself with some new possibilities for greater abundance topped off with copious heaps of fun!

*In that quest yours truly,*

*Gage Branda, Curator*

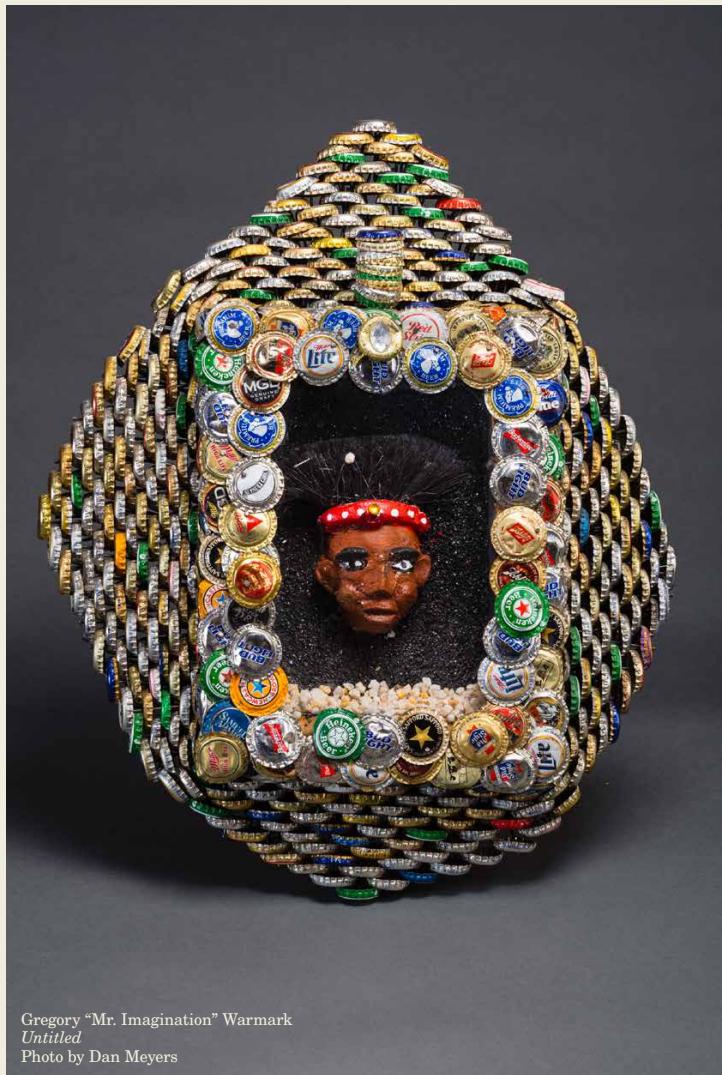
*and all of us here in proud part of The AVAM Experience*

## GREGORY WARMACK AKA "MR. IMAGINATION"

1948–2012

Mr. Imagination was born Gregory Warmack in Chicago in 1948, the third of nine children who gave church concerts together as the Warmack Singers. As a child, he suffered from seizures, but they stopped at the age of 14. An inveterate collector of rocks, beads, trinkets, and myriad cast-off objects, Warmack started making and selling jewelry in his late teens. He also carved bits of bark, wood, and stone into faces resembling African tribal masks or Egyptian kings. In 1978, a week after having a premonition that someone was going to kill him, Warmack was shot twice while selling his handmade jewelry on the street. He went into a coma and had an out-of-body experience that changed him forever. Reflecting that change, he renamed himself "Mr. Imagination." Mr. I (eye) began using new and different types of recycled materials in his art, most notably bottle caps and old paintbrushes.

Gregory "Mr. Imagination" Warmack  
*Untitled*  
Photo by Dan Meyers



In 2001, Mr. Imagination left Chicago for Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, "to put down some roots and grow some vines." After eight years and a house fire in which he lost a majority of his work, Mr. Imagination started anew in Atlanta. There, he hoped to establish a haven for other visionary artists. "Years ago my great aunt predicted I was going to be a minister, and in a way she was right," Warmack said. "I think every artist is a minister and a messenger in a way."

# ABUNDANCE

TOO MUCH... TOO LITTLE... JUST RIGHT.

## PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Greg Tucker | 410-624-9536  
[greg@tuckercomms.com](mailto:greg@tuckercomms.com)

### AVAM Prepares to Open Newest Mega-Exhibition: ABUNDANCE: Too Much, Too Little, Just Right

(Baltimore, MD) - The American Visionary Art Museum - a Congressionally-designated national museum and education center dedicated to showcasing intuitive, self-taught artistry and thought - will open its 27th original thematic mega-exhibition on Saturday, October 8, 2022 and extend until September 3, 2023. The exhibition, titled "ABUNDANCE: Too Much, Too Little, Just Right" and curated by the American Visionary Art Museum's own Gage Branda, features over 200 artworks from a diverse array of visionary artists and aims to inspire joyful, community-building contemplation of just what constitutes real wealth by exploring what lies at the heart of deep satisfaction, productive happiness, and gratefulness, both individually and collectively.

New AVAM Director Jenenne Whitfield stated: "I'm excited to be present to witness our first exhibition as AVAM's new director. In today's society, we are confronted by our own abundance with many of us finding that our 'things' are not fulfilling, while others who seemingly lack seek to acquire, by any means necessary! The beauty of art is that we can thoughtfully and joyfully consider and ponder just how much is ENOUGH!"

The ABUNDANCE exhibition promotes the shift from a focus on a constant hunger for more things, to connect the viewer to a self-reliant power generated by imagination, craft, ingenuity, and a dedication to -- and appreciation for -- the gift of now. Philosopher Eckhart Tolle put it best, "Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance... In today's rush we all think too much, seek too much, want too much and forget about the joy of just being."

The exhibition is further designed to convey a riotous visual feast, compelling to toddler, master craftspeople, and Nobel-laureate alike. Nowhere is the quest for personal freedom in the expression of work, nor the pursuit of joy, more exuberantly evident than in the creations made by visionary artists who have wrought new worlds from modest, often discarded, materials – equipped only with their hands, hearts, and fertile imaginations. "A pile of rocks ceases to be a rock pile when somebody contemplates it with the idea of a cathedral in mind," according to Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Transcultural, grassroots, humorous, and ancient wisdoms will be shared throughout. ABUNDANCE Exhibition & Artist Highlights are as follows:

- Never before exhibited out-of-this-world embroideries and clothing of Robert “Sparky” Brown, and those by Agnes Merrick, Chris Roberts-Antieau and Deborah Berger;
- Choice excerpts from “Grandma Prisbrey’s Bottle Village” film;
- Dean Millien’s Life-sized beasts sculpted from Aluminum foil;
- Surreal furniture and figures from found wood, scrap metal, refuse, and paper;
- A fervent celebration of life and its endless possibilities for happiness and empowered transformation;
- A full mining of AVAM’s 6,000+ piece permanent collection, including never before exhibited works, old fan favorites, and new additions from Mary Proctor, Charlie Lucas, Candy Cummings, Purvis Young, Sulton Rogers, Patrick Davis, Sue Kreitzman, and more;
- The shift from scarcity consciousness to abundance consciousness;
- Rituals for Abundance (e.g., Lunar New Year, Sukkot, Thanksgiving, land/harvest fertility);
- A championing of the efforts of our local and global champions, cultivating abundance from rubble, building community, and challenging the urban food desert.

## **GAGE BRANDA - CURATOR**

Gage Branda is a Filipino-American artist and educator. He received his BFA in Sculpture from the Maryland Institute College of Art. He has exhibited collaborative projects and artworks in venues across the country, including: the Eleventh Hackers of Planet Earth Conference in New York, the Emerge Conference at Arizona State University, the San Jose Innovative Tech Museum, and the Diana Lowenstein Gallery in Miami. Prior to his work at AVAM, Branda taught K-12 students across Baltimore City in programs on nutrition, science, and art. Currently, he offers insight from his diverse interests – from bronze sculpture to bio-design – in the curation of the American Visionary Art Museum's thematic exhibitions.

## **ARTISTS**

Artists whose artworks are featured in the ABUNDANCE exhibition include: Bill Traylor, Candy Cummings, Paul 'The Baltimore Glassman' Darmafall, Gregory 'Mr. Imagination' Warmack, Patrick Davis, Mary Proctor, Sulton Rogers, Vanessa German, Paul Lancaster, James Harold Jennings, Rosa Leff, Charlie Lucas, Christine McCormick, Tilden Stone, Craig Norton, Brian Ortega, Dean Millien, Monica Valentine, Terry Turell, Scottie Wilson, Brooks Yeoman, Kelsey Williams, Nek Chand, Sue Kreitzman, Troy Webb, O.L. Samuels, Linville Barker, and Margaret Munz-Losch.

The ABUNDANCE: Too Much, Too Little, Just Right exhibition opens on Saturday, October 8, 2022 and continues through September 3, 2023. For additional information, as well as ticket information, please refer to: ABUNDANCE



Chris Roberts-Antieau  
*Flowers and Stars*  
Photo by Dan Meyers

# HOPEFUL TRANSFORMATIONS

## FOOD DESERTS TO URBAN FARMS

*“They paved paradise and put up a parking lot.”*

JONI MITCHELL

With near mystic prescience, President Abraham Lincoln predicted, “The greatest fine art of the future will be the making of a comfortable living from a small piece of land.”

In 1900, more than one-third of the total US population lived on farms and a full 60% of Americans lived in rural areas. They knew well where their food was produced—locally. Today, only about 1 percent of Americans live on farms, and just 20 percent live in rural America. Globally and here in the US, urban city centers now constitute home for most people. This trend has meant we now depend on industrialized food production, and far less on any first hand intimacy with plants, animals, soil, water, seasons, and the impact of weather on the food we eat.

Despite the supposed efficiencies of grand-scale industrial farming (with all its chemical dependencies) a whopping 40% of all food grown and produced in the U.S. is never even eaten. That twisted sort of abundance stands in stark contrast to the real needs of an estimated 16 million US children (1 in 5) that currently suffer frequent or chronic hunger and malnutrition.

Humanitarian developer, the late Jim Rouse, concluded, “Cities were meant to be gardens in which to grow beautiful people.” Urban farms aim to bring back that joy of local connection to growing, harvesting and sharing food. They multiply access to fresh produce’s healthful benefits, and serve as partial cure to urban “food deserts”—places where supermarkets and fresh farm markets are few.

One of the leaders in the fast-growing urban farm movement is New York’s Karen Washington, founder of the Garden of Happiness in the Bronx. “If we’re talking about social justice it has to encompass the food that we eat, the people that grow the food, how they’re treated, their health benefits, their wages. How hard they’re living. Are they living in substandard housing? Do they have heat and hot water? What about the children? Are they getting a good education? Is it quality in terms of schools? So for me, the movement started about growing food but then blossomed into this social justice conscious.”

What we can all do is support our local urban farmers including Plantation Park Heights Urban Farm’s Farmer Chippy, Lavette and Warren Blue of the Greener Garden, and Denzel Mitchell of the Farm Alliance in Baltimore. We especially champion those with lively youth farmer apprenticeship programs, and recognize them as the true health and environmental change agents they are.

*“We are stardust,  
Billion-year old carbon,  
And we've got to get ourselves back to the garden.”*

JONI MITCHELL



Edwin Remsberg  
*Child Volunteer Helping Out with Chickens at Plantation Park Heights Urban Farm - Baltimore, MD*



Edwin Remsberg  
*Farmer Chippy (Richard Francis) Picking Weeds with Volunteers - Plantation Park Heights Urban Farm - Baltimore, MD*

## BOTTLE WHIMSEYS



Carl Worner  
*Untitled Bottle Diorama*  
Photos by Dan Meyers

You are standing on AVAM museum land once prized for its high quality, super fine white sand. Abundant just ten feet below rich soil, this coveted sand proved ideal for the Colonial production of glass whiskey bottles—also really handy for bottling whiskey for sale to all those sailors pulling into the adjacent busy Baltimore harbor!

Although glass bottle making dates back thousands of years to 1500 BC Mesopotamia, it was not until the late 19th and early 20th century that perfectly clear glass became both possible and affordable. At that moment, bottle whimseys found their ideal showcase.

We all have marveled at delicate wooden ships constructed inside bottles, but perhaps no American bottle whimsey artist has earned more respect than the late Carl Worner. Best known for his saloon scenes, Worner's whimseys often threw down a humorous challenge to viewers to “Find the Missing Man” (almost always a male figure somewhat obscured in a tiny bathroom somewhere in the back of the bottle.)

Prolific, Worner cleverly created many different lifelike scenes in bottles, including meat markets, bakeries, shoe stores, and religious scenes—with intricate mini-carved tableaus that seem to come alive, drawing the viewer deep inside the bottle. Over a hundred of Worner’s masterful bottle whimseys still survive, although sadly, not much is known about their secretive artist maker.

# CANDY CUMMINGS

1950—2014



Candy Cummings  
*Antennae*  
Photo by Dan Meyers

Candy Cummings was born Candace Carol Cummings on September 26, 1950, the youngest of two children. At her birth, Candy's father was stationed at the Patuxent River Naval Air Test Center. Candy's mother was a first-generation Italian-American and the fourteenth and youngest child of two immigrants from Naples. Candy's mother and older brother struggled with elements of bipolar disorder. Art became Candy's escape from much household chaos and unhappiness early on, crediting her mom for taking her and her brother on frequent trips to see Washington DC's museums and monuments. After 13 years in the military, Candy's father retired and started his own new business that became one of the earliest sales and service television and appliance shops. Many years later, the remnants of her father's business would become part of Candy's eclectic art-making palette in the form of the now antique vacuum tubes and appliance parts. Candy attended a parochial school, Catholic girls boarding school, and an art college in Philadelphia before dropping out after two years.

She credits the sixties, The Age Of Aquarius, Bob Dylan, the Beatles, and Vincent Van Gogh as major influences. As a young adult, Candy began her career as a caterer and survived both a major hurricane and a ruptured appendix while working as the Catering Director of the largest resort on Saint Thomas, in the US Virgin Islands. Candy died on November 4, 2014, following a valiant battle with lung cancer.



800 Key Highway  
Baltimore MD 21230  
410.244.1900

## MISSION AND EDUCATION GOALS

The American Visionary Art Museum (**AVAM**), which opened in 1995, is the only museum of its kind in the United States, designated by unanimous vote of the U.S. Congress as America's official national museum for the best in self-taught artistry. AVAM is dedicated to the study, collection, preservation and exhibition of visionary art, and to using such art to explore and expand the definition of a worthwhile life. At the very heart of AVAM's mission is a commitment to and belief in the power of creativity. AVAM holds a unique position within the cultural landscape, inspiring authentic, cutting-edge, thought-provoking creative acts. The Museum is an IRS designated 501(c)(3) organization, **EIN# 52-1608934**, based in Baltimore Maryland and serving a national and international audience. AVAM's institutional imperative is expressed by our unique definition of art and of vision and our nationally recognized "7 Founding Education Goals":

- 1. Expand the definition of a worthwhile life.*
- 2. Increase awareness of the wide variety of choices available in life—particularly students.*
- 3. Engender respect for and delight in the gift of others.*
- 4. Encourage each individual to build upon his or her own 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 something really, really well.*



Each year AVAM welcomes tens of thousands of visitors to our exhibitions, educational programs, and large scale public events. In the summer of 2022 AVAM was named "Best Museum," "Best Tourist Attraction," and "Best Wedding Venue" in the Baltimore Sun Reader's Poll. The Baltimore Magazine Reader's Poll named AVAM "Best Art Museum/Gallery" and Baltimore's Child named AVAM "Top Museum Experience for Children."

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE EXHIBIT, OR THE MUSEUM IN GENERAL  
FEEL FREE TO VISIT AVAM.ORG OR SCAN THE QR CODE.**