

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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***Keeping Vigil: Select Works from the Estate of Virgil Grotfeldt***

March 18 through April 22, 2023

Public Opening Reception: Saturday, March 18<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 to 8:00 pm

*Keeping Vigil Together*: Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 to 4:00 pm

Deborah Colton Gallery is pleased to present ***Keeping Vigil: Select Works from the Estate of Virgil Grotfeldt***. The public opening reception will be on Saturday, March 18<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. On Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, artists Wei Hong and Terrell James will discuss Virgil and his works, followed by a sound meditation experience with Alex Mora of Ethereal Healing Houston. This special program, *Keeping Vigil Together* will be from 2:00 to 4:00 pm.

This exhibition was inspired by the inclusion of Grotfeldt works in *The Curatorial Imagination of Walter Hopps* at the Menil Collection, an exhibition that opens on March 25, as well as the upcoming book, *Artists We've Known, Selected Works from the Walter Hopps and Caroline Huber Collection*, published by Yale University Press.

Hopps and Grotfeldt met in Houston, Texas in the late 1980's, an exciting and foundational time for the emerging contemporary art scene that helped establish the city as an international arts destination. Through the years the two forged an inspiring professional bond, as well as a deep and abiding personal friendship. By the 1990's, with the support of Walter Hopps and a robust community of fellow artists, Grotfeldt began to achieve the respect and attention of major art institutions and collectors both nationally and internationally. It was during this time that Grotfeldt met Dutch artist Waldo Bien, (FIUWAC Collection Amsterdam) and made his first works using coal dust and found documents recovered in the rubble of the Berlin Wall. These years mark a time of tremendous inspiration and artistic evolution for Grotfeldt. The works in this show have been chosen to reflect this classic era and capture the mastery of Grotfeldt's immense talent as an artist.

Virgil Grotfeldt was born in 1948 in Decatur, Illinois. He earned a bachelor's degree in art education from Eastern Illinois University in 1971 and a master's degree at Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia in 1974. He moved to Houston in 1977, where he lived and worked until his passing in 2009. As an established working artist, Virgil Grotfeldt holds an impressive exhibition history with over one hundred and fifty solo and group shows world-wide. Grotfeldt's works are included in the permanent collection of the Menil Collection, Houston, Texas; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas; El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso, Texas; Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, Texas; Upriver Gallery Collection, Chengdu, China; NOG Insurance Company, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; and Free International University World Art Collection, Zeist, The Netherlands among many others.

Two major hardcover books have been published on Virgil Grotfeldt: A comprehensive examination of Grotfeldt's career and works since the 1970s, *Virgil Grotfeldt: Including the Series with Waldo Bien*, written by Patrick Healy, published by Wienand Verlag Frankfurt, 2003. Grotfeldt is also featured in *Waldo Bien: Including the Series with Virgil Grotfeldt* written by Patrick Healy, published by Wienand Verlag Frankfurt, 2000.

Walter Hopps described the art of Virgil Grotfeldt as a "personal meditation on essential life forces." In *Keeping Vigil*, the viewer is invited to join Virgil Grotfeldt as he explores the mysterious forces we see and sense all around us. To enter the liminal space between the external world around us and the interior landscape of the mind; to encounter potent imagery of both the familiar and ethereal. Here we find the shadowy figures of man, of nature and of spirit blending, fading, and transforming into one another as if in a dream. As a society in economic, environmental, and cultural flux, many are searching for meaning in the more esoteric realms of healing energy, spiritual practices, shamanism or the exploration of consciousness itself. The work of Virgil Grotfeldt offers a road map for this universal journey; and reminds us that someone walks alongside us keeping vigil along the way.