

MEDIA RELEASE

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Jesse Lott: Sense of Spirit

September 25 through November 20, 2021

Opening Reception: Saturday, September 25th: 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Deborah Colton Gallery is pleased to present ***Sense of Spirit***, an exhibition featuring paintings, drawings, and sculptures by **Jesse Lott**, which is at the same time of Lott's dear friend and colleague, Bert L. Long Jr's exhibition at Deborah Colton Gallery, ***The Strength is Within***. The exhibitions can be seen online through the gallery's website. Questions or interest in specific artworks can be addressed by email, phone or "By Appointment" at Deborah Colton Gallery. There will be an Opening Reception from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm on Saturday, September 25th. Due to the pandemic, only 30 guests at a time to view the exhibition.

For the past 50 years, Jesse Lott's work has been grounded in an approach that he calls "Urban Frontier or Relic Art of the Future" which involves the recycling of discarded urban materials, mainly metals, paper and wood, into art. His work expresses deep feelings and a magical sense of spirit. Jesse states, "creativity is that part of awareness that goes beyond knowledge." His classic sculpture's aesthetic reflects a sophisticated grasp of folk art and often depicts a variety of characters, including mythological beings, heroes, artists, and ordinary people, as a way to explore the many complex dimensions of being human. Through the lens of urban archeology, Lott's art is inspired by the everyday, and becomes a vehicle of exchange through which viewers can re-examine their own sense of humanity and spirituality within the complexities of our modern society.

Jesse Lott is an African American artist who is a longtime 5th Ward, Houston resident. Lott began his artistic career creating and selling his works as a student at E.O. Smith Elementary School in 1957. This helped form the beginnings of his artistic career. Jesse Lott is one of Texas' most respected artists and has exhibited in major museums and universities in Texas and throughout the South. Additionally, his art has also been shown at The Studio Museum in Harlem and the Alternative Museum in New York. Lott has had recent exhibitions at both the Five Points Museum of Contemporary Art in Victoria, Texas and The Station Museum of Contemporary Art in Houston, Texas. In 2016, Art League Houston named Lott the recipient of the "Lifetime Achievement in Visual Arts Award." Jesse Lott has influenced many artists, including Texans as well-known as James Surls, Bert Long Jr., Rick Lowe, Robert Pruitt, Angelbert Metoyer and Robert Hodge. The all-ages workshops that he has held over the years in his studio as a community service have inspired many students who would otherwise have no exposure to art. Lott's community-oriented philosophy and his 'Artists in Action' program helped spark the creation of the now famous Project Row Houses.

Jesse Lott has been recently appointed the 3-D Texas State Artist for 2021- 2022 by the Texas State Legislature and the Texas Commission of the Arts. Lott feels his work has been influenced by living in Texas. As Lott states, "Texas has influenced my work in many ways. Texas is the "Lone Star State" and is characterized by its independence, individuality, and freedom to express original ideas and concepts. This environment has inspired me to develop my thoughts and ideas in original 3-dimensional ways". When asked what Lott wants to achieve as the Texas State 3-D Artist, he said this, "During my term, I would like to build on some projects that we started at Project Row House twenty years ago, that now still exist, and develop them further on a broader scale. This relates to children and giving them opportunities to explore and develop through using recyclable materials like paper, wood, and metals to express their ideas through creating 3-Dimensional objects. From this exploration, these children "learn how to learn" and these skills can then be related to any form or discipline of learning throughout their education and professional careers. The freedom to create and express is very important to their further development as healthy human beings who contribute positively to society." Lott feels that this also relates to the title of this exhibition, *Sense of Spirit*, in that materials become art when created soulfully. It's the spirit within us that transforms these materials that were used in our region's history into something new and exciting.

The film ***Jesse Lott: Art & Activism*** will be on view during the entire length of the exhibition. This is a 28-minute documentary, shot by 28 students from the 14 Pews Film Academy, which highlights Jesse Lott's art, activism and his mentors. The film has won numerous awards throughout the country. The documentary is directed and edited by award-winning Native-American filmmaker, **Cressandra Thibodeaux**.

Both Jesse Lott and Cressandra Thibodeaux will be attending our Opening Reception.

Deborah Colton Gallery is founded on being an innovative showcase for ongoing presentation and promotion of strong historical and visionary contemporary artists world-wide, whose diverse practices include painting, works on paper, sculpture, video, photography, performance, and conceptual future media installations.