

MEDIA RELEASE

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Bert L. Long, Jr.: The Strength is from Within

September 25 through November 20, 2021

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

Deborah Colton Gallery is pleased to present ***The Strength is from Within***, an exhibition featuring paintings, drawings, and wall sculptures by Bert L. Long, Jr. A solo exhibition of Long's dear friend and colleague, Jesse Lott, is on view at the same time, titled, ***Sense of Spirit***. 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.

Bert L. Long Jr., was self-taught artist, was born in 1940 in Texas, grew up the Houston's historic Fifth Ward and received his formal education from UCLA. Following a career as a successful master chef, Long decided to devote himself entirely to art in the late 1970's. He began to explore folk art and assemblage to create a unique body of work, attracting the attention of Jim Harithas, then Director of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, and artists John Alexander, Salvatore Scarpitta and James Surls. His life spanned an era of radical change in the American social climate, the influence of which can be seen clearly in his work.

Long's paintings and sculptures incorporate a high level of skill and sophisticated knowledge of art history, along with complex philosophical and social issues. Long describes the philosophy behind his work as "a quest to help people diagnose their inner self," believing his art to be "the vehicle to help facilitate the process."

"As artists we have the obligation to provide the world with art which communicates as truth. I believe that art has the power to heal our souls of their afflictions. I try to create art which helps to diagnose the prevalent conditions within our societies, hopefully providing an insightfulness which will help us all become brothers and sisters united in equality and compassion"

- Bert L. Long, Jr.

The late Peter Marzio, former Director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, said of Bert Long during the major retrospective of Long's work at the museum:

"Bert Long does not avert his gaze from that which is painful, but as [his artworks] testify, he also brings a spirit of joy and redemption to his art. We can all learn from this great artist."

Over Long's 33-year career as a painter, sculptor, and photographer, he had several solo exhibitions at respected museums and was awarded many significant awards including the National Endowment for the Arts Grant in 1987 and the prestigious international Prix de Rome fellowship in 1990. Other notable awards of Long's include the Texas Accountants and Lawyers for the Arts Artist of the Year Award in 2009, the Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation Emergency Assistance Grant in 1997, the Houston Art League Texas Artist of the Year in 1990, the NEA Visual Artists Fellowship Grant, 1987 and the Bemis Foundation Residency in 1998. His work can be seen in over 100 private and public collections worldwide, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Dallas Museum of Art, the Houston Museum of Fine Art, the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, the El Paso Museum of Art, and the Instituto de Bachillerato in Spain.

With a recent solo exhibition at the Houston Museum of African American Culture and an exhibition overseas which is pending featuring his work, plus interest from several national museums, Bert L. Long Jr. continues to be recognized as an important African American artist throughout Texas, nationally and internationally.

The film documentary, ***BERT***, will be screening at Deborah Colton Gallery on Saturday, October 16th, at 7:00 pm. Director and Producer of the documentary, **John Guess**, will be available to answer questions at the end of the screening.

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.