

MEDIA RELEASE

For more information contact:
Deborah M. Colton 713.869.5151
info@deborahcoltongallery.com

20 in 2020 – Part 3: Houston Foundations

January 16 through February 13, 2021

JOHN ALEXANDER BOB CAMBLIN VIRGIL GROTFELDT ANN HARITHAS DOROTHY HOOD
PERRY HOUSE SHARON KOPRIVA BERT L. LONG, JR. JESSE LOTT
SUZANNE PAUL DICK WRAY

Deborah Colton Gallery is pleased to present **20 in 2020 – Part 3**, a group exhibition featuring paintings, drawings, mixed media, photography and sculpture that reflect on highlights of Colton's twenty years in Houston serving the community with exhibitions from around the world and supporting our Houston art history. *20 in 2020 - Part 3* continues to celebrate Colton's 20th anniversary for exhibitions in Houston and focuses on the gallery establishing the **Houston Foundations Series** of exhibitions, panels and lectures during this past decade. All works are available for acquisition and can be viewed on our website and Viewing Room. The Gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday, 10:30 am to 5:30 pm, and private appointments can also be arranged when requested.

In addition to Colton's international and national programming that was emphasized in *20 in 2020 Part 1* and *Part 2*, this past decade especially, Deborah Colton Gallery has had a strong focus on establishing **HOUSTON FOUNDATIONS**, which reveres our city's artistic roots. By understanding where we came from, we can build on this foundation to become an even more dynamic and empowered "City of the Future" within the national and international art world.

Houston's internationally and museum-shown artist, **Sharon Kopriva** has been represented by Deborah Colton Gallery for most of this past decade. The first major solo exhibition of Kopriva's work that the gallery had was in 2011, *Sharon Kopriva: Cathedrals, Phantoms and Naked Dogs*. Since then Deborah Colton Gallery has had two other solo exhibitions of Kopriva's works, Sharon Kopriva: *Illuminations* in 2014 and *Meditations, Migrations and Muses* in 2019, and has included her work in Art Fairs and many group exhibitions.

Exactly a year after his passing, Deborah Colton Gallery had the major exhibition of **Bert L. Long Jr.'s** works in the grand solo exhibition *Bert Back and Beyond*. During this exhibition the film BERT that John Guess produced was shown along with a Q & A discussion. In November 2016 through January 2017, Deborah Colton Gallery had another solo exhibition of Bert L. Long's work, *Looking for the Right Time*, with an accompanying catalogue. In 2019 Deborah Colton and John Guess Co-Curated the solo exhibition *Riding The Tiger* at the Houston Museum of African American Culture (HMAAC). Shortly thereafter, Long's magnificent painting, *Riding the Tiger*, was placed into a major collection where the collector has agreed to let the artwork museum-tour. The gallery has been representing the Art Estate of Bert L. Long Jr. for over six years and has great things planned for his artistic career.

In 2016, Deborah Colton Gallery had relaunched **Dorothy Hood** with a solo exhibition of Hood's paintings in the main front gallery, *Dorothy Hood: Select Paintings*. This magnificent exhibition of Dorothy Hood's paintings was the very first solo of her works in Houston since the 1990's, which inspired Hood's patrons near and far. Since then, Deborah Colton Gallery has placed Hood's work in major collections nationally and internationally and was instrumental in getting the archives of Dorothy Hood back to Houston where they are now permanently housed at the University of Houston's School of the Libraries "Special Collection". Other

exhibitions Dorothy Hood exhibitions that Deborah Colton Gallery has had are *Cosmic Attraction: Works by Dorothy Hood & Don Redman* in 2018 and *Earth & Space: Dorothy Hood & Daniel Kayne* 2020, along with many group exhibitions.

September - October of 2017, Deborah Colton Gallery organized and exhibited *Foundations II: Focus on the 70's & 80's* which featured 26 of the most significant artists of that time-period who have made a major impact on Houston becoming the dynamic art city that it is today. *The Foundations Symposium Series* of panels and lectures each weekend of this exhibition attracted a Who's Who of the Houston art community with often "standing room only". Artists that will be featured from this exhibition include work from **John Alexander, Bob Camblin, Virgil Grotfeldt, Ann Harathis, Dorothy Hood, Perry House, Sharon Kopriva, Bert L. Long Jr., Jesse Lott and Dick Wray.**

Artist's Biographies:

Born on the bayou in east Texas, **John Alexander** has made an international career as a skilled draftsman, a painter of lush landscapes, and as a satirist creating allegorical tableaus. Alexander (b. 1945) began studying art at Lamar University in his hometown of Beaumont. After earning an MFA in 1970 from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Alexander took a teaching position at the University of Houston, where he became a key figure in the city's nascent art scene. Alexander moved to New York City in 1979, taking a SoHo loft he still calls home. In addition to his continuing fascination with the surreal and humankind at its worst, Alexander gravitates toward depicting marshy landscapes, and studied portraits of flora and fauna, particularly the birds flocking to his part-time home on Long Island's East End. Naturalism and conservation remain hallmarks of his work, and he says the Beaumont bayou of his youth is never far from his mind. Alexander has been widely exhibited, with major shows at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. His work can be found in public collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Dallas Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and many others.

Bob Camblin was born in Oklahoma in 1928 and studied painting at the Kansas City Art Institute, earning an MFA in 1955. He taught at Rice University from 1967 to 1973 with Joe Tate and Earl Staley, with whom he shared a studio space. His influence and art was a constant undercurrent in the Houston art scene, revealing much about the environment and those that surrounded him. He left Houston in the early 80s. Known for his drawings, watercolors, paintings and his gregarious, direct personality, Camblin was included in the *Fresh Paint, The Houston School* Museum of Fine Arts exhibition in 1985 and lead an active art life..

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.

Ann Harithas draws from a well of classic Texas culture, education, and personal history to create her art. Born in Houston 1943, Ann Harithas spent her childhood between school in Victoria, Texas and her parents' nearby cattle ranch where her interests in collage were recognized and nurtured from an early age. As an instrument for learning, collage would not only be a fundamental component of her adolescent development, but consequently has evolved to become the predominant medium in which she expresses herself as an adult. After graduating from the University of Texas with a degree in English, she received her MFA from Rice University. As the early founder and proponent of the Art Car movement in Houston in the 1980s, Ann continued to diversify her methods and application of collage and assemblage, including the creation of her own art cars. This marked an evolution of her techniques, employing technological advancements in color printing, construction, and materials. Summoning her personal history

to capture and catalog her experience, Ann assembles her past and present to express a notion of time that invariably oscillates between 'what has been' and 'what can be.

As one of the early Texas abstract artists, **Dorothy Hood** was born in 1918 and was raised in Houston. Hood was known nationwide for creating epic paintings that evoked the limitless skies and psychic voids of space, years ahead of NASA images. Capturing the earth's natural beauty through her worldwide travels, with vast horizons looking far into the universe, was always a signature of Dorothy Hood magnificent artworks. Over the next four decades, before her passing in 2000, Dorothy Hood became a renowned Texas painter whose works were collected across the United States, including over 30 major museums. Deborah Colton Gallery re-introduced Hood's work to Houston in September of 2016 with a magnificent booth featuring Hood's work at the Houston Fine Arts Fair, and then major exhibitions at Deborah Colton Gallery in November 2016 and in 2018. Dorothy Hood's artworks were recently featured in the Museum of Fine Arts - Houston exhibition, *Kindred Spirits: Louise Nevelson & Dorothy Hood*. Deborah Colton Gallery has continued to support Dorothy Hood's legacy by assisting with attaining all of Hood's precious archives and journals for the University of Houston Special Collection of the School of the Libraries. Deborah Colton Gallery also continues to promote Hood's work, with both national and international exhibitions pending.

Perry House was born in Orange, Texas. He pursued art as a vocation at the California College of Arts and Crafts where he earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in fine arts. Upon his return to Texas, House settled in Houston and began his lifelong career as an artist and a teacher of artists. His work often strips away decoration, narrative, sex, politics, and traditional perspective, while at the same time evoking the passage of time, weight, depth, and our mortal coil. As Houston's art scene was coming of age, House was one of the early pioneers of abstraction, showing with some of the most historically notable galleries in Houston. In the collection of the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, the artist received an NEA fellowship award in 1990 and mounted solo efforts at Diverse Works in 2000, curated by Susie Kalil, and 2004 at the Galveston Arts Center curated by Clint Willour. On his work House comments "My art has always been about some particular opposites; elegance and violence, humor and horror, the sacred and the profane. Things are sectioned, distorted and exploded." Perry House retired from Houston Community College - Central after 30 years of teaching, and painted full time up until his passing. House was a Houston fixture for decades, not only as an artist but also as a teacher. He touched nearly every corner of Houston's art scene and influenced many young artists in Houston and beyond.

Bert L. Long, Jr., a 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 master chef Long, decided to devote himself entirely to art in 1979. 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 [such a] process." The late Peter Marzio, former Director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, said of Bert Long: "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 was awarded several significant awards including the National Endowment for the Arts Grant in 1987 and the prestigious Prix de Rome fellowship in 1990.

Jesse Lott is an African-American sculptor of great distinction and a long time 5th Ward, Houston resident, who began his artistic career creating and selling his works as a student at E.O. Smith Elementary School in 1957. Jesse Lott works in paper, metal, and wood as well as working with armatures and wire, all the while building with his artistry a capacity for emotional power. His technique is derived from collecting and recycling discarded materials, as a type of urban archeology fused with scientific methodology. He has influenced many artists, including Texans as well known as James Surls, Bert Long Jr. and Angelbert Metoyer. 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.

Born in Houston, Texas in 1945, **Suzanne Paul** received her BFA from the University of Houston in 1968 and completed graduate work at the University of California, Berkeley. In the 1960s, Paul became a political activist for anti-war and civil rights causes. In Houston, she photographed for the feminist magazine Breakthrough in the late 1970s. Suzanne Paul has over 15 works in the permanent collection of the Museum of Fine Arts: Houston and has had solo exhibitions at the Contemporary Art Museum: Houston, the Fort Worth Art Museum, the Galveston Arts Center and the University of California, San Francisco. She has participated in numerous group exhibitions including Collaborations: Artists Working Together in Houston at the Glassell School of Art and Texas Artists at the Charles Cowles Gallery in New York among many others nationwide. In 1981 Suzanne Paul received a National Endowment for the Arts Photo Survey Grant and has been listed as one of the top national female photographers over the years. Her photographic works have been featured in both solo and group exhibitions by FotoFest International since their founding in 1983. Suzanne Paul's work has been shown in many of exhibitions at Deborah Colton Gallery, including the gallery's 2016 FotoFest solo exhibition of Paul's work Proof, and going as far back as at the Memorial exhibition and reception at the time of her passing in 2005 at Colton's first gallery space on Summer Street. Suzanne Paul's work is now permanently featured in Deborah Colton Gallery's "Houston Foundations Room."

A native Houstonian born in 1933, **Dick Wray**, was an artist of incomparable talent and personality who played a critical role in the development of Houston's contemporary art scene since the late 1950s. Often categorized as an Abstract Expressionist, Wray is best known for his explosive and dynamic paintings that have received numerous accolades from Houston's critical community as well as notable arts figures across the United States throughout his career. Wray attended the University of Houston's School of Architecture, followed by being educated at the Kunstakademie Dusseldorf Arts Academy in Germany. Returning to Houston in 1959, he began seriously working as an artist with zest and vigor. Over the next fifty years, he participated in a large number of important exhibitions nationally and internationally, while locally Wray had his first solo exhibition at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston in 1975, was included in the Fresh Paint: The Houston School at the Museum of Fine Arts in 1985 and many other prestigious exhibitions. Wray was an instructor at the Glassell School of Art from 1968 until 1982 and also taught seminars in other art institutions throughout the years. Wray was awarded the Ford Foundation Award in 1962, received a prestigious Artist's Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1978 and was named Texas Artist of the Year by the Art League of Houston in 2000. His work is in major collections, including the Albright Knox Museum in Buffalo, National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, the Contemporary Art Museum of Houston and the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

Deborah Colton Gallery has a permanent **Foundations Room** in the back of the gallery that highlights Suzanne Paul's photographs of the Houston art scene plus a video excerpt of our Foundations Symposium Series from 2017. The video was created by Lee Benner. There also is a library of publications on Houston artists.

Please view the Deborah Colton Gallery website for more details and installation images of our past exhibitions. Select videos that relate to many of the exhibitions highlighted *20 in 2020 Part 3* are on our Video Library section.

Respecting our past, being aware of our current environment, and looking far beyond into the future has always been part of the vision of Deborah Colton Gallery. The mission statement has been the same since our first exhibitions. 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 and public space installations. The gallery aspires to provide a forum through connecting Texas, national and international artists to make positive change.