

Book









HCG GALLERY IS PROUD TO BRING

Bert L. Long Jr.

AN ARTIST OF THE HIGHEST CALIBER

INTO OUR SPACE.

HE PRESENTS SUCH A VARIED AND

ECLECTIC MIX OF MEDIUMS, ALL

DEMONSTRATING MASTERY OF A TRUE

ARTIST AND CRAFTSMEN. BERT'S RESUME

IS LONG, THE WORK PROVOKING AND

CONTEMPLATIVE, AND THIS EXHIBIT

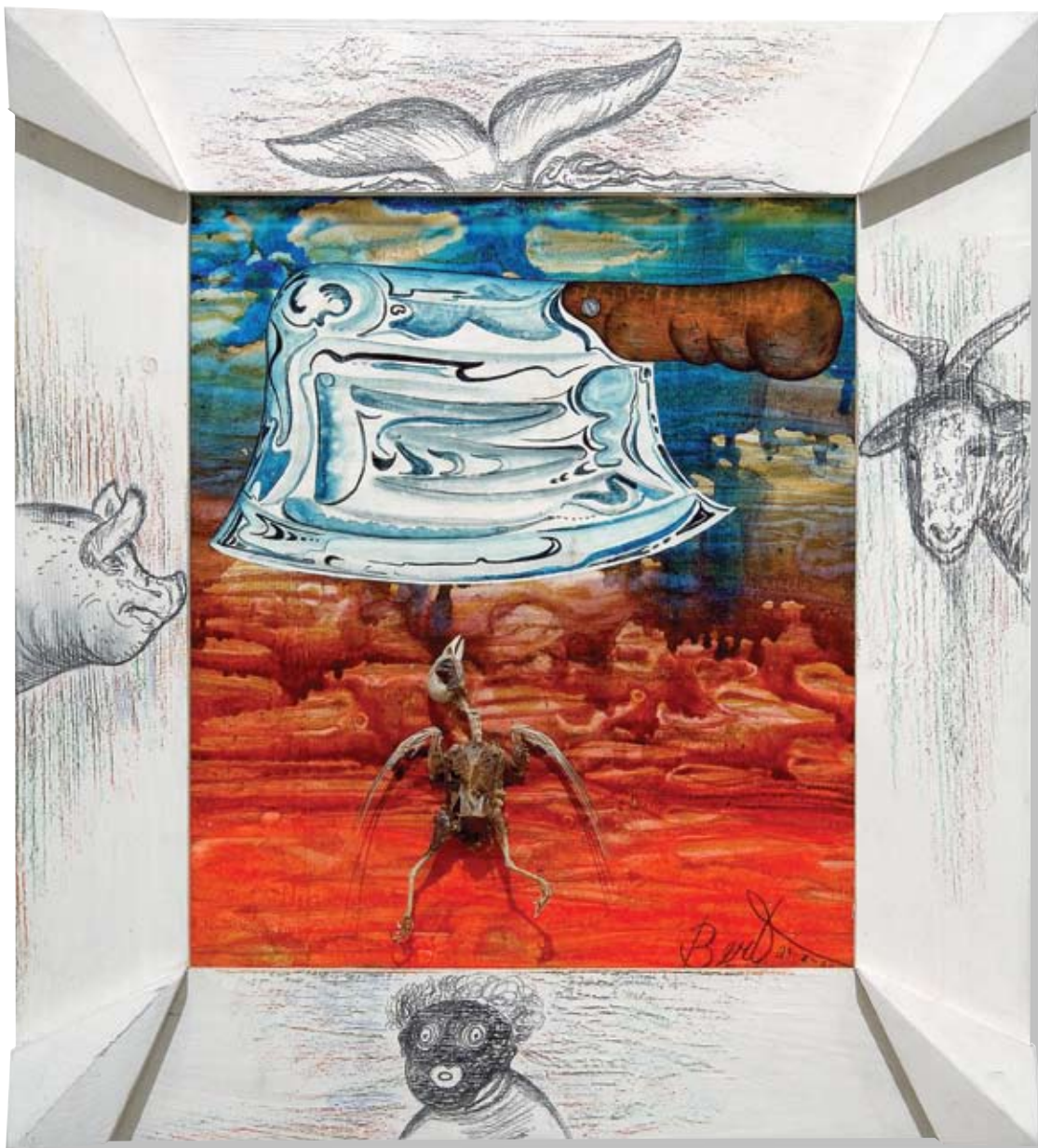
SPANNING THE LENGTH OF A STORIED

CAREER — IS AN HONOR TO PRESENT TO

THE PUBLIC AND COLLECTORS ALIKE.

DECEMBER 5, 2008 UNTIL JANUARY 10TH, 2009.

ARTIST RECEPTION FRIDAY DECEMBER 5, 6-9.



Endangered Species (1995). Acrylic and cadaver of bird on gessoed white pine board with frame of gessoed white pine, acrylic paint, charcoal pencil, and wax crayon, with frame of white pine with charcoal drawings. 18 x 17 x 1"

Bert Long's paintings are seriously ugly. He favors a lurid palette of blues and purples against a ground of paper-bag brown which he likes to highlight with day-glo yellow and green. He builds up his frames with lathing and plaster so that they often dominate the paintings themselves, and he adds to their bulk with broken glass, plaster-cast body parts, bones, and whatever else he finds. As a result, even his smallest works have a vulgar, screaming intensity. They pose a genuine challenge to any canon of aesthetic credibility, no matter how loosely it might be applied. — Charles Dee Mitchell, *Dallas Observer*, April 27, 1989.

Bert L. Long, Jr. was born in the ghetto district of Houston's Fifth Ward. From his first job as chef's assistant at the Houston Club to executive chef in charge of a major Hyatt Regency Hotel, Long spent 26 years perfecting his culinary craft in order to rise to the top of his profession. Then, in 1975, he gave it all up to pursue a personal artistic vision. After years of financial struggle, he eventually garnered a reputation as a self-taught genius, astonishing the public with his monumental ice sculptures, surrealist paintings, and larger-than-life personality. In 1990, Long was one of two American painters to receive the prestigious Prix de Rome Fellowship in Fine Arts given by the American Academy in Rome. He was also chosen as Texas Artist of the Year by the Art League of Houston. His work is now included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Dallas Museum of Art; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and the Huntington Art Gallery of the University of Texas, Austin. This is the stuff of myth.

— Stephen Pinson, *Voices of Art, Bert Long: Myth and the Black Artist*

One of the most unforgettable paintings in the show is *Slice of Reality*. A slice of watermelon consumed by flames stands as a symbol for the many men who have been murdered by lynching and burning. Ironically, it also suggests the hooded profile of a Klansman. The charred wooden frame offers further and immediate evidence of these acts of pure terror. As an illustration of America's appalling history of racism it is without parallel; only when we look back to such works as Goya's *No se Puede Pirar* (*One Cannot Look at This*) do we find a parallel in horror.

Long's extraordinary achievement over the past three decades demands that we reconsider what it means to be a "self-taught" artist. Although he came to art as a second career in the late 1970s, his paintings, sculptures, drawings, and assemblages demonstrate a level of sophistication and knowledge of world art that make him anything but an "outsider." Indeed, his consistent engagement with the everyday stuff of life and his willingness to test the limits of identity place his work in the arena of such contemporaries as David Hammons, Fred Wilson, and Betye Saar, a fact acknowledged by such recent exhibitions as *Valerie Cassell Oliver and Franklin Sirmans's Double Consciousness: Black Conceptual Art Since 1970*.

—Alison de Lima Greene, *Curator Contemporary Art and Special Projects*.

Long's ongoing evolution as an artist shouldn't be surprising, considering his late start; in terms of experience he's the equivalent of a typical 35-year-old artist just entering maturity. And this CAM show—Long's first one-man exhibit in a Houston museum—suggests that the most remarkable aspect of his extraordinary career is that his considerable talent is only beginning to emerge. — Michael Ennis, *Long Shot*, *Texas Monthly* February 1992.



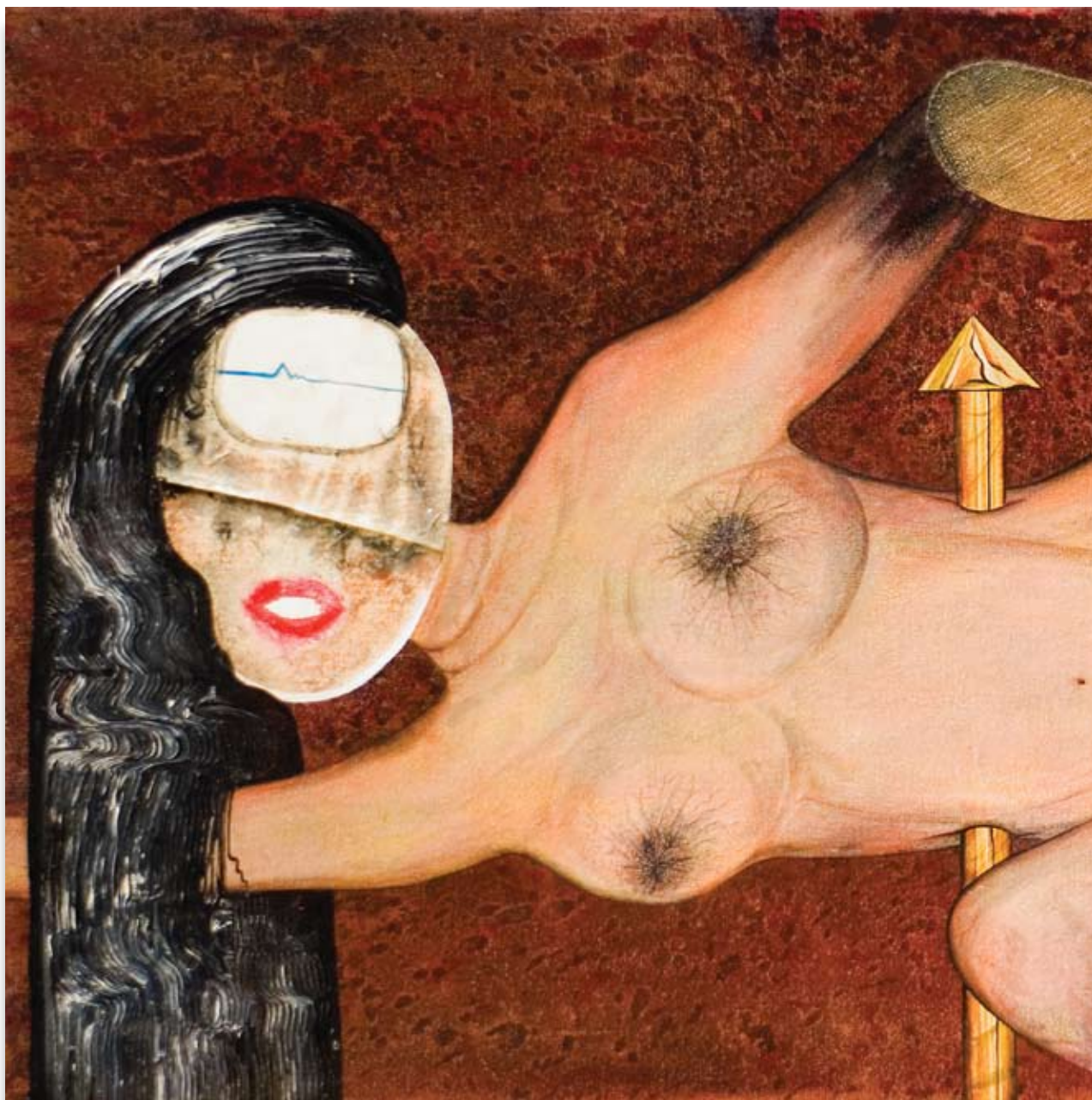
Riding the Tiger (2000). Acrylic on canvas with frame of gold, silver and bronze foil, acrylic paint on gessoed wood.
101 x 113 x 2" Collection of the artist.

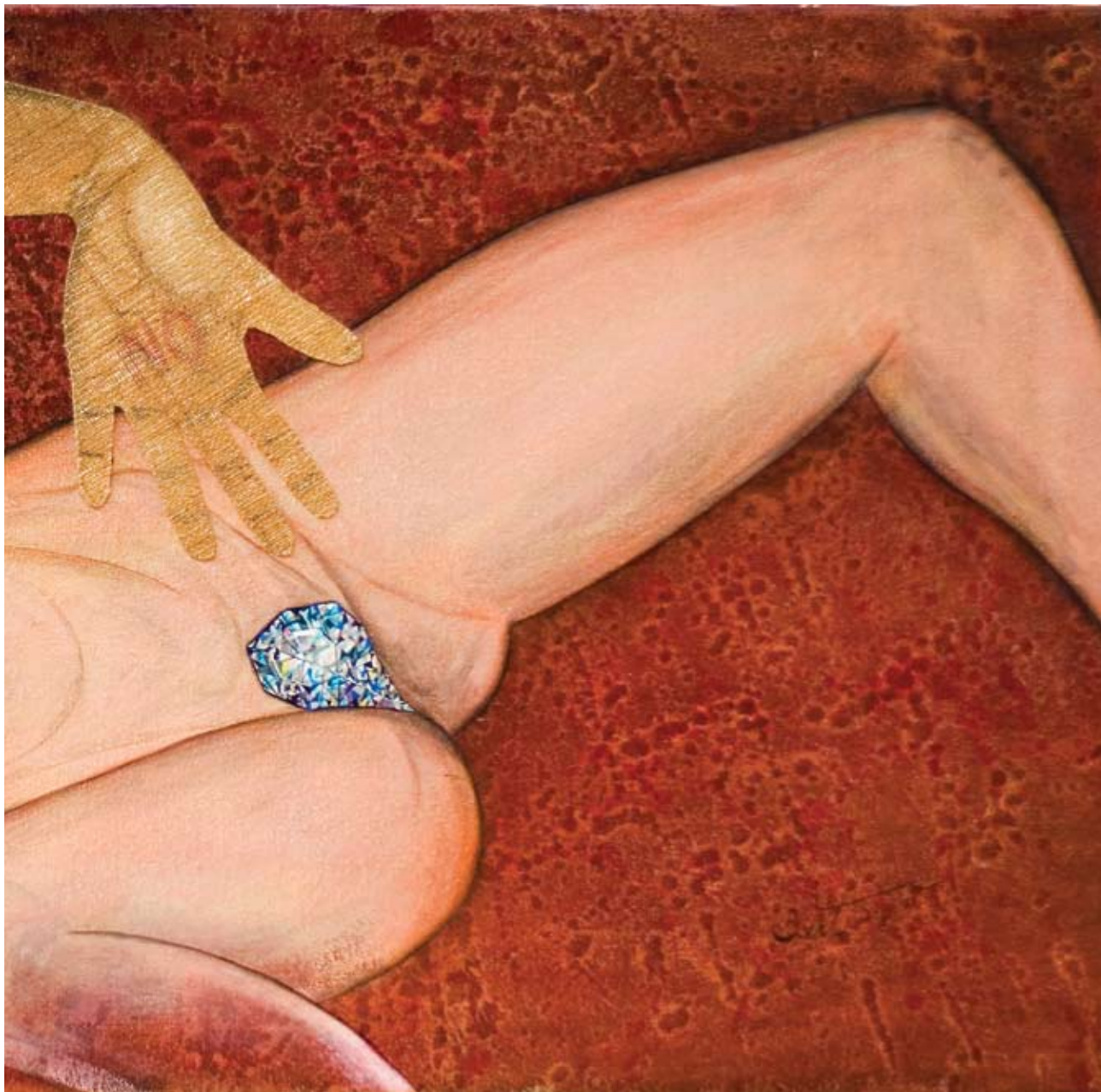


Vision of the Pain (2000). Acrylic on gessoed pine. 72 x 36 x 7"



Meal (1992). Burnt cornbread, beans, rice, chicken bones/wish bone in fiberglass resin. 16.5 x 18 x 3"
Collection of the artist.





My Loving Wife (1979). Acrylic paint on canvas with canvas cutout and collage of paper. 24 x 48"

Bert Long's Van Gogh incorporates a hug frame around a blackboard and a shelf at the bottom of the composition supporting various objects including a human brain in a jar. Unfortunately, Long's pictures seem no more than contemporary excursions into Surrealism which somehow never seems to die even though the art movement lost its intellectual vigor nearly half a century ago.The artists from Los Angeles present far and away the most imposing group in the exhibition (save for Judd and painter Bert Long, the Texans are unexpectedly wan). ...I don't mean that Bert Long's Van Gogh (the piece with the pickled brain) is not good art – in fact it is one of the best pieces in the show... – Joseph Young, Phoenix Biennial, The Art is Southwest the Concepts New York, The Arizona Republic, 1987.



Future See (2000) Acrylic on white pine with fiberglass eye. 24 x 36 x 6" Collection of the artist.

Bert Long does not avert his gaze from that which is painful, but as the works gathered here testify, he also brings a spirit of joy and redemption to his art. We can all learn from this great artist.
– Peter Marzio, Director, Museum of Fine Arts



Looking Like Everything You See (after GHANDI) (1999). Acrylic on canvas. 42 x 53" Collection of artist.



Fore Brother (1979). Acrylic paint on cardboard, with collages of colored papers. 30 x 24"



I Can See It But I Can't Feel It (2000). Laser engraving on plaster with tree limb and acrylic paint. 26 x 18 x 5"

Bert Long is one of the most consummate artists I know. Everything about him speaks to his art — from his very persona to his love of cooking, from carving on ice to printing on fabric, from working with children to renovating historic buildings. It is also no fluke that one of the most recurring iconic images in Bert's work is the eye, for it is Bert's eye that is always at work. — Clint Willour, Executive Director, Galveston Arts Center.

When asked who the most important Texas artists are—those who serve as models for young artists, for example— most people come up with the same group of names: alphabetically, they are John Alexander, Joseph Glasco, Bert Long, James Surls and Michael Tracy. Stylistically these artists have little in common, though they have all been influenced by a mixture of folk art. Mexican art and Surrealism. — Art in America, April 1987



New Day for A Colored Man (2002). Acrylic on paper with collage. 61 x 49" Collection of the artist.

BERT L. LONG JR.

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MEDIUM: Acrylic paint on canvas. Ice (multicolored).

EDUCATION: UCLA, 1972, California Teaching Credentials-
Adult Ed., Los Angeles Trade Technical College,
1971-1972, Restaurant Mgmt.

Significant Awards Received:

TALA Artist of the Year, 2008.
Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation, Inc.
Emergency Assistance Grant, 1997.
Texas Artist of the Year, 1990.
Rome Prize Fellowship, 1990-91.
Bemis Foundation Residency, 1988.
NEA Visual Artist Fellowship Grant, 1987.

EXHIBITION HISTORY SUMMARY: selected Solo and Two Person
2008 Project RowHouses, "Field of Vision" Sculpture Park, dedication
of permanent renovation and installation. Houston, TX.
2006 Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Texas "Out of the Life of BERT
L. LONG Jr", Houston, TX

2001 Rhode Island Foundation/RISD Museum, "Carta: Process
of the Ice Installation" College of the Mainland Art Gallery,
Providence, RI.

Bert Long, Aloma Marquis, Black like..." Texas City, TX.
2000 Old Dominion University Gallery, "Field of Vision"
Norfolk, VA.

Pascal Robinson Galleries, "Me looking at Me" Houston, TX.
5th ward Redevelopment Corp, "Field of Vision", Permanent
Sculpture Installation. 3900 Block, Lyons Ave. Houston, TX.
Spark School Park Program 1999-2000 City of Houston.
E.O. Smith Education Center, "Gates of Opportunity" Houston, TX.
The University of Texas at San Antonio Visual Art Gallery
"Flying into the Light" San Antonio, TX.

1998 Southwest Texas State University, "The Beginning, The End,
The Beginning" Bert Long and Constance Kelly, Paintings and
Photographs. San Marcos, TX.

Project Rowhouses, "The Passage" Bert Long's Tribute to Constance
Kelly Long, his late wife. Houston, TX.

1996 Pace Contemporary/Hare & Hound Press, "The Fine Art Print,"
San Antonio, TX.

Lyons Matrix Gallery, "Native Texans, 1996 Kickoff" Austin, TX.
1996 Centro de Exposiciones San Jorge, Cáceres, España.
1993 The Fabric Workshop, "Jive Plantation" Philadelphia, PA.
1992 Lyons Matrix Gallery, "Bert in the New World/España to
Americas" Austin, TX.

1991 "Looking and Seeing in Rome" Contemporary Arts Museum,
Houston, TX.

Lew Allen Gallery, "Bert Long in New Work" Houston TX

1990 Allan Stone Gallery, "Bert Long" New York, NY.

1989 Barry Whistler Gallery, "Bert Long, Recent Paintings" Dallas, TX.
Texas A&M Memorial Student Center, "Bert Long, Recent Work"
College Station, TX.

1988 Dallas Museum of Art, "Concentrations 18, Bert Long" Dallas, TX.
Art Museum of Southeast Texas, "Bert Long, Paintings and Sculpture"
Beaumont, TX

1987 Butler Gallery, "Josef Mutter: Woodcuts," "Bert Long: Paintings
and Sculpture" Houston, TX

L.A. Louver Gallery, Venice California.

1986 Butler Gallery, (James Surls Studio) Splendora, TX.

1985 Butler Gallery, "Bert L. Long & Joel Peter Witkin."

1984 Robinson Galleries, "New York Collection."

1982 Lawndale Annex, "Art: Healing Force" University of Houston.

1980 Galveston Arts Center, Gallery New Art Era. Galveston, TX.

1978 O'Kane Gallery, "The Spirit of Art". University of Houston,
Downtown College, Houston, TX.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS (selected)

2005 Contemporary Arts Museum, "Double Consciousness Black
Conceptual Art Since 1970 (Thin Ice)" Houston, TX.

Lawndale Art Center, "Still Crazy" Houston, TX.

Austin Museum of Art, "Color Pattern Grid" Austin, TX.

Houston City Hall Building Foyer, "MAC 2006 Art on Loan
Program" Houston, TX.

1998-1999 Museum of Fine Arts Houston, "Modernism in an
Century of Change for Object to Icon: The Art of Assemblage."

Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Museum of Southwest, El Paso.

Museum of Art, Austin Museum of Art, and Wichita Falls Museum and
Art Center. "Oil Patch Dreams, Images of the Petroleum Industry
in American Art."

1985 Museum of Fine Arts Houston, "The Houston School."

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS: Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC;
Dallas Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Art, Houston; Arkansas
Art Center, Little Rock; Bell Telephone, Houston, TX; Highland
Distributing Co., Houston; Contemporary Museum, Honolulu,
Hawaii; Chicago Library; Grupo Larios, Spain; Instituto de
Bachillerato, "Mario Roso de Luna", Logrosan, Spain; Office of the
Mayor, Berzocana, Spain; Fabric Workshop Museum, Philadelphia;
Museum of Southeast Texas, Beaumont; Dallas Morning News; Gallerie
Dario, Boccara, Paris, France; SBC Collection of 2000 Century Art,
San Antonio, TX; Jack S. Blanton Museum, Austin Museum, Austin,
TX.; San Angelo Museum of Fine Art, San Angelo TX.

Booth



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