

A Valentine for Bert

A special screening of a new documentary exploring the life and art of Texas art patriarch, Bert Long, Jr.

Presented by the Menil Collection, Houston Museum of African American Culture, and Houston Cinema Arts Society

Thursday, February 14th, 7:00 p.m. at the Menil Collection



HOUSTON, TX, January 30, 2013 – The Menil Collection – in partnership with the Houston Museum of African American Culture and Houston Cinema Arts Society – presents a Valentine’s Day tribute to artist Bert L. Long, Jr. At this free public program – in the Menil foyer – guests will be treated to the film and a wine reception for the artist.

The hour-long documentary, ***Bert***, explores the life and art of the esteemed Rome Prize winner, as seen through the eyes of collectors, colleagues, gallerists, and friends.

Narrated by artist John Alexander, ***Bert*** reflects on the long and storied career as told by admirers such as Valerie Cassel Oliver, Senior Curator at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston; Leslie King Hammond, Founding Director of the Maryland Institute College of Art Center for Race and Culture; Peter Marzio, the late Director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Rick Lowe and Floyd Newsum of Project Row Houses; as well as artists and collectors such as David McGee, Jesse Lott, Dick DeGuerin, and Marilyn Oshman.

Written, produced, and directed by Houston-based arts patron, John Guess Jr., the film eloquently reveals Long’s practice - encompassing various media including painting, sculpture and performance art. The film has been exclusively screened only at the Ensemble Theater, the McKinney Avenue Contemporary (Dallas) and Houston Museum of African American Culture.

A Fifth Ward native, Bert Long’s longevity is matched by the fascinating aspects of his early transformation from professional chef at the Ritz Carlton Chicago and Hyatt Regency Houston – to a widely exhibited painter and sculptor. Long has lived and worked extensively outside Texas, maintaining studios in Rome, Italy and Berzocana, Spain.

Bert Long is one of the state's few Rome Prize inductees – a bursary award made annually by the American Academy in Rome. He is among the most exhibited artists in Texas with a history extending back to the original Lawndale Art Center.

Institutions that have shown his work within the past decade include the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, with a major exhibition in 2006, *Out of the Life of Bert L. Long, Jr.*; the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston in 2005 with *Double Consciousness: Black Conceptual Art Since 1970*. Additionally, Long has created two of Houston's beloved permanent public works: *Field of Vision* at Project Row Houses and *Art/Life*, a 30-foot by 7-foot mural commissioned by the Houston Arts Alliance for Houston Public Library's Looscan branch.

About the Menil Collection

Considered one of the most important privately assembled collections of the twentieth century, with holdings that range from the prehistoric to the art of the present day, the Menil Collection opened in 1987 in a modern landmark building designed by the renowned architect Renzo Piano. Over the course of a quarter of a century, the Menil has established an international reputation for presenting acclaimed exhibitions; pioneering partnerships with other cultural and education institutions across Houston, Texas and the United States; and conducting groundbreaking research into the conservation of modern and contemporary art. The Menil charges no admission fee. www.menil.org

About Houston Museum of African American Culture

The mission of the Houston Museum of African American Culture (HMAAC) is to collect, conserve, explore, interpret, and exhibit the material and intellectual culture of Africans and African Americans in Houston, the state of Texas, the southwest and the African Diaspora for current and future generations. In fulfilling its mission, HMAAC seeks to invite and engage visitors of every race and background and to inspire children of all ages through discovery-driven learning. HMAAC is to be a museum for all people. While our focus is the African American experience, our story informs and includes not only people of color, but people of all colors. www.hmaac.org

About Houston Cinema Arts Society

Houston Cinema Arts Society is a non-profit organization created in 2008. With the support of former Houston Mayor Bill White and the leadership of Franci Crane, HCAS organizes and hosts Houston Cinema Arts Festival, a groundbreaking and innovative arts festival featuring films and new media by and about artists in the visual, performing, and literary arts. The festival celebrates the vitality and diversity of the arts in Houston with the objective of enriching the city's film and arts community. For more information, please visit HCAS at www.cinemartsociety.org.

For more info contact: press@menil.org or call 713-535-3170