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The only thing that Joseph Glasco and Bert Long have in common is their inclusion in "Fresh Paint: The Houston School."

Long's two paintings are figurative and narrative, unlike Glasco's panels, which are abstract. In "The Family," four people are sitting on a couch, the background and the couch are dark and solid, but the people are translucent, almost ghostly in appearance. "Faceless America" depicts a mother, father and baby standing behind a table covered with food and surrounding them is a cornfield. The colors are bright and the brush strokes are delicate, making the subject seem fragile.

Glasco's screen is impressive, if only due to its size and intricacy: there are ten panels, each 88" X 48" and covered with small, rectangular pieces of cloth, each individually painted.

Laura Russell, also featured in the show, called it the most fabulous piece.

"It's phenomenal," she said. "It could be any place at any time in the whole world. It's hard to articulate it; it's like it's just so right on.

"It works so incredibly on every level. You have this duality going on in it, different kinds of dualities that don't dominate each other. They work. It has to do with both sides, it has to do with inside/outside, with paint verses form."

Glasco has been doing collages for about eight years. He said he likes the way he can add a piece of cloth and cover something that was once there, or subtract a piece and make something hidden visible.

"It lends itself well to my work — collage," he said. "Changes are often accidental, which I found I could use in the composition of the thing. With the (paint) brush, it's pretty intentional anything you do, because the mind and the hand, it's all one."

Glasco's work is neither didactic, nor political. It simply is.

"I just do," he says. "Art is the reason. I'm pretty much of the school — art's about art. It becomes a thing in itself that takes on life. If it's good, it works. If you're turned on, one or two other people are going



Bert Long



"It is a responsibility to send that work off into the world and say, 'This is me. This is a reflection of me,' because people are affected by art without them even knowing it. It affects them very deeply without their even knowing it. I t gets into their clothes, into their living rooms, into their houses, into their children, into their relationships."

Long, on the other hand, paints with very definite intentions: he knows before he starts what a painting will look like, and what it should communicate to the viewer.

"When I go to my studio, I spend two days sweeping and stuff," he said. "I have to go through this ritual. Once I sit down, paintings come to me and they don't come real subtly. I mean they come in the middle of the night like claps of thunder.

"You know, I've said this before and I'm serious that I've had

paintings wake me up in the middle of the night because it was so noisy. So I know what I'm going to do when I sit down in the studio. I usually know the title and everything about the painting."

"Faceless America" was a turning point for Long.

"It was one of these paintings that sort of crept up on me," he said. "It was one of those few paintings that was not a clap of thunder. Technically, I consider the other painting ("Family") a much better painting. "Faceless America" was the first big painting I ever did. That painting taught me all the things I utilize now in my paintings.

"Basically, it's a giant watercolor because it's all these vaporous thin washes done that you're actually seeing the white of the canvas through."

Rather than painting heads, Long used mirrors.

"I wanted to bring the viewer another dimension," he said. "Somehow, I wanted them to spend more than the four seconds that they said people spend before paintings. I wanted them to spend eight seconds. And it happens."

Long said he's seen people sit and look at themselves in the mirrors. He got a laugh out of one woman who used a mirror to make up her face.

see page 13

## Bert Long's work is currently on exhibit in the Butler Gallery. *Nine Months In Hell* was painted in 1980.

to be turned on.

"It's the one thing that I've found that makes life worth living. It's very healthy for everyone."

Glasco in no way intends to manipulate the viewer's attitude toward his own work.

"No messages, no causes, no narratives, no stories as a rule,

tional reaction than I'm going to get. You'll see something totally different. I'm not planning what you're going to get 'cause I don't know when I start these what I'm going to get."

Glasco doesn't "try" to do anything with his paintings. People don't try to make love,

pened and I'll walk away from it and it's finished, as far as I'm concerned. But it may take 10 years for that to happen, or it may take an hour, or it may take a minute.

"It's a kind of magic that happens which you can't explain. And yet, if you're moved by my screen, it's something

*"Visual art is about visual art," Glasco said. "It's an experiential thing; it's not about issues. Anything you want to read into them, you're going to get a different emotional reaction than I'm going to get. You'll see something totally different. I'm not planning what you're going to get 'cause I don't know when I start these what I'm going to get."*

*"Anything you want to read into them, you're going to get a different emotional reaction than I'm going to get."*

except I use the figure sometimes, never with the idea of indicating a message. I think that belongs in writing, in literature, in another medium.

"Visual art is about visual art. It's an experiential thing; it's not about issues."

What, then, do Glasco's screens say about him?

"Anything you want to read into them," he said, "you're going to get a different emo-

he says, either you do or you don't.

"You have in you somewhere, in a dark spot, what the world would call beauty and you get to that some way," he said. "Sometimes I work on a piece for a year or two or three or four until it comes alive. Suddenly, I'll see something in it that will turn it on and I'll suddenly feel it happen. I'll know that something hap-

that I didn't intend to do. My intentions weren't to do something to move you, I intended to move myself. My intentions were to do something that I enjoy and get excited looking at. After that, I can present it to the world as something they might get off to. But first it had to hit me."

Glasco believes that sending his paintings into the world carries a lot of responsibility.