

April 22, 1980

News

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*I am waiting for my case
to come up
and I am waiting
for a rebirth of wonder
and I am waiting for someone
to really discover America
and wail...*

Lawrence Ferlinghetti

DALLAS--Wailing figures are the foundation for both the art and photography exhibits currently on display at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas. The shows, which are appearing in conjunction with a series of symposia on Violence in America on campus in April, illuminate the dark sides of life on the two American continents. They will continue through April 27 and be seen in Fort Worth May 3 and 4 on the South Campus, Tarrant County Junior College, in connection with the last symposium in the series, to be held there on the latter date.

Stark black-and-white prints of violent scenes in the United States in the 60s and 70s depict Vietnam, integration, racial riots, Texas prison life, murder, suicide and assassination. Photos are from Magnum publishers and Black Star. Vivid paintings of earth and blood tones filled with screaming blue-and-black figures by Guatemalan artist Elmar Rene Rojas depict the violence in his native country, which has been torn for a number of years by revolutionary forces. Rojas' paintings are peopled with cringing women, often holding babies close to their bodies, soldiers with rifles, even planes and helicopters looking strangely reminiscent of prehistoric beasts or birds.

Rojas, himself a politician who was deposed as mayor of Guatemala City by military junta in 1975, sees himself as a man with a mission in society which he can express through his art. That mission, says the artist/architect, is to induce change in his country and right the wrongs in society. Although Rojas says the artist can never forget that he is a craftsman in the sense that he has to pay attention to artistic values, questions of forms and those things of aesthetics to which he is true, the real problem of expression is making an impact on the society in which we live.

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first, add art and symposia

"The artist must demand respect for humanity. And by artist, I mean all who write, think, hold the brush, those who sculpt, the philosopher, the humanist. All have to work together to put an end to violence."

The symposia continue Saturday, April 26 with Faces of November, a short film of mourning John Kennedy; Crisis Behind a Presidential Commitment, a documentary on forced integration at the University of Alabama; and The Eternal Frame, a videotape re-enactment of the Kennedy assassination in Dallas by The Ant Farm. Addresses will be on "Transcending Topicality in Art and Popular Culture," Anne Livet, art curator and consultant and "Spirituality in Contemporary Art," Melinda Wortz, director of the Department of Art and the art gallery, The University of California. A panel, "Is History Made by People or Do People Make History?" will include Dr. David Hubbard, director of the Aberrant Behavior Center, Dallas; Texas sculptor James Surls; Blake Byrne, station manager, KXAS-TV, Fort Worth; and Dr. Mark Thistlethwaite, art historian, Texas Christian University.

A special KXAS documentary, The Hurt That Won't Heal, will be shown after an introductory presentation, "Television: The Functional/Dysfunctional Medium," by Dr. Harold Mendelsohn, Center for Mass Communications, Research and Policy, the University of Denver.

Program for the afternoon will close with Leonard P. Oliver, special assistant to the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, who will speak on "Violence and the Humanities: Expanding the Context for Understanding Action."

A showing of the 1953 Western movie Shane will begin the morning program Sunday, April 27. A tape of George Stevens discussing the morality of the violence in the film will follow. Also, Dr. Richard M. Brown, historian and author, The University of Oregon, will speak on "The Homestead Ethic and No Duty to Retreat: Violence in America and the Old West." Dr. Clifton Sparks, Texas Woman's University sociologist, will respond.

Conversations with Violent Men, a series of videotapes collected and produced by Leland Wino, an ex-offender will be on the afternoon program. Responding will be Gail Thomas, director of civic leadership, The University of Dallas, and Dr. George Stade, professor of English Literature, Columbia, will speak on "Violent Deliverance and Macho Self-Definition." A panel on Machisma will follow, and summing up for the day will be done by "Week in Review" editor Mitchel Levitas of The New York Times.

The final symposium in the series is scheduled for May 4 in Fort Worth. Subject matter will deal with crime, punishment and prison life. In addition, the film The Onion Field will be shown on the South Campus, TCJC, at 10 a.m., 1 p.m., and 4 p.m. both May 3 and 4.

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