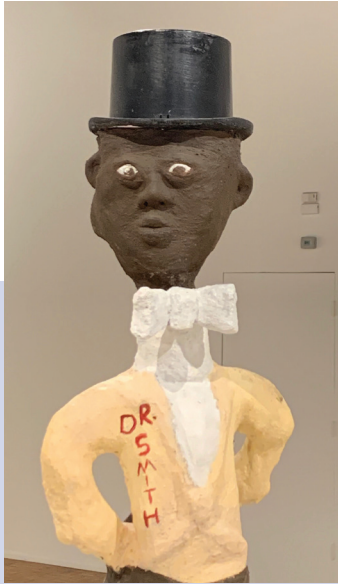


Dr. Charles Smith: Aurora

July 14, 2019–January 31, 2021



Who is Dr. Charles Smith?

Dr. Charles Smith (b. 1940) is an artist who creates **sculptures** about Black history. His sculptures show famous people from history, such as musician and singer Louis Armstrong, and scenes from everyday life, like a family eating dinner together. He uses **found objects** like hats, broken glass, and fabric on his sculptures. He first created his art in Illinois and now lives in Louisiana. He puts his sculptures outside his home. This is called an **artist-built environment**. He named his group of sculptures the *African-American Heritage Museum + Black Veterans Archive*. His museum is always open to visitors.

Words to Know

Sculpture: A three-dimensional artwork. It has height, width, and depth. A sculpture can be carved, cast, hand-built, or assembled from different objects or materials. Sculptures can be made out of a variety of materials, such as metal, marble, wood, concrete, or ceramics.

Found Object: Items that are used as nontraditional art-making tools or materials. Often, a found object is something that was discarded or no longer usable for its original purpose. It can also be something from nature that can be collected, such as driftwood and rocks. Sometimes a found object is functional for its original purpose, but it is used in a different way in an artwork. For example, buttons can become a texture that covers a sculpture.

Artist-built Environment: A unique place—usually a home—that is transformed by an artist. Often inspired by the life experiences of the artist, they typically are made using nearby and easily accessible materials.

**John Michael
Kohler Arts Center**

608 New York Ave
Sheboygan, WI 53081
+1 920 458 6144
jmkac.org/learn/education-resources

Dr. Charles Smith, *Dr. Smith (self-portrait)*,
c. 1985–c. 1999; mixed media; 63 1/2 x 15
x 14 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center
collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

Age Group:
7+ and Families

Learn more about the historic figures Dr. Charles Smith sculpted.



Louis Armstrong (1901-1971)

Louis Armstrong was a musician and singer. He was born in New Orleans, and first learned how to play the cornet, an instrument similar to the trumpet, when he was young. As an adult, he sang and played trumpet with jazz groups in New York City and Chicago. He was also an actor and appeared in many movies. His songs can still be heard today on the radio, television, and in movies.

Dr. Charles Smith, *Horn Player: Louis Armstrong Series*, c. 1985–c. 1999; mixed media; 32 3/4 x 9 1/2 x 13 1/2 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.



Rosa Parks (1913-2005)

Rosa Parks wanted everyone to be treated the same, no matter the color of their skin. In 1955 she refused to give up her seat for a white passenger on a bus. At that time, there was a rule Black people had to sit in the back of the bus. Her action helped change the rule so that people were treated equally on buses, no matter the color of their skin.

Dr. Charles Smith, *Rosa Parks*, c. 1985–c. 1999; mixed media; 40 x 18 3/4 x 29 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.



Florence Griffith Joyner (Flo Jo) (1959-1998)

In 1988, Flo Jo set world records for the 100-meter dash with a time of 10.49 seconds and the 200-meter dash with a time of 21.34 seconds. She won three Olympic gold and two silver medals during her career.

Dr. Charles Smith, *Flo Jo*, c. 1985–c. 1999; mixed media; 45 3/16 x 23 1/2 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.



Serena Williams (b. 1981)

Serena Williams is a professional tennis player. She has won many tournaments, including a record four Olympic gold medals she earned with her sister, Venus. The Women's Tennis Association has ranked her number one eight times during her career.

Dr. Charles Smith, *Serena Williams*, c. 1985–c. 1999; mixed media; 52 x 16 x 14 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

John Michael Kohler Arts Center

Continue your learning by visiting your local library or searching online to learn more about these historic figures and moments in history.

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