



John Michael Kohler Arts Center

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Feb. 21, 2020 Sheboygan, WI



Works from “Brass” Bob Halfmann's collection of objects created by Arts/Industry artists-in-residence. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Robert Halfmann. Photo courtesy of John Michael Kohler Arts Center.

New Exhibition Spotlights Artists' Appreciation for Work of Longtime Factory Associate

Tokens of Appreciation, opening March 8 at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, considers the meaningful and unexpected relationships that develop between Kohler Co. factory associates and Arts/Industry residents who come to the factory to create art. The exhibition runs through Nov. 29.

For many Arts/Industry residents, it is their first time entering a factory; for some, it is also their first time working with clay or metal. Kohler Co. associates such as “Brass” Bob Halfmann have had an undeniable impact on the ultimate success of uncountable residents in the factory’s pottery and foundry over the years.

Halfmann is one of the most notable and influential figures in the history of John Michael Kohler Arts Center’s Arts/Industry program. The recently retired Halfmann, an engineering technician III at Kohler Co., oversaw the melt operation for all the brass made into faucets and fittings as well as artworks.

Tokens of Appreciation features works from Halfmann’s personal collection of hundreds of objects created by residents and given to him as tokens of their gratitude for his help.

Halfmann isn't sure how the practice of giving him a gift of appreciation began. "I don't know if it was word of mouth from the artists coming back and forth saying 'when I left, I gave "Brass Bob this, and when I left I gave him that.'"

The exhibition also includes works of art donated to the Arts Center by Arts/Industry artists-in-residence. Among the artists represented are Ghada Amer, Michelle Grabner, Junko Iijima, Beth Katleman, Joel Otterson, and Lia Zulalian.

Tokens of Appreciation is part of the John Michael Kohler Arts Center's "On Being Here (and There)" series. The series highlights the ways artists and cultural organizations initiate community connections, encourage belonging, and provide social sustenance.

For more information, visit jmkac.org or call 920-458-6144. Admission to the John Michael Kohler Arts Center is free. It is located at 608 New York Ave. in downtown Sheboygan.

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Lia Zulalian, *Torso*, 1994; brass; 25 1/4 x 20 x 4 1/2 in.
John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of the artist.
Photo courtesy of John Michael Kohler Arts Center.

About the John Michael Kohler Arts Center

Founded in 1967, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center (JMKAC) is dedicated to generating creative exchanges between an international community of artists and a diverse public. Central to its mission is promoting understanding and appreciation of the work of self-taught and contemporary artists through original exhibitions, commissioned works of art, performing arts, community arts initiatives, and publications.

The Arts Center's collection focuses primarily on works by artist-environment builders, self-taught and folk artists, and works created in the Arts/Industry residency program. JMKAC is the world's leading center for research and presentation of artist-built environments. Beginning in August 2020, its collection of 25,000 individual works of art by more than 30 art-environment builders can be viewed year round at the Art Center's new satellite campus, the Art Preserve.

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center is supported by corporate and foundation donors, government grants, and its many members. The Arts Center is not an entity of Kohler Co. or its subsidiaries.

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center is located at 608 New York Avenue, Sheboygan, WI. The Art Preserve is located at 3636 Lower Falls Road, Sheboygan. Admission to both is free. For information, call 920-458-6144, or visit jmkac.org, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [Instagram](#).

Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Thursday: 10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.

Saturday, Sunday: 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Location

John Michael Kohler Arts Center: 608 New York Avenue, Sheboygan, WI

Art Preserve: 3636 Lower Falls Road, Sheboygan, WI