



Hawkins Bolden (1914–2005)

Hawkins Bolden and his identical twin, Monroe, were born September 10, 1914, in Memphis, Tennessee. A childhood accident blinded Hawkins. Throughout his life, he experienced extreme prejudice against both his race and blindness. Hawkins Bolden created and repeatedly reworked an installation of **figural assemblages** and mask-like forms in and around the yard of his small house in central Memphis during the last forty years of his life.

Perhaps influenced by a childhood spent planting and tending the family garden, Bolden took great pride in crafting artwork around his home as an adult. As a child, Bolden's brother encouraged him to make scarecrows, and he began posting his creations along the fence lining the garden. They became the guardians of the family's vegetable gardens and shaped a protected a personal space.

To earn a living, Bolden tended his neighbors' lawns, cleaned the streets, and removed discarded objects and other litter from vacant lots, all of which became a part of his art making. He fashioned his objects from the furniture, clothing, discarded toys, broken tools, and many other items he found. He also used discarded electronic components to make handmade radios.

In 2010, Kohler Foundation, Inc., gave ten of Bolden's works to the John Michael Kohler Arts Center. Bolden's art environment is no longer **in situ**.

Figural Assemblages

An assemblage is an artwork made of various two- and three-dimensional materials. A figural assemblage is one that represents or has elements of real forms, particularly the forms of humans and animals.

In situ

In the place it was originally created.



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Artist Overview

1 Hawkins Bolden, untitled, c. 1965–2005; metal and rubber; 18 x 16 x 2 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of an anonymous donor and Kohler Foundation Inc.

2 Hawkins Bolden, untitled, 1989; mixed media. Collection of William Arnett, GA.