



SHRINE

191 henry street, new york ny 10002 (subway: F line, east broadway) 347•693•4979 www.shrine.nyc

hawkins bolden: scarecrows

For its inaugural exhibition, **SHRINE** has collaborated with William S. Arnett, the founder of the Atlanta-based Souls Grown Deep Foundation, to organize a survey of mixed-media “scarecrows” made from found materials by the late, self-taught artist **Hawkins Bolden** (1914-2005). During his lifetime, the artist installed the sculptures in an art-environment setting in the back yard of his home in Memphis, Tennessee.

SHRINE is a new, artist-run gallery, whose exhibitions will highlight the work of both self-trained and emerging contemporary artists. In addition, the gallery will present artist-curated presentations of European *art brut*.

SHRINE will also show scarecrow works and a recreation of a portion of Bolden’s back-yard environment at the **2016 Outsider Art Fair** (Metropolitan Pavilion, 125 West 18th St., Chelsea; Thu., Jan. 21 through Sun., Jan. 24).

Bolden, who was left blind after a childhood baseball accident, scavenged the alleyways and fields around his Memphis home in search of discarded materials, with which he crafted abstract sculptural works. Using only his sense of touch, he created numerous sculptures, which he called “scarecrows.” Some stand tall and are totemic in form. Others are mask-like, wall-mounted objects.

With deep artistic and cultural roots in African spiritual traditions, Bolden’s sculptures may be seen as talismanic creations, which he produced to provide protection for his garden. Bolden never regarded these sculptures as works of art per se. Instead, he placed them in his yard in an effort to keep birds, insects and predators away from his tomatoes, hot peppers and collard greens.

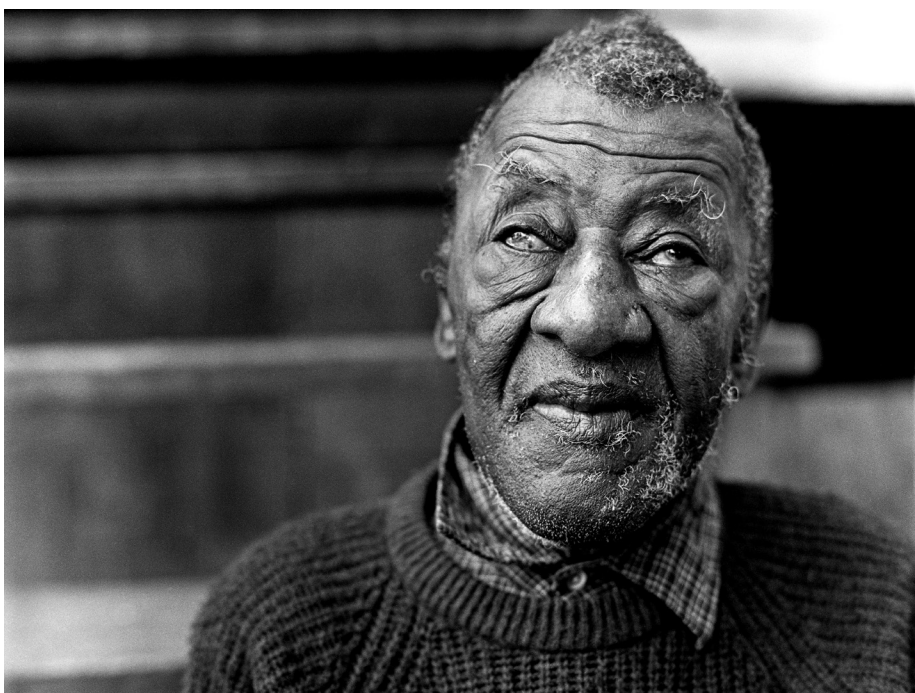
Weathered planks of wood, rusty pots and pans, carpet fragments, beer cans, strips of garden hose and old clothing — Bolden used wire to bring together such found materials and create new, mysterious forms. Unfiltered through any self-conscious critical theory, Bolden’s assemblages share rich, unwitting affinities with early-modernist experiments in constructed sculptural form. His works may also be seen as emblematic and highly original examples of what would become known as a postmodernist “appropriationist strategy” — before such an approach to art-making became codified, academicized and commonplace among his “professional-artist” counterparts.



Photo of Hawkins Bolden in the 1980s by David Raccuglia, courtesy of Souls Grown Deep Foundation.

Front of poster:
Untitled (Scarecrow),
circa 1980s, mixed media,
38 x 30 x 20 inches
Photo by Cary Whittier

Back of poster:
Untitled (Scarecrow),
circa 1980s, mixed media,
76 x 8 x 9.5 inches
Photo courtesy of
Souls Grown Deep Foundation



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SHRINE
191 henry street
lower east side/chinatown
new york ny 10002
(subway: F line, east broadway)

telephone: 347• 693•4979
www.shrine.nyc
scott@shrine.nyc