

# Loy Bowlin (1909-1999)



Loy Bowlin was born in Franklin County, Mississippi, and lived under conditions of poverty for much of his life. He struggled with depression after his divorce in the 1950s, and sought comfort through his Christian faith.

In 1975, inspired by Glen Campbell's hit record, "Rhinestone Cowboy," Bowlin began to adopt a new **persona** to lift his spirits. First, he covered his clothes entirely with sequins. Next, he **embellished** a 1967 Cadillac. Finally, he transformed his entire home into what became known as the The Beautiful Holy Jewel Home. Bowlin covered every inch of the interior with patterns of cutout paper, paint, glitter, and collaged photographs and magazine illustrations.

After Bowlin's death in 1995, Houston artist and collector Katy Emde was able to purchase the home as long as she removed the house from the property. Emde documented and dismantled the house. In 1998, Kohler Foundation, Inc., acquired the house components and worked for four years on preservation. The foundation gifted the home, along with many of Bowlin's hats, suits, and furniture pieces, to the John Michael Kohler Arts Center.



Artist Overview

# Nek Chand (1924 - 2015)



Nek Chand was born in 1924 in Berian Kala, Tehsil Shakargarh, India (current day Pakistan). After the **Partition of India**, when British rule came to an end in 1947, Chand's Hindu family was forced to flee their village in the Shakargarh region, which fell within the borders of Muslim Pakistan, and they settled in Chandigarh, India.

In 1955, Chand began working as a road inspector for the Indian government's Public Works Department. Chandigarh was going through a major shift at this time: the government had engaged the Swiss architect Le Corbusier to design and rebuild a new capital from scratch, which quickly changed the layout of the city. Chand, believing that everything in nature transforms itself from one form into another, began collecting rocks, discarded materials, and recyclable items from the demolition of surrounding villages. He used these materials to create the Rock Garden of Chandigarh, an eighteen-acre sculpture garden that he secretly constructed for many years. On January 24, 1976, the Rock Garden was formally **inaugurated** as an official public space by the Indian government.

Beginning in 1996 and lasting over the span of eight years, over 150 sculptures from the Rock Garden of Chandigarh were gifted to the John Michael Kohler Arts Center. Chand aided the Arts Center and the Kohler Foundation, Inc., in the selection process, carefully choosing works to receive lasting care and be seen in significant groupings outside of India.

Loy Bowlin. Photo: Sally Griffiths.

Nek Chand's Rock Garden of Chandigarh (site detail, Chandigarh, India), 1958–present. Photo: Iain Jackson, c. 2003–06.



# Create! Pattern and Texture Magnets

Both Loy Bowlin and Nek Chand assembled light-catching materials into arrangements filled with pattern and texture for themselves and for visitors to enjoy.

Using the beads and gems, create an eye-catching magnet that includes pattern and texture.

Start by making a plan. Using the paper template, arrange your beads and gems in a way you like. You can include other small materials you already have as well!

Then use the liquid glue to apply your arrangement onto the mat board. Squeeze a small dot of the glitter glue onto the mat board and place your gem or bead gently onto the glue.

Leave your finished design to dry overnight.

When your design is dry, attached the magnet strip to the back of your mat board.

## Keep Exploring

View more of Nek Chand's and Loy Bowlin's work at [artpreserve.org](http://artpreserve.org).

Listen to "Rhinestone Cowboy" by Glen Campbell.

Can you find India on a map? Search online to find out how far Nek Chand's sculptures traveled from Chandigarh to Sheboygan!

## Persona

A persona is a specific aspect of one's personality or identity. For example, a public persona is how someone might act in front of a large group of people or among people they have never met before.

## Embellish

To add decorative materials to the surface of an object.

## Partition of India

The Partition of India was the division of the Presidencies and Provinces of British India that resulted in formation of two independent dominions, India and Pakistan, in the British Commonwealth of Nations.

## Inaugurated (place)

To mark the beginning or first official use of a place.



Artist Overview

## For K-12 Educators

Suggested National Standard Connection

Visual Arts Creating 2.1

Anchor Standard

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Enduring Understanding

Artists and designers experiment with forms, structures, materials, concepts, media, and art-making approaches.

Essential Question: How do artists work? How do artists and designers determine whether a particular direction in their work is effective? How do artists and designers learn from trial and error?