



**THE SHOT PUTTER**

1933  
Poplar  
14 3/4" H

Inscriptions:  
*front* "The Shot Putter"  
*back* "12 '33 L. G. Bolling"

Lent anonymously

**EXHIBITIONS**

1935 "The Wood Sculptures of Leslie Bolling" (Richmond)

The stance of the shot-putter, a nude male figure, suggests that Bolling had seen photographs of the fifth-century BC Greek bronze sculpture of Zeus or Poseidon, discovered in 1926 off Cape Artemisium. Although *The Shot Putter* is not an accurate depiction of the shot-put stance, it nevertheless demonstrates Bolling's interest in the motion of the human body, as the figure begins to shift weight from his proper right leg to his left. His proper left arm is straight, and he holds the shot in his right hand, which has moved away from the start position of cradling the shot against the neck. Using clearly defined musculature of arms and torso, Bolling conveys the tensing of calf muscles as the body twists and the head turns to the left

Putting the shot is one of the oldest skills that requires strength and grace. "Put" is old Scottish for "thrust," and the sport probably originated in Scottish Highland games. The sport originally used stones that weighed between twelve and twenty-two pounds. In modern shot put, the shot is an iron sphere weighing about sixteen pounds. The athlete balances the shot on the neck next to the jaw and either glides or spins to thrust the shot into the field. The farthest-thrown shot wins the competition.

*The Shot Putter* was exhibited in the 1935 one-man exhibition of Bolling's work mounted by the Richmond Academy of Arts. Albert W. Pollard (1897–1971), listed as the owner, was a realtor with Pollard and Bagby, a firm created by his father, Henry R. Pollard Jr. (1869–1912), and John Bagby in 1894.