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African Toy Collections. Jude Andreasen.

Reviewed by Cleve Overton

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I viewed a wonderful show in November 1995, at the Performing Arts Center Gallery of Frostburg State University in Madison. It was a toy collection—about 100 pieces, all delightful and irresistible objects made of recycled refuse by and for children and tourists, all miniature means of transportation—cars, trucks, motorcycles, bicycles, planes, trains and boats, from at least a dozen different African countries. They were made from scraps of tin cans, wire, wood, rubber, raffia and cloth. Some are crude, and made by children. Others are more sophisticated, made using glue or solder by older siblings who realize that their “folk art” is attractive to tourists. Most were vehicles, many made by children in the Sahara who watch the Paris-Dakar rally roar through their village each year. There were also photos of children using and making the miniature cars, trucks and

motorcycles. The collection fits in with the exhibit on tour called “Recycled-Reseen,” from a Sante Fe collection, which unfortunately will have no venue on the East Coast of the United States. It also draws inspiration from an article by Trachtman in the December 1997 issue of *Smithsonian* magazine entitled, “Hands-On Toys.” The collection belongs to Jude Andreasen, 3301 9th St., NE, Washington, DC 20017. The universal appeal of vehicles extends to every child in the world who has seen the independence, freedom, and prestige associated with transportation. As the world changes and more and more people who want vehicles can actually afford them, the need to develop vehicles and fuels which do not overburden our atmosphere or over-tax our natural resources becomes ever more urgent.

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