

TURTLE 1





The automobile industry is wholly in the hands of multinational companies which constantly seek to outbid each other by developing ever more sophisticated technology and to satisfy the desires of potential customers by creating futuristic designs. However, the majority of people outside the Western world have no access to these benefits and need to shape their own lives as best as they can. With this in mind, Dutch artist Melle Smets and sociologist Joost van Onna went to Suame Magazine in Ghana, one of the largest industrial areas in sub-Saharan Africa where some 200,000 people dismantle and repair cars and sell used spare parts. Here, Smets and van Onna took only twelve weeks to assemble Turtle 1, a car built entirely from recycled parts that is perfectly suited to the local context, sufficiently sturdy to resist the climate and the road conditions and easy to operate.

However, the two initiated the project not only to develop a totally new type of car but, more importantly, to boost autonomy and self-reliance in an attempt to be free from global economic interests. Within two years, the vehicle attracted much attention from the public and the media both in Africa and the Netherlands, prompting Smets and van Onna to create the conditions for producing the car on a small, local scale. The production, however, never took off as the Ghanaian partners had other intentions in spite of all success. While Smets and van Onna promoted their recycling model, the Africans had tragically begun to work on a luxury version of the car.

This book is part of an extensive documentation of the project spanning several years and using exhibitions, films and apps to tell the story of a great idea.



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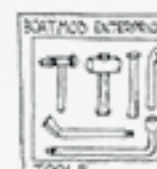
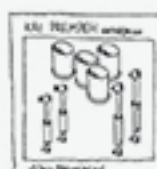
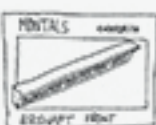
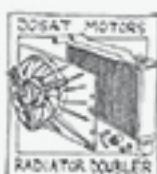
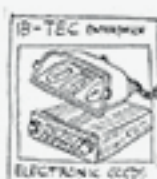
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SUPPLIERS



These are hundreds of materials needed to build one car. Some Magazine has many highly specialised shops. This is a summary of the shops which supplied the Turtle 1.

