



Turtle 1 - building a car in africa

Press information

Paradox presents **Turtle 1 - building a car in africa**, the project by researchers Melle Smets and Joost van Onna on the realisation of the first truly African car. Turtle 1 is an exhibition accompanied by a publication.

The car once was a symbol of freedom. Auto makers still want us to believe in that dream. In reality we are addicted to systems that have locked us out completely: we do not even know how to change a tyre anymore.

And yet, the majority of the world lives in a Do-It-Yourself environment. Artist Melle Smets and sociologist Joost van Onna travelled to Suame Magazine (Ghana) to learn how an informal economy works. They collaborated with some of the ca 200,000 artisans and 12,000 workshops there to build a truly African car in only 12 weeks. The design grew out of analysis of the local circumstances, as well as the accessible infrastructure. The concept was based on flexibility: the car was constructed with parts from different brands that happened to be available.

Turtle 1 became the first Ghanaian car to be exported to the West. It toured motor shows, where it flanked the fully electric Tesla S. Early 2015 Turtle 1 returned home. Yet, expectations turned out to have diversified: whereas the initiators opted for a low-tech small Turtle 2 production line, the Ghanaian partners started negotiating for a large robotised manufacturing plant. We never stop to learn from one another...

Exhibition dates *Turtle 1*

20.04.2017 - 31.10.2017

Part of the group show 'Autophoto' at Fondation Cartier, Paris (FR)

13.02.2016 - 28.08.2016

Part of the group show 'Project Rotterdam' at Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam (NL)

Press page & photos

For high resolution images, interviews and further information please contact:

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Book

Turtle 1 - Building a car in Africa

Authors: Melle Smets &
Joost van Onna

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Melle Smets (1975)

is a researcher, artist and critic, specializing in issues related to public space. He examines the relationship between man and his environment. His previous projects include: Radio Homo Ludens, Highway Stories and P-Travel.

Joost van Onna (1976)

studied social psychology and criminology. He is fascinated by the functioning and strength of informal self-regulating (economic) systems. Onna is currently working on his PhD thesis about criminal development and factors contributing to (non-) compliance laws.

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Press photos



01 Turtle 1, © Teun Vonk. **02** Turtle 1, © Teun Vonk. **03** The blast furnace melts left-over scrapes to create new products. © Teun Vonk. **04** A typical shop in Suame Magazine. This saleswomen can tell in which year a brake-cable was produced and for which model. © Teun Vonk. **05** The 1:1 wooden test of the Turtle 1. © Teun Vonk. **06** King Otumfo Osei Tutu officially inaugurates Turtle 1.



Press photos

High res photos can be requested by sending an email to:

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