# Articulated Cyclist Toy - Belgian Folk Art, Early 20th Century



1 500 EUR

Period : 20th century
Condition : Bon état
Material : Solid wood
Length : 53 cm
Height : 42 cm

## Description

Early 20th Century Belgian Folk Art Articulated Cyclist Toy
Handcrafted Solid Wood -- Rare Colonial-Era Subject -- Mechanically Designed Pedaling Motion (Belt Missing)

Description
A rare and remarkable early 20th-century Belgian folk art toy, hand-carved entirely from solid wood, depicting a stylized Black cyclist mounted on a painted green bicycle. The figure is fully articulated and was originally designed with a mechanical belt-drive system (now absent) connecting the foot pedals to the rear wheel. When pushed forward, the toy was engineered to simulate a realistic cycling motion, animating the rider's legs in tandem with the rotation of the

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Art Classique
curiosités, art premier et Asiatique
Mobile : 0032-475272534

Bilzen 3740

wheels.

Materials & Construction

Primary material: Solid wood (no plywood or laminates)

Figure & Bicycle: Fully carved, hand-painted in polychrome (green, red, black, ochre)

Mechanical features:

Jointed limbs designed to move with crankshaft motion

Metal-spoked wheels on rotating axles

Pulley attachment points for original belt-drive (belt now missing)

Dimensions:

Length: 53 cm

Height: 42 cm

Condition: Structurally intact; expected surface wear and patina consistent with age; belt mechanism missing but all original pulley points and joints remain.

Iconography & Cultural Context

The cyclist is depicted as a Black male figure in a red cap and outlined uniform, rendered in a simplified, expressive style typical of early folk toys. The toy likely reflects Belgium's colonial presence in the Congo during the early 20th century (Congo Free State until 1908, Belgian Congo from 1908-1960). Such depictions were common in Belgian visual culture of the time, often appearing in children's media, toys, and public exhibitions.

This toy offers not only mechanical charm but also serves as a historical document, reflecting period attitudes and visual language. It holds curatorial interest for ethnographic, toy history, and colonial-era cultural studies.

Dating & Attribution

Date: Circa 1900-1930

Origin: Likely Belgium

Style: Folk art, with vernacular mechanics and colonial subject matter

Comparison: Closely parallels German kinetic

push toys of the period in mechanical ambition but stands out for its subject matter and larger scale

Rarity & Collectibility

This toy is a scarce survivor of early 20th-century kinetic folk craftsmanship, notable for:

Its substantial size and entirely solid wood construction

The original pedaling mechanism design, now partially lost but evident

Its cultural and ethnographic significance as a Belgian artifact with colonial representation

A compelling display presence and educational value for museum or private collectors