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Arthur Simms

Born: Jamaica, 1961
Lives and works: New York, USA

Caged Bottle (2006)
Rope, wire, bottles, wood, skateboards,
bicycles, screws, glue, plastic
50 x 36 x 62 inches

Photograph: Arthur Simms

Arthur Simms emigrated to the USA as a child in 1969, and was educated at Brooklyn College, New York, and at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine. Simms is known primarily for his sculptural assemblages and installations of found materials, mainly human-sized in scale. Often these forms are tightly bound or completely wrapped within rope or wire. He also produces mixed media drawings and collages.

Simms traces his affinity with found materials back to his childhood in Jamaica, where he observed that poor people made great use of scrap material to make a variety of needed items, including push-carts for transport. A Jamaican ambassador in his own right, he sees his practice, including his Jamaican upbringing, his American experience and Western art movements, as an amalgamation of cultural thought and participation. *Hemp Or If I Were A Bird* (1991) reflects the irony of Modernist movements like Minimalism, by assembling a conglomeration of objects, then tightly binding and wrapping them into a simplified restrained cuboid, which formally contrasts with the desire for movement implied in the work's title. Other works like *Dream Catcher* (2000) and *Caged Bottle* (2006) also utilise wheels from bicycles and castors as metaphors for movement, for instance, in the transnational travels of people of the African diaspora, such as himself.