

Milestone's May 11 auction exclusively features Elmer's Toy Museum collection, Part II

Second in series of sales featuring famed assemblage of antique and vintage toys includes European tin toys, motorcycles, boxed Tonkas, battery ops

WILLOUGHBY, OHIO, USA, April 30, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Last October antique and vintage toy fans added a new chapter to the legend of Elmer's Auto and Toy Museum, which closed its doors in 2022 after 28 years of operation. Stoked by intense media coverage and toy-hobby chatter, bidders worldwide set their sights on rarities from the Wisconsin museum's archive of 25,000 toys and paid

estimate-shattering prices at Milestone's first of a series of sales. After the event, collectors clamored for more and asked when the next auction of museum treasures would take place. The answer is, on May 11 at Milestone's suburban Cleveland gallery, with all forms of remote bidding including live via the Internet.

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What collectors love most about Elmer Duellman's museum archive is the variety. As long as it was in excellent condition, and especially if it had its original box, Elmer was interested.”

*Miles King - Co-Owner,
Milestone Auctions*



Large and wildly futuristic Yonezawa (Japan) tin friction #58 Atom Jet racer with driver inside clockwork. Beautiful colors, graphics and details. Both friction and motor sound are functional. Length: 26in. Estimate: \$10,000-\$15,000

The museum's vast and storied collection of American, European and Japanese toys was built over 50+ years by an inveterate gearhead and visionary of the toy hobby, the late Elmer Duellman. "Everybody knew Elmer, or if they lived overseas, they knew of him. He had an army of pickers from coast to coast, and if necessary, he would drive through the night in a blinding snowstorm just to pick up a toy, motorcycle or car that he wanted. He was the king of all toy networkers, with a reputation for tracking down rare toys that was second to none," said Miles King, co-owner of Milestone Auctions.

The 774-lot May auction traverses scores of categories, such as tin windups, battery-operated

toys, pressed-steel trucks, Japanese tin cars, Dooling gas racers, and both automotive and character toys from Germany's pre-war era.

The session will open with European tin, starting with windup double-decker buses, limos and convertibles by Gunthermann, Bing, Carette, Karl Bub, Distler and Fischer; and a wonderful array of early 20th-century [Lehmann](#) clockwork toys. Lehmanns include: Anxious Bride, \$1,000-\$1,500; Masuyama, \$600-\$800; Zig-Zag, \$600-\$800; Duo (Rooster with Rabbit Cart), \$400-\$600; and Echo motorcycle, \$800-\$1,200. Other noteworthy tin motorcycles in the auction fleet are an all-original Kico, \$1,000-\$1,500; and a G&K "Cyclone" bike with a liveried driver and female passenger, \$800-\$1,200.

Two "Gordon Bennet" tin windup racers pay tribute to an early 20th-century New York playboy and sportsman known for his foolhardy adventures in yachting, hot air ballooning, aviation and motor racing. One of the auction entries, a rare Gunthermann tin clockwork production with lithographed vents and a four-leaf clover on its bonnet, retains its two original passenger figures. The 8½-inch toy is estimated at \$6,000-\$8,000. The other Gordon Bennet racer, made by Issmayer (Germany), is in excellent condition with a functional clockwork mechanism and has both of its original passenger figures. It measures 7½ inches long and is estimated at \$4,000-\$6,000.



Rare Gunthermann (Germany) tin clockwork Gordon Bennet racer with original passenger figures. Length: 8½in. Estimate: \$6,000-\$8,000



1955 Tonka pressed steel #775-5 Road Builder Set including semi with lowboy trailer, steam shovel, road grader and dump truck in original correctly partitioned box. Estimate: \$1,500-\$2,000



Dooling Arrow gas-powered tether race car with Dooling 61 motor. Complete running gear with fuel tank. All original, in as-raced condition. Length: 17in. Estimate: \$1,000-\$1,500

Lionel is known primarily for its train sets, but the firm's production range over the years has included a number of sidelines. An unusual example from Elmer's Toy Museum is a rare 1912 #80 Automobile Outfit which contains an orange race car, both original drivers, and metal track. The set is presented in its original cardboard box with Lionel company advertising on the exterior. As the auction catalog states, it appears never to have been played with. Estimate: \$1,500-\$2,000



Issmayer (Germany) tin clockwork Gordon Bennet racer in excellent condition with original passenger figures. Length: 7½in. Estimate: \$4,000-\$6,000

The sale also offers a strong selection of post-WWII automotive toys. Some faithfully replicate actual work trucks, taxis, fire trucks, scooters, delivery or transportation vehicles, while others are fueled by out-of-this-world imagination, like Yonezawa's tin friction #58 Atom Jet Racer. Wildly futuristic, with super graphics, a toothy chrome grille, and distinctly 1950s/'60s graphics and colors, this car measures an impressive 26 inches long. A great example of a very rare and perennially sought-after vehicle, it comes to auction with a \$10,000-\$15,000 estimate.

All a child of the boomer generation needed in order to feel like a worksite foreman was a junior-size hard hat and a Tonka pressed steel toy. Tonkas were built to last, and many have, but because kids often gave them a workout in dirt mounds of mud puddles, they incurred a few battle scars along the way. Elmer's collection boasts a number of beautiful examples that managed to avoid rough play, including some hard-to-find boxed sets. A 1955 Tonka #775-5 Road Builder Set that consists of a semi with lowboy trailer, steam shovel, road grader and dump truck comes in its original, correctly partitioned box. Its pre-sale estimate is \$1,500-\$2,000. Also, a 1959 Tonka #B-207 Hi-Way Construction Set with a lowboy truck and trailer, dragline, road grader and dump truck in its original box is entered with an \$800-\$1,200 estimate.

Four popular Dooling gas-powered tether racers are lined up and ready to take a victory lap around Milestone's gallery. They include an "Arrow," a "Mercury" and an "F Car," each estimated at \$1,000-\$1,500; and a "Pee Wee," which, in spite of its smaller size, is just as much fun and more modestly estimated at \$300-\$500.

"What collectors love most about Elmer's museum archive is the variety. Elmer was a nonpartisan toy buyer. As long as it was in excellent condition, and especially if it had its original box, Elmer was interested. American, European, Japanese – he liked it all," Miles King observed. "Based on how geographically diverse the bidder base was for our first offering of the museum

toys, we're expecting that many from outside the United States will return for round two on May 11th, especially for the Lehmann, Gunthermann and other German toys."

Part II of the Elmer's Toy Museum auction series will be held on May 11, 2024 at Milestone Auctions' gallery at 38198 Willoughby Parkway, Willoughby (suburban Cleveland), OH 44094. Start time: 10 a.m. ET. All forms of remote bidding will be available, including absentee, by phone, and live online through [Milestone's bidding platform](#), [LiveAuctioneers](#) or Invaluable. For additional information on any item in the sale, call 440-527-8060 or email info@milestoneauctions.com. Online: www.milestoneauctions.com

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