



MEDIA RELEASE – MAY 2024

TREASURE TROVE OF TOYS ON DISPLAY FOR THE YOUNG AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

Before smartphones and video games were a phenomenon, children worldwide were captivated by tin toys, wooden trucks and paper planes.

Now, visitors are invited to embark on this nostalgic journey of historic play once more at the David Roche Gallery, in North Adelaide, in its new exhibition *Australian Toys 1880-1965: The Luke Jones Collection*, on show from June 1 to August 24.

The fascinating range of Australian toys made between the 1880s and the 1960s includes refined lithographed tinfoil toys of the 1920s, such as a 30cm truck made by Melbourne manufacturer Leckie and Gray, mass-produced toys that emerged during the post-war period including a Glenn Holden Special, charming folk art creations and European and Japanese-made toys with local relevance.

The exhibition will also host a fun trail for children to participate to find objects along the display.

For Jones, what began as a nine-year-old's passion for collecting antique toys has blossomed into a sprawling personal collection he has compiled over 40 years – each item with its own rich history.

“I was a newspaper boy earning some money and I saved that money for a year. I wanted to spend it on something that would increase in value,” Jones explains.

“A family friend from Italy told me antique toys were big in Europe, so two weeks before my 10th birthday, I went to an antique auction with my father, where I bought my first toy—an Italian-made Coca-Cola truck from the mid-1950s. It cost me \$115 in 1983, and I still remember the strength of my emotion about how much I loved it.

“Since that moment, I’ve continued to grow my collection. A highlight for me is the Australian icon Holden cars from the mid-century and I also have a toy submarine made from the ballast of the submarine which sank in Sydney Harbour in 1942.”

Museum Director Robert Reason says he expects the treasure trove of toys will spark the magic of childhood for all ages.

“Stroll down memory lane and share the nostalgia with your own children because Luke’s collection truly is for the young and the young at heart,” Reason says.

“From board games to a toy Hills Hoist, this exhibition provides a detailed insight into Australian childhood through the lens of play. Be inspired by historic events, be entertained by toys that celebrate Australia’s love of sport and be enchanted by fantasy creations straight from toy makers’ imaginations.”

The idea for the exhibition was sparked when Reason approached Jones after hearing him speak at an Adelaide’s Society of Collectors meeting.

“A lot of passion has been poured into my collection so for Robert to recognise that, and then to have a culmination of my toys on display in a museum, it’s a dream come true,” Jones says.

While Jones enjoys sharing his love of antique toys with his two children Teddy, 8 and Florence, 5, he says they both agree who the big kid of the family is.

“They understand my passion for collecting, but they also both think I have too many toys,” he laughs.

What: Australian Toys 1880-1965: The Luke Jones Collection

Where: the David Roche Gallery, 241 Melbourne St, North Adelaide

When: June 1 – August 24

Cost: Adults \$12, concession \$10, TDRF Member \$9, children under 12 are free.

Jones is available for interviews.

For more information, visit rochefoundation.com.au

.....
Media contact: Natalie Farinola | 0401 308 328 | natalie@jpmedia.com.au