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The Kids' Multicultural Craft Book: 35 Crafts From Around The World

Roberta Gould
Sarah Rakitin, illustrator
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Kids who love to create unusual objects will love these international crafts, which reflect the resourcefulness of peoples throughout the world. Readers will gain an understanding of different cultures while they make traditional objects using materials rescued from the recycle bin. The author has travelled extensively and worked with children for many years, organizing arts and adventure programs; these experiences inform the wide variety of crafts selected for this volume.

The projects are arranged geographically. The adventure begins with crafts from the West Indies and South America, like the three-stick stool from Venezuela, made from rope, strong sticks, and denim, inspired by the Spanish explorers in the 1500s who traveled light. African discoveries begin in Botswana, with an ostrich-egg water holder from the Kalahari Desert, recreated using papier-mÃ¢ché and a balloon. For travelling in the Ethiopian desert, kids can make Shangalla Sand Shoes, a sandal similar in design to a snowshoe, from a rug pad and laces.

From Africa, readers “travel” to Europe, and make a Dutch Apothecary Head like the sick-looking “signs” carved in the late 1800s and early 1900s as advertisements for the local pharmacy. Modern-day kids can let family members know when they are unwell with their own version. In the section on Asia, a Chinese Child’s Hat, an Iu Mien Egg Holder, and a Javanese Batik Handkerchief are just a few of the projects. Australia and the Pacific Islands are represented with an Aboriginal Didgeridoo and a Tahitian Breastplate. The world tour ends in North America with several crafts from Native peoples and Pennsylvania Deutsch immigrants, as well as a wooden Appalachian Flip-Flop Toy.

The author has published several previous books of children’s arts and crafts, including *The Kids’ Book of Incredibly Fun Crafts*, part of the popular “Kids’ Can!” series. She includes with each project a brief history of the craft and its culture, a map, materials list, and sequential instructions. The illustrations are both photographed and drawn in a colorful cartoon style. The illustrator’s credits include a number of how-to books for children about magic, bicycle care, knot-tying, and ocean science.

Websites are included when appropriate, giving readers a chance to learn more about each culture, and sidebars called “Around the World with Roberta” relate some of the author’s travel experiences. Finally, an illustrated guide to the knots and stitches used, an index, and patterns for several of the projects are provided.

The thirty-five crafts represent a wide cross-section of the world, and the easy-to-follow directions will help kids achieve unique accomplishments. Useful in classrooms, after-school programs, or just at home on a rainy day, this title will be an interesting addition to school or personal collections.

TRACY FITZWATER (March / April 2004)

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