

Exploring the effects of bicycles on art and culture, *Re:Cycle—Bike Culture in Southern California* includes thirty artists and collectives that use the bicycle as both a metaphor and a realization for restructuring the urban environment. <http://www.sweeney.ucr.edu/exhibitions/recycle/>

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From the catalog

Re:Cycle—Bike Culture in Southern California

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UCR SweeneyArtGallery

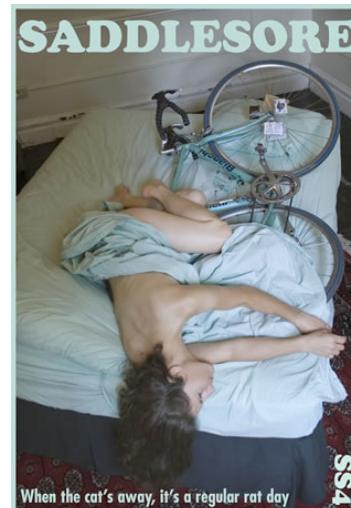
Lisa Anne Auerbach
Tad Beck
The Bicycle Lounge
Nathan Bockelman &
Cameron Crone
Damon Boyd/Nomad Cruiser
Leslie Caldera
John Divola
Sean Duffy
East Hollywood ArtCycle
Timo Fahler
Finishing School

Ghost Bike
Clement Hanami
Gabriel Hargrove
Simon Hughes
Folke Köbberling &
Martin Kaltwasser
Diane Meyer
Midnight Ridazz
Patrick Miller
Rubén Ortiz Torres
Ashira Siegel
Samuel Starr

C.R. Stecyk
Taco Tuesdays
Dan “El Daino” Torres
Jud Turner
Lee Tusman
UCR Bourns College of
Engineering, Human
Powered Vehicle
Ali Valle
Raphael Xavier



FOLKE KÖBBERLING, *Cars into Bicycle / The Californian Dream*, 2010, Saab vehicle, variable, courtesy of the artist



Lisa Anne Auerbach, *Saddlesore Cover #4*, 2007-2008, courtesy of the artist

Exploring the effects of bicycles on art and culture, *Re:Cycle—Bike Culture in Southern California* includes thirty artists and collectives that use the bicycle as both a metaphor and a realization for restructuring the urban environment. In the past few years, bicycle activists, advocates, and aficionados have proven to be vociferous in their desire for reimagining city landscapes in the U.S., such as Los Angeles, that have been built around the automobile as the primary mode of transportation. However,

contrary to this view, significant “bike cultures” have developed throughout the Southern California region in the past few years.

The exhibition focuses on artists who combine their two passions of cycling and art making. It is not so much a look at advances in frame technology and material advancements, as in the use of titanium, carbon fiber, and bamboo, or the various types of bicycles, such as fixies, folding bikes, road, race and touring bikes, commuters, or cargo bikes, but it is more a reflection of a shifting value system that looks towards alternate means of transportation, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, and a cultural shift from consumption to sustainability.

The roster of artists represent a range from recent graduates to those in mid-career, and have been selected from Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Diego counties. The works are mostly sculptural in nature as they incorporate actual bicycles, but the exhibition also includes drawing, photography, public actions, and video. Several works are functional while others function as platforms for dialog about the role of bicycles in Southern California. The art historical context for their works includes the retinal, optical based works of Pablo Picasso’s assemblage sculptures to the abstract, cerebral readymade sculptures of Marcel Duchamp. However, today’s artists exhibit a fascination with the image of human and machine as a source of freedom and an opportunity for relooking at the familiar world from a roaming perspective. In this sense, the artists in *Re:Cycle* are to be viewed in a contemporary art context of public practice in the arts, also referred to as participatory art, community art, public art, relational art, or social sculpture. They are dedicated to making art and to cycling that plays a conscientious role in the public sphere.

In many countries, such as China and India, the bicycle is considered a normal mode of transportation. In part this is due to having a sizable part of population that could not afford a car, or the infrastructure for a “car culture.” For the U.S., the bicycle is still associated with sport and recreation, rather than transportation. Here, it is still a battle to share the road with cars. But this is not to say that the U.S. does not have its population that has relied on bicycles for transportation. Many of the artists in *Re:Cycle* do explore segments of a working class that does rely on bicycles, such as roaming street vendors, for example. Other artists explore the exuberance of customization with bicycles, perhaps influenced by custom car culture, so closely aligned with Southern California, but a fitting and ironic thumb to the nose, signifying a shift from petrol to pedal power.

The exhibition inaugurates University of California, Riverside’s Sweeney Art Gallery’s new space in UCR’s Barbara and Art Culver Center of the Arts. The exhibition coincides with Riverside’s inaugural 2010 Riverside Citrus Classic Bike Run and other city initiatives to generate a regional bike culture. *Re:Cycle* is curated by Tyler Stallings, Artistic Director, UCR Culver Center of the Arts & Director, Sweeney Art Gallery. Major support for the exhibition has come from Jack and Marilyn Sweeney; UCR ARTSblock; UCR College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences; City of Riverside; JensonUSA; and Marriott Riverside.

Artists in the exhibition

Lisa Anne Auerbach sweaters, such as *I used to be part of the solution, now I’m part of the problem*, 2009, make her body into a kind of bumper sticker while on her bike, communicating to drivers her global, personal, and political ideas.

Tad Beck’s *Bipod*, 2006, video installation explores the merging of man and machine in which its rhythmic editing creates a transformative and hypnotic experience.

The Bicycle Lounge is a community driven bicycle building and repair space in Riverside, open to

anyone interested in learning more their own bikes and creating a local bicycle culture.

Nathan Bockelman & Cameron Crone's installation *The Air Up There*, 2009, is a reflection on their experience growing up in Southern California's BMX culture, but create an inverted monument by adding flocking to a bike's hardbody, for example.

Damon Boyd/Nomad Cruiser creates functional artworks, as in his collection of custom beach cruiser bicycles that includes *The Gondola*, 2010, which have become ubiquitous in the Venice Beach cultural life.

Leslie Caldera creates expressionistic "bicycle" assemblages. For *Significant Other*, 2009, he was inspired by Marcel Duchamp's famous work *Bicycle Wheel*, though taken an emotional, retinal approach rather than a purely cerebral one.

For the video installation, *Up Hill Down Hill with One Small Incident*, 2004, John Divola rode up and down a very long hill, and videotaped the white line on the road. There is the obvious formal interest of the changing vertical lines, but its Sisyphus sensibility references Divola's contemplation of mortality and change in much of his work.

Sean Duffy's *Brakes, Cranks, Shifters*, 2010, involved silk-screening cycling magazine covers onto scrap wood, creating a collection of paintings resembling a newsstand. It explores relationships between original and copy, high and low, familiar and strange, quixotic adventure and everyday life.

Brainchild of Jennifer Moran, East Hollywood ArtCycle, 2009 to present, is a day-long free art festival designed to showcase the emerging art and bicycling cultures in the area. Regularly scheduled bike tours ferry the art curious to local galleries, historic locations and artist workspaces.

Timo Fahler collects abandoned bicycles and bike parts to create composite "tall bikes," such as *Tusk*, 2010, creating an absurd, unconventional vehicle that confronts issues of consumerism and laziness in a car-centric U.S. society.

Finishing School's *Little Pharma Drug Run*, 2008, was originally presented during their residency at MOCA in Los Angeles. Participants constructed costumes modeled on their drug of choice and were then led on a costumed bike tour exploring various drug distribution sites of downtown Los Angeles.

Ghost Bikes are small and somber memorials for bicyclists who are killed or hit on the street. A bicycle is painted all white and locked to a street sign near the crash site, accompanied by a small plaque.

Clement Hanami's *Rice Rocket*, 2006, is one in a series of rickshaw-cum-lowrider mixed media works that intermingle symbols and iconography from both Asian and Latino cultures.

Gabriel Hargrove's *Town Stool*, 2010, made of ash wood and steel, is furniture design inspired by bicycle saddles, and includes a tripod armature that can be a resourceful resting place for bicycle commuters who need to remove and store their saddle for safekeeping.

Simon Hughes' *Bicycle*, 2010, is a video installation built around a reel of 8mm film that depicts a father and son assembling what appears to be a crude flying machine built around a 1970s-era "banana bike." Their attempt at heavier-than-air flight recalls the optimistic era at the turn of the 20th-century when cycling and aviation were seen as potentially compatible technologies.

Folke Köbberling and Martin Kaltwasser, together with students of the Art Center College of Art and Design, worked on *Cars into Bicycles*, 2010, converting an old red Saab 900 turbo car into two fully operational bicycles to awaken public interest in an alternative means of transportation in a city, where the automobile reigns as king.

Diane Meyer's *Without a Car in the World*, 2008-09, consists of photographs and text from interviews with one hundred Los Angeles residents living without a car, addressing how car culture has shaped psychological, spatial and geographic perceptions of the city.

Midnight Ridazz is a group of bicycle enthusiasts who have been riding together on the second Friday of every month since 2004, growing from an original eight riders to over 1300. Some attribute the movement to the high assed gas prices, or the frustration of LA traffic. More importantly, it is way to experience the city beyond the bubble of the car.

Patrick Miller's *Bicycle Bell Ensemble*, 2010, is an open collective of bicycling artists, performers, and musicians who join with community members in creating rolling musical bicycle parades, as well as stationary experimental music performances.

Rubén Ortiz Torres's *Power Tools*, 2010, presents designs for a bicycle and cart parade for the celebration of the bicentennial of the independence and the centennial of the revolution of Mexico in Los Angeles, paying attention to custom culture and street vendors to suggest an economical way for the people to reclaim an official celebration as their own.

Ashira Siegel's installation *Moments of Silence, Stars into Skies*, 2010, utilizes hand made and collected things including bits of hand dyed papers, colored threads, photographs, sewn stars, and recycled bicycle parts to create a tribute to "Bronx Jon" and other fallen riders who have been killed by cars and their drivers.

Samuel Starr's *Circulus*, 2010, a miniaturized bicycle track, was originally installed in the decommissioned Seeley G. Mudd Science Library of Pomona College, transforming it into a *velodrome*, juxtaposing the movement and noise of the bicycle and rider with a silent reverence implicit in the library.

C.R. Stecyk's installation tableau *Rouleur*, 2010, offers a mixed view of contemporary and historical velo culture. Elements of this assemblage include such varied artifacts as a 1920's era gaming wheel built from a wooden Lobdell racing rim; period photographs, arcane bicycle parts that have been re-interpreted into sculptural configurations and aesthetic musings that have been rendered in reworked and adapted bicycles.

Taco Tuesdays Bicycle Club's *The First 100 Rides*, 2008-10, is a collection of spoke cards that represents what started out as a weekly Tuesday night ride as part of the Midnight Ridazz bicycle scene, but evolved into its own club. The imagery depicts social, political, and pop culture influences to provide clues of the evening's route and/or festivities.

Dan "El Daino" Torres' *Cycleology*, 2010, is a performance and installation that employs an unconventional way of art making—drawing while riding a bicycle. It is a self-portrait that comments on his art making process, on biking as his only means of transportation, and on class issues.

Jud Turner's cycle-themed sculpture, *R-Evolve*, 2009, investigates how humans are enmeshed with their modes of transportation, and how bicycle culture may be a remedy to the shortcomings of the internal combustion engine we have built our society around.

Lee Tusman straddles the bridge between the gallery/museum world and DIY street works and actions. Using cycling as his primary mode of transportation, Tusman uses lightweight junk digital and analog cameras to document objects, people and places along his routes, here presented as *Biketography*, 2010.

ASME at Bourns College of Engineering, UCR's *Human Powered Vehicle (HPV)*, 2010, is a low cost, aerodynamically streamlined, recumbent vehicle, known as Thunder Horse, with efficient steering, ergonomic seating, and extensive safety parameters, designed to be a practical alternative to traditional modes of transportation.

Ali Valle's *Suburban Border Violations On a Dialectical Tricycle*, 2008, is suburban time-travel device designed to reveal the racial and class codes that naturalize Southern California's uneven suburban development, referencing the pushcart and truck *vendedores* who sell fresh produce, tacos, and Spanish-dubbed DVDs on Newhall's streets, and who signal their presence by blasting signature songs to summons customers.

Raphael Xavier, *No Bicycle Parking*, 2005-10, is a haunting documentary that displays images photographed over many years period in the U.S. and internationally, depicting bike skeletons leftover after other parts were stolen.

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UCR Sweeney Art Gallery
3834 Main Street
Riverside, California 92501
951-827-3755
<http://sweeney.ucr.edu>
<http://artsblock.ucr.edu>