

Art of Olive Green

Towards Art, an Ethics & a Laugh

Archives

All posts for the month July, 2012

Cross of Iron

Posted by *getraer* on *July 19, 2012*

Posted in: Engaged art, Studio, Upcycling, Work by Alex Féthière. Tagged: ammo, art, Coupture, cross, eisenhower, glass, jewelry, steel.
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(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/cross-of-iron-web.jpg>)

Three great tastes that grate great together: Russian, Soviet, and NATO.

From President Eisenhower's "[Chance for Peace](http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/3357)" speech of 1953, also known as the "Cross of Iron" speech:

[...]Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone.

It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.

The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities.

It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60,000 population.

It is two fine, fully equipped hospitals. It is some 50 miles of concrete highway.

We pay for a single fighter plane with a half million bushels of wheat.

We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people.

This, I repeat, is the best way of life to be found on the road the world has been taking.

This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron. [...]

This speech should not be confused with this equally topical excerpt from his “Farewell Address (<http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/3361>)” of 1961 invoking another of his famous coinages:

This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence-economic, political, even spiritual—is felt in every city, every State house, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

In the spirit of Ike, this Coupture piece is made from steel-cased cartridges manufactured in the countries that inspired the military industrial compounding we continue to suffer under today.

7.62x54R (Czech, surplus): a the “Russian” round used from the Tsarist days through into the present, only made in Eastern Bloc countries

7.62x39 (Russian, commercial): the “Soviet” round, also manufactured in States

.223/5.56 (Russian, commercial): the “all-American”/NATO caliber; the Russians undercut U.S. .223 manufacturing with a cheaper steel-cased version. It’s rarer at recyclers, perhaps because of economic nationalism, or possibly because it is less forgiving than brass.

The points of the cross are red and blue glass, but so charred as to be black, except in certain lights. The white of the red white and blue (incidentally probably the most popular Western flag colors, and Russia’s too) may be spalled, but beneath those flaws is clear.

Coupture: neither jewelry line nor party line

Posted by *getraer* on *July 10, 2012*

Posted in: Culture crit, Engaged art, Uncategorized, Upcycling, Work by Alex Féthière. Tagged: ammo, brass, jewelry, soldering, steel, welding. Leave a comment



(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/coupture-by-alex-fethiere-3.jpg>)

Arab Sprang...the centerpiece is a 1958 Egyptian (the Arabic reads “Misr”) 8mm Mauser brass cartridge, surely made in anticipation of war with the nascent Israel. It’s flanked by a 1975 Chinese 7.62x54R steel (copper-washed) cartridge and a 2012 Russian 7.62x39 commercial case.

COUPTURE beats swords into ploughshares. The steel, brass and aluminum droppings from rifles, handguns and shotguns pile up worldwide: It must be every second that a gun is fired. The ejecta glint in the sun and rust in rains. Each cartridge a fallen kernel of grain, its germ discharged, run to seed.

Coupture exempts them from recycling and rebirth, offers them a conditional discharge or conscientious objectorship. Made into accessories (not to say “attackaccessories”), perhaps they glorify revolution in the same way that Che Guevara does: in vain and empty, and for the profit of the unlicensed that use them.

But no! Coupture will not be coopted by the market, and as such is not for sale. It will not let the story of each cartridge be effaced. For better or worse (usually worse), each was made for a reason: this brass Egyptian cartridge stamped “Misr” made in 1958 by men knowing there would soon be war with Israel is TIG-welded to a bland Russian steel commercial round, made in a former Soviet factory for use from Afghanistan to Arkansas. Disjunctions abound, but such is the business of weaponry, and so it is with fashion—where a Stalinist guerrilla can become the denatured figurehead of change subverted, worn over imitation camouflage patterned into a garment too impractical for the military and too shoddy for service.



(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/coupture-by-alex-fethiere-1.jpg>)

Trystero...this 1963 Czech (CSSR) 7.62x54R steel case is welded to a nailhead to recreate the muted post horn.

Coupture also adopts the smashed glass of broken windows, of civilization rent by gunfire. Melted and nestled into the primer cavities of a Tito-era casing is the glass of a school window, a car window, eyeglasses crushed in a fall. Perhaps the garnish is the stained glass blown out of a church, as in former Yugoslavia.

Coupture reminds the U.S. of its draft into ongoing *sub rosa* wars. We all continue to fight with every tax dollar spent, every penny (itself an amalgam of copper and zinc=brass) melted and extruded into a shell which is packed with gunpowder and crowned with a bullet. These in turn are the coin of a new realm, “Ammo: The Currency of the New Millennium (http://www.google.com/search?q=ammo+the+currency+of+the+new+millenium&hl=en&cad=b&changed_loc=1&bav=on.2,or.r_gc.r_pw.r_qf.cf.osb&biw=1344&bih=768&emsg=NCSR&noj=1&ei=tNX7T_L5JunF0QHTloDNBg),” and those restless for sharp change hoard brass if not gold—or both.



(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/coupture-by-alex-fethiere.jpg>)

cHeart_ridge...the ubiquitous 5.56/.223 commercial brass round favored by NATO cradles an all-American .45 Colt commercial brass round. All are fused with stained glass. “I’d die for you” is so Bon Jovi. “I killed a sheet of paper for you” is both moving and manly.

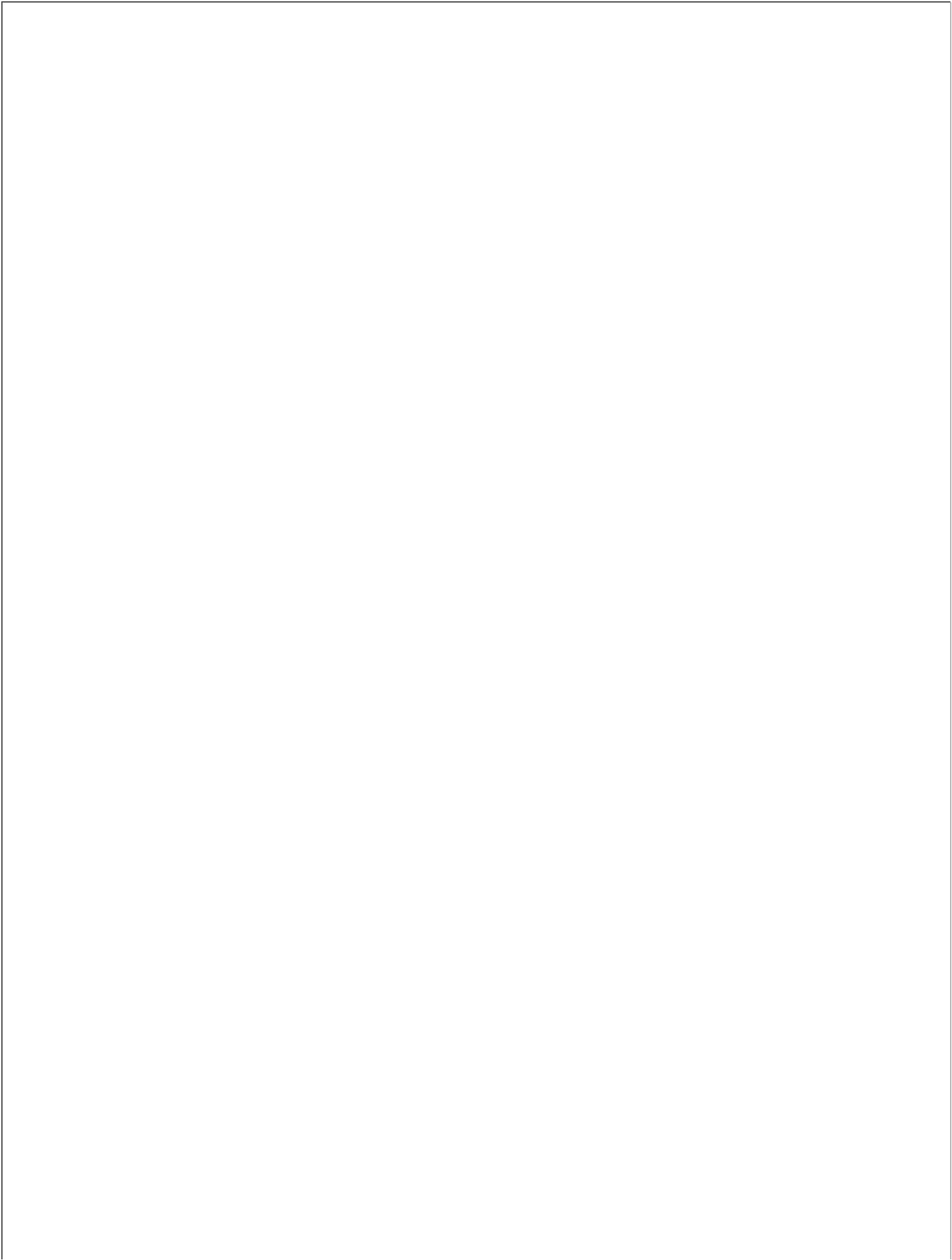
Coupture throws its arms up at the canard of world peace. But it can face the lie, literalize it, shove the Cross of Iron in the face of milquetoasted leftist pacifism. Passivism, et passim.

For the full gallery of Coupture photos, visit www.alex-fethiere.com (<http://www.alex-fethiere.com>)

Tao Jones mask (2010)

Posted by *getraer* on *July 3, 2012*

Posted in: Engaged art, Work by Alex F  thi  re. Tagged: aluminum, anodizing, Dow Jones, stock market, Tao. Leave a comment



The Tao Jones mask plays on Dow Jones and its ticker symbol, and the Chinese word "Tao," meaning "way." It figures the way of the Dow Jones, from the historical graph of the index since inception (barely recognizable as the eyebrows) to the rows of empty homes and factories [For Sale!] The chainlink and picket fence pattern around its face restricts access without compromising visibility; after all, a potential client must be able to see the most flattering views of a property. The whole is staked down by a scale model of the nose of James Baker, who held many appointments in Bush and Reagan administrations and has had a mysterious role in the shell game that is our "free market." Realized in rainproof and fadeproof dyed aluminum, it's the perfect foil against sunburn and recognition when the Tao Jones reduces the wearer to living under an overpass.

Happy 4th of July.