

# Art of Olive Green

## Towards Art, an Ethics & a Laugh

### Archives

#### All posts for the month March, 2014

### Is the Worker an Artist?

Posted by *getraer* on *March 26, 2014*

Posted in: Art, Culture crit, Engaged art. Tagged: art, metal, upcycling, welding. [Leave a comment](#)



The above is a perennial question for those who romanticize the working class and imagine it as the engine of revolutionary change. In my self-taught demi-ignorance I haven't seen much to convince me the worker is an artist, but I deal with a very prosaic stratum of workers: metal personnel.

Scrapyards only deal with me because I tickle their whimsy. I have to tell them what I'm doing with some weird thing I dragged from a heap under the eye of their security cameras, and if it makes the scaleman laugh, I might get to take it home. Sometimes they see the sagacity of a design and there's a glimmer of respect or curiosity. Twice I've met or heard of "people like me" in the yard—once it was a guy who ran his boxy 80s Benz on biodiesel and had an operation trucking waste oil upstate, where he got free fuel from a friend who refined it.

You'd think this kind of ingenuity would be more common, but in my experience it's not. The best a person who bridges art and the structural can hope for is nonplus. "What are you gonna do with that?" has become a greeting. So when I read the below poem, written moreover by a woman (in a decade+ of metalwork, I haven't seen a woman in a weldshop, much less a scrapyard...unless she was clerking in the weldshop), I was thrilled. The only woman I've welded with was one of the best, and she attributed that to women being more patient, FWIW.

The [reaction of the gentlemen](http://www.hobartwelders.com/weldtalk/archive/index.php/t-29218.html) (http://www.hobartwelders.com/weldtalk/archive/index.php/t-29218.html) in the forum where I found the poem I reproduce here typifies the above. This post is not to disparage such a perspective, but to tease the sophists who think that every toiler is a John Chamberlain, Richard Serra or Maxim Gorky.

**The Weldor's Weld**  
by Sonia Balcer 8/21/82

Wherefore must I wear a mask when  
I hold in my hand, the pen  
wherewith I write poetry with fire?

How I long to discover the secrets that are hidden  
in the theater before me;  
to behold the movement of tiny, metal  
particles, as they waltz and interlock  
in a world within a world;  
as they pirouette between the boundaries set  
by the fire which frees them to move.

Oh, Lord in heaven! Why are not human eyes made  
to see this wonder directly?  
Must I always hold this dark glass before me?

Hark! He causes my heart, to see the mystery!  
The metals are assaulted, by electric energy,  
carried by heaving, heavy wires. In a molten flash,  
I see the crystals breaking, and sighing;  
the silent order of the solid surface, giving way  
to rushing, hotly-radiant tides  
that crash together like waves at a beach.

It swirls before me, an intricate dance  
which I cannot see, but yet feel inside.

I delight to caress the molten piece  
in my heart.  
It is inside of me, and I am inside of it.  
I slowly feel over and underneath  
the hot liquid surfaces.  
I move into its every contour, and through  
the whole of it.

Bodies of metal, which once were separate;  
the boundaries are fading.  
It swirls and whirlpools within me-  
It is all blurred now, caught  
Into a quickly-freezing body of what once  
was separate, but now is together,  
  
a single piece.

## Laibach — “Spectre” (2014)

Posted by *getraer* on *March 4, 2014*

Posted in: Culture crit, Engaged art, Some thoughts have a certain sound. Tagged: music. Leave a comment  
Oh look! “Political art”!

**AMERICANA**

**Laibach - Americana***MILAN FRAS:*

If you want to change the world you better do it with a freedom  
 Because if you don't no one else will  
 Do it with a feeling  
 You've got to do it with a feeling

If you're going to beat the power you'd better do it right  
 Because if you don't you're going to lose the sight  
 Do it with a feeling  
 You've got to do it with a feeling

If you wanna change the system you've gotta tell the street  
 Because if you don't you'll hear a different beat  
 Do it with a feeling  
 You've got to do it with a feeling

Do it with a feeling  
 You've got to do it with a feeling  
 Do it with a feeling  
 You've got to do it with a feeling

**KORAN [No Youtube Video yet]***NICE LADY:*

I believe in a better world  
 I believe in a better place  
 I believe in brotherhood, equality and freedom  
 I believe in happiness for all

And the light is leaning out  
 Through the darkness of the night  
 There are questions I will follow  
 When the light is leaning out  
 There are all these questions on my mind

*MILAN FRAS:*

Words on ice  
 Words are memories of pain  
 The future is invisible  
 Words are something that remain  
 Words are substance of tomorrow  
 They are weapons of the mind  
 Words can take us far away  
 They will leave us all behind

*NICE LADY:*

You believe in a better world  
 You believe in a better place

You believe in brotherhood, equality and freedom  
You believe in happiness for all

And the light is leaning out  
Through the darkness of the night  
There are questions we will follow  
When the sun goes down again  
And the moon is shining bright  
There are all these questions on my mind