

# Art of Olive Green

## Towards Art, an Ethics & a Laugh

### Archives

#### All posts for the month May, 2011

### A Greener Clean?

Posted by *getraer* on *May 25, 2011*

Posted in: Uncategorized. Tagged: California, carbon dioxide, detergent, dry cleaning, EPA, hydrocarbon, IRTA, Meurice, PERC, solvent, tonsil, VOCs. 1 Comment

Antique clothing is often devalued by mildew, the cancer of storage. Once it takes hold it can metastasize to any fabric within sight, and the persistence of its odor makes even the most priceless article into shop rags.

I recently bought a vintage hat from overseas and it fouled the room when I opened the parcel. It needed aggro, preferably olive green cleaning. Hydrocarbon cleaning is a “green cleaning” process recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency. In keeping with this blog’s tone I will eschew “green cleaning” for “greener” because the former is an oxymoron and you should distrust anyone who uses it.

I found Meurice Garment Care (<http://www.garmentcare.com/>) through the EPA website’s dated (2001) list of “green cleaners.” (<http://www.epa.gov/dfe/pubs/garment/gcrg/cleanguide.pdf>) I had used another wetcleaner for a different mildewed antique purchase with unsatisfactory results. Hydrocarbon is lower-impact than PERC, according to this technical but interesting 2005 IRTA research paper (<http://www.irta.us/Hydrocarbon%20Report.pdf>).

Hydrocarbon cleaning costs are comparable to PERC for drycleaners. At Meurice *you must request* hydrocarbon. Being less aggressive, it can clean more materials (including leather, which was in the lining of my cap) than PERC, can be used on dyes that may bleed, and leaves a softer hand to the fabric. The process uses less energy, and using tonsil (an absorbent medium) it is even more efficient.

Meurice uses detergent instead of tonsil, which another IRTA paper ([http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/PollutionPrevention/upload/P2\\_REP\\_Emerging\\_Technology\\_Textile\\_Cleaning.pdf](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/PollutionPrevention/upload/P2_REP_Emerging_Technology_Textile_Cleaning.pdf)) as well found can create aquatic toxicity. Asked about this, a Meurice manager said that their waste water is carbon filtered and evaporated, presumably leaving only distilled wastewater. He did not concur with the research papers’ findings that tonsil can clean with solvent as well as detergent.

California’s HESIS (Health Evaluation System & Information Service) found hydrocarbon solutions to be *no more toxic than solvents in general*; they still emit VOCs (volatile organic compounds) but “do not pose risks of cancer and are not selective reproductive or developmental toxicants.” As such hydrocarbon is not the greenest solution, but is more commonplace than quasi-mythical liquid carbon dioxide, which also requires a larger drycleaning operation and deserves separate research.

My cap had fit snugly, and Meurice balanced fear of shrinkage with mildew remediation to such an extent that they confirmed twice before cleaning. The webbing of mildew along the leather trim was gone, almost all of the suffocating fetor removed, and only a faint detergent fragrance and solvent off-gas remained, the latter of which was gone with some airing.

## Sculpture Has Taught Me...

Posted by *getraer* on *May 17, 2011*

Posted in: Self-Sufficiencies, Studio. Tagged: building, DIY, repairs. Leave a comment



([https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/\\_ediyt.jpg](https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/_ediyt.jpg))

YMMV: Your Materials May Vary.

Art inculcates obvious virtues like sensitivity, discernment and empathy. Certain of its more practical yields are less tangible.

For three years I have been trying to get to the uppermost tier of this house's roof. The side "ramps" are too steep to climb and have no handholds, and the tilt of the roof's second tier makes ladders unstable. First I wanted to clean the loftiest gutters, periodically clogged with pine needles—once a year I attach an air gun to a pole with a long hose to my compressor and blast it clean. (That's another invention.) Then I hoped to trim the same leaning pine tree that pulled shingles off with every gust of wind—but it was cut down.

The third reason to reach the top tier couldn't be fobbed off quite so. Recently we had some crazy spin-off gales from the tornadoes that ravaged the South. They tore a strip of siding loose near the roof's peak, and my neighbor called my attention to it because it's directly over his driveway, which is fully loaded with cars too nice to be hit by a falling scimitar of siding—to say nothing of their passengers. The siding swayed and creaked, and I noticed later was gradually tearing from both ends as the wind torqued it.

Shortly after I noticed there was less than an inch of intact metal between the two opposing tears. I probably had less than 24 hours. It fluttered insouciantly and I got so angry I tried to drag myself up the 75° roof for the third time...my hands are still sore and the shingle burn on my right tricep has nearly healed. My neighbors may have uploaded the video tagged "Jackass 4(Ever)."

Sculpture initially attracted me with its three-dimensional problem solving. Years of this has disposed me towards frank, prosaic solutions, like mounting toilet paper on a rented apartment's tiled bathroom wall using a bungee cord and s-hooked window suction cups. Despite my bleeding rage I saw the solution in the studio: A SAND BAG.

I've only had sand around lately for building blast furnaces. A bag of it is heavy and malleable with a lot of rough surface area. I shaped it into a wedge on the roof, stood some plywood parallel to the ground on it, and climbed the ladder to the peak.

## Demilitarized Zone

Posted by *getraer* on *May 6, 2011*

Posted in: Earth Safe Finishes, MadeInUSA, Recycling, Self-Sufficiencies. Leave a comment



(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/esfdetail.jpg>)

Black colorant panel detail; note original color.

Military surplus has connotations of craziness, bunkers and Mad Max, but it's heavily cannibalized by designers for today's pricey duds. QM Fashion (<http://qmfashion.wordpress.com/>) documents this so thoroughly that if you read enough, you'll probably find you're wearing a martial detail/design right now. This "military creep" seems dishonest in a world where perpetual war is a crescendo without end.

A character in "A Separate Peace" creepily equates love of olive drab=love of war=love of country: "...and in these times of war, we all see olivine drab, and we all know it is the patriotic color. All others aren't about the war; they aren't patriotic." As such, I'd like to expunge olive drab from my visual vocabulary. I've been testing Earth Safe Finishes ([www.earthsafefinishes.com](http://www.earthsafefinishes.com)) products for creating a fully conscientious demilitarized zone in my functional wardrobe. As mentioned in an earlier post, I ultimately plan to tailor the boxy generic fits. If you ever see anything from Los Angeles's boutique T-shirtier E-Label, they were an inspiration: old thrift-store T-shirts overdyed, overprinted, cut apart and reconstructed with other fabrics.

Why go to all this trouble with surplus, anyway?

1. It's phenomenally well-made because lives depend on it.
2. Our tax dollars have already paid for it.
3. Or globally, somebody else's tax dollars have already paid for it.
4. It's recycling, and a lot of surplus is barely used or is stored at length.
5. It's affordable (see #2,3).
6. You will support small business; surplus dealers are always independent enterprises.
7. U.S. law requires that military suppliers (<http://www.wildthingsgear.com/blog/?p=2241>) manufacture in the U.S. (<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/01/11/idUS67427+11-Jan-2011+PRN20110111>), so you're indirectly protecting jobs, building tax bases, etc.
8. You thought there would be 10?
9. I don't want to end on an even number.

In the photo above (enlarged to show texture – like breakfast cereal!), I used 1 / 4 ounce of ESF's FabricMagic to an ounce of water, and over a week applied and reapplied as I gradually increased the black colorant I was using to see what would penetrate and dominate the olive drab. The above results on a very coarse, almost hessian fabric were from 65 drops of black in the 1.25 oz of fixative. The frisson of ESF's metal powder is just to test its tenacity; this article is worn and cleaned a lot and I'll update with results.