

Art of Olive Green

Towards Art, an Ethics & a Laugh

Archives

All posts for the month September, 2013

Swifty scooter deview

Posted by *getraer* on *September 18, 2013*

Posted in: Self-Sufficiencies. Tagged: deview, KickPed, review, Swifty, Xootr. 24 Comments

Thanks to Rishio for the headsup in the comments of "[Xootr vs. KickPed: Folding Scooter Throwdown](https://artofolivegreen.wordpress.com/2011/07/13/xootr-vs-kickped-folding-scooter-throwdown/)

(<https://artofolivegreen.wordpress.com/2011/07/13/xootr-vs-kickped-folding-scooter-throwdown/>)"! I hadn't heard of the Swifty.

They *look* keen. Here are a few thoughts from looking at the pictures:

- 1) Tires: huge, and inflatable. The urethane or rubber tires of the Xootr and KickPed absorb less shock, but require no service and last forever. Moreover, the larger tires of the Swifty mean portability issues and a larger turning radius—the latter is important because kick scooters lack the speed of bikes, which often try to crowd us out of bikelanes. Zombie pedestrians with ears and eyes wired to glowing rectangles (see: "walker, urban") also appear from behind stopped / parked vehicles suddenly, requiring sharp movements in confined areas. It's key to be able to get out of their way, and big lumpy tires on a craft that moves at ~6mph less than a bike is asking to get mashup. However Swifty's website promo photos suggest the scooter is at home in southern California, where it will be thrown in the trunk when you're done, not walked through a meatpacked train station or sidewalk. In L.A. its storage would also be less of a problem, where apartments are larger and, in my experience, people aren't living five deep
- 2) Weight: even weighing less than 10 lbs., the Xootr and Kickped can become burdensome. The Swifty's weakest point is its preposterous weight: just over 17 pounds! That kind of mass *requires* a car to carry it at rest, obviating the green ownsteam (self-transport) virtue. If you're going to have something so bulky and heavy, just get a folding bike (the Birdy is 25 lbs), a much more effective mode of transport than a scooter will ever be.
- 3) Folding configuration: The Swifty folds at two points? BAD. The Xootr folds at one and collapses at another, and both are subject to seizing when corroded. (The collapsing handlebar stem also wanders in its shaft, which can be deadly.) Even with inflatable tires to buffer shock, those two points are going to get beat on U.S. roads, and when they get some road grit or salt in them to boot forget it. The KickPed is the clear winner: its springloaded stem+shaft are simple, sturdy and have forgiving tolerances that preclude corrosion or jamming. Maybe tolerances are too loose as mine is getting wobbly and I can't figure out how to shim it up.
- 4) Price: "handmade in England" or no, at ~USD \$750, the only people who can afford the Swifty in austerity times are celebrities. Maybe ~~Huge Grunt~~ Hugh Grant will ride one around Notting Hill. The Xootr and KickPed come in at a more real pricepoint, below ~USD \$300, which in my experience is about as much as most regular schmos will pay for "a grownup's Razor". Moreover, both companies manage to produce a premium product in the USA, albeit in KickPed's case using some Taiwanese components AFAIK. Must be labor costs of English unions; would that Maggie had finished them off.
- 5) Handlebar stem (Honorable Mention): note from the below illustration that Swifty has milled a groove into its handlebar stem, which meets a tooth in the tube collar that will keep it from working loose while riding. **Xootr, take note:** the stem on my Xootr has so much play now that it can twist as much as two or three degrees without warning. In rain, this could mean a sudden absence of traction and change in angle, with instantaneous horizontality resulting in loss of life.

English design of portacraft has yet to impress me. Even my folding bike is a German Birdy, not an English Brompton—to be fair, the

Birdy is made in Taiwan.

These criticisms are, of course, subject to trying a Swifty and examining it in person. The many readers of these scooter posts prove that deciding based on web photos is very difficult. Though I doubt NYCeWheels will ever stock the massive Swifty unless they buy out the other stores on their block (their available space is compromised by very expensive electric bikes), if I see one on NYC's streets I will hail its owner for a closer inspection—that is, if I can catch them on a KickPed.

“Countries” — B.J. Vorster vs. Polska

Posted by *getraer* on *September 17, 2013*

Posted in: Engaged art, Some thoughts have a certain sound, Uncategorized. Tagged: apartheid, Ireland, BJ Vorster, Polska, South Africa. Leave a comment

“Already we can see how easy it is to create and instill wrong impressions about peoples and countries by slanted news and pictures and unbalanced presentation of facts.” —**South African Prime Minister, BJ Vorster, 5th January 1976**

Occasionally political messages sneak into art in the weirdest places. Polska, an Irish drum & bass producer, made this (and many other) stunning drumwork & atmospheric tunes years ago. Around 2008 I thought to look up the source of the sampled quote because I couldn't recognize the accent.

The tone of tune seems sympathetic or thoughtful to me, but the statement was made by B.J. Vorster, Prime Minister of South Africa in 1976. A similar version of it is quoted on Google Books (http://books.google.com/books?id=X4nLxY_6P-cC&pg=PA559&lpg=PA559&dq=%22already+we+can+see+how+easy+it+is%22&source=bl&ots=RYLv7UCcVm&sig=71txNR7mtGm4y0WilCJD3NZZcoo&hl=en&sa=X&ei=MAk4UvLqKtPB4AOIiYDQBA&ved=0CCwQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22already%20we%20can%20see%20how%20easy%20it%20is%22&f=false), but years ago, I found the entire quote attributed to him on a single weblink, now gone. I reproduce it here for posterity as I copied it back then, along with the work that samples it so pensively. If you listen, do so with headphones:



Shellshocked and close-cropped

Posted by *getraer* on *September 2, 2013*

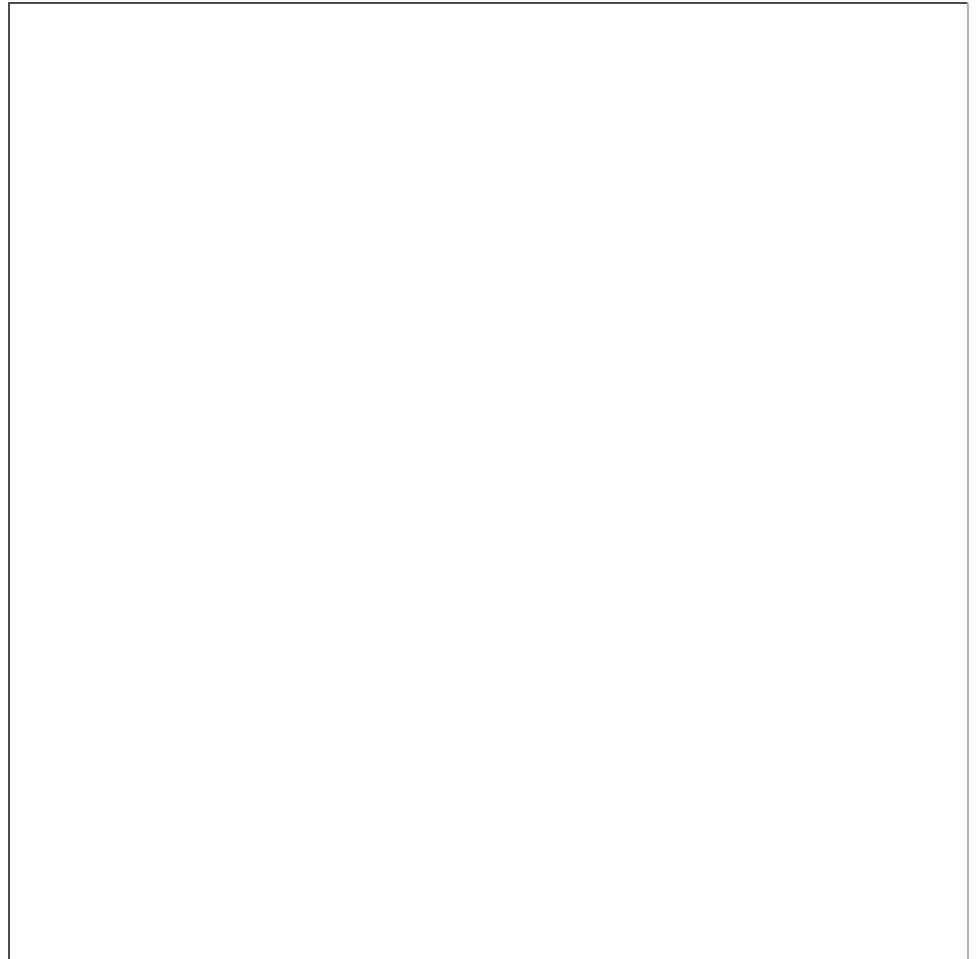
Posted in: Uncategorized. Leave a comment

It's been a tough year for me, and I know I'm not alone. But my main reason for staggered posts is that I've been very busy rephotographing and retouching all my work for my NDI Gallery store (<https://www.ndigallery.com/sellers/coupture/vendors/Coupture-vendor-46>), which provides a venue for designs from multiple periods of studio development. I've also finished some pieces that have been lingering on the bench.

Besides that, I've been toiling in the fields, tilling in 100+ pounds of compost, planting and weeding, installing automatic watering, getting bitten to a moonscape by mosquitos (and then sweating in full long sleeves with mosquito net), and discovering surprises left by nature in forgotten corners of the victory garden. There should be a lot to share this year. I put unprecedented work and money into it, and the yields have been surprising and heartening—such that I can understand why large numbers of US folk are returning to the

land (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-23849569>). I've been documenting the development of my crops, and am confident that with a little more land and my hydroponic sprouter, I could produce most of the food that I eat. This would mean fresh things even in winter, with enough to give away for promotional purposes. Staples like grains and beans can't be raised and processed practically on an suburban plot, but everything else is within reach.

So hang tight, phantasized persecutory reader. Art of OG is not dead (though it really needs to be rebranded). That will have to be for later.



Colt for the Win, a ring built around discharged .45 Colt and Winchester .308 cartridges.



(https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/20130821_131140.jpg)

Fordhook chard, Lacinato kale, Red Russian kale, Gai Lohn, Chioggia beet greens, Golden Detroit beet greens, Bull's Blood beet greens and Malabar spinach. For the most part.