

PASSIONATE PARTICIPATION

I'd like to concentrate on the second half of that title, the colon separates two important ideas: the reason "I" ride and the "Art" of so doing in New York. Art for many people means many things. Riding a bike in New York can also mean many different things to as many people. The combination of the two: art and riding, or the expression and representation of one by the other, is a proposition that intrigues me. Freedom of motion: freedom of expression. If art is passion, then making art about a passion is double passion and could take position on both sides of the colon. Biking is like art, the freedom of physical and mental movement as expression: art is like biking, the freedom of physical and mental expression as movement. Both offer release from passive experience; every turn of the road or of the brush/lens/pencil, is movement of body and mind that requires your full participation.

I want to be associated with art that says something to me about the artists' reasons for making art. I like to see expressed the reasons for living, the reason to get up in the morning, the freedom to do so, and the will to tell others about it. Cruising or crunching up a long hill or down a steep incline, wending through rough traffic in the city, stopping to refresh your mind and spirit with a view of the Hudson at sunset while straddling your latest love with wheels: taking that last shot of the procession of bikers on the latest race through central park, the snap of the peaceful riders of this month's Critical Mass ride, the shot of the not-so-peaceful arrest of fellow riders at another event, the pen and ink drawings of the bike as anatomical specimen, the etching of the character you play on wheels, the oil painting of kids riding bikes on their way to school, these are things you might want to relate if your passion was biking and you wanted to show how biking in the city makes you feel about your everyday life through another passion that also makes your life worth living every day, art.

The 15 artists, or artist groups, who have given their work and projects to us for this exhibition have shown us all this and more. They are dedicated to the ideas of biking and the ideas of art. They are expressing what they feel is their freedom on wheels and behind the canvas, film, or paper. Join us in congratulating them in their efforts to make the art of bicycling visible for more than the initiated, the passionate, the winded! Join us in viewing this passion and celebrating the desire to communicate with the world all around.

For the first part of our title: *Why I Ride*, we are talking with a community that is already formed and one we hope others may want to join. A community that values the individual within the group for all the power each brings in change, purpose, interest, passion, and critique. The "I" we refer to is you and it is me and it is all of us who live together in this vast city, in this sprawling country, whether we ride or not. The "I" can be more important than the group in that each one makes the group and each one affects how the group lives. This efficacy is a freedom that should be welded with passion as the artists in this show so artfully exhibit for themselves and for the larger group through their freedom of expression and freedom of movement.

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