

The ADVOCATE

Cycle celebration

Aldrich Museum hosting bicycle fest, exhibit

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Posted: 09/29/2009 06:37:31 PM EDT

Updated: 09/29/2009 10:19:38 PM EDT

Recently, curators at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield began to notice more and more artists using an unusual object as their medium for expression: the bicycle.

Richard Klein, exhibitions director at The Aldrich, said at the same time they also noticed "a lot of reports in the media about issues of sustainability," and bikes were increasingly seen as one of the greenest modes of transportation.

These observations fueled -- or in this case pedaled -- the latest show at The Aldrich, "Bike Rides: The Exhibition."

The recently opened exhibit gets rolling, literally and figuratively, on Sunday afternoon when The Aldrich hosts Bike Fest, a celebration of all things bicycle outside the museum.

The event will feature a meet-and-greet with exhibit curators and artists, bike tricks performed on unicycles, plus an array of unusual bikes performing oddball tasks, like taking pictures, drawing and serving beverages. In addition, there will be food and beer provided by The Ginger Man of South Norwalk.

The event will kick off early in the day with the Le Tour d'Aldrich -- three organized bike rides for

cyclists of all abilities. Riders will depart from East Ridge Middle School in Ridgefield and finish their ride at the museum.

As for the exhibit itself, there are about 30 pieces; some are artistic representations of bikes, while others are cutting-edge, fully functional bikes from the world's best designers.

Among the items on display will be two of Lance Armstrong's Trek bikes, used this past year at the Tour de France, tricked-out vintage rides of the Brooklyn-based Puerto Rico Schwinn Club and fully-functioning bamboo bikes created by the Bamboo Bike studio.

Brooklyn-based artist Jonathan Brand is among those whose work is featured in the exhibit. His piece, "Fallen," is a medium density fiberboard sculpture of a bike that has fallen. The work was inspired by the first new bicycle that Brand owned. Growing up in southern Ontario, Brand had received mostly hand-me-downs from an older cousin. But, at about, 5 he got a brand-new BMX bike.

"That was a really important moment," recalled Brand. "To receive something that was pristine and new rather than something somebody else had outgrown."

Brand completed the work in 2007 after spending 12 hours a day on it for six weeks.

In addition to Klein, Mónica Ramírez-Montagut curated for the exhibit, and musician and biking enthusiast David Byrne served as an adviser. Klein said they approached Byrne to help with the exhibit after hearing he was an avid biker and wrote a book on his adventures, "Bicycle Diaries."

The exhibit also shares statistics and facts about bike use and seeks to urge people to use human-powered vehicles more often.

"In the U.S. the average car trip is less than three miles," Klein said, "that kind of distance is the perfect distance for a bicycle trip."

Bike Fest is Sunday 1 to 5 p.m. outside The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, 258 Main St. in Ridgefield. Organized bicycle rides begin at 11:30 a.m. from East Ridge Middle School at 10 East Ridge Road. Admission to the ride, festival and museum is \$25, to just the festival and museum \$10. Free for members and kids under 12. Through Jan. 3, \$7, seniors and college students \$4. Members, K-12 teachers and 18 and under free. Free Tuesdays. 203-438-4519, www.aldrichart.org.