



Hennepin Crawler

If a camel is a horse designed by committee, then what is the Hennepin Crawler?

It looks like a jalopy, but it's really a big bike, designed by **Krank-Boom-Clank**, four Santa Rosa, Calif., artists who wanted to build something that moves as gracefully along railroad tracks as it maneuvers around the playa at Burning Man.

Two of the members, **Clifford Hill** and **Skye Barnett**, had built an art car for Burning Man in 2007. For the Crawler, they drew in fellow welders **David Farish** and **Dan Kirby**.

"It was a very organic process," says Barnett. "The only thing we had set was that it would be pedal-powered and that it had four seats — since there are four of us."

They also got involved in planning a local event, the Great West End & Railroad Square Handcar Regatta, which aimed to raise awareness for transportation beyond the car, including bikes and commuter rail. So they designed the Crawler (Farish was fond of the antique-sounding Tom Waits song "9th and Hennepin") to ride the rails, too.

Found materials helped dictate the design: Barnett returned from one dump run with a \$15 metal hammock holder. It eventually became the centerpiece of the Crawler's curvy chassis.

"I refer to it as improv, because we were using metal like Play-Doh," says Hill. "We would try something, break it if it didn't work, try something else." They got together once a week — "Our Thursday night TV watching got all screwed up," says Kirby — and cranked into the night to get it finished.

Now they pedal it out to community events, where it draws a lot of interest. "People ask who designed it," says Hill. "Everybody pulled their weight. People can't handle that."

Hill says their goal is to "plug this notion of art and celebration in a public context, inspiring more people to do creative things with bikes, especially kids."

"Kids see it, they find out there's bike parts in it, and then they realize they can make something like that," says Farish. —Dave Sims

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