

Daid Puppypaws
Speculative Vehicles Part I
April 26 – June 8, 2025

You might remember your first time riding a bike. No training wheels, no parental assistance. The freedom of pedalling, coasting, pedalling and coasting again, floating on air. Or did you find this feeling earlier, on a tricycle or your Big Wheels? The crunch of concrete under the hard plastic wheels as you pumped down the sidewalk, cruising so fast you should have worn a cape. Maybe it was when you finally hopped the curb, cleanly, on a skateboard, your first *ollie*. Ready, set, liftoff – those six inches may as well have been into the stratosphere. They say the first practical rollerskates were invented all the way back in 1863 and I can only imagine at that time it felt like having rockets on one's feet. Have you ever worn rockets on your feet?

Micromobility is a corporate buzzword coined in the 2010s and currently used by "green capitalists" in the urban "sharing space" to market the rental of electric bikes, scooters and the like. Bike-sharing was conceived, however, by a group of Dutch anarchists, Provo, who took it upon themselves to counter the growing car congestion and improve the deteriorating air quality of Amsterdam. The *witte fietsenplan* (white bike plan) was simple: take a bike, paint it white and leave it unlocked for anyone to freely use. While the project was short-lived – police, ever the antagonists to activism, rounded up and discarded the bikes – its imprint influenced the creation of similar programs in cities across Europe.

Puppypaws is a bicycle riding position in which a cyclist drapes their forearms over the tops of the handlebars to adopt a more aerodynamic crouch. In 2021, this position was banned for use in both amateur and professional racing by the Union Cycliste Internationale. Sounds like it might be dangerous. But it looks fast and cool, and dangerous can be pretty cool, too. Skateboarding would seem to be about as perilous as it gets - there's a trick called the "hospital flip" - but if you are skilled enough to surf the sidewalk for gnarly fun or just to get from A to B, more power to you. Competitions notwithstanding, danger may not be so much inherent to either skating or biking but due to the built environments in which they are exercised. Despite green lanes, bollards, and parks, cities continue to be hostile to anyone riding a vehicle less than 100lbs. Just ask the orthopedists. Or anyone given a ticket for biking on the sidewalk for fear of being plowed by an F150. Or chased off a public square by buzzkilling security guards who can't stand the sight of a kickflip. More and more, though, people are proving the possibility of traveling through urban spaces on vehicles that abandon fossil fuel combustion, choking automotive traffic, and restraints from the powers that be; movement in favor of the freedom of riding on wheels they themselves power. It is this spirit that animates Daid Puppypaws's practice and this exhibition, *Speculative Vehicles Part I*.

Daid Puppypaws is a lifelong artist and advocate for sustainable transportation. Guided by the declaration that art is a practice of freedom inseparable from everyday life, they are also the founder of *BLACKNASA*, a space agency aimed to teach rocketry and the ideals of space exploration to underrepresented youth groups. Puppypaws also experiments with their own rocketry and noise music under the same name. They received an MFA in sculpture from Yale University, where they were a recipient of the Yale School of Art Social Justice Initiative Grant. They currently live and work in Los Angeles.

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