

## Entry to SPOKES' "Bike Path Art" Summer 2010 Competition

I've got no artistic eye, no artistic talent and no particular passion for art – but I am passionate about attracting people to cycle. Momentum is a big thing in cycling (and cycle campaigning!) – cycling becomes easier, quicker, smoother, safer and more enjoyable if you don't have to stop and start all the time.

I'm constantly struck by the poor quality signing of bike paths (and indeed on-road bike routes). The wee blue signs with white writing, where they even exist, are unappealing, don't really broadcast "cycling" and are far too small to be able to read whilst cycling. They are the second class citizen to the numerous road signs for drivers. The net result – people aren't aware of the cycle paths that exist, or aren't attracted to try those that do, or momentum is lost as they stop and peer up at signs to see where the path is and where it actually leads!

My art competition entry is therefore based on the following premise – that attractive, vibrant, stylish, newly designed and suitably sized signs to cycle paths are essential, and they need to stand out on streets. My idea is to make the signs stand out in their own right on streets near to cycle paths, with their supporting posts as part of an overall artwork, making all passers-by pause momentarily to take note and store away in their minds the realisation that there's a cycle path nearby. Instead of a sign on a post, the concept is an artwork feature which embeds the sign.

Specifically, the artwork in each location would consist of a series of wrought iron sculptures with cycling themed designs, each encapsulating a newly designed cycle path sign with destinations and mileage on them. The sculptures would be approx 2m tall, with the other dimensions appropriate to the exact location of the item.

The sculptures would be made out of black wrought iron lengths about the thickness of standard railings (and preferably recycled e.g. old railings). The signs would be bright green (a subconscious link to cycling's green credentials) with black writing (writing large enough to be easily read at distance by cyclists, allowing time for lane changes etc to join the cycle path without losing momentum), and would be made out of the standard metal currently used in signs. Overall, these materials would be durable, and recycled wherever possible. The idea would be to have a series of these sculptures across a city (Edinburgh) replacing existing signs or in places where no sign currently exists, thereby prioritising cycling, as well as the paths, across the city. Designs would include:

- . Racing cyclist, with sign element (destinations and mileage) being the square on the racer's back and front that would usually contain their race number
- . Uni-cyclist holding the sign element between hands as if maintaining their balance.
- . Man in top hat and tails on penny farthing, with signs on his back and front.
- . Single giant cycle wheel – with signs acting as spokes (ideal for a junction of several cycle paths from the street in question)
- . Single giant hand bike pump – with sign written vertically up the stem
- . BMX sculpture appearing to be stunt jumping over the sign.
- . Tricycle, with sign joining the two back wheels.

I'm afraid I can't sketch (terrible at art as I mentioned), but I hope the design concept appeals.