

## The Pedestrian Propaganda Project

An experiment in social messages through universal utility imagery

[See the complete set of pieces](#)

### The big idea:

The Pedestrian Propaganda Project (PPP) came about from my love of the simple imagery on public information signs (crosswalk, bathroom, wet floor, etc.).

I especially like the juxtaposition of the very simple imagery and some fairly gruesome subjects (amputation, decapitation, electrocution, being burned by acid, crushed by rocks, torn to shreds by some machine, etc.). The little pedestrian figures get bent, torn, burned, and smashed all while being handled in this cute harmless format. No matter how shocking your subject, everything is boiled down to this simple universal symbol language.

To me the format is perfect for delivering tough messages, like dealing with complex social issues, because you can say so much with so little. And it lacks any suggestive tone or emotionality so it leaves more room for the viewer to bring their own interpretation to the message.

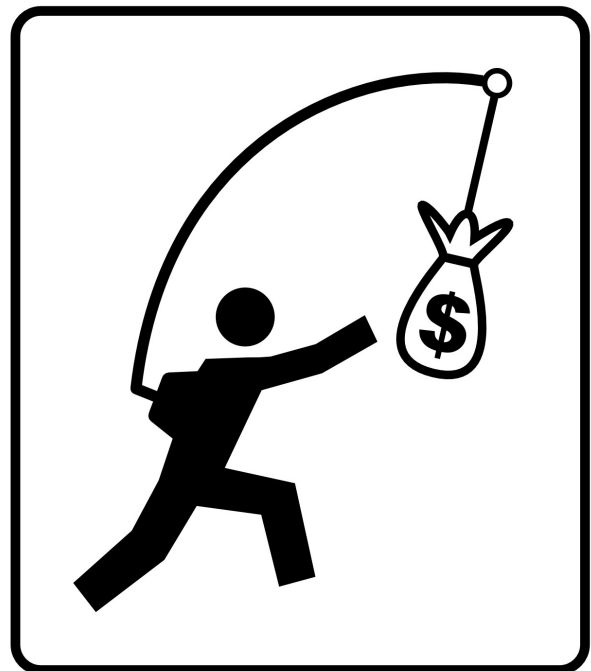
### The artifacts:

The PPP consists of a series of pieces (the number waxes and wanes over time, see "Evolution" below).

Being designed in vector format, the pieces can be produced in a variety of sizes. They have been made as stickers, posters, and T-shirts.

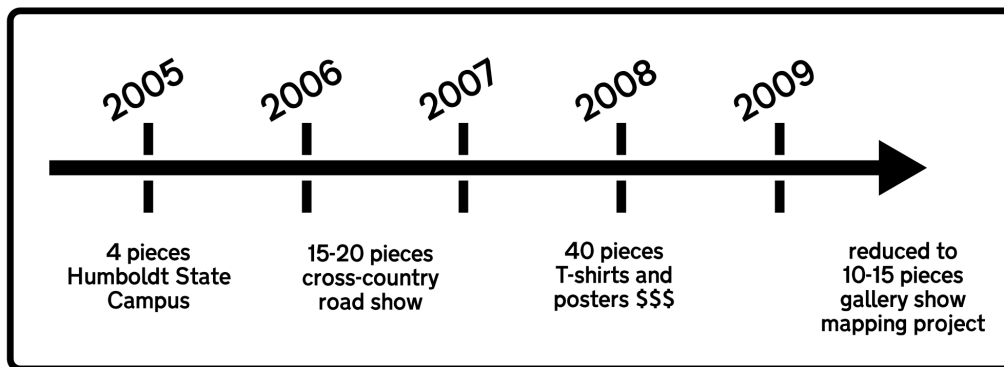
Because of my strong beliefs about sustainable production methods and the lack of acceptable alternatives at the time, the most common form has been as a type of home made sticker with starch-paste glue.

These "stickers" are printed on plain white paper (often re-used office paper). Starch-paste is then applied to the back and allowed to dry. This produces a crude type of stamp. These wet-and-stick labels allows the propaganda I put out in the world to be biodegradable.



## The evolution:

The Pedestrian Propaganda Project has gone through several phases.



The first set consisted of only four pieces. They were printed up as the "stickers" described above and distributed around Arcata, California and the HSU campus. Each sticker also had a URL to a website that allowed people to leave comments. There was some interesting feedback, but eventually it became flooded with spam. The website was taken down.

By the next phase, more signs were added (perhaps a dozen). The same bio-degradable sticker format was used. As my wife and I moved from California to Pennsylvania, I did a cross-country art show. I pasted up PPP signs at rest stops, gas stations, hotels, on vending machines, in bathroom stalls - really anywhere that I found interesting. A new website was launched, but this time only a simple contact form was provided. I received emails from people who found my stickers from across the country, including a girl in Texas that found my secret roadside show in an abandoned building off Interstate 40.

The third phase was an attempt to commercialize the PPP. I had T-shirts and posters printed and attended a bunch of indie craft fairs. Although this was a valuable learning experience, for me, bringing money into the equation just sucked the fun out of the process. I ended up putting the PPP aside for a while.

I am gearing up for a fourth phase with a refined set of pieces. This round will feature no text, just the images to speak for themselves. The signs will be done in two formats.

One format will be a gallery show of large signs which will be hung on the standard metal post used for street signs - i.e. mocking the very signs the PPP is modeled after.

The other format will be stickers - now that it appears there are alternatives that are acceptably sustainable, This time they will be more like regular stickers with peel and stick backing. The stickers will be distributed via dispensers (see "FREE Take One" photo above) and a website will be made available. The stickers will also have batch numbers on them so that people can report back and the distribution can be mapped.

