



onestar press lisa anne auerbach unicycle shop

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Unicycle Shop was open on May 12 and 13, 2007, as part of High Desert Test Sites in Joshua Tree, California. During two days of business, we rented unicycles to over 50 people for the price of ten cents per hour. Most of those renting unicycles were first-time unicyclists and they approached the challenge of unicycling with enthusiasm and vigor. Crashes into the soft sand were not uncommon. Some visitors became quite obsessed with unicycling. The sun beat down at 90 degrees, and unicyclists were covered in sweat and sand. Though Unicycle Shop was fully equipped with First Aid equipment and a certified First Aid technician, the worst accident was a splinter unrelated to unicycling.

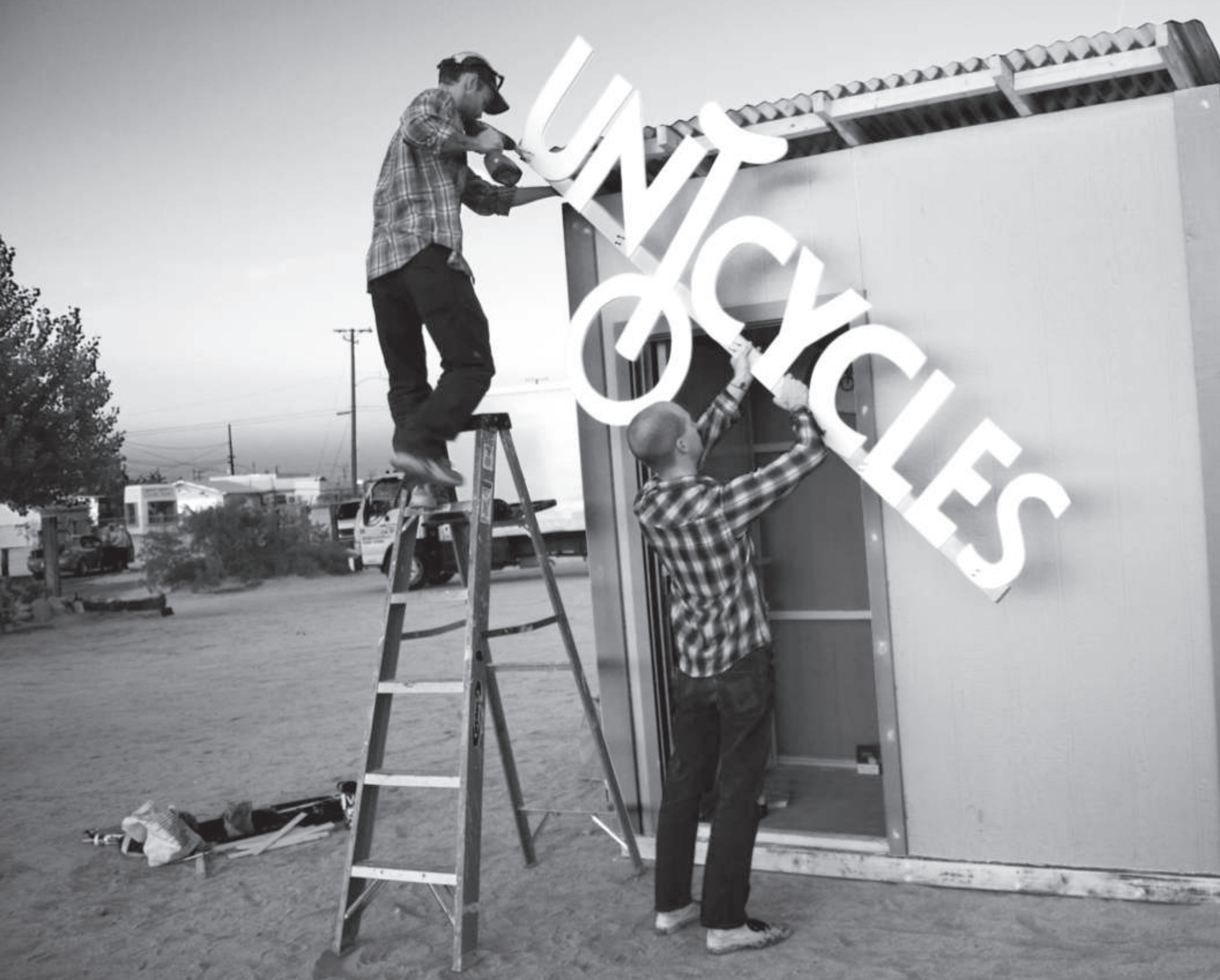


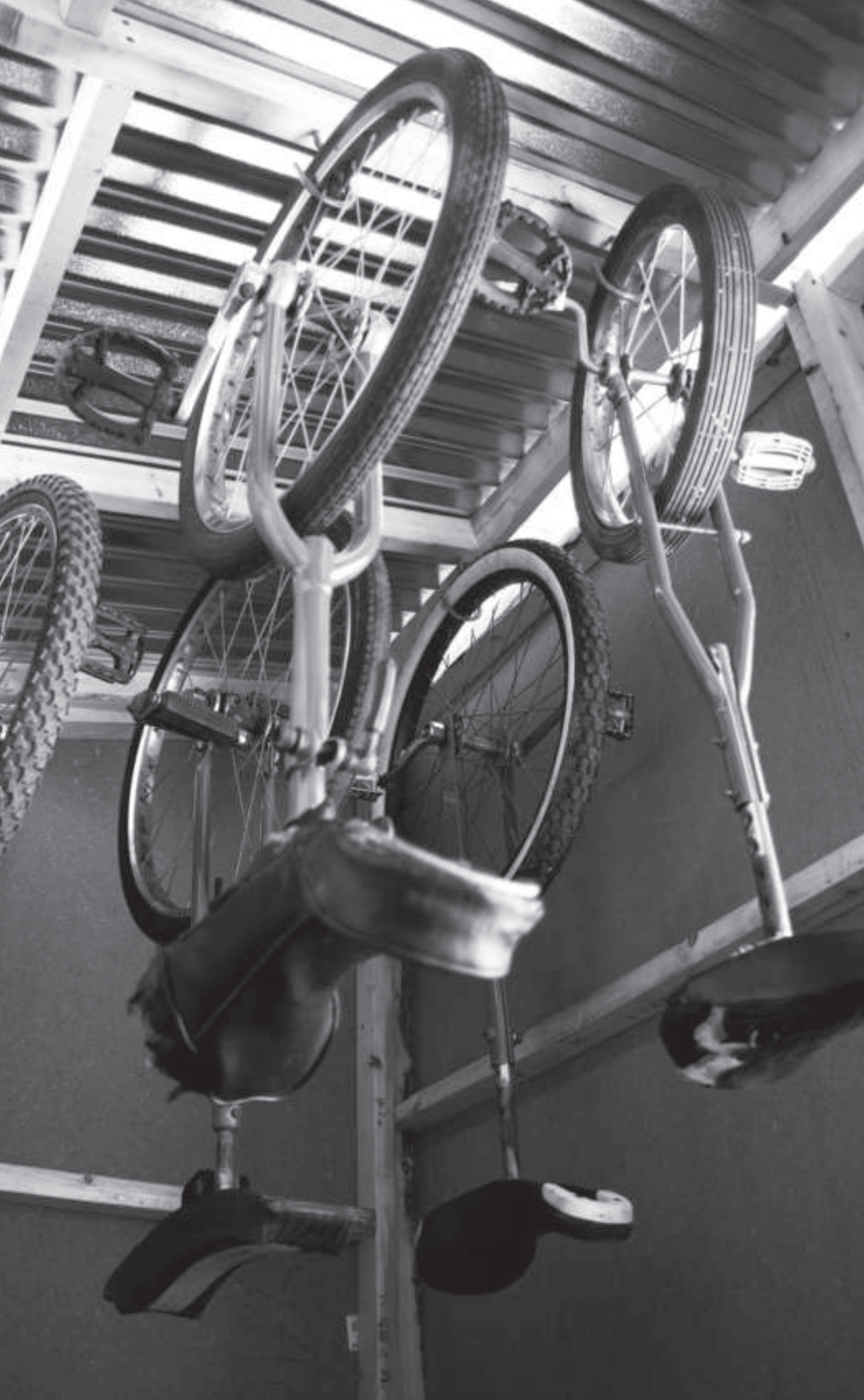












UNICYCLES







Blood Ocean



Cookie Monster



Bloodstorm

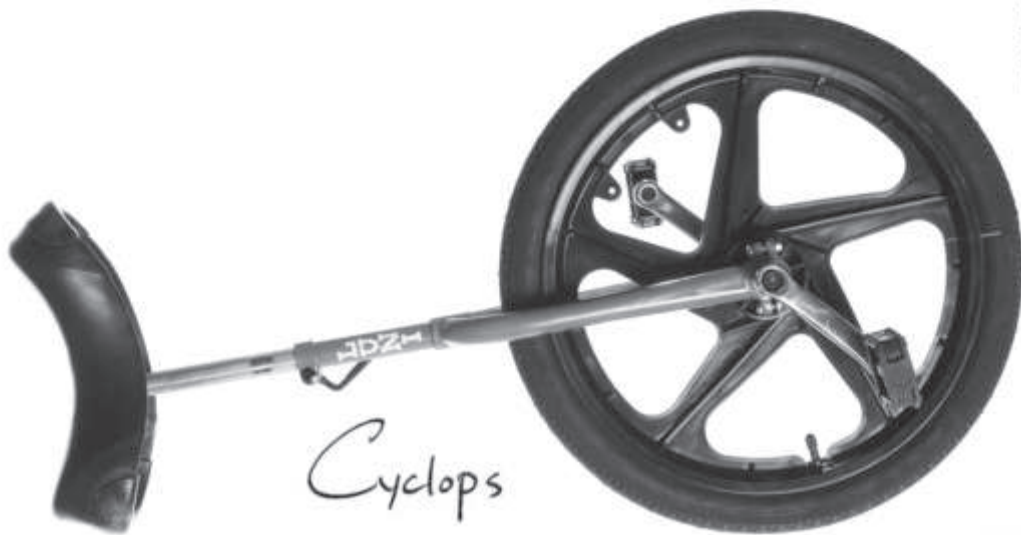


Blizzard Beast





Jelly Roll



Cyclops





Widow Maker



Snuggly



Little Red



Marvin



ENSOR



Spirit of '76



Helter Skelter



Dirty Rotten Red



Unibomber







Tricky Dick



Unicide































































































I learned to ride a unicycle in the late 1970s, when it seemed unicycling was as American as apple pie. I was an only child, so the one wheel thing seemed especially appropriate. The unicycle was an old purple Schwinn with a quilted black curved seat. The seatpost was bent near the top, which made riding it a challenge. The gravel of the driveway was not a forgiving landing pad. There was a lot of falling. I still have scars on my knees. My mother bought me bright yellow knee pads and elbow pads after scraping rocks out of my wounds too many times. I was always squeamish around blood and the tattered flesh made me feel woozy.

Propping the unicycle up against the railroad ties surrounding the gravel was the strategy for learning. The street was “too dangerous.” Cars sped down Portwine Road, especially during rush hour. When we moved there in 1970, the street was gravel too, but by the time the Schwinn entered my life, it was paved. I thought Portwine would be the perfect launching pad for my new hobby, but, even in the heyday of unicycling, traffic didn’t recognize a one-wheeled vehicle as anything more than an ordinary nuisance.

The streets in my neighborhood were all named after cocktails, and there weren’t many children around. On Daiquiri Drive, there were twin boys, but while I was in grade school, one of them shot himself in the head. The other one went on to become handsome and popular in high school, but I could never remember his name and didn’t want to accidentally call him by the name of his dead brother.

I rode a bicycle too, but refused to quit the unicycle before I figured out how to go forward. I was jealous of friends who had paved driveways, but also felt a little bit badass crashing in my gravel. It was a mix of caramel and chocolate browns, the pieces rounded. My mother told me it was very expensive gravel, fancy gravel. Designer gravel. I might not have had designer jeans, but I had very exclusive gravel lodged beneath my skin, which seemed somehow better, even if it hurt. Or maybe because it hurt. Punk was happening somewhere else, but it didn’t get to me until years later. I was still listening to the Beatles and my mom’s Steeleye Span albums and going to the Renaissance Fair because I thought the muddy maidens and jousting was pretty neat.

The first time I appeared in public on my unicycle, I wore a tiger costume and rode in a parade. It was my high school's Homecoming celebration, through downtown Deerfield, Illinois. All I remember is that the inside of the tiger costume stunk and that no one asked me to the Homecoming dance. I also did a charity ride of some sort, a bike-a-thon, raising money for MS or something. 5 miles around a nearby subdivision. People thought I should get half as much per mile since I only rode one wheel. I learned at an early age that people who tell jokes about unicycles think they are really, really funny. One year my friend Anna and I did a routine for the school talent show, where we juggled together and I rode around the stage on a unicycle. I had circus skills.

Unicycling was about the least cool hobby a teenager could have. There was really little about it that was good, but it was fun to have a skill that no one else cultivated. In 1984, Nancy Reagan visited our high school to lecture the students about "say no to drugs." We were told in special assemblies in the auditoriums that there were evil children pushing drugs in the bathrooms and that we needed to be very careful and aware of these dangers so that we too did not fall prey to the dark side. I spent a lot of time peeing and touching up my eyeliner, but no one ever offered me anything. I wasn't even invited to the parties my mother would read about in the local newspaper, the ones that happened when parents were out of town and involved topping off liquor bottles with water so the level didn't appear to change. It was years later that I found out that people in my high school were actually having sex. I was shocked. I credit unicycling with keeping me off drugs and clean of STDs. No drug pusher or Svengali in their right mind wanted to be seen cavorting with my kind.



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In addition to this book a limited edition multiple by the artist
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onestar press
16, rue Trolley de Prévaux
75013 Paris France
info@onestarpress.com
www.onestarpress.com

Unicycle Shop happened in Joshua Tree, California on May 12-13, 2007 as part of the
High Desert Test Sites.

Lisa Anne Auerbach lives in Los Angeles, a city known for its heartfelt embrace of circus culture.
She makes photographs, sweaters, and small publications. She believes that humor can make the
bloodiest wounds and that politics begin at home. Although she has an impressive collection of
tomato-red unicycles, she prefers riding a bike, and her exploits are well documented within the
pages of *Saddlesore*.

