



**Sharpener**

## Sharpener / Knife Grinder



Sharpener, circa 1878

In the old days, a knife grinder was an itinerant tradesman who sharpened dull knives, scissors, and other edged tools. While this is a dying trade the world over, there are aspects to it that point the way ahead for our global society because it juxtaposes the big with the small. It does not require a great investment and the market is a given; sooner or later, all knives or scissors become blunt. I believe it is interesting to link this idea with the notion of buildings as power stations in 1990s architecture, which could be set up through a simple process. The bicycle is at once a means of transportation, workplace, machine, and power station. When it comes time to serve a customer, one needs only to sit backwards on the bicycle and operate the grinding bench. The energy used to travel distances is turned back, so to speak. In this way, a reversal of its use results in won energy. This balancing of energy creates a kind of perpetual motion machine. It appears that such an ideal system is more feasible on a small scale because small amounts of energy are easily available. The merging of different tasks leads to a bundling of energy and ultimately produces a result that is commonly impossible to achieve.

## Los Angeles — modes of transportation

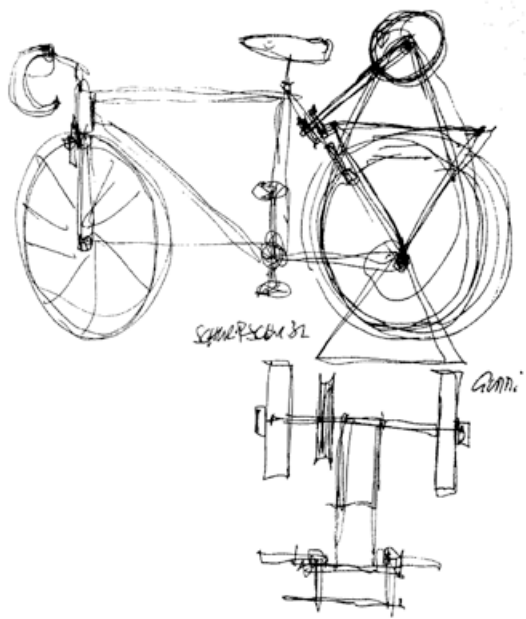
Due to the height of its buildings, Los Angeles forms a sprawling town mosaic around a small downtown area with high-rise buildings. The threat of earthquakes and the concept of the „City in the Garden“ account for its expansiveness. The people of Los Angeles, of course, exclusively travel in cars. It has been alleged that General Motors acquired streetcar operators, in part through a network of subsidiaries and holding companies, in order to dismantle and replace them with bus lines that operated busses built by auto companies. While this theory has been debunked in court, it encapsulates a profound sense of loss. There is an urgent need for alternative modes of transportation to the extensive network of highways, which has greatly contributed to making Los Angeles the number one “Smog Town” in the US.

## Workplace / transportation / power station

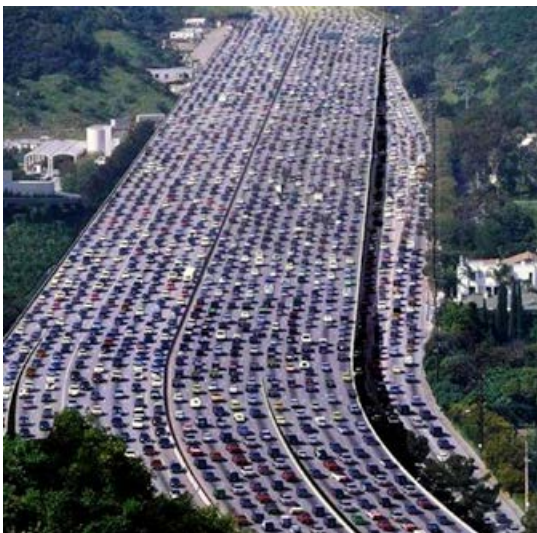
A modified racing cycle from the 1960s will be adapted only slightly to serve a second function: A grinding bench will be driven by a rubber belt powered by the back wheel. A kickstand will lift the back wheel so that the grinding bench can be operated sitting backwards on the bicycle seat.

The Sharpener is an independent system that runs on its own resources. The bicycle is transformed into a workplace or a means of transportation the moment it is used for one of these purposes. This one-man business can be run through a lossless process, as it were, because it does not require long commutes but, rather, generates demand for services through movement.

If we look at the city and its sealed transportation surfaces as a building, moving around its premises with a bike can be said to require minimal space. It can make excellent use of energy stored in cultivated urban spaces by optimizing energy distribution.



Grinding disc, rubber belt, and rubber disc



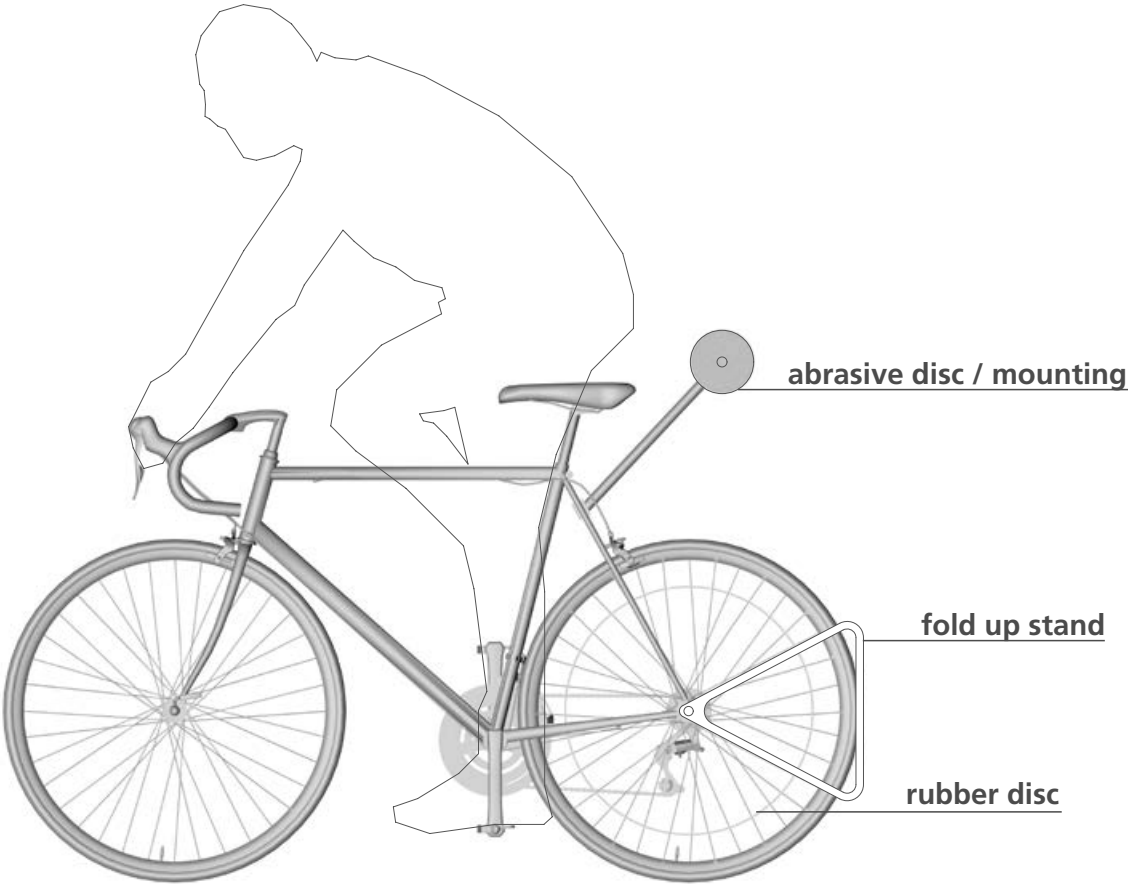
Rush hour Los Angeles



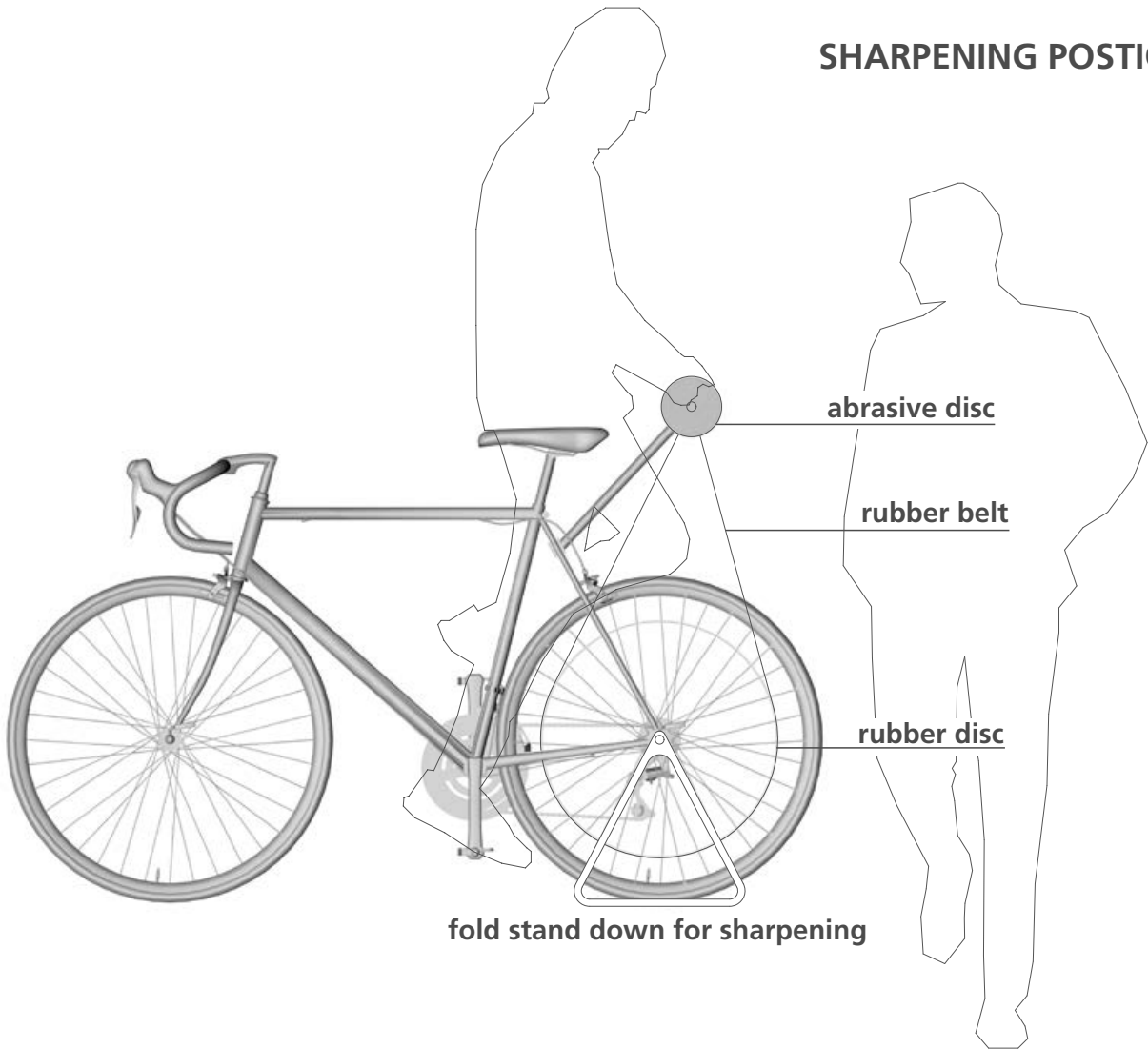
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION / POWER STATION / WORKPLACE



**BICYCLING POSITION**



**SHARPENING POSTION**





## SHARPENING POSTION





