

Manifesto Vélorution Universelle 2013

Marseille Provence 2013, European Capital of Culture

In a city of over a million inhabitants and the populus of the surrounding region 2013 is for many the year of change, of progress but others have be heard muttering 'Marseille capital of capitulation, Marseille 2013 Capital of rupture, the Capital of the Cult of the Car'.

A huge amount of European investment and public money has been thrown at the city and region in its bid to catch up with other cities in Europe and attract long term investment and create employment, attract tourists and develop its infrastructure.

The city that was founded over 2600 years ago in clash of civilisations Greek and then Roman. Ever dissenting, its port remained ever open to the Mediterranean. Differing waves of imigrants were greeted with open arms from its begining. The last 100 years have seen the arrival and installation of Italians, Greeks, Kabyles, Russioans, Armenians, Corsicans, Spanish, Maghrebins, and Africans. The Cosmopolitan nature and steep social contrast of Marseille makes it unlike any other city in France.

With its cultural heritage, Marseille is however not going to let itself be imposed upon by the mediatisation and marketing of a distant cultural elite that appears set on a superficial transformation of the city. A series of <<off events>> are planned to take place alongside the clamour of orchestrated happenings and the true spirit of the city will take to the streets.

With that in mind, this year's Vélorution Universelle will bring the streets to life -The largest annual bicycle event of the French year comes to town – its going to be a wonderful few days!

Across the world The Critical Mass rejects a system in which malfunctioning financial systems are prioritized over basic human needs - Upon this elitist culture we, The Mass, impose our own system of unbridled Do It Yourself urbanism.

Critical Mass revindicates the value of a city by the value that it puts upon bike use ; it reclaims the right for all to be mobile, the right to citizenship, housing, education and culture without discrimination : these rights have been neglected by European governance and the nature of its investments locally.

The obvious growth of bike use and need for investment in the city's bike transport routes is beyond debate but public officials here remain reticent to put in place the changes necessary for its development. Fear of change, ignorance of the benefits and yes, even administrative laziness have meant that Marseille has been held back for too long. The city has fallen behind and failed to see beyond the haze of pollution blown up from the streets.

We are not demanding complete political and social change but rather that tools already widely used in other cities for bike transport development be put in place in this city, Marseille, city of 300 days of sunshine per year – quand même !

We demand :

- That in future the city be developed and planned in a manner that accounts for existing bike use and the future growth of bike use – that this be useful for the whole Urban Community of Marseille Provence Métropole.
- That a genuine infrastructure be constructed that is dedicated to the regular use of bicycles including : bike parking zones on the street, in train stations, outside municiple buildings and for residential buildings etc.

- That bicycle initiatives that incentivise bicycle use are supported, such as bike driven delivery services , bike repair workshops, bike taxis and bike groups etc.

Time and time again the advantages of bike use have been proved – speed of displacement, running costs, ease of parking, benefits to health and reduction of sound and air pollution are but a few well known examples. Our standard of living and that of those around us can be lifted with relative ease and practically no cost – let it be done now and not tomorrow!

For all these reasons and a thousand others, the Velorution Universelle organise a three day party, celebration, festival of the bike and attached cyclist and invite all of you, every single one of you to come join us in the movement of two wheels spinning and turning en mass, gliding across the city, breathing the calm air of a and wide streets filled with the wonders of a world reclaimed – the sea the sun, la fête, le vélo.