The series of two posters presents the team project on exploring the inventive potential of the Russian northern periphery – the rural areas, distant from administrative centers, large industries and infrastructures, where people pursue a literally de-modernized way of living. In such settings, we searched for locally appropriate transport solutions to problems of daily mobility that involved minimum effort and material. The objects we found provided a new understanding of the “beauty and utility” formula, which appeared to be unique for each locality and personality of a maker. Our further plan is to move the research on the northern periphery inventiveness to the next level that is synchronous shoulder-to-shoulder collaboration between designers and real makers/users. Although the very idea of such collaboration with local makers is certainly not new, in our case what matters is the convergence of environmental, social, and economic factors.

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Among those machines, there are no two jeeps alike, although there is an easily recognizable Pozhva frame. The reliable and ergonomic design resulted from numerous experiments in the field. Local makers tried different schemes: from front skis and three-wheels to all-wheel drive and other modifications. They finally came to the “golden standard” of all-weather use, easy-to-handle and light machine that include: four wheels, a motorcycle engine, an automobile chassis, a luggage box at the rear, and a cargo platform in front.

Today, jeeps are unique handicraft production not associated with any commercial enterprise or collective. The factory was shut down in 2014, but there is still a viable community of former factory workers that serves as a group of peers to make the cooperation easier. At the same time, almost nobody makes jeeps for profit. Also, there is no specialization at any stage of the making process: generally, everyone should be able to do everything.

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