

ESSEX STREET presents Peter Fend : Über die Grenze : May Not Be Seen Or Read Or Done

The exhibition runs from January 8 – February 12

Opening Reception Sunday January 8, 6 - 8pm

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Über die Grenze is the term used by the German Ministry of Science and Technology, Art Department, to describe, in 1991, the work of Peter Fend. It means “out of bounds.”

Since that time, and especially in the past decade, most of the work Fend produces is Über die Grenze and hasn't been seen or read or done.

ESSEX STREET presents a survey of several Über die Grenze projects.

These projects include:

- proposing a channel near Chernobyl to reduce river pressure on the reactor site
- producing satellite imagery of contested sites for global mass-media, and demonstrating the rights and duties

of civilian artists to work with such imagery

- conceiving and testing an offshore rig for rapid growth of giant algae—to yield bio-gas
- drawing maps based on the world's saltwater systems, and not present-day nation states, to develop rational

policies for renewable resources and reverse environmental decline

- restoring water-flows into the Arabian/Persian Gulf, in order to bring back animal habitat
- designing and deploying lightweight, undershot waterwheels reducing dependency on river-blocking dams -organizing the efficient collection of weeds that accumulate in sluggish waters—to clear the water, and then

processing them in silaging and fermenting tanks for methane

- showing the parallels of the borderline layout of NY, CT, NJ and PA to that of Iraq, Iran, Kuwait and Saudi

Arabia, which provisioned the strategies of the eventual attack on Iraq in 2003

In every case, these projects were initially invited or commissioned for exhibition or publication by various institutions, including Documenta; the Venice Biennale; the Venice Architecture Biennale; Semiotext(e); the European Capital of Culture Ruhr 2010; Kunsthaus Kaufbeuren; the New Museum; Gallery Marc Jancou, London; U.S. Congress; Tokyo Metropolitan Government; Kunsthalle Graz; FRAC PACA, Marseilles; Grand Street magazine; the Sharjah Biennial; Heidelberg Kunstverein; the Contemporary Arts Center of Cincinnati; Museum Ludwig, Koln; Migros Museum, Zurich; Kunsthalle Wien; Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, Indiana; Royal Academy of Art, London and elsewhere.

However, none of the projects were realized to their necessary extent. One must understand the scope of Fend's ambitions. To show a proposal in a gallery, which is then elaborated in a Biennial, then acquired by an institution, and then reviewed in a magazine, yet isn't funded or allowed real world implementation, is for Fend a kind of failure. The works, their contained ideas and potentials, have ultimately been censored, stolen, discarded, filed as confidential and otherwise submerged because the projects, or Fend's role in them, were deemed Über die Grenze. But for Fend the very goal is just that: to be Über die Grenze, to use the supposed freedom and catalytic nature of the avant-garde to go beyond.

One might respond, Perhaps the art world isn't the most suitable context for Fend's efforts. If so, we must acknowledge the following: How very little do we ask, or even allow, from art?

Other well-known artists, such as Gordon Matta-Clark or Dennis Oppenheim, ended up with much of their intended work unrevealed or unbuilt. The artist is often devalued as unqualified to do anything real. Need he or she gain credentials and become an engineer, an architect, or a scientist? But what about the gaps between these disciplines? What about the scarcely imaginable projections of a society that defies logical and linear progression? Why does the state of art so often merely imply a passive reaction to past events?

Fend is in business: he wants the legal contract rights he has with many experts for collaborative efforts enforced; he wants the ability to exercise his constitutional rights and duties to the fullest extent; he wants to maintain his intellectual property. The specialization of disciplines causes rupture of such rights, with deadly

consequences for society's ability to cope with ecological and technological change. Fend wants to build his ideas, not disperse them as objects and gestures.

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Remarks about Fend:

Il fait la pornographie politique.

Paul Virilio, Paris, on French TV 1, 1985

What he does: real estate.

Leo Castelli, NY, on visiting a Fend exhibition at American Fine Arts, 1991

He's the Lawrence of Arabia of the Art World. Richard Prince, NY, in "Arts" Magazine, 1991

I like his work but don't like him.

Benjamin Buchloh, NY, as stated to Kate Glazer, who went on to marry Fend

If every time you read the name Damien Hirst in the newspaper it said Peter Fend instead, we wouldn't have this BP mess in the Gulf of Mexico. If Peter Fend were as famous as Jeff Koons, there would be no toxic nightmare in our oceans.

Rachel Harrison, NY, in "Spike" Magazine, Vienna, 2010

Peter Fend has, among other activities that transcend the usual artist's remit, published scientific papers and articles in *New Scientist*, produced press conferences at the UN and lecture on military analysis.

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As happens so often, the role of art in discussions of such gravity as nuclear power, decommission of weapons and negotiation of international borders must be called into question.

Sally O'Reilly, London, in "Art Monthly" Magazine, 2008

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-Peter Fend's first showed, suddenly, in a group exhibition at the Baxter Art Museum at Caltech in 1978.

-His first solo show was at the Peter Nadin Gallery, New York in 1979.

-In 1979 he co-formed The Offices of Fend, Fitzgibbon, Holzer, Nadin, Prince & Winters.

-The Offices expired in 1980 at which point Fend followed a lawyer's advice about collaboration and founded a

business corporation for art ideas, now called Ocean Earth. Other investors and participants were Coleen Fitzgibbon, Wolfgang Staehle, Taro Suzuki, Bill Dolson, Eve Vaterlaus, Jonathan Crary and Paul Sharits. Since the reincorporation of Ocean Earth in 2008, Heidi Mardon and Catherine Griffiths have become

significantly involved.

-Galerie Buchholz, Koln, published the first monograph of Fend's work in 1990.

-Fend has had solo exhibitions at Esther Schipper, Koln; Le Casa D'Arte, Milan; Christian Nagel, Berlin; Tanja

Grunnert, Koln; Anne de Villepoix, Paris; Marta Cervera, Madrid; Marc Jancou, London; Mars Gallery, Tokyo;

Nicola von Senger, Zurich; and with George Kargl in Vienna.

-From 1988-2004, Fend worked with Colin De Land/American Fine Arts, New York.