

INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIES OF PETER FEND

In order to market my ideas in the world, I established in 1980 a business corporation--not big, not major--named the Ocean Earth Construction and Development Corporation.

The objective was to develop ideas from art into a program of architecture, and to realize what artists often said they wanted to do but could not do given the then gallery-museum system.

The mandate was to produce (1) architectural components, assemblable into large architectural structures, and (2) media services, such as programs for TV.

Several events triggered this course of action: one, witnessing the rejection by John Gibson, then famous for commissioning artists' projects, of the large earthworks projects envisioned by several artists for the property of collector Maya Hoffman in the Camargue; second, hearing Walter De Maria describe how scientists had approached him about Lightning Field but, given his patronage system, nothing was done in response; third, hearing Vincent Scully, the architectural historian from Yale, give a special series of lectures showing the relationship between landscape architecture and regional planning, specifically of a region called the French nation-state, and then suggesting that new forms of regional definition and planning would arise from the earth art emerging in the 1960s.

With a business structure, operating separately from the gallery-museum system, we would convert ideas generated from art into technical inventions, into certain media-technical practices, into architectural technologies and procedures, which could be sold to large property-owners, to regional or national governments, to media companies, such as TV, to energy utilities with access to coastal resources, to planning agencies, to anyone in a position to use our ideas and realize them as built construction or regular mass-media practice.

One could think that this is just a business strategy. In art history, this had already been done by people like Leonardo da Vinci, in his famous letter to the Duke of Milan. It had also been proposed by De Maria, in his

proposal, published in Arte Povera, to have a construction company that could execute his ideas. The idea base we would utilize, and for which we have already made legal arrangements for access, such as co-copyright agreements and architectural development agreements, includes the work of: Dennis Oppenheim, Paul Sharits, Wendy Jacob, Gordon Matta-Clark, Heather Jansen, Wolfgang Staehle, Peter Fend. A prime strategy now is to greatly expand the number of these agreements. We focus now, for example, on certain works of older artists like Michael Heizer and Keith Sonnier, and on many younger artists with usable ideas who have not yet been corrupted and deflected from their original intentions by the gallery-museum system. An art catalog recently described me as "using" the ideas of other artists: indeed, but always with public attribution, usually with written contracts, sometimes with payment. The ideas of one artist were used in an exhibition regarding our work in Montenegro by outright buying her work, giving her artistic credit for the work, and including her in any art-historical documentation as one of the artistic producers in the project.

The chief danger to these arrangements comes from an art world which, in its hunger for name individuals, repeatedly tries to deny the company and celebrate only one or another person associated with it. Enforcing legal arrangements, including exclusivity contracts with third parties, has become a No. 1 challenge, given that the art world--notably the gallery-museum system--has very little respect for the law. I have become extremely discontent with presentations of work which should be attributed to Ocean Earth instead to, for example, "Peter Fend." Legal action against museums or galleries misrepresenting the company and its work product, particularly when such work product is co-copyrighted with a satellite-data agency, is now being prepared. What happened legally to Jeff Koons should be only a beginning for what happens throughout the art world, particularly against institutions like the Nationalgalerie Berlin.

The "international strategy," if any, is to coordinate operations in countries where we are respected enough for straightforward, profitable business contracts. Those contracts are being focused around the development of a hydrocarbon industry based on biomass, chiefly in the ocean, and monitored with satellites, radar and other remote-sensing instruments. The monitoring work could be fed into a resource-inventory program, hence a public-finance (tax) system, which encourages the development of property (as against incomes) for greater energy efficiency and thorough materials circulation. This would encourage, for

example, passive solar engineering, immediate wastes conversion into local energy, urban pyrolysis for conversion for agents which can be taken up by migratory animals traversing marshes. We are looking for client regions and states which want to develop terrain, the physical substrate, not just incomes.

To date, there has been a good reception in the scientific community worldwide. There has been a mixed reception in the diplomatic community, depending on the degree of orientation around the power structures of Big Oil and the West. There has been a confused and often counterproductive reception in the art world, at least the established art world. I speak not here of the many artists and architects who know and respect Ocean Earth. I speak of the institutions of the museum-gallery system, along with their adjuncts the critics, which with astonishing naivete work on behalf of existing industrial interests to block any serious consideration--either industrial or architectural--of ideas generated from art.

To date, aside from numerous contracts and news-release experiences with the mass media, most now blocked by counter-actions of security agencies (particularly in relation to such "sensitive" zones as the Gulf, Libya, Lebanon and Russia--the very zones which mass media would pay good money to see), we of Ocean Earth have received a respectable and contractually-useful hearing in the cultural, art-critical context of only these countries, in order:

- Yugoslavia (including Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia, Slovenia, the relations having started before the war, and involving large investments and architectural engineering projects)
- Denmark, through the Museum Louisiana
- Iceland, through the positive response, now under 5 year license contract, of artist Inga Svala Thorsdottir

Nowhere else has the company Ocean Earth been given a legally-correct acknowledgement by institutions of culture. This may someday change, as we are also responding to requests from Djibouti, Brazil and the Caribbean, but meantime we are noticing that three countries are inviting us to work in line with our corporate mandate, in line with our eight sectors of research and development (only one of which is remote

The degree of success of this strategy rests on concrete achievements, specific inventions, workable technologies. It rests, for example, on there actually being a successful growth and harvesting program with ocean algae, in accordance with Beuys' concepts of Fat Corner, in a site such as Iceland. Let us see what gets done, not what is just being talked about.

STANCE OF PETER FEND TOWARDS ART

Peter Fend is not an artist.

Not if by that is meant someone fundamentally preoccupied with painting, drawing or sculpture.

Peter Fend is an architect, if by that is meant someone fundamentally preoccupied with ways of combining developments in painting, drawing or sculpture to yield new practices of spatial organization, new ways of handling the space in which we live.

The stance of Peter Fend towards art, although at first intuitive and sensual, is subsequently, at end, functional. If Fend is overwhelmed by pleasurable or excited feelings from certain art or architectural works, he will then try to find ways of reliving and building on those feelings, through efforts at architectural realization.

These efforts can even be as small in scale as an exhibition in a gallery or the room of a museum. We say here "room" to distinguish how Fend deals with an exhibition, and its space, from how a painter might deal with it. The making of objects is not of much interest to Fend, as he is not an artist but rather an architect. Hence he makes models, scenarios, mise-en-scene, plans, architectural drawings... with the intention of eventually making real landscapes, real buildings, even real cities.

A question will be how far Fend proceeds from art, the source of ideas and images, to architecture, a generally public practice.

This exhibition in Vienna is part of answering the question