

WOMAN

DEER

FOR

VISIONS OF
THE NEAR FUTURE

URBAN EXTRUSION

PETER FEND

Urban Extrusion is a presentation of stages of Fend's research towards an Earthwork with a real social impact. It is based on a process in which alpha-keratin tissues, which may be extruded as feathers or scales, are dropped into feeding grounds, near the mouths of rivers in order to encourage fish and bird populations in the wild. Through this research Fend also aims to prove that the alpha-keratins can be grown on hydrocarbons derived from urban wastes.

Peter Fend has exhibited widely since the late 1970s, his practice involves collaboration with artists, architects, scientists, and scholars, in order to bring their creative energies to bear on serious environmental issues. He seeks practical solutions to large-scale problems, and works to spark discussion amongst policy-makers, corporations and individuals. He founded the Ocean Earth Construction and Development Corporation, which develops and promotes alternative energy sources, and uses satellite imaging to monitor and analyse global ecological and geopolitical hot-spots.

QUESTIONNAIRE

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How did you meet your collaborator?

PF The project for *Wonderful* is not a collaboration of an artist with a scientist, at least not in the sense of collaboration as a confluence of intellectual efforts towards a common, or at least jointly held, intellectual property. In some projects I undertake, there has been a collaboration of artists and scientists, this occurs especially with satellite monitoring and offshore biomass schemes. But in this project, the source of ideas is the artist Dennis Oppenheim, and my role, as one with architectural ambitions, is to see if the ideas can be translated into built habitat, a functional daily reality. A co-copyright agreement was made with Dennis Oppenheim in 1988, allowing me to test any of his manifested ideas for function. I wrote to him in early 1976, saying that I saw enormous practical implications in his work and met him soon after – we have been in touch ever since. A scientist engaged in this project is Dr. Steve Hughes, now of the ESRC Centre for Genomics in Society at the University of Exeter. He acts as an advisor and referee, ensuring that we don't make grievous mistakes and don't overlook certain vital facts.

What was the nature of your conversations?

PF Oppenheim recognizes that I might be on to something important, and has praised me for my efforts, but does not wish to collaborate or even get involved inside of what I am thinking and doing.

In what ways were your working methodologies similar or different?

PF He's an artist, following his intuitions and emotions, and I am an architect, trying to use art ideas that I'd like to become primary

elements of the built environment.

Has working with someone in a different discipline made a change to your work?

PF With artists, yes. I have become an exhibitor also, playing the art game. With scientists much less, competitive concerns have led me to publish in scientific conferences and journals, to make sure that my artist colleague and I get intellectual property credit – not the scientists.

Who should decide the future and in what way?

PF Business entrepreneurs should decide the future, by selling products and services that people happily purchase. The entrepreneurs can be artists, scientists, lawyers, actors, anything. In sum, the market should decide the future. Nowadays, however, the market is undermined by meddling governments. For example, a conversion to renewable energy is retarded grossly by government subsidies for non-renewable energy, in the form of military and diplomatic adventures culminating in a so-called war on terror, in mineral depletion allowances, in an income tax system that encourages consumption rather than conservation, and in not imposing taxes or other charges for the damage measurably done by non-renewable energy. Old-fashioned industrial interests have gained control of government machinery, denying the movements of a free market.

What would you like to be doing in twenty years time?

PF I would like to have accomplished my objectives in assuring clean air and water, with offshore and upland constructions that restore these essentials, and would like then to be engaged in designing and building physically exciting habitats above terrain rich in wild animal species.

What is your favourite vision of the near future?

PF In North America, a return to the partitioning of territory according to the Treaty of Paris of 1763, settling a war between England and France. This in turn allows for comprehensive land-use policies to restore, in each basin, the original, pre-Columbian numbers of what the book *Water: A Natural History* says are essential to ecological strength on the continent: eighty million buffalo, two hundred and fifty million beaver, billions of prairie dogs and millions of alligators. Human settlements would be well off the flatlands, up on pilotis (stilts) or set into mountainsides, allowing wild animals to proliferate. A similar vision, with different species, applies to the other parts of the world ruined by European colonization, notably South America, Africa, Australasia, Central and Southern Asia. As for Europe, the vision is that it be partitioned into regional – sea basins, ending its imperialist and ecologically damaging rampage of the past five hundred years.

