

ESSEX STREET

Peter Fend
REBELS ARE REASONABLE
September 7 – October 26, 2014

CAPTIONS BELOW

1.

2.

3.

Countries are in question again. Remember: every country has a flag: every flag represents, in high abstraction, that country's place. But each place, as we learned from Earth Art and Duchamp's Urinal, has a slope to something more essential to us all: the Sea. We revise the flags in relation to the Sea.

In response to tribulations with Documenta, the artist decided in 1992, when invited a second time, to replace the official flags of the three-month public event with his own. These flags would not be without reason. But they would also be challenging the current power setups. Some thought of them as a joke. No: they could become programs for future evolution of every site re-flagged. Recall that a flag is specific to a place, so it becomes a highly-abstracted landscape painting of that place. What is to be done, place by place, to address planet problems? The first flags identified programs for Germany, the EU, the Northern Hemisphere Americas, Asia and the Southern Hemisphere. Next came flags for the UN, centered on the South Pole and not the North, and Switzerland, purchased by Zurich City's wastewater (water runoff) administration. In 2007, in another spurt, flags were produced for: Libya, Cuba, Poland, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, South Africa, China. The last flag was flown large size outdoors in Shanghai—and remains an enduring proposal for that country's now-controversial expansion into the Sea.

These flags, in 2014, present solutions, place by place, to global problems.

NOT PRESENTED, BUT ALWAYS POSSIBLE, IS THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES.

This flag is a landscape-painting. It represents, in very abstract form, the 13 original colonies, as stripes, and the current number of states, as stars. Each has a representative location. I have applied my usual Duchamp-Urinal model to the US, to identify some 60 or so catchments into which waters and nutrients flow. To register this as a US flag requires a very-small modification: instead of 50 stars, place 60, or maybe 63. Probably no one but a US citizen, indoctrinated in the US flag from childhood, could have imagined the works here shown.

4.

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5.

Peter Fend

COSTA RICA, 2014

UV inkjet print on aluminum

12 x 18 inches

As the World Cup showed, this country straddling the Middle-American isthmus has clout. Geopolitical scrutiny explains why: it's a darling of US companies, US intelligence agencies, US think tanks. Its leaders go on to run UN agencies. It's a model for the developing world. Or is it? Let's organize the country into its highlands, all above 1500' elevation, in red, extending along the Isthmus into Panama, and into its lowlands, receiving soil runoff, in white. Then let's assess the impact on vast water bodies. This includes Lake Managua, at one end, and the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean, on both flanks. Major dam projects might disturb the interface between red and white. Systematizing the scrutiny with satellite data, integrated with elevation data, could induce even greater improvements in a tropical habitat.

6.

Peter Fend

HAITI, 2014

UV inkjet print on aluminum

12 x 18 inches

Aid programs to Haiti usually fail, with a few exceptions, such as that of doctors from Cuba. One could better begin with assessment of its soil. Materially, this soil starts in the red area, above sea level, then is cropped, burned and washed away, with residues flowing into the blue area, below sea level. SAVE YOUR SOIL, I say. Collect it from the sea, in the biological forms of seaweed and fish. I've discussed this for decades with Haitian-Americans in NY (even Jean-Michel Basquiat; days before he died, he asked for a Haiti map; I produced it long after). If one concentrates more on the land-sea relation, and more on what flows down from that mountain ridge on the right to the territorial waters, then one can be more "humane" with the people living there.

7.

Peter Fend

BELARUS, 2014

UV inkjet print on aluminum

12 x 18 inches

Most of the damage from Chernobyl impacts this country: we don't know yet the consequences in Evolution. The territory also hosts some of the most species-rich wilderness in Europe. Given that contaminants flow downstream, we can assess the country in its two main slopes: north, to the Baltic, heavily forested, green; south, to the Black Sea, swamplier, with peat, red. The traditional Belarus decoration remains. Can traditional Belarus ecology be organized thus? If so, Europe could possess what Italian politician Gian Mario Spacca advocates, as do I: "macro-regione" for the Baltic Sea basin and the Black Sea basin, with implications for Russia and Ukraine. (Photographs made 1996, but by a Russian photographer, as visa for Fend in Moscow was denied.)

8.

Peter Fend

CHAD, 2014

UV inkjet print on aluminum

12 x 18 inches

Boko Haram, Darfur rebels, invaders (1983) and refugees (2014) from Libya, and the Islamist guerrillas that take refuge in the Sahara's highest mountain, the Tibesti, can all coordinate their struggles on the basin of Africa's largest inland salt sea, Lake Chad. Zones of strife are red, the sun-bleached desert yellow, and the lake, to which all drains, blue. Intensive harvesting of algae and fish in the lake could restore eco-cycles throughout this concavity; earthworks

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uphill could stabilize groundwater flow. A legal structure already exists: the Commission du Bassin du Lac Tchad. Separate this area from its embattled neighbors, defining it as a post-colonial regional-sea basin under UN Environment Program rules. (Research launched with satellite surveys of northern border during Libyan invasion, 1983.)

9.

Peter Fend

ISIS, 2014

UV inkjet print on aluminum

12 x 18 inches

Downstream from Iran and Turkey, in the mid-section of the Tigris-Euphrates Basin, many rivers converge on Baghdad. The catchment, part of Mesopotamia, of land between rivers, could become verdant. Over time, the colors here could change to the green and beige in Islamic garden painting. I was asked for an "Islamic solution" to another war in Iraq, in 1985, by a diplomat from the Islamic Republic of Iran. Knowing about the terrain crises, I volunteered, "Islamic Garden." Such a response could be made to ISIS: stay in this frame, "cultiver vos jardin," and we will expand the State Department's river-basin technical/scientific exchange program to set up a parallel anti-drought program with our drought-damaged river, the Colorado. Progress could be extended into neighboring lands, in both hemispheres. (Parallel first shown, 2002; segmented thus, Sharjah Biennial, 2007.)

10.

Peter Fend

KOREA, 2014

UV inkjet print on aluminum

12 x 18 inches

Traditionally, Korea has divided into two slopes: to the Eastern Sea (Sea of Japan) and the Western Sea (Yellow Sea). Do this again and we see the yin-yang image that all of Korea honors. In a new division comes a path beyond now-unsustainable north-south division: any peninsula cut across the middle begets conflict. The US has a responsibility here, extending back to when it "gave" Korea to Japan in 1905. Now it can promote research done with the Japanese (California) and Chinese (NY State) on post-fossil hydrocarbon industry, ideally suited for the two rocky, irregular coasts. The "Asian pivot" of the US does not need to be just military. It could be economic, accelerating what has already been stared by Korean scientists. (Analysis done for a North Korea-themed project in duel with Morten Traavik, 2012.)

11.

Peter Fend

JAMAICA, 2014

UV inkjet print on aluminum

12 x 18 inches

Great runners are bred there, and a huge musical force bursts out from there, but--due to Western development and mining--the main environmental problems are said to involve water quality and waste disposal. Mapping of Jamaica into its four main coasts began when the head of the North America office of the UN Environment Program, from Jamaica, asked me to map the entire Caribbean: 1982. Can such mapping extend into national policy? Social cohesion is strong; such a goal can be reached.

12.

Peter Fend

ALGERIA, 2014

UV inkjet print on aluminum

12 x 18 inches

In 1985, the Algerian Ambassador to France, after three meetings with us to study our satellite observations of the Iran-Iraq war, revealing vast earthworks similar to US earth art but designed by Russians, asked if we could propose similar vast earthworks to restore the Sahara Desert to what it was long ago: animal-rich savannah. This led to detailed proposals for the Grand Erg Oriental (into Tunisia) and Grand Erg Occidental (through Mali). Following through became tough with the civil war. We could do that now. In the east, we could remove soil runoff in sub-sea-level sinks to gradually restore what Herodotus described as a giant Gulf of Triton. In the west, we can restore inland salt seas in what's now Mauritania, working to open up flows to the Atlantic. Nutrients from the northern coast get harvested and

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turned to biofuel or food in the Gulf of Gabes, vindicating the ambitions of Carthage. (Research since 1985, Paris; first shown in 1994, Vienna, with sequels in Pescara and Milan, and "Arab Springs" at White Box, NY, 2011.)

13.

Peter Fend

RUSSIA, 2014

UV inkjet print on aluminum

12 x 18 inches

Russia is so huge that it's frequently open to encroachments: from Europe, from China and Japan, from the arid South. Let it re-structure along two main ridges: the Urals, separating Asia from Europe, and the Lomonosov Ridge bisecting the Arctic Ocean, highlighted by Putin with an undersea flag-planting in 2007. Also, the ridgeline practice, already a custom, can distinguish Russia from the desert basins of Central Asia; the UN Secretary General stresses that those regions need their own management. With the regions shown here, concentrate on the soil flowing down to the sea, including added nutrients, including tundra meltoff, to reap huge amounts of biomass offshore. Russia is rich in ocean life It need not be dependent on fossil fuels. It has prepared for a post-petroleum future, perhaps by chance, in deciding to make methane its main transport fuel. (This three-part division answered a request of a Russian securities trader for a "restructuring," 2014.)

14.

Peter Fend

UNITED KINGDOM, 2014

UV inkjet print on aluminum

12 x 18 inches

Possibilities of Scotland separating from England (with what meaning?) leave the Union Jack out of date. Maintain the general form, but draw on deeper reserves of history and meaning: the Isle of Man as a center, especially of ocean industry; the area of Hadrian's Wall, farthest limit of the Roman Empire, as an ancestral divide between Rome and the savage; England dominant, as the main cross, in line with Nelson's signal at Trafalgar: "England expects every man to do his duty." The duty is to control and dominate in the "waves": blue. Now, emerging ocean industries, as described in New Scientist in July, become an all-British aim, in a new union. (We could begin flying such a flag at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, in a cooperation with a native of Glasgow, where we discuss a deal called TEST WORKS for scientific and engineering testing of the designs in well-known 20th-century artworks, such as Spiral Jetty, Lightning Field, Dry Wells, Feather Ridge.)

15.

16.

Peter Fend

OCEAN COMES TO US, 2014

Video

3 minutes, 23 seconds (looped)

17.

Peter Fend

OCEAN COMES TO US, 2014

Video

3 minutes, 23 seconds (looped)

18.

19.

20.

21.

TREASON, 2014

ESSEX STREET

Vinyl decal on aluminum sign
24 x 36 inches

22.

Peter Fend

SOCIAL CHANGE, 2014

Vinyl decal on aluminum sign
36 x 24 inches

23.

Peter Fend

PERFECTLY LEGAL, 2014

Vinyl decal on aluminum sign
36 x 24 inches

24.

Peter Fend

SAVE YOUR SOIL, 2014

Vinyl decal on aluminum sign
36 x 24 inches

25.

Peter Fend

YOUR PROBLEMS, 2014

Vinyl decal on aluminum sign
36 x 24 inches

26.

Peter Fend

TO END UP IN TROUBLE, 2014

Vinyl decal on aluminum sign
24 x 36 inches

27.

Peter Fend

REBELS ARE REASONABLE, 2014

Vinyl decal on aluminum sign
24 x 36 inches

28.

Peter Fend

EXERCISE THE CONSTITUTION, 2014

Vinyl decal on aluminum sign
24 x 36 inches

29.

Peter Fend

FUNCTIONAL EARTHWORKS, 2014

Vinyl decal on aluminum sign
36 x 24 inches

30.

Peter Fend

TERROR / OIL AND GAS, 2014

ESSEX STREET

Vinyl decal on aluminum sign
24 x 36 inches

31.
Peter Fend
HISTORY MADE BY ARTISTS, 2014
Vinyl decal on aluminum sign
36 x 24 inches

32.
Peter Fend
LET THE MARKETS DECIDE!, 2014
Vinyl decal on aluminum sign
24 x 36 inches

33.
Peter Fend
DO WHAT MUST BE DONE, 2014
Vinyl decal on aluminum sign
36 x 24 inches

34.
Peter Fend
LET THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE THERE, 2014
Vinyl decal on aluminum sign
24 x 36 inches

35.
Peter Fend
IT MAY LOOK GOOD, 2014
Vinyl decal on aluminum sign
24 x 36 inches

36.