

May 17, 2016

Peter Fend aims not to make art, but to make architecture from art. Most architecture is made from prior architecture. Fend presumes to make entirely new architecture, being a combination of cutting-edge art in the past century, showing what material culture could be, with new science. The shows listed or documented below were attempts to promote his architectural practice. In many cases, they allowed him to research and develop the architecture. But the shows were more scenarios for a future than a display of "objets d'art." They were advertising displays for what he wants to achieve.

One may ask, then, why he works with seaweed, or water-wheels, or earthworks, or satellite data. The answer pops up when one recognizes, as did Alberti, the fundamental, even universal, responsibilities of architecture: to provide for a habitation, a settled area, the technical deployments for (1) clean air, (2) living waters, (3) circulatory space, or ease of movement, (4) defense. So, the seaweed schemes assure clean-burning fuel, the earthworks, waterwheels, and feathers from waste, assure living, fish-rich waters, the megastructures and other structural designs, assure cities that facilitate movement, and the satellite monitoring plus basin mapping monitor, define and help defend what appear, from history, to be defendable regions.

None of this work was "intended." Peter Fend did not say, I want to be a great architect. He just happened to be thinking and scheming this way. So, he analyzed the city's chemical exchanges with a drawing method mimicked from Sol Lewitt; Gordon Matta-Clark liked this very much, and asked him to join in starting a new, post-anarchitecture firm. So, he imagined in a night how earthworks from De Maria, Heizer, Oppenheim and Smithson could be assembled in a sequence according to Joseph Beuys' "Chief of the Hunters" role, and he was asked to exhibit such plans, more rigorously, at Caltech; the student newspaper called him the only artist in the show, which included Lewitt, to deal with reality. So, he was inspired by Paul Sharits to develop a new color-language using reality-based spectral data from satellites; after a show at The Kitchen, plus Chase Manhattan Plaza, he was selling such service to TV companies and international newspapers worldwide. So, he wondered how structures could mimic the body, especially in its desires for erotic self-extension, and this led to ultra-lightweight structures being designed pursuant to actions by Carolee Schneemann, Richard le Ricolais, Matta-Clark and the Russian Constructivists. So far, not one project or structure intended has been built. The shows and efforts here documented constituted what might best be called a beginning.

The word "beginning" is used because, through time, Fend has discovered that what he discovered or displayed, time and again, maybe always, certainly a lot, turned out to be "correct." But human custom is very resistant. And the art world, in which he has operated, concentrates on collecting objects and images, not on seeking any real-world realization therefrom. Given the orientation of the art world, away from assuming any responsibility for its images and thoughts, away from thinking of building structures based on Matta-Clark, Burden, Oppenheim, Schneemann, Horn, or Beuys, away from reality, towards reliquary, Fend has been deemed to be making "art" almost exclusively with his signs. When he blurted out "GLOBAL WARMING" behind an Exxon fuel station, for example, a prominent collector, long aware of him, said, with relief, Finally, he made some art. So, for much of the art world now, "art" is a form of personal expression and personal opinion. Fend wants more, being by nature (if not training) an architect: he wants art, or display of images and things, as a form of PROJECT PLAN. Fend's biggest aim, throughout, is high-profile propaganda: SEE THIS, ADAPT IT TO YOUR PLACE, THEN BUILD.

Peter Fend is grateful to the Contemporary Art Group and the Essex Street Gallery for working so hard to assure, at the least, a hard record of what has been shown and published. He acknowledges that he constantly chomps on the bit, seeking to convert what is shown into construction. He also concedes that reviewing this archiving effort taxes his body/spirit very much, and he cannot delve into what happened without becoming ill. So, less disturbing ways shall be found for allowing him to verify the facts of what is here collected. But it is a very good and honorable beginning.

Probably, given the slowness of change ensuing from art, we will not know what impact all this "beginning" has until the end of the 21st century.

-Peter Fend