

# Mousse Magazine

Mousse 74

## Architect of the Lifeworld

Peter Fend

BY Dora Budor



“Rather than speak of a practice let’s look at what appears to be most necessary to achieve, and how I can work to make that happen, in the evolution of the species.” Thus reads a sentence from Peter Fend’s proclamation titled “IMPERATIVES—WHAT WE MUST DO.” Rendered in his signature Courier typeface and dated October 16, 2020, this austere raison d’être was on hand in Fend’s most recent exhibition, *BIRDS REIGN* (2020–21) at Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin.

The twenty-first century saw the rate of movement of material from construction and agricultural activity surpass, by an order of ten, that of all geological processes, and Fend recognizes the significant role of the architect (like-wise, describing himself as one) in this monumental shifting and reorganization.<sup>1</sup> His vision of the “world as a living earthwork”<sup>2</sup> necessitates that architects’ and urbanists’ jobs neither begin nor end with building edifices—“one fault is overdesign, and consequently over-building.”<sup>3</sup> On the contrary, they must incorporate entire physical systems of air, land, water, and the sets of relations that transverse them. Following Lauren Berlant’s phrasing of infrastructure as “the lifeworld of the structure [...] defined by the movement or patterning of social form,” if I would to make a name for what exactly Fend does, I think *architect of the lifeworld* would be pretty accurate.<sup>4</sup>

Like many political currents of the 1960s, the ecology movement was a reaction to both the successes and the failures of modernism. Pushing against the romantic notion of Nature as something apart from and unspoiled by humans, a number of artists started engaging with outdoor sites, oftentimes wastelands and industrially impacted landscapes, forming the movement that would become known as Land art. From it, a critical strain of environmental and ecologically oriented art advanced, and kept on underscoring the effects of social and political entanglements with nature. Spurred by the increasing toxicity of air and water and the soaring prices of oil—plus the effects of environmental poisons already described in Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962)—1972 was hallmarked by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, the first major meeting on international environmental issues. This was the climate from which Peter Fend’s lifelong project emerged—the reflection that something *must* be done, and that earthworks could be utilized to a higher means, or “applied,” leading to technological innovation and betterment of living conditions across the planet.

Born in 1950 in Columbus, Ohio, Fend grew up near General Electric’s research headquarters and close to the Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base, which early on worked on providing aerial reconnaissance and mapping services, even serving for a while as a center for gathering intelligence on a global scale. After finishing English and History studies at Carleton College in Minnesota, Fend engaged in regional planning around the Midwest, built ski lifts in Colorado, worked briefly at the World Bank in Washington, DC, and spent some time in the wilderness. “Making a last attempt to conform,” he considered applying to law school, then moved to New York and worked night shifts at the Fulton Fish Market.<sup>5</sup> Finding the academic route neither compelling nor forward-looking enough, but enthralled by Vincent Scully’s lecture at Columbia University “Garden & Fortress: The Shape of France,” he wrote the essay “Agriculture Ends, Art

Takes Over” (1976), in which he proposed a return to pre-domestication land use, a hunter-gatherer lifestyle, and the restoration of pre-Neolithic multitudes of wildlife.<sup>6</sup> Impassioned letters to both Scully and Dennis Oppenheim on a return to “the wild” followed.

All of this led, under Oppenheim’s auspices, to various introductions in New York’s art world and working for Gordon Matta-Clark, for whom he researched aerostats, bridge engineering, and more; they worked closely until Matta-Clark’s death in 1978. The concept of Anarchitecture—the proposition of using architecture against itself in order to wildly expand its methodologies and influence—would provide a framework for Fend’s wielding of the architectural language in terms of both aesthetics and megastructural application. Described as “practicing architecture of the whole habitat—with the atmosphere, the waters, the entire technical and physical apparatus by which a city lives and breathes,” megastructures position the architect as responsible for stewarding an entire territory’s well-being, accounting for not only its human inhabitants but an ecology of all fauna and flora there. For Fend, the territory as a topic underlines everything—“who controls it, what is done with it, and how it gets used”—becoming a crux where seemingly disparate issues of ecology and military converge.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout his career, Fend has collaborated with other artists, architects, and scientists, which formalized in manifold entities—Ocean Earth Development Corporation, Space Force, NEWS ROOM, GLOBAL FEED, Rapid Response, Swiss Defense—allowing for experimentation with different production methods, upset hierarchies, and distribution outside of art channels and in the real world. Collaborative Projects began in 1977, when a group of artists (including Coleen Fitzgibbon, Jenny Holzer, Tom Otterness, Kiki Smith, and Robin Winters) started producing collective exhibitions and television content for community cable TV, out of which the spinoff The Offices of Fend, Fitzgibbon, Holzer, Nadin, Prince & Winters emerged. Under Holzer’s concept of “Pleasure/Function,” standing for work that aligns with what gives pleasure, they attempted to sell “art-based thought and practice to non-art clients [...] working with client’s needs.”<sup>8</sup> They advised 112 Greene Street to change its name to White Columns as their first job, followed by various other jobs for Los Angeles Public Library, UC Irvine, civil engineers, a marine development corporation, public radio hosts and a balloonist. The pleasure might have also arrived from incitement of a collaborative modus operandi, and detection of a pertinent space for their practices in real life—a desire shared by numerous artists and collectives of that period. It was a result of a reciprocal interest from the managerial and entrepreneurial sphere; the business sector saw potential to model its shifting practices on artists’ “immaterial labor,” and toward which artists would use their newly found allure to gain entry into spheres outside of art.<sup>9</sup>

The dedication to “militant research” required involvement in constellations of intersecting groups in order to access and co-form knowledge.<sup>10</sup> Hence, this period was demarcated by an increasing number of eco-artist groups and partnerships, including Newton and Helen Mayer Harrison, Critical Art Ensemble (often collaborating with Claire Pentecost), CLUI (Center for Land Use Interpretation), and the environmental artists who are mostly known by their individual names but in actuality

operated in close connection or collaboratively, such as Hans Haacke, Agnes Denes, Joseph Beuys, Alan Sonfist, Viet Ngo, Bonny Beaumont, Patricia Johnson, and herman de vries, to name a few. Summed up under the mantra “Develop action, thought and desires by proliferation, juxtaposition and disjunction, and not by subdivision and pyramidal hierarchization. [...] Difference over uniformity, flows over unities, mobile arrangements over systems,” their artistic aspiration was to radically reimagine the way the world and its resources are governed, distributed, and protected.<sup>11</sup>

Equally dedicated to “militant research” and radical pedagogy, Fend spearheaded multifarious alliances. Taking a lawyer friend’s recommendation that The Offices’ work might be further-reaching as well as better protected under a legal, for-profit corporation, Ocean Earth Construction and Development Corporation was founded in 1980. Specifically conceived as an instrument for implementing the goals of the environmental art movement and pushing earthworks beyond purely aesthetic engagement, this association of artists, architects, and scientists shifted according to the needs of each project, wherever it took place around the world, but Fend remained a central figure throughout. As their primary aim—a result of a meeting between Fend, the avant-garde filmmaker Paul Sharits, and CNN camerawoman Coleen Fitzgibbon at Magoos’ restaurant in New York to discuss the confluences of lowest cost and maximum “believability”—they set out to acquire satellite data. “We, the artists, would do visual communication from space, for the world, and we would bring to the world a visual government, what Beuys was calling ‘direct democracy.’”<sup>12</sup> With Taro Suzuki and Wolfgang Staehle, a particular subsidiary of Ocean Earth shaped up, functioning as a sort of a civilian space militia named Space Force. *Art of the State*, their first exhibition, was held at The Kitchen, New York, in 1982, and it was outlined by the manifesto “Television Government,” flagged by the motto “When Space Force Looks, the World Will See.”

From that point, Ocean Earth swiftly started to acquire data from the commercial satellite enterprises Landsat and EROS under the “open skies” policy. Running it through state-of-the-art processing labs, differently colored spectral bands would materialize as critical geopolitical events, which they would broadcast, along with selling their reportage to news organizations and other media outlets. They were the first to locate the British fleets in the Falklands preparing to attack Argentina in 1982, and selling that footage to the NBC made them pioneers in citizen-run investigative reporting. This move likewise blazed the trail for organizations such as Global Rev and WikiLeaks as well as human rights research groups like Forensic Architecture. With an incredible persistence and ability to sift through multicolored grains of data and decipher complex visual phenomena, Ocean Earth continued with an outpour of news leaks, published in international outlets such as *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *International Herald Tribune*, *L’Express*, *Observer*, *Sunday Times*, *London Times*, and *New Scientist*. Among the reports was a disclosure of Iraq’s plans to use waterway construction as a weapon in the Persian Gulf (1988); the improper stabilization and grounding procedures that led to the Chernobyl reactor disaster (1986); detection of a few Soviet submarine bases (1986); and demonstration of excessive fertilizer use and pollutant runoff causing wild microalgae blooms in the North Sea (1988).

Artists’ growing interest in remote sensing technology and satellite imagery, which operates on a global, even interplanetary scale, marked an important shift from the observational techniques attuned to human perception in modern (art) history—a jump from the human eye into the all-seeing eyes of satellites, first enabled by the military use of aerial photography in the 1930s. The turn from three-point perspective (which posits the spectator as the unique center of the world)<sup>13</sup> to overview field studies revealed the layers and complexity of “slow violence” and the fluctuations of economy, transportation, and climate.<sup>14</sup> Members of Ocean Earth shared diverse interests in surveilling and mapping; as artists, they were already “in the business of being suspicious.”<sup>15</sup> What for the photographers in the group became a live mode of abstraction provided through space imaging—Sharits called it a “true abstract cinema”—the others saw as a chance to be *inside* history. Not to read the news, but to *be* the news. For Fend, this gateway was twofold: first, it was crucial as a credible platform for his ideas regarding ecology and land use to feature on the global policy agenda, and second, the analysis of satellite material seemed the most adequate, abstract form of contemporary landscape painting, which he would follow by sea basin mapping and the flag works.

Fend continued with the site monitoring and international exhibitions with Ocean Earth, whose activities at this point were mostly happening in Europe, but he also was exhibiting individually at a steady pace. *IRON LUNG: A ROOM DEFINED NOT BY ITS WALLS BUT BY A PUMP; WEALTH OF BASINS, DEATH OF NATIONS*; and *World Space: Political Economies after Oil* (all 1979) were his first three solo projects. They took place at Peter Nadin Gallery, a short-lived but influential art space at 84 West Broadway, New York, which was run by the Offices’ partner and painter Peter Nadin and artist Christopher D’Arcangelo. For his last show there, Fend borrowed an iron lung from Bellevue Hospital and turned it on inside the loft, to “breathe” the room. Already in this early work, a radical inquiry into the relation of the body to the spatial realm was presented, as if the architectural boundary must be superseded by the conditions of existence in the space: the circulation of air and the capability to breathe. “Space ceases to be a given, seen from inside. It becomes an inside as visceral as our bodies.”<sup>16</sup> (I can’t help but think of this exhibition in relation to a recent show by Park McArthur, a fellow ESSEX STREET / Maxwell Graham, New York artist whose last show, *Edition One and Two Fantasies* [2020], required us to think about space through our ability to exist in it by inverting the room into the inside of an incentive spirometer, a medical device that measures lung capacity.)

In 1988 Fend joined the roster of Colin de Land’s American Fine Arts in New York, which he continued showing with until 2004 (a year after de Land’s death), counting eight solo exhibitions. The first, *BODY* (1988) by Ocean Earth, focused on satellite monitoring of Iraq’s manipulation of fluvial geomorphology in the Persian Gulf conflict. This was followed by Fend’s project *Completion of the War* (1989), where instead of a political reading of the world, a topographical one was proposed—an idea he had pursued earlier in *WEALTH OF BASINS, DEATH OF NATIONS* at Peter Nadin Gallery and *Global System* (1982) at Chase Manhattan Plaza, New York. This decades-spanning project drew from an economic doctrine called physiocracy, which aims for national borders to be reshaped

according to their concomitant sea basins, so as to form ecologically sustainable units for resource management and taxation. The maps on the walls, familiar and bewildering at the same time, presented the centripetal lands around the drainage basins of former Central America, Italy, Germany, Japan, Russia, and Libya. Reliance on mineral fuels and lack of nutritive resources were replaced by food and energy self-sufficiency, ergo ending the need for conflicts and ensuring the maintenance of absorption and return in the ecosystem. Two years later, in 1992, a continuation of this endeavor was shown at documenta IX, Kassel, in which official flags were replaced with basin-flags of the EU, Germany, Asia, the Americas, and the Southern Hemisphere. No wonder Fend is so interested in water streams and sea changes; his view of the world at large is a view of flows, which at moments are either opened up and routed to benefit and feed many, or dammed to aggregate power for a few. To this end, questions of representation of territory, and its reorganization and extraction via the sovereign state, feature in the majority of his work.

*NEWS ROOM NEW YORK* (1990) was his third show at American Fine Arts (simultaneously with *NEWS ROOM AMSTERDAM* at the Museum Fodor, Amsterdam). The series has had iterations in several cities: Frankfurt (Institut für Neue Medien / Pavilion Varisella, 1990), Stockholm (Galerie Nordenstad-Skarstedt, 1991), Paris (Galerie des Archives, 1993), Copenhagen (with Globe, 1994), and Graz (Steirischer Herbst, 1998). It built upon the work of Space Force, only from the ground, using comparative dissection of news and footage from diverse news outlets. For example, one *NEWS ROOM AMSTERDAM* report included study of the blast that occurred on October 7, 1991, at the Presidential Palace in Zagreb from the viewpoints of the Croatian versus Yugoslav media. This blast (which I sensed as a kid and remember to this day as a bombing) in their analysis was disclosed as a coup attempted by the far right via ground attack, instead of an aircraft attack by the Yugoslav Air Force, as the Croatian government framed it to rally support. Some *NEWS ROOM* presentations featured maps displaying geopolitical situations confronting other maps demonstrating ecological emergencies, pinning the two into an interdependent relation that links property possession with property degradation.

Attuned to the Beuysian legacy of cohabitating with coyotes, the planting of seven thousand oaks, and attempts to restore degraded marshes in the Zuider Zee basin, Fend's ongoing call for the return to wildness imagines a post-agricultural condition, something like the re-wilded world of self-sufficient scavenger communities of John Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids* (1951), minus the killer plants. This post-agricultural world is quite unlike the one we know and live in today. Overgrown with vegetation, wetlands proliferate and wildlife prospers, state borders cease to exist, human predators hunt and grow to eat, and garbage and shit are transformed into energy.

The question is, how would one reach such a state? Fend's proposals pile up. Working to provide alternative sources of food and energy by replacing land-based agriculture with farming of the oceans (such as using kelp for food and energy and algae to filter contaminants, waste conversion via fungi and yeasts, raising of herds of wild animals on open range lands, et cetera) would in return drastically diminish pollution, and hence reduce its negative effects on humans (such as the all-too-familiar epidemics, cancers, and immunological diseases) and over-

all environmental health (for which mineral fuels, such as natural gas and uranium, must be replaced by non-polluting energy sources). A strong warning against artificial fertilizers is issued, given their depletion of soils that over time renders them infertile, and against animal domestication and farming practices that lead to weakening of ecological diversity, which is essential to human as well as animal immunology (a fact with which renowned evolutionary biologist Rob Wallace agrees), and for wildlife restoration. "Agriculture, dead-end means, comes to an end as we conceive of the wilderness as a packaging plant."<sup>17</sup>

Fend is a man of words, but he always proposes concrete courses of action, whether they come in the form of maps, diagrams, site reports pasted on foam-core boards, topographic models, industrial prototypes, technological schemes, client presentations, or email blasts to CCed friends and acquaintances. They all outline solutions. These range from transition to non-polluting and life-preserving industries for the whole Ruhrgebiet, as in *Duisburg Policies* (1980), which includes elevation of habitation and office megastructures into the air to allow life below to flourish; to architecture, as in *Prototypes for Windbreak-Canopy for City, Supported by Exhaust Heat Ducted from Buildings* (1979); to semi-submersible offshore seaweed-harvesting rigs to produce non-polluting methane gas, designed with naval architect Marc Lombard (*Offshore Soil Rig* [1993]); to a circular system of waste converted into keratin via yeasts, and then into artificial feathers, which would then remediate ecosystems.

That last project, titled *Urban Extrusion*, was first presented at Arnolfini, Bristol, UK, in 2004 and then again in Fend's most recent exhibition, *BIRDS REIGN*. The expansive installation reads almost as an essay film. In the sequencing of *Word Stacks* as title cards, photo snaps from site reports, a progression of the project is tracked through microcosmic and aerial views.<sup>18</sup> Enlargements of protein extrusions, samples of manufactured keratin film by a New Zealand company, aerial views of "activated" marshes, and a video of the artist himself throwing feathers into water all surround a massive wall completely covered in feathers—a soft, cumulous presence that appears almost to unbuild itself. In the viscous connectivity of the threads that Fend tangles between disparate places and substances, a view of the world emerges that is not only transnational, but also trans-species and trans-corporeal.<sup>19</sup> To be a body or a system—especially in the case of autopoietic entities—is to *live from* the world. And not only live from the world, but *learn* from the world, in which for instance taking part in a mimetic dance with the migratory birds and insects, mapping their flight pathways and growth systems is utilized to naturally reorganize ours.

The problem with detrimental effects of climate change—which we consume affectively and with a rush of an apocalyptic movie in the daily deluge of news, but still have a problem mobilizing a real sense of—is to realize the intensity with which our bodies, and our time, are mutually implicated in environmental alterations. Rapid Response, a group that Fend and collaborators Christina Cobb, Julia Fischer, and William Meyer began in 1999, was an attempt at that intensity; their goal was to form a real "post-petroleum" gas station that would serve alternative fuels like methane and biogas in order to curb climate change (*RAPID: Post-Petroleum Gas Stations, Launching a Brand*, American Fine Arts [2000]). It was launched by an urban action, which sought a fissure in the narra-

tive flow of the urban landscape through subversion of the language of big oil. Installed for the first time in the outdoor back space of Nikolai Fine Art in New York, directly adjacent to an Exxon station, the blue and red lightboxes visually blended into the floating lights of the petrol station signage, spelling out *Global Warming/Global Terror* (1999). Extending the petrol station beyond its blueprint and into the street, they served as an alerting alteration of the symbols elevated by Ed Ruscha and fellow US industrial landscape painters, recontextualizing the territory and the spatiality of the landscape once again in a completely novel way.

The reasons and conditions preventing Fend's projects' construction have been much discussed, including in the artist's own "Why New Worlds Conceived by Artists Do Not Get Built" some twenty years into his practice.<sup>20</sup> In his statement, art is positioned as a mutation, or an adaptation of that which is known, which in its successful form shall co-function with innovation in other fields (hence its ultimate use as a means of survival). In times of historical crisis such as war, pandemics, or other life-threatening events, a relay occurs that sets forth an extension of art practice into the worlds of industry, construction, medicine, and military engineering, allowing for the collaboration of art innovation and science, for which Fend offers multiple historical examples. The recent decades of paralysis that have confined art strictly to domain of "culture," allowing it only a function of entertainment and commodity, or in the other variant as a political folly ("commentary"), distracts us from its progressive set of imaginings, intuitions, and tools for survival, Fend warns.

Certainly, there is a codependency of intelligence and survival, and this would be my takeaway from the above. Unlike extraction from the land and endless exploitation of Earth's resources, one thing doesn't get exhausted, and that is the exponential capacity of knowledge itself. As artist Stephan Dilleuth succinctly notes: "The more knowledge is used, the more knowledge is produced. Its dissemination increases its fertility."<sup>21</sup> Moreover, it points to the vital connection between *commons* as a shared resource, sustained communities, and *common-ing* as an act or process. And, moreover, if one supposes it to be a strategy, they can follow the Fend chant: "SEE THIS, ADAPT IT TO YOUR PLACE, THEN BUILD."<sup>22</sup> Remember, there is a reason why in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), the most dangerous item to possess is a book.

- 1 See for instance Bruce H. Wilkinson, "Humans as Geologic Agents: A Deep-Time Perspective," *Geology* 33, no. 3 (March 2005): 161–64.
- 2 Jonathan Crary, "Peter Fend's Global Architecture," *Arts Magazine* 55 (June 1981): 152–53.
- 3 "Fend Statement for Kaap, Wagemans and Velthoven," December 6, 1989, part of the materials for *NEWS ROOM NEW YORK / NEWS ROOM AMSTERDAM*.
- 4 Lauren Berlant, "The Commons: Infrastructures for Troubling Times," *Environment and Planning D Society and Space* 34, no. 3 (2016): 393.
- 5 From Peter Fend's Timeline, <http://inquest.us/peter-fend/>.
- 6 In lectures such as "Garden & Fortress: The Shape of France" Scully argued that recent Land art and Conceptual art contained the germs of a radically new approach to gardens (or land), fortresses (or military defense systems), and, extendedly, regional planning.
- 7 David Joselit and Rachel Harrison, "A Conversation with Peter Fend," *October* 125 (Summer 2008): 130.
- 8 Joselit and Harrison, "A Conversation with Peter Fend," 118.
- 9 Leah Pires, "Pleasure/Function: Aesthetic Services circa 1980," *Brand New Art & Commodity in the 1980s*, ed. Gianni Jetzer, (New York: Rizzoli Electa, 2018), 62–73, covers these confluences extensively, drawing from Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello's *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (London, New York: Verso Books, 2005).
- 10 The art historian Tom Holert characterizes artistic research practices that seek to build "autonomous publics" and "spheres of emancipation" in terms of "militant research." Tom Holert, "Artistic Research: Anatomy of an Ascent," *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 82 (June 2011): 55.
- 11 Michel Foucault, preface to *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Viking, 1977), xiii.
- 12 Joselit and Harrison, "A Conversation with Peter Fend," 120.
- 13 John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 1972).
- 14 Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).
- 15 Joselit and Harrison, "A Conversation with Peter Fend," 127.
- 16 "Ocean Earth: 1980 bis heute," published by Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum, Graz; K-raum Daxer, Munich (Stuttgart: Oktagon-Verlag, 1994), 4.
- 17 "Ocean Earth: 1980 bis heute," 8.
- 18 *Word Stacks* is a series the artist started in the 1970s featuring lines of poetry, organized according to the spatial logic of each line containing the same number of characters in Courier typeface, hence forming perfect columns as they get longer.
- 19 "Transcorporeality is, in other words, an ontological orientation that expresses the imbrication of human and non-human natures, writes Stacy Alaimo." Astrida Neimanis and Rachel Loewen Walker, "'Weathering': Climate Change and the 'Thick Time' of Transcorporeality," *Hypatia* 29, no. 3 (Summer 2014): 558–75.
- 20 Caroline Busta, "Bureaucracy to Ploughshares / On Peter Fend at ESSEX STREET," *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 85 (March 2012): 207–10; Daniel Keller, "Informers / On Peter Fend at Barbara Weiss and Oracle, Berlin," *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 101 (March 2016): 175–77.
- 21 Stephan Dilleuth, "The Hard Way to Enlightenment," *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 82 (June 2011): 94.
- 22 From Peter Fend, "Statement," May 17, 2016, <https://www.contemporaryartquarterly.com/artist/peter-fend/4164-statement>.

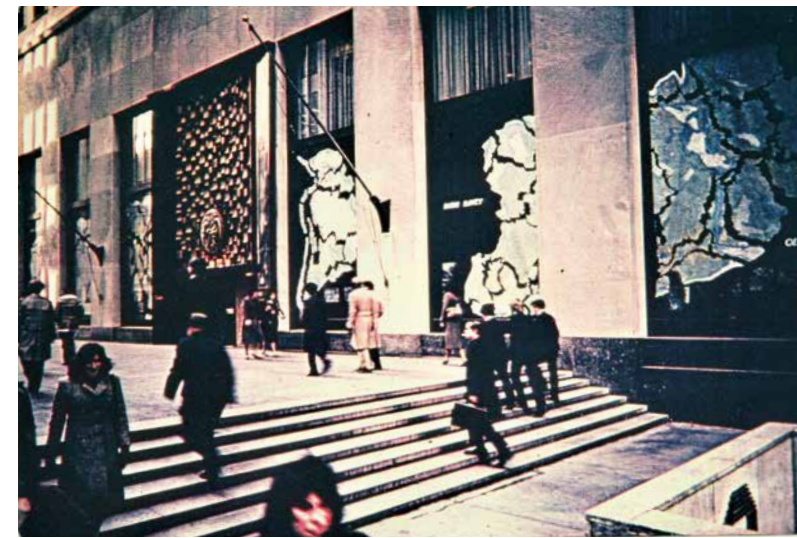








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The present political and economic division of space does not satisfy our needs. We work towards a reorganization of existing elements into more functional configurations.

POLITICAL ECONOMIES AFTER OIL

3N 84 West Broadway, NY, NY 10007, Tel (212) 732-1153, Open Friday and Saturday, 1-6 PM, Opening December 7, 6 PM.

 This is a large black rectangular panel with white text and a map. At the top, there is a paragraph of text. Below it is a white outline map of the continents of North and South America. Underneath the map, the text 'POLITICAL ECONOMIES AFTER OIL' is written in all caps. At the bottom of the panel, there is a block of text providing an address, phone number, and opening hours.

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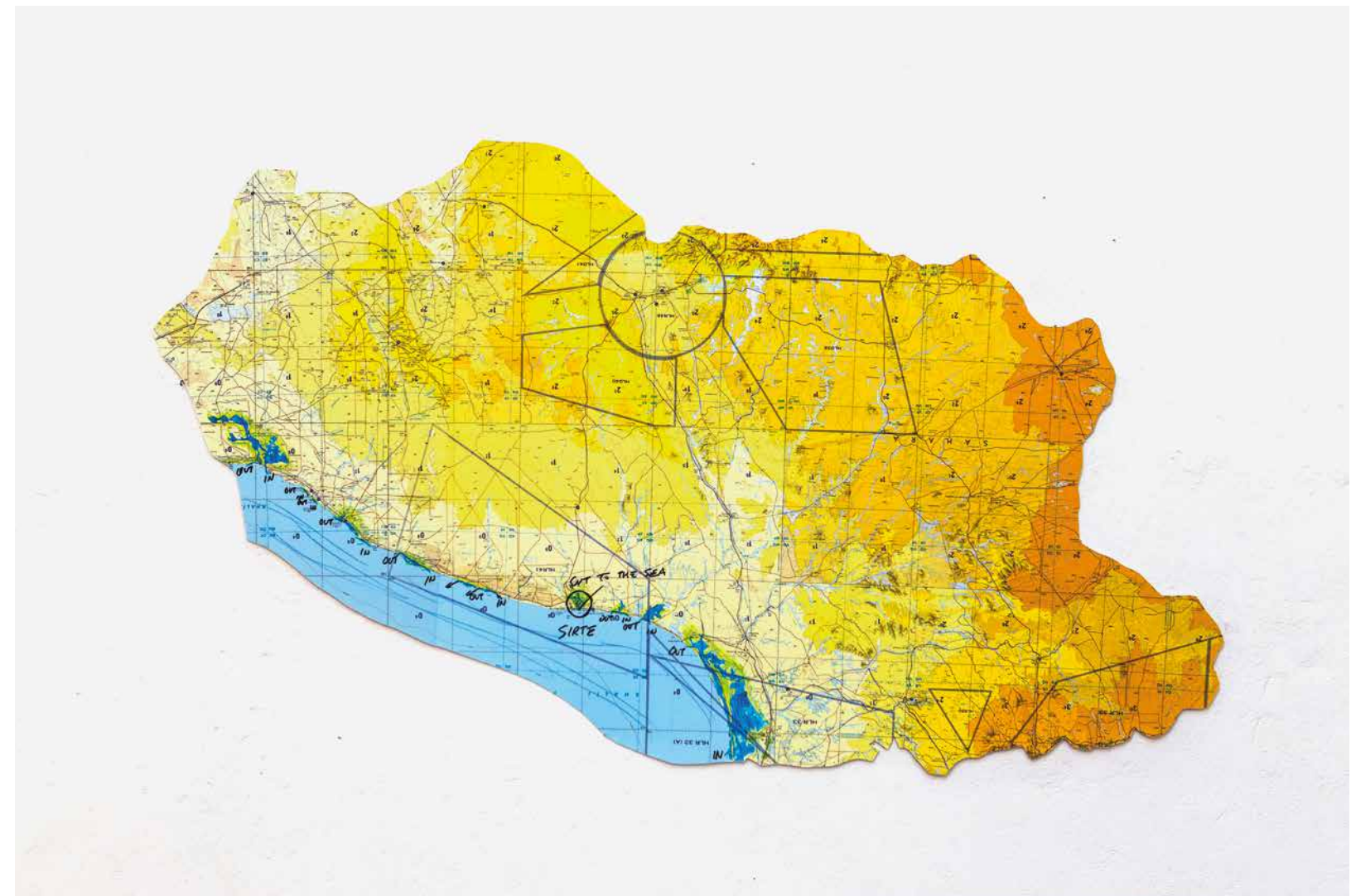
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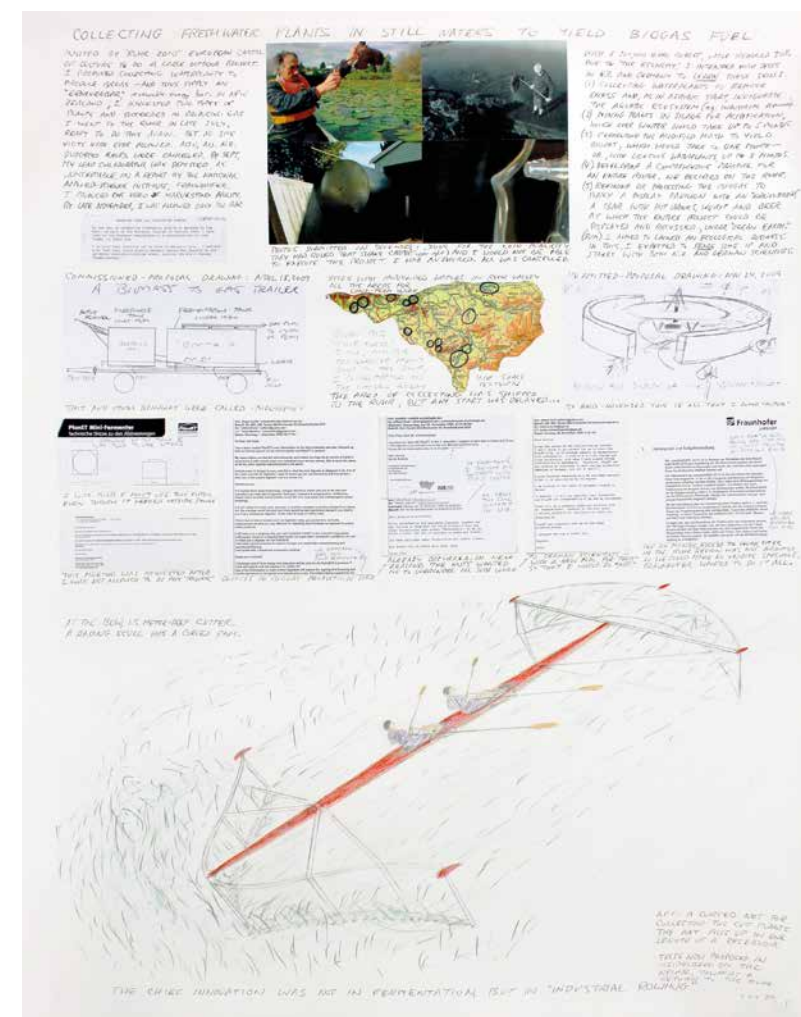
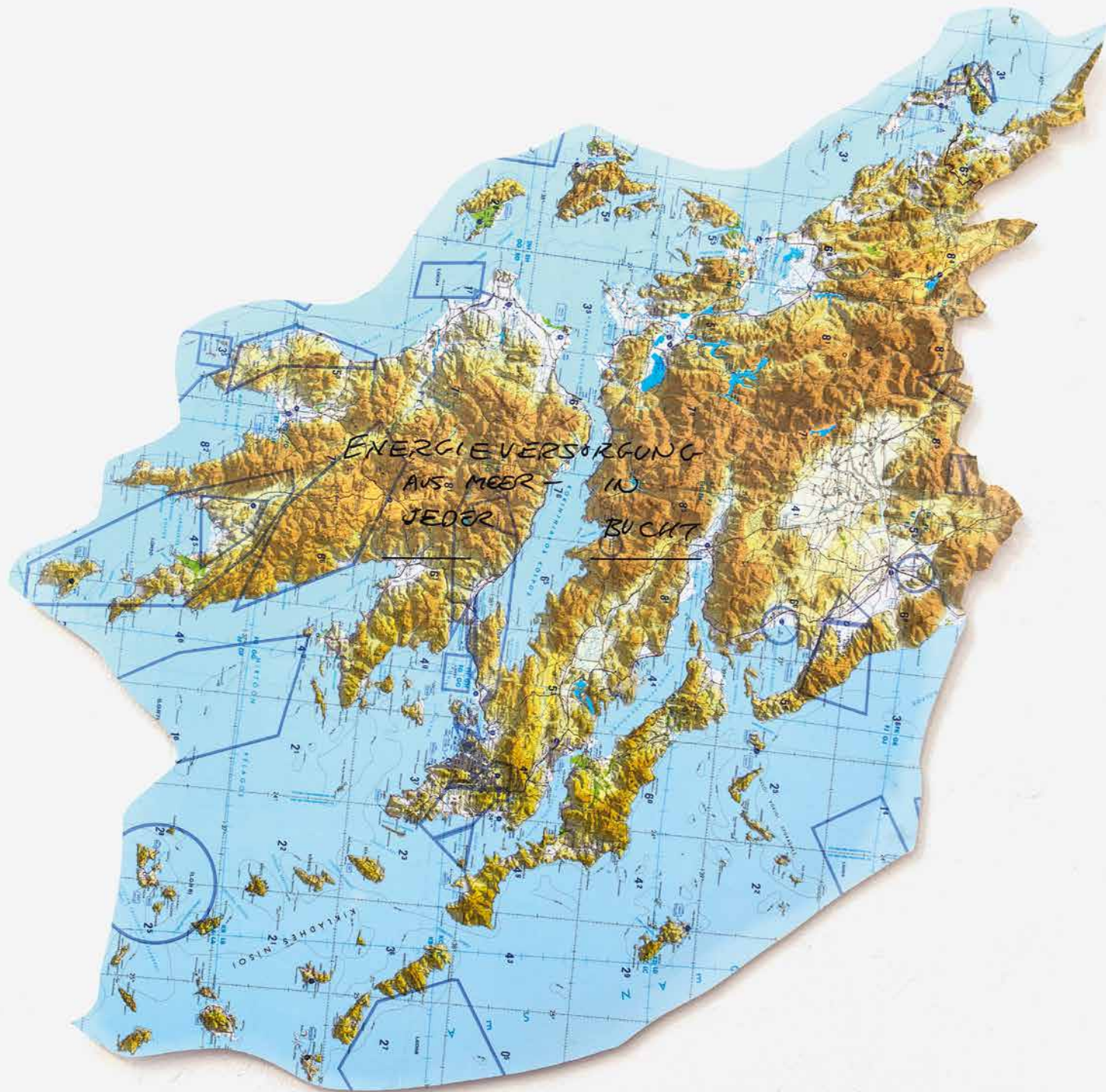
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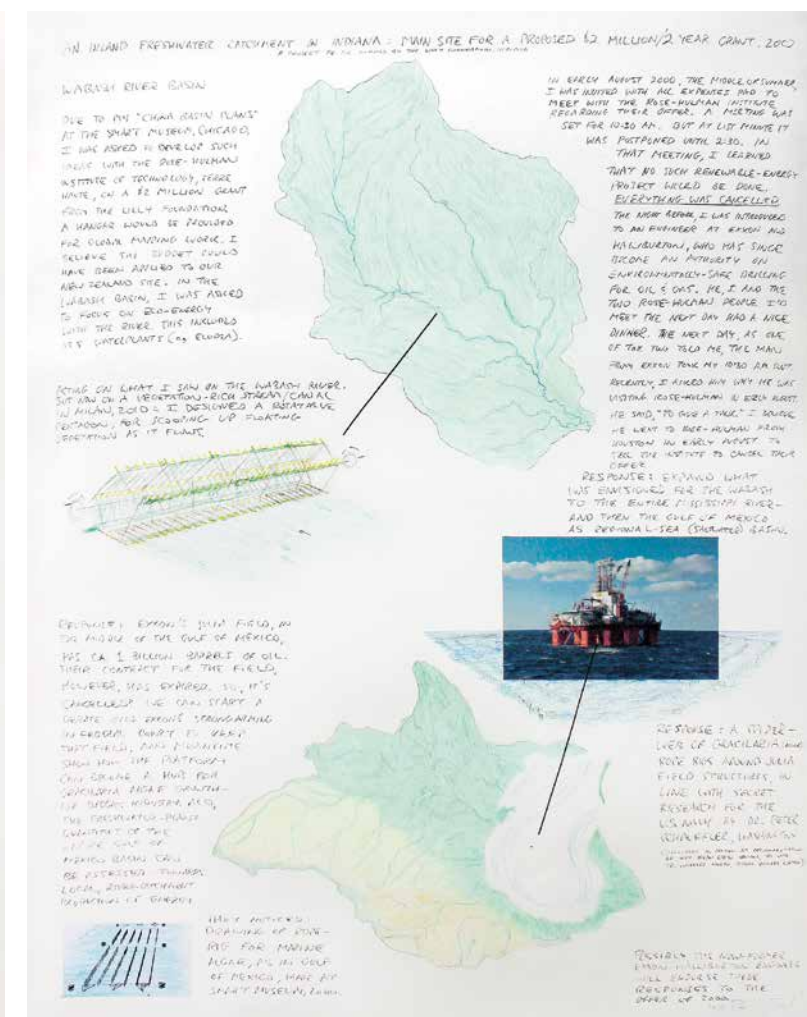






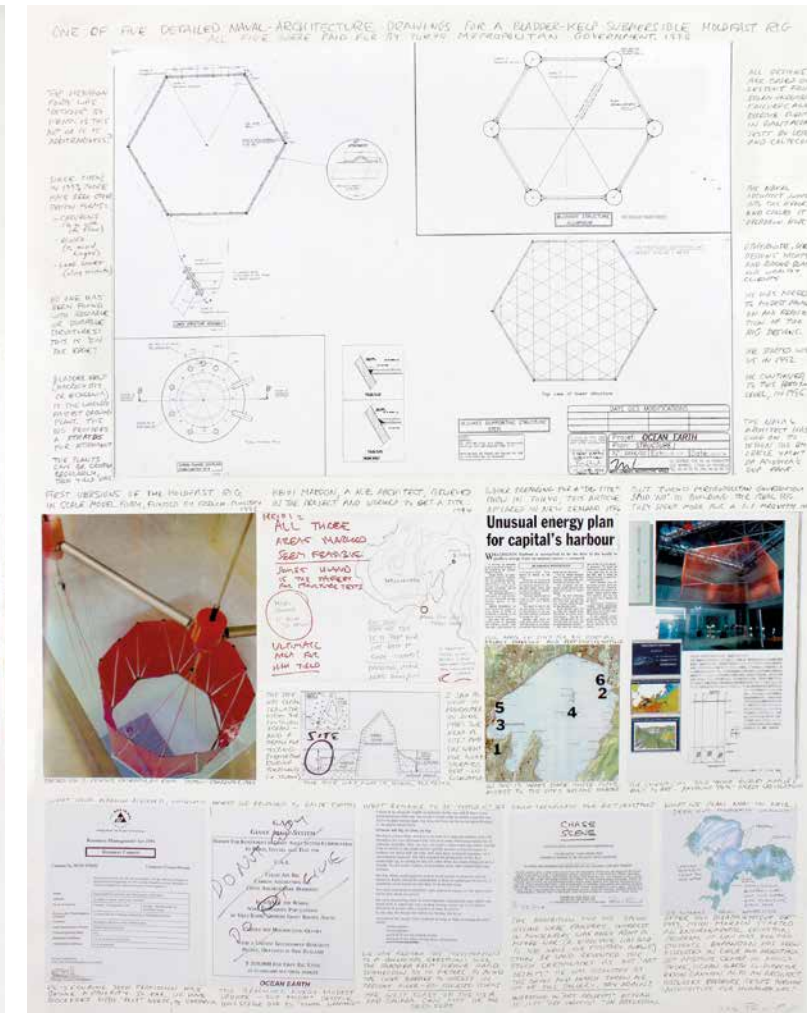
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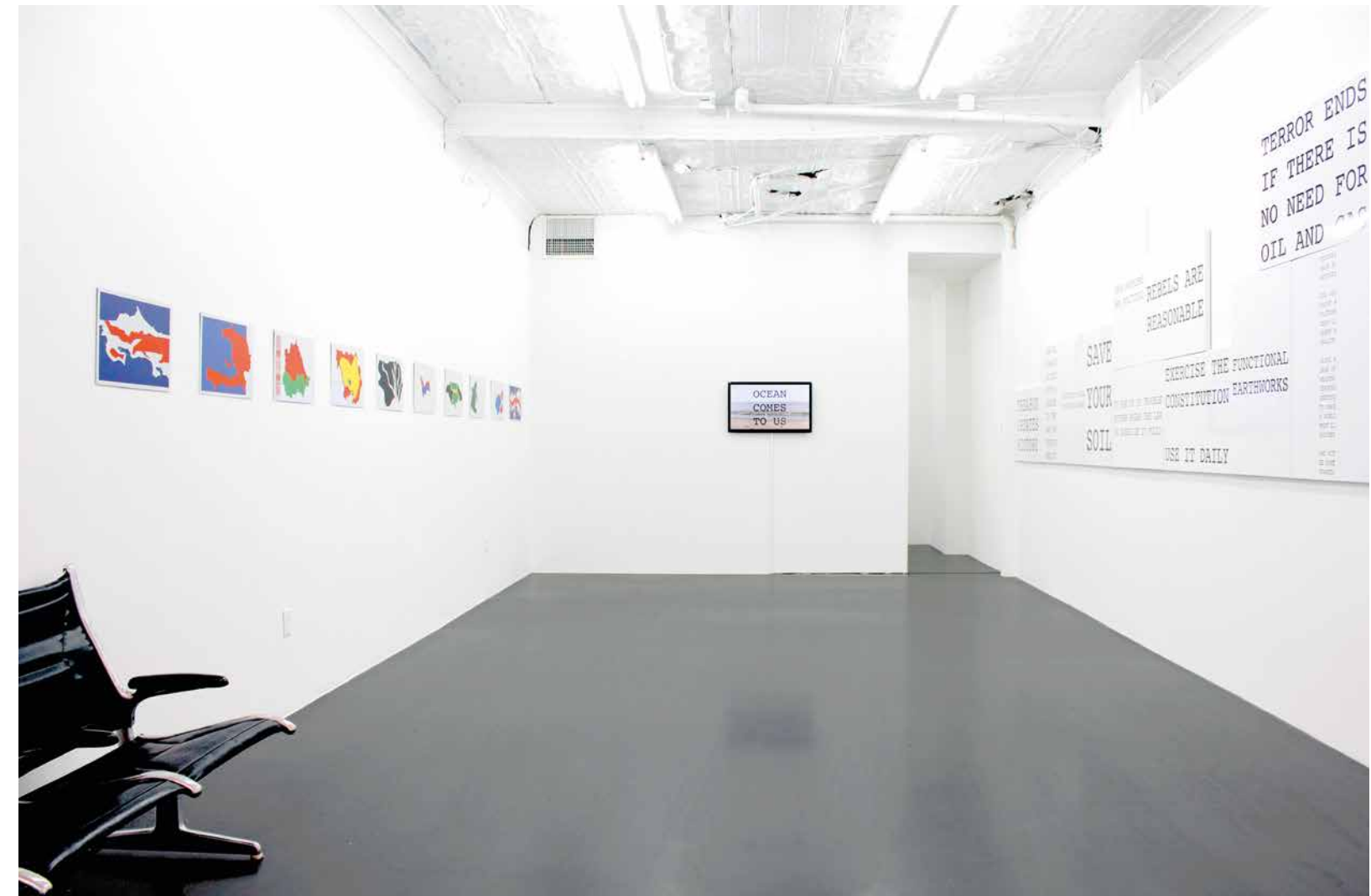
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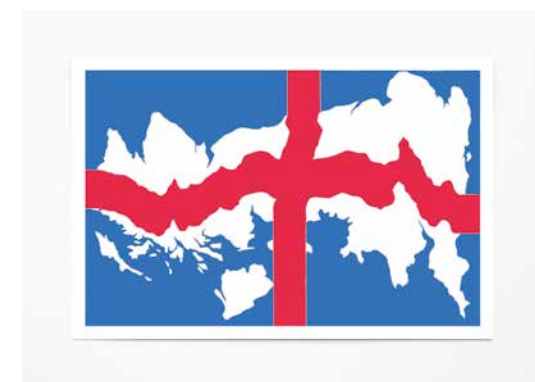




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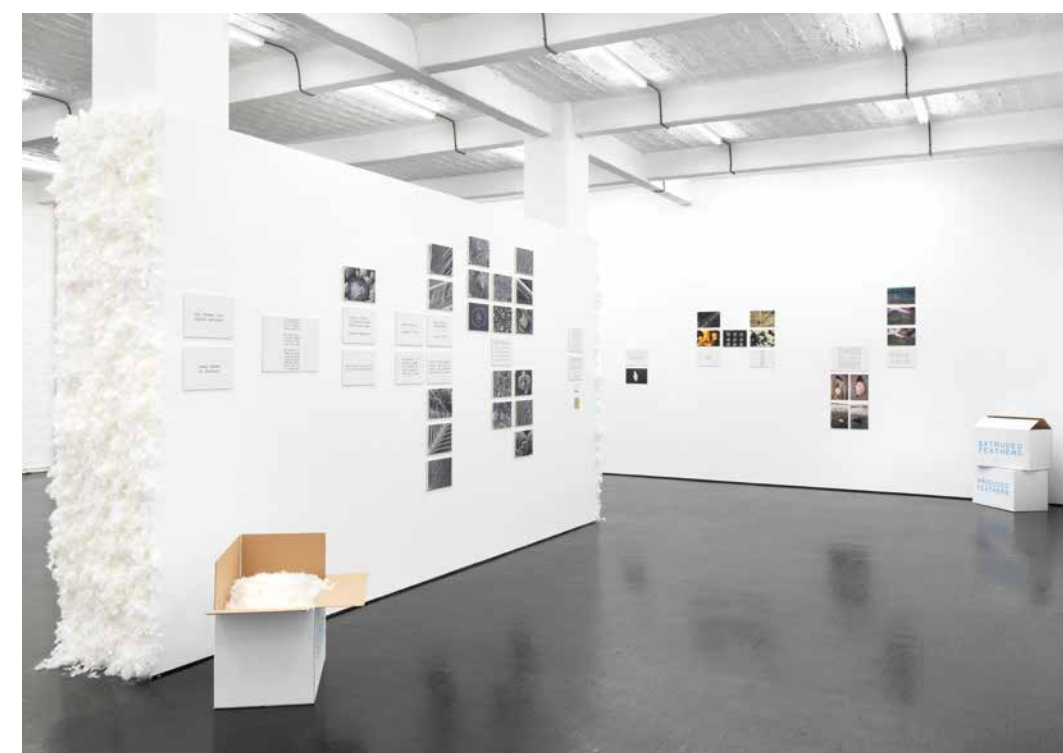


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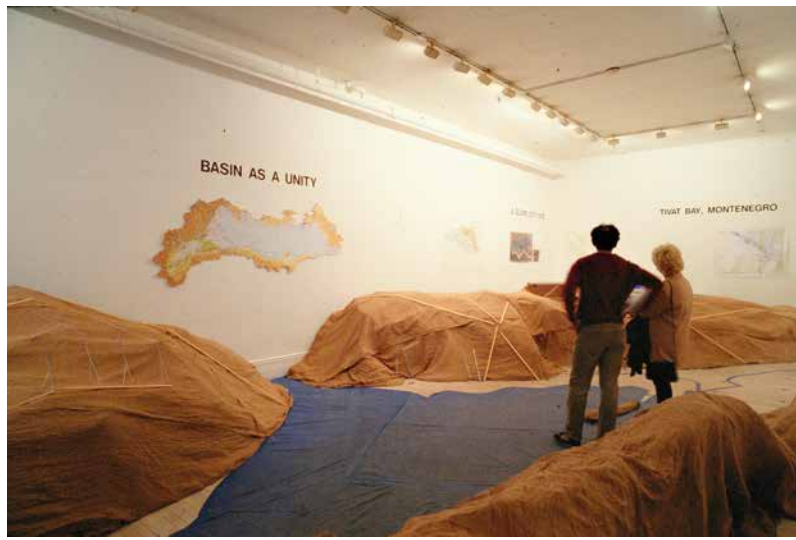




HOW DO YOU RESTORE TO 'MOSS, MUSHPLATS AND WHITES' AS EYES THE BOLD OF THE SURFACE OF A 'FARM', WHAT THE IN GOVERNMENT SAYS NOW IS VISUAL, EXCEPT USING AN ALIEN THAT CAN ENTER THE FOOD CHAIN INSTEAD OF THE WEIRD COMPACT OF 'BIOLOGICAL' FOR AGRICULTURE







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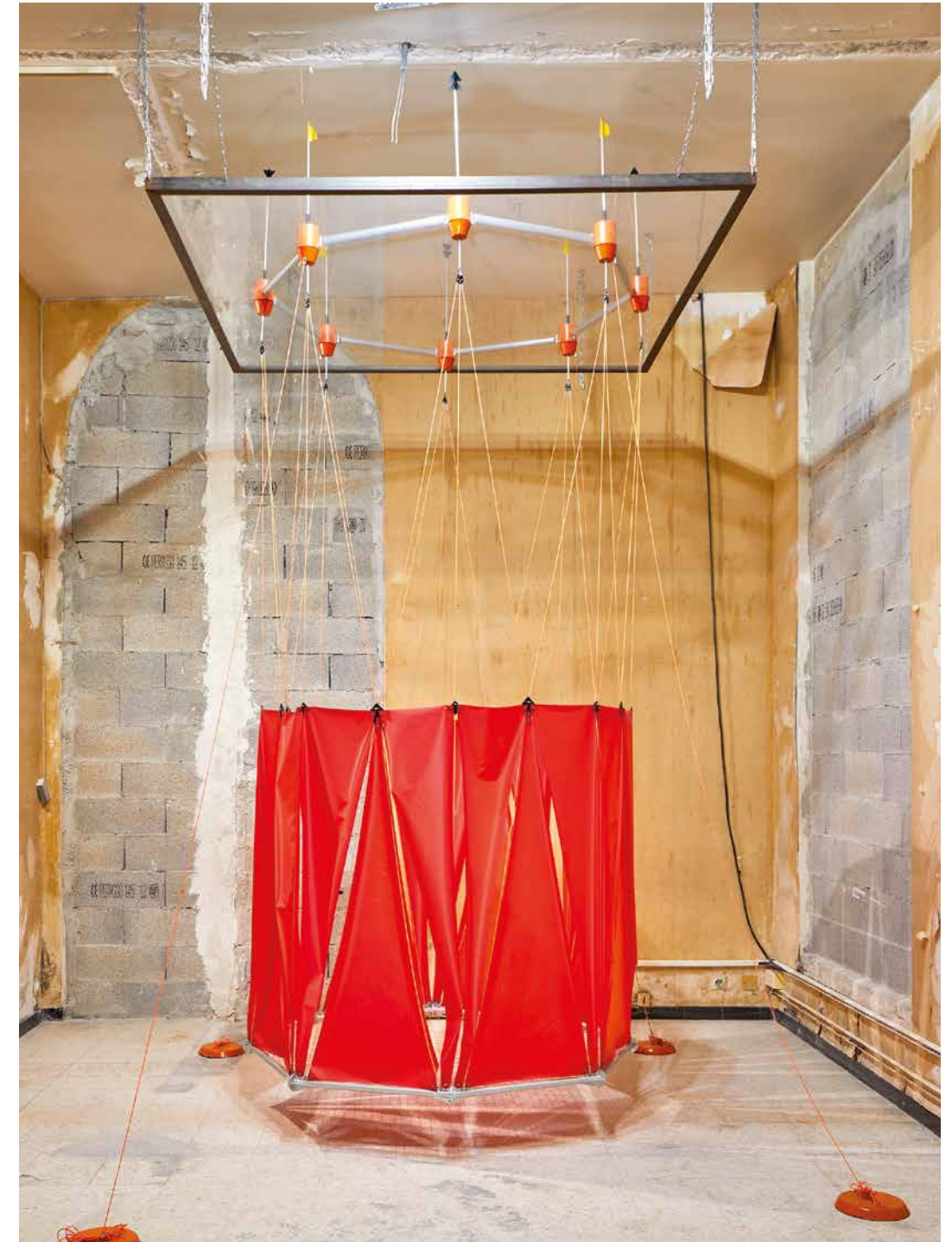
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Peter Fend  
March 1976

Agriculture Ends, Art Takes Over

Agriculture will destroy us, along with other high species. Art sets forth means to survival. We can imitate the art in order to thrive.

Agriculture simplifies biological systems. Yet complex and highly organized species such as humans flourish over time--to evolve beyond present structures--only if the surrounding biological systems are complex and highly-organized. A variety of higher animals must accompany our kind. But agricultural monopolization of land, along with the sprawling of human settlements, has cleared away complex surroundings throughout the world. Our context gives way.

Agriculture now removes the essentials of life. It depletes soil, slows down cycling of water, reduces the number and variety of nutrient-transporting animals, speeds up runoffs of trace elements, and reduces the rates of oxygenation.

To cite specifics. Simplified tillage, turning up the soil, induces saltification of the surface, with consequent loss of plant habitat. Artificial fertilizers, required now in virtually all agricultural regions of the earth, settle in small basins to burn away all vital powers, to literally scorch the earth. Those fertilizers meantime fail to maintain stores of trace minerals, of ions, or of microbial agents. They supply certain higher plants only with certain bulk items: the plants and animals which serve as the substrate fade away. The phosphates in fertilizers run off into waters and choke out the higher species there. The nitrates in fertilizers react in water to poison downstream drinkers, and in air to deplete the ozone layer far faster than BFRONT's Freon was suspected to do. As the ozone layer goes, photosynthesis declines, oceans die and humans contract fatal skin cancers--all at double the rate of ozone depletion. Meantime, in Iowa, fertilizer use has tripled within two decades to sustain levels of productivity.

Even if all wastes were returned and if artificial fertilizers were banned, even if tractors with carbon monoxide emissions were removed from

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the fields, agriculture would still exhaust essentials to higher life. Domesticated fields become vulnerable to insects, rodents, grazing wild animals, alien plants: destroying the invaders weakens the ecological diversity essential to human immunology; destroying the invaders with poisons, as is the current economic practice, only speeds up the breakdown of public health; plague, after all, originated in the sedentary agricultural societies of East Asia. From the assumption that plants and animals exist to serve humans, agriculturalists research to reduce the genetic diversity and uneconomic tendencies of their charges. The grasses of Green Revolution fields, though bearing high yields, generate far less leafage and overall photosynthesis than their free ancestors; supplies of oxygen diminish. The domesticated species decline in vigor and nutritive qualities; indeed, as with some cows and chickens now, they become transmitters of cancers. If all the supposed advances of present agriculture were abandoned and if a far larger portion of the population returned to the land for that rotation of legumes, of composts and of grazing animals attendant to organic farming, the essentials to higher life would still disappear. The organicists would flood the landscape with their domesticated species, destroying the habitats essential to evolution. Suburban sprawl replicates peasant land-settlement patterns; organic farming would spread an empire of such patterns over the earth. Such farming would not curb the run off into offshore waters of upland soils, altogether, for they would not account for the need to integrate saltwaters with freshwater lands. The cycles of biology and geology--of life and of rocks--would remain short-circuited; they would remain straitened within the confines of tillage and husbandry: the biosphere would continue its collapse. We become obsolete, and dulness takes over.

Humans must become hunters again. They would forage, they would chase, they would lure. They would thrive amidst a wealth of surging plants and predacious animals. They employ senses and intuition for tracking, then trapping what they require. They unleash and go beyond agriculture.

TELEVISION GOVERNMENT

In 1984, there will be several satellites with high-resolution sensors with data available to the public. Available, but not accessible. The data arrives on earth in digital form, and it is recorded on computer tapes which can only be processed by special computers at high cost. Further, people are only beginning to know how to handle these computers. The challenge, as scientists say, is to imitate sight. Neurophysiologists, mathematicians and computer scientists have worked on methods for processing and displaying wave-length signals, and artists have recently taken up the challenge. Organized through the Ocean Earth Construction and Development Corporation, an architecture venture with planet-survey objectives, and identified as SPACE FORCE for this task, a half-dozen New York artists have built on traditions in video art, structuralist film, field-theory painting and Futurist photodynamism, to develop methods of processing the computer tapes and display the results not in the customary "satellite photograph" but in video. One does not just have to look at a "general picture" of a site. One can move through the site, in detail, in a variety of color interpretations, at various angles of perspective, in three-dimensional landscape projections, in rapid or slower image sequence, all in a manner in which sight works: in motion. What one color version of a site reveals is not what another reveals, and a feature like the oil slick in the Persian Gulf becomes clear only with multiple-color studies. In video after computer processing, images of the earth become accessible. Not just to scientists or governments. Also, to the TV public.

OECD has brought satellite-data analysis into the mainstream of mass culture: broadcast TV. Since its first SPACE FORCE exhibition in 1982, OECD has contracted with NBC, CBS, the BBC and French TV to select, process, analyse and video-record the satellite observations of these areas: the Falklands, Beirut, southern Lebanon, the Persian Gulf and (impending with several networks) the Soviet Union. By 1985, when the French launch the super-resolution SPOT satellite (which can identify trucks), OECD expects to have developed facilities for systematic review of the incoming satellite-data stream and for image-processing with video-output of anything which seems to merit public attention or scientific study.

The implications for world politics are substantial: how well a government manages its resources, or whether one government prepares military actions against another, or what the effects would be of computer-simulated civil engineering projects, can all be shown to the world TV public. If the Israelis divert a river in Lebanon to supply the West Bank, or the Argentines mass troops; if Sunbelt cities exhaust groundwater supplies, or Arctic energy industry jeopardizes world climate; if Amazon forest depletion expands the Sahel or acid rain spreads into the Soviet Union: all can be revealed with satellite-data processing which mimics the rapid color-sequencing and detail-searching processes of human sight. WHEN SPACE FORCE LOOKS, THE WORLD WILL SEE.

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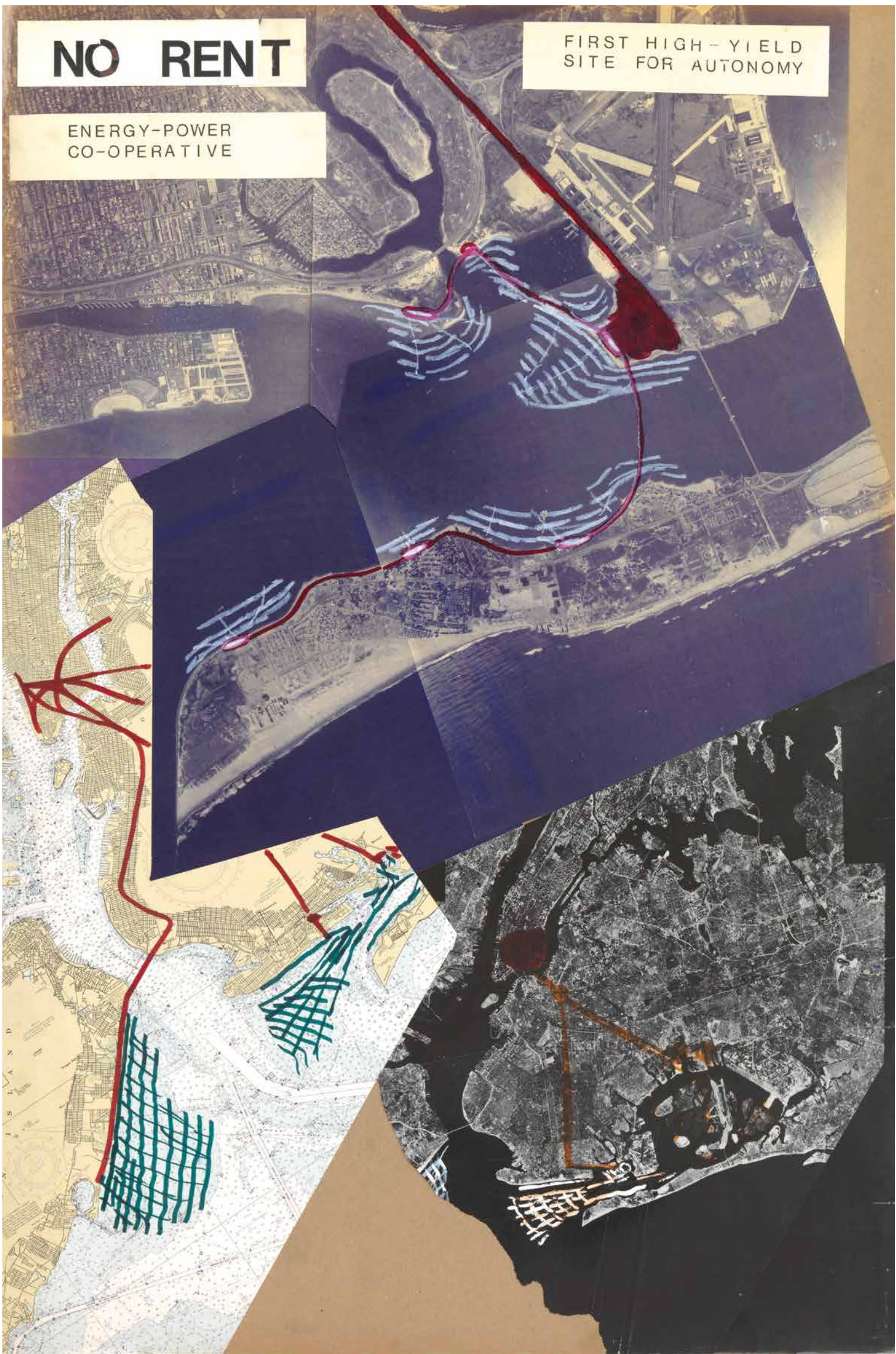


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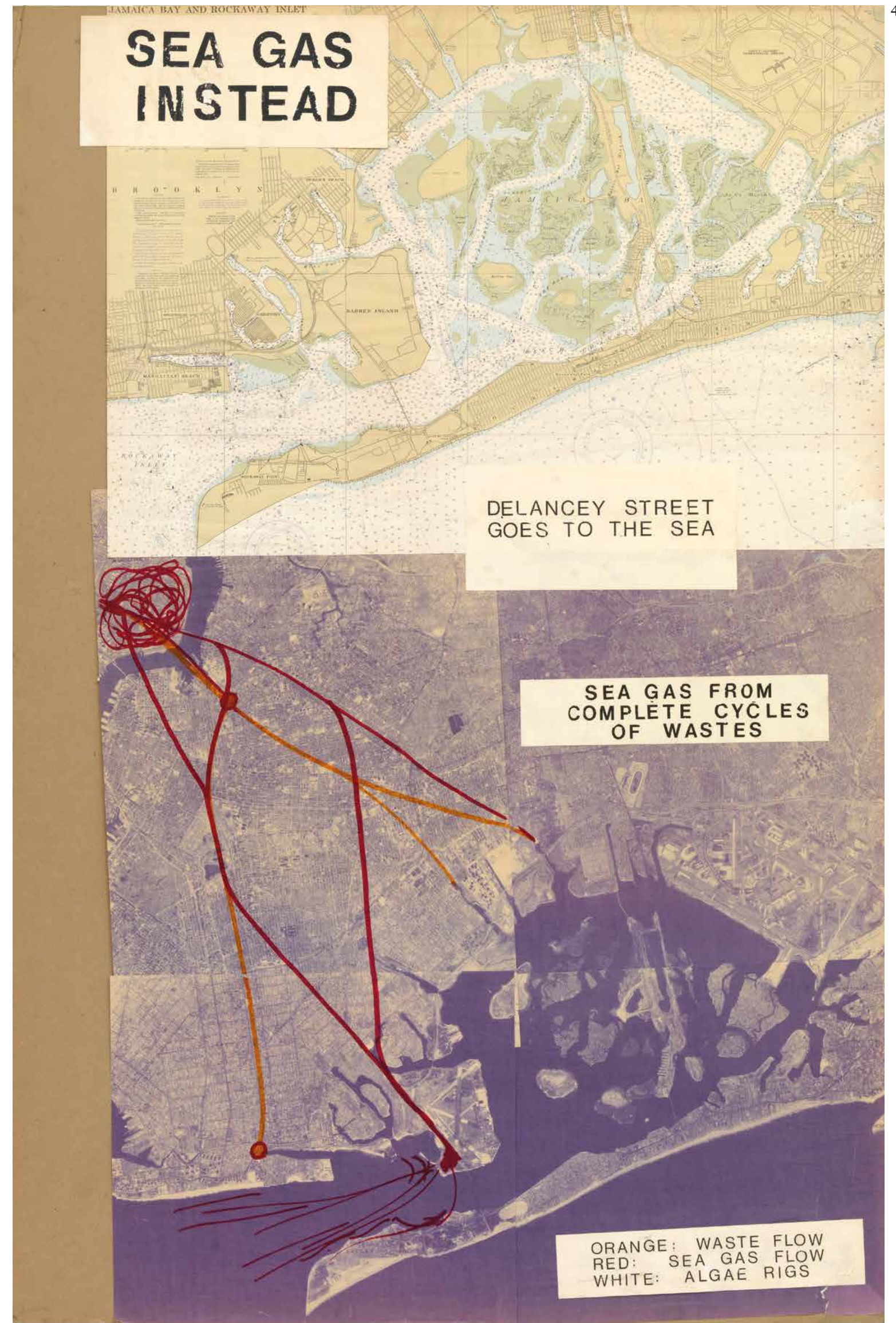




**NO RENT**

FIRST HIGH-YIELD SITE FOR AUTONOMY

ENERGY-POWER CO-OPERATIVE



**SEA GAS INSTEAD**

DELANCEY STREET GOES TO THE SEA

SEA GAS FROM COMPLETE CYCLES OF WASTES

ORANGE: WASTE FLOW  
RED: SEA GAS FLOW  
WHITE: ALGAE RIGS

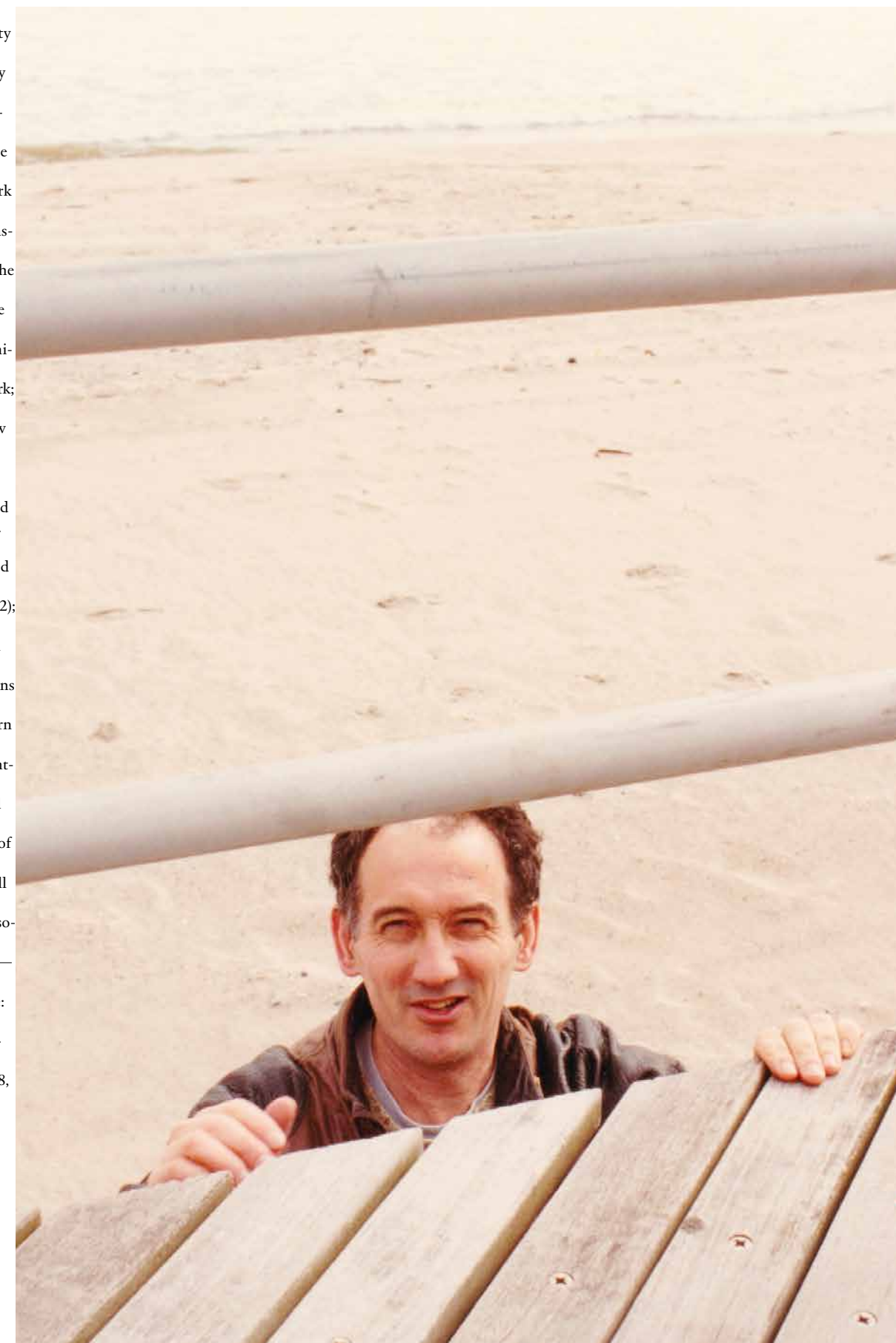


- 1 *IRON LUNG: A ROOM DEFINED NOT BY ITS WALLS BUT BY A PUMP* installation view at Peter Nadin, New York, 1979. Courtesy: the artist
- 2–3 *World Space, Political Economies After Oil* installation views at Peter Nadin, New York, 1979. Courtesy: the artist
- 4–5 *Global System* installation views at Chase Manhattan Plaza (Lower Manhattan Cultural Council), New York, 1982. Courtesy: the artist
- 6 *Flags for Documenta* installation view at documenta IX, Kassel, 1992. Courtesy: the artist
- 7–9 *NEW YORK ROOM NEW YORK / NEWS ROOM AMSTERDAM* installation views at American Fine Arts, New York and Museum Fodor, Amsterdam, 1990. Courtesy: the artist
- 10–11 *NEWS ROOM NEW YORK* installation views at Roger Smith Gallery, New York, 2000. Courtesy: the artist
- 12–13 *GLOBAL WARMING RAPID RESPONSE* installation views at Nikolai Fine Art, New York, 1999. Courtesy: the artist
- 14 Announcement for Peter Fend’s *World Space, Political Economies After Oil* at Peter Nadin, New York, 1979. Courtesy: the artist
- 15 *Beach Party Deutschland* installation view at Esther Schipper, Cologne, 1992. Courtesy: the artist
- 16 *Coste*, 2018, *Costa Verso Costa* installation view at Pinksummer goes to Palermo, 2018. Courtesy: the artist and Pinksummer, Genoa. Photo: Cave Studio
- 17 *Bacini*, 2018, *Costa Verso Costa* installation view at Pinksummer goes to Palermo, 2018. Courtesy: the artist and Pinksummer, Genoa. Photo: Cave Studio
- 18 *Sinai, und Meer, mit Gaza Becken*, 2015. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin
- 19 *Danakil Depression, Sea Influx to Expand Ocean*, 2015. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin
- 20 *Sirte Region, now sought by “Islamic State” Rebels, with the Sub-Sealevel flooded with Channels*, 2015. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin
- 21 *Most of Greece with Waters out to 100 Fathoms Depth*, 2015. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin
- 22–25 *Über die Grenze: May Not Be Seen Or Read Or Done*, 2012. Courtesy: the artist and ESSEX STREET / Maxwell Graham, New York
- 26–28 *To Be Built* installation views at Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin, 2015. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin
- 29 *REBELS ARE REASONABLE* installation view at ESSEX STREET / Maxwell Graham, New York, 2012. Courtesy: the artist and ESSEX STREET / Maxwell Graham, New York
- 30 *UNITED KINGDOM*, 2014. Courtesy: the artist and ESSEX STREET / Maxwell Graham, New York
- 31 *BELARUS*, 2014. Courtesy: the artist and ESSEX STREET / Maxwell Graham, New York
- 32 *JAMAICA*, 2014. Courtesy: the artist and ESSEX STREET / Maxwell Graham, New York
- 33 *BIRDS REIGN* installation views at Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin, 2020–21. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin
- 34 *AFRIKA EUROPA BRÜCKE* installation view at Oracle, Berlin, 2015. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin
- 35–36 *BIRDS REIGN* installation views at Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin, 2020–21. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin
- 37–38 *Site Simulator, Tivat Bay* installation views at American Fine Arts, New York, 1992. Courtesy: the artist
- 39 *Cities as Bodies / Städte als Körper* installation view at Esther Schipper, Cologne 1990. Courtesy: the artist
- 40 *Means To Wealth / Mittel und Wohlstand* installation view at Tanja Grunert, Cologne, 1992. Courtesy: the artist
- 41 *Birds Reign - Second Attempt*, 2020. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin
- 42 *Birds Reign - Amazon to the South*, 2020. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin
- 43 *Offshore Soil Rig*, 1993, *THE PARK: BECOMING A BODY OF WATER* installation view at Manifesta 13, Marseille, 2020. © Collection Frac Poitou-Charentes. Courtesy: the artist and Manifesta 13, Marseille. Photo: Jeanchristophe Lett / Manifesta 13, Marseille
- 44 “Agriculture Ends, Art Takes Over” by Peter Fend, March 1976. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin
- 45 *THE PARK: BECOMING A BODY OF WATER* installation view at Manifesta 13, Marseille, 2020. Courtesy: the artist and Manifesta 13, Marseille. Photo: Jeanchristophe Lett / Manifesta 13, Marseille
- 46 “Television Government,” Manifesto for the show *Art of the State* at The Kitchen, New York, 1982. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin
- 47 *SEA CHANGE* installation view at Spacex, Exeter, 2001. Courtesy: the artist
- 48 *Delancey Street goes to the Sea, IV*, 1979. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin
- 49 *Delancey Street goes to the Sea, III*, 1979. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin
- 50–54 Invitation cards for Peter Fend’s shows

Peter Fend is represented by Cabinet, London; Le Case d’Arte, Milan; Galería Marta Cervera, Madrid; ESSEX STREET / Maxwell Graham, New York; Georg Kargl Fine Arts, Vienna; Mars Gallery, Tokyo; Nowhere Gallery, Milan; Pinksummer, Genoa; Kunstruimte Wagemans, Alkmaar; and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin

PETER FEND (b. 1950, Columbus) lives and works in New York. For more than forty years, he has expanded the boundaries of how an artistic practice can relate to society and the world that society inhabits. His unique methodology incorporates architecture, art history, activism, and business acumen to propose ecologically responsible solutions to real-world problems. Through his work across mediums, Fend aims to spark discussion among policy makers, corporations, and individuals in a manner that transcends the context of art. He has been featured in notable survey exhibitions around the world, including documenta IX, Kassel (1992); the 45th Venice Biennale (1999); the 47th Venice Biennale (2003); the Liverpool Biennial (2003); and the 8th Sharjah Biennial (2007). He has had solo exhibitions at Kunsthalle Düsseldorf; The Kitchen, New York; Kunstraum Daxer, Munich; Galerie Esther Schipper, Cologne; American Fine Art, New York; Peter Nadin, New York; Arnolfini, Bristol; Roger Pailhas, Paris; Georg Kargl, Vienna; Pinksummer, Genoa; ESSEX STREET / Maxwell Graham, New York; and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin, among others.

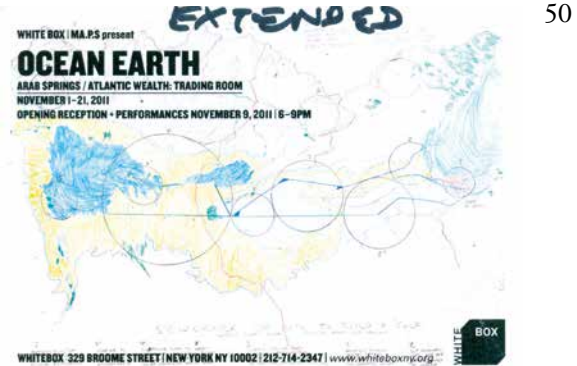
DORA BUDOR is an artist and writer based in New York. She has recent and upcoming solo exhibitions at Kunsthau Bregenz (2022); Progetto Space, Lecce (2021); Kunsthalle Basel (2019); 80WSE, New York (2018); and the Swiss Institute, New York (2015). Her work has been presented in group exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Swiss Institute, New York; La Panacée, Montpellier; the Migros Museum, Zurich; Fridericianum, Kassel; Halle für Kunst und Medien, Graz; the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw; MOCA Belgrade; the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka; and K11 Art Foundation, Amsterdam, as well as the 9th Berlin Biennale (2016); the Vienna Biennale (2017); Art Encounters 2017, Timișoara; the 13th Baltic Triennial, Vilnius (2018); the 16th Istanbul Biennial (2019); RIBOCA2—2nd Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (2020); and Geneva Biennale: Sculpture Garden (2020). Budor was a recipient of the Rema Hort Mann Foundation’s Emerging Artist Grant in 2014, a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant in 2018, and a Guggenheim Fellowship for 2019–20.



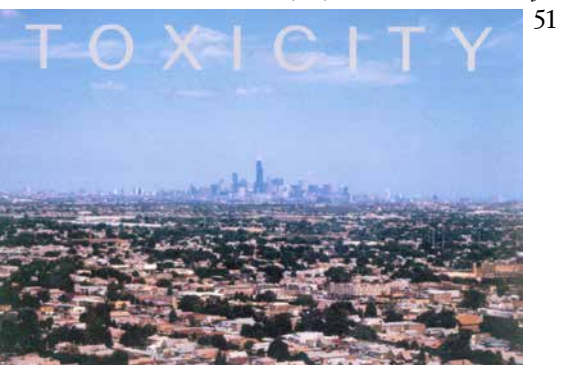
Peter Fend at Rockaway Beach, New York, early 2000s



2020-21	(PF)	<i>BIRDS REIGN</i>
2019	(PF)	<i>AFRICA-ARCTIC FLYWAY</i>
2018	(PF)	<i>HACE SENTIDO / MAKES SENSE</i>
2018	(PF)	<i>Costa Verso Costa</i>
2017	(PF)	<i>Shadow Cabinet: A Loyal Opposition Response</i>
2017	(PF)	<i>Forse</i>
2015	(PF)	<i>TO BE BUILT</i>
2015	(PF)	<i>AFRIKA EUROPA BRÜCKE</i>
2014	(PF)	<i>REBELS ARE REASONABLE</i>
2014	(PF)	<i>Lomonosov Furthered</i>
2012	(PF)	<i>Über die Grenze: May Not Be Seen Or Read Or Done</i>
2012	(PF)	<i>WHAT TO DO NEXT</i>
2011	(OE)	<i>Arab Springs/ Atlantic Wealth: Trading Room</i>



2011	(PF)	<i>Ricchezza D'Italia</i>
2010	(PF)	<i>Situation Room</i>
2009	(OE/PF)	<i>Situation Room: Technology Change Climate Stability</i>
2007	(PF)	<i>Elbegas</i>
2007	(PF)	<i>BET AND WIN: Way Out Too</i>
2005	(PF)	<i>Parallel Projects: Proposals for Condoleezza Rice / Parallelprojekte: Vorschläge für Condoleezza Rice</i>
2004	(OE)	<i>Reverse Global Warming</i>
2004	(PF)	<i>One to Another (foreign policy proposal)</i>
2004	(PF)	<i>Correspondence</i>
2003	(OE)	<i>Independence from Big Oil</i>
2003	(PF)	<i>Proposals for Arabia</i>
2002	(OE)	<i>Global Gas / Super Gas, Ocean Earth vis-à-vis Superflex</i>
2001	(PF)	<i>Naval Actiony</i>
2001	(OE)	<i>Big Deal: Revival of the America</i>
2001	(OE)	<i>Sea Change</i>
2001	(OE)	<i>Ocean Earth: Policy Models</i>



2001	(OE)	<i>Economic Potential</i>
2000	(OE)	<i>RAPID: Post-Petroleum Gas Stations, Launching a Brand</i>
2000	(PF)	<i>EURAFRICA/AMERICAS/MONDO</i>
2000	(NR)	<i>NEWS ROOM NEW YORK</i>
1999	(PF)	<i>Global Warming: A Rapid Response Remark</i>



1999	(OE)	<i>Chase Scene</i>
1998	(NR)	<i>NEWS ROOM GRAZ</i>
1997	(PF)	<i>Spinal Ramp</i>
1996	(PF/OE)	<i>Chernobyl Solutions</i>
1996		<i>Art Meets Science</i>
1995	(PF)	<i>Landkraft/Swiss Split</i>
1995	(OE)	<i>Landkraft</i>
1995	(OE)	<i>Architecture for the 21st Century</i>
1994	(PF)	<i>Eurasian Scenario</i>

Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin
Museo Nivola, Orani
Embajada, San Juan
Pinksummer, Palermo
Cuchifritos Gallery + Project Space, New York
Pinksummer, Genoa
Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin
Oracle, Berlin
ESSEX STREET, New York
LISTZ, Berlin
ESSEX STREET, New York
Peanut Underground Art Projects, New York
White Box / MA.P.S, New York

Galleria Cesare Manzo, Pescara
391 Victoria Street, Hamilton
Arnolfini, Bristol
Galerie für Landschaftskunst, Hamburg
Unit 2 Gallery, London
Christian Nagel, Berlin

Spacex, Exeter
American Fine Arts, New York
American Fine Arts, New York
Dublin City Council and Fingal County Council, Dublin
Galería Marta Cervera, Madrid
Kunstruimte Wagemans, Alkmaar
Mars Gallery, Tokyo
Nikolai Fine Art, New York
Spacex Gallery, Exeter
Rockford Art Museum

Roger Smith Gallery, New York
American Fine Arts, New York
Galería Marta Cervera, Madrid
Roger Smith Gallery, New York
Chelsea Exxon station, Nikolai Fine Art, New York

American Fine Arts, New York
Kunst und Neue Medien, Steirischer Herbst, Graz
Woodlawn Cemetery, New York
Steffany Martz Gallery, New York
Charlottenborg, Copenhagen
Ars Futura, Zurich
Künstlerhaus Palais Thurn & Taxis, Bregenz
Artspace, Sydney
Marc Jancou Gallery, London

1994	(PF)	<i>Startbahn Oesterreich</i>
1994	(PF/OE)	<i>Global Spiral</i>
1994	(OE)	<i>Ocean Earth</i>
1994	(NR)	<i>NEWS ROOM COPENHAGEN</i>
1993	(OE)	<i>Strategie Globale: Giant Algae System for France</i>
1993	(OE)	<i>Habitus</i>
1993	(OE)	<i>OCEAN EARTH: FOR A WORLD WHICH WORKS</i>
1993	(NR)	<i>NEWS ROOM PARIS</i>
1992	(OE)	<i>Site Simulator, Tiut Bays</i>
1992	(PF)	<i>Beach Party Deutschland</i>
1992	(PF)	<i>Beach Party Yugoslavia</i>
1992	(PF)	<i>Documenta Flags</i>
1992	(PF)	<i>Documenta Flags</i>
1992	(PF)	<i>Espace Circulant/Spinning Room</i>
1992	(OE)	<i>Floriade</i>
1992	(PF)	<i>Corse Divise</i>
1992	(PF)	<i>Nippon International Contemporary Art Fair</i>
1992	(OE)	<i>Means to Wealth/Mittel und Wohlstand</i>
1991	(OE)	<i>Europa</i>
1991	(PF)	<i>Beach Party</i>



1991	(NR)	<i>NEWS ROOM STOCKHOLM</i>
1991	(PF)	<i>Salle du Monde</i>
1990	(OE)	<i>City of the Dead / Die Totenstadt</i>
1990	(OE)	<i>Cities as Bodies / Städte als Körper</i>
1990	(NR)	<i>NEWS ROOM FRANKFURT</i>
1990	(NR)	<i>NEWS ROOM NEW YORK/NEWS ROOM AMSTERDAM</i>
1990	(OE)	<i>Progetto Adriatico</i>
1990	(PF)	<i>Einheiten</i>
1990	(PF/NR)	<i>Kleine Fragen</i>
1989	(PF)	<i>Completion of the War</i>
1989	(OE)	<i>Global Monitoring and Assessments: Towards the 21st Century</i>
1988	(OE)	<i>BODY</i>
1988	(PF)	<i>Peter Fend</i>



1988	(PF)	<i>Art at the End of the Social</i>
1985	(OE)	<i>Bacino Torbido</i>
1983		<i>Image/Process</i>
1982	(OE)	<i>Space Force in Action</i>
1982	(SF/OE)	<i>Art of the State</i>
1982	(OE)	<i>Global System</i>
1979	(PF)	<i>IRON LUNG: A ROOM DEFINED NOT BY ITS WALLS BUT BY A PUMP</i>
1979	(PF)	<i>WEALTH OF BASINS, DEATH OF NATIONS</i>
1979	(PF)	<i>World Space: Political Economies After Oil</i>



Collaboration Notations
(PF) – Peter Fend
(OE) – Ocean Earth Development Corporation
(NR) – NEWS ROOM
(GF) – GLOBAL FEED
(RR) – Rapid Response
(CH) – Swiss Defense
(SF) – Space Force

Galerie Metropol, Vienna
G-Mex Centre, Manchester
Strauss & Adamopolous, Frankfurt
Copenhagen
FRAC Poitou-Charentes, Angoulême
Galerie Anne de Villepoix, Paris
Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum, Graz
Galerie des Archives, Paris
American Fine Arts, New York
Galerie Esther Schipper, Cologne
Riverside Studios, London
Galerie de Marseille
Le Case D'Arte, Milan
Galerie Roger Pailhas, Paris
The Hague
Assemblée Nationale, Paris
Yokohama
Galerie Tanja Grunert, Cologne
Kunstraum Daxer, Munich
American Fine Arts, New York

Galerie Nordenstad-Skarstedt, Stockholm
L'Hôpital éphémère, Paris
Galerie Tanja Grunert, Cologne
Esther Schipper, Cologne
Institut fuer Neue Medien / Pavilion Varisella, Frankfurt
American Fine Arts, New York; Museum Fodor, Amsterdam
Le Case D'Arte, Milan
Galerie Ryszard Varisella, Frankfurt
Galerie Christian Nagel, Cologne
American Fine Arts, New York
Fondazione Cini, Venice
American Fine Arts, New York
Scott Hanson Gallery, New York