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### LUSTFAUST: A FOLK ANTHOLOGY 1976-1981

Curated by Jamie Shovlin from the Archives of Mike Harte and Murray Ward

“Lustfaust was an experimental noise band active in West Berlin during the late seventies and early 1980s composed of a group of session musicians. Featuring a Japanese jazz drummer, Matsushita ‘Bobby’ Kazuki, a Belgian guitarist/multi-instrumentalist, Guido van Baelen, a German bassist, Hans Berger, and the California-born, German/American Peter Kruger, the band was a curiously international mixture, initially formed through a mutual distaste for the inoffensive music that it was for the most part their job to produce. Their combination of an aggressive on-stage presence, instrumentation through found objects such as cement mixers and pneumatic drills, and the use of an anti-capitalist community-based model of distribution (if you sent the band a blank cassette, they would return it with their latest release) spawned the Dadaist *Geniale Dilettanten* movement of the early 1980s and pioneered the burgeoning cassette culture of the late seventies.”

This statement, taken from the only existing Lustfaust website, was my formal introduction to Lustfaust so I see no reason why it should not be yours. The pair responsible for the website, Mike Harte and Murray Ward, have been researching the legacy of Lustfaust for almost a decade and the website, originally intended to encapsulate the band’s history and musical legacy, has evolved into something far more personal for its subject, creators and users. Ever since my first encounters with Lustfaust, the archivists and with the transatlantic rabble of Lustfaust fans actively engaged in the website’s assembly, the prospect of an actual physical exhibition has appealed to us all.

The Internet appears to be the most appropriate forum for Lustfaust. Indeed, the activities of their fans in the late seventies seemed to anticipate the file-sharing that was one of the Webs’ earliest applications; it later went on to become one of the most fiercely contested Internet legal issues. Over twenty years ago, the devotees of Lustfaust exchanged tapes by mail and opinions through the Lustfaust fanzine *Falke Tränen*, and today those same devotees have been reunited with the band and each other through the Web.

If the Internet is the logical home to the story of Lustfaust, then perhaps New York is the most fitting location for a display of items relating to the obscure band. After all, the most urgent of Lustfaust’s many ambitions was to play in New York, a city they considered their “spiritual home”, the home of punk and new wave, and a breeding ground for Lustfaust’s closest transatlantic analogues, the Velvet Underground and Sonic Youth. Sadly, despite myriad opportunities, the band never succeeded in fulfilling their ambition to bring their special type of performance to the Big Apple. We hope that in revealing this underdog, under-represented and long-forgotten folk history at Freight + Volume, we are able to bring the world of Lustfaust to an audience that, performance-wise at least, evaded the band during their short history.

Lustfaust’s internal dynamic reflected that of their home city, Berlin, during the late seventies; independent, communal, segregated, schizoid – a band and a city in perpetual flux. Stories of the band’s infighting veer, as every good band’s should, dangerously close to Spinal Tap-isms. Without a record label and anyone to market their releases and performances, Lustfaust relied heavily on the word-of-mouth recommendations of fans and on the small adverts that they placed in music weeklies such as the *NME* and *Sounds*. Offering their music for the cost of return postage, the band extended a more generous invitation by asking fans to design covers for the cassettes they would receive. They never charted and never sought to chart - Lustfaust was a band you had to be informed about, not a band you could inadvertently stumble across, such was their community cohesion.

If a collection of fans can be thought of as the physical residue of a band’s being, then to what extent do they generate the band’s consequential identity? On a standard basis, this is obviously not an issue; you get what you’re given with a CD and the basic marketing strategy that accompanies its release. Despite this, developments throughout recent musical lineage suggest another case. The Arctic Monkeys recent surge to popularity (and the UK’s fastest-selling debut album of all time) was an internet driven phenomenon; and Wilco’s label-rejected album *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot* was revived - and re-purchased by Time Warner - after they streamed the album free of charge for fans on their website. Even Lustfaust’s logical descendants Einstürzende Neubauten have got in on the fan-act, adopting a fan patronage system for the series of *Supporter* albums.

With Lustfaust, the fans were always the generators of the band’s identity. As such that identity, particularly in the visual realm, never became fixed. The open harmony of difference visible in the fan-designed cassette covers was sadly never reflected in a similar acceptance of the diversity of interest between band members. What remains of Lustfaust’s legacy lies in the multiple points of view offered by the fans through their associated designs.

Hence this display concentrates on the variety of cover designs offered by a number of fans and footnotes these items with an “official” history of Lustfaust provided by Kevin Ashworth, the editor of *Falke Tränen*. Alongside Ashworth’s timeline are Lustfaust-related artefacts and items from a variety of sources too numerous to include. Owing to erstwhile member Peter Kruger’s threat of legal action, you are restricted to one-minute samples of Lustfaust’s music that he shared no part in creating. Discussions with Kruger about allowing the entirety of Lustfaust’s oeuvre to be heard are currently ongoing and it is hoped that the complete discography of Lustfaust’s music will be made available in the near future.

For more information, please visit the gallery’s website or contact C. Sean Horton (Director) or Nick Lawrence (Owner) at 212-989-8700 or [info@freightandvolume.com](mailto:info@freightandvolume.com).