

Aaron Marcus

Soft Where, Inc.

Volume 2



Preface

Aaron Marcus was educated in physics at Princeton University and in graphic design at Yale University. He taught for nine years at Princeton University during which time he published and exhibited his work internationally. In 1977 he edited a special issue of the scholarly journal *Visible Language*. In 1978 he taught in Israel, then became a Research Fellow of the East-West Center, Honolulu, where he coordinated a project for visualizing global interdependence in a new symbolic form. In 1979 he taught at The University of California at Berkeley. He is currently staff scientist in the computer graphics laboratory of Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory. As a graphic designer and visible language specialist, he is assisting the development of an information management network in which computer-naïve people are able to create computer-assisted charts and maps.

As an artist and visible language poet during the decade of the 1970's Aaron Marcus created work in concrete poetry, computer graphics and conceptual art that knit together streams of development in communication media that are seeing their realization in the decade of the 1980's. This second monograph on his work takes up where *Soft Where, Inc.* (1975) leaves off. The publication focuses on his conceptual visible language artwork documentations in which he has attempted to express his own existence within environmentally scaled telecommunication systems and to uniquely compose messages in space and time with these media. The documentations are filled with technology and religion, humor and seriousness, broad awareness of changes in society and a deeper penetration into the meaning of writing and mark-making.

The Editors

Aaron Marcus

Soft Where, Inc.

Volume 2

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Aaron Marcus
1982

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Time Piece

Documentation of a conceptual artwork conceived during January through June 75 and executed during June through September 75 by Aaron Marcus, 5y Magie Apartments, Faculty Road, Princeton, New Jersey 08540 USA.

Summary

During a trip around the earth by jet, plane, boat, bus, train, car scooter, bicycle, rickshaw, and foot, I purchased conventional picture postcards in cities from Jerusalem, Israel, to Omaha, Nebraska USA. On each card I wrote a special text that was temporally specific but ambivalent. I addressed and mailed them to myself. The postcards and I travelled to Princeton where I eventually received them, read them, and contemplated their images, their messages, and their significance. At that moment an asterisk- or star-like object was completed in time-space, in which the 'lines' from myself intersected myself in a point. The work involves the passage of time, simultaneity, and memory. Resonating conceptually between drawing and calligraphy, it is primarily a 'time-time'¹ work, or time-piece.²

15.01.75

My wife Susan, our son Joshua, and I left Princeton University and the United States for a sabbatical semester in Jerusalem, Israel, where I was a guest faculty member/researcher at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design and at the Program of Art and Science. It was our plan to travel eastward to return to the USA after leaving Jerusalem.

19.03.75

I had planned to continue my telephone-based conceptual artworks that explore the nature of late twentieth-century mark-making and the bivalent symbolism of writing and drawing in such marks. The earlier pieces, 'An X on America,' 'A Zero-Circle Around the Earth,' and

'Signing On the Dotted Line' were appearing in a special monograph on my work called *Soft Where, Inc.* being published by the *West Coast Poetry Review* in Reno, Nevada. In continuing the themes of the earlier pieces I conceived of a conference-type phone call which would connect Moscow, Russia; Washington DC, USA; and Cairo, Egypt; through Jerusalem, Israel. When eventually connected the electronic marking would create an arrow-like symbol wrapping around the Western Hemisphere and pointing to Jerusalem, the symbolic spiritual center of the West. At the same time the form would be the elemental structure of the 'shin', the Hebrew letter associated with 'shaddai', one of several names for God, and with 'shalom', the Hebrew word for peace.

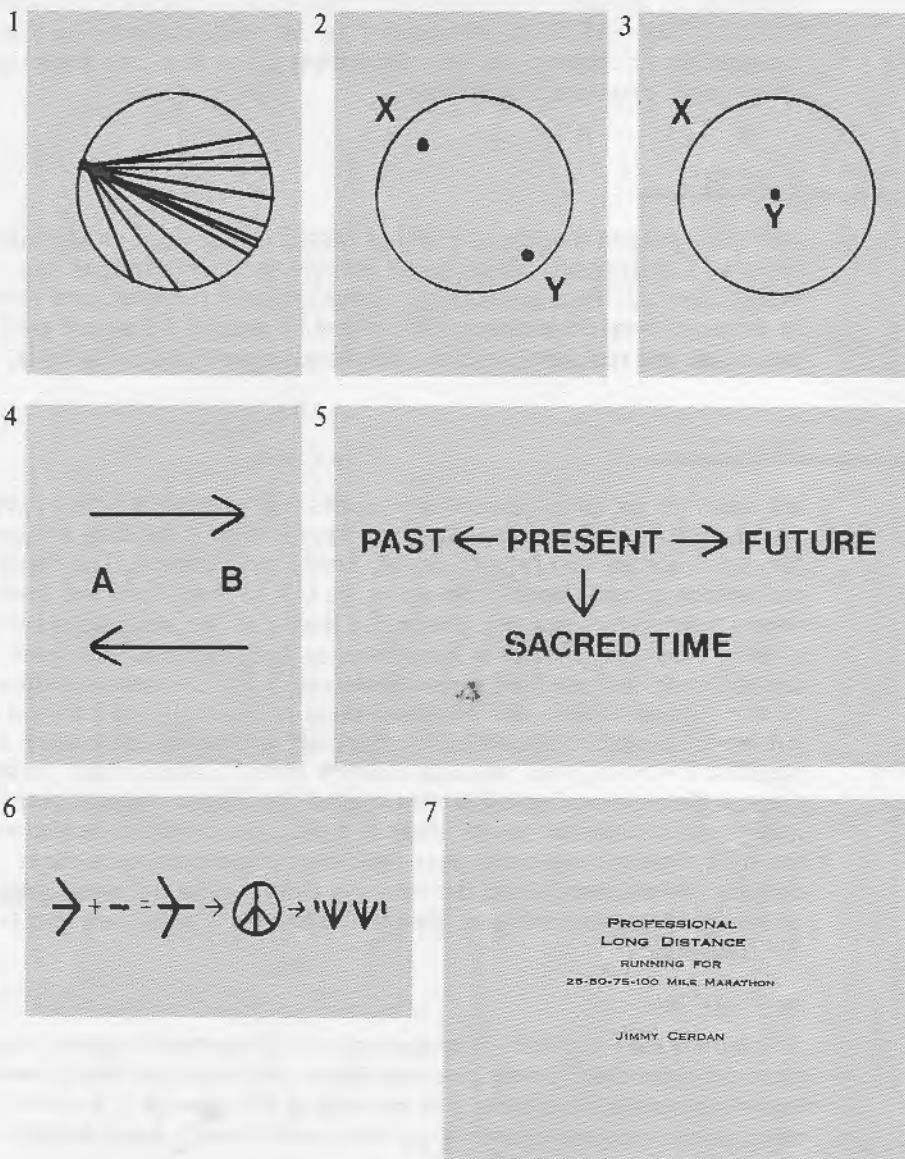
01.05.75

One day during a break in my morning Hebrew language course at Upan Etzion in Jerusalem, I asked Sana Chasan, a fellow student, whether she knew if there were any way to contact Cairo by phone, even if the call were routed through Europe. I thought she might know because she was an Egyptian citizen and a journalist currently studying Hebrew in between interviews of major Israeli figures in order to research a new book. She said she knew of no way to set up such a connection.

At the same time I was beginning to doubt that I would be able to find any way to call Moscow from Jerusalem. I had been in telephone contact with Mrs. Kenneth Keating, the wife of the US Ambassador to Israel. We were planning to get together as soon as their schedule permitted. Their routine was as complicated by Henry Kissinger's visits to Jerusalem as were the bus re-routings around the King David Hotel where he stayed. Several potential meetings between our family and theirs had to be cancelled. I had thought to gain some informal advice from the ambassador about establishing this Israel-based mark-work. Unfortunately and sadly, just as I was about to finalize a time during a relatively quiet period in Kissinger's schedule, Mr. Keating died. My telephone plans likewise transformed themselves.

05.05.75

Commenting upon the final impression of our stay in Jerusalem, I



remarked to myself in my diary/sketchbook: In Jerusalem it is possible to touch time itself. Yet, like a clever feline spirit, it allows itself to be caressed for an instant, and then slips away faster than my fingertips, fleeing into incomprehensibility.

08.05.75

Not being able to telephone Cairo or Moscow, I devised an alternative artwork, a mail-piece (which might involve some rerouting of the mailed objects). Each posted letter would explain the work and would be sent out from Jerusalem. Each might be sent by registered mail and would ask the recipient in Cairo, Washington, or Moscow to reply.

20.05.75

My ideas for an Israel-related piece continued to develop. This work was to become a sketch for the final 'Time-Piece.' I decided to use a two-sided postcard to Messrs. Sadat, Ford and Brezhnev. The Sadat and the Brezhnev cards would first go to the UN in New York and then would have to be rerouted. The major theme of the work would still be a 'shin' from the 'center' of the world, as Jerusalem has been considered over the past 3000 years. However, I also decided to send a card to Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, the Prime Minister of Israel. In the drawing topology of the work, this added a 'chupchik' or a small extra mark which signified for me a 'yod', another Hebrew letter.⁴ Together the permutations of the two conceptual letters spelled the Hebrew words 'yesh' and 'shey', which together mean 'there is a gift', i.e., a gift of peace, were the men to whom the cards were sent ever to confront each other directly. At the same time, the two-way communication aspect suggested the need or desirability of dialogue. The text of each card was to be the following:

Dear Mr. W,

This card is part of a work of conceptual art. This artwork requires that this postcard be received by you, that you sign it, and return the card to me using the other side of the card. The meaning of this artwork is that all of those people who receive and return to me similar cards desire peace in the

Middle East and in the world. The other cards have been sent to : Mr. X, Mr. Y, and Mr. Z.

Thank you for returning this card to me, if possible, before 15 June 75.

Sincerely,

Aaron Marcus

Artist (Citizen, USA)

In listing the names I had to continually alter the order to make the list palatable to what I imagined were the desired pecking orders: B/FSR, F/BRS, R/FBS, S/BFR. The cards were to be sent out on 22 May 75, my solar birthday.⁵

21.05.75

The Secretary of the Graphic Design Department of Bezalel Academy of Art and Design gave me blue cards for making the postcards. I discussed with Susan the relative merits of making the postcards one-way or two-way objects, and I considered further the time-time nature of this work. In becoming one-way communication (and thus more solipsistic), the work would be about the nature of end-points for lines or vectors. In other words, when does the postcard actually 'reach' Brezhnev? At the UN? at Moscow? at the Kremlin? in his office? in his hand? in his eye? in his optic nerve? in his brain? in his perceptions? in his conception? in his understanding? in his appreciation? in his conviction: in his action?... Because I am the originator, the qualities of the source point are more 'clear and precise', as our friend Descartes would have it. From inside my well-lighted black box, I was shooting a conceptual arrow to another black box.

22.05.75

I decided to make the work a one-way postcard and not to request a return statement. Nevertheless I secretly hoped I might receive some acknowledgement of each card's reaching its destination. The revised body of the text now read as follows:

This postcard is part of a work of conceptual art by Aaron Marcus. The intention of this work is that the people involved in this artwork will envision new ways to achieve peace in the Middle East. Postcards have been sent to you, Mr. X, Mr. Y, and Mr. Z. Thank you for looking at and thinking about this card.

I considered mailing the letters to Brezhnev and Sadat from East Jerusalem. The cards would have gone to Jordan and onward, but I decided to use the same mailbox at the Hebrew University post office as a simple, straightforward reference to the academic aspects of the work and my own nature. I took documentation photographs in the post office and some close-up views of the cards (Figure 8).

The work seems more and more to be about directed lines without end points.⁶ There are some obvious time-timely relationships to my life, to life in general, and to the concept of form. For example, I had been trying to reach Ambassador Keating and also David Diringer, a pre-eminent scholar of the alphabet. In each case, just as I neared the point in time when I could have reached them, each one died. Life itself seemed to be of this nature: a directed vector minus the final point. In moving from particular to general reflections upon the work, the difficulties I had establishing the final form of this current sketch piece mirrored the dialectic of finality/endlessness of any work of art, the antimonies of realism/idealism or concretism/conceptualism.

Not surprisingly, I received no reply from the three cards sent out of the country. I did, however, receive a formal card from the Israeli Prime Minister's office thanking me for my communication (Figure 9).

Having completed the sketch project, I began to think of other ways to explore visual communication using postcards, the international postal system, and time, to create a work over which I would have more control in terms of the nature of the end points. I realized that our impending travel through Asia afforded me an ideal opportunity to create such a work over the appropriate physical scale and time scale. Quickly the scenario unfolded: I would send postcards with a standard text to myself from a number of points around the globe. Jerusalem would begin the sequence, and Omaha, Nebraska, would end the sequence. These source points had an obvious, close, personal relationship to me that enhanced the significance of the work, both objectively and subjectively.

I purchased a conventional postcard (Figure 12) with a view of Jerusalem,⁵ and without much pomp and circumstance sent it 'Winging

8

AARON MARCUS
 RECHOV CASUTO 11
 BAYIT VEGAN
 JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

PRES ANWAR SADAT
 CAIRO, EGYPT
 TO EGYPTIAN DELEGATION
 UNITED NATIONS
 NEW YORK, NEW YORK
 USA

PLEASE FORWARD
 AIR MAIL

8A

DEAR PRESIDENT FORD, THIS POSTCARD
 IS PART OF A CONCEPTUAL ARTWORK
 BY AARON MARCUS.
 THE INTENTION OF THIS ARTWORK
 IS THAT PEOPLE WHO SEE IT
 WILL ENVISION NEW WAYS
 TO ACHIEVE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.
 POSTCARDS HAVE BEEN SENT
 TO YOU, LEONID BREZHNEV,
 YITZHAK RABIN, AND ANWAR SADAT.
 THANK YOU FOR LOOKING AT
 AND THINKING ABOUT
 THIS ARTWORK

SINCERELY,
 AARON MARCUS
 22 MAY 75

לשכת ראש הממשלה
PRIME MINISTER'S BUREAU

Jerusalem, May 26, 1975

Mr. Aaron Marcus
Rechov Casuto 11
Bayit Vegan
Jerusalem

Dear Mr. Marcus,

Your postcard of May 22 to the Prime Minister
has been received. Thank you for your concern.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs.) N. Bar-Moshe
Prime Minister's Bureau

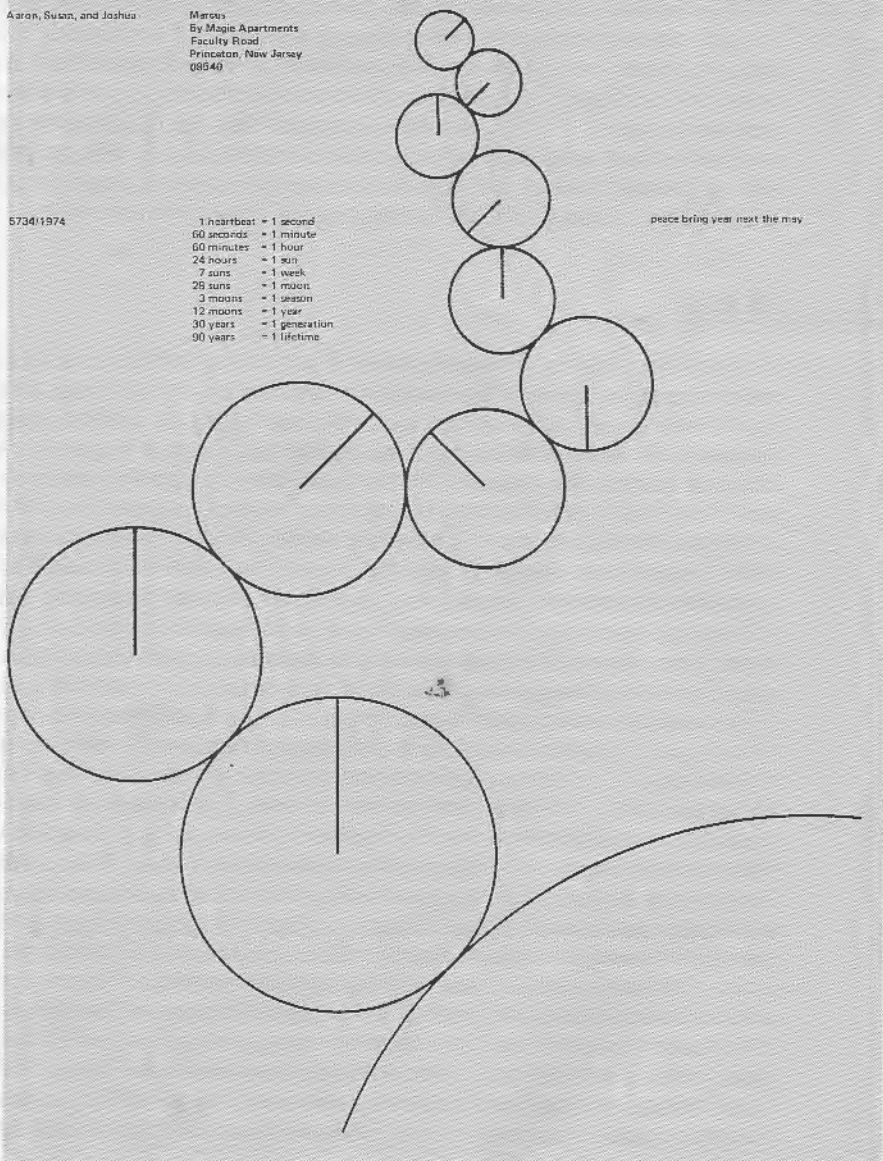
Aron, Susan, and Joshua

Marcus
 64 Magic Apartments
 Faculty Road
 Princeton, New Jersey
 08540

5734/1974

1 heartbeat = 1 second
 60 seconds = 1 minute
 60 minutes = 1 hour
 24 hours = 1 day
 7 days = 1 week
 28 days = 1 month
 3 months = 1 season
 12 months = 1 year
 30 years = 1 generation
 90 years = 1 lifetime

peace bring year next the may



its Way to the USA' from a post office near our apartment in Bayit Vegan, an outlying south-western neighborhood of Jerusalem. From this apartment we could see the sun rising over Old Jerusalem and the modern buildings of the Hebrew University campus. Since we were near the edge of the city and on a high cliff, in the evening we could watch the bare sand hills of the Judean desert and the distant site of Herod's winter palace perched upon an artificial hill gradually merge their somber colors with the warm gray of the darkening sky.

15.06.75

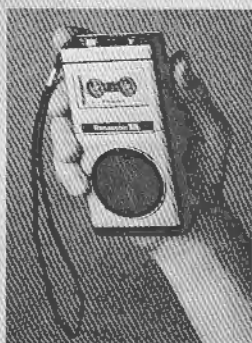
On this day, Joshua's second birthday according to the lunar calendar,⁷ we prepared to leave. Our apartment was empty, but our minds were full of memories and expectations. We had spent a vigorous, peripatetic semester in Israel and we were saddened that we had to depart. We had become particularly attached to our neighbors, a family whose parents had fled twenty years ago to Israel from Yemen in Saudi Arabia and who had introduced us to Yemenite Jewish culture. My mind swept rapidly through the sensorial images of our stay⁸ and our meanderings through a country of wanderers from many parts of the globe who had at last returned to a source point/end point/beginning point.⁹ At the same time fantasies of the places which awaited us in our spiral through the time-space continuum cohabited with memory inside my skull.¹⁰

I stumbled among the retinal images of the Real World as we walked to our planned rendezvous with American friends who were to take us to the airport. From our waiting point I had a panoramic view of much of Jerusalem.¹² Striking a mock-heroic pose I surveyed the wide-screen version of future memories. We continued to wait, growing a little nervous as the amount of fail-safe time dwindled to zero. There was no sign of our friends. We had no phone, and the streets were deserted. I had described precisely the corner at which we were to meet and noted the small triangular island nearby where the main road branched. However, they had never driven on this particular street. I began to pace and to review the route leading up to this intersection. Suddenly I realized there was a similar, but smaller, triangle at an earlier section of the main road. I quickly ran to see whether they might be there. Just as Susan, Joshua, and our backpacks passed out of sight behind a curve in the main road, I saw our friends standing near their car. They also had

Your Personal Equipment

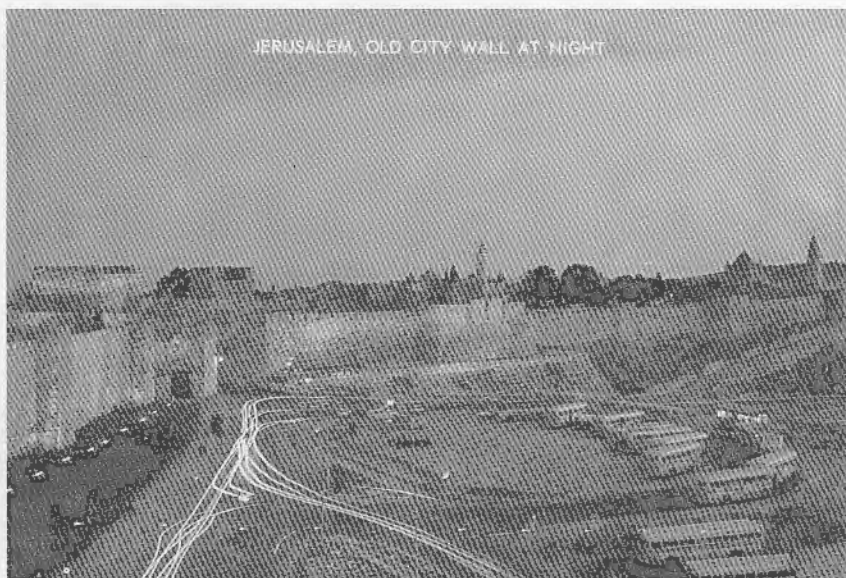


Another time, another place. Panasonic's space-age digital clock tells you what time it is anywhere in the world at the touch of a finger. Just select any of the 100 major cities represented, and you get an instant display of that city's date and time. At the same time, all the major cities in that time zone light up to give you complete information at a glance. Local time and date are continuously displayed in electronic digits with AM/PM indication. Quartz crystal time accuracy. Covers 30 world-wide time zones. Operates on AC or batteries. Tastefully designed brushed aluminum and rosewood finish case enhances any office or home. (16 w x 13 h; d x 2 1/4 h)
World Clock 1-423-3 \$2,500 (\$4.95)



The micro mini cassette recorder from Panasonic pulls size aside to compact lots of quality in the smallest space possible. Allows up to 1 hour recording time on micro mini cassettes. Perfect for travel. Just slip it into your pocket and you're ready for dictation or dialogue airborne or on land. Features AC/DC system; condenser mic; cue review and LED. Includes carrying case, 3 micro mini 30 minute blank tapes, earphone and batteries. 5 1/2" x 2 1/2" w x 1 1/2" d.
Micro Mini Cassette Recorder 1-424-1 \$200.00 (\$4.95)

12



12A

9234

8 June 1975
29 Sivan 5735



Dear Aaron,
It is 10:52 a.m., and I am here
... and you are there?
Sincerely, Aaron



Aaron Marcus
School of Architecture
+ Urban Planning
Princeton, N.J.
08540 U.S.A.



ישראל, חומת העיר העתיקה בלילה
שער יפו, מגדל דוד והר ציון

JERUSALEM, OLD CITY WALL AT NIGHT
JAFFA GATE, CITADEL AND MT. ZION

COPYRIGHT BY PALPHOT LTD. PRINTED IN THE HOLY LAND

Aaron Marcus, Rechov Caetano 11, Bayit Vagan, Jaffa, Tel Aviv, Israel

been waiting nervously, wondering where we were. I quickly joined them in the car and we returned to the intended trysting point. From there we drove uneventfully to the airport and arrived with extra time to spare. We departed from Israel at about 6 p.m. for Teheran, Iran, via Turkey's airspace in order not to be shot down over Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, or Iraq.

17.06.75

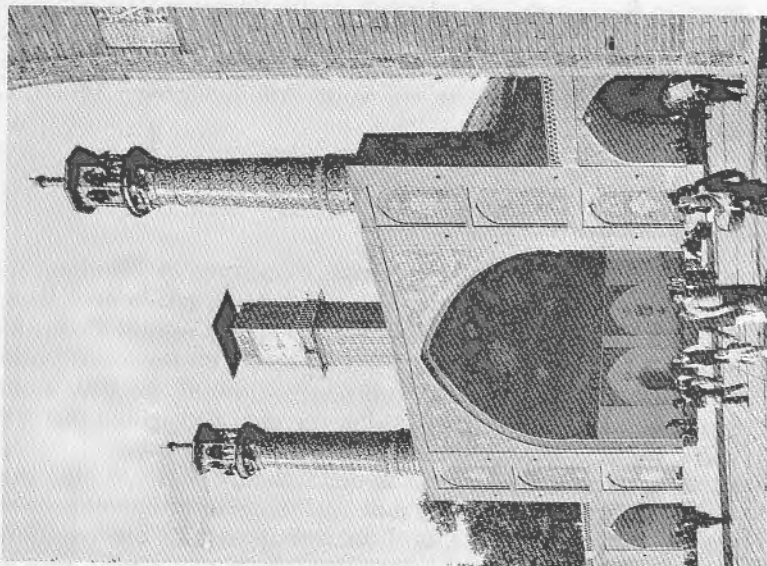
After a flight of about three hours, we arrived in Teheran, whose official time differs from Jerusalem's by one-half hour. I bought a conventional picture postcard (Figure 13) of the Masjid Shah, the Shah's Mosque. Within the image appeared a very curious western-looking clock tower perched incongruously over one of the great arches leading to the central court. As I gazed at the card I imagined that somewhere and sometime in an omni-chronic universe¹³ it was still 2:57 p.m. on a sunny afternoon in Teheran under a picture-postcard blue sky.

In the central post office near our inexpensive hotel I purchased the stamps and mailed the card. I decided to pass up buying many of the colorful and interesting commemorative stamps which were sold by vendors on the streets. In fact, I was not quite certain that the objects were actually postal stamps. They may have been some other kind of stamps sold simply for philately or decoration. The postcard itself, naturally, could capture little of the experiences of our week in Teheran, Isfahan, and Shiraz. During our stay we were introduced to beautiful mosaic decorations in gigantic mosques, mysterious women veiled in black from head to foot (revealing only their eyes and noses but occasionally a stylish wedge-heeled shoe, miniskirt, or blue jeans beneath!), Moslem hospitality, the incongruous clash of ancient morality and modern oil-money society, the busy, colorful souks or bazaars, and varieties of delicious breads. At Persepolis near Shiraz, we roamed for half a day among the remnants of the royal retreat begun by Darius in about 520 BCE and destroyed by Alexander the Great in 318 BCE after an almost secret existence for two hundred years.¹⁴

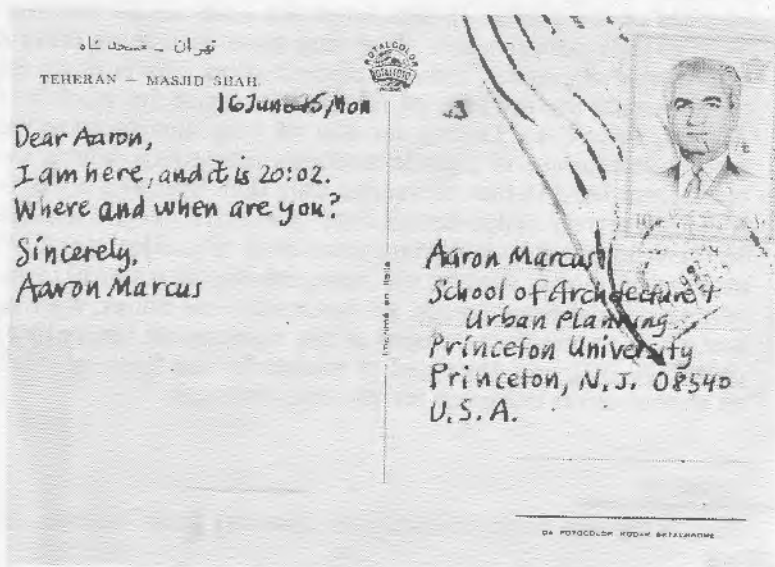
23.06.75

Our jet trip was three hours late in departing from Teheran. Once in the

13



13A



air we arrived four hours later at 6:30 a.m. in Bombay, India, whose official time, like that of all India, differs from Teheran's time by two hours. The days had been hot and dry in Iran and the nights cool. As the air-conditioning of the jet began to melt away and we stepped out into the Monsoon season of Bombay, we were struck by a stiff blast of viscous, heated mist; instantly every pore of our bodies opened. A thousand tiny faucets signaled to our senses that we had arrived in mysterious, enchanting India. During the day in Bombay I purchased a conventional picture postcard (Figure 14), filled it out, and mailed it.

02.07.75

After Bombay we had arrived a few days before in Delhi where Joshua developed a mild case of dysentery or similar intestinal disorder. Today we arrived at the post office by 9:45 a.m. to send some six packages by sea mail to the USA, only to learn that it was not yet open. We waited, eventually entered, and completed all the required forms. Susan and Joshua left, and as I attempted to pay the clerk I discovered I did not have enough money in rupees. I was not allowed to leave the bags in the post office, but had to carry out all six of them plus my heavily loaded shoulder bag. I took a scooter-rickshaw (taxi) to a nearby Bank of India building. The elevator was not working, and I had to carry all of the bags up the stairs to the third-floor. Once there I learned that the bank would not cash traveller's checks. I struggled downstairs, into a second cab, and headed toward another bank that had been recommended by the first. An official lobby receptionist in the building told me that the office for cashing my traveller's checks was on the sixth floor. I headed for the elevator landing which presented me with two doors. The one on the right stopped and opened, but because of my large, heavy baggage, I could not maneuver myself to be able to squeeze in among the people already occupying the small cubicle. Eventually it elevated without me and preceeded at a snail's pace to the upper floors. With growing frustration I watched the signals for the elevator on the left repeatedly pass the floor I was on as it ascended or descended. Only after a few minutes of closely scrutinizing a small sign near the elevator door did I come to understand that the elevator on the left did not stop at this floor. Finally the doors of the elevator on the right opened, and I entered. As they closed, I was seeking the but-

ton for the sixth floor. To my amazement and, by this time, to my fatigued stupification, the choice of buttons showed only odd numbers. Now that I had succeeded in getting in an elevator, I could not get out on the sixth floor. Even in the midst of my muffled fuming I was still capable of deciding that to descend from the seventh floor was a superior option to ascending from the fifth. I exited on the seventh floor and staggered down the stairs. Under the guidance of a number of gestural thumbings and articulated index fingers, I threaded my way from the entrance door of the large room, through a maze of clerk-filled desk areas and cubicles, and to a desk at the extreme diagonal corner of the space. I set down my bags and stated, a little breathlessly, my request to cash a traveller's check. The man in an ash grey suit and a placid voice apologized. It seemed that this was not the floor on which to transact that particular business. It was the fifth floor. I lost control and accosted him verbally about what I had endured in order to be able to stand at his desk; in a rhetorical dither I demanded that the lobby receptionist be fired! I later regretted this lapse of sympathy. I descended to the fifth level of bureaucratic Hades and found the one man who was responsible for cashing traveller's checks. Despite the fact that the bank had been open for some hours he was still lovingly counting the various currencies in his possession and appeared to be engaged in a devotional ritual which might last for another hour. With the feelings of a caged animal, I sought a nearby clerk and learned that I could at last proceed. This clerk filled out all the forms in such a way that he had to write everything twice instead of using an available sheet of carbon paper. Like a seventeenth-century chess-playing automation his hand swept over the sheet of paper, sometimes moving spasmodically as it sought another blank entry to feed his hungry pen. Just as he finished and as my spirits swelled to think I would at last complete this near-mythological test of endurance, he turned to his superior (still sorting currency notes) and gave him all the forms to check. The clerk-of-clerks certified their accuracy and I received my rupees. I bolted out the door, or more accurately, jerked myself along with bags hanging and swinging from every shoulder, arm and hand. I caught another scooter-rickshaw and directed the man, who spoke very little English, to take me to the post office; but which one? In my earlier haste and confusion, I had neglected to observe by what route I had reached the second bank from the first. We tried the nearby central post office, but it was not the correct one. After two more reconnaissance missions to

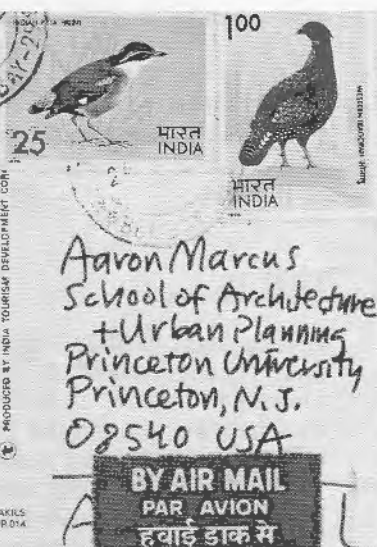
14



14A Bombay, India

24 June 75

Dear Aaron,
 At 9:18 p.m. I was here,
 and where and when
 are you now?
 Sincerely,
 Aaron



INDIA
 Huzam Chowk, (Firoz Foundation) Bombay

VAKILS
 WR 014

nearby post offices, I finally spied the familiar facade. At long last I was able to label, address, and stamp all the packages. I emerged from this Kafka-esque dream-time at about 13:00. Actually I don't really know what time it was. I had noticed that no matter what wristwatch or wall clock I might look at in any given space, no two would read the identical time.¹⁶ What was 10:45 for one person might be 10:30 for another. No one seemed to mind. That morning, I didn't either.

09.07.75

We celebrated Joshua's second solar birthday¹⁷ on 5 July 75 in the small village of Kajuraho, whose 800 inhabitants attend to the needs of tourists visiting the nearby renaissance Hindu ziggurat temples. After the dense, moving experiences of Varanasi (the holy city of Hinduism) and its sister city Sarnath (holy to Buddhism), after an hour's flight from Varanasi, we arrived yesterday in Kathmandu, Nepal, whose official time differs from Indian time by 15 minutes. I purchased a conventional postcard (Figure 15) and mailed it somewhere east of the small capital city from a tiny local post office that we passed as we were bicycling to visit a nearby Buddhist sanctuary. The day was a picture-postcard day, like one of those that a magic brush might paint over a black movie screen at the beginning of a Walt Disney cartoon of the 'forties or 'fifties¹⁸ (Figure 24). We were glad to be away from our \$1.00 per night hotel bedroom where the friendly cockroaches began to rival in size (hyperbolically speaking) the rats we had seen outside our hotel room in Bombay.

13.07.75

After a flight of about three hours we arrived a few days ago in Bangkok, Thailand, whose official time is five hours later than Jerusalem time (Jerusalem's time¹⁹ is seven hours later than New York time). We were thus half-way around the time zones from our starting point.²⁰ I purchased a conventional postcard (Figure 16) of the city. It did not reveal at all that Bangkok was once known as the Venice of the Far East because of its extensive network of southeast Asian jungle-lined canals. Today they co-exist with polluted, automobile-clogged, urban

15



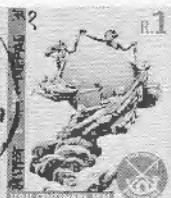
15A

9 July 75

Dear Aaron,
 It is 12:36, 10 minutes
 ahead of Indian time,
 and I am here. When
 and where are you
 now?

Sincerely,
 Aaron

Aaron Marcus, School of Architecture
 + Urban Planning, Princeton U., Princeton,
 N.J. 08540 USA



Aaron Marcus
 School of Architecture
 + Urban Planning
 Princeton University
 Princeton, N.J.
 08540 USA

AIRMAIL

16



16A Mon. 14 July 75

Dear Aaron,
 It is 12:55, and I am here
 + you are there. When +
 where are you. Greetings from
 now?

Sincerely,
 Aaron

A bird's eye view of Wat Phnom
 Bangkok

AIR MAIL

Aaron Marcus, 40 Halls, Wm. Lee Bank,
 P.O. 51230 Bangkok, Thailand



Aaron Marcus
 School of Architecture + Urban Planning
 Princeton University
 Princeton, N.J.
 08540
 USA

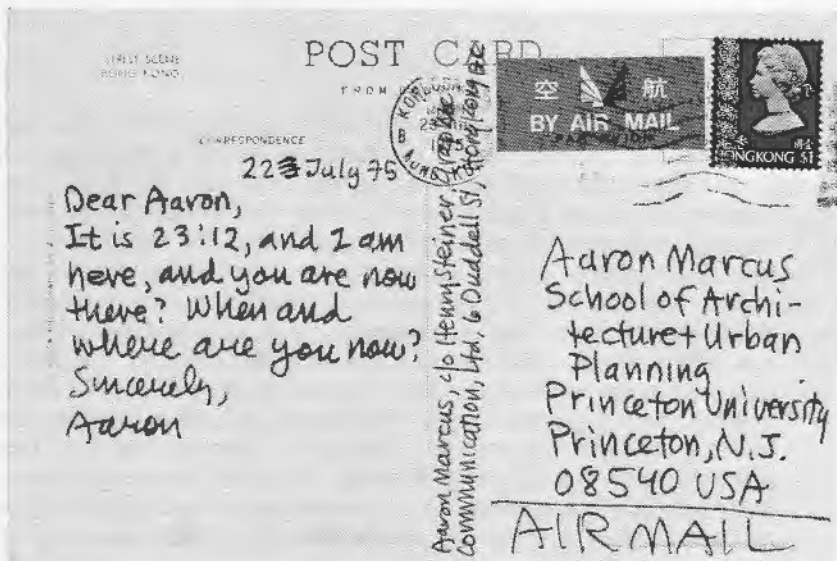
SERIES D

AIR MAIL

17



17A



thoroughfares. The card did show some of the many temple-monasteries called wats, fantasy architectural forms that look as if they were designed by Dr. Zharkov in consultation with Donald Duck. I filled out the postcard with the necessary ritual items and mailed it.

20.07.75

Two days earlier we arrived in Hong Kong from Bangkok via a flight of several hours that included a stretch along the coast of South Vietnam. Our flight had been three hours late leaving. This gave me time to recover from the high fever that I had after catching cold on an overly air-conditioned bus returning to Bangkok from an outing to Pimai, the location of a ruined city of the ancient Khmer civilization. Hong Kong's official time differs from Bangkok's by one hour. On the day's travels around Hong Kong, I purchased a conventional postcard (Figure 17) that indicated a quite familiar and reliable street scene, filled out the ritualized text and mailed the card from a postbox in Kowloon near the ferry landing from Hong Kong Island.

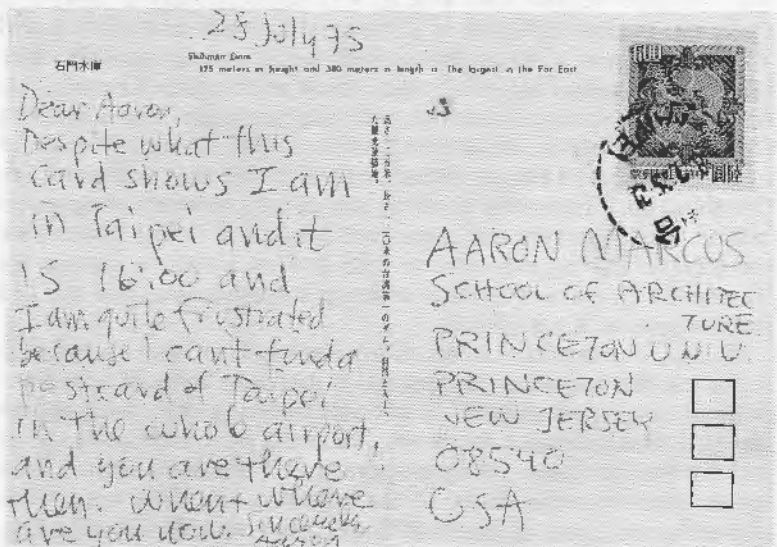
28.07.75

Taipei, Taiwan, is in the same time-zone as Hong Kong, but the people drive on the opposite side of the road. As we were preparing to leave Taipei after a thoroughly interesting, but brief visit which included the National Museum's treasures of Chinese Art, I tried to purchase at the airport a conventional postcard view of Taipei. To my dismay I could only find multiple picture packs of cards. I had already converted my money and had only a small sum left, insufficient for the postcard set. A few days before I had purchased the necessary postage at the central post office, whose efficiency and good organization, by the way, is unmatched in my experience. After discussing my problem of finding a postcard with a girl working in the airport post office, she was able to locate a conventional postcard (Figure 18) showing Shihmen Dam somewhere on the island of Formosa. The card had been tucked accidentally into a magazine. In this emergency situation I had to accept this postcard as valid for my project. She very kindly gave me it, be-

18



18A



cause I did not have enough local currency to buy even one card. I filled out the prescribed text and mailed it.

04.08.75

On 28 July 75, after several hours of flying, we arrived in Tokyo, Japan. Tokyo's official time differs from Taipei's by one hour, and the people drive on the opposite side of the road, i.e., like the British. During a visit to a stationery store in the Ginza district of Tokyo I purchased a conventionally unrealistic aerial view postcard (Figure 19) of the super-city showing both Mt. Fuji in the background and, in the middle ground, the full-scale model (actually a bit taller) of the Eiffel Tower which now stands in Tokyo to bring a taste of Paris to the people of Japan.

25.08.75

After nearly a month's sojourn in Japan we were again in Tokyo. During this time we had been able to witness, especially in Tokyo, the complex, curious collision of Eastern philosophy and culture with Western objects: a young boy in traditional wooden sandals swinging an imaginary baseball bat as a friend threw an imaginary baseball toward him; men at home in kimonos watching late night television which features Japanese western-suited studs sipping Johnny Walker in front of a bare-breasted female peanut gallery while they wait for a return to the short burlesque strip routines performed between commercials; discarded television sets and mass-produced adult comic books piled up in the streets. During this visit we also had been able to wander through thousands of years of history in Japan's museums and in the living monuments of Kyoto/Nara.

Today, our last day in Japan, time seemed to have stopped completely for us. We had entered a special in-between time. We watched a daytime-television samurai soap opera in living color with abundant red violence and elaborate costumes; we could only appreciate the action but not the language. Being immersed in a previous century via twentieth century media added to the impact of our time warp. Slowly the day unfolded like a mysterious flower until we reached the moment that we dreaded: the initiation of departure procedures: closing the apart-

19



19A

A Grand Panorama of Tokyo - Window
through the heart of the city is the Sumida River.
Snow-capped Mt. Fuji, the sacred peak of Japan,
is seen in the distance above the Tama River.
The city area is surrounded by a wide
belt of greenery. The city is clearly visible.
(A grand panorama of Tokyo)
Viata panoramica de Tokyo

4 August 75

Dear Aaron,
It is 21:05, and I am here,
and you are now there.
When and where are you
now?
Sincerely,
Aaron

空からみた大東京 - 写真は江東区上野一帯から南西
部方面を臨んだ大東京の景観である。写真中央を流れる
のは隅田川。その上、右から左へ日本橋、京橋、東
横、上野、赤坂、目黒、豊田、中野、大塚方面の
市街地が展開し、遠く、丹波山、日本アルプス、富士
山が見える。写真の多い多量には全く新しい写真
がはいっている。



POST CARD



Aaron Marcus
School of Architecture
& Urban Planning
Princeton Univ,
Princeton, N.J.
08540
USA

Aaron Marcus 40 Avenue S. 10th St.,
G. K. Desha, 2-14-16 Shimodachi, Shinjuku-ku Tokyo



ment door, the subway door, the airport door, the jet door. We were reluctant to leave our Dream-Time/Travel-Time and to re-enter Real-Time which existed inside the USA and which seemed to us to be completely unreal. Our piercing of the barrier of time was symbolized that night by our crossing the International Date Line at about 06:38 Honolulu time during our 14-hour flight.

25.08.75

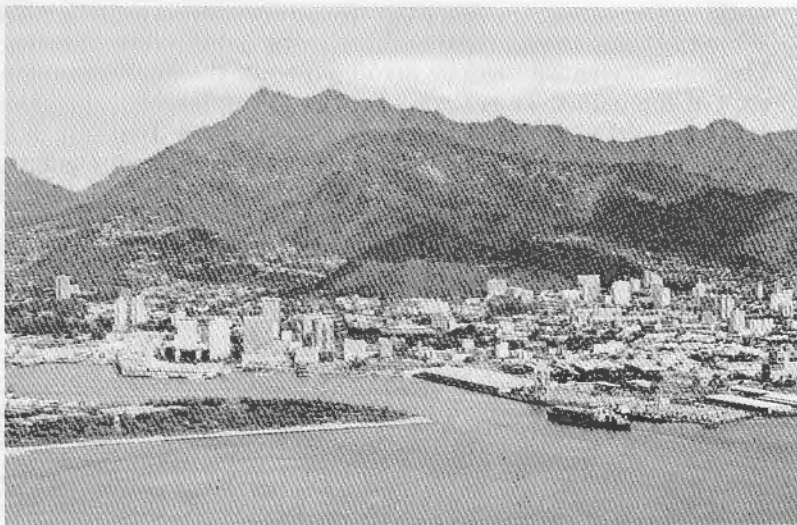
We arrived in Honolulu, Hawaii USA at about 08:00 (03:00 the previous day in Tokyo) and prepared to relive the same day and date that we had spent in Tokyo.²¹ My mind was in shock from the flight, from being in America again, and from this momentous circumstance of reliving time. We were also stunned to hear English spoken all about us for the first time in ten months and from the sheer bulk of the people we were seeing. After two months in the Far East²² our eyes had begun to think of our bodies as being the size of the people we became accustomed to encountering each day. I was actually filled with terror as I looked at the tanned, gargantuan objects in styrofoam wigs who moved ploddingly among the miles of corridors in wall-to-wall astro-turfed shopping malls as they chose their intra-meal snacks from 57 varieties of breakfast cereals. We were back in the USA.

It was the evening of our first day. I drove for many miles in a large car in order to buy a postcard (Figure 20). My first American purchase filled me with anxiety. I managed to look like a professional purchaser at the cash register, but my facade was fragile; I couldn't help but stare at the tiny dimes and pennies in my hand, a hand which seemed correspondingly magnified. At my Uncle Ted's and Aunt Etta's semi-luxury condominium I filled out the ritual text.

26.08.75

As the active, sending phase of the project neared its completion, I began to set down some of the theoretical notes which had been simmering on the back burners of consciousness: When redrawn diagrammatically as a static space work, the project has the form of Figure 1. However, because of the movement of my own body and of the earth and be-

20



Downtown Honolulu, Harbor Entrance and New Buildings

20A

Honolulu 26 Aug 75 HAWAIIAN
 Dear Aaron,
 It is 21:05 and I am
 here and you are there.
 When + where are you
 now?
 Sincerely,
 Aaron
 P.S. the day before the
 day before yesterday was
 yesterday.

POSTCARD
 ALWAYS USE
 ZIP CODE
 U.S. AIR MAIL 11¢

MR AARON MARCUS
 SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
 PRINCETON UNIV.
 PRINCETON, NJ
 USA
 AIR MAIL

Downtown Honolulu, Hawaii, showing the harbor, many new buildings and famous skyline of the Koolau Mountains. This photograph was taken from aboard a Panorama Air Tour flight.
 A Panorama Air Tour Photograph
 A CONTINENTAL CARD BY HAWAIIAN SERVICE, INC. P. O. BOX 2835, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96821

cause of the passage of time, the space-time path is actually a complex joining of lines along a constantly spiraling path in four dimensions. The work is characterized by my initiation of the physical sending of each of the points. Thus I am a kind of circumference representing a particular order of infinity (Figure 2,3) much as a Riemannian graph might represent a sphere as a planar disc and transform a point-point connection (at opposite ends of a diameter) into the circumference-center relationship. The return trip along the conceptual vectors B:A (Figure 4) is done through memory, internally, non-physically, as I gaze at the cards. Through these tiny excerpts of reality I return to the respective source points.²³

27.08.75

After so many trips far above the surface of the earth, we spent several days in close proximity to it, prostrating ourselves at the edge of this small dot of land in the middle of the Pacific Ocean beneath the intense equatorial sun. I looked with awe at the massive Horizontal, the motionless mother-rim of water/ heaven, womb/air. Today, at a branch post office in another gigantic shopping mall I mailed the postcard to myself.

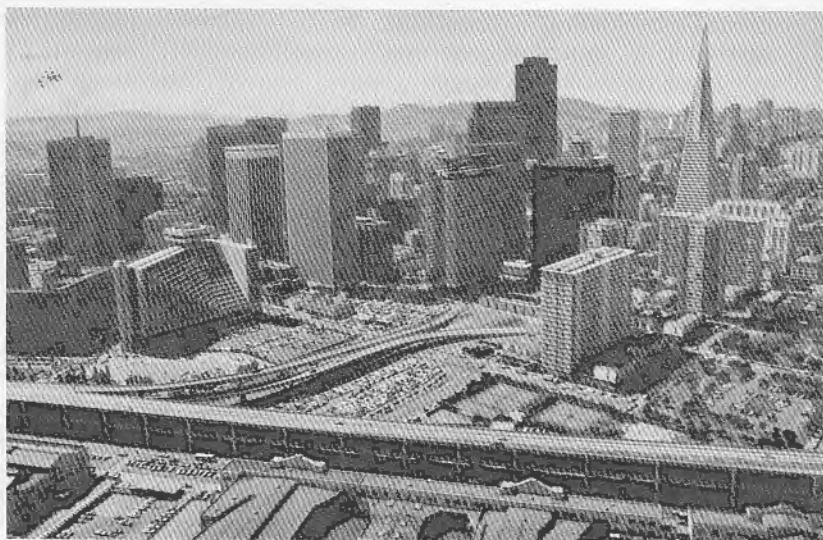
29.08.75

We flew for about 7 hours from Honolulu, Hawaii to San Francisco, California, whose official time differs from Hawaii's by 2 hours. We stayed with my Aunt Ethel and Uncle Marv, and then with close friends.

02.09.75

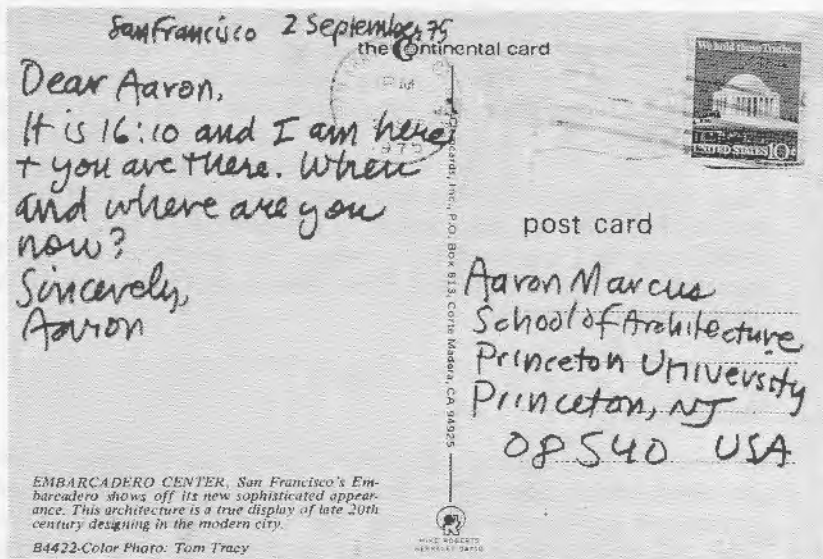
While visiting the Hyatt Regency Hotel to marvel at the chrome-plated visitors and vast interior pinball machine environment, I found a conventional aerial view postcard (Figure 21) in which that very building was pictured: Somewhere down there I was looking at a postcard in which there was a picture of the building in which I was somewhere

21



Embarcadero Center, San Francisco

21A



down there looking at a postcard...When my brain ceased resonating parabolically I purchased the card for approximately twice what a normal store might have charged. I was paying boutique prices in a high fashion environment; even the lowly postcard was apotheosized into an *objet*. I wrote on it the conventionalized text and mailed it at the hotel. At least the stamps had not been made more expensive: a mere ten cents for an air mail postcard.

04.09.75

Just before the Jewish New Year of 5736 on 6 September 75 (for comparison, see Figure 10), we arrived in Omaha, Nebraska (Figure 22). Omaha's official time differs from San Francisco's by two hours. Omaha is my birthplace, the city in which I had spent the first eighteen years of my life. In the airport I purchased a conventional picture postcard. As is common on this particular kind of card, bright red 'Greetings From Omaha' floated mysteriously in the milky cyan sky. Out on the streets small yellow rubber markers had been placed near freshly painted crosswalks; an odd moment to snap a picture, I thought. The signs on the buildings showed businesses which were no longer there, and it was difficult to determine how many years ago the picture had been taken. Perhaps as long ago as 1963, for in the center of the card a mysterious white 1963 Chevrolet Impala was pulling away from a parking place, a car identical to the one which my father handed down to me and which we continue to drive as the odometer passes the 120,000 mile marker. Could I be in that car pulling away from the corner of 15th and Farnam Streets? Perhaps I am only dreaming that someday I shall be looking at a card in which I find myself dreaming...I mailed the card from the home of my parents, Nate and Bebe Marcus, at 1504 South 58 Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68106.

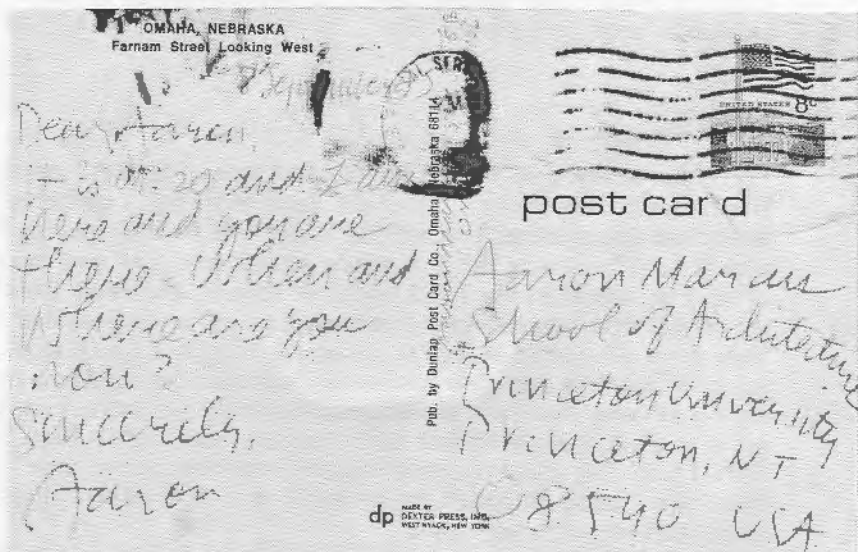
08.09.75

We returned by a domestic jet flight of two hours to Newark, New Jersey, whose official time differs from Omaha's by one hour. Susan's parents met us. We were in shock. We could not believe that Moving Time, the time to be moved through space, the time to be moved by all

22



22A



that our senses brought to us, was at last over. Time stopped. Everyone had recently been saying in the USA, 'Well, you'll be getting back to reality, hmmm?' I felt just the opposite. I felt the most intensely real time of our lives was coming to an end, and a depressing dream was beginning. For the next week I stumbled through the sense data that my body brought to me as I tried to put on the mental uniforms by which anyone out there beyond my skin might be able to recognize me. While my face seemed to move forward in time, my eyes gazed steadily backwards into the center of my skull where, as in a long space tunnel, Real Time was fast disappearing, particles of sense memory flying off every moment, escaping forever into the interior universe.²⁴

I had been reading Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* [12]: I dived into the metaphysical text and came up refreshed. I struggled to keep my head integral and locked onto the Reality of the past months as though every moment of the past nine pregnant months were the single previous moment connected to now. The strain of deciding which time to inhabit was showing. I would break into tears at unexpected moments, and I often felt as if I were floating in a Chagall-like manner, hovering over, and at the same moment, inside a vast, complex world called the Ivy League academic version of late twentieth-century American life.

09.09.75

I returned to my studio-office for the first time in almost nine months. It was quiet. Only the buzzing of the fluorescent lights disturbed the sepulchral atmosphere. The mail on a desk was in piles totaling four feet in height. Among the magazines, letters, and junk mail lay the tips of the conceptual arrows I had hurled at myself, like Zeus, from around the world, from around time. I picked them out and assembled them. They were all there. I looked at the inscriptions and the images. I turned them with care over and over. I am here now and you are there then. I am now there and you were here then. I was here then, but you are now there. I am here now but I shall be there then....Then Now Here There...My mind reverberated and resonated across time and space like Tibetan Buddhist temple bells, with strong throbings, and a clarity that pierced every sense.

The work itself came to an official end in time and space at that mo-

ment (Figure 5). I happened to be in Princeton, New Jersey, where we were on Daylight Savings Time. Like all works of post-relativistic, post-quantum reality, the edges of the piece are not precise...

05.10.75

Under the influence of Pirsig's book I've been trying to create 'quality' at every moment. In part this has taken the simplistic form of trying to remove the physical junk which has accumulated in our lives and to at least contemplate discarding some of the mental excess baggage that we carry around every second. We did manage to give away six large cardboard boxes of Things. I've tried this in the past, and couldn't bear it. I took slides of the favorite things that I discarded: at least I could keep them in a smaller volume. I've never dared showing anyone these slides.

10.10.75

Speaking in general terms, let us define a characteristic, call it 'American'. Consider A.G. who is American. I had met him elsewhere, and he had recently moved to Princeton. He came up to me and said, 'You know, if I had not met you elsewhere and knew about you, I would not know that you are American.' Since I considered myself American, I was shocked. The same day N.M. came up to me and said privately that she'd noticed I'd lost weight (I had managed to discard 25 pounds of excess bodily luggage) and that I was acting strangely. Obviously my mental costumes also no longer fit me very well. She reassured me that she and a friend, J.S., with whom she came into frequent contact, were there if I needed them and wished me luck in working things out. I almost broke down in tears again, but was too confused to have such a direct reaction. Real Time and Unreal Time were battling it out.

17.10.75

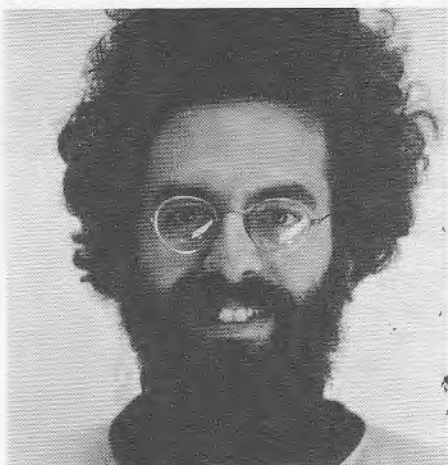
I've been wanting to set down some comments about time, but oddly enough I've not had the time to do it. The world of activities, of

change in the outer world in modern America²⁵ is whirling as fast as ever. It has already induced a corresponding increase in the rate of passage of time as the connections of obligations, of likes and dislikes begin to form again. It is dawn/dusk between Night-time and Day-time, between Dream-time and Real-time. Are my eyes opening or closing?

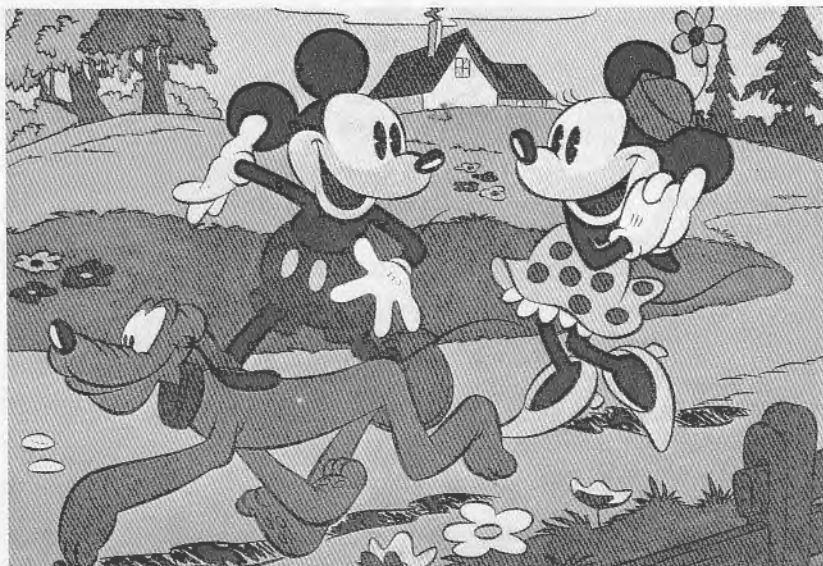
Aaron Marcus (Figure 23)

23:59, 31 December 75²⁶ (Figure 11)

23



24



Footnotes

¹For a discussion of the nature of time-time works, see 'Signing on the Dotted Line,' a documentation of a conceptual artwork, *Soft Where, Inc., The Work of Aaron Marcus*, available from the *West Coast Poetry Review*, 1127 Codel Way, Reno, Nevada 89503, USA [7, pp.27ff].

²Time terms include the following:

on time	time flies
time is money	time of our lives
time on my hands	keeping abreast of the times
time after time	in good time
to find time	past time
time's up	good times, bad times
at no time	time out of mind
time enough	out of time
time out	pastime
time piece	from time to time
time and tide	in time
to keep time	time to go
double time	in no time
out of time	dinner time
time enough	time bomb
for a time	for the time being
bed time	sidereal time
to kill time	lifetime
to do time	solar time
lunar time	in time
timeless	long time, no see
with time	timely

Time-related phenomena include the following:

Waiting:

duration, impatience; boredom, expectation; novelty

Memory:

sharp, clear indistinct

Overlap:

simultaneity present + past vs. future combinations of past + future

Directionality:

objective: one-directional, linear (Figure 10)

1 heartbeat	= 1 second
60 seconds	= 1 minute
60 minutes	= 1 hour
24 hours	= 1 sun
7 suns	= 1 week
28 suns	= 1 moon
3 moons	= 1 season
12 moons	= 1 year
30 years	= 1 generation
90 years	= 1 lifetime

subjective: multidirectional, non-linear secular time vs. sacred time (Figure 5)

Integral vs. scanning perception: length of the present moment [8] Order vs. disorder [5]

Piaget's conception of a child's conception of time [11] includes the following:

Events

Sequences

Duration

Succession

Simultaneity

Measurement (of time)

The concept of age

³This act of writing letters to leaders was in part foreshadowed by my earlier letters in 1957 and 1958 to Nikita Krushchev (cynically congratulating him for putting a Russian into orbit) and to Joseph Kennedy, John F. Kennedy's father (in which I asked him if he might not like to become the patron of a budding artist). Needless to say, I received no reply to either of these letters, not even a friendly check-up from the FBI.

⁴As it happens, the form of the mark also resembles the symbol that has become accepted as the symbol of peace: the 'chicken foot' or nuclear disarmament symbol (Figure 6).

⁵I was born in Omaha, Nebraska at 18:05, 22 May 43.

⁶In selecting the use of postcards, I was aware of the potential significance of

and analysis of the precise imagery as it has been tested in histories of such ephemera (see for example references in [9]). I also recalled a graduate urban planning student's project at Yale University's School of Architecture in 1972. The student and I discussed a detailed semiotic-oriented analysis of the imagery of complimentary Hotel and Motel postcards. In my use of the postcard medium, I was accepting conventionalized imagery relatively uncritically, as one might select a particular yellow because it is basically yellow. What was more important in this work was the later migration through space and time of a 'sign vehicle' in Peirce's terms [2], rather than specific sign vehicle vs. designatum or referent relationships. This by no means detracts from the value of the work as executed nor from the potential merit of another work which might choose to explore the gross semantic dimension of the sign vehicle/designatum.

⁷Time is read in the color of leaves during the change of seasons; the 'tick-tock' of a clock, the swing of a pendulum, the rotation of two or three lines around a point, the change of numbers in a sequence, the presence of menstrual flow, the shape of the moon...

⁸During my years in high school and undergraduate college, it was very clear to me that my own Present, which was filled with so much tension, suffering and anxiety, was intolerable. At the time, the past was the subject of deep longing for something irretrievable. It likewise brought only frustration, remorse, regret, and painful devotion. Consequently, I was completely trapped in time and single-mindedly future-oriented. However, as soon as any future moment, goal, experience, activity, or emotion neared, I raced through the room of the present moment, grabbed hold of the internal experience, and threw it violently into the past as fast as I could, then locked the door behind me.

⁹When I was in Jerusalem on my sabbatical, I felt with unsurpassed intensity that I was imbedded in history as solidly as if I were a rock deep within the walls surrounding the Temple Mount.

¹⁰When I was a young child and drove with my parents to visit my Aunt Eva and Uncle Tom in Sioux City, Iowa, I calculated that it took eight 52-page comic books to reach their front door from ours in Omaha, Nebraska.

¹¹One day on my way to school during the seventh grade I opened a comic book at the corner near our house and began reading. When I finished the comic book, I looked up and found myself at school, with no recollection of how I had come there, of having crossed streets, or of encountering other children. I was frightened at the thought of where/when I had been.

¹²In Hebrew there is no present tense. It is conjectured that primordially there were only simple constellations of nouns and adjectives which expressed that which is existing and that which is acting/being acted upon.

¹³Among many biological rhythms plants exhibit very slow ones in comparison to animal circadian rhythms. If one were to accept as valid the quasi-scientific statements about plant perception, one might conclude that many forms of life are thinking, but in a time frame so different from ours that we cannot perceive it or conceive it. Mightn't one? For more on the effect of cyclical time, see Footnote 24.

¹⁴We generally have difficulty keeping large quantities of time in our consciousness. Newspapers in general do not help us to relate what is news today to what was news yesterday; for them only the present exists. Today television gives us 'instant news.' We are so engrossed in keeping and ingesting as much of the present as possible that we have no idea of what all this explosion of information means altogether. As intellectuals we are led to think that we may high browse in the whole of time. In fact, we have lost our grip on the present. What a relief it was on the trip around the world to be outside of time on a global scale. We simply related to the present joys and sorrows of a local space which measured just beyond the boundaries of our three skins.

¹⁵In a discussion between A.G. and myself about the differences between the US American East Coast and West Coast we reduced them (as others also have) to essentially this: the East Coast is trapped in Past-Time (history); the West Coast has escaped and is living comfortably entirely in the Present tense (a-history).

¹⁶John Wheeler, the noted Princeton University physicist who has studied gravitational waves, black holes in space, and the basic concepts of space-time, remarks somewhere that matter may simply be considered as bumps and knots in space-time; in addition, 'below' this space-time as we know it is an ur-space-time or infra-space-time, which is that of pure geometrical-mathematical relationships. I believe I hear someone whistling the tune of the players of Herman Hesse's *Beadgame*.

¹⁷When I was a teenager, I used to send letters, usually on the occasion of my birthday, to my future self explaining my then current predicaments and aspirations. I felt that my future self was my closest and most trustworthy, sympathetic friend. I addressed the letters to myself, mailed them, and when I received them back, I put them in a safe place to wait for my still more future version to discover them. Somewhere these unopened envelopes are still waiting.

¹⁸When I was a child, I used to think that sky writing was caused by God writing in the heavens. As obvious proof of this, I could detect a small black object in the sky just preceding the letters of shaped cloud. I took this to be the pencil point of His pencil which had just begun to pierce the blue planer fabric of the sky.

¹⁹When we were near the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem one particular day, we saw orthodox Sephardic Jews celebrating Shushan Purim, part of the celebration of a holiday called Purim. It was an unusual sacred-time event for the following reason. The holiday consists of two days. On the first day all Jews in Israel (and elsewhere) celebrate the first, basic day of the Holiday. To be more precise, in Israel all areas outside of the Old City of Jerusalem celebrate, but not inside the Old City. On the second day it is the first day of the festival inside Jerusalem, but not elsewhere beyond the walls. These particular Jews had come from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem on the day when it was Purim in Tel Aviv but not in Jerusalem to celebrate Purim near the holiest place in Judaism. Thus for them it was the sacred time which existed outside Jerusalem that they had carried in a conceptual bubble with them into the bubble of (relatively) secular time that existed for their orthodox brethren who might be living nearby inside Jerusalem. The time barrier was at the edge of Jerusalem and had been penetrated by another...which doesn't happen very often, even for those jet travelers who feel (rightly so) that they carry the previous local time with them until, like an evaporating atmosphere, it diffuses into the new local time.

²⁰Jack Burnham in *The Structure of Art* [3, p.471] comments: 'Another example [of art transgressing history] would be work $\S$ which focus on the time element, but in such a way that time is negated or reduced to a finite duration. It must be remembered that mythically, works of art function only as points on the time continuum, never as events.' Q.E.D.

²¹It is amusing that as we approach 1984, all statistical charts, predictions, etc., refer to 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, or 1985. It seems as if we've already blocked that year out of our memory. In all actuality as someone has said, we shall not even know when we are in 1984. It will cease to exist as a concept, because it will simply exist.

²²When I was a child, I used to think that the whites of my eyes were like the film of a camera that ran just behind my pupils. Because I would wink or blink on various occasions with one or the other of my eyes, I became aware that the amount of unused 'film' in one eye was uneven with that in the other. I became very concerned about this, worrying that one of my eyes might run out of film before or after my proper time was up. As a result, I endeavored over a period of several months to wink and blink with each eye until I felt intuitively

that I had evened out the two 'cameras.' I was thus symmetrical in time again and was better prepared to meet my end in time.

²³I suppose this project could be said to have begun sometime in 1974 when an informally dressed man in tennis shoes entered through the partially open door of my office near the candy machines in the basement of the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at Princeton University. Without uttering a word he handed me his business card, waited until he was certain I had read it, then jogged away, up the stairs, and was gone. I had never seen him before, and I've never seen him since. His card read as shown in Figure 7. He was a Professional Long Distance Runner! This man's expertise was in moving in time and space from point A to point B. How on earth did he manage to make a living doing that? Was he a 'starving artist'? Who would assign him his tasks? For what reasons would anyone employ him? Or did he merely set his own goals? What did he think about as he carried out his tasks? I didn't know then...

²⁴See Footnote 13.

²⁵One theory has it that heavy, durable media go with early empires that stress time, and lighter, less permanent materials go with empires that stress space.' [Ascher and Ascher, 'The Quipu as a Visible Language,' *Visible Language*, Vol. 9, No. 4, Autumn 1975, p.353, summarizing a theory in Innes, Harold, *Empire and Communications*. Oxford:University of Oxford Press, 1950.]

²⁶For a very good time, call 609-878-1212.

²⁷Some thoughts in English cannot be expressed through the alphanumeric symbols.

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Figures

1. Basic asterisk-or starlike formation of 'Time-Piece.'
2. Point-point conceptual relationship.
3. Circumference-point conceptual relationship.
4. Bivalent (bi-directional) flow in 'Time-Piece.'
5. Linear vs. non-linear time.
6. Evolution of mark symbolism in the initial sketch of a 'time-piece' or mark-work.
7. Business card of a professional long-distance runner.
- 8,8A. Prototype cards for initial sketch.

9. Reply from Israeli Prime Minister's office.
10. Rosh Hashanah card for 5734/1974.
11. Advertisement for a world time zone clock which costs approximately the same as one round-the-world flight.
- 12,12A. Jerusalem, Israel.
- 13,13A. Teheran, Iran.
- 14,14A. Bombay, India.
- 15,15A. Kathmandu, Nepal.
- 16,16A. Bangkok, Thailand.
- 17,17A. Hong Kong, B.C. (China).
- 18,18A. (Taipei) Taiwan.
- 19,19A. Tokyo, Japan.
- 20,20A. Honolulu, Hawaii USA.
- 21,21A. San Francisco, California USA.
- 22,22A. Omaha, Nebraska USA.
23. Aaron Marcus.
24. A Walt Disney Picture Postcard Landscape on an Israeli Postcard.

American Bi-Centennial Tetragram/Tetragon

Documentation of a conceptual poem-drawing artwork conceived 1972-1976 and executed 4 July 1976 by Aaron Marcus, 5y Magie Apartments, Faculty Road, Princeton, New Jersey 08540 USA.

Summary

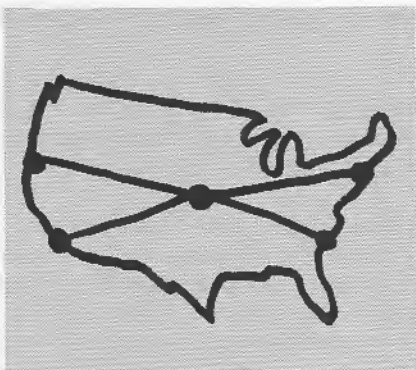
After considering a varied set of theoretical sketches, a commemorative marking of the 200th birthday of the United State of America was created by writing/drawing over time and space in the following manner: electronic-environmental forms were constructed by means of (a) phone calls to blood relatives who, during the calls, ritually clasped hands and joined four points on the continental U.S.A. and (b) phone calls to far northern, southern, eastern, and western points of the USA in which I tried to locate another person bearing my name.¹

12.03.72

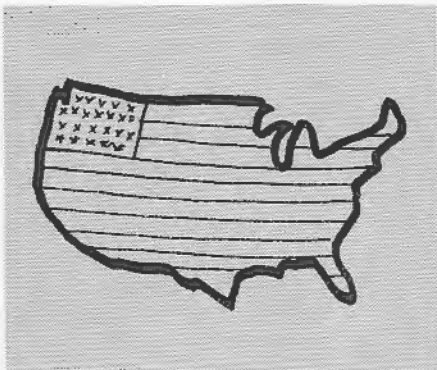
In dionysian frenzy, as if possessed by a divine power, I set down a series of proposals for conceptual art works. Some of these were to be developed over the next few years as complete, separate works. I noted that many of these projects attempted to create a conceptual resonance across time and that they concerned themselves with the transfer of information for purposes of symbol-manipulation, not tool-making. These sketch ideas included the following schemes:

1. Electronic Auto-Cancellation of America Piece: set up a conference call on the Fourth of July between five cities so that an electronic X (Figure 1) is created across the country. (This work later became 'An X on America' and was documented in the monograph on my work *Soft Where, Inc.*, West Coast Poetry Review Publishers, Reno, Nevada, 1975.)
2. Electronic Patriotism Piece: On Flag Day, set up a conference call which links many cities in the USA in such a way that the pattern of locations looks like an American flag (figure 2), or spells out 1776 (Fig-

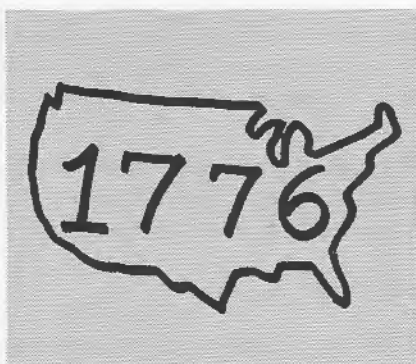
1



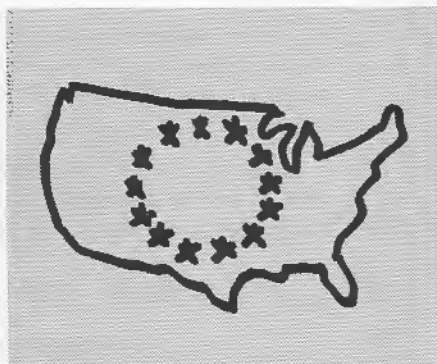
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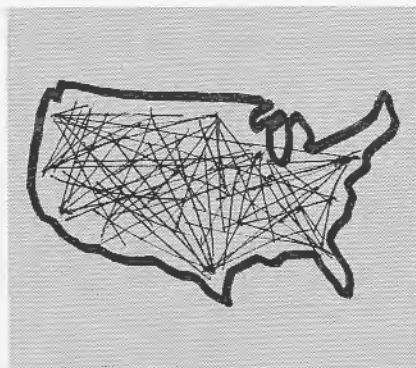
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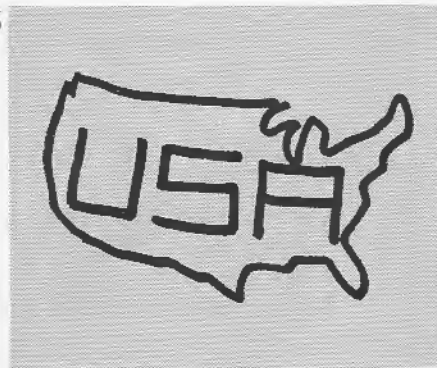
4



5



6



ure 3), or creates a large circle of 13 points (Figure 4) reminiscent of the first American flags.

3. Radio Piece: On a certain day of the week two radio stations, one in New York, the other in Los Angeles, should exchange broadcasts, including local news and weather, for a period of an hour.

4. Television Piece: As soon as closed circuit television cameras are set up to monitor the streets in Hoboken, New Jersey, and in Glendale, California (reported on in a recent issue of *Communication News*), closed-circuit television signals should be made available so that residents of one city may watch the downtown corners of the other. This would provide work/recreation for retired people in rest homes.

5. Xerox Peice: Copy several one dollar bills with the new two-sided xerox copier. Try to buy something with these copies. Record the results of the endeavor. Friends or a local art gallery may provide assistance.

6. Interplanetary Probe Piece: Instead of banal illustrated metal plaques sent on rockets to stellar destinations, include the following with extra-terrestrial probes to signal intelligent beings that there is life on earth:

An American Express credit card.

A miniature photocopy of the front page of the *Wall Street Journal*.

One xerox copy of the telephone company's bill for the last such probe.

02.04.72

I conceived of two American telephone pieces, one which would connect all state capitols in a conference call (Figure 5) and another in which the cities selected for a conference call would be in three groups such that their locations spelled out 'USA' (Figure 6).

01.07.73

I formulated the following theoretical conference call conceptual art-works that related to 'An X on America,' a work which had been completed in November 72:

1. JFK: The cities of the conference call creating 'JFK' would be re-grouped in such a way (Figure 7) that a new gestalt 'CIA' emerged. The correspondence was never resolved. This work was to be executed on 22 November 73, the tenth anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.
2. USA: This work would possibly be sponsored by AT&T. The cities of the USA selected for the work would spell out the acronym 'USA' (Figure 8). I considered using only small town locations as participatory points.
3. 1776-1984: The locations of a conference call conceptual art work were to be designated in such a way (Figure 9) that the gestalt of points could be read either as 1776 or as 1976 or as 1984. The call was to involve 18 stations or nodes.

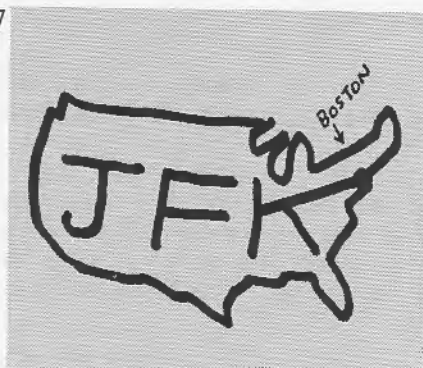
06.08.73

I conceived of a conceptual art work in which four points would be used as shown in Figure 10. The connected points would make the largest rectangle possible on the continental USA assuming that irregularities were evened out. It was to be called 'The Bureaucratic Idealization of America Piece.'²

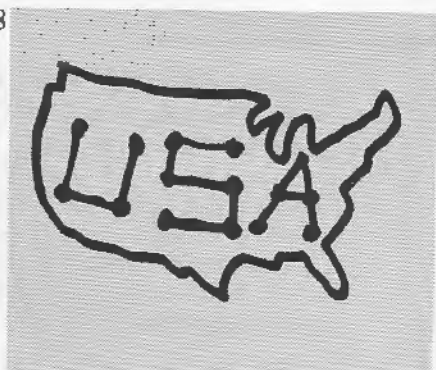
08.08.74

Today Richard Milhous Nixon resigned as President of the United States of America. I imagined briefly a work which turned the entire continental USA into a large smiling mouth (Figure 11).

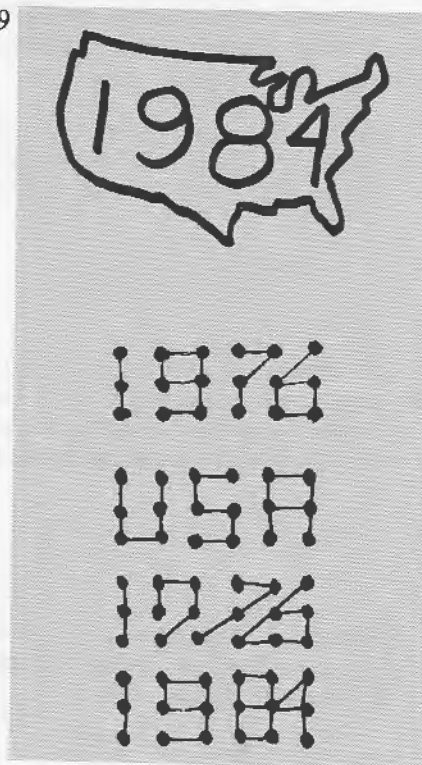
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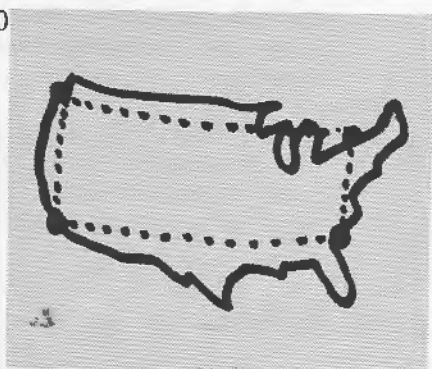
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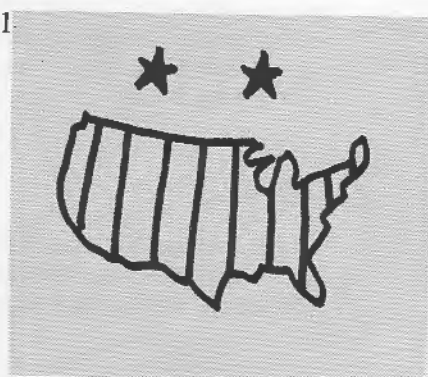
9



10



11



06.09.75

Ideas for cybernetic space-time environments occurred to me: imagine (1) if everytime I blinked my eyes, small items of my surroundings changed; (2) if everytime I turned my head to look again at what had been in my field of view, the composition of reality would be greatly changed. Computer graphics systems could easily create such environmental artworks.

28.09.75

Time is the essential phenomenon which must be addressed in artworks, yet many artists become confused and conceive it to be space.³

10.03.76

Today is the 100th anniversary of the telephone. I meant to commemorate the day in an appropriate fashion, but it slipped my mind. In *Communication News* (Vol. 13, No.3, p.1) some portentous and pretentious remarks appeared in honor of the occasion: 'the telephone's centennial year (is) not only... an occasion for celebration but...an opportunity to enhance our own understanding of the role of communications in our society.' Although somewhat delayed in time, the work in progress will respond to this call for contributions. The same issue (page 28) noted that the USA possesses 143,972,000 of the world's 358,600,000 telephones.

13.06.76

As the Bicentennial date approached I began to grow nervous. I had not provided the necessary conditions for a 'USA' or '1976' call to take place on America. A new development occurred: I conceived of a 'Midwestern Square Dance on the USA' in the following way (Figure 12). The project would be scheduled for 12 noon in middle-America. As precisely as possible a 'square' on the (spherical) surface of the USA would be determined, each of whose corners fell in some city,

town, or village. Four people would complete the corners. The instructions would ask these four participants (arranged through phone calls and/or letters to Chambers of Commerce) to stand still ritually, twirl, grasp the hands of the other three spiritually/psychically/physically, then kick, twirl, then stand still again.⁴ Presumably there would be an audience around each of the four participants as each concentrated on feeling the presence of the three others.

24.06.76

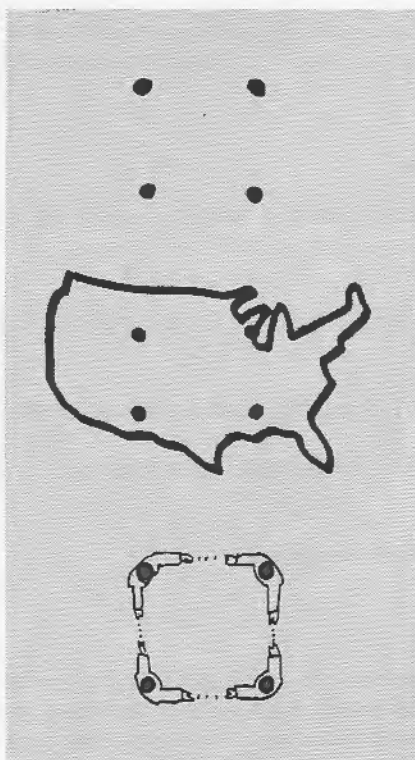
During a fitful night's sleep I awakened at 4:00 a.m. with a new version of the Bicentennial piece throbbing in my head. In this version four people across the USA would begin at 12:00 noon a ritual event that would unite them, this time in a diamond-like marking: one person would be in the north, one in the south, one in the east, one in the west (Figure 13). I immediately considered my brother Stephen in California and myself in New Jersey as the east-west representatives. These choices seemed particularly appropriate since we appear to have naturally accommodated ourselves to East Coast vs. West Coast mentalities. (As an example, my first question is, what are you thinking about; his is, how do you feel about what you are thinking.) The other two personalities remained undetermined. I ran over possible friends and/or relatives but did not immediately select anyone. It occurred to me that it would be desirable to have a suitable 'equalized' mixture of male/female, white/black/brown/yellow/red, and Jew/Protestant/Catholic. However, I felt I could not find the appropriate people in the few remaining days before 4 July 76.

The work was to be dedicated to American expansion from 1776 to 1976: expansion in terms of territory (north, south, east, west), agriculture, science, spirituality, technology, and aesthetics.⁵ On a personal level it was dedicated to our forthcoming child who would complete our four-being family.⁶ Hovering in the background were implicit and explicit Tetragrammatonic references: the four points represented earth, air, fire and water.⁷ The ritual would involve three stages as follows:

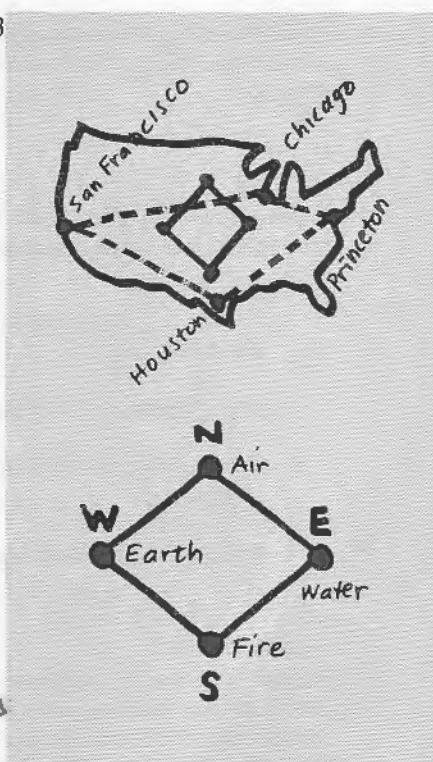
1. Getting In

Eighteen minutes of meditation on the presence and significance of the

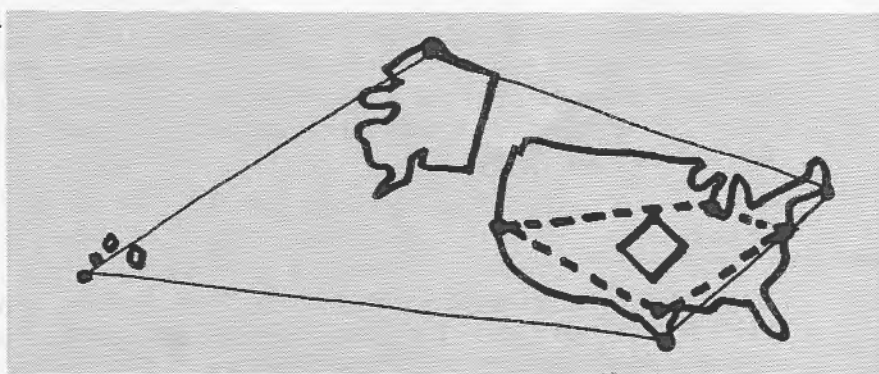
12



13



14



other people participating in the event. Each person would stand facing toward the center, with arms reaching out to grasp the hands of the others.

2. Doing

Sitting down for about one minute, each of the four would go through an appropriate action sequence:

Earth: digging a small hole in the earth, defecating into it, and covering it up.

Air: breathing air slowly, rhythmically, and self-consciously.

Water: digging a small hole in the earth, urinating into it, and covering it up.

Fire: eating something, then exercising.

3. Getting Out

Seven minutes of meditation on the presence and significance of the other people participating in the event. Each person as before would stand toward the center with arms reaching out to grasp the hands of the others.

The documentation would consist of photos taken by witnesses (spouses or family) plus a letter, note, or book of comments from each participant about the reactions to the entire event beginning with my phone calls to request their participation and ending with the writing of their comments.

25.06.76

During the morning I had a premonition that Susan would give birth to a girl, Elisheva, on 7 or 11 July. (As it happened, she was born on 14 July 76 at 11:45 p.m. (= 17 Tammuz 5736).)

04.07.76

Panic: suddenly time spun too rapidly about me, and I had not made the necessary phone calls and preparations. Between preparing for this work of conceptual art and the birth of our second child, the former succumbed to the latter. As always, necessity was the mother of invention.⁸ Before my eyes the final form of the Bicentennial work rapidly unfolded. It would not be a meek, passive score, but a dynamic event whose depth and breadth were conceived as an instantaneous whole, like the assembly of a handful of axioms into a logical universe from which an infinite kaleidoscope of realities emerges, forever revealing new petals of a universal flower or new layers within a universal onion, depending upon one's cultural preferences.

It seemed clear that the new work would simultaneously be a resonating directed graph that would reverberate along the multi-dimensional space of topological, ethnic, geographic, diachronic, and synchronic parameters (Figure 14). I would be allegorically 'calling my family on the phone' across space-time. Was this an electronic Lissitzky in the sheep's clothing of a dematerialized Norman Rockwell?

04.07.76

In a flash of double-brained vision the bivalent nature of the work revealed itself. While engaging in the conceptual searching for myself, I would have my maternal blood relatives enact the complete conceptual tetragram/tetragon as we square-danced in time and space about my maternal grandmother Jenny Burstein (called by her great grandson 'Gee Gee Jenny'). She was born in 1886 in Kiev, Russia, fled Czarist Russia to America on a ship from Hamburg, Germany (which turned around during the night in a vain attempt to save the sinking *Titanic*), and made her way to Omaha, Nebraska, by way of the immigration route then operating through Galveston, Texas.

I decided to call to the four directions, the four winds, the four letters. I would call the most distant points of the entity USA.⁹ At each location I considered calling the local information operator and asking each to stretch out her hands: I also momentarily thought of calling local telephone business offices. Then the conceptual fog lifted, and I beheld the natural form: I would call 'myself' at these locations.

Technically I would try to locate an 'Aaron Marcus' at an appropriate location.

Established through phone call connections, the work would not have the concreteness of earlier projects of similar form, such as 'An X on America' (1972), 'A Zero-Circle Around the Earth' (1973), and 'Time-Piece' (1975) in that the electronic branches of the tetragram/tetragon established by the original calls did not in themselves finalize the work. In both the paternal and maternal phases, the point locations created their own form subsequent to the calling sequence. From basic Gestalt psychology (e.g., Wertheimer's Principles), it is obvious that these four points may coalesce into a symbol like a plus sign as well as the intended quadrilateral. In this case the previous discussion within the documentation clearly sets the priorities. It is not the arrow/branching mark of the calls or the plus-sign/horizontal-vertical mark, but the quadrilateral/diamond mark which is the preferred reading. As in earlier works there is a satisfying ambivalence of themes present should the reader/viewer wish to pursue the matter beyond the surface network of visible language. These themes include the following descriptors of marks:

written/drawn
temporal/spatial
paternal/maternal
solipsistic/universal
concrete/abstract

After consulting the *New Grosset Road Atlas* (1967) I determined that practical nodes for the work were these (I later discovered that I erred in selecting Texas: Florida would have been correct. This was a regrettable but non-fatal oversight to the significance of the project.¹⁷):

Lubec or Eastport, Maine
Brownsville, Texas
Fairbanks or Barrow, Alaska
Nihau or Mana (on Kauai), Hawaii

The forthcoming participants were to be the following:

Maternal Grandmother center Omaha, Nebraska

My brother Stephen	west	San Francisco, California
My Uncle Alvin Burstein (My Grandmother's son)	south	San Antonio, Texas
My cousin Stanley Burstein, (My Grandmother's brother's (My Uncle Jake) son)	north	Chicago, Illinois
Myself	east	Princeton, New Jersey

I ritually enacted my corner of the embrace and thereby began the work. I concentrated on myself in space-time, the events that brought me to this point and my future companions. I tried calling my parent's (Nate and Libbie Burstein Marcus) house (402-553-0973) where my Grandmother was visiting for a Fourth of July 1776-1976 family picnic. There was no answer. I called my step-grandfather's number and learned from Grandpa Louis that everyone was out cruising the shopping centers and would return shortly. I called my brother Stephen in San Francisco. I found him at his girl friend's apartment (415-285-3219). He agreed to participate and formed the western node. He concentrated for a moment until he felt the conceptual links attached through his outstretched hands, then notified me when link-up was completed and taken down. I thanked him, discussed family matters, and moved on in space-time.

04.07.76

I called cousin Stanley in Chicago at 312-878-8255, but there was no answer. In the meantime I began to locate the nodes for the topological/geographical overlay tetragram/tetragon. I needed to find an Aaron Marcus in Hawaii, Alaska, Maine, Texas. I marvelled at the following coincidence. Two weeks earlier, while making my annual glean-ing of the anthropologically, sociologically, and monetarily valuable refuse from the trash cans of student dormitories at Princeton University (where the pampered children of middle and upper-middle America deposit their hardly used plastic-electric bon-bons), I had discovered someone had thrown out twenty telephone books from major areas in the USA. I had noticed in particular Alaskan and Hawaiian books. I had considered saving them simply because of their piquant uselessness in Princeton, New Jersey, but had eventually dismissed the notion as be-

ing beyond the umbra of comprehensibility. Lacking these authorities I now consulted the local Princeton telephone book and determined the appropriate area codes:

Alaska	907
Hawaii	808
Maine	207
Texas	512

I began by dialing Information in Alaska, letting my 'fingers do the walking' over thousands of miles in a search of my 'self.' In trying to reach what seemed to be a northernmost point, Barrow, Alaska, I found the connection had been made to Fairbanks. The operator explained that she handled all towns and cities in the northern part of the state and could not find any Marcus at all in her listings. She suggested that if I wished to pursue the matter further I should try the names in Nome.

Moments later in Nome, Alaska, I learned that there were three individuals with my monicker: Joe Ann G., L., and M., but no A. or Aaron Marus. I contemplated calling up one of these three, but decided it was beyond the hermetic intentions of this abstract paternally-oriented phase of the work as originally planned.

On to Hawaii: I called up via trans-Pacific links the island of Kauai and discovered there were two listings, for Arthur and for P.M., but alas none for Aaron Marcus. I seemed to be getting closer, however. In Maine I dialed up information for Lubec and Eastport, but no Marcus listings could be located there or in the entire Calais section of Maine. The closest that I could find was a single listing for an Ivan Markus, MD in Machias. Was this a playful refrence by fate to the Russian original of my family name Marcus which, according to my father, was once Markusovitch? I left off further musing and whisked myself to Texas.

The information operator for Brownsville had some difficulty understanding my family name. Eventually I learned there was not a single Marcus listing, or for that matter even a Markus listing. She was able to find one Marcos listing: the Marcos Premier Service Station (but that hardly met the requirements).

The results of this rapid hemispherical search were not rewarding in an immediate, surface sense. However, there was no failure in sketch-

C		EASTMAN KODAK		11:15 AM		# 1000 1000		TOTAL		3221		Service From Last Bill - Defunct amount paid		1000	
R-RATE CODES															
If you pay by mail please enclose punched card If you pay in person please bring bill and card															
Business Office address are shown in front page of telephone directory. Office Hours 9AM to 5PM Monday Through Friday															
930 2R 609 924 0185 # 20590 29 July 76															
A MARCUS FACULTY RD SY APT MAGIE APTS PRINCETON NJ 08540															
JUL 20 76															
Service and Equipment - For one month in advance 9.18															
Message Units - For one month 1															
Calls Outside Local Area and Telegrams 32.21															
Other Charges or Credits - Explanation enclosed															
United States Tax 2.42															
Director's Advertising 42.81															
Balance From Last Bill - Defunct amount paid AUG 10 76 42.81															
1001 0908 542															

DATE	PLACE CALLED	AREA	TELEPHONE NO.	MIN.	AMOUNT
6200	MAHA	NEBR	4025530973	0552	19 280
623	NEW YDPK	NY	2124758382	2200	5 87
625	MERCERVL	NJ	58655334	1526	5 19
629	MAHA	NEBR	4025530973	2304	34 496
629	BAYDNE	NJ	2014364200	1319	6 85
629	TRENTON	NJ	39364614	1423	1 16
629	TRENTON	NJ	39364614	1417	4 28
629	PHILA	PA	2154774700	1413	2 63
630	BAYDNE	NJ	2014364200	0813	5 73
701	NEW YORK	NY	2124758382	1533	1 39
701	NEW YORK	NY	2122881588	1433	7 183
704	CHICAGO	ILL	3124455479	1427	1 20
704	CHICAGO	ILL	3128788255	1748	7 165
704	SAN FRAN	CAL	4152853219	1402	25 386
704	MAHA	NEBR	4025530973	1733	15 361
704	MAHA	NEBR	4025531963	1359	2 35
707	NEW YORK	NY	2124758382	2102	2 40

ing electronically a tetragram/tetragon relation across time zones and across vast terrestrial expanses.¹¹

At 17:32 I called Omaha again and reached both my Grandmother and my Uncle Al at my mother's house. My grandmother is almost deaf; and being an amiably cantankerous person, she refuses to turn up her hearing aid. As a result, phone conversations are like monologues passing in the ether, often with very humorous results. As long as we adhere to our normal script, we can manage a discussion of the weather, health, and what the grandchildren are doing. We had a brief, but satisfying contact.

Speaking to my Uncle Al in Omaha created an extreme state of the geographical warping of the tetragram/tetragon graphing, for I had expected to reach him in San Antonio, Texas, and then remembered that for the Fourth of July weekend he had made an unusual pilgrimage back to his birthplace to visit his family. Al agreed to complete his corner of the multi-dimensional object. I waited in silence while he prepared himself, cleared his mind, and established the connection. When he was through I reached Cousin Stanley and explained the project to him. He consented to participate and in a manner very much like Uncle Al (they are both natives of Omaha and contemporaries), conducted the ritual, thereby completing the final stage of the work (Figure 15).

06.10.76

I had planned to write up the documentation in the days that followed. On 5 July 76 I organized a selection of comments on space-time by Professor John Wheeler of Princeton University, who is recognized for his research into the nature of gravitation and the black holes of the universe. These comments are to be a conceptual framework paralleling the documentation's chronological narrative. The ensuing birth of our daughter Elisheva on 14 July 76 replaced one creation for another, and not until this moment in time has an opportunity arisen to close the narrative sequence. Somewhere in the hypogeometry of energy and time, the bivalent hypo-tetragram/tetragon structured by telephone links, intention, and the course of history resides for (possibly cyclic) eternity.

Aaron Marcus
Princeton, New Jersey USA
23:24 EDT

6 October 76

Completed at the close of the second Presidential debate between Gerald Ford (who recently wrote me a 'personal' letter manufactured by machines and machine-like men) and Jimmy Carter (who hasn't written me at all and doesn't know me from Adam).

Footnotes

¹The quantum principle...and the relativity [principle]...together constitute the major scientific innovations of our time...Of all the advances that the mind of man has ever made toward a completely harmonious account of human experience, none is more revolutionary, and none has penetrated more deeply into the inner working of the machinery of the universe. These new concepts have dramatically influenced the branch of philosophy which is concerned with distinguishing the knowable from the unknowable. (*Note*: this and the following footnotes are quotations from 'Seekers for Eternal Truth: Planck, Einstein, Bohr; Our Changing Views of Space,' by John Archibald Wheeler, the Paul Dana Bartlet Lectures at the Inauguration of James Edward Doty as President of Baker University, 20-22 April 1967, reprinted with a change of folio J.E. Doty, ED., *Authentic Man Encounters God's World*, Baker University Press, Baldwin City, Kansas, 1967, and found by accident lying in an empty set of file drawers delivered to my office in June 1976 by the Princeton University office equipment movers.)

²...and then came the time in 1899 and 1900 when the measurements became good enough so it became utterly clear that the idea of the time would not suffice to explain this [phenomenon].

³Newton proposed ideas of absolute space and absolute time which seemed preposterous to many of the philosophers of the day.

⁴...but whether we talk of space in the small or space in the large, we are talking of the *dynamics* of space. We are envisaging a geometry which changes with time. What then does it mean to speak of geometry? And what is to be understood by the term, 'the change of geometry with time'?

⁵[In regard to Riemann's theories of space:] The space in which we live may be curved up into closure, and yet this curvature may be on a scale so grand that it escapes everyday observation...space may also be rippled on a scale so microscopic that this curvature likewise eludes our attention...space...must respond to matter.

⁶[But this is only with respect to space. Einstein went further, regarding the curvature of four-dimensional space-time:] Time [must] be recognized as on the same footing as space...

⁷Geometry and curvature reduce in the last analysis to a matter of the distances from point to point--and to such distances alone.

⁸The three overarching principles of twentieth century physics[:

1. The Quantum principle: Plank's quantum of angular momentum:
 $h = 1.054 \times 10^{-27} \text{ g cm}^2 \text{ sec}^{-1}$
2. Special relativity: the speed of light is a constant: $c = 2.998 \times 10^{10} \text{ cm/sec}$
3. Gravitation: geometrodynamics, the gravitational constant:
 $G = 6.670 \times 10^{-8} \text{ cm}^3 / \text{g sec}^2$

Out of these three great constants there is only one way to put together a quantity with the dimension of length[:

$$L = (h G/c^3)^{1/2} = 1.6 \times 10^{-35} \text{ cm}]$$

⁹At the very smallest dimensions a new kind of physics is going on.

¹⁰Fluctuations are not peculiar to geometry. They occur in every dynamical system that is subject to the quantum principle.

¹¹Einstein [had a] vision of a particle as built of curved empty space...[In other words, a particle is a] quantum state of excitation of the geometry of space.

Satellite

Documentation of a conceptual visible language art work conceived during Autumn 1977 and executed during Winter 1977 by Aaron Marcus, formerly, Visiting lecturer, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel, currently, Research Fellow, Open Grants, East-West Center, 1777 East-West Road, Honolulu, Hawaii 96848, USA.

Summary

On 21 November 78 I launched a visible language satellite, a work which circled the earth at an altitude varying from 1 to 10,000 meters approximately. I accomplished this by mailing from Jerusalem, Israel, an airmail letter which was forwarded around the globe. The letter eventually returned to me in Jerusalem.

21.06.77

While waiting in the Israeli Consulate in New York City for the visa that would enable me to teach for a year at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem. I reviewed the various pieces of trash that I found in my last year as a faculty member at a prestigious Ivy League university located in the corporate bedroom community of Princeton, New Jersey. As is my annual rite at the close of the academic year, I had circumnavigated the garbage bins of the undergraduate dormitories on my bicycle as I passed between my office and home. I had collected a very reputable assortment of exotica, trivia, and effluvia. Among my finds this year and last I could recall the following:

- an eight-inch-high silver goblet
- 70 different record albums
- 10-20 audio cassettes
- turntables
- a woman's winter coat with hood
- a woman's long dress coat
- ski boots
- wristwatches

money
 40 pairs of jeans
 several pairs of men's pants
 several sweaters, shirts, and skirts
 3 radios, 2 cassette recorders
 a collection of 10 South American hats
 10 pairs of shoes
 a pair of ice skates
 several large rugs

Of course there were also the tumescent issues of hard-core pornography. This year's issues included new titles like *Club* and *Incest Family* that I had never seen before being introduced to them by the prestigious undergraduates of Princeton. As in past years, I found the usual 12 to 14 record albums, but this year there was a fresh twist. In two neatly taped boxes I discovered 40 copies of the same record, an album of preppy/collegiate songs warbled by well-washed bright-haired lassies.

I recalled with inexplicable sadness and simultaneous exultation one moment a few weeks earlier during my rounds, when I met one of my senior students who was crossing the campus with her parents. My bicycle baskets were overflowing with an odd assortment of textbooks, lurid magazines, crumpled clothing, and several pairs of women's shoes. I was hot and sweating from the sun. J.M. called out to me as I was peddling and lost in thought. Suddenly I was caught inextricably in an unwanted encounter. She introduced me to her parents who were dextrously coiffured and nattily attired in summer whites. I recall her father remarking, "I always wanted to be a professor." I mumbled a confused goodbye, feebly offered my best wishes for their visit, then wandered off in a daze wondering if they had noticed that I looked like a tattered ragpicker of Orchard Street. Did he really know he as dreamily requesting that his annual income might be at least halved?

It's not the prophylactics, the rubberized imitation sexual organs, or the other detritus of normal living that I find disgusting among the depths of these bins. The disgust arises from the many useful things thrown carelessly away by pampered individuals. Will these leaders 'in the nation's service' do the same with the world's resources when they have their turn to control the earth?

This year alone I estimated that I gave \$700.00 worth of items to the Salvation Army. It is through my searches that I am able to sample the consumer goods of America, albeit at a late point in the game. People

who see me at my task generally avoid looking my way. They seem indifferent or embarrassed and appear to prefer that I do not exist. Only the younger and a few of the older custodialns, blacks and Italians, nod discreetly as they recognize a strange, but distantly related Brother.

12.07.77

In preparation to leave for Israel, I sold my comic book collection to a New York City comic book dealer. My parents carried the 1300 copies in their car from Omaha, Nebraska. Although I hoped to receive \$2000 for my comics (the dealer later admitted that their worth was in excess of this) I settled for \$1400 for a collection whose earliest copy dated from 1937 and whose most recent issues dated from 1957. At various moments afterwards, I brooded over the fact that in a single transaction I had sold away my childhood, leaving only a few remnants for my children to inherit. I repressed deep feeling of guilt and sorrow and hurried back into life.

27.07.77

I decided to create a conceptual art work for 1977 and to start it in Jerusalem. It would be called *Satellite* and would involve sending a letter around the earth. I debated starting the work in Princeton, catching the envelope in Jerusalem, then flinging it onward around the earth. I eventually rejected the idea, because it seemed purer to begin and end the orbits in Jerusalem. The text of the enclosed letter was to read as follows:

"Dear Friends, I am sending this letter in order to complete a work of conceptual art called Satellite. The work involves sending letters by regular airmail routes around the earth several times. The 'letters' consist of a small dot and dash, basic markings within most typographic systems. They will circle the earth at an approximate height of 1 to 8000 meters. I would like to ask your co-operation in sending out the letters again by airmail to the next address on the list. Please enclose the front sides of all previous business-sized envelopes so that I shall have a record of postage and postmarks to exhibit afterwards. Please do not drop the current envelope or its contents; it

should not touch the ground. Please sign your name and date where appropriate. Thank you. Sincerely, Aaron Marcus."

These were the names of the participants (all males):

Aaron Marcus, Jerusalem

Henry Steiner, Hong Kong, a professional friend

William Horwich, San Francisco, a family friend

Nate Marcus, Omaha, my father

Paul Douglas, Princeton, my father-in-law

Pieter Brattinga, Amsterdam, a professional friend

Wolfgang Weingart, Basel, a professional friend

Aaron Marcus, Jerusalem

20.10.77

In mid-August, my wife Susan, our children Joshua and Elisheva, and I left for Jerusalem from JFK Airport, New York City, aboard an El Al 747. During President Anwar Sadat of Egypt's historic visit to Jerusalem in November, I realized that the explicit focus of my work ought to change. I felt the work needed to be dedicated to this outstanding ascent to Jerusalem and to peace in the Middle East. The new text is to read as follows:

"In order to complete a conceptual visible language art work, I am sending this expalnatory sheet and the enclosed card around the world. The work is intended to be a symbol of international communication and co-operation. I am beginning the work on the occasion of Anwar Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem. Please help me to complete the work."

After receiving the two sheets from the person who precedes your name on the list, please be certain to sign and date this sheet. You may fold the envelope fronts so that they fit into the next envelope. Thank you."

The days of Sadat's visit to Jerusalem were like a rare dream. All schools had been closed just before his address before the Israeli

Knesset. Susan, Joshua, Elisheva, and I walked over to the King David Hotel where Sadat was staying. I was reminded of Henry Kissinger's visit there three years ago during the period of his shuttle diplomacy. We had also been in Israel for half a year at that time. When Kissinger was at the hotel, he had interrupted my bus route during each morning's trip to Ulpan (language) classes, and his busy schedule had prevented me from seeing the U.S. Ambassador before he died (see *Time Piece*, an earlier work, 1975). The King David Hotel was about 15 minutes by foot from our apartment in Moshava Germanit. We hurried along with other curious well-wishers until we stood as close to the building as the police barricades would allow. Eventually a black Cadillac with darkened windows emerged and hearty cheers from the public greeted the visiting head of a state at war. Surely this was an unusual chapter in the book of world history.

21.10.77

I hurried to finish the final text of the accompanying letter and to complete the symbol/mark set which would be launched into space. The final text read as follows:

"In order to complete a conceptual visible language art work entitled Satellite, I am sending this explanatory sheet and the enclosed card around the earth by regular airmail routes. The 'letters' I am sending consist of a dot and a dash, basic markings within most typographic systems. They will circle the earth at an approximate height of 1 to 8000 meters. The work is a symbol of international communication and cooperation. I am beginning it on the occasion of Anwar Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem. Please help me to complete the work.

"After receiving the two sheets from the person whose name precedes your own on the list, send the two items to the next person on the list. Please be sure to sign and date this sheet. I ask you to enclose in addition all the faces of the envelopes (approximately 10 by 23 cm each) used to convey the work so that I shall have a record of postage and postmarks to exhibit afterwards. Please do not drop the contents of the work; it should not touch the ground. Thank you for your assistance in completing Satellite."

1

אחרון מוקדם ☐ Aaron Marcus
 בעלמא אסמית ☐ Bezalel Academy
 לאמנות ויצירה ☐ of Arts and Design
 רחוב בצלאל 1 ☐ Bezalel Street
 ירושלים, ישראל ☐ Jerusalem, Israel
 02-225111 ☉ 02-225111

שנייה מוקדם ☐ Susan Marcus
 מוקדם ☐ Marcus
 רחוב המליץ 5 ☐ 5 Hamelitz Street
 מושבה גרמנית ☐ German Colony
 ירושלים, ישראל ☐ Jerusalem, Israel
 02-68694 ☉ 02-68694

In order to complete a conceptual visible language art work entitled "Satellite", I am sending this explanatory sheet and the enclosed card around the earth by regular air-mail routes. The "letters" I am sending consist of a dot and a dash, basic markings within most typographic systems. They will circle the earth at an approximate height of one to 8000 Km. The work is a symbol of international communication and cooperation. I am beginning it on the occasion of Anwar Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem. Please help me to complete the work.

After receiving the two sheets from the person whose name precedes your own on the list, send the two items to the next person on the list. Please be sure to sign and date this sheet. I ask you to enclose in addition all the faces of the envelopes (approximately 10 x 23 cm each) used to convey the work so that I shall have a record of postage and postmarks to exhibit afterwards. Please do not drop the contents of the work; it should not touch the ground. Thank you for your assistance in completing "Satellite".

Aaron Marcus 20.11.77 Aaron Marcus, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design,
 1 Bezalel Street, Jerusalem, Israel

Henry Steiner 28.11.77 Henry Steiner, Graphic Communication, Ltd., Printing House,
 6 Duddell Street, Hong Kong, B.C.

William Horwich 12/3/77 William Horwich, Tuckman and Horwich, Suite 3180, Bank of
 America Center, 555 California Streets, San Francisco,
 California, 94104 USA

Eate Marcus 12/7/77 Eate Marcus, 1504 South 58 Street, Omaha, Nebraska, 68106 USA

Paul Douglas 12/10/77 Paul Douglas, 48 Cleveland Lane, Princeton, New Jersey 08540 USA

Pieter Brattings 4/12/77 Pieter Brattings, Form Mediation International, 628 Prinsen-
 straat, Amsterdam 1002, Netherlands

Wolfgang Weingart 31.12/77 Wolfgang Weingart, Allgemeine Kunstgewerbeschule, 15 Vogelsang-
 strasse, CH-4058 Basel, Switzerland

Aaron Marcus 16.01.78 Aaron Marcus, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design,
 1 Bezalel Street, Jerusalem, Israel

The work itself is a black point and line (a dot and dash) on one side of a white sheet of paper approximately 20 by 20 cm. I signed it on all four edges to declare it isotropic. The final countdown began. I took it to our corner post office station on Emek Refaim Street where I purchased postage and asked a person waiting in line to photograph me with the letter. He grudgingly complied. The post office personnel were amused at the event.

00.12.77

While waiting for the letter with its accumulating contents to return, I continued to teach graphic design at Bezalel. I also had a part-time teaching position at the Hebrew University in the Communication Institute and in the Geography Department. As is my custom, while passing between to Computer Center and these other two locations, I examined the contents of the trash bins located behind the National Library. Among the old copies of Hebrew and Arabic newspapers, scholarly and professional journals, and other esoterica, such as a dental journal from Cuba in the 1930's, I was startled to find a half-year's collection of the international edition of *Penthouse* magazine. Were the sacrosanct chambers of the National Library a hidden hothouse of lascivious leers (as Spiro Agnew, the U.S.A.'s most ignominious Vice-President, might have remarked)? I could hardly imagine a less appropriate place. Ah, the glory of international commerce which had brought these images from New York and elsewhere to Jerusalem the Holy City.

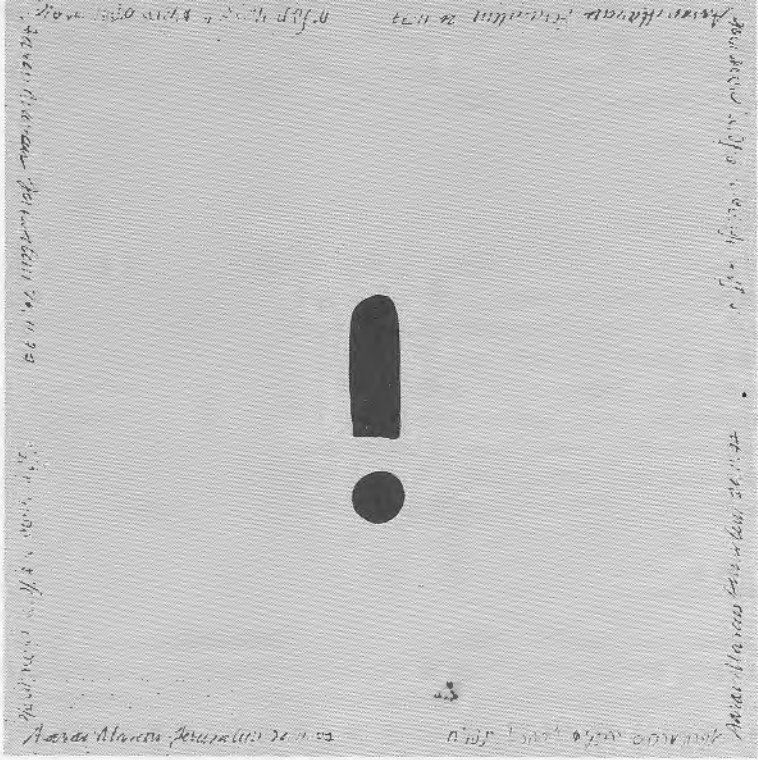
21.01.78

The satellite had successfully returned from its flight. I decided I could not trust it to circle a second time without mishap and therefore cancelled my informal plans to have it orbit several times in succession.

00.02.78

I exhibited the envelope and enclosed sheets in Bezalel's ground floor exhibit case for a two-week period. Most students ignored it, especially

2



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Graphic Communication Ltd. 8th floor, Printing House, 6 Duddell Street, Hong Kong

phone: 5-23111 Mobile: 9758888888

with compliments

10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
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those who read English with difficulty. I received a few enthusiastic responses from persons who immediately 'grokked' (see Robert Heinlein's *A Stranger in a Strange Land* for a definition of this term) the internal and external content of the work.

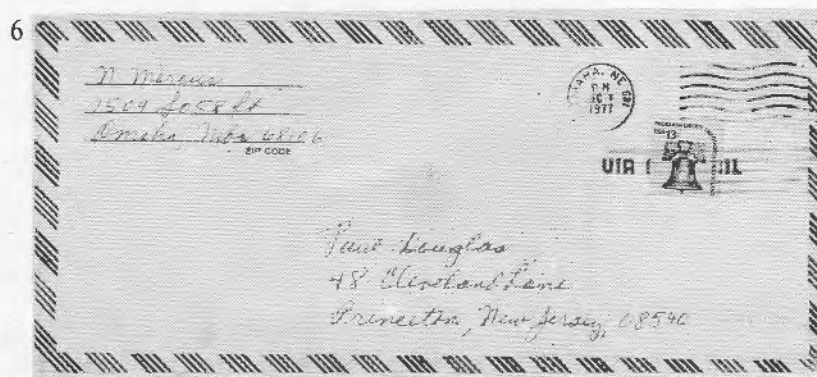
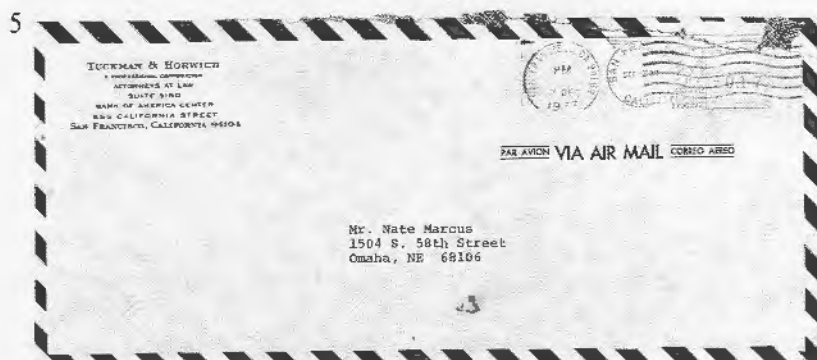
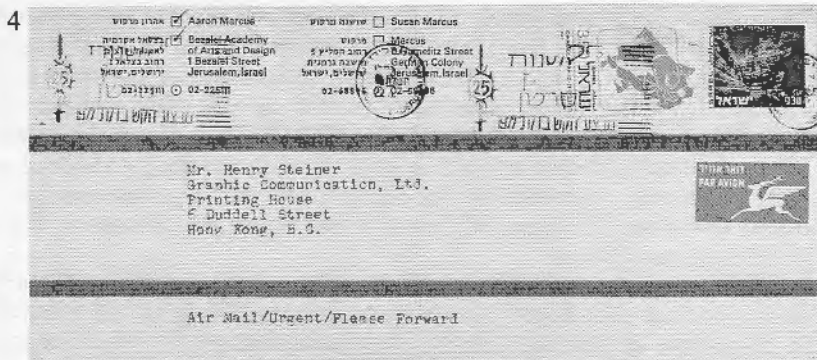
00.07.78

Following a decision to return to the United States of America for an unknown period of time, both Susan and I contracted hepatitis three weeks before our scheduled date of departure. Despite the illness, we packed, sold our belongings as necessary, and complete travel arrangements. We returned temporarily to Princeton, New Jersey, to house-sit in a well-to-do home during our period of quarantine. We were in a sumptuous decompression chamber, re-entering the American influence of affluence. A fiddled the knobs of the Boulton music system and wondered where I and America were headed.

03.09.78

I landed in Honolulu, Hawaii, to begin a five-month period as a Research Fellow of the East-West Center exploring innovative, graphic ways of 'visualizing global interdependencies'. One night shortly after my arrival, I was stumbling about the city in an emotional stupor at 3 a.m. after searching for and losing a desirable apartment to house my family. Suddenly, I noticed among the trash cans on the street a large cardboard box. Inside were approximately 50 abandoned books including a copy of Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*. In Jerusalem Susan had received a copy of the book sent from a Princeton friend, but I'd not had a chance to read it. In Honolulu, halfway around the world, I finished the copy I'd found. The contents of the book and the circumstances of its arrival in my life were compelling enough to bring me to call up the author. We had lunch with her at the Waioli Tea Room. I wondered in passing if it could be that trash placed in a receptacle in one place on earth could mysteriously appear in a trash bin at another location.

I've recently learned from Prof. H.K. of the East-West Center and Gakushuin University, Tokyo, of the Kura ceremony performed in the



Melanesian islands of the South Pacific. Among these island a ritual object is carried by boat from island A to island B, then by men from island B to island C,...and eventually back to island A. The token itself had little intrinsic value. The warriors who carry it from one island to the other face the possibility of losing their lives at sea as they traverse the great distances between the islands. The ceremony's existence and description was confirmed by the account of L.K., a governmental official from the Kingdom of Tonga in the South Pacific, who is also at the East-West Center.

The main purpose in this 'chain letter' of the Kura ritual seems to be to ensure that each island knows its neighbors still exist and are willing to co-operate in this one activity of communication. I smiled inwardly and outwardly when I learned of this ceremony and considered my present work to be completed.

Aaron Marcus

21.09.78

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THE CONFERENCE TELEVISION COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 172
PRINCETON, N. J. 08540



Pieter Brattings
Form Mediation International
628 Prinsengracht ←
Amsterdam 1002
Netherlands

AIR MAIL/URGENT/PLEASE FORWARD

Air Mail

8



Wolfgang Weingart.
Allgemeine Kunstgewerbeschule
15 Vogelsangstrasse
CH-4058 Basel
Switzerland

Prinsengracht 628
Amsterdam 1002
Netherlands

9



AM/TO

Aaron Marcus
Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design
1 Bezalel Street
JERUSALEM

ISRAEL

ABSENDER/ FROM: WOLFGANG WEINGART CH 4001 BASEL 1
SWITZERLAND
POST P.O. BOX 94

Light Line

Documentation of a conceptual visible language art work conceived and executed during 1978 by Aaron Marcus, formerly Visiting Lecturer, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel, currently Research Fellow, Open Grants, East-West Center, 1777 East-West Road, Honolulu, Hawaii 96848, USA.

Summary

Across seven months and 20,000 km (12,000 mi) I scribbled a complex line in space-time while I tried to contact a former student of mine as she was about to become Queen Nur el Hussein of Jordan. My attempts included telephone calls arching the Atlantic Ocean between Amman, Jordan, and Princeton, New Jersey, USA. I received a form letter from the Queen's secretary announcing that my messages had reached the Palace.

Spring 1974

Sometime and somehow during her participation in my class in basic design at Princeton University's School of Architecture and Urban Planning, I learned that Lisa Halaby was the daughter of Najeed Halaby, then chairman of Pan American Airways. At that point in time her father was leaving his position. I recall that Lisa seemed visibly upset by this. Because of her difficulties I believe I gave her an extension on a project due for the course. Alas, my memory for such matters is not like John Dean's during his courtroom recollections of Richard Nixon's Presidential escapades. Without consulting my records I can not even recall what kind of student she was. I suspect this means that she was of reasonable quality, neither spectacularly talented nor inadequate.

In fact, only one essential memory persists from my contact with her. On one occasion I saw her in the company of two other women as they departed from the School of Architecture building headed for a trip to New York City or to some other rendezvous. At that moment I was struck by the obvious richness of their attire. Suddenly the casual jeans-clad figures of my classroom had rushed into their respective telephone booths and emerged to reveal their true identities: scions of the

corporate elite that Princeton University professes to educate. At once the gulf of status and wealth yawned before me as these darlings of Dupont, *et al.*, gamboled on the green sward of the campus prior to their departure. The jeans costume was a special aspect of the university environment. Students from various walks of life convened, adopted the uniform of students, and practiced performing in new roles. When their parents came at last to fetch them, some would return to their old clothes, carefully kept waiting for them, while others abandoned their former coverings and adopted, perhaps forever, new camouflage. With the faculty, however, there was this difference (at least for the faculty with whom I felt close): we had no other suit of clothes into which to change when all was said and done. We were what we wore, and that was that.

Lisa Halaby and I parted space-time curves, and that was that, or so I thought.

Spring 1978

My family and I found ourselves in Jerusalem, Israel. I had left Princeton University and had begun teaching in the fall of 1977 at Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design and at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Since this was our third family trip to Israel, we were not seeing it so much as tourists and visitors: instead, we had established a conventional Israeli schedule of work, work, and more work, with time out on the Sabbaths to rest. Nevertheless we had toyed with the idea of visiting Cairo, Egypt, or Amman, Jordan, since relations with these countries had improved following Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem the previous November. We now vaguely imagined a short trip to Amman, the capitol of Jordan, about an hour by car, as far away as Tel Aviv from Jerusalem. As American citizens we would be able to get special visas or passes to cross the border via the Allenby Bridge.

16.05.78

In the *Jerusalem Post* today I was surprised to see a photograph of Lisa, Halaby, my former student. The caption read, 'Lisa Halaby, daughter of former Pan American Airways chairman Najeeb Halaby, who is reportedly shortly to become King Hussein's fourth wife. Royal Palace

spokesmen in Amman declined to comment on the report, but said an official statement would be issued later in the week.' My reactions were mixed. I thought to myself, ahah, a fitting connection for this privileged person, a step from riches to more riches, even if the situation she would find herself in might be a delicate one, to say the least.

17.05.78

Another article appeared in the *Jersalem Post* today headlined, 'Palace confirms that King Hussein will wed soon.' In the article I learned that Lisa will be called Nur el Hussein, the 'light of King Hussein.' I also learned that a close friend of the Halaby's was current U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. A sigh eased from my lips as I learned of further connections to the ruling elite. A fitting match indeed. I also noted that Lisa Halaby's salary, four years after graduating from Princeton, was 900 dinars (IL43,200) per month at her work in Amman. This was approximately four times my salary at Bezalel after nearly a decade of teaching at Princeton University. In addition she was earning this amount in a country whose standard of living was probably a third of Israel's. Another sigh escaped as I pondered the impenetrable web of privilege. I was filled with mild bitterness, envy and cynicism typical of have-somes viewing have-mores.

20.05.78

Out of a mixture of flippant cynicism and curiosity, I decided to try to contact Lisa Halaby. I would mention our "Princeton connection" for authenticity and would express my interest in visiting Amman before, during, or after her wedding. Having decided to try to contact her, I had to find the means of accomplishing this goal.

22.05.78

It was my birthday; I had turned 35 and was now legally able to accept the Presidency of the United States, should anyone ask me. Having a day off from classes I decided to use the telephone and to begin the process of communicating with Lisa Halaby.

I tried the American Consulate at 226-312. I learned that there was an 'interested party telegram' that could be sent to the American con-

sulate in Amman from the Consulate office in the Old City of Jerusalem. The cost would be \$15.00. The telegram would have to be relayed by messenger from the American Consulate in Amman to the Royal Palace. This did not seem the right approach; it was too impersonal.

I next called the overseas international operator. Persons having little experience in using the telephone outside the United States will have no conception of how difficult it is to make connections on phone systems in other countries. In Israel, to get the overseas operator, I had to dial 18, over, and over, and over. At last a recorded message replaced the busy signal and announced that I had broken through the first barrier. Now I had to wait in line while other calls were being serviced. Finally I was able to reach the operator. I explained to her that I wanted to call Amman, Jordan. She answered with a slightly bitter laugh that it was impossible. I asked if there were not some special arrangements that could be made. She said I would have to speak with a supervisor. I was switched to a supervisor, and I repeated my request to her. She thought there was no way to create such a call because of Arab political regulations against Israel, but she suggested I talk to a Mr. P at 530-262, or the Director of the Overseas Telephone Services, Mr. H, at 242-936 or 230-336. These gentlemen were either out of the office or at meetings. I called back later that morning to speak with the one, then the other. Mr. P said flatly that there was no way to call. Mr. H said no, also, but in a more interested tone of voice. He explained that there was technically nothing to prevent such calls; however, the Arab countries had instructed the central switching station for international calls in Rome that any call originating in Israel should not be passed to their countries. Only Egypt had recently revised that decision in the light of the Sadat visit. It was now possible to make calls to Egypt from Israel. Mr. H mentioned that he might have been willing to look into possibilities for informally arranging a call to Jordan, but that Israel had burned its fingers recently after a reporter staying at the Intercontinental Hotel atop the Mount of Olives had talked a Rome operator into relaying a call to Jordan. It was solely a matter of convincing someone in Rome to throw the right switches. Someone else in Jordan learned about this telephonic *tete-a-tete* and complained to the international telephone headquarters in Paris. Israel was reprimanded for having participated in this flagrant violation of non-communication. I was amazed at the child-like antics of some countries. Small wonder, I mused, that the United

Nations sometimes has the aura of a children's nursery.

It seems hard to believe in retrospect, but I had spent two full hours on the phone trying over and over to call the operator and then to talk with supervisors and directors. Eventually I had to accept the undeniable fact: from Israel I could not talk directly with Lisa Halaby. The only alternatives were to send some kind of relayed telegram (too impersonal) or to have a letter relayed to Amman from the USA (too slow). I needed to contact her quickly if I expected to be invited to attend her wedding. Then I realized that I could call someone outside Israel who would be able to call directly to Amman. Friends M and A in Princeton, New Jersey, at 609-921-7673. They were surprised to learn of my plans but, accustomed to my slightly wacky activities, were enthusiastic about trying to reach Lisa. I instructed them to call between 6 and 7 a.m. Princeton time. This would be 12 to 1 p.m. Amman (and Jerusalem) time.

23.05.78

Because of all the difficulty involved in telephoning and the sheer insanity of the goals I had set, I gradually realized that this was no quotidian activity, but an Art activity. Towards the rear and to the right of my mind I had been formulating this new version of the telephone and postal conceptual art works that I had executed in the past (e.g., those documented in *Soft Where, Inc.*, plus 'Time Piece,' 'American Bicentennial Tetragram-Tetragon,' and 'Satellite'). I realized that all of the events in the current work were strung out in the gradually unfolding fabric of space-time and constituted a kind of web of light lines constructed through cause-and-effect relationships in communication. My working title for the project was the Hebrew work "keesh-koosh" which our son Joshua had recently learned at school and had been singing in a little jingle. Keesh-koosh means "a rattling, ringing, or chattering" and is often applied to "scribbling." In this work I would be scribbling in space-time as I sent something like tracer bullets through the black ether of communication media.

Even now an arc of connection was being made across 20,000 km around the globe from the USA to the Middle East. At the same time as I tried to create a personal connection to Lisa, the mass media were sending back messages to me about her activities. The mass media scattered these globules of light along their own global networks so that I

could travel anywhere and pick them up.

At noon in Jerusalem I thought about M and A in Princeton calling back to Amman. I wondered if they would get through. I thought they probably wouldn't and decided to cancel what had become a project. We had just gone to bed when our phone sprang to life at midnight. It was M and A calling from Princeton, New Jersey, USA, to Jerusalem, Israel. They were jubilant. They had reached Lisa Halaby! We could hardly believe what had happened. The international operator had connected them immediately to Jordan. They were ushered into the Royal Palace via telephone number 37-341, and suddenly found themselves connected to Lisa. The phone had been brought to her table as she was eating lunch at the Royal Palace. She interrupted her meal in Amman, Jordan, to say to two strangers in the USA that she would like to know more about what I was doing in Israel and why I wanted to come. She wanted to know 'when you'd like to come' and cautioned that June is 'confused' what with the wedding which will just be a 'family' affair. She turned aside during her conversation to tell a servant in English 'no potatoes please'. Thanks to the miracle of electronic telephony, this remark was carried halfway around the globe to the USA and was later relayed back almost to its starting point. I giggled uncontrollably. Apparently the Royal Palace was not used to commoners entering by telephone and assumed a call from the USA and from Princeton to boot must be some Important Member of the Ruling Elite trying to reach her. I chuckled and thanked Ma Bell for inventing acoustic anonymity. I also thanked M and A profusely and tried to settle back to sleep. Needless to say I was feverish with imaginings of a trip to Amman as a guest of the Royal Palace. Would King Hussein shake hands with a quasi-Israeli?

24.05.78

I began to determine how I might send a letter to Amman as I had been instructed to by Lisa. Calling to the American Consulate in the Old City on Nablus Road (tel. 282-231) I learned about the Abdo taxi service at the Damascus Gate. This seemed to be the only way to send a message to Amman. One taxi would take it to the Allenby Bridge. The driver would relay the letter to another Jordanian taxi service which would carry it to the Royal Palace in Amman. If I were lucky it would arrive within a day.

Parenthetically I note that after my great frustration with trying to reach anyone from the Israel telephone system, after spending as much as 12 minutes simply dialing and re-dialing, trying to get through to the international operator a few days earlier, I was understandably interested in an article of the *Jerusalem Post* on 21.05.78 commenting about Egyptian telephone service. The article was headlined, 'One step for man, giant leap for Egyptians: Telephone users face long waits for dial tones, and those are the lucky who have one.' Brushing aside this incoherent banner, I dived into the text and learned the following:

Only 23.9 per cent of all calls go through.

One flood in April cut off Cairo's central business district from the rest of the world for two weeks.

During the Ismailia summit with Israeli Prime Minister Menahem Begin, Sadat was unable to consult with US President Jimmy Carter because all the lines were busy.

Telephone users face long waits for dial tones, a good chance of connecting to the wrong number, and the prospect of having their ears assaulted by extraneous bangs, shrieks, and whirrs in the line.

I simultaneously felt pity for poor Egypt as it tries to run itself into the twentieth century and not into the ground while simultaneously attempting to maintain a military machine to use against Israel. I also felt increased appreciation for the fact that the Israel telephone system works as well as it does. Truth is always relative.

I called the Abdo Taxi and Travel Service at the Damascus Gate to be certain that it existed (tel. 283-281 and 286-292). The gentleman on the other end of the line assured me in English that there would be no problem and that it took only 40 minutes or so to reach the Allenby Bridge. From there it was a short trip to Amman and the Royal Palace.

27.05.78

As I sat waiting for the washing machine repairman to come, I began to draft a letter to Lisa Halaby. I wondered vaguely if Lisa Halaby had ever needed to remove half-washed diapers from a washing machine

that didn't work. I guessed that she would not be troubled by this sort of untidy phenomenon in the future. The washing machine repairman eventually showed up. He was dark, burly, short of temper, short of words, and apparently short of foresight. Just after he placed some screws he had removed on top of the machine, he tipped it back to look at something below. Had I not caught the screws in the nick of time they would have slid off the top and been lost amid the rubble behind the machine. This man as a technician, repairman, citizen, and human being looked into the future only as far as the next 10 to 20 seconds. He was dismantling the machine with no concern, no interest, and no awareness that within 10 or 20 minutes he would have to re-assemble just those parts that he was now so casually spilling about the floor. Even his tools suffered this fate. To make matters worse, during his repair work, some part slipped off the machine from within and became caught on the outside of the revolving drum. We could hear it rattling around inside as the drum turned. I knew it would be useless to complain. He assured me that 'yiheyeh b'seder,' i.e., 'it will be o.k.,' a standard comment signifying, 'don't worry, it will probably not cause a major malfunction and anyway I have no time/power/interest to do anything about it.' This is a standard comment in the country, and is perhaps a Middle Eastern response to Western technology.

After the repairman exited and I washed the floor clean of debris, I returned to finish my letter to the future wife of King Hussein of Jordan. I tried to make it polite, vague, and sincere, to emphasize the social nature of my proposed visit, and to play down all political and aesthetic considerations. The text read as follows:

Jerusalem
28 May 1978

Ms. Lisa Halaby
c/o The Royal Palace
Amman, Jordan

Dear Lisa,
Congratulations on your forthcoming marriage to His Majesty King Hussein. I am delighted that my indirect communication reached you at the Royal Palace. You requested some background information in regard to my interest in visiting you, and I shall be happy to explain. I am giving some

lectures in Jerusalem at the university and at an art and design academy. I am here with my wife Susan, son Joshua, and daughter Elisheva. We shall be leaving to return to Princeton on 2 July 1978. Susan and I had been contemplating a visit to Amman during our visit to the Middle East, but we knew no one there and were not certain how easy it would be to come from Jerusalem. We were then surprised to read in the newspapers of your marriage plans. I thought that this rare coincidence might enable us to reach Amman, to discover the country of Jordan a little, and to renew my acquaintance with you. The last time we talked was during your participation in my Visual Studies course in the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at Princeton University at a time when your plans were in flux. We would enjoy now seeing you again. Meeting other members of your family or future family would be an added pleasure. You will surely be very busy both before and after the wedding, but if you can find time to see us for an hour or whatever part of a day you can manage, we would be pleased to visit you. By "we" I mean all four members of my family, unless bringing our children would unduly complicate your arrangements. Except for a 20 June 1978 lecture date in my own schedule, almost any other time before 2 July 1978 would be possible from our point of view. I think a day in the middle of the week would be preferable because it would be easier to make any last minute adjustments in our travel arrangements or in border transactions. I imagine that if we make the trip that we would leave Jerusalem by taxi in the early morning, cross into Jordan at the Allenby Bridge, then take another taxi directly to Amman. If it is not feasible to return the same day, we would find some accommodations in Amman and return to Jerusalem the next day. I have not yet inquired from the American Consulate in Jerusalem as to the details of such a trip, but I know in principle that it can be done. I shall wait until I hear from you before trying to arrange for the details. If you do have time in your schedule during June, we shall make every effort to be there at the appropriate time and place. It might facilitate our travel arrangements if you were to contact the American Consulate in Amman and have them notify the American Consulate in Jerusalem. For your convenience, I give our passport information below. If mail service proves uncertain, please call my American contact, Mr. Matthew Edelman, at 609-921-7673 in Princeton, who will relay calls to me. For your information, I am sending this letter early on 28 May 1978 via the Abdul Taxi Co. which as service between the Damascus Gate, Jerusalem, and the Allenby Bridge. I hope this letter will reach you and that you will be able to receive us in Amman. We wish you great happiness and success in your new life.

With Best Wishes,

*Aaron Marcus
c/o Begir
5 Hamelitz Street
Jerusalem
Telephone: (02) 68896*

*Aaron Marcus: 22 May 1943, USA E2256672
Susan Marcus: 9 December 1946, USA E2256674
Joshua Marcus: 5 July 1973, USA E2256673
Elishava Marcus: 14 July 1976, USA H1807910*

Incidentally, I worried that someone at the Royal Palace would misread the name of our apartment landlord, Begir, for Begin, i.e., Menachem Begin, the Prime Minister of Israel. I anticipated that someone would decide I was trying to involve Lisa in some kind of international intrigue.

28.05.78

I drove over to the Damascus Gate and found my way to the small office of the Abdo taxi service. Around the pastel colored office were old women and men in dusty gray, brown and blue clothing waiting to go to Jordan, I suppose. One monk in clean, dark brown habit was intently reading a small book of religious texts. I came up to the desk, and a moustachioed man in a crumpled suit politely inquired of my needs. He was visibly impressed that I was seeking to send a letter to the Royal Palace in Amman to the future wife of King Hussein.

When our transaction was completed, I inquired about the price. He waved his hand and squeezed his face in a way which indicated that I was not to pay. I was confused and didn't know whether to accept his offer and thank him, or to protest further, then pay. After he assured me for a second time that because of the nature of my request, I need not pay him, I accepted his offer, thanked him and departed. Back in the car I wondered whether I should have given him bakshi, a small bribe. I did not know enough about Arab socio-economic rituals to understand what was expected of me. Perhaps I was supposed to have accepted and that the man had thrown the letter into the wastebasket in

a fit of pique. It would be a long time before I could ever find out. Nevertheless, ever optimistic, I returned home fully expecting to hear from the Abdo taxi service in a few days that a return letter was waiting for me.

Another in the regular stream of articles about Lisa appeared in the *Jerusalem Post* for 28.05.78. This was entitled 'Another glow for Hussein: Jordan's fourth First Lady, a low-key girl, adaptable.' The article gave some background of the Hussein-Halaby romance. It included some at one fatuous but revealing comments such as these:

"She's very cool and poised," one friend said. "She moved easily between the West and the Arab World, and she has the knack of being friends in a comradely way. She likes to dance, worries about money, and is extremely serious about her work."

"I never could figure out exactly what her job was," one acquaintance said, "but she was always running off to meetings with important people, always studying reports and really seemed to work very hard..."

I gave a silent smirk to the next mirror I found, and sighed again at the ease of employment for those with connections.

10.06.78

We had very little time left before we were scheduled to leave Israel and return to the USA. Our plans to visit Jordan were interrupted not by Lisa Halaby's decisions nor by ours, but by disease: Susan and I both caught hepatitis. Susan succumbed first: she was diagnosed this evening and spent the next week in bed unable to move, her skin yellow, her eyes like two canaries, her urine dark as coffee. The next week I became ill and spent most of the week in bed with these frightening symptoms. A shot of gamma globulin I received shortly after Susan's illness was discovered may have helped reduce the severity of my own infection. Our last weeks in Israel were turned into complete chaos as my last classes were cancelled and, despite our illness, we had to arrange to care for our children, to sell our car, to pack up our belongings, to ship 7 boxes and to arrange for air travel to return to the USA.

16.06.78

From the Royal Palace there was still no reply. Instead, the world's media and various populations watched as Lisa Halaby entered a royal

telephone booth and emerged clothed as Nur el Hussein in a surprise turn of events the Queen of Jordan. I had meant to watch the news from the Jordanian television station, Channel 6, but for some reason missed it. While I had such difficulty piercing the Jordanian border by telephone, I hasten to add that Jordanian television is beamed to Israel everyday including news in English at 8 p.m., sometimes with an announcer who wears a moustache and sunglasses. Got that? Under the intense studio lights he is wearing sunglasses. The other delights of this television stations were its station identification picture, which featured a leafy vista of desert and palm trees reminiscent of Palm Springs, California, and a children's program, in which a corpulent, pompadoured, dewy-eyed male would conduct a gaggle of small children singing in synch with a phonograph record.

I missed the scenes of the wedding, and even the pre-nuptial news briefing by Lisa and the King shortly before the ceremony. Luckily Susan saw it and reported that Lisa looked frail, wary, and ill at ease during her cross-examination by reporters. Such news conferences were clearly not her forte, at least not yet, while the King deftly fielded questions. A disturbing aspect of her replies was the manner in which she spoke. She seasoned her sentences with phrases like 'get it together' and 'you know,' expressions familiar to an American college campus and quite peculiar in the context of Amman, Jordan. They seemed to indicate a variation on a Patty Hearst theme, clearly not the sort of material that King Hussein needed. An ominous note was sounded when the King in a subtle bit of macho revealed that when he proposed to her he had asked Lisa if she were willing to be the Queen for the rest of her life. For the rest of *her* life? Hussein is 42, and Lisa is 26 or 27 depending on which report one reads. Can we guess who will die first? I add in passing that his previous wives have been divorced or died.

The Jerusalem *Post* article of 16.05.78 was headlined: 'Hussein weds U.S. beauty; the bride becomes a queen.' In it I learned that the small family affair had been limited to 'only' 350 guests.

18.06.78

An article appeared in the Sunday Jerusalem *Post* today entitled 'Lisa named Queen of Jordan.' In it the Queen's father is quoted as saying that he and his wife were 'happy, with a little anxiety in the background.' Asked about the anxiety, he replied, 'you can guess.' The arti-

cle also notes that the Queen's gown was designed by Christian Dior in Paris to her own specifications.'

25.06.78

As I was beginning to move about the city again, contrary to doctor's orders for rest, I noticed, as I had on several different occasions before, a car sitting on its side by the road. The driver had apparently flipped it over trying to take a turn too sharply. This scene, rather unusual in the USA, is much more common in Israel and perhaps throughout the Middle East.

We had discovered that Yitzhak Navon, the next President of Israel, lived behind our apartment building on the next street over. I had gone to watch him arrive at home and to receive government notables. He was preceded by his wife who arrived unescorted in a gray, unkempt Mercedes sedan. That afternoon as we were passing the Knesset building there was a roar of sirens. Traffic stopped and from the opposite direction came a fleet of motorcycles and a sleek black limousine with the President-to-be inside heading for his swearing-in. As we passed around the hillside to return home we could no longer see him, but the fanfare taking place at the Knesset boomed from nearby open windows via the radio. We returned home, turned on the television, and saw him enter the Knesset Building. In a relatively short space of time we had witnesses him transformed from ordinary man to ceremonial man to radio man to television man.

02.07.78

Without waiting for a reply from her Highness, we boarded an El Al flight and returned to the USA where we house-sat in a lush wooded area of Princeton, New Jersey.

22.08.78

No message had come forth from the Palace. Had she received mine? Was she ignoring my request? Was she too busy partying at Aqaba or on the Riviera? I decided to try a direct phone call myself. I was sitting in the wood-paneled study of a member of the corporate elite. I picked up my imaginary pipe, placed it in my imaginary mouth, dialed the

operator, and in what I thought was a Very Important Voice asked to be connected to the Royal Palace in Amman, Jordan. Operator 2163 told me I would have to wait for a call back. And wait I did. At least one-half hour later I finally received my call. My New York operator dialed up the Royal Palace at 37-341. I was amazed at the speech patterns used by these operators, e.g., the New York operator told the Jordan operator, 'OK, Honey, just a second.' There was the sound of many people yelling in the Amman telephone exchange. Oh, yes, I thought, oh, yes, I know that scene: yelling, hands flying, screaming, confusion, cacaphony. It was the Middle Eastern bazaar operating the telephone exchange. In my air conditioned, organized home office the Boulton Home Music System was playing Israeli children's songs from the records we had brought back, probably the first time Hebrew words had been played on this machine. Then our daughter Elisheva picked up one of the five extension phones in the house and started babbling. Meanwhile there were some exchanges in Arabic between the Amman operator and the person who answered the telephone at the Royal Palace. The operator had to say my name over and over, since it was not a familiar Arabic name: 'Marcus: Mary Albert Robert Charles Uncle Sam...one of her former teachers at Princeton'. A male voice at the Palace said to call back tomorrow at 10 a.m. Amman time. Apparently the Queen was beginning to be surrounded by male protectors. It was no longer so easy to break into the palace.

23.08.78

The next morning I arose at 4 a.m. Princeton time and dialed the international operator exchange 160-962 and spoke with operator 713. Again I was asked to wait for a call back. This time I had to wait half asleep for 40 minutes. When I finally received a call, in the background (in the distance, acoustically speaking) I could hear voices faintly screaming at the Amman exchange. An operator said "Hold it, Honey," my operator replied, "Thank you, my dear," I wondered what sort of kinky relationship developed between these women who spent their days talking to each other around the world. On their vacations did they go off to meet the voices they knew so well? There was no answer from the palace. The phone rang and rang. The operator said she would call back in one hour. I decided to take a nap at the desk.

At 7:05 a.m. the phone rang. The New York operator then spent 20 minutes trying to get through to the operator in Amman. I asked her if

this were unusual. She said no. Finally the connection was completed to Amman and New York asked Amman where in the Hell she'd been. She replied she had just stepped away for a few minutes. I thought, perhaps to get coffee? Unbelievable. The nation's international phone contact was being held up while the operator stepped out to find a cup of coffee. At last she rang the Palace. No answer. She tried another number, 12-345. No answer. Finally she tried a third number. At last, an answer. And a disappointment. A Ms. N, secretary to her Majesty, answered the phone. She explained that the Queen had received my letter but was 'too busy and away.' She would write me, and I gave her my address in Honolulu, where I was soon to relocate. It was a frustrating experience. The Queen was now surrounded by layers of protective personnel. The web had closed.

03.09.78

After hopping a 747 from Chicago to Honolulu, setting up a new apartment, and beginning work as a Research Fellow for a project called Visualizing Global Interdependencies at the East-West Center, I received a letter from Amman, Jordan. It bore the royal seal and a postage stamp with a blurry portrait of the young Hashemite King in military dress. The letter read as follows:

The Royal Palace

Amman, Jordan

August 23, 1978

Dear Mr. Marcus,

Her Majesty Queen Noor has asked me to write and thank you for your kind good wishes on the occasion of her marriage.

Her Majesty was sorry she could not see you during your trip to the Middle East owing to her busy schedule at the time.

Please accept Her majesty's appreciation and warmest regards.

Yours sincerely,

Huzaimi Nasser

The Sharifa H. Nasser

Secretary to His Majesty the King

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



THE ROYAL PALACE
Amman, Jordan

الرقم :
التاريخ :

August 23, 1978

Dear Mr. Marcus,

Her Majesty Queen Noor has asked me to write and thank you for your kind good wishes on the occasion of her marriage.

Her Majesty was sorry she could not see you during your trip to the Middle East owing to her busy schedule at the time.

Please accept Her Majesty's appreciation and warmest regards.

Yours sincerely,

Sharifa H. Nasser

The Sharifa H. Nasser
Secretary to His Majesty the King

Mr. Aaron Marcus
East West Center
1777 E.W. Road
Honolulu, Hawaii 96848
U.S.A.

It was a disappointing result for a project that had spanned half the globe and several months time in preparation and waiting. On the other hand, I felt that the web constructed in space-time was intricate, delicate, and intriguing, like a four-dimensional spider-web of cause and effect.

10.09.78

Our friends M and A sent us a clipping from the Newark *Star-Ledger* of 05.09.78 headlined, 'Royal Yank: Jordan's new queen adjusts to an Arab lifestyle.' It commented that for Lisa Halaby the 'compensations outweigh the difficulties...Noor wears blue jeans for afternoons at home, washes her own hair, and grabs a sandwich as often as a full meal. She sometimes persuades her chauffeur to let her drive her green Mercedes.' Hmmm, could this be a reversal of the jeans-telephone booth-gown syndrome?

26.11.78

In another clipping sent by M and A from the *New York Times Style* section of 19.11.78 a half-page article on Lisa is entitled, 'After 5 months as Queen Noor, Life as Lisa is Ancient History.' The article includes the following comments:

"I think one's physical environment is terribly important," she said in the palace's immense living room. She said she found the palace too large, a touch too impersonal and cold, and she was eager to move into a smaller palace closer to Amman.

"A medium sized palace is now being planned, but the Queen said that her ideal home is still a long way off. "After all," she sighed, "we have a budget; we just can't go building palaces all over the place."

Sitting in scruffy Levi's in our two-bedroom apartment in urban Honolulu half a world away I vaguely nodded my dazed assent as my eyebrows raised almost to the border of temples and hair. So: the jean-telephone booth-gown hypothesis is vindicated and completes its cycle.

11.12.78

A last reverie: during my stay in Honolulu I have played a certain game which I began playing as a child growing up in Omaha, Nebraska. My

brother Stephen and I would go up and down the alley behind our home looking in people's trash cans to see what they were throwing out. We would often find interesting booty and bring it home to use, to play with, or to give away.

Here in Honolulu, people seem consumed with consumption. The newspapers are crammed with advertisements more thoroughly than anywhere else I recall seeing. On my regular walk home from the University of Hawaii I pass several trash bins located near a small shopping area as well as some bins near apartment buildings. Through casual perusings over the past 3 and a half months I have found the following items. Those I've not kept I've given to local thrift shops, our children's schools, and friends:

50 books including many hard cover books in a single box

2 large red corduroy pillows measuring 25 x 60 x 100 cm plus 1 leather covered electric heater-vibrator pad

1 Instamatic camera (with film inside) plus a Wella 35 mm camera plus a Pioneer stereo earphone set plus a 21-jewel wristwatch

4 teakettles plus 3 one-gallon airpump thermos bottles plus 3 hair-dryers plus one captain's chair plus one folding stool

2 large kitchen chairs plus two captain's chairs

3 battery operated fluorescent lanterns

12 tubes of athletes foot cream plus 3 large bottles of calamine lotion plus 3 boxes of suppositories plus 4 bars of glycerine soap

1 19" black-and-white television

1 Remington ladies shaver

1 Hamilton Beach electric knife (minus the replaceable blade)

8 men's long- and short-sleeved shirts

2 phonograph albums

4 leis including an orchid lei plus 3 dozen long-stemmed roses

1 AMC women's hair dryer with head cover and carrying case

1 Gillete hair dryer plus a mixmaster plus assorted children's toys

1 world map 2 meters wide

For the last two days a copy of *Newsweek* had been staring up at me from the bins. I wondered why; it seemed to be calling to me. At last I grabbed it, brought it home, and examined it. The issue of 26.06.78 featured the brat-beautiful face of Princess Caroline of Monaco with a cover story entitled 'The New Royal Life' which announced that Royalty are marrying commoners. Lo and behold, on page 68 was *Newsweek's* coverage of the marriage of Lisa Halaby to King Hussein of Jordan. Entitled, 'An American Queen,' the article notes that 'her background was privileged.' For some unknown reason it includes a comment by an Amman pharmacist, 'She'll learn what it means to be the wife of a king.' Yes, indeed.

16.12.78

With this final message of non-communication via the media carried through time and space from Jordan, to New York publishing offices, to West Coast printers, to Honolulu distributors, to Ms. B who subscribed to it, and finally from the trash bins of Honolulu, Lisa Halaby agrees that the webs cannot easily be pierced. Once, if one is lucky.

In the meantime, the real work at hand, my project to create a dancing curve of cause and effect, of messages public and private, in the space-time of this globe in 1978 has had a fine time and a fine space. Who but Albert Einstein could imagine what the tracery of these lines on the surface of the light cone of knowable universe might look like. Could we actually see this network pictured in some way? Perhaps someday this work could be played with a home cassette computer graphics hologram system. For the present it exists only in this documentation. The work has come to an end.

Aaron Marcus

16.12.78