



The River Pierce Foundation
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Lucien Kammermann
Marking Out A Way (2018)

Sculpture of mirror fragments and tiles, reflecting powder, and cement
Commissioned by The River Pierce Foundation
International Artists-In-Residence Program

Back in the XIX century days in the United States, when distance ruled everything in-between humans, place of living and activities, from a coast to another. The notions of space and territory meant more. Because of its vast horizon and huge geographical dispositions, the American continent was without a doubt, one of the most difficult land to acknowledge. The West's journey is full of stories of lost pilgrims braving wilderness and desert seas to find out what was next as a survival mechanism.

Ever since, pathfinder and road-opener, supported by technological progress, driven by demographic expansion and economic needs, etched this immensity, setting landmarks and shapes that are now a huge part of USA's timeline. Railroad and telegraph network for instance, setting up the first ways of transportation and communication for a society dispersed on a 2796 miles wide country in the making.

Another of theses meaningful human undertaking was the Aeropostal Odyssey, conducted from 1923 to 1933 by the Post Office and Department of commerce. Delivering mail evolved from the Pony Express to Airplanes, but navigation technologies remained pretty rudimentary, at a time when telecommunications were yet to come. As so, a system for pilots to navigate through the nation was designed and built:

Airway beacons.

They are formally composed on the same template : a beacon pointing towards the sky on a large size concrete arrow set on the ground, pointing outward, used as visual navigation landmarks by airplane pilots.

Approximately 1,500 airway beacons were constructed to guide pilots from city to city, covering 18,000 miles of land.

Nowadays, the story behind theses relics felt in oblivion but the concrete remains, and arrows are still visible like stigmas etched in the Earth, establishing forever man domination over a whole continent by marking out the ways on the name of Manifest Destiny.

Theses ruins are not only interesting from a modern day archeology point of view but also formally.



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The Arrow is the universal sign to represent a movement through dimensional space, as much as the sign itself is made of the base, the core and the head, pointing outward, saying literally: "from here to there".

Nowadays, the United State of America has grown a big issue with people "from there to here" after its purpose was a refugee land.

The borderland is for more than a decade now, the theatre of one of the more challenging

Human Space Odyssey with thousands of people each year trying to cross one of the most

watched world border, braving death through deserts, thorns and rivers.

Since Trump administration promised to enforce drastically the border control, it seems like the USA definitely lost the bound with its essence by bringing in the physical space another type of land stigma: walls.

In the very mean time and paradoxically, America's foundational hunger for space perpetrates nowadays: leading space race, Space X, with E.Musk setting himself up as one of the pilgrim of the outer Space, is making huge moves in exploration of universe outer limits.

San Ygnacio is one of theses peculiars space, charged emotionally to a point where time perception changes, awaking our minds to a much bigger awareness of this World we live in.

This artwork takes the form of an arrow as well; its shape and scale follow the airway beacons' template, but a blue, glittery, shiny, precious yet broken. Matter and light covers its body : this archetype, as a last of a kind, recalling the star-spangled Night sky of sleepy and gorgeous San Ygnacio village.

To recall and honor origins and destinations to the American folk, as much as it is to encourage mankind to reconsider and think about its existence and actions in the Universe.

Its purpose is to work as an astronomical navigation landmark, shining at day and glowing at night, visible from sky, etched in earth, pointing at hope, calling out ignorance and cruelty, and as a reminder of our own life through time in the Cosmos.

—Lucien Kammermann



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Lucien Kammermann is an artist based in France where he experiments and studies.

Focusing on topics ranging from gravitation to the space race, often goofy, he likes to picture himself as a “mythological outsider” exploring cultural spaces and telling its story and dynamics through the narrative of civilization, society, science, and various sorts of landscape.

On the year 2018, after a long time on a self-lead path, aiming at precision of mind and technique, he became increasingly captivated by the idea of going across America.

Strange land told by myths, where the bound between History, Humans and Space rules everything, but is yet very delicate, often alienating, then pretty inspiring.

Made of absurd examples and incredible stories, the United States is a traumatic and paradoxical nation, which is visible in every layers of its culture, politics and the land itself.

His nomadic trajectory started in post-industrial east cities, and randomly followed towards the unknown as his ways of moving around space and encountering has become polymorphous. Committed to absorb everything coming across, good or bad, with curiosity, he reached that level of awareness and impregnation allowing him to relate and better understand the dimensions of the American spirit.

After months of a hectic dive, often turning into a struggle, covering thousands of miles by foot, he finally reached out the way to his ultimate goal: occupying and operating on the edge, at the border. Stepping back on a yearlong experience, the artwork he left in a field by the border is charged as the last move, the one that speaks out before vanishing across.

