

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

2021: VOYAGE & EXISTENTIALISM

by
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AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

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Date of project presentation: May 28, 2021

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

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ABSTRACT

Title: 2021: Voyage & Existentialism

A study of the mind, the self, and the human condition.

From a technical standpoint, the project is a dissection of Graphic Design in its various disciplines, as a universal language of communication, and as an instrument of study, culminating four years of accumulated knowledge and practice in the field. The aim is to utilize much of what I have learned, to develop and structure a narrative and design a message in its denoted and connoted forms such that I can successfully communicate the various thematic elements and undertones to its recipient. The work challenges the boundaries of the publication format and the conventional structure of story, and explores the way in which artifacts hold value. The content is fragmented and dispersed across a range of disparate material enclosed inside a folio. Every part a puzzle piece, that sets the reader on a trail of their choice and asks them to investigate and assimilate the information provided by its parts, in order to make the story whole and uncover and complete the intended meaning behind it, through a non conventional, non sequential, and non linear form of progression. This allows the reader a unique experience of reception and reconstruction, whilst providing an opening for personal interpretation.

The meaning is carried by a science fiction narrative, that provides a scope from which we can observe, analyze, and deconstruct the world at a distance, and figure out where our place in it lies, enabling us to see the issues that have become far too embedded in the everyday routine that go by unseen, and thus providing an opportunity for commentary on these issues. The readers position however is not passive and detached but active and involved alongside the central character of the story, who holds up mirror to the person following along.

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ORIGINS

Initially for my final year project, I knew I wanted to embark on a journey to explore and discover without knowing. What I would seek, I would find either within or elsewhere in the stretch of land I travel. Not knowing what I was searching for was in itself interesting and exciting to me. The notion of venturing into the unknown, and searching without knowing, and without aim, could provide me with a fresh and broadened perspective in my journey, and allow me to notice things that would otherwise go unseen, and hence permit me to find more.

In time, as I developed an interest in space, and started to lean more towards my passion for story-telling, I was able to close in on my topic. A science fiction narrative set in space, told through the recovered journal of a traveler, that documents a journey across a collection of archives, schematics, documents, photographs, and other miscellaneous items. The work would be allegorical, drawing parallels to humanity and human civilization, asking questions about our existence, our purpose, and the state of our occupation in the world, as well as what lies on the horizon ahead.

I want the reader to follow along, and to take on an investigative role in trying to uncover and derive meaning as they progress through the pages of the work, with the intent that the themes they will find will be relevant, and relatable to whomever they may be, wherever they may come from, and whenever they may come across the work. To accomplish this, the work needs to be open. Narrative elements present but subtle, and the meaning fragmented and dispersed along its recesses, for the curious reader to find, piece together, and interpret for themselves.

The Design Question

It is a question of communicating a fragmented storyline and its themes through design. Of grasping the reader's attention, and inviting them to embark on a trail to read closely into the work.

PROCESS

My project is not canonically titled, so I started developing an identity, and thinking about the role of branding in story telling and how that pertains to my project.

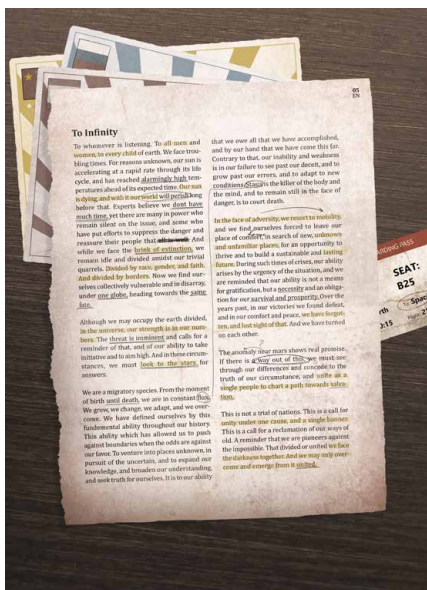


2020: Ground Zero

In an early module, I was able to explore my project further, by laying the groundwork behind the journey which my character will embark upon in my final year project. It serves as a foundation for the narrative which will follow. I started exploring different visual directions, and working with different elements and techniques, throwing everything that came to mind on the page in front of me. I began to narrow things down towards something more focused and clear.

I developed a prologue. I set out to explore the conflict which would set the narrative and its events in motion. I established a threat under which a world is caught in turmoil. A setting which was politically ruptured by debate, conspiracy, and misconception.

Propaganda has surfaced to create a movement in the heart of the streets, raising awareness and urgency around the situation. A call to action targeting the fears of each nation, and causing panic and pressure.



DELIVERABLES

Throughout the different modules, I developed a solid base for an approach, and a narrative which I will develop further within my fyp, after which I will decide how much to obscure and how the story will be dispersed across its different parts.

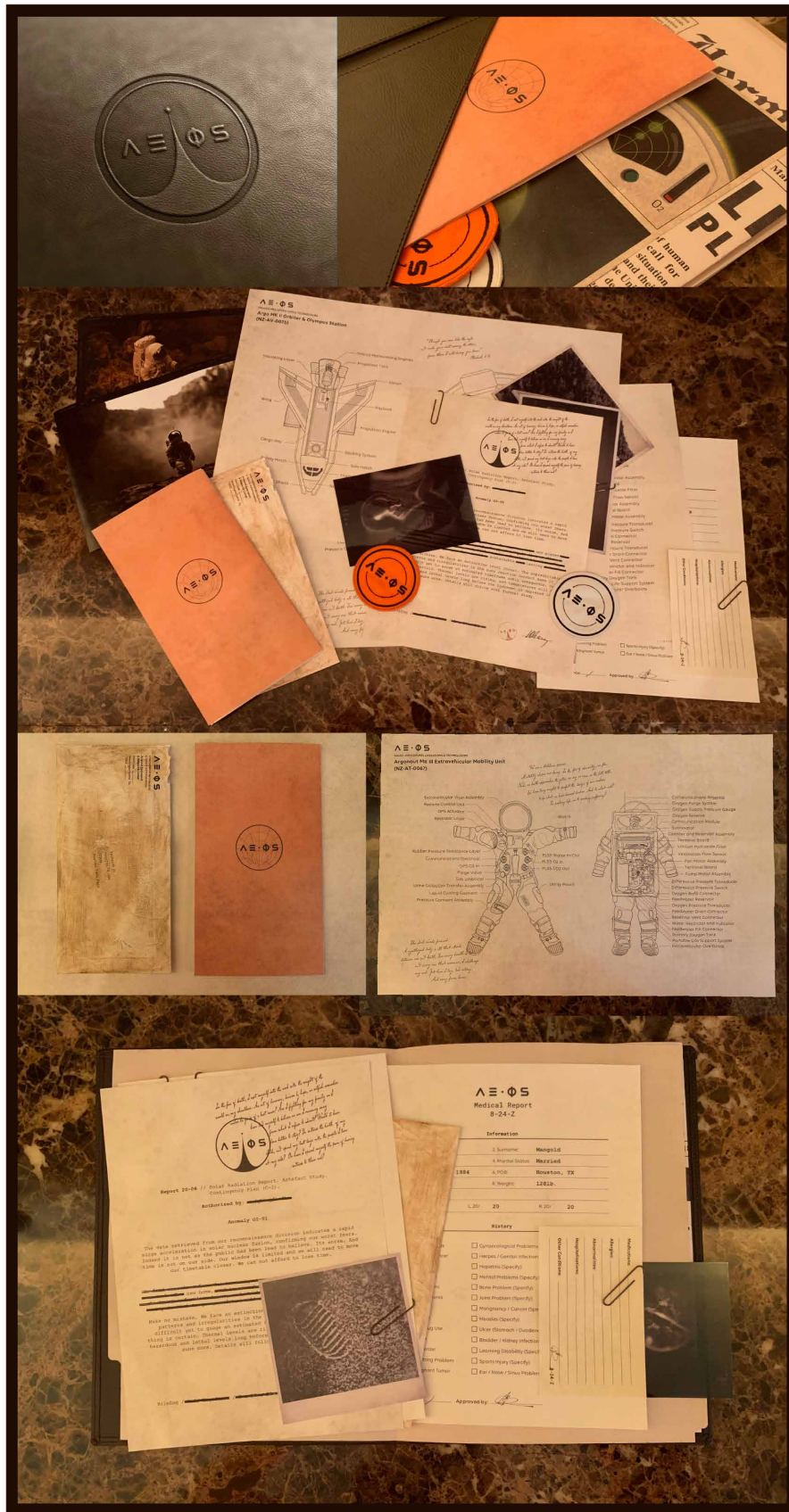
Outline of deliverables:

A leather folio containing the following:

- Photographs** (Documenting the travellers journey and findings)
- Polaroids** (Classed separately from the main photographic element, serving a lesser purpose. documenting past findings. providing backstory)
- Documents / Medical Records / Letters** (Providing intel on character, mission, and narrative)
- Schematics** (Providing intel on the items, technology, and transportation methods used, with narrative centered implications)
- Manual / Brochure** (Intel on the mission)
- Comic strip** (Narrative implications)
- Patches / Miscellaneous Items** (Provide added tangibility to the work. A souvenir for lasting impact)

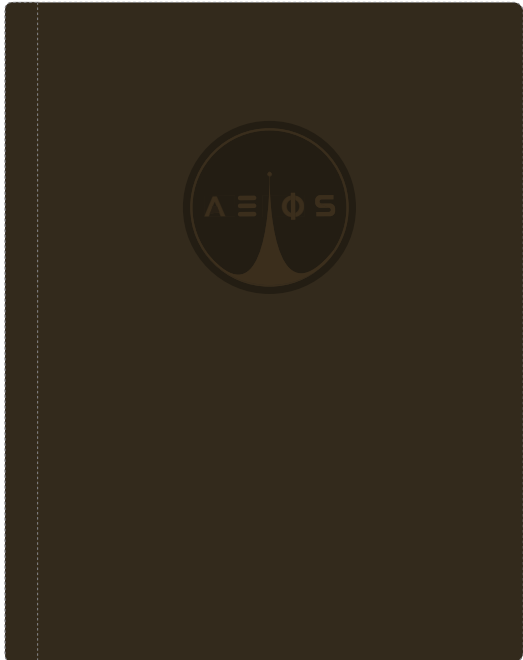
The varied deliverables not only allow me to explore different sides of the overarching narrative. They also allow me to explore the overarching narrative from different sides as well. This will allow the reader to follow the story across different perspectives, and derive a meaning which is complete.

PREVIEW

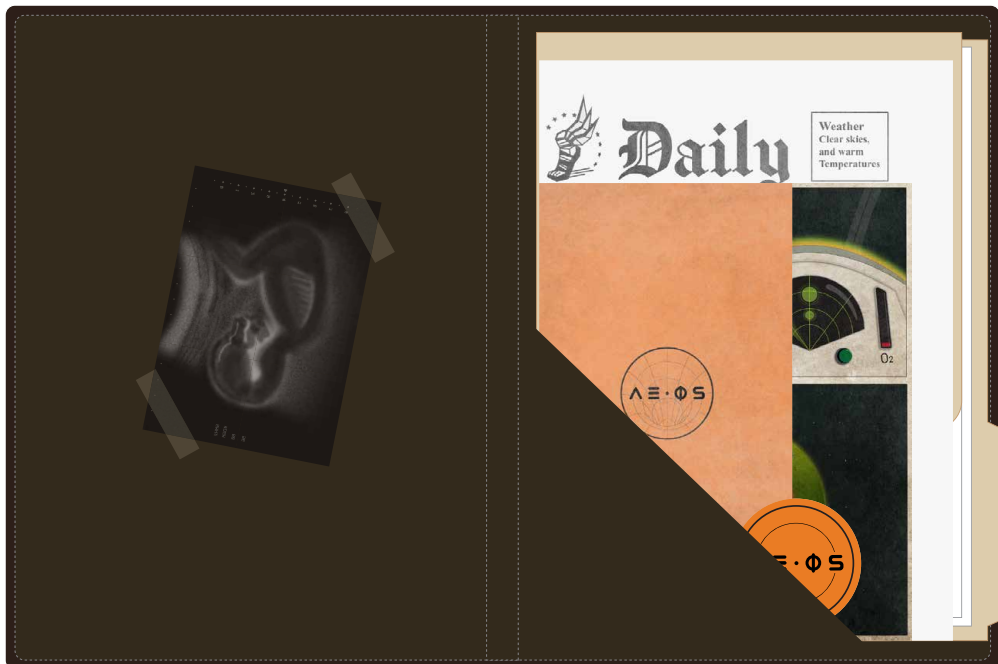


FOLIO

Cover



Inside



NEWSPAPER

Included in Edition
 - Heatwave persists
 - Refugee Situation
 - AEOS future plans
 - Secretary of State issues warning

Hermes Daily



Weather
 Clear skies,
 and warm
 Temperatures

49th Year - Num. 204
Houston, TX, Sunday March 18th
Daily Independent Newspaper
45 Cents

OUR WORLD IN PERIL!

SWARMS OF PEOPLE RELOCATE NORTH

Drought, starvation, and blight drive new waves up north as heatwave persists. Experts at the World Health Organization and the International Union of Climate Change warn of a reported estimate of 8,000 deceased by the end of spring with catastrophic implications for the summer to follow. The months following the rising conditions imposed by the solar heatwave, show increasing rates of migration from residents near the equator towards the Northern and Southern Hemispheres. The refugee situation exacerbates with a growing number of settlements and camps for those not permitted entry across international borders. Tensions are at an all time high as riots and protests

across the globe accuse of human rights violations and call for immediate action. With the situation of many unaccounted for and their cries yet to be answered, the United Nations has yet to issue a decision regarding the plea for refugee entry. Spokesperson Luna Pavlovsky of The International Aeronautics and Space Program AEOS reassures of progress following the programs second expeditionary mission Theseus, but have refused to comment on the whereabouts of its crew whom have departed back in January, citing confidential reasons. Theseus follows the first AEOS lead expeditionary mission Perseus which saw its crew return in January with inconclusive

findings. The crew remains in quarantine under strict procedure. Pavlovsky also assured that they will be moving ahead of schedule with their next expeditionary mission MIDAS. Although a date has not yet been determined, Pavlovsky promises an announcement will be made soon.

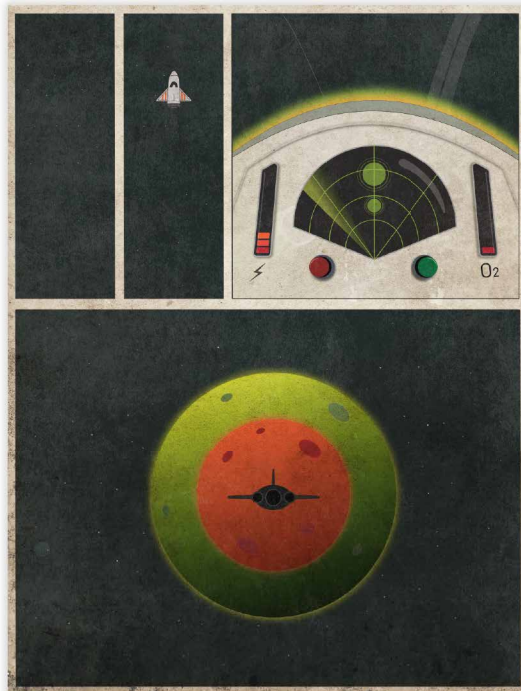
“We stand united, or we fall divided.”

Former secretary of state Neil Musk issued a warning on Saturday stating “In these difficult times we are met with forces greater than all of us. Conflict beyond borders, religion, or politics. Conflict above our petty quarrels. Conflict that does not discriminate and threatens us all alike.

We face the darkness together, as one people. Our strength in our numbers. We need each other now more than ever. Either we stand united, or we fall divided.” Musk provided no further comment. The former secretary of state is not the only person painting a grim picture of the situation. Conspiracy theorists have ridiculed the efforts made by the Internationally funded initiative and have labled it as an elaborate attempt by the nation leaders to prevent panic, even questioning where their true intentions lie. Some conspiracy theorists have even gone to the extent of dismissing these efforts as a hoax, and that a solution to save the people was never in place to begin with.

COMIC

Recto



Verso

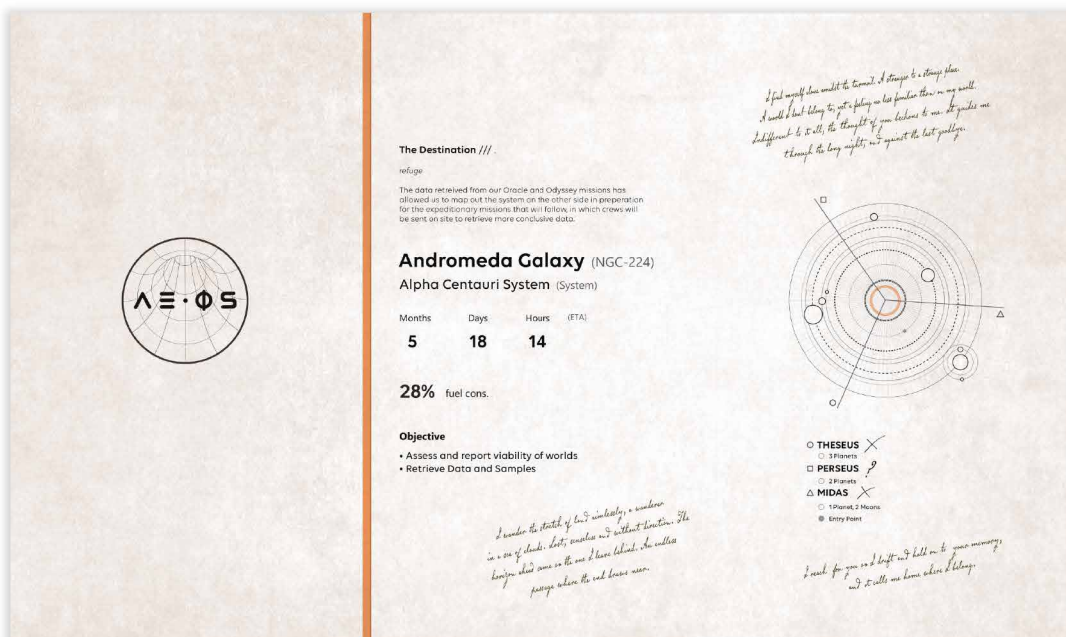


BROCHURE

Recto



Verso



DOCUMENT

See the face of Athena, I will myself into the void with the weight of the world on my shoulders. She sits of heavenly bodies in selfish conceals with no my shoulders. She sits of heavenly bodies in selfish conceals with no my shoulders. She sits of heavenly bodies in selfish conceals with no my shoulders.

AEOS

Report 20-06 // Solar Radiation Report, Artefact Study, Contingency Plan (C-2).

Authorized by: _____

Anomaly OI-01

The data retrieved from our reconnaissance division indicates a rapid surge acceleration in solar nuclear fusion, confirming our worst fears. Indeed it is not as the public had been lead to believe, its worse. And time is not on our side. Our window is limited and we will need to move our timetable closer. We can not afford to lose time.

_____ new places
_____ sustainable and lasting _____

_____ mistakes. We face an extinction level threat. The unpredictable _____ and irregularities in the suns reaction conduct make it _____ an estimated timeframe until armageddon. One _____ levels are rising, and temperatures will reach _____ long before the hydrogen is depleted in the _____ will follow with further study.

AEOS *Wray*

Artefact OI-02


On a more positive note, further study of the artefact near mars continues to show real promise. They have taken to calling it ORB for its resembling appearance. We do not know the origin and circumstances that brought about these recent anomalies, but we do believe the artefact (ORB) is one side of a twofold pathway to a new solar system. A shortcut that will allow us to cross the distance between two ends in space as we had hoped. A postulation that goes back to Einsteins field equations. Current evidence is inconclusive and we may not be able to confirm without sending a live subject (ODYSSEY). We do not yet understand its properties, if it can be contained or harnessed, nor of any possible side effects.

At this juncture, we stand to believe that the cause behind the singularity is not a natural occurrence. If proven to be a construct and our hypothesis is validated, given the convenient timing, the possibilities could be endless and the implications could be an indicator of a favorable outcome. An existence of ~~unpredictable, uncontainable, unmanageable~~ **unpredictable life.**

Our first Mission ORACLE will allow us our first test launch and first contact with the artefact (ORB). Our primary aim is successful unmanned entry to map and survey the antipole. If entry is successful, Olympus will be stationed in place for docking and refueling of future spacecraft, and will be a necessary prerequisite before we proceed with any expeditionary missions. The Ruler will be the overseers of our lunar base and we will soon be joining _____ station of _____

If ORACLE is a success, our second Mission after, lead by one commander Katja Nov subject to cross through. Once on the lost, her mission will be to retrieve back unharmed.

The data we expect to gather will be with human expeditions. Await further _____



ORB (1,12 / 1,1) - ODYSSEY (1,9 / 2,1,9) - ORACLE (11,1 / 2,1,7) - OLYMPUS (1,1,1)

MEDICAL REPORT

AEOS
Medical Report
8-24-Z

Information

1. Name: Joel	2. Surname: Mangold
3. Sex: Male	4. Marital Status: Married
5. D.O.B: Nov. 2nd 1984	6. P.O.B: Houston, TX
7. Height: 1.78m	8. Weight: 128lb.
9. B.P: 88	
10. Vision: L 20/ 20	R 20/ 20

History

<input type="checkbox"/> Congenital Defects	<input type="checkbox"/> Gynaecological Problem
<input type="checkbox"/> Malignancy / Cancer	<input type="checkbox"/> Herpes / Genital Infection
<input type="checkbox"/> Thyroid Disorder	<input type="checkbox"/> Hepatitis (Specify):
<input type="checkbox"/> Heart Problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Problems (Specify):
<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Bone Problem (Specify):
<input type="checkbox"/> Epilepsy / Seizures	<input type="checkbox"/> Joint Problem (Specify):
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuberculosis	<input type="checkbox"/> Malignancy / Cancer (Specify):
<input type="checkbox"/> Skin Problem	<input type="checkbox"/> Measles (Specify):
<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol / Drug Use	<input type="checkbox"/> Ulcer (Stomach / Duodenum):
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chickenpox	<input type="checkbox"/> Bladder / Kidney Infection
<input type="checkbox"/> Eating Disorder	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning Disability (Specify):
<input type="checkbox"/> Blood Clotting Problem	<input type="checkbox"/> Sports Injury (Specify):
<input type="checkbox"/> Non Malignant Tumor	<input type="checkbox"/> Ear / Nose / Sinus Problem

Clearance: _____ Approved by: _____

ENCLOSED LETTER

AEOS
International Administration
& Space Administration
Athena Spaceport
& Research Center
Warrington Land, CL
72005

AEOS / Human Resource Division

Commander,

Upon careful consideration, we regret to inform you that your request to delay and reschedule departure has been denied. All preparations have been set in order for MIDAS.

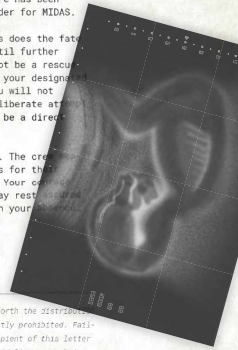
The whereabouts of PERSEUS remain unknown. As does the fate of its crew. We can only assume the worst until further developments arise. To be clear, this will not be a rescue mission. Your primary objective is to search your designated sector, and to gather and retrieve intel. You will not divert course under any circumstance. Any deliberate attempt at risking or jeopardizing your mission will be a direct violation of protocol.

We each have our orders and our part to give. The crew members of PERSEUS included. Their sacrifice was for the belief in something greater than themselves. Your courage and contribution are acknowledged, and you may rest assured that your family will be well accommodated in your absence.

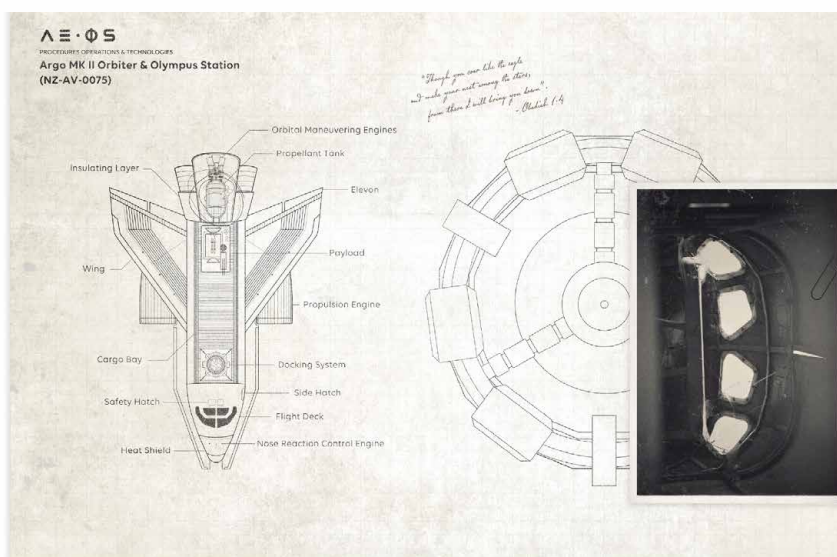
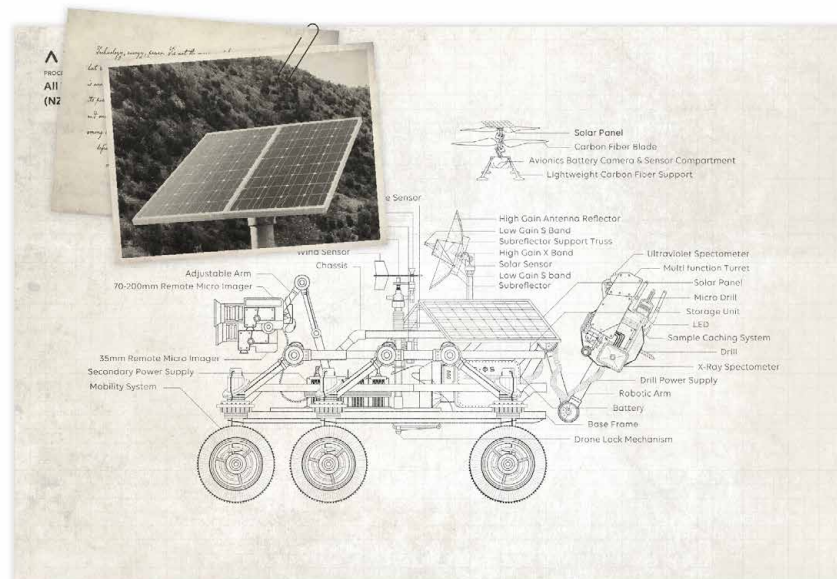
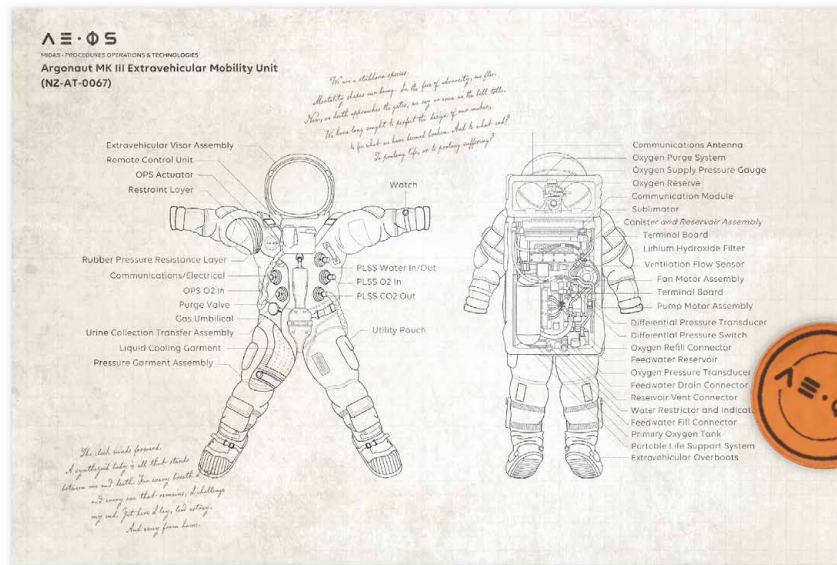
Good Luck, & Godspeed

// The contents of this letter are confidential, nonconfidential distribution or reproduction of the information held within is strictly prohibited. Failure to comply will be a violation of protocol. The recipient of this letter is advised to properly dispose of all content as per guidelines upon being briefed, unless indicated otherwise.

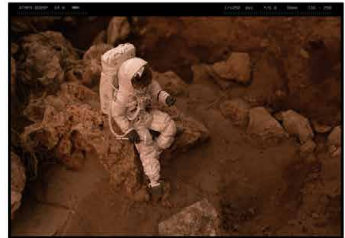
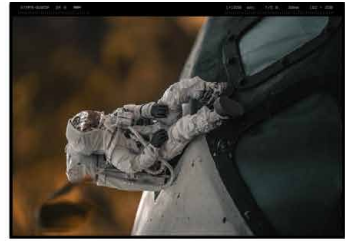
The weight of the face to come wrong, so the wrong to over the face? I received a signal along my elected path. No telling how long since the signal had been sent. Could it be that the man's done? Was I honest then the way has been revealed? Could it have been this last chance to survive? Could they have been mine?



SCHEMATICS



PHOTOGRAPHY



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