Concept Proposal
March 1996

SPACE

A Journey Beyond What Is Known

Epcot 2000

Opening Summer 1999

The Space Pavilion will be housed in the existing Horizons pavilion at Epcot. The current ride system will be retained, but shortened, to make room for a second, new ride experience: **The Speculator**, a 150-person vertical platform that tilts forward to suspends guests in "mid-air" above a giant curved motion picture screen.

The ride portion of the attraction will be approximately 10 minutes in length, followed by the 6 minute Speculator experience. The capacity of the attraction will be 2,250 THC.

The theme of the pavilion is "That which you think becomes your world." Guests will be immersed in the wonders of space—as seen or imagined by mankind throughout the ages. More than just a showcase of technology, the Space Pavilion will take guests on a journey beyond what is known—onto a journey of speculation about the unknown.

The exterior of the Horizons pavilion will be modified to fit the new theme of Space. The sloping roofs on the front half of the building will be extended down to meet the ground and form the pavilion's overall new look—a mysterious pyramid, a shape that was often used in ancient civilizations as part of their celestial studies and observations.

Out in front of the pavilion will be a large animated Armillary Sphere, an object used throughout history as a mapping device of the heavens. With planets moving along their orbital pathways, this sphere becomes an enticing marquee to the Space Pavilion.

Enter the Gallery

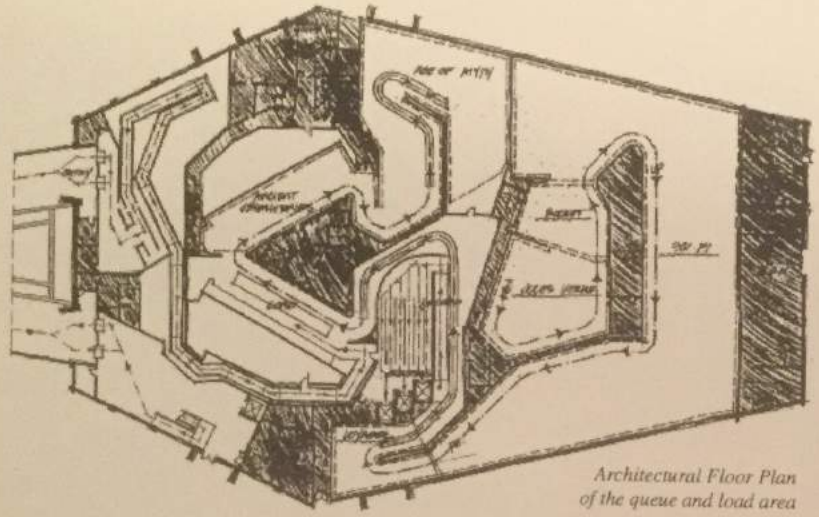
We enter the Pavilion and find ourselves in a gallery of images that convey the utmost limits of our knowledge of space.

We see dramatic views from the Hubbell telescope, showing the most distant celestial objects ever seen from earth. Computer-enhanced images and data sent back from the Voyager space probe are displayed next to a digital readout that counts off the miles Voyager has traveled away from earth—the farthest into space that any man-made probe has ever traveled. We see exciting scenes from the most recent space shuttle flights, as astronauts live and work space, preparing for construction of the first permanent space station. This area is simple in design, and is constantly updated as new images become available.

In this entry gallery, interspersed between the images, we see the faces and hear the voices of folks of all ages and walks of life. They are asking questions about what space might be, and wondering about our role in the universe.

These faces and voices, combined with the gallery's state of the art images, will be the first of several reinforcing moments in the show that use commonly held beliefs in great diversity to demonstrate the theme, "that which we think really does become our world."

Space isn't remote at all...
it's only an hour's drive away
if your car could go straight up.

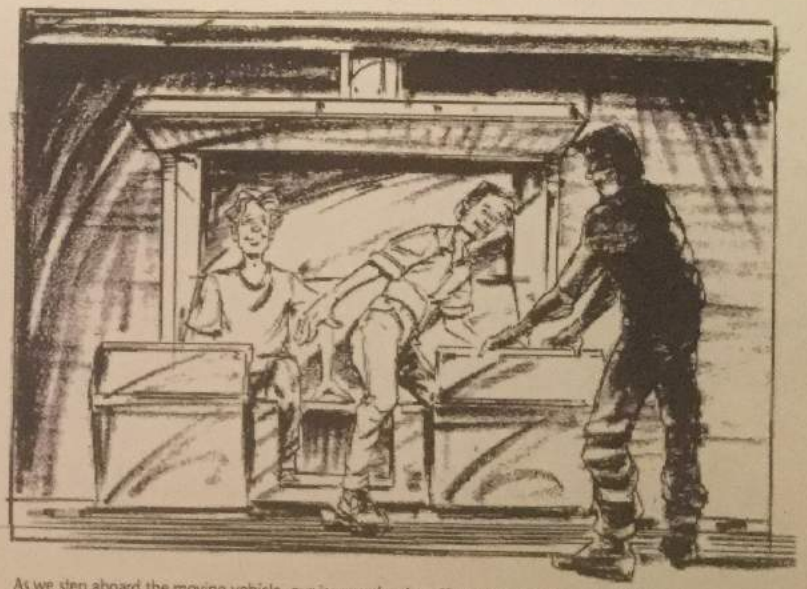


Architectural Floor Plan of the queue and load area

Boarding the Ride Vehicle

The first of two adventures, the ride is a journey toward the stars, a journey to see what our ancestors have envisioned and imagined space to be—and how knowledge and tools forever alter those perceptions. But most importantly, it is a journey for us to think about space, to learn—to imagine.

We'll begin at a time when the only tool we had to explore space was the human mind, and finish this part of the show inspired by images from today's technology—images that will fuel tomorrow's speculation. We'll see four "acts" in our story—*We Imagined, We Saw, We Went, We Reach*—that will take us from a point here on earth to the furthest explored point in the universe.



As we step aboard the moving vehicle, our journey begins. The voice of a narrator will accompany us along the way. As we travel, we will encounter strategic "milestones"—tools that represent sudden and tremendous advances in mankind's ability to understand and explore the universe. At each milestone, the visual style and the mood of the show will change, to emphasize the special importance of these advances, and to separate their factual content from the speculation of the main scenes.

As our ride vehicle leaves the loading area, today's modern world is left behind and we find ourselves transported to a time where our ancestors' only tool to interpret the skies above was the incredible vision of the mind's eye. With this single first tool, speculation begins.

Aboard the Ride

Act One:
We Imagined

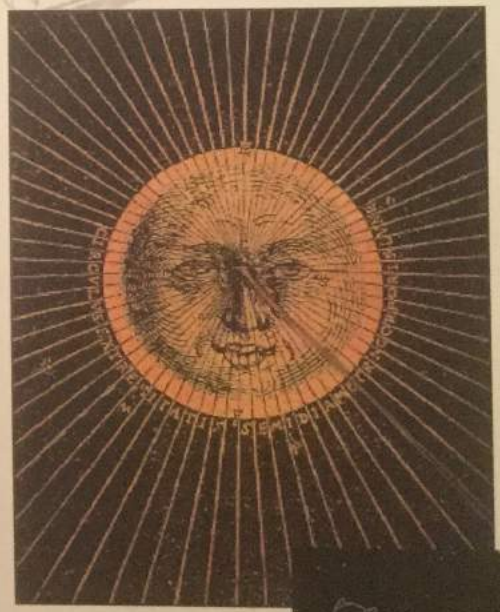
with our tool:
the mind

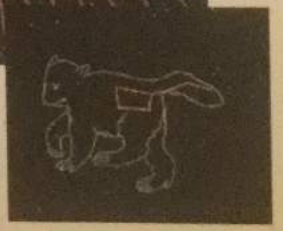
We peer out from under the flickering flames of candles and torches in ancient observatories, Chinese temples, Egyptian pyramids and the monoliths of Stonehenge toward the vast unknown of space. We hear the voices of our ancestors as they wonder about the points of light in the sky overhead. We see how the diverse early civilizations have all looked toward one common unknown: the universe.

In this long-ago time, as we watched the skies in wonder, we used our imaginations to conjure up amazing visions of what those points of light might be. Diana's arrow is shot across the heavens, bringing to life the constellations and the hidden beings they represent. We used our imaginations visualizing how the universe must work. We saw dragons consuming the sun, and even imagined things we couldn't see, like the earth being carried through space on the back of a giant turtle. These images play before our eyes like a sequence from Disney's *Fantasia* come to life.

We feel the emotional power of these images, as animation, color and music swirl through our vision. It makes us realize that sometimes images from the mind are more powerful than the actual nature of the universe. We see that without the benefit of technical knowledge, these speculations existed as reality, for that which you think becomes your world, until....

The universe was, in ancient times,
an enigma.
A strange, endless void filled with mysteries.
Gigantic—and beyond understanding.





Aboard the Ride

Act Two:

We Saw

with our tool:

the telescope

In one great sweep of scientific creativity, space became more understandable. The universe was nearer now.

Things changed. As we reach our next milestone, we encounter a wondrous man-made tool: the telescope. Now we can actually see into space, rather than just imagine. We see that those points of light are planets like our earth and stars like our sun. The riddle of the solar system starts to unfold, as we see the earth is no longer the center of the universe. Much of what we believed and looked at would never be the same.

As we enter the scene, we hear the voices of people from this era, speculating about the universe—with the newly acquired vision of the telescope enhancing the power of the mind's eye.

Through the vision of the telescope, we began to imagine what it might be like to travel to the moon, and perhaps even the planets and stars beyond—and we conjured up amazing visions of how we might get there.

Authors like H.G. Wells, Jules Verne and Edgar Rice Burroughs began to speculate about how that technology might work, while artists like Albert Robida began to envision how it all might look.

The imagery we pass resembles the machine age world of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* of Chaplin's *Modern Times* with the whimsy of a Roland Emmet kinetic sculpture. For the first time, we can imagine the possibility of an exodus from the planet earth, heading for the stars beyond.

That which you think becomes your world.

Aboard the Ride

Act Three:

We Went

with our tool:

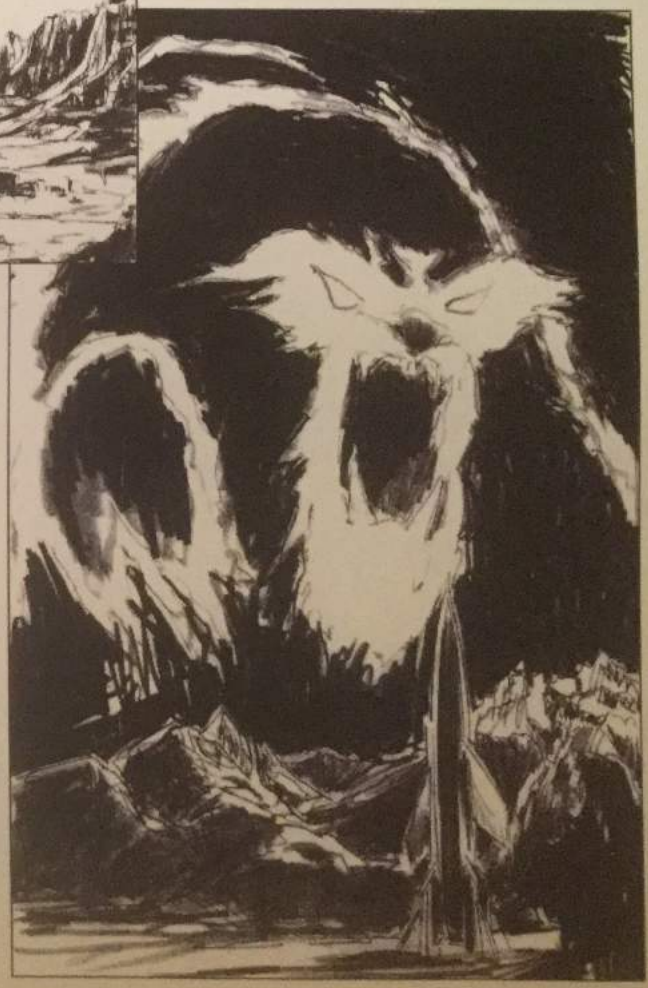
the rocket

Once again, we arrive at a milestone: the invention of the rocket. The first successful launch put aside once-and for all our quaint visions of how space flight might be accomplished, and forever altered the way we would look to the stars—and how we would think about getting there. As we pass by this milestone, voices fill our ears and we once again listen to people of the era speculating about space travel and the galaxies beyond.

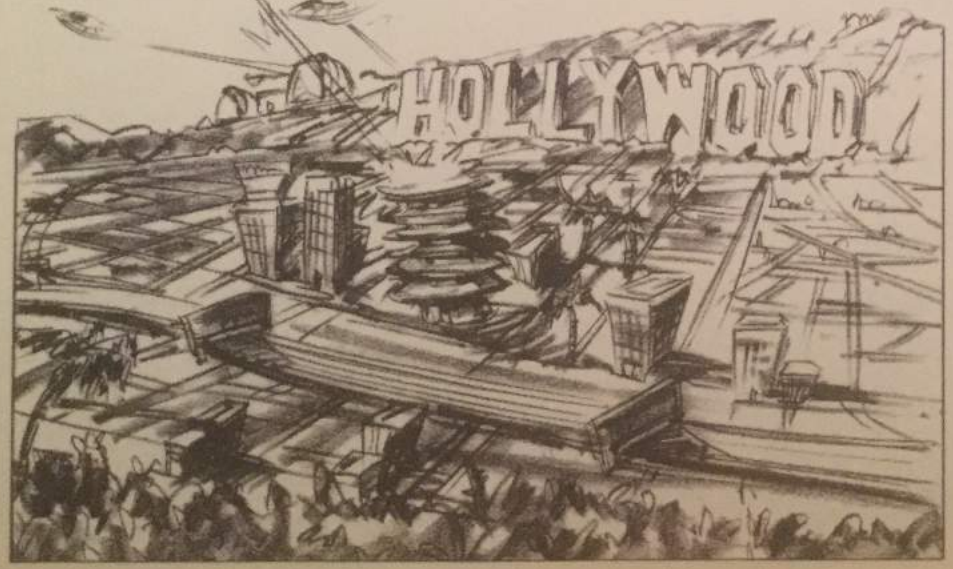
By means of rocket technology, we are able to leave the earth behind and actually visit our nearby planetary neighbors. We quickly begin to speculate that they, too, could visit us—and the imagination takes flight, conjuring up amazing visions of flying saucers, robots and monstrous creatures from other planets. Scenes similar to the most evocative science fiction movies threaten the visitor with surprises as stunning as the illusions in the Magic Kingdom's *Alien Encounter*.

Through Hollywood magic, we imagine beings from our worst nightmares descending to attack the cities of Planet Earth. In another moment, bizarre, fragile (and maybe even benevolent) creatures spring from the imagination, confronting us with showers of mysterious rays of unknown power.

Could they be evil or good?



Now that space travel had become
a reality, we began to wonder
—and worry—
about what might exist in space,
that could travel to us...



Aboard the Ride

Act Four:

We Reach

with our tool:

Voyager

It will be 40,000 years
before Voyager makes a close approach to
any other planetary system.
It will take us much less time.

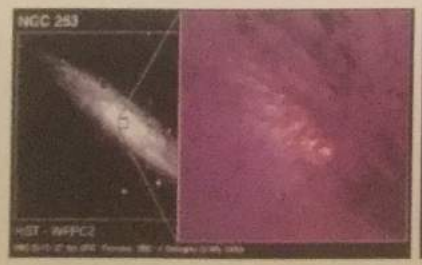
Speculative images of ever increasing sophistication bring us to today, as we approach our current milestone: advanced tools that probe the mysteries of space, traveling far into the galaxies, reaching out to points further than we could ever sustain manned space flight.

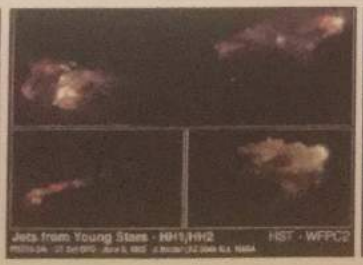
Now we are coming to the end of the ride, the first portion of our journey, and we see *Voyager* carrying its hopeful message of greeting on an endless trek through the universe.

It's today, and thanks to the technological advances of NASA, JPL and the world's other space programs, we can extend our presence and knowledge further than ever before, from our own galaxy into the vastness beyond. We have reached almost unimaginable distances into space. But at the same time, we have reached the limits of our modern technology.

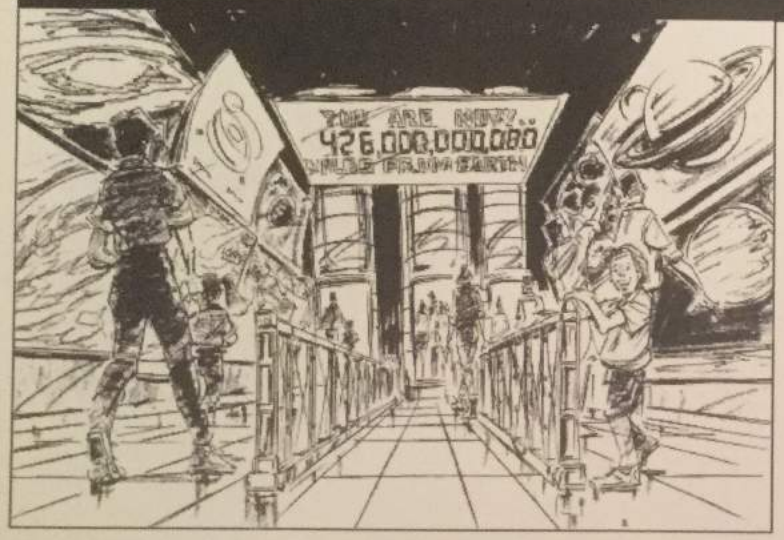
Or so we thought. This is Epcot, after all, and coming up in the second half of our *Space* experience, we will have access to an innovative future tool that will forever alter the way we perceive and understand the concept of space and our place in it.

This is a present
from a small
distant world,
a token of
our sounds...
our science...
our images...
our music...
our thoughts.





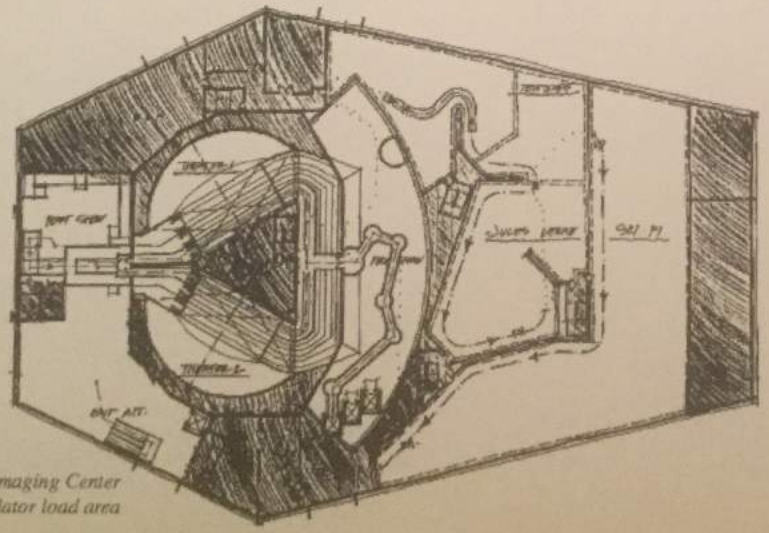
Arrival at the Digital Imaging Center



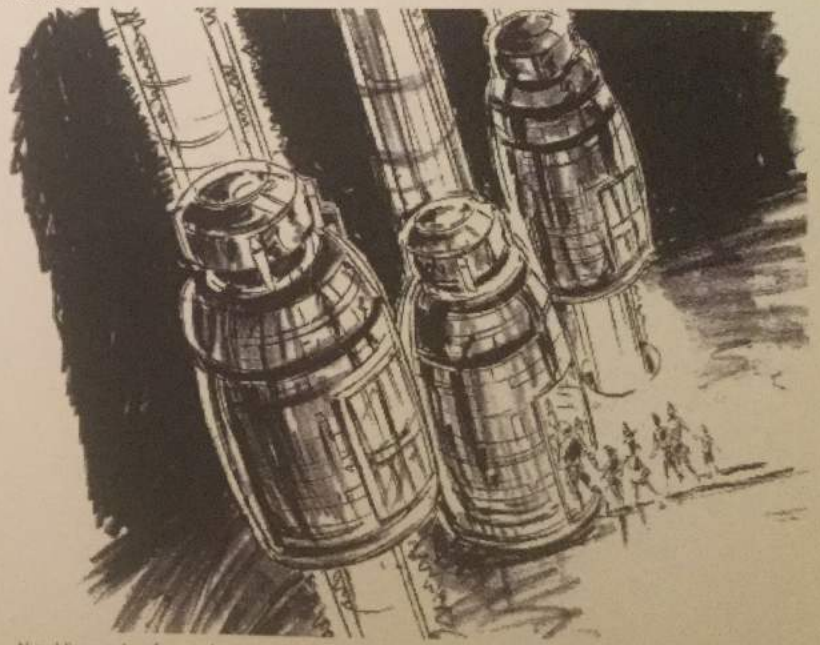
We disembark from our ride vehicle and find ourselves at an advanced digital information receiving center for JPL and NASA. The center has a state of the art look, with data coming in from the farthest reaches of the known universe. Digital images are being assembled before our eyes, forming fascinating views of distant space.

These images will always be the newest, most up-to-date photographs possible, incorporated into the show as quickly as they are made available to us by JPL and NASA.

We hear the spoken impressions of others, and perhaps our own voices join in as we speculate about what is coming next. What visions can the mind create from these state-of-the-art revelations?



Floorplan of Imaging Center and Speculator load area



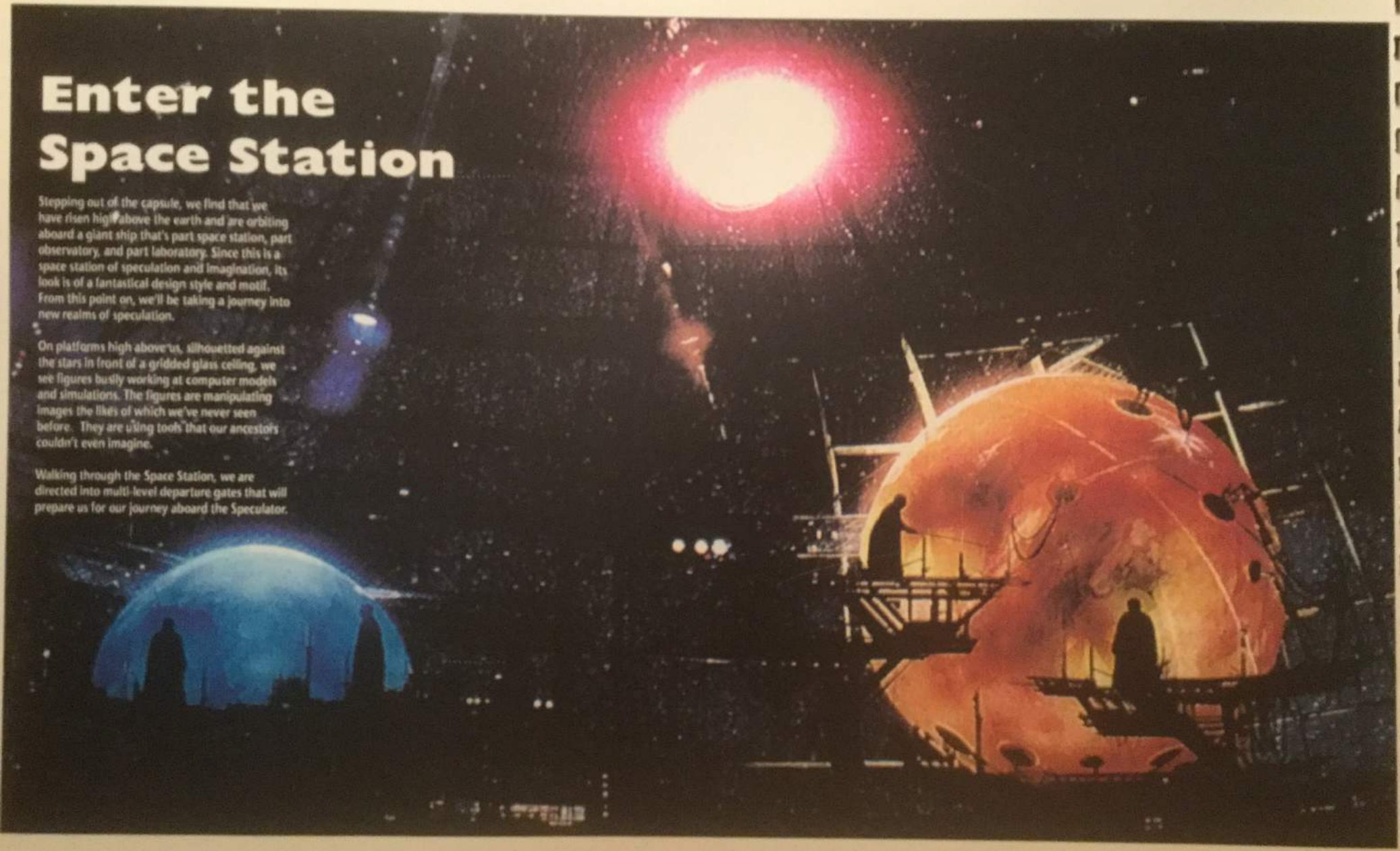
Ahead lies a series of mysterious capsules that will transport us from this earth-bound NASA center up to the orbiting Space Station X-1, where we'll board the Speculator—our second adventure. These capsules will be a bridge between the tools of NASA and the visions of the human mind. They will be real elevators, using dramatic special effects to convince us that we are being transported upward to the space station.

Enter the Space Station

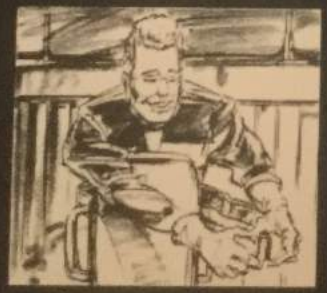
Stepping out of the capsule, we find that we have risen high above the earth and are orbiting aboard a giant ship that's part space station, part observatory, and part laboratory. Since this is a space station of speculation and imagination, its look is of a fantastical design style and motif. From this point on, we'll be taking a journey into new realms of speculation.

On platforms high above us, silhouetted against the stars in front of a gridded glass ceiling, we see figures busily working at computer models and simulations. The figures are manipulating images the likes of which we've never seen before. They are using tools that our ancestors couldn't even imagine.

Walking through the Space Station, we are directed into multi-level departure gates that will prepare us for our journey aboard the Speculator.



Safety first...



...fasten those seat belts!

As we wait to be called aboard the Speculator, we'll experience a video pre-show. During this brief presentation, we will be shown the safety information needed to ensure a successful journey. We see that once we go inside, we will be directed down one of the aisles. Instead of sitting in theater seats, we will be standing up during our journey, facing an individual vertical platform. We will be told to stand against the platform, adjust it up or down to a comfortable height, then secure a seat belt around our waists. Hand-holds are available on the platform in case we feel the need to "hang on." We begin to wonder just why these precautions are necessary.

The vertical platforms, we are told, are actually sensors that will read the thoughts that now fill our minds—thoughts inspired by the ride we just completed. These thoughts will be gathered, stored and recombined to create the speculations on which our upcoming Speculator journey will be based.

Of course, the visions seen during our Speculator journey will have actually been inspired by a group of the modern world's greatest and most imaginative thinkers: scientists like Steven Hawking and Carl Sagan, illusionists like David Copperfield, humorists like Gary Larson and Douglas Adams, storytellers like George Lucas, as well as philosophers, mathematicians, writers, musicians, artists—and even children, who in their innocence see things in a way no one else ever can.

As the pre-show continues, we find out that all speculation begins with a premise—and it turns out that a premise is the fuel that makes the Speculator run. The more exciting the premise, the further the Speculator will travel.

Like a telescope, the Speculator can be aimed anywhere in space. Like a rocket, it can take us wherever we choose to go. And like a space probe, it can tell us what we're seeing when we get there.

But unlike these existing tools, it can expand our concept of the universe by giving us the vision of a being freed from the limits of size, space and time. Just as the electron microscope can magnify the infinitely small so that we can comprehend its hidden universe, so too can the Speculator reduce the cosmos so that we may "see larger" and catch a glimpse of what it might all be.

The Speculator can also take us downward like a microscope to a size where we can "see smaller" so that molecular structures which are normally viewed as solid to mortals of our size become as vast and infinite as outer space. But most importantly, it also commands the most powerful tool of all—our very first tool—the human mind. Our imaginations.

And now, we're told that the Speculator is in position, ready for us to climb on board. Let's fuel it up and take a trip.

We step aboard the Speculator and walk to one of the vertical platforms. We face the platform, adjust its height and fasten our seat belt. In front of us, we see a giant screen filled with computer data that is tracking our fellow passengers as they find their places and strap themselves in. As each person takes their position, the Speculator scans their thoughts, sorts them, categorizes them and adds them to the conglomerate of data that will form the basis of our speculation.

Our journey of speculation will be told in six sequences:

Things May Not Be What They Seem
Ahead Full Throttle
Cities Among the Stars
Are We Alone?
Faster than the Speed of Light
Inside The Mind's Eye

The journey will take approximately 6 minutes.

Aboard The Speculator

Sequence One:

Things May Not Be What They Seem

The computer data screen tells us that the last passenger is in place, and we are ready to begin our journey. The data screen fades to black and for a moment we find ourselves in total darkness. A low rumbling sound begins to build in intensity as the Speculator is powered up, reaching its peak as a crescendo of music fills the room—and a spectacular image engulfs the screen, completely filling our field of view.

Behold!
The Universe!
But not the universe
of outer space...

It's an image that appears to be a galaxy, with tens of thousands of points of light suspended in the blackness. It is an image that is at once as familiar as it was to the ancients and yet strangely new and mysterious—for this is not the universe we would expect to see. It's <u>not</u> the universe of stars and planets. This is the universe of subatomic particles, pieces of matter so small that their tiny size is as hard to comprehend as is the vastness of outer space.

In the quickness of a minute, we will journey from this subatomic realm to the farthest reaches of the known universe. This part of the voyage will serve as an introduction to the idea of speculation: it's aim is to "throw the cards up in the air" and show that there are countless different ways of seeing things, that there are worlds existing all around us that we don't even know about, and that there are issues of scale that dramatically affect how we comprehend our place in the universe.

Things are not always what they seem to be.

Accompanied by the voice of our narrator, we begin to pull back from this subatomic realm. We are traveling like a rocket flying through outer space, but pulling back in <u>size</u>. As our vision becomes larger, the atomic particles begin to form something amazing. Out of the randomness comes an orderly composition. There is a unity to this universe.

As we watch the image on the giant screen in front of us, we realize that the points of light are actually atomic nuceli surrounded by clouds of electrons, the way moons surround their planets and planets surround their suns.

Then we see the atoms merge together to become molecules, until finally we've pulled far enough back to see the molecules form into a strain of DNA.

We continue to pull back even further, until the DNA resolves into a living cell, and the living cells are revealed to be an entire organism.

What are the limits of the universe? Where does it begin? Does it end?

We see a surface beginning to cover the organism, and realize that we are seeing a layer of human skin. And crawling on top of that skin we see huge monsters—just like the Hollywood space creatures we had once imagined inhabiting our own galaxy. But these monsters are real. They are actually the tiny organisms that are right now living on our own skin, inside our eyelids—existing in their own size scale, as oblivious to us as we are to them.

The eyelid blinks as we continue to pull back, and we see a human eye. At our present tiny scale, the eye appears to be gigantic.

But we quickly see that it belongs to a young boy, who now turns his head to look through a microscope.

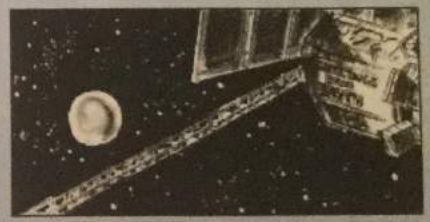
We pull back more and see a whole classroom of children, one of whom is a young girl looking through a telescope. The lens of the telescope glints as it is turned towards a window.

We pass through the window and see a schoolyard of children, who quickly vanish as their schoolyard shrinks into the countryside, which in turn becomes a tiny spot on the landscape of the planet earth.

Our scale of vision is now so vast that these children have become as tiny to us as the creatures living on the their eyelids are to them. The children and the creatures each exist in their own universe, equally oblivious to each other.

As we pull back further, we see the earth itself retreat in the distance. We pass by the moon, and soon the asteroids and the nearby planets vanish in the distance as well, becoming nothing more than anonymous points of light.

Now the sense of order, human scale and relationships give way to the random, void galactic universe we know as outer space.



We realize we're leaving our own solar system far behind as we streak past *Voyager*, earth's most distant space probe, which is dutifully continuing its endless mission to explore the universe within the limits of its mortal concept and vision.

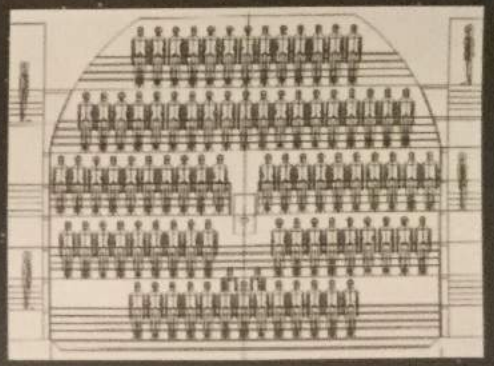
Our Milky Way galaxy disappears into the distance as the Speculator slows and comes to a gentle rest. Floating before us we once again see a universe, looking much like the subatomic universe we saw at the beginning of our journey. But this time, it turns out to be our existing concept of the universe, the universe of outer space.

We've come as far as our knowledge can take us. Now our destination lies beyond that which is known.

Aboard The Speculator

Sequence Two:

Ahead Full Throttle

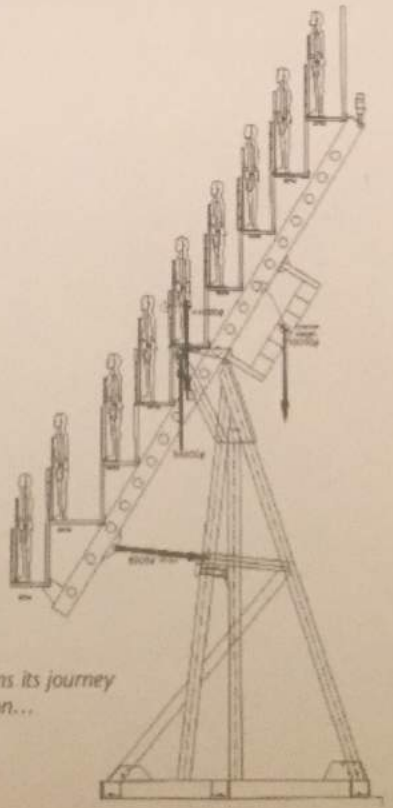


Up to this point, our Speculator journey has been primarily cinematic. But now our Speculator will begin to actually move, and our experience will become much more akin to a ride, taking us on a thrilling point-of-view space journey through state-of-the-art computer-generated visuals.

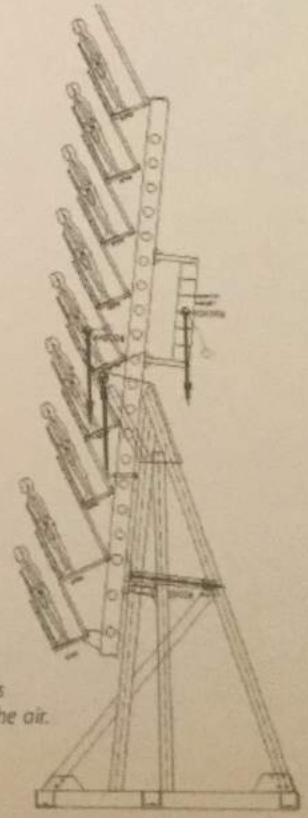
Against the black backdrop of space, we will see the images of our speculations resolve digitally—almost magically—from millions of tiny pulsing data points into clearly defined simulations. During the digitizing process, on-screen computer updates will flash on and off to tell us what is happening. Once the digitized images have completely formed, we will experience the wonder of actually entering those perfected speculations.

In the next five thrilling minutes, we'll soar towards distant galaxies, visit earth's first giant space colony, encounter beings on other planets, and travel faster than the speed of light through a treacherous wormhole into a spectacular and thought-provoking finale.

Our Speculator starts to move again, slowly revolving 180° to face the opposite direction—away from where we came. A computer-generated grid enhances the feeling of motion as we turn, while at the same time indicating the location of planet earth—from this scale far too small to be seen. As we turn, we see our home planet disappear off the screen, emphasizing that we truly are headed for places where no one has ever gone before.



The speculator begins its journey in an upright position...



...then suddenly tilts forward to a thrilling 25° angle—suspending its passengers as high as 60 feet in the air.

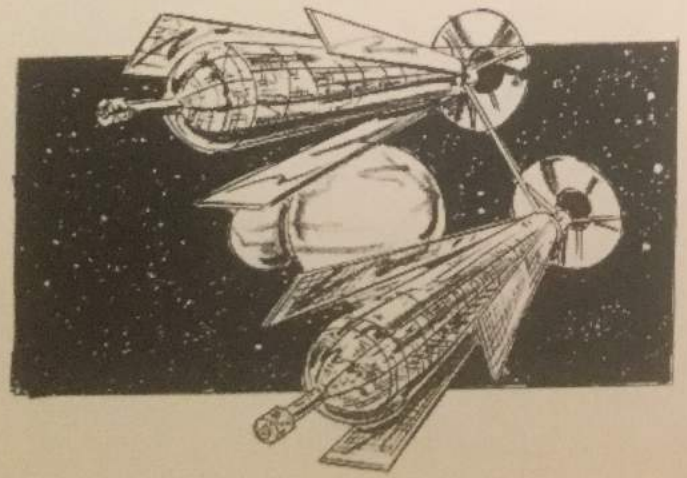
With a sudden exhilarating movement, the Speculator tips forward 25° and we find ourselves strangely floating over the vastness of space, looking directly out into the unknown that lies ahead. We feel ourselves pressed forward onto the vertical platform, suspended as much as 60 feet above the Speculator floor.

Before we can even catch our breath, the Speculator surges ahead and soars dramatically toward the stars, diving and climbing, swooping left and right, speeding ever faster as the universe streaks past. These incredible sights fill our eyes while a majestic musical score fills our ears. For a few moments, we simply enjoy the thrills of this incredible journey.

Aboard The Speculator

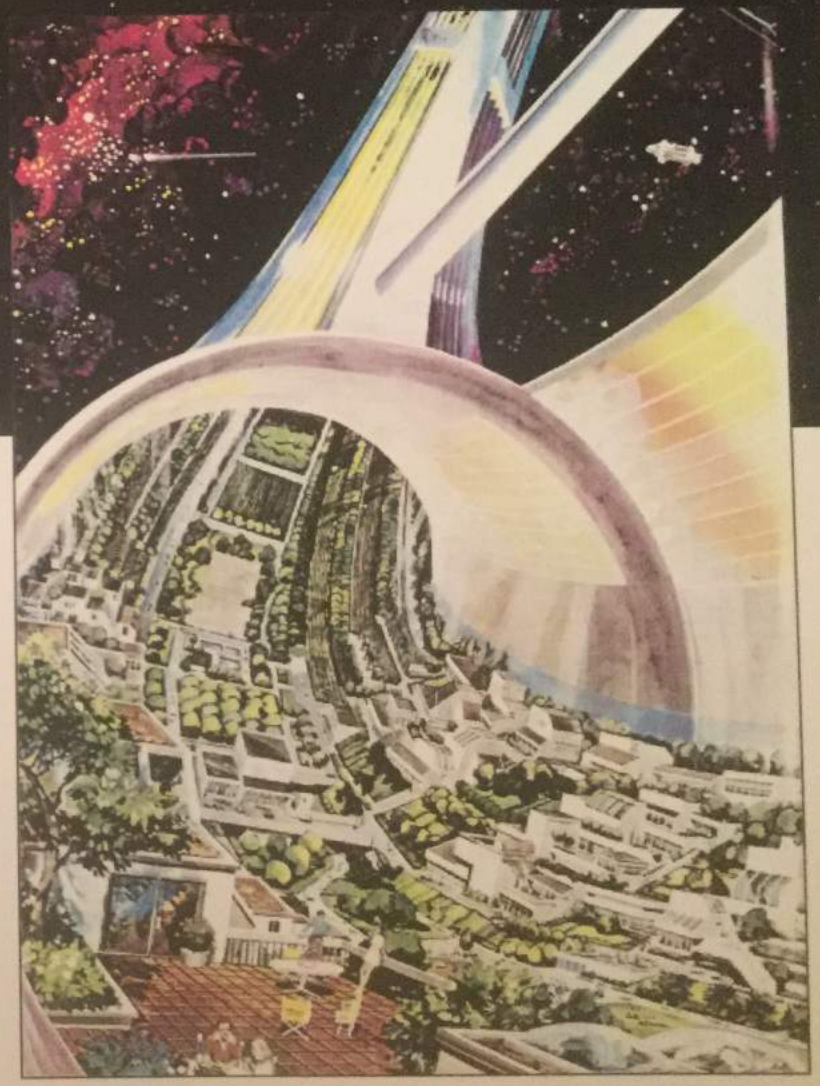
Sequence Three:

Cities Among the Stars



Against the backdrop of the stars, we see an image start to form in the distance.

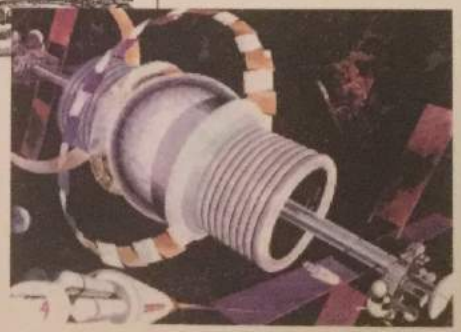
Pixels of digital data sparkle to life, then pull together to become a strikingly beautiful speculation of earth's first colony in space.



What would it be like to live and work in space?

Our Speculator zooms ever closer to the floating colony—then soars right through the digital wire-frames and polygons of the materializing airlock, into the colony's spectacular interior, which has by now become a completely resolved image.

A space colony host riding aboard a futuristic rocket bike leads the way as we experience a first-hand "guided tour" that shows how people just like us—men, women and children—might someday live and work in space. The primary mission of this colony is to continue the search for life on other planets.



As we fly high above the vast colony, our host is joined by two more rocket bikes—and riding aboard them are his wife and kids. Our space host apologizes for cutting our tour short, explaining that he and the family are about to leave for a long-awaited vacation. As their space bikes begin to descend towards the surface, one of the kids turns around and yells "We're going to Disney World!" We follow for a moment as the bikes disappear towards a magical looking amusement park—the happiest place off earth.

We're going to Disney World!

Aboard The Speculator

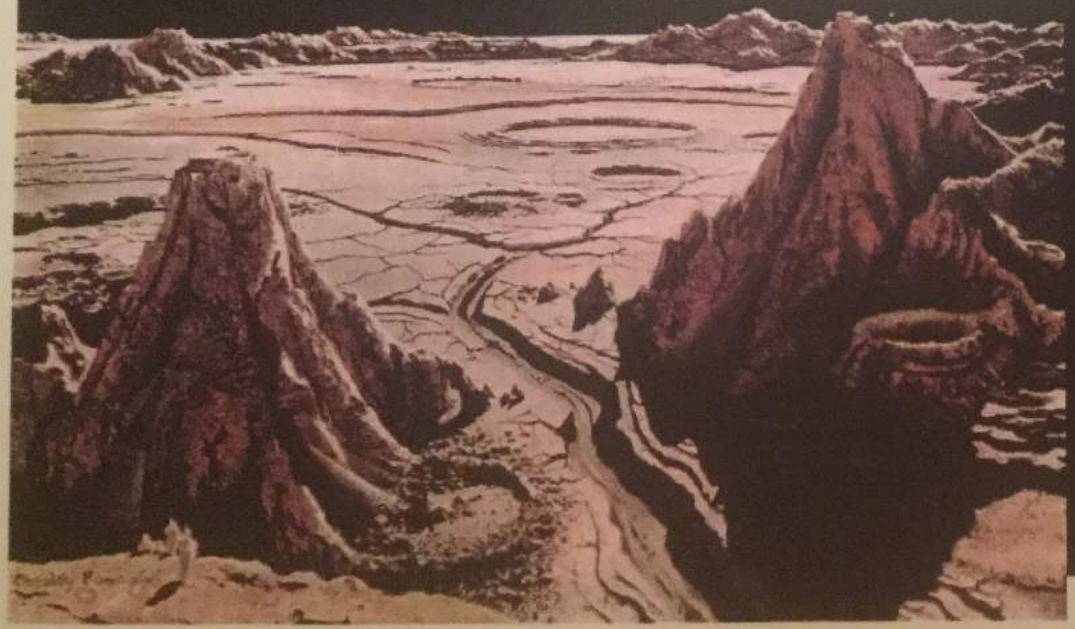
Sequence Four:

Are We Alone?

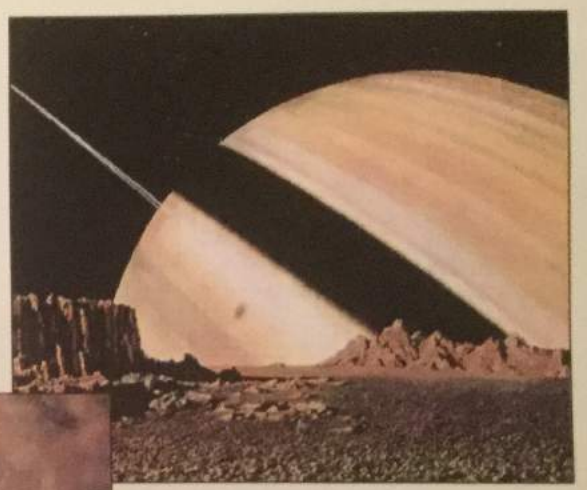
After the incredible tour through the colony, the digital image dissolves back into the blackness of the universe once again. Almost immediately, another image begins to appear in the distance ahead.

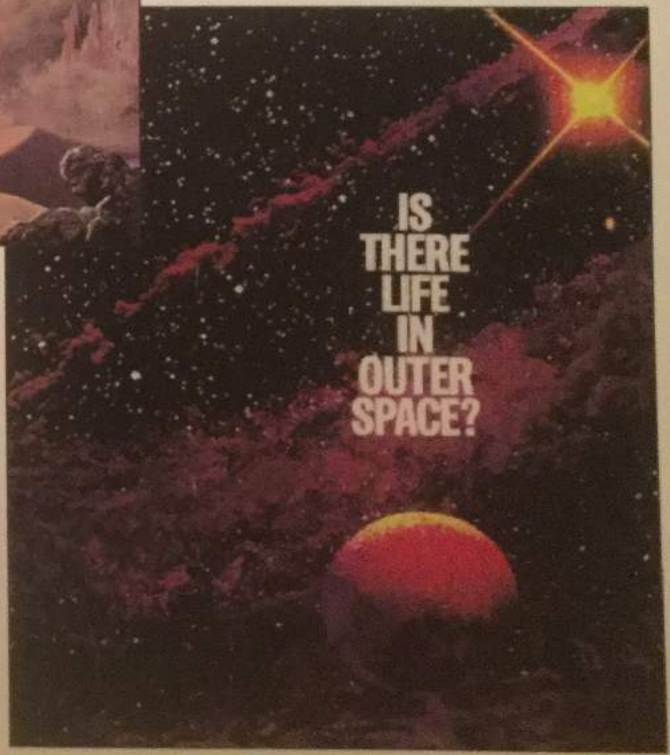
As the image digitally resolves, we find ourselves sweeping across the surface of an alien planet—one of countless inhabited planets that we speculate exist in the universe, and the first of several that we will actually visit. Here we encounter amazing and sometimes very humorous speculations about life forms that might exist throughout the universe—an endless variety of beings in spectacularly exotic environments.

Do you think it's possible that beings on other planets wonder—as we do—are we alone?



Would we even recognize life if we ran into it on another planet?





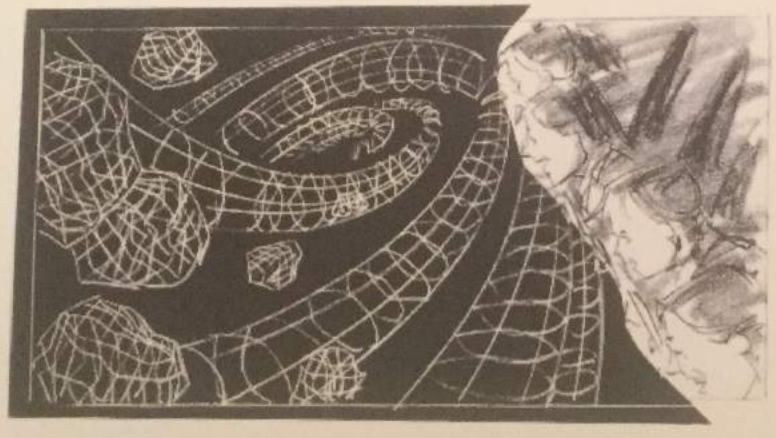
Aboard The Speculator

And now, as we leave those mysterious planets behind, our Speculator travels faster than ever, approaching the speed of light, the greatest speed possible —but not the greatest speed imaginable. After all, our Speculator is fueled by the power of our combined thoughts.

What if we could travel faster than the speed of light?

Sequence Five:

Faster than the Speed of Light



If we could somehow bend the universe,
could we jump from one end to the other in an instant?
And if we did, what would we see?
Let's find out.

The Speculator instantly jumps to the opposite end of the universe, and emerges trapped in the intense gravitational field of a black hole. We're pulled into the center of its darkness, flying out of control past all manner of matter that is being drawn in with us. We fear that the Speculator and all of us will be crushed any moment now by the unimaginable force of the black hole. But luckily for us, this black hole is just a digitally created speculation—and moments before we're destroyed, the black hole suddenly vanishes in a flash of scrambled computer data. We lurch to a stop, floating in space, returned to an upright position.

We are now ready to approach our greatest speculation.

Aboard The Speculator

Sequence Six:

Inside the Mind's Eye

What if we could pull back even further than this furthest known point, far enough to see the stars of outer space merge into something cohesive—a concept, an order, an image—just as we saw the particles of the subatomic realm merge into atoms, molecules, cells...and eventually us.

What would we find in outer space, if we could see beyond infinity, and then look back?

Fueled by this incredible premise, our Speculator starts to move again, pulling back away from where we have just been. Since we are still standing in our vertical position, just as we were at the start of our Speculator journey, this sequence will seem eerily similar to our journey from the subatomic realm.

As we continue backwards, we see the stars begin to come together. Much like the digital pixels that formed the images of our earlier speculations, the stars themselves begin to resolve into an image. But this is not just another digital image being formed by the Speculator. At first it appears to be a huge nebula cloud...then...is it our imagination or could it be that we have started to resolve the presence of some vast cosmic eye?

The motion of our Speculator slows as we ponder this astounding sight—then tilts forward to its steepest and most exhilarating angle. We rush forward, towards what might be just a dark patch in the nebula—or perhaps it is the very pupil of the eye.

We fly directly towards the center, break through the surface and surge into a storm of pulsing, flashing light. Thoughts race and spark from one node to another. We're in a brand new universe; one of boundless thought. Perhaps this universe is actually a combination of all of us, and of our ancestors—the collective sum of our thoughts, experiences, histories and dreams.

Perhaps this universe is actually the collective sum of our thoughts, experiences, histories and dreams

From all around us, voices fill our ears while thoughts fill our minds—thoughts about what and where we came from, where we're going, what the universe is, what it all might mean. The voices speed past us stereophonically as a swirl of images recall the thoughts and speculations we have experienced on our two journeys. As we continue to race past these kinetic visions, our minds are opened up to new ways of speculating about our place in the continuum of space.

Thought is vastly greater than any universe of outer space could ever be, for whatever is known—that which we can see and comprehend—is always overwhelmed by what the mind, through imagination, can speculate.

The only thing larger than the universe is the human mind.

In a blinding flash, our Speculator stops and we return to an upright position. Along the course of our journey, we've experienced what the ancients thought about space, what our modern scientists think about space, and what people just like us speculate about space. Now, in darkness, we are left with the most important question: "What do you think?"

For that which you think becomes your world.

As we disembark from the Speculator, we once more pass by images of folks like us and hear their speculations about the universe and outer space. All of us have been inspired by our experience, and there is tremendous discussion. We have activated that most powerful of tools, the human mind.

What do *you* think?

For that which you think becomes your world.

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