

pre-London Email to Dave Wark

Dear Dave:

Ruthenium doesn't often make the news, unless in some obscure art journal about my transmutation efforts. However IBM just announced that it has cracked a barrier in disk-drive design that will quadruple the data density of a hard disk to 400-gigabytes.

This new type of magnetic coating is a three-atom-thick layer of ruthenium ("...a precious metal similar to platinum...." says IBM) sandwiched between two magnetic layers. Scientists at IBM's Almaden Research Center in San Jose have dubbed the layer "pixie dust". Always watching for omens and auguries (the flights of cranes, the entrails of toads) regarding my problematic sculpture of $Tc \rightarrow Ru$ transmutation I instantly recognized this news as divine intervention.

Well Dave, I apologize for having been such a poor correspondent over the past year and no, I'm not proposing we move to a Russian reactor and manufacture "pixie dust" hard-drives from technetium 99 - it's just been a bumpy couple of years. From Imperial backing out of letting me use their Consort reactor through not getting the sci-art grant with you to the wildfire that burned 220,000 acres of the Hanford site and my studio, I've been rather off balance.

Granite comes through fires fine and I sold a long-finished sculpture to one of Seattle's new 'dot.com' millionaires and did one of those introspective things that brought me back to creating sculpture with neutron capture: Transmutation.

I can't let go of this planned artwork and can't get past it. It makes to much artistic and ascetical sense to me. The age-old dream to transmute one element to another (air, earth, fire, water to the Greeks) only became a reality with Rutherford and only commonplace with WW II. Transmutation is a logical tool of sculpture, which is an art of technology, and to use technology to create art is an inevitable accomplishment of civilization.

So I'm coming to UK, on my own, before any agreements with arts organizations or academic institutions for a artist-in-residency are entered into, to rethink this sculpture from scratch. I will meet with all the people and entities who have expressed interest and support of my work in the past and search for a partner that would like a sculpture in return for neutron flux and hot chem-seps. Additional to a great work of art I can give them unprecedented publicity (curse or blessing - up to them). You are one of the people who's council I am desirous to have and I'm hoping you can give me a few hours of your time in the first week in July, before my trips to BNFL, RAL, ISIS, et al.

I'll be arriving in London Thursday 28 June and spending at least the first few days at our friend Jim Flint's flat. I've booked a return flight to the States on Wednesday 25 July. During this period I plan to leave no stone unturned in my sisyphusen quest. I'm not asking you to put your name on anything, just to be a sounding board on the numerous possibilities I'll be exploring. It would mean a great deal to me and I'll buy the beer.

My hopes are that you won't be watching neutrinos in the bottom of a nickel mine in Canada or Russia, or on holiday, when I'm in UK. You can reach me at Jim Flint's email at ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ or call; ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ and I will try you at all the contact points I have for you once I get me feet under me after I get to Jim's. And Dave, it is no dirt between us if you are to busy or off the planet to get together. You did good in partnering with me on the sci-art thing.

In my preparation for this coming visit I've cobbled together a new slide-show; to explain what this project is about. I would certainly like to have you see it but mention it now to say if you would like me to present it to any of your classes, professional societies, colleagues, associates, accomplices or friends, I am at your service.

So, hope to see you soon, and meanwhile every best wish,

James Acord

Dave and I got along great. at last I've found my physicist.