

# **DREAMACHINE PLANS**

**created by**

**BRION GYSIN**

## **Dreamachine Plans**

This amended and expanded edition

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# INTRODUCTION

The Dreamachine was devised by Brion Gysin, artist, traveller, writer and alchemist; one of the unsung English painters of the 20th Century, expelled by Breton from the Surrealists, and the seminal influence who introduced William Burroughs to the use of cut-ups in writing. His wide cultural synthesis led him also into the world of the Rolling Stones and particularly Brian Jones whom he introduced to the Master Musicians of Joujouka.

The Dreamachine arose from his observations of the effects of passing rapidly through a vale of trees, the flickering of sunlight causing him to enter into an altered state of consciousness. This effect is well known to any who have driven along tree-lined avenues, and has led traffic engineers to reconsider the use of evenly spaced trees to line long stretches of straight road. The effects of flicker, you see, are potent. The process itself was known to North African tribesmen who entered trance states through the rapid movement of their hands and fingers across their closed eyes, heads tilted towards the Sun. With the current vogue for high-technology brain-machines at an unparalleled height, the original concept as developed by Brion Gysin and his collaborator Ian Sommerville is a welcome reminder that whilst technology advances apace, the conceptual base for interior research is as ancient as the Sun and the trees. It's beauty is in its simplicity, and in its ecologically sound construction which



Brion Gysin using a Dreamachine

requires no more than a sheet of card and the recycling of a redundant record player.

Many users of the Dreamachine have referred to it as a drug-free 'trip', but with the emphasis on INWARD travel into the areas of one's own unconscious Dream State. The Dreamachine Plans

are quite literally a Passport to this domain, and for once there are no customs posts to pass, no police barriers or laws to break down or transgress. It is quite simply a voyage of exploration without restriction.

Part of all magical process is the production of one's own tools. This is as ancient a Truth as the Art itself. The Dreamachine Plans enable one to partake in just such a process — to make the Dreamachine literally your own. Through the simple process of drawing out the design, obtaining an old 78 r.p.m. record deck, and constructing the machine, you are actively working within the oldest of traditions. All that has changed are the tools. Magicians have always retained a magpie quality which enables them to utilise whatever comes to hand. For all the dogma one reads, magic and mysticism are in reality the least dogmatic of

disciplines. It is further possible to add both internally and externally, designs, sigils, marks of your own and to anoint the Dreamachine — if you so wish — in any of the myriad ways that so many cultures have utilised since earliest time.

To make best use of the Dreamachine it is best to set it up so that you can sit comfortably (and well balanced) with your face close to the centre of the column. Music can be played, but try to avoid music with words. Words are names that call us back. The point of the Dreamachine is to travel. Other experiments include whispering into the machine as it spins round. Listen as the words are cut-up, as you get back not what you put in.

The Dreamachine is probably the first visual device to be viewed with your eyes closed. What we want to see is INSIDE. Do not worry if you generally find that closed eyes means darkness. With the Dreamachine it doesn't. A kaleidoscope of light will result and slowly these turn into archetypal visions, pictures that come alive and tell you your story, as you really are.

The instructions are simple, so close your eyes and enter the visual world of the Dreamachine. Enjoy your journey.

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*The following article is re-printed from RAPID EYE magazine with the kind permission of Simon Dwyer.*

Brain waves, minute electrical oscillations associated with brain activity, can be measured accurately and graphically recorded by the electroencephalograph (EEG) machine. EEG records show that brain rhythms divide into two groups according to frequency. One of these groups, the alpha or scanning rhythms, is strongest when the brain is unoccupied, searching for a pattern, and weakest during purposeful thinking, eyes open studying a pattern. The strength and type of rhythms vary between individuals. The EEG records of some primitive peoples are similar to those of a ten year old in our society. Variations occur with age. The alpha rhythms do not appear in children until they are about four years old.

*Ian Sommerville 'Flicker'*

“Had a transcendental storm of colour visions today in the bus going to Marseilles. We ran through a long avenue of trees and I closed my eyes against the setting sun. An overwhelming flood of intensely bright colours exploded behind my eyelids: a multi-dimensional kaleidoscope whirling out through space. I was swept out of time. I was out in a world of infinite number. The vision stopped abruptly as we left the trees. Was that a vision? What happened to me?”

*Extract from the Diary of Brion Gysin 21/12/1958*

Department of transport guidelines say that trees planted alongside motorways must not be of uniform height or distance apart. the reason for this is that drivers passing such trees for long periods experience pulses of light and changes in sound levels which can affect their concentration, and their ability to drive. Drowsiness, nausea and ‘motorway madness’ can ensue.

Tests in Britain and America have taken place investigating the effects of strobe lights and loud oscillating sound on humans. It has now been confirmed that this research has been put to use by some security agencies in the area of crowd control. It is believed that systems have been developed which can induce epileptic fits in approximately one in four people — which would be more than enough to confuse and disperse any demonstrating crowd.

On February 15th 1960, Ian Sommerville, who had been recently inspired by Grey Walters' book 'The Living Brain', wrote a letter to Brion Gysin. 'I have made a simple flicker machine. You look at it with your eyes shut and the flicker plays over your eyelids. Visions start with a kaleidoscope of colours on a plane in front of the eyes and gradually become more complex and beautiful, breaking like surf on a shore until whole patterns of colour are pounding to get in. After a while the visions were permanently behind my eyes and I was in the middle of the whole scene with limitless patterns being generated around me. There was an almost unbearable feeling of spatial movement for a while but it was well worth getting through, for I found that when it stopped I was high above Earth in a universal blaze of glory. Afterwards I found that my perception of the world around me had increased very notably. All conceptions of being dragged or tired had dropped away..."



Following Sommerville's later description of the 'Flicker machine', Gysin proceeded to make his own, adding to it an interior cylinder covered with a painting which he had produced along the lines of his 'flicker' experiences. (Indeed, much of Gysin's later painting sprang from his visions experienced in front of the machine.) Gysin wrote at the time: 'Flicker may prove to be a valid instrument of practical psychology: some people see and others do not. The DREAMACHINE, with its patterns visible to the open eyes, induces people to see. The fluctuating elements of flickered design support the development of autonomous "movies", intensely pleasurable and, possibly, instructive to the viewer.

'What is art? What is colour? What is vision? These old questions demand new answers when, in the light of the Dreamachine, one sees all of ancient and modern abstract art with eyes closed.'

**IN THE HISTORY OF ART, IN THE HISTORY OF MAGIC AND SCIENCE, IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD, ONLY ONE OBJECT HAS BEEN MADE TO BE VIEWED WITH THE EYES CLOSED: THE DREAMACHINE.**

Dreamachines bring to a conclusion the period of kinetic invention in 'modern' painting and sculpture. The Dreamachine opens up a whole new era and a new area of vision... Interior Vision.

Look into a Dreamachine, and look deep. Here you will actually SEE the fundamental order present in the physiology of the human brain. Your brain. Order imposed on chaos. Life imposed on matter. History and Mystery.

'You are the artist when you approach a Dreamachine with your eyes closed. What the Dreamachine incites you to see is yours... your own. The brilliant interior visions you so suddenly see whirling around inside your head are produced by your own brain activity. These may not be your first glimpse of these dazzling lights and celestial coloured images. Dreamachines provide them only just as long as you choose to look into them. What you are seeing is perhaps a broader vision than you may have had before of your own incalculable treasure, the "Jungian" store of symbols which we share with all normally constituted humanity. From this storehouse, artists and artisans have drawn the elements of art down the ages. In the rapid flux of images, you will immediately recognise crosses, stars, haloes... woven patterns like pre-Columbian textiles and Islamic rugs... repetitive patterns on ceramic tile... in embroideries of all times... rapidly fluctuating serial images of abstract art... what look like endless expanses of fresh paint laid on with a palette knife.'

*Brion Gysin*

The visions hollowed out of the Dreamachine usually start off with a rapid, and quickening, succession of abstract patterns. Often this transit of speeding images is followed by a clear perception of human faces. Humanoid figures and the apparent enactment of highly coloured events, or, as Gysin described them, 'pseudo events', carried out in



time and space.

'Do you dream in colour?'

*Bill Nelson*

The Dreamachine really IS just that. A dream machine. One person I know who exposed themselves to its spinning glare came out of their semi-hallucinatory state talking seriously of visiting another planet, complete with aliens, cavepaintings and children. Some people have reported nightmares of sorts, but these, as all dreams experienced on the Machine, can be abruptly brought to an end by opening your eyes.

'However you look into a Dreamachine, in a short time you will have acquired greater self-knowledge, extended the limits of your vision, brightened your perception of a treasure you may not have known you own.'

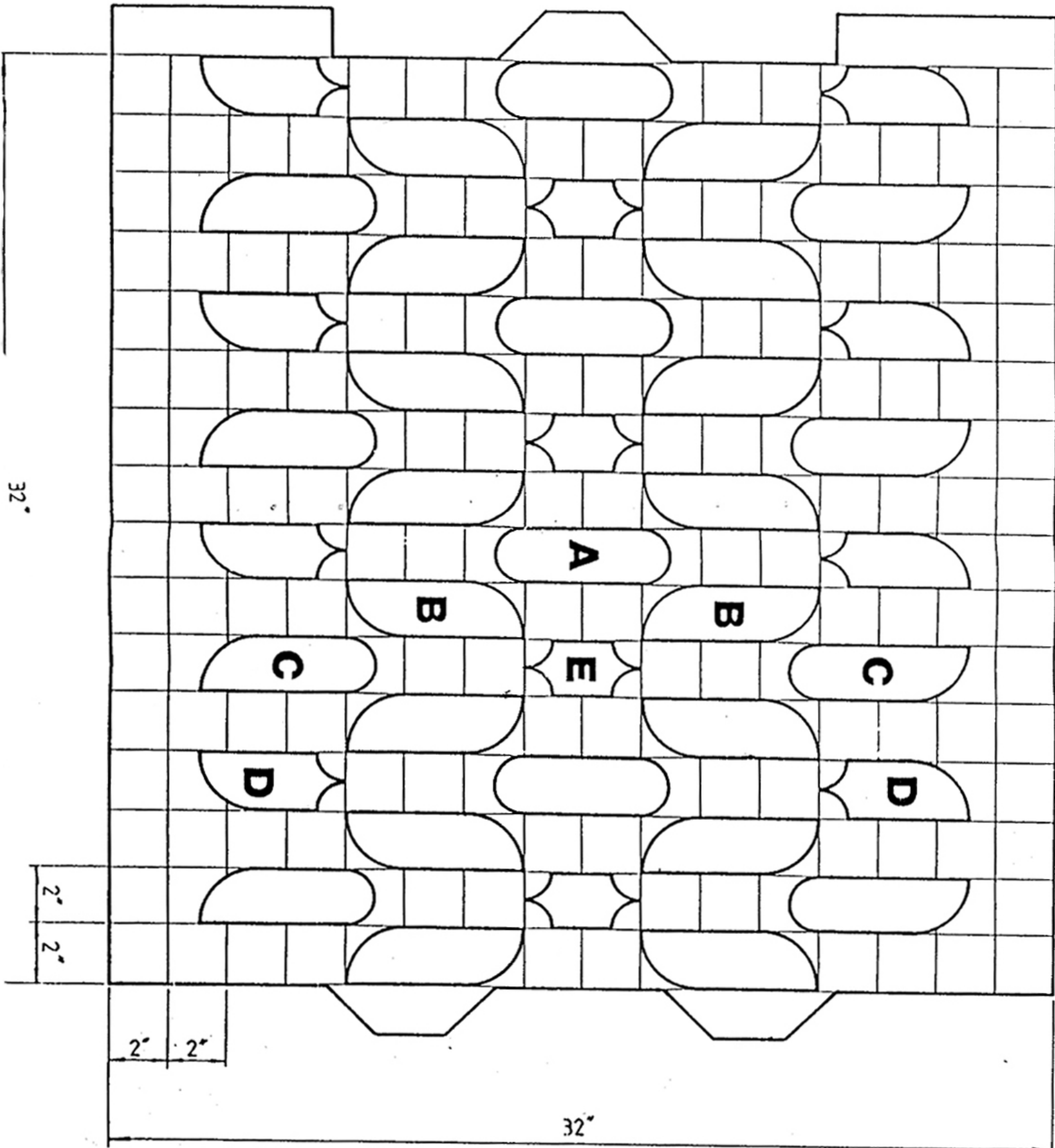
*Brion Gysin*

Gysin was approached by various large companies, including the electronics giant, Philips, sniffing around the patenting possibilities of the machine which he and Sommerville had effectively invented out of nothing. 'When I told them that it made people more awake,' said Gysin later, 'they lost interest. They were only interested in machines and drugs which made people go to sleep.'

If the Dreamachine is real, a non-habit forming, simple spinning dreambox that is capable of including a drugless high, why is it not available in your local department store? The answer would seem obvious. Look at the Financial Times and you will see that some of the biggest companies in the world are chemical giants: I.C.I, Bayer, Hoffmann La Roche. Go to your G.P. and tell him that you are ill, and what will you get? Drugs. Seek a path out of everyday trivial reality and what will you be offered? Drugs. You can only sell people one Dreamachine, one turntable, the occasional lightbulb. Drugs and their accompanying paraphernalia (and I include most doctors as an integral part of the paraphernalia) generate far more money in a drug dependent world.

How do you go about getting a Dreamachine? Well only a handful exist, made in metal cylindrical form and costing upwards of £500.00. But you can experiment by making your own.

From now on, it's all free, it's all safe, it's all legal and it really works.



## ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS

### MATERIALS

32" x 32" (minimum) piece of heavy paper/card (we find 4-ply to work well)

78 r.p.m. turntable (available at second-hand/thrift stores or boot sales)

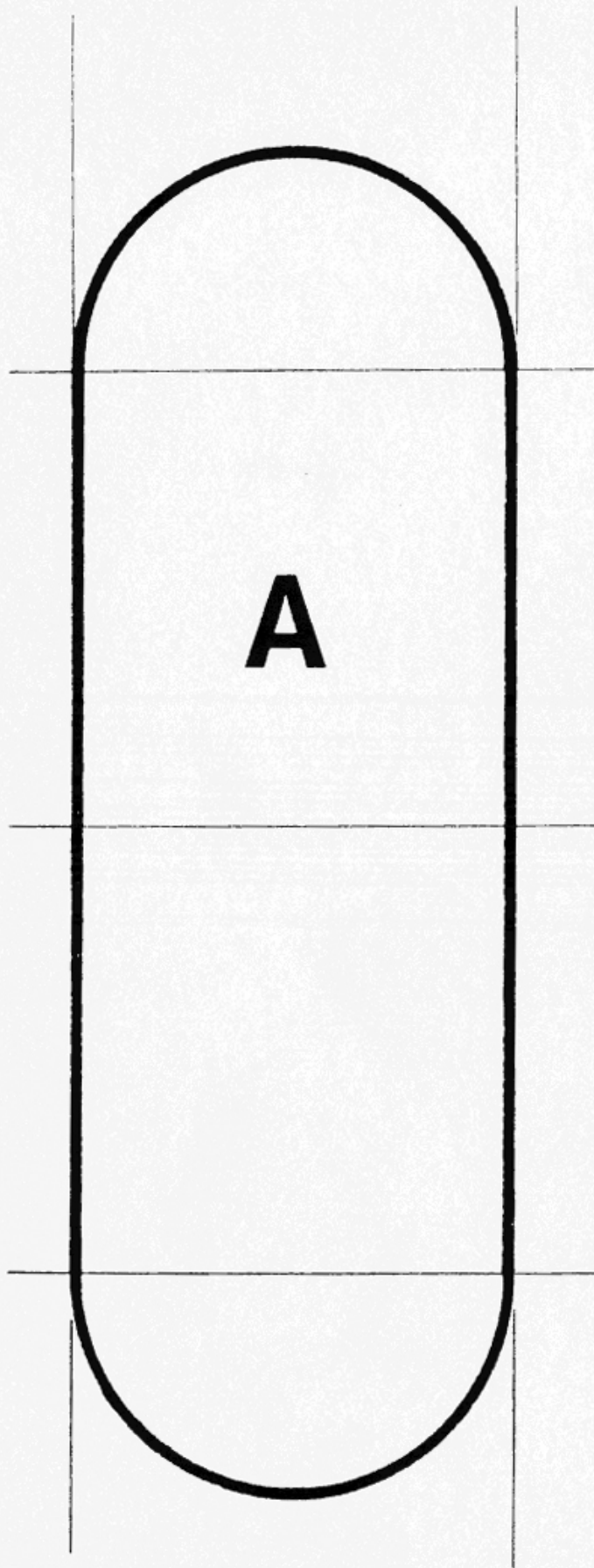
One hanging light bulb

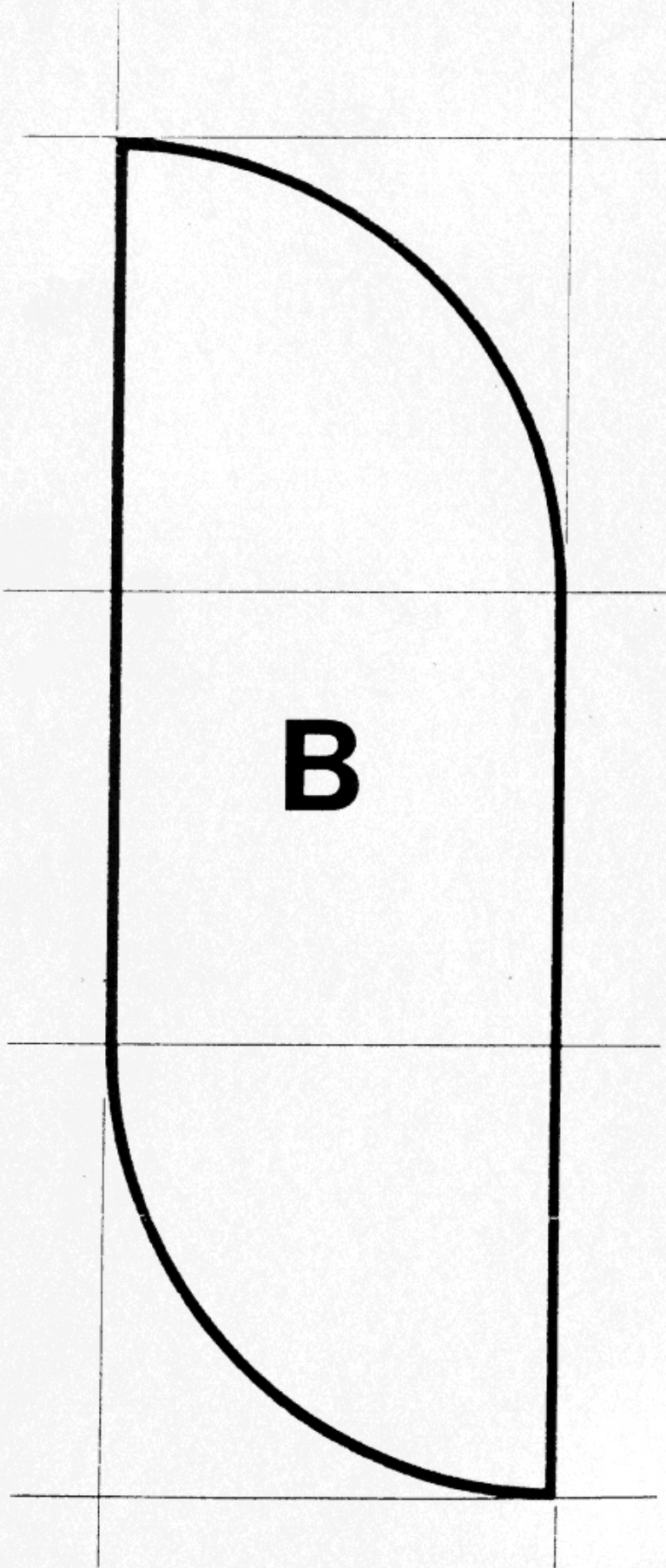
### CONSTRUCTION

1. Carefully remove the templates from the centre of this booklet.
2. Divide your paper into a grid of 2-inch squares as shown on the overall plan.
3. Cut out the templates.
4. Trace the template designs onto the grid in the same sequence detailed on the overall plan.
5. Carefully cut out the holes and connect the two ends of the paper/card together.
6. Place the Dreamachine on the centre of a record turntable, and set the rotational speed to 78 r.p.m.
7. Suspend a light source in the centre of the Dreamachine. A cantilevered arm will serve adequately to overreach the centre of the Dreamachine and a normal lighting socket with bulb can be suspended from this. The light should be roughly 1/3rd to halfway down the Dreamachine (experiment to see which you find best), and care should be taken to ensure that it does not touch the turntable or Dreamachine when in use.

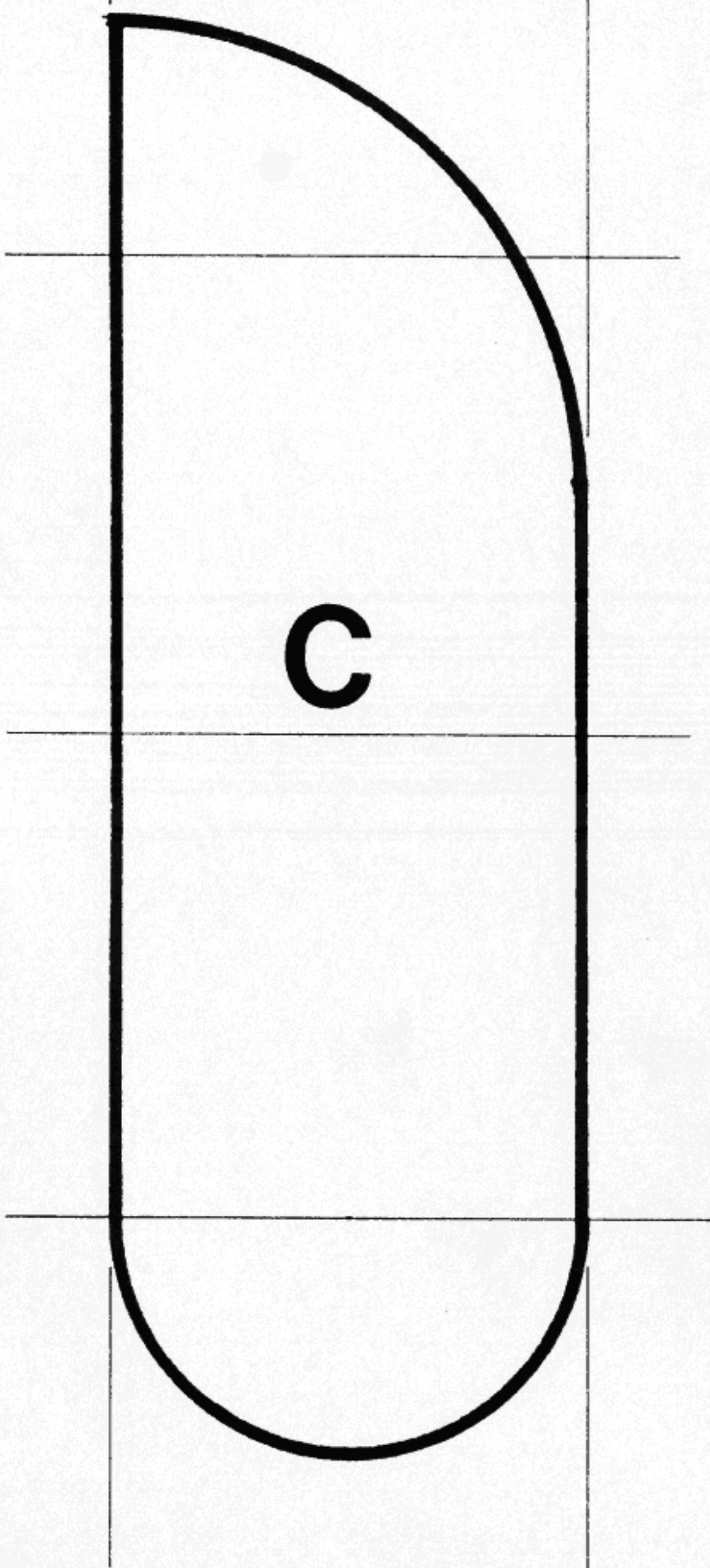
Note: it may be necessary to score the paper/card slightly so that it remains round.

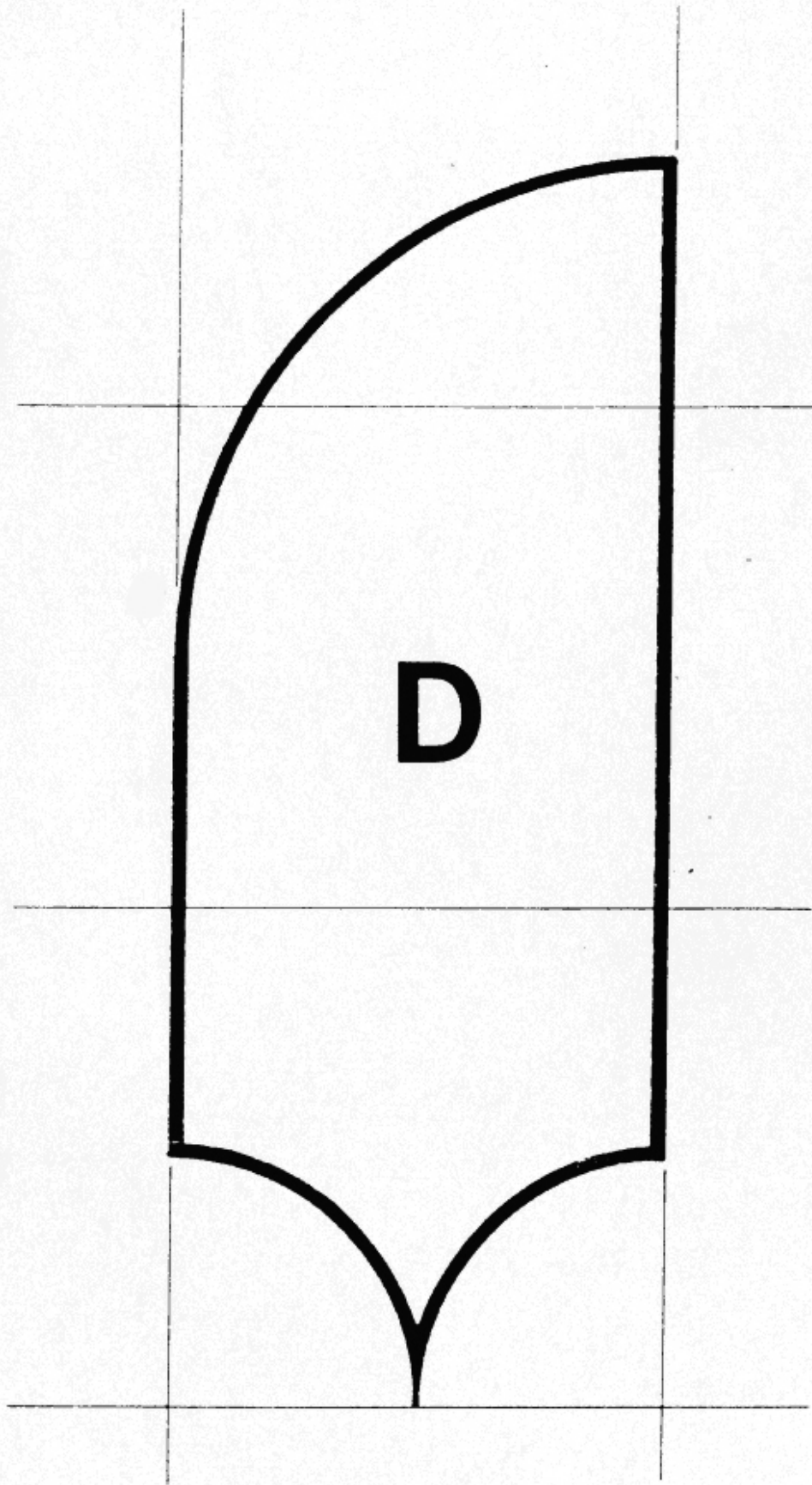
Warning: The Dreamachine may be hazardous to people with epilepsy or other nervous disorders. Please use with caution.

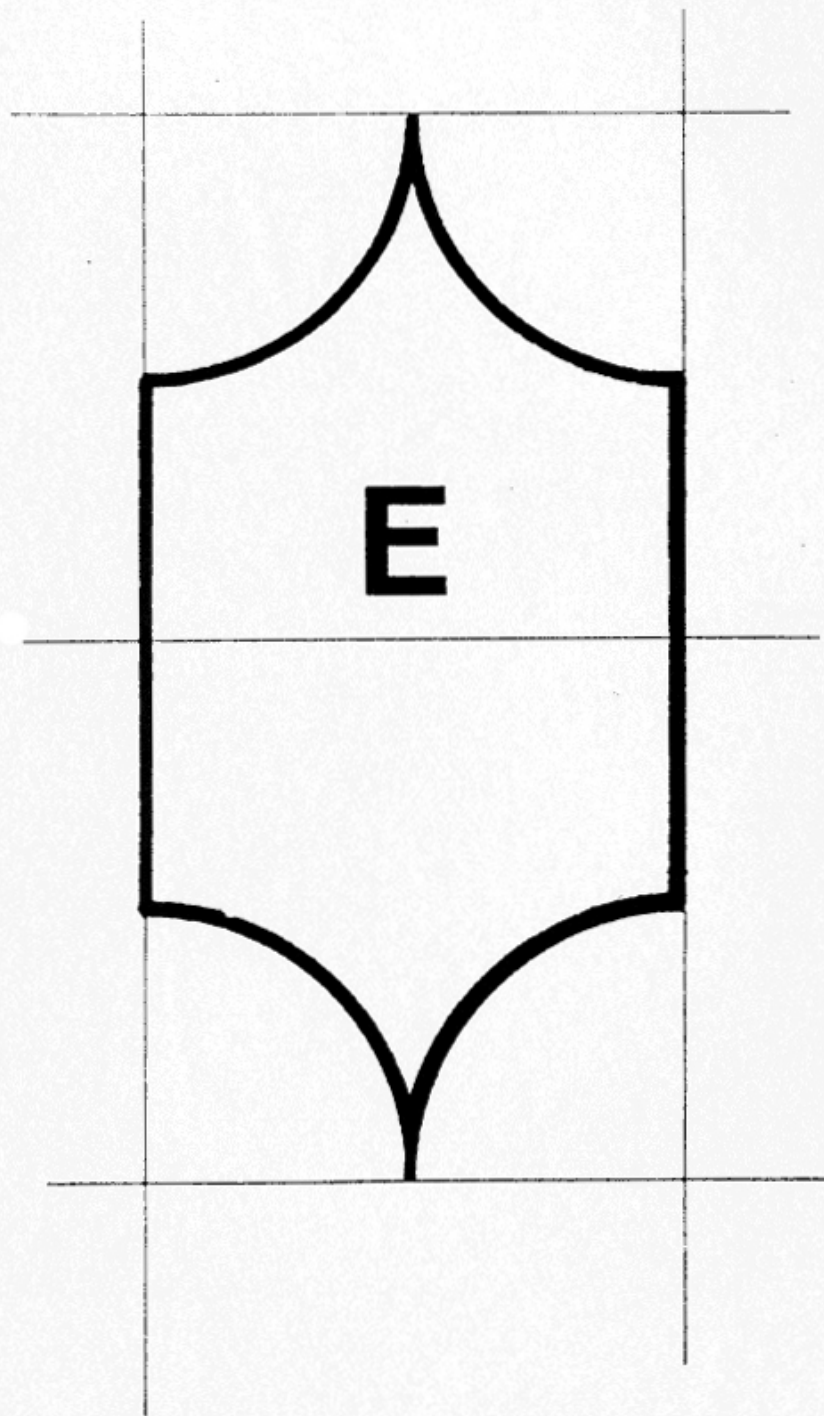




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## DREAMACHINE PLANS

The Dreamachine is the first device in history designed to be looked at with closed eyes.

The Dreamachine opens up inner vistas for travel and exploration.

The Dreamachine is a machine for Dreams.

The Dreamachine can be built by anyone, anywhere.  
This booklet contains full instructions.



Here to Go

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England