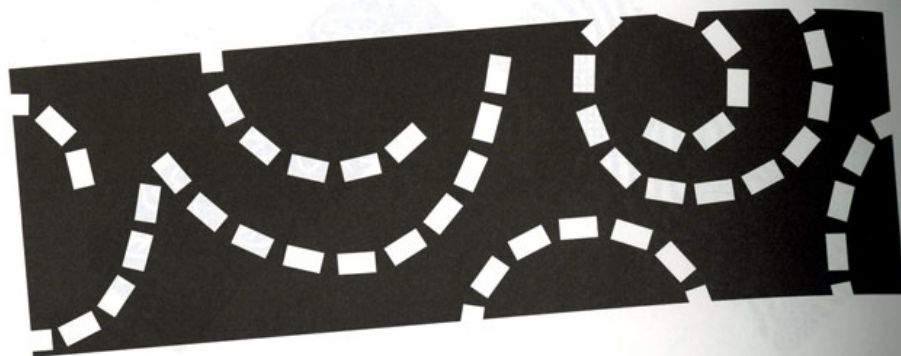


DOES A FACE HAVE
A CHRONOLOGY?
TEAM THURSDAY



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WHERE I LIVE, THE
HOUSES ARE MADE OF
BROWN BRICK. JUST
PLAIN. THEIR SHAPE IS
UNUSUAL. THEIR
HEIGHT IS AVERAGE.
THEY REALLY DON'T
DO MUCH TO ATTRACT
ATTENTION.

WHEN I LEAVE MY
HOUSE AND WALK TO
THE SUPERMARKET,

IT'S TRUE THAT THE FIRST CITIES
WERE WRITTEN INTO EXISTENCE.
I ONCE READ THAT THE ANCIENT
SUMERIANS DEVELOPED THEIR
CUNEIFORM SCRIPT WHEN THEY
ENDED THEIR NOMADIC LIFESTYLES.

THEY SETTLED IN MESOPOTAMIA,
BECAUSE IT LAY IN A RIVER
DELTA, WHERE THE SOIL WAS
FERTILE. SETTLING DOWN IN ONE
PLACE MEANT THEY SUDDENLY
CAME TO OWN THINGS—LAND,
CATTLE, FOOD SUPPLIES—WHICH
THEY NEVER HAD BEFORE.
HAVING THAT PROPERTY REQUIRED
EFFICIENT BOOKKEEPING AND SO,
A WRITING SYSTEM WAS...
INVENTED? BORN?

DIFFER
ENT
TONG
UES



BUT, BEING A RIVER-LAND, MESO-
POTAMIA WAS STONELESS. SO THE
SUMERIANS BUILT WITH SUN-FIRED
MUDBRICKS INSTEAD. THESE BRICKS
WERE INSCRIBED WITH MESSAGES
TO GODS AND PRAISES OF KINGS.
SO UNLIKE CONTEMPORARY CITIES,
THESE FIRST CITIES WERE LITERALLY
BUILT TO BE READ.

TEXTS HAVE A BEGINNING AND
THEY TEND TO SIMPLY END.
IRONICALLY, THE ONLY WAY
MESOPOTAMIAN CITIES NOW LIVE
ON IS AS DESCRIPTIONS IN BOOKS.
THEY'VE BECOME PURE TEXT.