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NY CULTURE | Updated July 12, 2012, 10:56 p.m. ET

A Day in the Life Of a Day on Film

'The Clock' Gets Its 24 Hours of Fame

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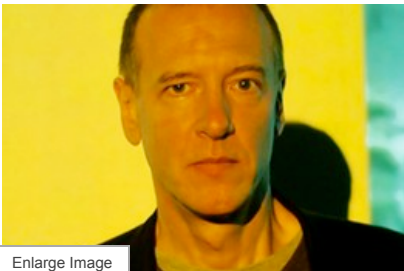
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By [ANDY BATTAGLIA](#)

Would it be unreasonable to nominate Big Ben for an Academy Award in the Best Supporting Actor category? How about the persistent ticking of a pocket watch for Best Original Song?

Both play transformative roles in "The Clock," the 24-hour film and polyglot piece of collage art that will screen for free at Lincoln Center's David Rubenstein Atrium from Friday through Aug. 1.



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Dr. J Caldwell

Christian Marclay's 'The Clock' opens at Lincoln Center on Friday.

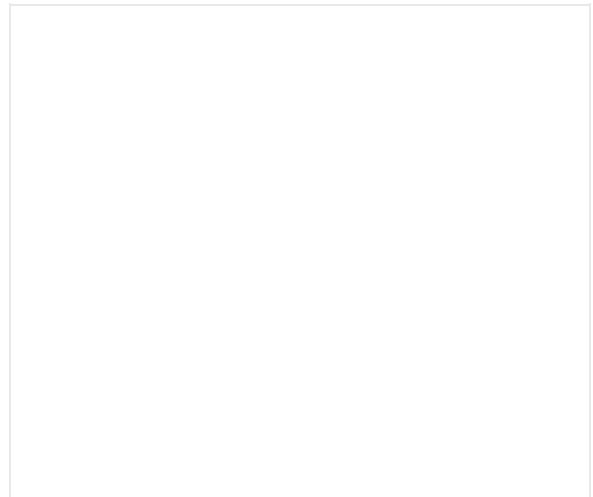
The last presentation, in early 2011, of Christian Marclay's overwhelming, captivating work became a major event in New York, drawing rapt reviews and long lines of people to the Paula Cooper Gallery in Chelsea. In the 15 months since, it has grown into an international sensation in the art world and beyond.

The process of making "The Clock" involved meticulous watching and cataloguing of movies going back to the beginning of cinema, with a goal of

compiling thousands of scenes to mark every minute—represented by a clock, a watch or a spoken line of dialogue—of every hour of an entire day. The result is a chaotic mash-up full of poetic reverberations, as juxtaposed scenes start to suggest their own internal logic and tell a meditative story about time itself.

"It's undeniably a masterwork," said Steven Henry, director of the Paula Cooper Gallery, where "The Clock" made its U.S. premiere last year. (It made its debut in London, where Mr. Marclay assembled it as a co-production between White Cube Gallery there and Paula Cooper here.) "We knew it would be well-received, but I don't think anyone imagined it would be as monumental in terms of its broad level of appeal. All different people respond to it, from art aficionados to movie fans to everyday people."

Elana Rubinfeld, who works at Yossi Milo Gallery, a few blocks from Paula Cooper, said she missed seeing "The Clock" when it was there in 2011—but not for want of trying. "I



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went with a friend at 2 a.m. on a Tuesday because we thought we'd be able to get in," she said. "But there was a line out the door. It was freezing. It wasn't worth it. I'm very excited it's back."

A Second Look at 'The Clock'

24 hours Duration of film

12,000 Viewers who saw part of 'The Clock' at Paula Cooper Gallery in 2011

96 Visitors allowed in Lincoln Center installation of 'The Clock' at any given time

10,000 Film clips used (approx.)

26,304 Hours devoted to making 'The Clock'

6 Editions of 'The Clock' in existence

The Wall Street Journal

Part of the thrill of "The Clock" owes to awe over the process, to which Mr. Marclay devoted three years of work with a team of assistants to search the whole of cinema history for alternately dramatic and fleeting instances of time's passing. In the finished work, those range from Gary Cooper gunned up for dueling purposes as a clock strikes "High Noon" to the cast of "The Breakfast Club" whistling as a minute of Saturday detention ticks down. Other fleeting characters include Crispin Glover, Adam Sandler, Humphrey Bogart, Marlon Brando, Ashton Kutcher and Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Shots of the looming clock face of London's Big Ben, as both a portentous point of focus and background decoration, abound.

"The moment one sits down to watch it, it's completely captivating," Mr. Henry said. "If you're able to commit a good bit of time, you see these wonderful lines that run through the piece

and reappear. For some people 15 minutes is enough; for others it's more like 15 hours. When we showed it, I know of people who watched as many as 20 hours."

Mr. Henry's own routine echoed a phenomenon that overcomes many who lay eyes upon "The Clock": "I would go in thinking I would take five or 10 minutes out of my work day to watch and end up taking an hour and a half."

At a preview screening on Thursday, Mr. Marclay said he encourages viewers to make of it what they will: "As a viewer, you make your choices. It starts whenever you come in. You're constantly being told what time it is and how long you've been watching, but still you get lost in it."


—Cora Lewis contributed to this article.

A version of this article appeared July 13, 2012, on page A18 in the U.S. edition of The Wall Street Journal, with the headline: A Day in the Life Of a Day on Film.


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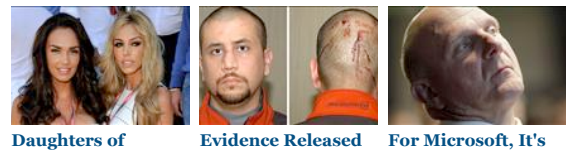
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