A Day in the Life Of a Day on Film

'The Clock' Gets Its 24 Hours of Fame

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.

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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