



Christian Marclay, The Clock (2010), single channel video with sound, 24 hours, looped, installation view at White Cube Mason's Yard, London (15 October–13 November 2010). Photo: Todd-White Photography, © Christian Marclay, courtesy of Paula Cooper Gallery, New York and White Cube, London.

MARGOT BOUMAN

The New School

On Sampled Time and Intermedial Space: Postproduction, Video Installation and Christian Marclay's *The Clock*

Abstract

Like other postproduction work by contemporary artists and purveyors of popular culture, the videos of artist, musician and composer Christian Marclay use accumulations of cultural data extracted from thousands of films (and television shows) as raw material for the diegesis. What sets Marclay's installation The Clock (2010) apart from other installations and films in this category is the interrelationship established between its postproduction aesthetic and its specific display conditions. By matching on-screen time with actual time in a carefully designed exhibition context, The Clock simultaneously reifies the psychosomatic transformation of the moviegoer identified by Roland Barthes and dismantles the hermetic nature of the cinematic apparatus. In so doing, Marclay mobilizes latent aspects of video installation to produce new phenomenological experiences and reorganize the relationship between aesthetics and everyday life.

Keywords

Christian Marclay
The Clock
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 cinematic experience

Christian Marclay's video installation *The Clock* (2010) is a 24-hour compilation of film and television clips that matches the actual time of the viewer to the time displayed on screen. Its use of an archive of existing cultural references that are embedded in collective memory comprises part of a broader trend that helped define the 1990s, which curator Nicolas Bourriaud (2010) identified as 'postproduction'. Structured from a deceptively simple premise, the effects that precipitate out of *The*

Clock are complex and far-reaching: specifically the intensification of, and overlap between, everyday and aesthetic experience. These effects are made possible in part because of Marclay's decision to correlate real time to on-screen time, and thus link the repurposed archive to collective memory. Just as critical as the work's temporal alignment and use of archival material are the exhibition and display conditions that Marclay established for *The Clock*: the placement of the sofas, the enforcement of the possibility (when feasible) for visitors to come and go at will 24 hours a day, and the requirement that no time limit be set for anyone staying in the gallery or museum where the work is exhibited.

The sampling, the temporal alignment, and the display conditions all set it apart from other examples of video installation art. Marclay's directives concerning its display are rigorously enforced wherever *The Clock* is shown. He has refused offers, for instance, to adapt the installation as an outdoor projection at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, to place it in the Turbine Hall at the Tate Modern in London, and to show it in a windowed atrium at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts for reasons of poor acoustics, fade-out by ambient sunlight, and unnecessary distractions (Burns 2010; Zalewski 2012: 60). In what follows, I am going to argue that through the careful regulation of the installation's display conditions and the alignment of spectator time with screen time, Marclay produces a heightened phenomenological awareness of the simultaneous passage of diegetic and actual time. By inciting awareness of the continuity and discontinuity between live on-site experience and the visitor's internalized archive of existing cultural references, *The Clock* definitively reorganizes both the relationship between the cinematic apparatus and everyday life, and the relationship between everyday life and the exhibitionary context. The specificity of its installation, in other words, establishes a productive tension between the everyday, the cinematic, and the aesthetic.

Postproduction

Like appropriation, collage and sampling, postproduction art conceives of cultural products such as songs, movies, other works of art and design as raw material to be repurposed and reformed. Unlike appropriation or collage, postproduction artworks reference their cultural sources without either subsuming or being reduced to them. Rather, postproduction works are embedded in a broader culture of circulation and sharing known as sampling, which also includes hip-hop, mashups, supercuts and memes, each oscillating fluidly between modes of production and consumption. Broadcast network television, Hollywood film, Brechtian analysis or the latest trends in design are all, as Bourriaud characterizes it, 'so many storehouses filled with tools that should be used', and form a 'world of cultural products and artworks' (2010: 14, 17).

Typically, Marclay's videos are composed using accumulations of cultural data extracted from thousands of films and, to a lesser degree, television shows. He shares this approach with both contemporary artists such as Philippe Parreno, Douglas Gordon, Candice Brietz, Thomas Hirschhorn, Mike Kelley, and Daniel Pflumm, and alternative dance and hip-hop artists Dr Dre, Eminem, Coolio and Big Audio Dynamite, as well

as those consumers of popular culture who, in turn, produce memes, supercuts, mashups and remixes. These artists, musicians and cultural producers exhibit what Bourriaud has described as a 'willingness to inscribe the work of art [or cultural product] within a [broader] network of signs and significations, instead of considering it an autonomous or original form' (2010: 16). While proliferating since the 1990s, and especially in the last decade, examples of postproduction work date back to the mid-twentieth century, and must be distinguished from such artists as Cindy Sherman or Sherrie Levine. Both Sherman and Levine appropriated artwork or popular culture in order to critique the broader institutional frame that both artist and cultural producer reside in, bringing a quotational, or enframing, quality to the relationship that the artists establish between the original product and the art. In *Untitled Film Stills* (1977–80), Sherman appropriated the visual language of mainstream Hollywood movies to expose the mechanisms of mass-media fictions and enact the impossibility of identification and desire. In *After Walker Evans* (1981), Levine rephotographed canonical Depression-era images by Walker Evans to interrogate notions of originality and the role of the author-artist in the commodification of art.

In contrast to Levine and Sherman, Bruce Conner's *A MOVIE* (1958) did not incorporate a critical distance between the original material and the artist's reworking. An early and influential example of found-footage cinema, it interleaved newsreels with non-commercial, industrial and educational found-film into a series of formal relationships. Because the diegesis remained stubbornly free of narrative, the film's sonic intervals became its organizing principle. The film culminated in an escalating series of associatively linked sequences repeatedly interrupted by recursive returns to the iconic frame, 'The End'. Footage of cowboys being chased is succeeded by a charging elephant and then gives way to a racing train; a military tank plunges over a ravine and a race car skids around a curve and crashes. Conner's film foreshadows Marclay's work in its dependence on music as a structuring form, yet remains apart from it in that *A MOVIE*'s intended venue was the cinema.

Most recently, easy access to editing tools and distribution platforms have given audiences the chance to respond to the popular media products – such as political debates, music videos and television shows – that shape cultural discourse. By absorbing and reshaping its vast, shared vocabulary of image and sound, audiences express affiliation, criticize or construct entirely new content. These re-edited videos are then shared online by the segment of the public that has been spending increasing amounts of social time in networked environments, shifting easily and fluidly between the role of consumer and producer. A similar to-and-fro was integral to the making of *The Clock*. Marclay hired six assistants to watch DVDs and rip digital files of any movie scene showing a watch, a clock, or an allusion to time. The relationship between Marclay and his assistants evolved into one of shared consumption that transitioned seamlessly into production. Marclay identified the chance element involved in hiring assistants to make taste decisions for him, and then acknowledged the manner in which he built it into his resulting work: 'you have to accept what people bring to you [...] you don't always control things [...]. It's the way life is, I suppose. Whatever happens, you deal with it' (quoted in Zalewski 2012: 54). What separates this process



Christian Marclay, *Telephones* (1995), still from video (VHS format), 7:30 min. Photo: © Christian Marclay, courtesy of Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

from both collage of the early to mid-twentieth century, and appropriation art of the late 1970s and early 1980s is the unwillingness on Marclay's part to differentiate between production and consumption, to sequester them from each other with a critique of either.

Hollywood film is one particularly rich vein of popular culture that has been worked and reworked by multiple artists from the late 1970s onward. While appropriation artists set out to critique the ideologies found in mass culture (Levine and Sherman, among others) as well as its gender and racial stereotypes, 'postproduction' artists take an approach that primarily assumes the pleasures of a fan/collector, and foregrounds the material's formal aspects over a sociocultural critique. Nevertheless, some of the works that result succeed in both taking pleasure in and commenting on the original work. For instance, *Home Stories* (1990) by Matthias Müller stitches together an encyclopedic collation of a seemingly neutral act found in Hollywood movies – a woman shutting a door. The repetition calls attention to the formulaic nature of melodrama, without taking away from the visual and aural pleasures that also inhere in this genre: the gleaming surface of a silk chemise; the gracefully sculpted shapes of the different women's arms; or the decisive swing an actor gives to the act of closing a door and causing a resounding thunk.

Marclay's *Telephones* (1995), a single-channel video, utilizes a similar postproduction method to edit together phone conversations from a wide array of movies. The work's narrative consists of a conversation edited together from dozens of film fragments. Characters played by actors such as Fred McMurray, Ray Milland, Tippi Hedren, Whoopie Goldberg, and Charles Bronson dial a number. Phones whose designs tell a history of twentieth-century taste cultures and technological changes repeatedly ring across nightstands, desks, on top of precariously piled phonebooks, and credenzas. Characters played by Meg Ryan, Shelley Duvall, Tom Selleck, James Cagney, and Humphrey Bogart et al. pick up the hand set. Salutations ranging from the cursory to the throatily seductive to the briskly emphatic are made by actors such as Michael Keaton, Sean Connery, Cary Grant, Geena Davis, and Louise Fletcher. The briefest and most formulaic one-sided conversation is staged across dialogue fragments by, among others, Joan Crawford, Tom Hanks, Katherine Hepburn, Warren Beatty, and Jimmy Stewart. Finally, Dylan McDermott, Clint Eastwood, Danny de Vito, and Barbara Stanwyck et al. bring the conversation, and the work, to a close. Like Müller's *Home Stories*, Marclay's *Telephones* exposes the prescribed nature of Hollywood film, while instantiating the artist in the role of an implicated consumer and connoisseur of Hollywood rather than a distanced or critical observer.

1. For the latter, see Bruce Nauman's *Mapping the Studio I* (Fat Chance, John Cage) (2001) shown at Dia: Chelsea.

Postproduction in Video Installation

In art galleries and museums, postproduction videos acquire a markedly different meaning as a result of the display conditions and institutional context, each of which shape the audience response to the work. The diegetic temporality of video installation art is distinct from the quotidian temporality of the exhibition context (see Bouman 2009). Depending on the display conditions, these two time forms can either function together or clash with each other. While video installations produce myriad time forms, all of them imply how much time the viewer should spend in contemplation of the work. Boris Groys has observed that this implied suggestion provokes the same anxieties found in the temporality of everyday life, and typically emerges when visitors enter the gallery after a video installation's sequence appears to have begun, or before it has come to a end – even in a work that is designed to be entered (or exited) at any point. The viewer is 'filled with that very same feeling of having missed something crucial and [is] no longer [...] sure what is really happening in the installation' (Groys 2001: n.p.). The dual temporalities of the linear, finite time of the exhibition and the multifarious time internal to the video installation can thus create an irresolvable tension for visitors. This frequently results in a disaffected view of video installation art by critics. The challenge to both artists and curators then becomes one in which they must successfully manipulate the two layers of time and make them serve the installation and the audience, rather than work against them and each other.

In addition to time, space is activated in video installations. Changing the normative presentation conditions of film and television can result in dramatically different experiences. Viewers having to stand versus sitting on neatly arranged benches or wheeling around in office chairs engage in diverse types of reception.¹ Curator Lynne Cooke stresses the absence of



Christian Marclay, *Video Quartet* (2002), view of video installation at Paula Cooper Gallery, New York (12 December 2002–1 February 2003). Photo: © Christian Marclay, courtesy of Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

2. For example, consider Irit Batsry's *Set* (2003) for the former, and Christophe Girardet's *No Forever (Golden)* (1997) for the latter.
3. Eija-Liisa Ahtila's *Where is Where?* (2008) demonstrates the former, and Omer Fast's *The Casting* (2007) the latter.

fixed seating as an advantage for video installation work, in that it prevents the audience from becoming 'totally immersed, incarnate viewers' who otherwise passively experience popular cinema while 'cocooned in a darkened chamber' (1998: 8). If ambient light conditions exist, this produces an entirely different environment than if the visitor is plunged into darkness upon entering the gallery and has to stumble over the furnishings and people already present. Using a similar analogy, curator Chrissie Iles emphasizes that the 'model [of the cinema as a cocoon] is broken apart by the folding of the dark space of cinema into the [modernist] white cube of the gallery' (2001: 34). The metaphor of a black box nesting inside a white cube is potent and frequently repeated. The scale, quantity and projection mode of the video plays as important a role as the presence or absence of darkness. If multiple, miniature monitors are scattered on the floor throughout the gallery, the videos played thereon carry a different charge than if one video is projected onto a monumental screen that covers the wall of a gallery, dwarfing the audience.² Multiple, larger-than-human projections are shown on screens that limn the perimeter of the gallery in a semi-circle result in a different experience of narrative flow than two videos projected onto either side of a single screen in the centre of a gallery.³ Each produces a different physical relationship between the work and the visitor, wherein the audience's movement helps determine the aesthetic impact of the video installation.

The way that space is organized in video and film installations can alter the visitor's perception of time. In some instances, artists expressly make use of the interrelationship between screen and body, time and



space. Marclay does precisely this in his video installations. For example, in *Video Quartet* (2002) he draws together primarily Hollywood audio-visual film fragments in which actors and musicians sing, dance, perform or otherwise generate noise across a four-channel video installation. The work is contingent on both Marclay's brilliant manipulation of the existing stockpiles of cultural data, and their presentation in the exhibition space. Marclay's background as a composer and a musician as well as a visual artist makes him sensitive to the possibilities opened up by the multiple layers of time and space in video installations. Inside *Video Quartet*, the viewer is invited to move through a darkened gallery in a manner that is spatially organized using conventions similar to a musical composition such as sonic and visual escalations and de-escalations. Edmund Husserl's metaphor of the comet provides a useful tool to conceptualize the temporality of the 'now' experience that is produced by the interaction between the components of film, video installation and audience in *Video Quartet* in particular, and video installation more generally. A phenomenologist working in the beginning of the twentieth century, Husserl was not interested in empirically measurable or objective time, but rather in how the consciousness of time was internally experienced. He conceived of the consciousness of time as a succession of now points that first materialize in awareness and, and just as quickly exit into memory. Husserl used music to elaborate on what he considered the special place of 'just-pastness', or the time that immediately follows upon the present moment. This sort of memory produced a consciousness not only of a succession of notes that form a melody, but also of the very presentness of the present. To hear a present note's sound is to be conscious of its occurrence; but its taking place is precisely its supercession of its predecessor (Husserl 1964: 33). When the gallery visitor moves around Marclay's installation,



*Christian Marclay, The Clock (2010), stills from single-channel video with sound, 24 hours, looped.
Photos: courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.*

their experience of the video quartet continuously changes. In effect, their bodies become integral to the score's composition.

The manifestation of the presentness of the present in *Video Quartet* is dependent in equal parts on viewers, the gallery space, the recognizability of the source material, and Marclay's virtuosity with the conventions of musical composition. One sequence begins with the actor Billy Redden plucking the first notes of a 1955 composition *Feudin' Banjos* by Arthur Smith in the 1972 film *Deliverance* (directed by Michael Boorman). In the original scene, Redden (in the role of an Appalachian mountain man), is joined by the actor/musician Ronny Cox on guitar. Cox plays a suburban Atlanta resident who is out on a weekend canoeing and hunting trip that eventually goes terribly wrong. After he and three friends get lost in the Georgia wilderness, an initial clash with the local residents leads to increasingly violent confrontations, resulting in rape, assault, murder and mayhem. Following the film's commercial and critical success, the instrumental piece *Feudin' Banjos* (also known as *Duelling Banjos*) simultaneously became its representation and an evocation of the initial conflict and its subsequent escalations. Marclay steps into his role as composer when he translates video into the language of musical composition by doubling and trebling clips of Redden across multiple screens. Eventually, the banjo line is visually replaced and aurally overlaid by clips of piano players and converges into cadences of pure noise before reversing course and giving way to film footage of Jerry Lee Lewis, and actors in the role of Jerry Lee Lewis, performing *Great Balls of Fire* (1957). To become conscious of the shift between the banjo line, which evokes one set of cultural associations, and *Great Balls of Fire*, which evokes another set, is to arrive at the intensified awareness – what Husserl describes as the 'comet trail' – that follows behind the present moment, in which the present and the immediate past are incompletely fused together (1964: 32). By using clips of iconic filmic moments – both aural and visual – Marclay exacerbates this sensation of past-presentness within the installation.

Following from *Video Quartet*, Marclay continues to use visual and aural echoes in *The Clock*, heightening viewers' awareness of the passage of time. As scenes shift, aural sections overlap, precede or extend beyond the visuals. Some aural clips reference a successive visual clip. One scene ends with the sound of a door closing, which is succeeded by the clip of a door opening in the next. These formal associations further intensify time consciousness, or Husserl's comet trail. Indeed, in *The Clock*, time becomes a factor in the dialogue and storylines of the clips in addition to the more general experiential sense that I have discussed so far. The consciousness of time extends into the content of many clips that are selected, which show actors/characters engaged in intense exchanges about time. Clips from *Back to the Future* (1985) show Michael J. Fox's and Christopher Lloyd's characters passionately debating the necessity of timing their departures from and arrivals to the past, the present and the future. In *Groundhog Day* (1993), Bill Murray's character is condemned to repeat a particular day in his life until he acquires self-awareness and empathy. *Run Lola Run* (1998) manipulates the nature of cause and effect with three versions of a narrative in which a young woman, Lola (played by Franka Potente), races to save her boyfriend from death at the hands of mobsters, with three dramatically different outcomes.

In *The Clock*, noon confirms the significance of the midday hour. The montage leading up to noon includes a series of clips from escalating calamities in the 1952 western *High Noon*, the 1995 western *The Quick and the Dead*, and a brief nod to *Run Lola Run*. At noon's high water mark, human drama is overshadowed by a rapid series of clocks tolling the twelve bells, culminating in a scene from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1939) in which Quasimodo (Charles Laughton) lurches back and forth, screaming, atop a pealing bell in the tower of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, while Esmeralda (Maureen O'Hara) crouches, deafened, nearby. The ensuing seconds and minutes that follow sink incrementally from this rolling climax into a quietly repressive everyday. From *The Hudsucker Proxy* (1994), Sidney J. Mussberger (played by Paul Newman) leans out through a freshly broken plate-glass window from under a giant clock marking 12:01 p.m., and surveys the sidewalk below, following the curious suicide of his company's CEO. From the *Twilight Zone* episode 'Time Enough at Last' (1959), Henry Bernis (played by Burgess Meredith) puts up a 'Next Window Please' sign at his teller's station in the bank in order to take his lunch break – alone, in the bank's safe, reading a book. Simultaneously a temporal marker and a cultural touchstone, this sequence bridges both the crisis and the banality of telling time.

Dragging

The now-time identified by Husserl becomes intensified and distilled into aesthetic experience in video installation's spatial and temporal configuration. Although the aestheticization of now-time is a condition of all video installations, this experience becomes subsequently attached to fragments of Hollywood films in postproduction video installations. The legibility of postproduction video installations in general, and *Video Quartet* in particular, depend in large part on memes, or ubiquitous units of cultural data that circulate and re-circulate rapidly across multiple media platforms and conversations. In visiting the installation, the viewer of *Video Quartet* activates a pre-existing exchange between meme and site that Chris Rojek first identified as 'dragging'.

Originally theorized with reference to tourism, Rojek defined dragging as the cultural exchange that takes place between an artifact such as a movie, a postcard, or a souvenir, and its representational origins in, for example, Paris (the Eiffel Tower), China (the Great Wall), or London (Big Ben). Rojek describes a feedback loop where the cultural significance of sites are in part produced through representational culture, which in turn 'increase the accessibility of the sight in everyday life' through their ubiquitous representations (1997: 53). For example, in 1972 the duelling banjos scene from *Deliverance* established the stereotypes that guide the rest of the film wherein the urban visitors (residents of Atlanta) are typed as dismissive and arrogant, and the rural residents (the mountain people of the Appalachians) are typed as inbred, violent and intuitively gifted. Subsequent to the film's release, the duelling banjo scene became its evocation, establishing a synecdochic relationship between the meme, or the duelling banjos, and the original story in the film's trailer and reviews. Decades later, the duelling banjos scene has diffused into a symbolic stand-in for the urban/rural divide that is still representative of parts of

the deep South, as well as a celebration of the richness and complexity of the Appalachian cultural heritage. Forty years after its release, the pleasure that inheres in watching *Video Quartet* arises in part from recognizing and re-siting *Duelling Banjos* and the other multiple memes, such as *Great Balls of Fire* that come together to form Marclay's work. Rojek's notion of dragging identifies this unstable oscillation of influence between sight and site:

Selections of images, symbols and associations are drawn from representational files to create new values for the sight [...]. Dragging operates at both conscious and unconscious levels [...]. Cinematic events are dragged in to the physical landscape and the physical landscape is then reinterpreted in terms of the cinematic events [...]. A reserve of sights [...] precedes the physical exploration of the sight [and] imaginary places have a direct influence on the structure of physical space.

(1997: 54)

Similar to the dragging that takes place between the tourist site and its souvenir, the location and its cinematic representation, postproduction artwork's meaning is determined both by the audience's recognition of the original, and its repurposing into a new site. In video installations, a feedback loop is established between the installation site, the video and the recycled film clip's origins. In *Video Quartet*, a given visitor could experience pleasure in remembering the origins of the fragment, as well as the way it is manipulated and altered by its new context. The outcome of this type of experience becomes one that involves both the pleasure of recognition and that of misrecognition. The duelling banjos sequence from *Deliverance* is aesthetically compelling in its own right, and can, in the mind of viewers/listeners familiar with its history, simultaneously evoke a narrative of class and regional prejudice and rich cultural heritage. Its repetition and eventual subsumption into the subsequent piano solos in *Video Quartet* acts to defamiliarize the audience from the original fragment, and brings them back to the particular structure and resonances of the overall video installation.

The Cinematic Apparatus in the Age of Video Installation Art

In postproduction video installation art, the meme is 'dragged' in two directions, becoming newly anchored by the artist's manipulation of space and time in the gallery and its audience's intensified sensation of the presentness of the present. Marclay brings a renewed temporal intensity to dragging by matching fictional and actual temporalities in *The Clock*, his 2010 single-channel video installation. The work consists of thousands of different film and television clips spliced together that not only depict clocks and watches of all kinds, but also align each on-screen minute to the actual time of day. As both a 24-hour work of art and a wildly elaborate timepiece, *The Clock* extends the conceptual boundaries of sampling by emphasizing its intermedial dimensions, and extends the temporal expectations of video installation art, further dissolving the boundaries between aesthetic experience and everyday life.



Christian Marclay, *The Clock* (2010), single-channel video with sound, 24 hours, looped, installation view at White Cube Mason's Yard, London (15 October–13 November 2010). Photo: Todd-White Photography, © Christian Marclay, courtesy of Paula Cooper Gallery, New York and White Cube, London.

4. Translation courtesy of Philip Schauss.

The installation is configured according to Marclay's precise instructions. Visitors to the work are to be permitted to stay for as long as they want. Even if the work's length exceeds the capacity of the most determined viewer, *The Clock*'s temporal form still operates as a loop. Like any looping video installation, its operational logic establishes that any point is as good as any other for the work to commence. When possible, the gallery or museum is to remain open overnight for several consecutive days, allowing the visitors to experience the work at any time of day or night, as Marclay commented:

The Clock is after all not a film. A film has a defined beginning and a defined end. Everyone goes [to the cinema] together – and together they leave. *The Clock* neither has a beginning nor an end. It starts when you enter the room and it stops when you leave.

(Ammann 2012)⁴

Marclay structures unimpeded circulation into both the work's diegesis (*The Clock* is conceived of as a loop), and its apparatus (the gallery and/or

museum is given meticulous instructions as to when and how to permit visitors to enter and exit, and the sofas are staged in such a manner to facilitate this coming and going). A set of guidelines produced by White Cube, Marclay's London-based representative, demonstrates the degree to which each element of the installation is tightly controlled and needs to be customized for each gallery or museum space. At all points, the needs of the audience are established as the driving force for the decisions, reinforcing the fluid exchange between consumption and production that was present in the work's initial conception and subsequent production. When discussing the possibilities of light traps, the document asserts that '[t]he artist prefers [...] not to have a curtain across the entrances, so as to allow much clearer free flowing of [the] public' (White Cube 2010: 2). Regarding the sound, the guidelines demonstrate a desire on the part of the artist that the visitor control the length of their stay: 'the sound [should] be audible but not overwhelming. The intention is to make it comfortable for the audience so as they can stay for some time' (White Cube 2010: 6). In an interview, Marclay indicated that the arrangement of the sofas was intended to differentiate *The Clock* from a standard cinematic experience:

At the cinema, everyone needs to stand up if someone wants to leave. I wanted to avoid that. We show the film in a black box. With comfortable sofas. It must be played in real time. So, if it's 2 p.m. in Zurich, then it's also 2 p.m. in *The Clock*.

(quoted in Ammann 2012)⁵

The guidelines also stipulated how the viewing space and furniture was to be configured, regardless of where the work was shown (for example the Paula Cooper Gallery and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Venice Biennale, the Power Plant in Toronto) by allowing the free circulation of the audience, the ability for individuals to stay for as long as they wanted. When combined with its synchronization between *reel time* (or the time shown on screen) and *real time* (or the time experienced by the viewer) *The Clock* alters the pre-existing experience of watching movies, where the subject is interpellated into the cinematic apparatus. Originally theorized in the late 1960s and 1970s, the cinematic apparatus brings together two French terms. Firstly, it refers to '*l'appareil*', or the things and infrastructure required to shoot, process, edit and (especially relevant to Marclay's installation), project films. This requirement traditionally includes the theatrical space, seating, a projector hidden in a booth above the audience at the back of the theatre, sound, dimmed lighting, light passing through the theatre from the projector to the screen, and finally the screen itself, on which is projected moving images. Secondly, apparatus incorporates '*le dispositif*', which refers to the physiological, psychological, perceptual and social elements necessary for the interplay between audience and movie.

Through interpellation, moviegoers 'recognize' themselves as addressees, thus identifying with cinematic commands. In this way they are imaginatively woven, or sutured, into the film joining, as Rosalind Krauss observed, 'the side of the projected actor' (2011: 214–15). As with the other components of *The Clock*'s cinematic apparatus, interpellation is central to its experience. Yet, at the same time, Marclay troubles the cinematic

5. Translation courtesy of Philip Schauss.

narrative by aligning its temporality to the real time of the viewer even as they remain imbricated into the on-screen time. In *The Clock*, the synchronization between reel time and real time produces an uncanny slippage between on-screen timekeeping and everyday temporality, which like the entry and exit of the visitor had only been haphazardly experienced prior to this work. Responding to the similar synchronization of quotidian and cinematic time in *The Clock*, critic Peter Bradshaw recalled the Czech writer Petr Král who, when watching the 1916 silent movie serial *Judex* by Louis Feuillade, suddenly realized that the time shown on screen was the same as the time in which the audience was watching the film:

[O]n the screen there appears a clock set in the centre of the kind of sumptuous salon that epoch, and Feuillade, alone had a taste for; it shows 4:40 p.m. One of us automatically consults his watch: 4:40 to the second. For an instant our present, across the ruins of several decades, has rejoined that of an afternoon in the 1910s.

(quoted in Bradshaw 2011)

Neither factual nor fictional space is privileged in Marclay's indexing and linking of diegetic time to actual time. The pleasure that ceaselessly arises from *The Clock* – and its uncomfortable persistence – is due precisely to this conflation between the two temporal modes. The audience member is interpellated into filmic and televised conceptualizations of time that depart from everyday experience. They are coloured more dramatically, and progress according to a series of cinematic narrative devices. Midnight is an apocalyptic, cathartic event. At 2:00 a.m. insomniacs stare into the void; Lillian Gish plays a grandmother keeping vigil over her grandchildren with a shotgun in her lap while Robert Mitchum plays a diabolically crazed preacher prowling over the horizon.

While the on-screen events are highly coloured, the inner and social lives revealed by critics reviewing the show are also remarkably rich with incident. It is striking that multiple reviews of the work include accounts of the critics' personal experiences: fabulous and spectacularly late dinners, red-carpet arrivals, glamorous locations, hipster envy, childcare anxiety and intimations of mortality are revealed through the published descriptions. In his review of the work, Peter Velasco dedicated equal care to the events preceding his viewing of the work as well as his impression of the work itself:

When I first saw *The Clock*, it was late in the evening of its October 14 debut at White Cube in Mason's Yard, London. I arrived after a long dinner, walked the red carpet, descended the stairs, and sat down on a sofa in the cavernous, makeshift theater: the reflexive trappings of cinema. On the giant screen, restless, sinister bedroom scenes prevailed. People were about to have sex or had just finished having sex. There always seemed to be a bloodbath around the corner. It was a few flicks in before it clicked that the clocks were flashing the real time: 2:29... 2:30... 2:31 a.m. The realization was thrilling but also indescribably melancholic. As much as it sucks you in, you're always mindful of how late it is, or what you might be late for.

(2011: 200)

In this passage, Velasco simultaneously acknowledges his inability to escape from the pressures of his everyday life into the artwork, while folding his social life into the critical response to the work. The divide between the everyday (dinner and the red carpet) and the cinematic (the 'sinister' bedroom scene) is uncertain to both the reader and the critic.

'Real' life and the on-screen narratives inside *The Clock* were kneaded together in my own experience as well. When visiting the work in mid-afternoon at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, I would look down at my cellphone and see it mark off the time. At 2:44 p.m., Robert Redford gives up on his blue plate special, gulps down his coffee and exits a diner. At 2:45 p.m., Harold Lloyd dangles above the traffic, hanging precariously from a minute hand of a clock affixed to an office building. I thought to myself, I have half an hour before having to leave to pick up my son from his after-school program. And somewhere else in the audience, perhaps on another day, perhaps on that day, at 2:45 p.m. the novelist Zadie Smith (2011) was making the following observation about the intensely conflicted emotions that viewing *The Clock* stirred in her:

The Clock is a joyful art experience but a harsh life experience because it doesn't disguise what time is doing to you. At 2:45 p.m., when Harold Lloyd hung off the face of that clock, I couldn't access the delight I have felt in the past watching that fabulous piece of fiction, because if Harold was up on that screen it meant I had somehow managed to come at the same time again, the early afternoon, despite all my efforts to find a different moment, between childcare and work. I looked around the walls of the gallery where all the young people sat, hipsters, childless, with a sandwich in their bags and the will to stay till three in the morning. I envied them; hated them, even. They looked like they had all the time in the world.

In *The Clock* the fictional and the factual are not only not pressed and stretched together, but the fictional keeps relentlessly folding the viewer back into the factual by reminding her or him what time it is. At 2:46 p.m. a glossy black four-door sedan pulls into a parking garage lit with sickly-hued fluorescents. Its stone-faced driver checks his Luminor Panerai watch as an alarm goes off. An actor playing a moustachioed operative announces the time. When my cell phone reads 2:47 p.m., a clock embedded in the smooth wooden panelling of a corporate boardroom marks off 2:47 p.m. 'It is 2:47 p.m.', an off-camera voice announces. With 'It is 2:47 p.m.', Kyle MacLachlan as FBI Special Agent Dale Cooper begins his report, flanked on one side by a heaping plate of garishly decorated donuts, and on the other by evidence of a murder investigation. Patrick McGoohan, playing an unnamed former British secret agent who is held in a prison tricked out as a bucolic seaside resort inspects his watch for material evidence. At 3:15 p.m., around the time that I had stood up and exited the museum to look for a subway train that would take me to my son's school, the novelist Lynne Tillman could have been coming to terms with the mortality of time:

And now I'm reminded of my acute anxiety seeing Christian Marclay's extraordinary video *The Clock* (2010). It was Thursday – 3:15 p.m.,

3:16 p.m., 3:17 p.m. – I was watching time pass. My time. It was passing, and I was watching it. What is this watching, what am I watching for? I wouldn't, couldn't, wait for the end.

(2013: 21)

The Clock's temporal alignment between reel time and real time does two things. Like other postproduction video installations, it draws on and intensifies the pre-existing exchange between representation and material culture identified by Chris Rojek as 'dragging', by anchoring it into a new site. Like other video installations, it also intensifies the 'now-time' and the manifestation of past-presentness identified by Husserl. More than anything, however, it reorganizes the relationship between aesthetic experience and everyday life. Some critics lamented this experience, as the following rhetorical questions by Jennifer Alleyn demonstrate:

What escape remains if the fictional space is hunted down and then regulated along the hour and minute hands of our lives? Where can we take refuge when the screen, receptacle of our imaginary, incessantly reminds us of our mortality, revoking all poetic escape?

(2011: 66, author's translation)

As Alleyn's anguished nostalgia for an escape into fictional space implies, the cinematic apparatus of the movie theatre is typically understood as a 'time out' that is analogous to Michel Foucault's heterotopia or a 'floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea' (Foucault 1986 [1967]: 27). This 'place without a place' endows the time within with a certain kind of timelessness, or a 'time outside of time' that is considered crucial to the experience of film. Christian Metz defines the time of cinematic narrative within the apparatus as 'a closed discourse that proceeds by unrealizing a temporal sequence of events' (1991 [1968]: 21, 28). If the filmic narrative is to be perceived as real inside the cinematic apparatus, it must render the profilmic (or selected elements of reality that are placed in front of the camera and leave an impression on the film) unreal.

The cinematic apparatus's place without a place and time outside of time does not apply to the spatial and temporal conditions of video installation art that I described earlier. Juliane Rebentisch differentiates these conditions from the aesthetic experience that results from going to the movies as 'a qualitative shift away from the dreamlike state of entertainment' (2012: 181). She identifies the movement of the spectators as the means by which video installation art brings the anxiety of everyday time into the gallery. The audience's movement is made possible by the exhibition and display conditions of video installation, whose flexibility is repeatedly differentiated from cinema's. Marclay's particular exhibition and display requirements draw on the viewing conventions of both cinema and museum, and out of them devises a new aesthetic that deliberately weaves the dreamlike state of film into everyday life, creating waking fantasies that live past the walls of the gallery and radically aestheticize, for a prolonged period, the sensation of past-presentness produced by Husserl's comet trail.

On Entering and Leaving the Video Installation

Marclay's new aesthetic also formalizes an intermittent and haphazard practice of going to the movies previously described by Roland Barthes. Barthes identified the experiences immediately preceding and following the movies as psychosomatically transformative. In 'Leaving the Movie Theatre', he departs from Jean-Louis Baudry, Christian Metz et al. by extending the effects of film beyond *l'appareil*. Briefly, these other film theorists agree that the making/viewing system will only 'work', that is, create a suspension of disbelief, if it does not call attention to both the *dispositif* and *appareil* that makes it possible. Rather, it must leave the viewer feeling like a disembodied subject who becomes joined to, or identified with, the diegesis. Consequently, French film theorists stressed a materialist critique of the ideological effects of the cinematic apparatus, whose presence is restricted from the viewers' point of view to the space and time of the theatre. If the 'concealment of the technical base will [...] bring about a specific ideological effect,' Baudry argued, foregrounding that base should result in a 'denunciation of ideology', or a 'critique of idealism' (1974–75: 41). Barthes, on the other hand, by drawing the psychosomatically produced aesthetic trance beyond the precincts of the cinematic apparatus, depicts the viewer as continuing in her/his role as a producer/recipient of the cinematic experience into the everyday:

Back out on the more or less empty, more or less brightly lit side-walk (it is invariably at night, and during the week, that he *goes*), and heading uncertainly for some café or other, he walks in silence (he doesn't like discussing the film he's just seen), a little dazed, wrapped up in himself, feeling the cold – he's *sleepy*, that's what he's thinking, his body has become somewhat *sopitive* [soporific], soft, limp, and he feels a little disjointed, even (for a moral organization, relief comes only from this quarter) irresponsible. In other words, obviously, he's coming out of hypnosis.

(1986 [1972]: 345, emphases in original)

Barthes is careful to describe his approach to and exit from the movie theatre as purposefully haphazard. The places he visits, the topics he chooses not to discuss are all designed to extend the experience of cinema beyond the confines of the apparatus. In addition to the operations of identification and misidentification that go on between the on-screen image and the audience, the dawning alertness of Barthes's hypnotized spectator hints at a Brechtian coming to awareness through a simultaneously somatic and psychic operation that complicates the audience's relation not only between it, the on-screen image, and the place of the movie theatre, but also the experiences leading up to and following the movie:

How to come unglued from the mirror? [M]any things can help us to 'come out of' (imaginary and/or ideological) hypnosis [...] but there is another way of going to the movies (besides being armed by the discourse of counter-ideology); by letting oneself be fascinated *twice over*, by the image and by its surroundings – as if I had two

bodies at the same time: a narcissistic body which gazes, lost, into the engulfing mirror, and a perverse body, ready to fetishize not the image but precisely what exceeds it: the texture of the sound, the hall, the darkness, the obscure mass of the other bodies, the rays of light, entering the theatre, leaving the hall; in short, in order to distance, in order to 'take off', I complicate a 'relation' by a 'situation'.

(Barthes 1986 [1972]: 348–49, emphasis in original)

In *The Clock*, my relationship with the on-screen action (the diegesis), was complicated by my immediate environment (my situation). While each element of the environment – the carpeting, the lighting, the sound quality – was designed so as to be unobtrusive, Marclay's desire to establish an installation in which it was possible for the audience to come and go at will created an entirely different dynamic from the typical movie experience. Audience members lined the walls, waiting for a desirable seat, closer to the front of the theatre or its centre. At the Paula Cooper Gallery, audience members also chose to lounge in the proscenium between the sofas and the screen. The greatest movement occurred at the half-hour mark. Over time, the ebb and flow of people came to resemble a collective intelligence such as a school of fish, or a herd of antelopes, or a colony of ants. I found myself resisting the impulse to leave along with this group or that. Alongside this ebb and flow, most crucially, the constant awareness of everyday time identified by all the critics keeps returning the viewer of *The Clock* to an awareness of her or his 'situation'. Marclay describes the communal relation that results between viewer and screen inside the gallery:

What makes [*The Clock*] work is that you become part of this experience [...]. You're aware of when you started looking at it, and you know how much time you've spent there – so you have to make choices. You might have an appointment in half an hour – maybe you can stay another ten minutes and be late, or forget about the appointment and just stay. These choices make you hyper-aware, and you become an actor in the film. People become totally aware that their life is linked – their life is synched – with this thing.

(quoted in Romney 2011: 31)

As a result of these choices, and this reflexive awareness, the impact of *The Clock* extends well beyond the confines of the gallery to alter the sensed 'now' of everyday life, thereby extending the work's aesthetic trail. Before or after viewing the work, multiple critics reported that for a brief period the cinematic became joined to the individual's lived reality, bringing to it all of cinema's potential verve, sparkle and beauty, as well as the ideological charge of the narrative tropes that define it. This hyperawareness stemming from the syncing of 'diegetic time' and 'actual time'; or 'temporal reality' and 'situational reality' was nowhere more evident than in the queues outside the installation.

The Clock proved to be enormously popular. Because audience members were permitted to stay as long as they wanted, and only a limited number of people were admitted at any time, queues formed. Like all queues,



Queue for The Clock outside the Paula Cooper Gallery, New York (2011). Photo: courtesy of Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

the one for *The Clock* formed a site of anticipation and memory. As Erika Balsom observed, the queue for *The Clock* became a visual display of the aspiration to experience the work inside:

[T]he experience of this artwork is about temporality in more ways than one. Long queues are normally the property of nightclubs or iPhone launches, not gallery installations. But the queue for *The Clock* fulfills the same function as the queue outside the Apple Store [...]. It is a visual display of desire that in turn incites desire.

(2013: 178)

However, like the artwork it preceded, this queue carried with it the double charge of the aesthetic and the everyday. Frequently these queues lasted for hours, acquiring the quality of accidental performances, or Kaprow-esque happenings. For the visitors who were queuing up for a second or third visit to the installation, the sense of anticipation overlaid their memories of a work that emphasized the temporal intermix of the everyday and the aesthetic: this resulted in a reflexive consciousness of both the act of waiting and its surroundings. The second time I visited *The Clock* in February 2011 I waited for almost three hours on a bitterly cold night in Chelsea, New York. The queue stretched down the street and wrapped around the block. Across the street, a swarm of clubbers queued up to get into a nightclub, providing fodder for critique and commentary from our side. On that night, I was preceded in the queue by a performance artist and an architect, both second-wave feminists. Our awareness of why we were in the queue prompted us to view our counterparts across the street as unintentional theatre and to appreciate their performative qualities, rather than

hurry by the clubbers without a second glance. We were struck by the uniformity of the flocks of twenty-somethings who were gathered under an awning in the glow of a violet-coloured overhead light. We could not resist engaging in an ideological critique of the scene unfolding across the street, and looked askance at the sameness of the girls' black micro minis, their uniform hairstyles and stilettos. As the hours crawled by and the line inched forward, the rhythm of the crowd across the street acquired a pulsating quality as groups would arrive and be admitted at a much quicker pace than ours. In line, I eavesdropped on conversations between gallery dealers and their clients; adjunct professors embittered by their marginal status; recent graduates of my university. Aspiring artists showed their work to friends on their cell phones; a couple discussed the state of their relationship. Those forming the queues became in turn aestheticized by becoming a subject for journalists who interviewed visitors during the summer 2012 Lincoln Center installation of *The Clock* in New York City: an English teacher who had appeared in the audience of the *Ed Sullivan Show* in which the Beatles made their first appearance in 1964; a brother and sister waiting for their mother; a 21-year-old student at Brown read a library copy of *The Myth of Sisyphus*; a research scientist and engineer on his fourth visit to *The Clock* (Paumgarten 2012: 20–21).

Just as the wait preceding the installation formalized the escalated awareness of time and place, *The Clock's* after-effect also left its visitors with the extended aesthetic experience made possible by their attention to both the relation and the situation. Multiple critics made note of this doubled and extended aesthetic experience. Jonathan Romney described a sensation of acute awareness of time that was sustained in the world subsequent to departing the gallery: 'emerging from *The Clock*, you can expect your sense of the passing minutes to be curiously heightened for a good hour or so' (2011: 30). Peter Bradshaw (2011) described an after-effect produced by *The Clock* in which he walked out of the Hayward Gallery on the concrete walkway of the South Bank, saw the clock on the Shell Building and noted the time, 12:55 p.m.: 'Ha!' he said to himself, '5 to one! It's five to one. You can see the time on that clock in this shot'. Moments later he realized that he had returned to real life, and naturally the clocks he saw around him would give the actual time. And Jeffrey Zuckerman (2012) related his experience of dislocation as one in which otherwise ordinary and unremarkable scenes of workers, audience, streets and clocks became extraordinary:

I emerged into the New York twilight three hours after entering, having walked past sleeping hipsters and snacking gallerinas toward the fading sunlight. I took the bus back to my apartment, and saw a row of clocks along Fifty-Seventh Street, each one set to a different time zone. In my head, I could still hear the ticking.

I had an identical experience of an aesthetic after-effect when I left the Paula Cooper Gallery at 4:40 a.m. on that night in February. The local clubs were still going strong as I stepped out into the frigid air, but the lines in front of them had dwindled to nothing. A few drunks were reeling

across Tenth Avenue. I hailed a taxi to go home. As it drove through the city, disoriented from lack of sleep I watched the buildings slide by in a cinematic glaze. A clock floated past me atop an Art Deco office building limned with lights. The digital clock inside the cab marked off the minutes as we sped over the bridge to the outer boroughs. I entered my apartment still saturated in a state of cinematic wonder and waded through the sleep that enveloped my family as they floated in their own dreams. As I lay in bed looking at the digital clock that glowed faintly on my bedside table, my last conscious thought was: 'It's 5:20 a.m. Look, it's 5:20'. The next morning I awoke and the feeling of swimming through film was gone.

With *The Clock*, Marclay extends the boundaries of video installation and fulfils some of its unrealized potential. Through a meticulously planned staging, the piece deftly aligns everyday time with aesthetic temporality, and radically expands postproduction practice into spatial and experiential dimensions. The intermediality fostered in the work creates a heterotopia that juxtaposes a here and a there that is simultaneously physical and mental, live and virtual. By breaking down the divisions between the everyday, the black box, and the white cube, *The Clock* undermines and confounds the autonomy of both the cinematic apparatus and the exhibitionary context.

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Contributor Details

Margot Bouman is an assistant professor of visual culture at The New School in New York City. Recent publications include an essay on the use of the *mise en abyme* as a rhetorical device in visual culture, and the paradox of anamorphosis in televisual public space. She is working on a book-length history of the unintended consequences of avant-garde

television entitled *Between the Revolutions: From Television's Avant-Garde to the Televisual and the Avant-Garde*.

Contact: The School of Art and Design History and Theory, Parsons The New School for Design, 2 West 13th Street, Room 606, New York, NY, USA 10011.

E-mail: boumanm@newschool.edu

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