Chrstian Marclay's The Clock

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Christian Marclay's *The Clock* is both simple and difficult to explain. It is a 24 hour film produced by editing together bits and pieces of thousands of films from over 70 years of cinema. The museum screens the film such that the time in the film tracks real time. Almost every clip of film shows a clock or watch or the mention of time, or some other reference to the time. We got there around 10:00 AM and stayed until about 12:30. There was a wonderful building of excitement as the hour approached noon, starting at 11:40, with a clip from *High Noon* in which the town folk inveigh upon the sheriff to get out of town, and culminating in seemingly several terrorist acts, bank jobs, etc. all timed to commence at noon.

12:04 to 12:07

This does point up one of the oddities of the piece, which is that certain minutes seem to stretch out, such as hours (11:00, 12:00), for about 2 or 3 minutes. Also, one does witness time shift forward and back quite frequently, as it will be, say, 11:15, then 11:18, then 11:16. There are also odd coincidences. It seems, for example, that a quarter past is a common time for waking up "late" in film, so at 10:15 and 11:15 we are shown scenes of people just waking up, looking at the clock, and swearing.

The sensation of watching T*he Clock* is something else. You get wrapped up in the action, but the action keeps shifting. You recognise this or that scene, but then it shifts again. Marclay's expert sound editing makes the transitions seamless at times, and jarring at others. MoMA is just the latest to acquire a copy of the film, let's hope more people get a chance to see this. X returned the next day for another 3 hours, from roughly 5:30 to 8:30 PM. She reports that that stretch featured a lot of meal preparation, cocktailing, etc. and had longer clips of each film than the morning span we saw together.