

Sketching the Present

21L.325
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CONTEXT

Constantin Guys

In his essay "The Painter of Modern Life", Baudelaire comments on Guys' artistic process. His drawings take on the impression of sketches and reflect the fleeting nature of the present. This project attempts to prescribe a ruleset to this act of capturing the present moment through a series of sketches.

Tehching Hsieh, *Time Clock* (April 11, 1980-1981)

Hsieh's performance year-long performance piece, in which he punches a time card every hour for a year, illustrates a systematic representation of the passing present. He presents it as a documentation of his life. Similarly, this project serves as a record of a day in the artists' lives, as shown through a series of moments taken in the present.

CONCEPT

This project explores the question of how close one can come to capturing the present through hand drawings. Sketches of the present not only offer real-time information about the current moment, but also include the artist's own perspective at that point in time. Such drawings are then encoded with a duality of information about the present. Consequently, a series of sketches offers the possibility of a comprehensive portrayal of both what the artist sees as well as insight into the artist himself.

CONSTRAINT

- Drawings will be made in blue or black ink on a 5.5 x 8.5-inch piece of drawing paper, held landscape.
- Drawings from all artists will be made at predetermined time intervals during the same 24-hour period.
- No drawings will be skipped, unless the artist is sleeping during that particular moment.
- The duration that the artist may spend on the drawing must fall within one to three minutes.

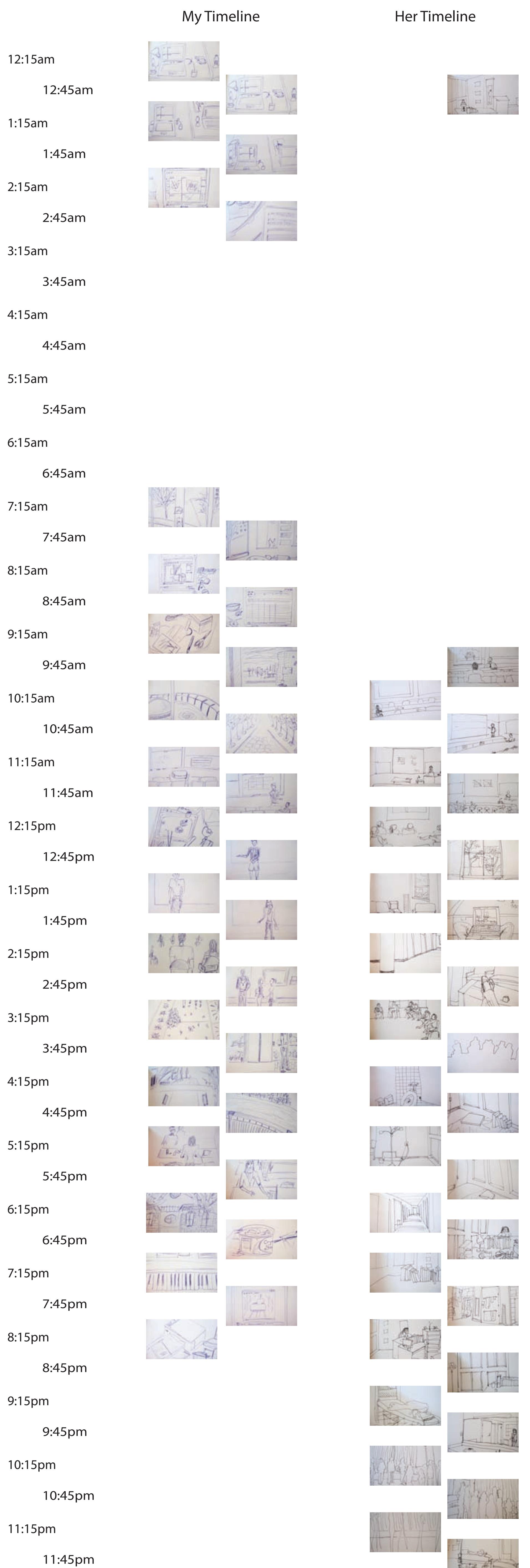
CONSEQUENCE

Upon execution of this project, a variety of observations on capturing the present surfaced:

- A comprehensive depiction of the present result from a balance between time and detail. Spending time to capture the exact details of the present removes the artist from the present, such that the image becomes only a representation of the past. However, adhering to real time forces the removal of detail at the discretion of the artist, and is a fundamentally incomplete description of the present.
- The mere act of documenting the present creates a heightened awareness of the passage of time. Time, in some way, is experienced at a greater level of consciousness.
- There is the dilemma of describing the present during the times set aside for sleep. Is it possible to avoid this "loss" of the present? Perhaps the only solution is to recover this time through another individual's record of the present through his eyes. Even then, there is an inherent interpretation in this record.
- Though this iteration of the project does not contain the occurrence of intersecting timelines (two individuals recording the same moment at the same physical location), the notion of such intersections implies a larger network of interwoven timelines that form the fabric of the present.

CREATION

The participants in this project include myself and a fellow student. On Wednesday, November 17, 2010 each of us produced a drawing from our field of vision every half an hour starting from 12:15am.



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