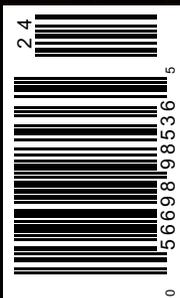


Cabinet

A QUARTERLY OF ART AND CULTURE
ISSUE 44 24 HOURS
US \$12 CANADA \$12 UK £7



INTRODUCTION

Rome was not built in a day, but could a magazine be produced in twenty-four hours? This was the question that the current issue of *Cabinet* was designed to consider. Inspired by literary precedents such as automatic writing, by the resourcefulness of the bricoleur making do with what is at hand, and by the openness toward chance that all artistic production under severe constraint must necessarily incorporate, the themed section of this issue includes contributions by twenty-four artists and writers who were given twenty-four hours—exactly—to complete a project that responded to a prompt sent to them by the editors.

On the one hand, this may seem like an exercise in editorial sadism, further exaggerating the time crunch faced by working artists and writers. Nothing could be further from the mission of a benevolent non-profit whose brief is purportedly to create the conditions for considered reflection. On the other hand, unburdened from some of the usual parameters for both evaluation (and self-evaluation), there is a kind of paradoxical freedom that accompanies such a radical constraint, one that encourages unorthodox forays in both subject matter and style.

Given the mechanical nature of the conceit behind this issue, it was clear that a set of loosely framed questions around daily time would be useful starting points, both for the contributors and for our readers. The staggeringly diverse responses to our prompts (reproduced at right) can be found on the following pages.

Dear "24 Hours" issue contributor,

Choose one of the three prompts below as the starting point for your project. Bear in mind that all kinds of approaches and subject matter are equally welcome, including those that draw on historical, scientific, personal, literary, phenomenological, philosophical, sociological, medical, legal, economic, anthropological, spiritual, zoological, and botanical perspectives and/or artifacts, just to mention a few!

As stated before, contributions that use text, image, or hybrids of the two are all acceptable, as are unorthodox formats, including diaries, charts, graphs, receipts, calendars, advertisements, budgets, menus, correspondence, and lists.

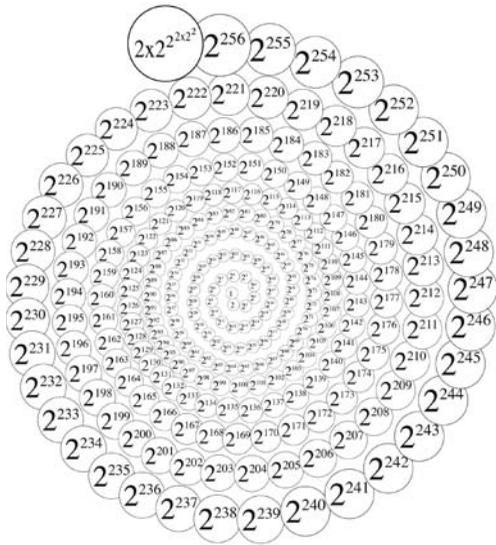
1. Consider different ways in which daily time is kept or administered—from the daily planner to the structure of mealtimes, from the ringing of church bells to our hygiene habits—and how they form and inform our experience of day and night. Specific episodes or incidents are as welcome as broader or more speculative considerations.

2. Depict a day in which dayness itself—its temporal structure, its specific length, form, or limits—was specifically brought to the fore. This can be a day from the past, or the very day on which you are doing this project. Feel free to draw on your personal life or on historical materials.

3. Choose one of the four following divisions of a given 24-hour period—morning, afternoon, evening, night—and create a project that considers or inhabits its particular "being" or "mood."

We look forward to receiving your projects.

Cabinet



The Creation Spiral by James Carter.

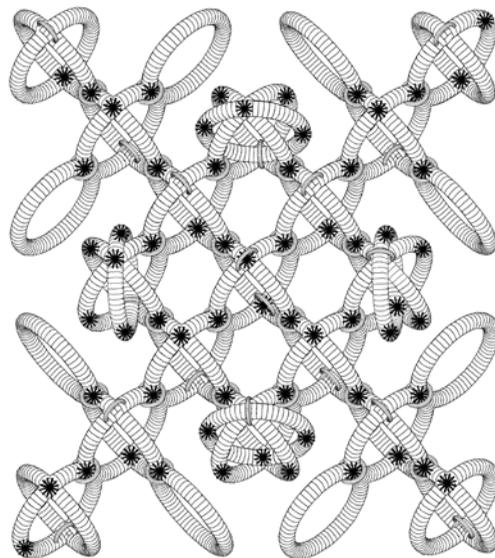
Time seems the most fundamental of constructs, a quality of being that can neither be ignored nor contained, and its calibration is naturally a cosmological concern. Where traditional units of space derive from the human body—the self-evident “foot,” and the “yard,” which approximates the length of a man’s arm—our measures of time are taken from the universe; the “year” from the orbit of our planet, the “day” from its rotational period. The structuring of time provided by the spinning earth provides the first order of our being, setting not only our bodily clocks but configuring our very psyches. We are first and foremost diurnal animals. No wonder then that the day has served to calibrate the progress of creation; it is a handy, manageable unit through which we can dream of framing the ultimate unfathomable act.

In Judeo-Christian cosmology, Yahweh is said to have created the world in six days, using the seventh to rest. For James Carter, an “outsider scientist” who has spent the past half-century developing an alternative theory of physics, cosmic ontology unfolds over an eight-day stretch, with each individual “day” witnessing a new phase in a literal chain of being in which everything is said to be composed of interlocking toroidal-shaped particles he calls “circlons.”

For the past eighteen years, I have been following Carter’s progress. The theoretical framework of his universe was established in the 1970s when he was working as a gold-miner and abalone diver on Catalina Island off the coast of California. As a diver he learned to

blow ring-shaped bubbles underwater and it occurred to him that these uncannily stable forms might hold the key to atomic nuclear structure. In 1976, he left the abalone business and moved to a pristine piece of land perched atop the Green River Gorge in Enumclaw, Washington, about an hour south of Seattle. There, he established a trailer park, and in his backyard, amid stands of Douglas firs, he has been experimenting with smoke rings, a dry-land manifestation of the form he believes is the central unit of reality.

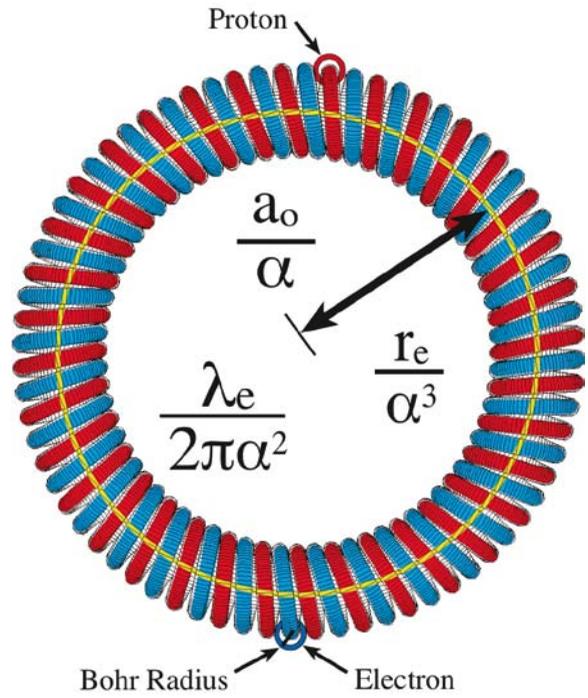
Yet if everything is composed of circlons, then the question arises as to how the circlons got here. His eight days of creation give us his answer in baroquely articulated detail. In this complex process of almost organic evolution, circlons beget circlons, but it is Carter’s fourth day that provides the pivotal link in the chain. It is on this day that two originary ur-circlons split and divide like a living colony of cells, giving rise to four circlons, then eight, sixteen, thirty-two, sixty-four, and so on, with each new generation constituting an ever more finely parsed version of what has gone before. This fissiparous process proceeds 256 times (itself being two to the power of eight) until all the particles we see in the universe today have been spun into being. Carter depicts this sequence in a diagram he calls the Creation Spiral, which encapsulates a day like no other before or since.



In Carter’s theory, circlon-shaped articles interlock together to form the nuclei of atoms, and thereby define the structure and order of elements in the Periodic Table.



Diver Al Giddings blows a ring-shaped bubble underwater.



A circlon-shaped particle.



Smoke rings sailing across Jim Carter's yard in Enumclaw mimic the structure of subatomic particles as defined by his theory of Circlon Synchronicity. Photo Linda Carter.