



## Press Coverage

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## Living in the Long Now:

*A ten-thousand year clock ticks away the millenia.*

By Emily Krill

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Art is, by nature, promiscuous. In the last few decades the accepted modes of artmaking have expanded to include sound, video, installation, performance and computer generated images. And to Art's debious ranks, I would like to nominate inventor Danny Hillis. He works in a new media: Time.

Hillis has teamed up with Whole Earth Catalog founder Stewart Brand, musician Brian Eno, filmmaker David Lynch and others to create a 10,000-year mechanical clock. This "Clock of the Long Now" ticks once a year, chimes every hundred years and on the millenium sounded two great gongs. The 8-foot tall sculpture is composed of Monel alloy, Invar alloy, tungsten carbide, metallic glass and synthetic sapphire. The works consist of a digital-mechanical system that self corrects by synchronizing with the noon Sun. And this is just the prototype. The longterm vision is to create a large-scale clock tower that will house a library. Think: Big Ben meets the Library of Alexandria. Brand wrote of this goal, "Such a clock, if sufficiently impressive and well engineered, would embody deep time for people. It should be charismatic to visit, interesting to think about, and famous enough to become iconic in the public discourse. Ideally, it would do for thinking about time what the photographs of Earth from space have done for thinking about the environment. Such icons reframe the way people think."

The Clock of the Long Now employs one of the essential qualities of art: the ability to communicate an idea simply. Icons were initially used to communicate ideas to a largely illiterate public. Medieval stained glass windows, for example, illustrated the bible for a congregation who couldn't read it. And in this way, the 10,000 year clock acts as an illustration for a society where any plan more than a year is considered "longterm." The clock acts as a balancing corrective to this short-sightedness. It is a mechanism and a myth. And it all started with a dream:

"I have a recurring dream of a big, slow clock in a faraway place- somewhere empty and difficult to reach, perhaps in the middle of a desert, or on a mountaintop, or in a deep cool cave. This is the clock that connects the motions of the sun and the moon and the stars to the mundane calenders of humankind. Wound by human caretakers in a quiet ceremony, it patiently counts the millenia." -Danny Hillis

To learn more about the project visit The Long Now Foundation's excellent website: <http://www.longnow.com/>

Further reading: Essays by Danny Hillis [www.longnow.com/timelinks/Essays.html#hillis](http://www.longnow.com/timelinks/Essays.html#hillis)

Further reading: Essays by Stewart Brand [www.longnow.com/timelinks/Essays.html#brand](http://www.longnow.com/timelinks/Essays.html#brand)

An online community created by Stewart Brand <http://www.well.com/>

To learn more about "milleniumism" check out <http://www.thirdmil.org/>

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