Rêveries des Secondes

A seconds hand that wanders, and is on time every minute.

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For an instant, the hand seems to stop

Glance at a clock's seconds hand and, for a short moment, it seems to stand still. The hand appears to take longer than normal to reach its next position. Neuroscientists call this chronostasis: the brain stretches the moment of looking.[1]

It is a small illusion, and a revealing one. The instrument we trust to measure time evenly is read by a mind that does not. Rêveries des Secondes begins there, with the seconds hand itself.



The time we measure, and the time we live

Our sense of time is not constant. Some seconds slip past unnoticed. Others stretch toward infinity. Yet every watch we wear marks each one exactly the same.

The idea is old. Sixteen centuries ago, Augustine wrote: "in te, anime meus, tempora metior", it is in the mind that we measure time.[2] In 1889 Henri Bergson took a clock as his example: when we follow its hand with our eyes, he wrote, we do not measure duration; we only count.[3]

So the question behind this watch is simple. Why should a watch show only the time we measure, and never the time we live?

Sixty seconds,
as they are felt



Four findings on felt time

Absorption and boredom. Emotion and attention change the speed of felt time: it flies when we are absorbed and drags when we are bored.[4] Wanting something, striving for it, makes time seem to pass more quickly.[5]

Waiting. People left alone to wait in an empty room felt time pass more slowly as boredom grew.[6]

Memory. After a 31-metre free fall, people remembered their own fall as lasting 36% longer than other people's.[7]

Order. The brain can even reorder moments: a flash that follows an action can be felt as coming before it.[8]

The hand's own figures are design choices, not measurements. The research is the reason for them.

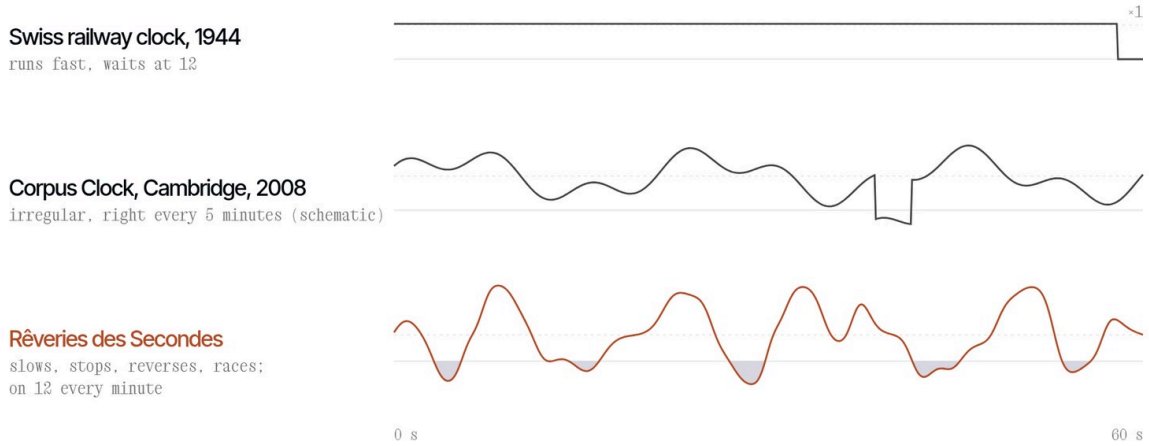
Others have played with the seconds

Clockmakers and watchmakers have bent the seconds before.

The **Swiss railway clock**, designed by Hans Hilfiker in 1944, laps in about 58 seconds and then waits at twelve.[9] The **Corpus Clock** in Cambridge, by John C. Taylor (2008), was designed to run erratically, slowing down, speeding up, sometimes stopping, and returning to the correct time every five minutes.[10] Dubois Dépraz's **Thila** (2020) swings a small-seconds hand like a metronome, 15 seconds one way and 15 back.[11]

Each does one part of it. To my knowledge, no seconds hand on the wrist slows, stops, runs backwards and races, and still keeps its appointment at twelve every minute.

Nadim Elgarhy



The designer

Nadim Elgarhy founded Algorithme du Temps. He holds a degree in computer engineering and algorithms, and he researches time perception. He is the author of two papers: The Future of Time: Psychological, Perceptual, and Philosophical Dimensions and Their Potential Applications in Advanced Horology and Consciousness as a Fundamental Dimension: A Modern Theoretical Framework.

In The Future of Time he wrote: "Current watchmaking traditions, primarily focused on measuring standardized units of time, offer only a limited reflection of human temporal experience."

On the name of the brand: "Algorithme ... relates to the very definite, predictable, logical, mathematical, while temps ... is elusive, mysterious, misunderstood, we try to control it but we can't."



It slows. It stops. It turns back. It races.

The centre seconds hand of Rêveries des Secondes never runs evenly. It slows. It stops for an instant. It runs backwards, at the pace of an ordinary seconds hand. Then it races forward, up to three times its normal speed.

Its speed changes continuously, between −1× and +3×. Nothing about it is random: it is entirely mechanical, and its pattern returns every five minutes. Because five minutes is longer than anyone watches a seconds hand, it feels free.

Hours and minutes keep their usual pace on two sub-dials, so the time is always plain to read.

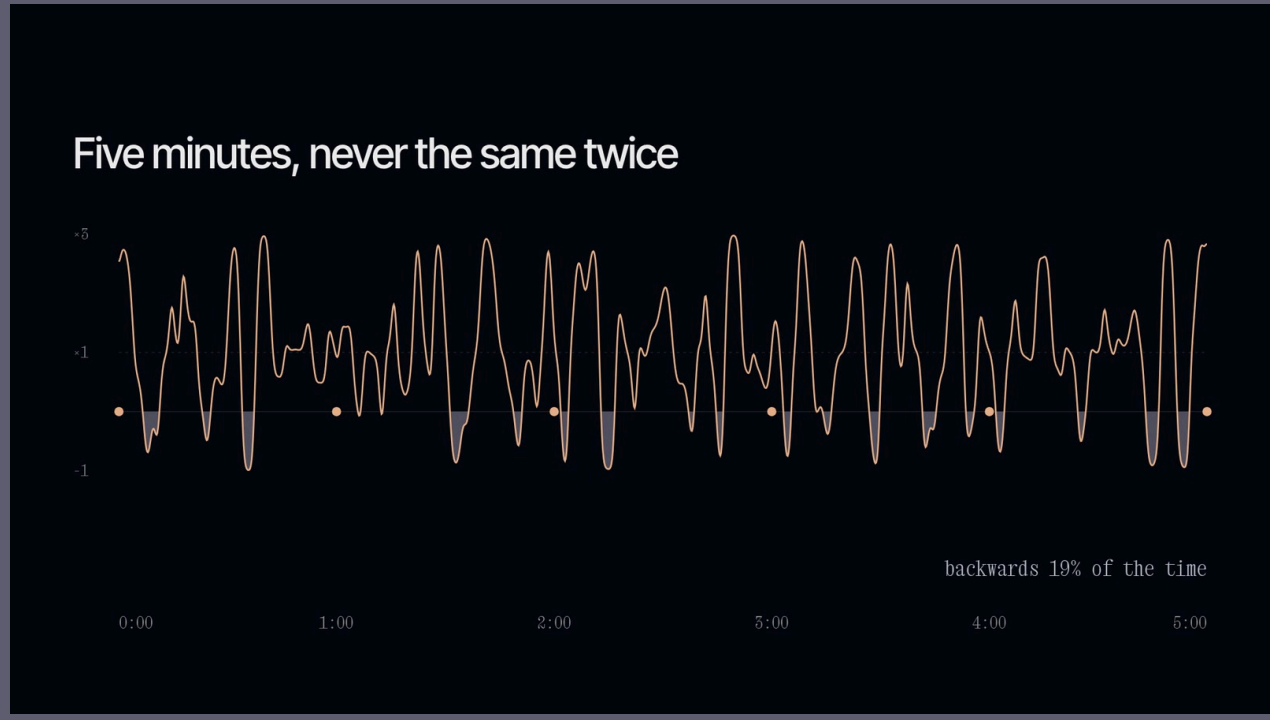


However it wanders, it arrives on time

At every full minute, the hand crosses twelve exactly on time, after running forward for at least two seconds.

Between the marks it keeps its own rhythm. That rhythm never repeats within five minutes. Almost a fifth of the time, 19%, the hand runs backwards, and it changes direction 46 times in every five minutes.

So the watch holds two kinds of time at once. The minute is measured. The seconds inside it are lived.





The centre belongs to the seconds

The hours sit on a recessed sub-dial at half past ten, the minutes on another at half past one. The centre of the dial is left to the seconds.

The seconds hand is blued steel, 13.3 mm long, and alone at the centre. Its tail ends in a hollow ring that frames the centre of each sub-dial as it passes over it.

At six o'clock, a round window 10 mm across shows the hand's rhythm being made.





Each piece has its own heartbeat

Rêveries des Secondes is a series of 25. Each piece receives its own pattern, made for it alone, so no two hands wander the same way.

Every one keeps the same appointment: however its hand wanders, it crosses twelve exactly at every minute.



904L steel. A closed, mirror-polished back.

The case is 904L steel, 39.7 × 42.1 mm and 10.53 mm thick, with the crown centred on the flank. Under a domed sapphire crystal the dial sits deep, so the watch has depth. The back is closed, mirror-polished and acid-etched with the name, the reference and the number of the piece.

Inside is an automatic Sellita SW200-1 without date, beating at 28,800 vibrations an hour.







Étude N°1. Specification sheet.

Display

Seconds	Centre seconds of varying speed
Seconds hand	Blued steel, its tail ending in a hollow ring that frames the sub-dial centres
Hours	Recessed sub-dial at 10:30
Minutes	Recessed sub-dial at 1:30
Aperture	Round, 10 mm, at 6 o'clock
Date	None

Case

Material	904L steel
Dimensions	39.7 × 42.1 mm, 10.53 mm thick
Crystal	Domed sapphire
Crown	Centred on the flank
Case back	Closed, mirror-polished, acid-etched

Function

Speed of the hand	From -1× (backwards at normal speed) to +3×
Running backwards	19% of the time
Changes of direction	46 in 5 minutes
At twelve	Exactly at every full minute, after running forward for at least 2 s
Pattern	Repeats every 5 minutes; its own for each of the 25 pieces

Edition

Series	25 pieces, numbered

Movement

Base calibre	Sellita SW200-1, no date
Winding	Automatic
Frequency	28,800 vph (4 Hz)
Power reserve	38 h (base calibre)

Images

High-resolution files: the image pack (ZIP) at algorithmedutemps.com/#press.
For editorial use, credit "Algorithme du Temps".



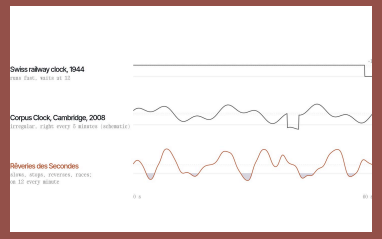
Étude N°1, Rêveries des Secondes, face-on. 904L steel case, 39.7 × 42.1 mm.



The dial close, the blued seconds hand at the centre.



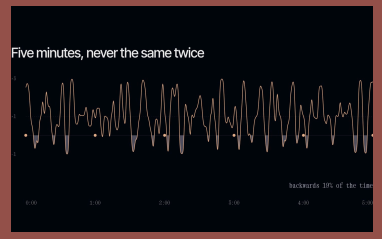
Sixty ticks, some stretched, some shrunk: felt time against measured time.



Three seconds hands as speed traces: the Swiss railway clock, the Corpus Clock (schematic), and Rêveries des Secondes, backwards stretches shaded.



Étude N°1 close, on a red ground.



Five minutes of the hand's speed. Backwards stretches shaded: 19% of the time, 46 changes of direction.



The dial against a coral ground.



Hours at 10:30, minutes at 1:30: the centre is left to the seconds.



The dial in macro: the Numéro plaque and the window at six.



The round window at six o'clock, beside the Numéro plaque.



The case in 904L steel, three-quarter view.



In profile: the domed crystal and the crown centred on the flank, engraved with the house symbol.



The closed case back: mirror-polished 904L steel, acid-etched.



Étude N°1 on black acrylic, its croc strap laid flat.

Algorithme du Temps

Rêveries des Secondes is presented by its designer, Nadim Elgarhy.
For interviews, images or the film, write to the press contact below.

Press: press@algorithmedutemps.com

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Time doesn't flow. It dreams.

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