

## Calendar Drawings, 1983-2018

**Time**...that elusive concept, marked by chronological increments. Of days and nights, lunar phases, annual seasons, clocks, timepieces, and calendars.

Growing up, a holiday Christmas gift would often include a good art or pop culture calendar. So after Mom got me an M.C. Escher calendar for 1983, its graphics inspired me to start drawing within the blank squares for each day, on a random doodling whim that turned into a nightly little ritual that ended up lasting for most of 34 years! Back then I was a teenager with a rapid-ograph, interested in detailed renderings.

It was fun, and with little importance of commitment, but just a few moments spent drawing something in that days calendar square before I went to sleep every night. These tiny drawings took on a life of their own, from being silly to serious, rough or refined, abstract or not, reflecting something experienced that day to being unrelated and randomly drawn. Certainly experimental, and often crude from being unfocused at the very end moments of being awake. After the year ended, I realized I had a personal ritual that deserved continuing!

And so, here is a link to scans of the calendar drawings I still have from 1983 through 2017 . [I stopped shortly into 2018, when it became too difficult to hold pens up steadily from progressing ALS, or I'd still be at it now.]

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/126364600@N06/albums/72157716319413303/>

In 2006 I had them on display in a group exhibition at *Million Fishes* gallery on Bryant Street in the Mission district of San Francisco, only two blocks away from where I lived (also Bryant St.) during most of my twenties. The show was titled *Empirical Nostalgia*, where I got mixed responses, mostly of amazement by the practice that nobody had ever seen done before. I was happy to finally put them out there, especially as non-commerce based for my inclusions. It was all purely about my personal creativity, and that was 23 years of calendars by then.

I didn't make them for every month if I was away, and there are months

missing when traveling or in transition. Regardless, the amount of small calendar drawings became enormous, and I am surprised how they've stacked up, showing some crazy creativity, moods, memories, experiments, and styles explored over the decades. It's a peripheral view of my timeline stream—or rather several streams—of late night edge of drawing consciousness.

- Dean Gustafson, January 2024



*Drawing in a square on April 22, 2006.*