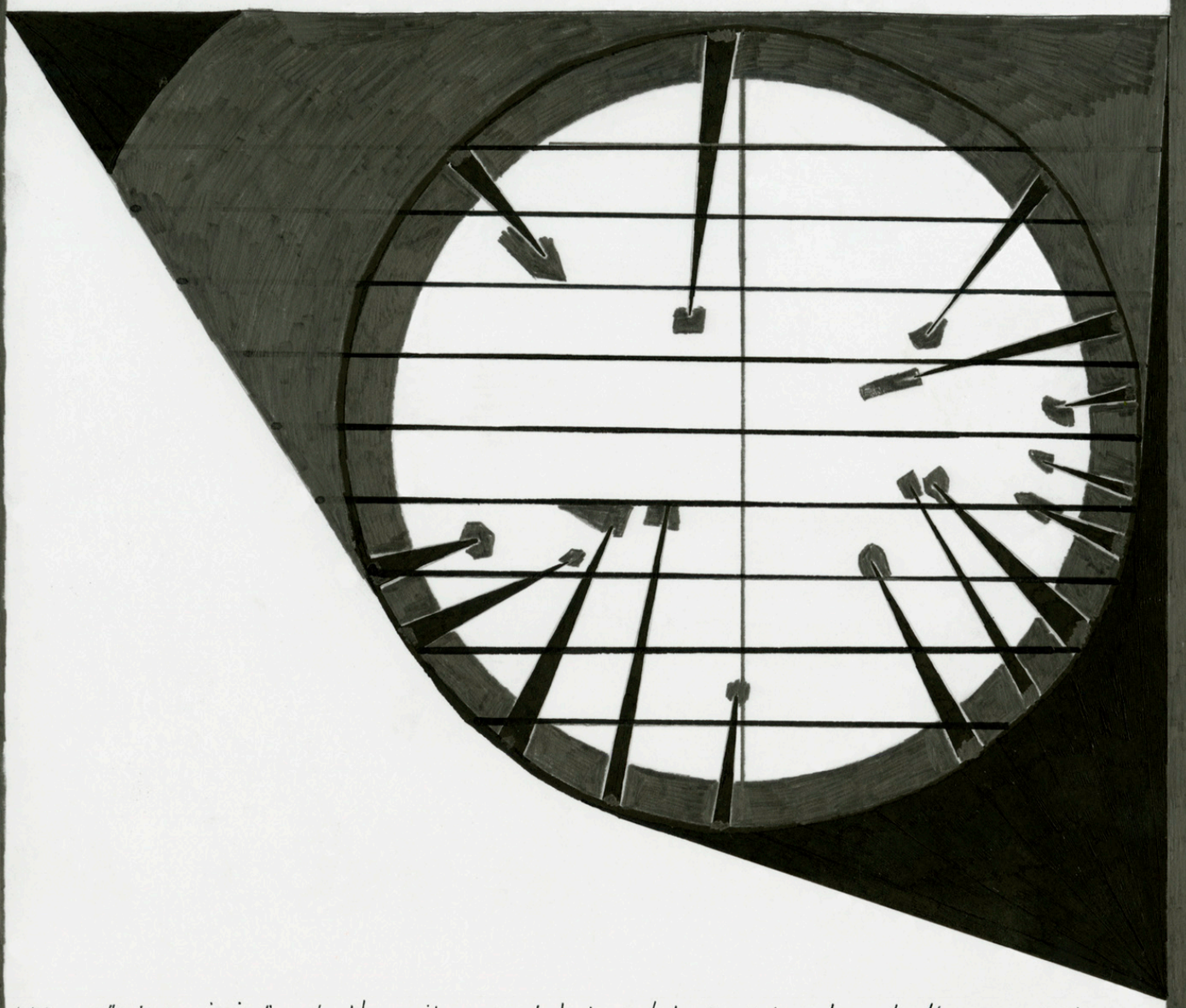
ON JUNE 17 2009, NASA PLANS TO LAUNCH ITS LUNAR RECONNAISSANCE ORBITER (LRO), A SATELLITE PROGRAMMED TO MAINTAIN A POLAR ORBIT OF THE MOON THAT WILL ENABLE IT TO FLY OVER DOZENS OF PAST LUNAR LANDING SITES— U.S. AND SOVIET, ROBOTIC AND HUMAN — TO INVESTIGATE THE EFFECTS OF LUNAR TIME ON THE HARDWARE LEFT BEHIND



LRO — a "science mission" — should provide a great deal of data for future trips to the moon, both manned and unmanned. Its cameras (the most important of the Orbiter's nine instruments) will target approximately 50 locations on the moon, both U.S. and Soviet robotic spacecraft touchdown sites and the landing sites of all six Apollo missions.

The LRO will study the conditions of the "hardware" these missions left behind, search for missing moon rovers, and provide data on geologic changes that have occurred in places from which Apollo astronauts took soil samples 40 years ago. It will be accompanied in space by the Ames Research Center/Northrup Grumman Lunar Crater Observing and Sensing Satellite, which looks for lunar ice in hopes of finding potential sites for future lunar outposts.

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