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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Kulturforum, Neue Nationalgalerie**

Potsdamer Straße 50, 10785 Berlin

Tue + Wed 10am – 6pm, Thu 10am – 8pm, Fri – Sun 10am – 6pm

**Tehching Hsieh**

1 April – 24 September 2023

A special exhibition by Nationalgalerie – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

**The Neue Nationalgalerie (New National Gallery) presents Tehching Hsieh's installation "One Year Performance 1980-1981 (Time Clock Piece)": Over the course of a year, the artist photographed himself using a time clock in his studio every hour. The installation includes all 8,627 photographs of the performance as well as a six-minute film consisting of all the recordings. Tehching's one-year long-term performances made the artist internationally known in the late 1970s and early 1980s and influenced artists such as Marina Abramovic.**

The entire artistic work of the American artist Tehching Hsieh (born 1950 in Nanzhou, Taiwan) consists of seven performances. It started in 1973 with the jump out of a window, then between 1978 and 1986 the long-term performances follow: living in a cage for a year, stamping a time card, living outdoors, being connected with a rope, not making art, seeing, or discussing. Hsieh's last work lasted 13 years: from 1987 to 1999 he did not exhibit his art. Hsieh performed these performances with extreme rigour and established numerous rules and conditions. He also often used elements such as legal documents to underline the constraints he imposed on his art and life.

For Hsieh, his first performance was "Jump" from 1973, when he jumped from the second floor of a building in Taipei and broke both ankles. Since then, extreme physical and mental endurance have been the foundations of the autodidact's art. In 1974, his training as a naval soldier enabled him to leave Taiwan and emigrate to New York. Until 1988 he was an undocumented immigrant in the USA and earned his living as a cleaner in restaurants: "I go cleaning, come home, go back to work, come back and ask myself: what am I actually looking for? This here is my piece. My job is explaining life and turning it into art. I create, but my creation is not like an object, but rather an idea that is basically life – it's about time", he describes in an interview for Tate Modern in 2017.

In 1978 he began his first "One Year Performance". A year is the time in which the earth once orbits the sun, a cycle, "a human calendar of life" as Hsieh says, and thus the ideal unit of time for him to examine his life. For "Cage Piece", Hsieh built a cell in a corner of his studio and equipped it with a bed, blanket, sink and bucket. His lawyer locked the door, sealed it with screws and a written contract. Talking, reading or writing, radio or television were not allowed. Every three weeks his apartment was open to the public and like a gallery open to the public who could watch the ongoing performance. After a year, the lawyer confirmed in a written document that the seal was unbroken and Hsieh left his cell.

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The Neue Nationalgalerie shows the installation of his second “One Year Performance” entitled “Time Clock Piece”, in which Hsieh stamped a time card every hour for one year from 1980 to 1981. Every hour he took a photograph of himself and then cut the bundle into a 6-minute film. The artist always wears the same work suit, but the changing hair length visibly documents the passage of time. Again, Hsieh had previously put the plan in writing with a lawyer. Here, the lawyer also listed the 133 missed stamps that Hsieh failed to execute due to mental breakdowns. The photographs and stamped time cards that were taken over 365 days were exhibited at the Guggenheim New York (2009, at the same time the MoMA showed “Cage Piece”) and the Tate Modern (2017).

By 1986 he had completed three more “One Year Performances”: Hsieh spent a year exclusively outdoors (Outdoor Piece). In another, a 240 cm long rope connected him to the artist Linda Montana, whereby they were not allowed to touch once (Rope Piece). This was followed by a year in which he was not allowed to make, look at or discuss art (No Art Piece). The artist describes the “One Year Performances” in an interview as follows: “I have lived 24 hours a day in my art for a year – it is life. [...] My work was not part of an art movement, it cannot be simply classified. I was an outsider in the art world – and in reality.” In the entrance hall of the exhibition, the artist’s six self-declarations can be seen, as well as the associated posters of his collected works from 1978-1999, which were distributed in the New York City space parallel to the performances.

Hsieh’s performances are conveyed in the exhibition space through impressive photographic, cinematic and contractual documentation. Above all, however, they survive in the imagination of the audience: confronted with the extreme conditions to which the artist is exposed, the visitors ask themselves questions about the meaning of freedom and imprisonment, standing still and moving.

Curated by Klaus Biesenbach, Director Neue Nationalgalerie and Lisa Botti, assistant curator.

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