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FRIEZE

## 57th Venice Biennale: Off-Site Pavilions and Collateral Shows



Tehching Hsieh, *One Year Performance 1980-1981*, New York. Courtesy: © the artist and Sean Kelly Gallery, New York; photograph: Micheal Shen

Selfhood, exile, performance, shelter – these are subjects invoked within Tehching Hsieh’s works on view in ‘Doing Time’, an exhibition at the collateral pavilion of Taiwan, documenting two of Hsieh’s iconic and powerful one-year performances from the 1980s (he made five of these in total). A letter, dated September 26, 1981, contains a statement in which Tehching Hsieh writes ‘I shall stay OUTDOORS for one year, and never go inside. I shall not go in to a building, subway, train, car, airplane, ship, cave, tent.’ In one room, we see a slide presentation of his performance in which he clocked in on the hour, every hour, and photographed himself doing so, and numerous vertical strips of photographic prints of this performance cover the walls like so many prison bars. These works – including the clothing Hsieh wore, and some new works in which he reflects on his past performances – are extremely acute, as they prefigured a 24-hour working economy and our contemporary entrapment with ‘clocking in’ and availability, as well a gradual effacement of nearly any private sphere, as lives, images, and experiences are externalized in real time. Documentation from Hsieh’s *Outdoor Piece* (1981), in which he existed outdoors in New York’s TriBeCa for an entire year, are genuinely moving: we see maps of Manhattan describing where he went, when and how he spent his time. In the video documentation of this action presented on a monitor, we see Hsieh accosted by police and struggling to resist them taking him inside the Police Station. The ability of the works to speak to themes as broad and prescient as shelter, the culture of working and externalization, and the effacement of any public space is, for me, evidence of art’s versatility and contextual agility.