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Taipei Fine Arts Museum News Release

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TFAM Official website: <http://www.tfam.museum/>

TFAM Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/taipeifineartsmuseum/>

Exhibition period: May 13, 2017 – November 26, 2017

Venue: Palazzo delle Prigioni, Venice, Italy

Artist Tehching Hsieh to Represent Taiwan at Venice Biennale 2017

Taipei Fine Arts Museum (TFAM) is delighted to announce Tehching Hsieh as the sole artist, representing Taiwan with an exhibition to be curated by Adrian Heathfield at the 57th International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale 2017.

About Hsieh's representation, Ping Lin, Director of TFAM states: "With high anticipation, Taiwan's nominating committee recommend Hsieh's vital and richly metaphorical performance art projects. Hsieh's work not only bears witness to a visionary perspective, but also sheds light on universal human conditions through his critical enactment of a biopolitics of existence."

Hsieh remarks: "It is a great honor to represent Taiwan at the 57th Venice Biennale. This exhibition is a rare opportunity to show previously unseen early works that I made in Taiwan, and to develop new understandings of my *One Year Performances* in New York. I am grateful for the support of the nominating committee, the Director of TFAM Ping Lin, Chief Curator Chaoying Wu, and for the opportunity to collaborate with curator Adrian Heathfield."

Born in 1950, Hsieh is a critically acclaimed artist from Taiwan. His outsider journey began with his departure from the country in 1974, when he entered the United States of America as an 'illegal alien.' With a series of five *One Year Performances*, starting from 1978, Hsieh initiated a quest with his body, adopting time as his creative medium to advance his ontological exploration of human existence. This staggering series of works explores self-discipline, physical and psychological confinement, notions of freedom and exposure, and the limits of human behavior and relations.

Through an interruption of the status quo, Hsieh has attempted to rebel against the existing socio-political hegemony and strip bare the mechanisms of subjugation. His work "Cage Piece" (1978 – 1979) was presented at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in 2009 and "Time Clock Piece" (1980 – 1981) at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in the same year. From an estranged position, Hsieh not only embodies a life force and resilience emerging from his early days in Taiwan, but also a persistence in adversity common to many, conveyed through frugal yet extreme artistic practices. His actions evoke collective cultural anxieties and explore the many existential dilemmas found within the modern human condition.

Taiwan's representation at the Venice Biennale began in 1995 and has been a collateral event since 2003. For the past two decades, the Taiwanese art scene has witnessed a paradigm shift of the geo-political power structures within the international contemporary art community, alongside the increased mobility of global art professionals and their influence on established international exhibitions around the world. Taking this changing atmosphere into consideration, the 2017 Taiwanese nomination committee seeks to make a unique intervention in the scene of ever-expanding national pavilions and their collateral events. It hopes to generate bilateral dialogues with pan-European and global cultural contexts and to open up windows of understanding for the vibrant and diverse spectrum of contemporary art connected to Taiwan.

Adrian Heathfield is invited to curate the exhibition for Taiwan. Heathfield is a renowned British curator and writer with particular expertise in time-based arts: live art, dance, and experimental theater. He was a curatorial attaché for the Biennale of Sydney (2016) and is a co-director of the Bergen Assembly (2016). He has long dedicated his research to performance, and he co-authored the definitive publication *Out of Now: The Lifeworks of Tehching Hsieh* with the artist.

Heathfield states: "It will be a great joy to make the most extensive and in depth exhibition of Tehching Hsieh's work to date, spanning distinct decades, continents and artistic propositions. The historic halls of the Palazzo delle Prigioni Venice, the former prison of the Palazzo Ducale, are an ideal setting for the work of an artist who understands more than most, the meaning and cost of 'doing time', and the nature of lives lived at the edges of what we call society."

Further information on Tehching Hsieh can be found at: www.tehchinghsieh.com

Further information on Adrian Heathfield can be found at: www.adrianheathfield.net