



IT'S ALL ABOUT TIME

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**KUNSTMUSEUM
RAVENSBURG**

IT'S ALL ABOUT TIME

Time is so much more than a ticking clock. It seems to slip away when you want to hold on to it and to stand still when you are waiting for something. Technological developments help make our life faster, more flexible, and more efficient, and to compact our activities. Yet many people feel that they have less and less time and are increasingly out of sync with time.

Against this backdrop, the exhibition focuses on large-scale installations by six international artists that allow us to experience the passing of time with our senses and draw attention to different dimensions of time perception. Natural cycles and biological rhythms meet the pulse of late capitalism, prayer rituals that recall trance and rave suspend the ordinary, linear sensation of time in favor of an expanded experience of the present and stand in contrast to the passage of our lives. Alternative proposals for clocks that don't serve the standardized measurement and collective organization of time demonstrate that time is not exhausted by timing and efficiency but inseparably linked to our experience. The exhibition *It's All About Time* directs our attention toward the complex phenomenon of time: as Maurice Merleau-Ponty put it, "not as an object of our knowledge, but as a dimension of our being."

With works by Jill Baroff, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Rafik Greiss, David Horvitz, Tehching Hsieh, and Alicja Kwade

1. DAVID HORVITZ

all floors

Proposals for Clocks, 2016–

A clock whose seconds are synchronized to your heartbeat; a clock whose minutes are the lengths of your breath; a clock that follows the shadows of cats; a clock whose hands are the shapes of rivers; a clock that is wound by the wind; and a clock that falls asleep, out of exhaustion or tiredness? According to what criteria do we measure, experience, and live time?

The poster series *Proposals for Clocks* (2016–) by David Horvitz (b. in the U.S., 1972, lives in Los Angeles) is an invitation to explore notions of time that move beyond its standardized measurability. This means thinking about time borrowing from the biorhythms of our own bodies, in connection to the cycles of nature, or also as surreal, abstract time images. Horvitz's poetic suggestions for clocks encourage reflection on temporality and make room for the subjective experience of time.

David Horvitz's posters are distributed throughout the entire museum, beginning in the foyer and ranging from the lower level to the second floor of the exhibition. During the exhibition, they will also be displayed in various places around the city and encounter the pulse of everyday life with their playful explorations of ideas.

Time is an integral component in Horvitz's work: using photography, video, watercolors, mail art, or text, the artist turns to the symbolic or associative experience of time: for example, in relation to the spatial distance between (two) people and the proximity that results from shared time. Through images, words, objects, and in performative acts, he searches for possibilities of appropriating and subverting purely calculable time, and reminds us that while we might be able to organize ourselves perfectly by counting the hours, minutes, and seconds, we remain unable to grasp time's multilayered dimensions.

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CLOCK
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2. RAFIK GREISS

ground floor

The Longest Sleep, 2024

A resonantly murmuring sound, like a heartbeat, fills the ground floor. In an initially dark space, gradually film images of a nocturnal urban scene emerge: a shopping arcade, a residential building, a mosque, blue light reflected on buildings and people taking pause, standing or sitting. Colorfully illuminated carousels turn, their figures seem to hover in the rotation. Repeatedly, the film images fade into the dark, as if the eyes closed for a moment to take pause.

In *The Longest Sleep* (2024) by Rafik Greiss (b. in Egypt, 1997, lives in Paris) images slowly unfold on three screens, accompanied by an atmospheric soundtrack. Men and women, some with skull caps and veils, sway rhythmically. Many have their gaze lowered, lost in thought. Increasingly, the images of bodies swaying back and forth in slow motion come closer: their movements are similar to the ecstatic moves of ravers, but are here carried out by religious believers.

This footage was shot during a Mawlid in Cairo, where Rafik Greiss grew up. Mawlid is a religious festival where Muslims celebrate the birth of the prophet Mohammed and in many regions commemorate the local Sufis. As *The Longest Sleep* shows, Mawlid celebrations not only take place at religious sites, but also in the urban space of the metropolis: public squares are decorated festively and recall fairgrounds, with attractions like a chairplane. But at the center of the ritual, celebrated from sundown to sunrise in a large assembly, are song, recitations, and dance, practices that serve spiritual immersion and can generate a state of ecstasy, which literally means: "stepping outside oneself." As Paul-Philipp Hanske and Benedikt Sarreiter describe in their book *Ekstasen der Gegenwart*, ecstasy is experienced as a moment of expanded present, from which the past and the future are equally cut off; as a moment of pure perception.

A sensation of abandon and existence beyond time's measurability becomes palpable in *The Longest Sleep*, where the images and spherical sound allow us to immerse ourselves in the events. The work shows how cyclical rituals suspend the linear sensation of time and simultaneously refer to a universal longing for presence in the curr-

ent moment. In an interview about the film, Greiss emphasizes that his interest is not in religion, but the state of transcendence that suspends the boundaries of time in consciousness. His goal is to create spaces where (such) experiences can be shared.





3. HANS-PETER FELDMANN

1st floor

100 Jahre, 1998–2000

While conceptual artist Hans-Peter Feldmann (1941–2023, b. in Germany) is most often associated with found images from photographs, he also used the camera and photography ever since his childhood. At age 57, Feldmann began the photographic work *100 Jahre* (1998–2000), his “age project.” It consists of 101 black-and-white prints that the artist took of people, from infancy to one hundred years of age. For each life age, Feldmann took photographs of individuals from his personal surroundings: family, friends, acquaintances, or their families. The photographs are arranged in a continuum like a frieze at eyelevel, with the first name and age of the portrayed individual as a caption beneath the photograph. Feldmann’s series thus shows the life phases of a human being, one year after the next, starting with a baby just a few weeks old and ending with a hundred-year-old woman. Depending on how old we are, while viewing the photographs different resonances emerge: the personal memories of an age, as flashbacks in time, or the notions of the future, of aging. What was 17 like? What will it be like at 86?

A bouquet of wildflowers that withers over the course of the exhibition accompanies Hans-Peter Feldmann’s photographic work, which, as a memento mori, reminds us of the gradual progression and passing of everything alive.

Beginning in 1968, working in photographic series of various snapshots became an important artistic method for Hans-Peter Feldmann. For example, in the 1970s he completed *Zeitserien*, a series of photographs that focused on apparently incidental aspects of everyday life, like the act of cleaning the window, that stretch over 36 photographs from a single roll of film. The artist realized many of his photographic series in the form of books, including the work shown here, *100 Jahre*. For Feldmann, artist books were of such great importance because—as an exhibition in a portable format—they could be viewed regardless of time and place. For Hans-Peter Feldmann, the series was more expressive than the individual photograph. In *100 Jahre*, it serves as the basis for representing the existential dimension of our lifetimes.



4. ALICJA KWADE

Durchbruch durch Schwäche, 2009/2016

Ninety-six clock weights suspended by chains transform the rear of the exhibition floor into a fragile labyrinth and link the top of the room with the bottom, spanning the height of the space. It seems as if some of the weights would penetrate the roof and others, attracted by gravity, sink into the floor. For her installation *Durchbruch durch Schwäche* (2009/2016) Alicja Kwade (b. in Poland, 1979, lives in Berlin) collected clock weights that were made between the seventeenth and twenty-first century. They were once used to drive clocks, to make time visible and quantifiable. In Kwade's installation, which now invites visitors to carefully navigate the space, time that otherwise sets the rhythm for our everyday life, now appears as a quiet echo. In carefully moving around the fine-chains and the variously sized brass or bronze weights, we become aware of the presence and the movement of our own bodies. This generates the impression that we move through the flow of time, leading to questions about the (individual) perception of reality, time, and their truth contents.

Alicja Kwade dedicates herself to these issues frequently in her artistic work, where clocks are a constant. In another work, she mounted more than a thousand watch hands next to one another on a wall to make us aware of the range of time zones that diverge from the world time, to demonstrate the absurdity of this, and to question the exact measurability of time. Another watch was entirely crushed to dust by Kwade. In this way, the artist develops surreal-poetic models to explore how we experience and structure time. With *Durchbruch durch Schwäche*, Alicja Kwade composed a space that is defined by physics, yet symbolically divorced from it, which encourages us to balance our own sensation of time.

"The clock is the most powerful symbol for our efforts to order what we call reality." Alicja Kwade, 2015

5. DAVID HORVITZ

2nd floor

The Distance of a Day, 2013

Two mobile phones installed next to one another on the wall show a sunset and a sunrise captured at the same point in time in February 2013 on opposite sides of the Earth's surface. On the left smartphone, a sundown over the Pacific can be seen that the artist's mother shot at his request in Palos Verdes, California. The smartphone on the right shows the sunrise that the artist captured from the Maldives over the Laccadive Sea in the Indian Ocean. Although thousands of kilometers away from one another, Horvitz and his mother looked at the sun at the very same time; their shared experience of sundown and sunrise creates an emotional, poetic link over different time zones and locations.

The title of the work *The Distance of a Day* refers to the meaning of the "journey," borrowed from the French term *journée*, the distance travelled in a day. With a parallel representation of the end and beginning of a day, Horvitz makes clear that day and night cyclically merge and that the measurement of the duration of a day does not exist for the Sun. The constant rotation of the earth condenses to a moment in the videos shot using mobile phones. We experience it as mediated: for Horvitz and his mother, it became real through the shared sensation of the moment in their respective locations.



6. JILL BAROFF

Tide Drawings: Hurricane Ida, Hurricane Zeta, Hurricane Isaac, Hurricane Ian, Hurricane Xaver, 2022–2023

Changes in sea level are the source for the five *Tide Drawings* (*Hurricane Ida*, *Hurricane Zeta*, *Hurricane Isaac*, *Hurricane Ian*, *Hurricane Xaver*) by Jill Baroff (b. in the U.S., 1954, lives in New York). In these works, Baroff deals with the subject of the tides, the rhythms of nature, and our relationship to the environment and the world, which is changing noticeably as a result of climate change. The drawings from the years 2022 and 2023 draw attention to the tides shaped by the course of the moon as well as the impacts of a total of five hurricanes on the coasts of Louisiana, Florida, and the Baltic Sea. Scientists predict that the intensity of strong hurricanes and their storm tides will increase due to global warming.

Jill Baroff began her conceptual work series *Tide Drawings* in 2002. To this day, she continues to use measurements that document the falling and rising water levels in coastal regions linked to ebb and high tide as the point of departure for her drawings. The artist transfers this data to concentric circles made with the finest of lines and oscillating structures. She draws with pigmented ink on Japanese Gampi paper, which is thin and transparent but enormously resistant. Baroff places each line precisely by hand, using a compass, ruler and drawing pen, tools usually used for technical or cartographic drawing. The respective distances between the lines reflect the gamut of water level data, recording unusual water levels, especially after a storm. In this way, Baroff's *Tide Drawings* render the tides legible using regular or varying line patterns and make it possible to recognize the impacts of extreme weather events. The works thus refer not only to repeating temporal patterns and the specific ecological structure of a location but also provide inferences about the interruption of the cycles of nature. As the American cultural historian Rebecca Solnit points out, climate change is increasingly destroying the rhythms of nature and the temporal structures that are linked to them, for example, the seasons.

Jill Baroff's *Tide Drawings* target our awareness of natural rhythms, which in our everyday life play less and less of a role: in her draw-



ings, time is evoked as a cosmic order and we realize that recurring phenomena, like the water movements of the ocean, can be understood from the pure visibility of these optically vibrating drawings.

"I think that Rebecca Solnit has been most eloquent in describing our connection with the natural world and our sense of place within it when she observes that 'the natural world is not a static visual splendor that can be captured in a picture, but time itself as patterns, recurrences, the rhythmic passage of days and seasons and years.'" Jill Baroff, 2025

7. TEHCHING HSIEH

One Year Performance 1980–1981 (Time Clock Piece)

"The kind of art I make is about how I understand the world. It's how I mark the passing of time. That's all life is, and it's the one thing that makes us all equal." Tehching Hsieh, 2026

Between 1978 and 1986, Taiwanese-American artist Tehching Hsieh (b. in Taiwan, 1950, lives in New York) created five *One Year Performances*, now considered iconic. He performed these as an undocumented immigrant in the United States at the margins of public perception: with extreme rigor, precision, and self-discipline. Hsieh then completed his life's work with a final performance that took thirteen years to complete. Each of Hsieh's works is presented with a personal declaration of the artist's intention and a poster created as part of the performance. In each of these works, Tehching Hsieh approaches the physical and mental experience of time and the existential needs linked to it in different ways.

Tehching Hsieh's second long-term performance, *One Year Performance 1980–1981 (Time Clock Piece)*, unfolds across the second exhibition level and—shown here for only the second time in Germany—can be experienced spatially in its extensive temporal dimension. Over the duration of a year, art and life fuse into a processual act. As he emphasizes, the time frame of a year is intentionally chosen, since it seemed to him ideally suited for pondering life in general. One year is the time the earth takes to circle around the sun and also the unit of human calculation of life: how we count time, explain time and measure our existence.

For a year, Tehching Hsieh subjected himself to the dizzying task of punching a time card every hour on the hour, taking a self-portrait at the same time. Towards this end, he set up a time clock in his New York studio along with 366 time cards, with which he captured time each hour from April 11, 1980 to April 11, 1981: taking twenty-four pictures a day on seven days a week over the course of one year. Each day is represented by a time card and a strip of film, in the exhibition, these are hung in chronological order. The time clock, running in real time with an automatic release that the artist used to operate the



camera, as well as marks on the floor tracing Hsieh's exact standing position in his studio, make his actions palpable.

After completing the performance, Tehching Hsieh condensed the photographs into a six-minute time-lapse film. At furious speed, the artist's hair, shaved off at the beginning of the performance grows, while the hands of the time clock whizz by. The physical and psychological impacts of this uncompromising extended performance are apparent: the images capture in an existential way the physical and mental impact of the extreme time regimen, which only allowed him a maximum of 55 minutes absence and only that much sleep at a time. Every hour on the hour, an alarm sounded, which he amplified in his studio with a loudspeaker to remind him to comply with his prescribed rules, despite exhaustion.

133 times he was too early or too late, either because he punched the time card with his eyes closed or because he had fallen asleep completely. The artist kept track of his failures in a chart that can be seen in the display cabinet and calculated his failure rate to be 1.52 percent. Hsieh's occasional 'failures' highlight the impossibility of existing as a human being subject to constant external regulation of time. The work makes us aware of the disparity between the personal need for time and social construction of time, including the demand of general availability.

Although the time clock and the gray uniform that Hsieh wore during the performance are reminiscent of factory work in the industrial age, *Time Clock Piece* can be read as a systematic criticism of the temporal logic of late capitalism. It anticipates the intensity of a world that never sleeps. At a time when society demands the permanent availability of time and attempts to save time, using for example artificial intelligence, the experience of temporal duration becomes a new intellectual task we set for ourselves as human beings.

Texts on the artists: Dr. Christina Irrgang

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