

**Dia Center for the Arts and Electronic Arts Intermix present**

# **Joan Jonas**

**Film and Video Work, 1968-76**

**Thursday, September 28, 2000 7:30 pm**

This program of film, video, and audio performance celebrates the work of Joan Jonas, bringing together her rarely screened early work from 1968-76.

This program of film and video is framed by Jonas's never-before-screened color video footage of the performance **Glass Puzzle**, 1973.

*30 minutes, color, sound*

*camera: Babette Mangolte*

*music: The Liquidators*

*with: Lois Lane and Joan Jonas*

This complex and enigmatic work, which is performed by Jonas and Lois Lane, explores female gestures, the body, and narcissism. Mirroring each other with synchronized movements as they perform as alter egos, Jonas and Lane reference archetypal female gestures and poses from popular and traditional cultures. Throughout the performance, space is dislocated and altered as a formal device segmented by a swinging bar, superimposed in layers, transformed by subtle changes in light and shadow, or flattened by the video screen. This work was inspired by E. J. Bellocq's photographs of New Orleans's prostitutes dating to the beginning of the century.

### **Wind**, 1968

16mm film, 5:37 minutes, b/w, silent; courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix

*camera: Peter Campus edited by Peter Campus and Joan Jonas*

In this recently restored performance film, Jonas focuses on a group of performers moving through a stark, windswept landscape. The stylized motions in the silent, black-and-white film evoke early cinema, while the content locates it in the spare Minimalism of the late 1960s. Jonas strips down the film's elements, foregrounding the figures and their ritualistic movements in space. Her performers struggle over and over with their fluttering coats, battling the gusts of a wind, which, though soundless and invisible, defines the contours of this piece.

### **Veil**, 1971

Joan Jonas, Richard Serra

16mm film, 6:15 minutes, b/w, silent; courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix

Inspired by Kenneth Anger's 1949 film *Puce Moment*, *Veil* is a performance work in which Jonas refers to the cinematic device of the "wipe." Jonas suggests this effect not with technology, but through her performance action; she uses notions of masking and costume to achieve formal resonance. In a six-minute loop, Jonas slowly unveils layer upon layer of richly patterned fabrics—silk, velvet, fur. Ultimately, she reveals her face underneath.

### ***Organic Honey's Vertical Roll*, 1973/99**

*video, 15 minutes, b/w, sound; courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix  
edited by Joan Jonas*

This shorter edited version of a documentation of a 1972 performance at Leo Castelli Gallery, in which Jonas performs as "Organic Honey," includes many of her signature devices: mirrors, masks, and the use of video for spatial, temporal, and psychological layering. In this prescient work, Jonas relates the theatrical space of her live performance to that of electronic media, as in her reference to the "vertical roll." Costumed in a doll's mask and a kimono, employing props such as fans and a feathered headdress, Jonas foregrounds emblems of female identity.

### ***Songdelay*, 1973**

*16mm film, 19 minutes, b/w, sound; courtesy of the artist  
thanks to Pat Hearn Gallery, New York  
camera: Robert Fiore*

*edited by Robert Fiore and Joan Jonas*

*sound technician: Kurt Munkacsi*

*performers: Ariel Bach, Marion Cajuri, James Cobb, Carol Gooden, Randy Hardy, Michael Harvey, Glenda Hydlar, Joan Jonas, EP Kotkas, Gordon Matta Clark, Michael Oliver, Steve Paxton, Penelope, James Reineking, and Robin Winters.*

This 1973 black-and-white film is a rediscovered classic. Performing with a "cast" that includes Gordon Matta Clark, Jonas choreographs a theater of space, movement, and sound, with the urban landscape of lower Manhattan in a featured role. She creates a highly original, if enigmatic, theatrical language of gesture and sound, introducing references to painting, emblematic props, and audio delays. At once delightfully improvisational and precisely choreographed, *Songdelay* resonates with themes and strategies that recur throughout Jonas's performance work.

**15 minute break** to warm up on the third floor: lounge and restrooms

### ***Mirage*, 1976**

*a double projection with a live audio performance by Joan Jonas  
16mm film, 31 minutes, b/w, silent; courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix  
camera of Mirage: Babette Mangolte  
editing of video by Seth Price and Joan Jonas*

The first viewing in 15 years, the unedited footage of the film *Mirage* made for the performance is screened simultaneously with a newly edited video, consisting of 1970s off-air and performance work.

"For *Mirage* I made a film of drawing, again and again, images on a blackboard, and then erasing them. Reading the essays collected in *Spiritual Disciplines*, I got another idea to use drawings, also in *Mirage* and *Organic Honey's Vertical Roll*, which I called 'Endless Drawings' after those described in the Melukean Book of the Dead, the tribal ritual book of New Guinea. There it says that in order to go , from one world to the next you must finish a drawing in sand, which an old lady, / the devouring witch, begins at the boundary between life and death." -Joan Jonas

An acclaimed multimedia and performance artist, **Joan Jonas** was a central figure in the performance art movement of the mid-1960s. Trained in art history and sculpture, she merged elements of dance, Japanese Noh and Kabuki theater, drawing, and sculpture in works that examine space and perceptual phenomena. In her early performances, Jonas developed an emblematic vocabulary of ritualized gesture and symbolic objects, including masks, costumes, and mirrors. With *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy* (1972), she began using video in performance, employing live cameras and monitors as a means of transforming and layering images, space, and time. Jonas also made a series of films that extended her enigmatic language of gesture, drawing, and objects in the late 1960s and early 70s. Her recent work, which includes installations, performance, and photographs, continues this unique inquiry into theatricality and ritual. Jonas has performed and exhibited her work extensively throughout the world; one-person exhibitions and performances include venues such as the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Kunstmuseum Bern, the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, the San Francisco Museum of Art, the University Art Museum, Berkeley, and Sonnabend Gallery, New York. She received the 3rd Annual Polaroid Video Art Award in 1987 and the American Film Institute's Maya Deren Award in 1988. A retrospective of Jonas' work will be installed at the Galerie der Stadt Stuttgart in 2000. She lives and works in New York City.

### **selected bibliography**

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*Joan Jonas: Performances, Film and Video Installations 1968-2000.*

Stuttgart: Cantz/Hatje, 2000. With texts by Chrissie Isles, Andrea Jahn, and Joan Jonas. *Joan Jonas: Works 1968-1994.* Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1994. With texts by Sweeney Astray, Alvin Curran, Bruce Ferguson, Simone Forti, Rudi Fuchs, Mary Heilmann, Joan Jonas, Dorine Mignot, Susan Rothenberg, Richard Serra, Kees Veelenturf, Alice Weiner, Lawrence Weiner, and Robin Winters.

*Joan Jonas. Scripts and Descriptions 1968-1982.* University Art Museum, Berkeley and Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 1983.

Descriptions in this program have been taken from Electronic Arts Intermix's Online Catalogue, edited by Lori Zippay, located at [www.eai.org](http://www.eai.org).

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