

**JOAN JONAS**  
Guggenheim Museum/New York

Joan Jonas's *Double Lunar Dogs* was presented as part of the First Intermedia Art Festival, a series of evenings at the Guggenheim Museum that offered performances by a range of artists who combine several mediums within their work.

'Double Lunar Dogs' is a chronological presentation of excerpts from Jonas's performance and video works incorporating *Mirror Piece* (1970), *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy* (1972), *Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* (1973), *Mirage* (1976), *The Juniper Tree* (1976), and *Upside Down and Backwards* (1979).

Jonas's works, since their outset, have subscribed to 'intermedia' standards since they employ theatrical elements, video, dance, and sculptural concerns. But stating this implies something very distant from the actual texture and complexity of the work. Here, the various tools of performance all weigh the same.

*Mirror Piece* prefaces the evening with a nude Jonas inspecting her body head-to-foot with a small mirror. The mirror seems to function in almost Duchampian terms; issues of duality, illusion, and perception are woven throughout the works, from the masked, 'Organic Honey' banging away at her own exotic video image in *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy* to the allegorical Snow White/Rose Red premutations in *The Juniper Tree* segment. Excess is avoided and balance maintained with an array of difficult representational forms and devices. The *Organic Honey* videotapes achieve an effective illusion through simple technical means coupled with abbreviated Muybridge-like demonstrations. Her manipulation of basic props like masks, hoops, staves, balls, and hammers provided some of the more eerie and transporting moments. Personages ranging from the flamboyant to the samurai-precise are adopted and dropped as their use demands. In the later *Juniper Tree* segment, a pair of pointy glasses transforms Jonas into a teenager, a child/woman who suspends herself within a ladder sug-

gestive of the flying dreams of adolescents. Similarly, her careful undressing of a full skeleton from *Upside Down and Backwards* alternated between the innocent and the ghastly.

The primitive is present within *Double Lunar Dogs* in an authentic, unforced manner. Jonas's feverish running-in-place from *Mirage* seemed to summon filmed scenes of geological phenomena that recalled Robert Smithson's preoccupations with pre-history. Hand-rendered images of rainbows, hearts, and landscapes reminded me of aboriginal cave paintings; simultaneously naive and sophisticated, they maintain a climate of invocation and magic. It was the projected drawing of the double-eyed dog (day and night visions) that served as the evening's emblem.

In spite of the Guggenheim's cavernous setting, Jonas avoided any 'Greatest Hits' feel to the work by bridging each segment with a percussive or saxophone interlude played at various levels of the museum's familiar interior. It was often difficult to determine from which ring the sounds emanated, being further obscured by echo, but it proved as diverting and contemplative as a visit to the planetarium.

In *Double Lunar Dogs* a myriad of conundrums are dealt out like Zen koans for our deciphering. Recently Jonas stated, 'My work is women's art, and I know it's hard for some men to understand it.' Performance currently holds an umbrella over everything from 'conceptual' comedians to art-conscious punk-rockers, and it is of some interest that the major practitioners of multi-media performance in America and Europe are women. Joan Jonas's continued relationship with a complicated apparatus of expression has been instrumental in this development.

**Tim Maul**

**IMAGE PROCESSING**  
The Kitchen's Video Viewing Room/ New York

An exhibition of video works in which colorizers, computers and synthesizers play the title roles, 'Image Processing' is a state-of-the-art

report that enables us to see the recent developments that have taken place in the work of those artists who are interested in electronically manipulating televised imagery. Curated by Shalom Gorewitz, this show includes the work of such artists as Pier Marton, Barbara Buckner, Gary Hill, Woody and Steina Vasulka, and also a collaborative tape made by Nam June Paik and Gregory Battcock. The wide range of images and the concerns found in these works clearly shows the potential for this genre, still in its infancy. Yet, in spite of the diversity of techniques used (and the points of view that these imply), the majority of work in this exhibition gives the impression that it is experimentation and exploration rather than finished product. In other words, instead of seeking to use their sophisticated electronic equipment as a means to an end, many of the artists have been content to conceive of the abstract imagery produced by their synthesizers as an end in itself. For this reason much of 'Image Processing' has the look and feel of the unstructured, psychedelic light-shows of the 1960's. Having given in the temptations of technology and the 'special effect,' these artists seem to have been content to let their machines do much of the decision-making.

Still, there are quite a number of works in this exhibition that show that some videomakers are concerned with exerting their control over their tools. *Alien Nation* is one of these works. Created by Barbara Latham, John Manning and



Pier Marton, *Video*, The Kitchen 1979.

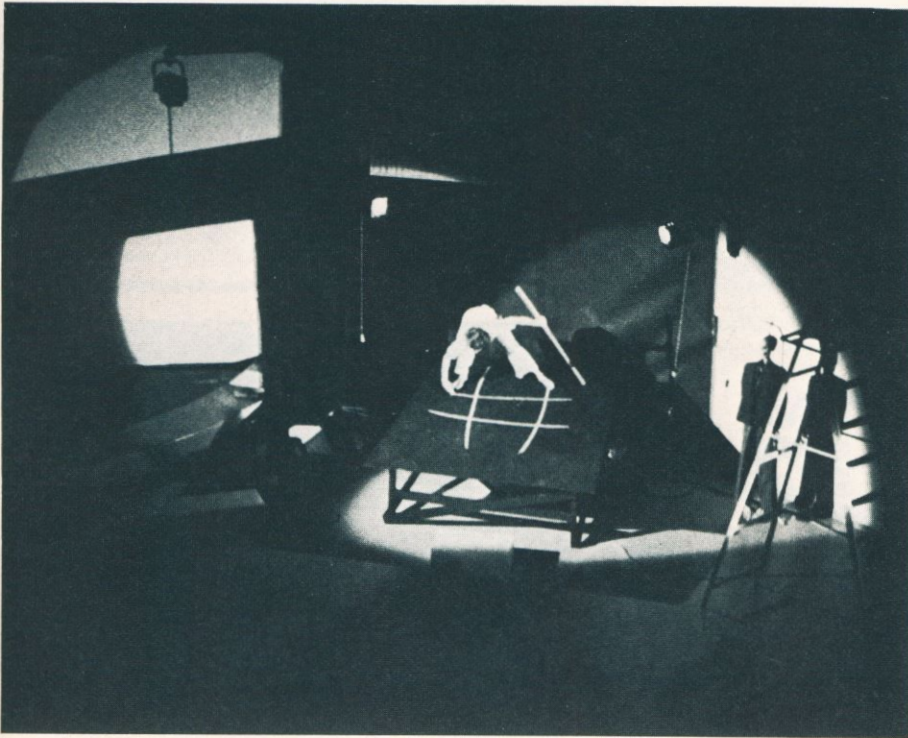
Edward Rankus, this tape is a very sophisticated multitrack collage of sight and sound. Its soundtrack, composed of clippings from 1950's sci-fi films and disco hits, enhances the eeriness of its Space image. Rats, Hostess Twinkies, disco-Trekers, Godzilla and Rodan are the featured characters in this futuristic cosmetics commercial that ponders the waste of both our natural resources and our souls.

The most impressive piece in this show is Pier Marton's *Tapes*. Using suicide and acts of self-inflicted torment as the metaphors upon which he builds his work, Marton (a Los Angeles-based performance artist and filmmaker) carries the tradition of Michaux, Mirbeau and Artaud to new heights and depths. In his attempt to "subvert" our perceptions of 'the Horrible', Marton shows us that there is comfort to be found in the bizarre, that sounds and images of pain and passion can be unnaturally soothing. Marton's *Tapes* is a carefully crafted chaos. It is a brilliant meditation on the refinement of anguish.

**Douglas Blau**

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Joan Jones, *Double Lunar Dogs*. Performance at Guggenheim Museum, NYC 1980. Photo D. Gigliotti.

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Modern Painting and Modern Criticism in England; Style and Sensibility in British Painting; Recent British Painting, Future Space; American Avant-Garde Theater; Post Avant-Garde Theater in Italy; New York 1980.

## Letter from the Editors

### Dear reader,

This time our usual letter is going to be very brief.

We would only like to let you know that after a lot of hard work and some delay, Art Diary 1980 is finally available. This delay was because we wanted to present our readers with a perfect edition and we must say that we've almost succeeded. With only \$10.00 you can have 360 full-packed pages of 20.000 up-to-date addresses revised as of January 31, 1980.

This editorial initiative is an all-time record — judge for yourselves! In our opinion, this edition of Art Diary is fantastic. Many people have already told us so and we're sure that you'll think the same. Ciao, many thanks and best wishes.

**Helena Kontova and Giancarlo Politi**

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