

Pirelli HangarBicocca presents *Light Time Tales*,
the largest exhibition ever devoted to Joan Jonas

Curated by Andrea Lissoni, the exhibition includes twenty works, with installations and videos, by the highly acclaimed contemporary artist who invented new forms of narration by breaking down the boundaries between disciplines

2 October 2014 – 1 February 2015
Opening 1 October 2014

From 2 October 2014 to 1 February 2015, Pirelli HangarBicocca presents *Light Time Tales*, a retrospective exhibition of works by Joan Jonas, a key figure in art for the past 50 years. Curated by Andrea Lissoni, the exhibition includes ten installations and nine single-channel videos, bringing together **Joan Jonas's most important works** for the first time in Italy. These range from the most historic, such as *Mirage* (1976/1994/2005) and *Volcano Saga* (1985/1994), through to the more recent *Lines in the Sand* (2002), *Reanimation* (2010/2012/2013) and others that have never been seen before in Europe, such as *Double Lunar Rabbits*, (2010) as well as a new work specially created for HangarBicocca. The works are shown together with films and videos dating from the 1960s to the present day, including *Wind* (1968) and *Merlo* (1974).

Reanimation, a performance produced with the musician and jazz composer Jason Moran, will also be presented on 21 October, during the exhibition, offering visitors an opportunity to experience Joan Jonas's intense performing tension.

The exhibition will offer the general public an insight into the **constantly evolving artistic career** of Joan Jonas. A great experimenter, but always open to multi-disciplinary collaborations, she creates a personal artistic language that seamlessly interweaves video, installation and performance, creating a constant renewal of figurative art, with formal solutions that have become a **model for subsequent generations including the young artists of today**.

In 2015 Joan Jonas will be representing the United States of America at the **Venice Biennale, 56th International Art Exhibition**, with a project presented by the MIT List Visual Arts Center.

The Themes

One of the first female artists to combine video and performance, Joan Jonas has since the 1960s explored the **theme of identity and the relationship between the body and its representation**, always avoiding any stereotyped image of herself. With a background in the history of art and sculpture, Jonas's artistic language has developed through dance, experimental film, contemporary music, Japanese Noh and Kabuki theatre, and drawing. Her works contain a blend of **personal memories and myths, magic and everyday life, poetry and psychoanalysis**. She always keeps a close eye on other cultures, such as the Hopi community in the south-west of the U.S.A. or that of the ancient Minoan civilization.

Greatly influenced by various forms of literature, she uses mirrors, masks, costumes, veils and disguises to investigate codes of representation. She has worked intensely on the texts and translations of narratives in motion, closely studying sound in relation to time and space. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, she investigates **video as an artistic medium capable of exposing the illusion of the story**, revealing its mechanisms. **Nature plays a major part** in her ideas and **is seen a constantly evolving world to be preserved** and as a source of spiritual sustenance. Animals and urban and natural landscapes often play an

important role in her works, offering the public an experience of emotional involvement, and expressing fundamental states of mind. At the same time, the interaction between past and present reveals an autobiographical trait and a reason to reflect on universal themes and on the state of the world today.

Resistance to the classification of works of art as market commodities, the affirmation of a feminine vision, the need for cooperation, and **a sense of conveying knowledge**, all of which feature in Joan Jonas's long teaching career, constitute a powerful political statement.

The Exhibition

The exhibition at HangarBicocca opens with a series of video works that immediately give the visitor an idea of Joan Jonas's **pioneering research into the medium of video** and film, and of the many ways it can be made known and viewed. This ranges from the macro-scale of projections to the smaller world of monitors, through to *My New Theater* – devices that take both from sculpture and from small portable theatres.

The title of the exhibition refers both to the temporal aspect of the artist's work, which is based on time and on light, on video and narration, as well as to the **particular nature of HangarBicocca**: a vast space where the darkness welcomes the works like luminous time capsules with all their tales and potential stories.

The *Light Time Tales* display revolves around **three central works** with themes and subjects that chase after and renew each other.

The order is not chronological, but emphasises the cyclical nature of an open-ended artistic research that is always in the making and never monolithic. The first is a video, *Waltz* (2003), which questions the role of the artist and of her ageing body, not without some amusement, through images that portray her wearing eccentric costumes and performing actions that are as simple as they are mysterious, on the beach and in a wood, together with other performers. *Mirage* (1976/1994/2005) is one of the most emblematic of Joan Jonas's works. This complex installation explores the formal aspects of her early studies, recombining them with new solutions. Here we see elements of a performance she put on in 1976, in which she wore a Mexican mask while performing actions such as running on stage, making gestural drawings, blowing into a cone and interacting with sculptural elements. The work was later turned into an installation, with a number of stage props, three monitors and three projections. *Reanimation* (2010/2012/2013) is installed in "The Cube", the last area of the exhibition space, and is an important example of how her experimental art has evolved. About the work, Joan Jonas writes: "The project's themes cross from literature to science, the metaphors of unexplored space, to the actualities of the archeology of the ocean". Four grids of wood and Japanese paper form the screens used for showing projecting videos with northern landscapes, mountains at sunset and black ink drawings traced out in the snow. A metal structure contains many hanging crystals, and two *My New Theaters* complete the work with excerpts of the *Disturbances* (1974) and *Melancholia* (2005) videos.

The Artist

Joan Jonas (New York, 1936) is one of the most highly respected and acclaimed artists alive today. Considered to be the **highest authority in the history and theory of performance**, she first made a name for herself in the 1960s and 1970s with her pioneering performances and videos. Her work gives an absolutely original reinterpretation **of the relationship between art and narrative forms, for together with video, stage props and performance, she includes the word as a driving force of the imagination**. She is currently a **professor emerita at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)** Program in Art, Culture and Technology in Boston and she is the author of reference books on performance art. She has taken part in some of the most important exhibitions of the past thirty years, including the

Venice Biennale in 2009 and no fewer than six editions of the prestigious **Documenta in Kassel** (1972, 1977, 1982, 1987, 2002, 2012).

The Exhibition Programme at Pirelli HangarBicocca

Light Time Tales is part of the programme of exhibitions created by Vicente Todolí together with Andrea Lissoni. It is being presented in conjunction with *Papagaio*, a solo show by João Maria Gusmão & Pedro Paiva in the exhibition space of the “Shed” (until 26 October 2014). The Pirelli HangarBicocca calendar will continue with exhibitions by Céline Condorelli (December 2014), Juan Muñoz (April 2015), Damián Ortega (June 2015) and Philippe Parreno (October 2015).

Pirelli HangarBicocca

HangarBicocca, the Pirelli contemporary art space, is the natural continuation of a long tradition of emphasis on culture, research and innovation that has been a key feature of the company ever since it was founded over 140 years ago. Thanks to the commitment of Pirelli, HangarBicocca offers the public a prestigious programme and a whole series of activities for children and families, making it a centre of attraction for Milan and for an international public.

Data sheet

Institution	Pirelli HangarBicocca
Artist	Joan Jonas
Title	<i>Light Time Tales</i>
Curated by	Andrea Lissoni
Opening	1 October 2014, 7 p.m.
Press Conference	30 September 2014
Exhibition dates	2 October 2014 – 1 February 2015
Performance	21 October 2014
Address	Via Chiese 2, Milano
Opening hours	Thursday – Sunday, 11 a.m.-11 p.m.
Admission	Free
Workshops	Every weekend, for children (11.15 a.m.-3.30 p.m.)
Info for the public	+39-0266111573/

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