

*Mirage*, 1976

Performance with film projections and pre-recorded video

► Anthology Film Archives, New York, 1976. Performers: Joan Jonas, Christina Patoski.

► Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, December 3, 1976. Performers: Joan Jonas, Jane Savitt.

► Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 1976. Performers: Joan Jonas, Tabea Blumenschein.

► Theatre Vanguard, Los Angeles, 1977. Performer: Joan Jonas.

► Documenta 6, Kassel, Germany, 1977. Performer: Joan Jonas, assisted by Jane Crawford.

► India America Festival of Music and Dance, Sala Borromini, Rome, sponsored by Galleria l'Attico, 1977. Performers: Joan Jonas, Rosella Or.

► Salle Patino, Geneva, 1977. Performer: Joan Jonas.

► Kunsthalle, Basel, February 1, 1978. Performer: Joan Jonas.

► *Joan Jonas: Performance/Video/Installation*, University Art Museum, Berkeley, 1980. Performer: Joan Jonas, assisted by Elsie Ritchie.

See pp. 218–25 for script. For related independent videos, see *Good Night Good Morning* (1976); *May Windows* (1976); *Mirage* (also known as *Mirage I*, 1976); *Car Tape* (1976); and untitled volcano footage.

*Mirage*, 1976/1994/2005

Multi-media installation; see pp. 228–29.

# Mirage

*Mirage* [1976] was made after a trip to India (an underlying influence) and was the last of the black-and-white series. It was designed specifically for the screening room of Anthology Film Archives, New York, where I had spent hundreds of hours viewing films. There was no live video, only pre-recorded tape and 16mm film. The film of drawing with chalk and erasing on the blackboard was a series of images from past and present pieces—a heart that looked like a bug, signs for a storm, a rainbow, and mirror reflection, all to be read as a kind of sentence with no fixed meaning. For me, they represent signs of change, the way of the heart, for instance.

There was also a five-minute documentary loop of volcanoes erupting, and a film shot off the monitor of a television turned on its side with the vertical roll bar switching from right to left. My action of repeatedly stepping through a small wooden hoop was broken by the vertical bar. Rhythms were syncopated. The metal cones developed from the paper cones of *Funnel* [1974]. In *Mirage* they were used to funnel sound in various ways, to look through, and simply as sculptural objects to move, to rearrange. It is because of the form of the cones that I chose to use the film of different volcanoes erupting. *Mirage* is partly about transformations of energy, about ritual and game-playing to facilitate movement in time and space. The videotapes *Good Night Good Morning* and *May Windows* [both 1976] were part of *Mirage*.

In 1994 for a show at the Stedelijk Museum I made an installation of *Mirage* that included fragments of videos that had been included in the original performance. In the latest version for a double projection at Dia [Center for the Arts] in Chelsea, New York, in 2000, I showed the entire film of drawing on a chalkboard (*Mirage I*, 1976). Its original edited projected version in the performance was about ten minutes. This uncut version consists of thirty minutes of unedited footage of one drawing after another. They are drawn and erased. For the second projection [*Mirage II*, 1976–2000], next to *Mirage I*, I edited some newly discovered old footage from around the time when *Mirage* was made to make a thirty-minute video loop that is a combination of old performances, more chalk drawings, and footage shot off the television in the 1970s.

There are fragments in which tin cones and paper cones are used indoors to sing through (with James Nares) and in various other ways outdoors (in night street actions with Pat Steir). Side by side the two projected loops are each altered by the other. This is a new version of *Mirage*. In the next version I will add additional layers from the original. This ongoing revision is, for me, appropriate to *Mirage*. It is, perhaps, the one work from the 1970s that I could continue to refashion.—Stuttgart, 2001

*Mirage* [1976] developed from working at the Anthology Film Archives on *Twilight* (1975). In *Mirage*, the nine-foot metal cones that I designed and had fabricated in a metal shop



Jonas performing in *Mirage* (1976), Anthology Film Archives, New York, 1976. Photo: Copyright © 1976 Babette Mangolte, all rights of reproduction reserved.

were based on the paper cones in *Funnel*. There were at least six of these metal cones used in *Mirage*, all, except for one, used behind the film projection screen, visible when the screen was lit from behind. You could see through the screen. The cone in front of the screen, on and off the table, was the major prop in my sequence of actions. After the first performances of *Mirage* at Anthology, actions were put in a different order. The hopscotch drawing, for example, finally came directly before the volcano film projection. The sequence made more sense this way. What is interesting about *Mirage* is that everything in it, except for the volcano film and the car film, is distributed by EAI. The volcano film was obtained from a stock house.”—JJ

When Jonas performed *Mirage* at the Anthology Film Archives in 1976, she used a proscenium platform, where, facing the 16mm film projection of *Volcano Film* and with her back to the audience, she created and then erased chalk drawings underfoot (the pattern of a hopscotch court). Between black velvet curtains, the projected black-and-white silent 16mm film was a montage of clips that Jonas had created or found. Among her props were six nine-foot metal cones, one of which she used as a megaphone and in other ways manipulated as a sculptural element; a small wood hoop she stepped through repeatedly; and a video monitor that served to present her tapes—*Good Night Good Morning*, *Car Tape*, and *May Windows*—while also functioning as part of the stage set itself, as a stool on which Jonas knelt. As *Mirage* was performed in different venues, Jonas made “minor changes,” as she calls them, in her performances, such as “the pace being faster or slower” or “adding or subtracting props.”

The installations, by contrast, vary considerably from the work’s initial presentation in 1994 until its final form in 2005. The first installation of *Mirage* was shown at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, in 1994, where its elements included one projection (film transferred to video, with different moving picture works cut together), one monitor (playing the *Good Night Good Morning*), six metal cones, photographs, and objects including a blackboard, mask, hoop, and a slide show. Though the artist “changed the installation a little bit” for her Galerie der Stadt, Stuttgart, show in 2000, her final revision was for the 2005 installation of the work at Yvon Lambert, where there were two stages. The first was “on legs, as in the performance, above which were double projections of *Mirage I* and *Mirage II*, and on this stage was the Mexican mask, hoops, and a tin cone. A second stage [was] at ground level, a little larger, on which the hopscotch was drawn in chalk and above which was projected *Volcano Film*. Three monitors, turned on their sides, played *Good Night Good Morning*, *May Windows*, and *Car Tape*.” This is the version acquired by the Museum of Modern Art, New York.—JS

*Mirage*, 1976/1994/2005

Multi-media installation with six videos (black and white, sound and silent), props, stages, and photographs. The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Gift of Richard J. Massey, Clarissa Alcock Bronfman, Agnes Gund, and Committee on Media Funds, 2009.

The six video components are *Car Tape* (1976), *Volcano Film* (1976), *Good Night Good Morning* (1976), *May Windows* (1976), *Mirage I* (1976), and *Mirage II* (1973/2000). Props include seven tin cones, one found Mexican mask, three hoops, and two drawings on blackboard.

- ▶ *Joan Jonas: Works 1968–1994*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1994
- ▶ *Joan Jonas: Performance, Video, Installation, 1968–2000*, Galerie der Stadt, Stuttgart, Germany, 2000
- ▶ *Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art 1964–1977*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2001
- ▶ *Joan Jonas: Moving in Place 1976–2000*, Yvon Lambert, New York, 2005
- ▶ *Joan Jonas: Two Works*, Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy, 2006
- ▶ *Joan Jonas: Timelines: Transparencias en una habitación oscura/Transparències en una habitació fosca/Transparencies in a Dark Room*, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2007; traveled to Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva, 2008
- ▶ *Performance 7: Mirage by Joan Jonas*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2009
- ▶ *Joan Jonas: Light Time Tales*, Hangar-Bicocca, Milan, 2014

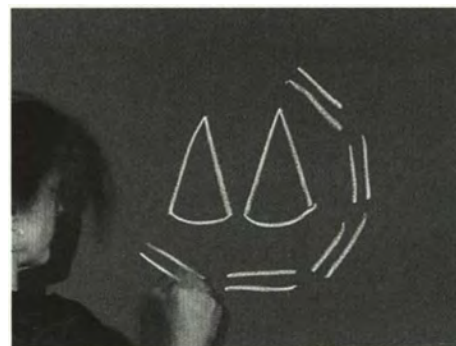
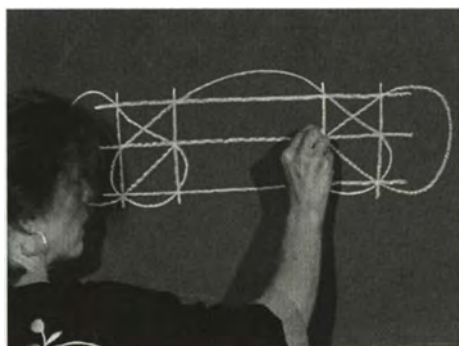
See pp. 216–27 and 234–35 for script and related works.

# Mirage

The first installation version of *Mirage* (dated 1976/1994) was shown at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, in 1994 and included the stage, some props, and the video elements from the original performance, shown as a projection and in a single monitor. Prior to the final installation, now in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA), there have been several permutations: “In Stuttgart in 2000 the installation was quite similar to that at the Stedelijk in 1994,” notes Jonas. “At the Whitney [in 2001] only projections of media; no props. The version shown at Yvon Lambert, New York [2005], was closest to the final MoMA version. The one element of the installation that is newly drawn each time *Mirage* [1976/1994/2005] is installed is the hopscotch chalk drawing. I have always drawn the hopscotch. At MoMA the drawing for the exhibition in 2009 has been recorded, so that when the piece is re-installed in the future, someone can retrace my drawing.” The photographs here (pp. 230–233) are from the 2007 installation at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, except the photograph to the right, which is from the 2014 installation at HangarBicocca, Milan.—JS

→ Installation view of *Mirage* (1976/1994/2005), HangarBicocca, Milan, 2014.  
Photo: © Hans Cogne 2014.

Following two spreads:  
Installation views of *Mirage* (1976/1994/2005), Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2007. Photo: Juan Andrés Pegoraro.



# Mirage

*Mirage (or Mirage I)*, 1976

Film (16mm transferred to video), black and white, silent, 31:00 min. Component in *Mirage* (1976, performance with film projections and pre-recorded video); video component in dual screening with *Mirage II* (1976/2000) and the 1976/1994 and 1976/1994/2005 multi-media installations titled *Mirage*; also distributed as an independent video by EAI.

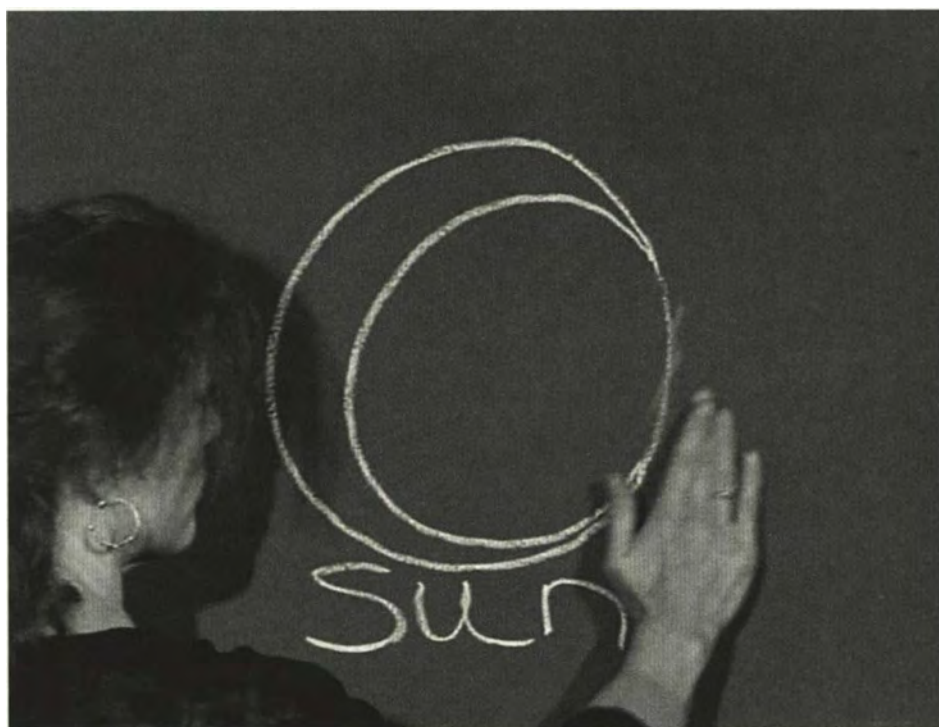
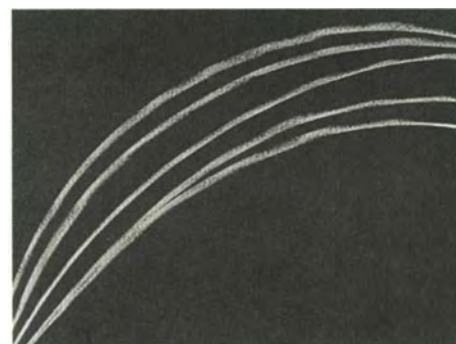
► Double video projection (with *Mirage II*), Joan Jonas. *Film and Video Work, 1968–1976*, rooftop of Dia Center for the Arts, New York, September 28, 2000

► *Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art 1964–1977*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2001

See pp. 218–35 for related works.

For *Mirage* (1976) I made a film of drawing, again and again, images on a blackboard and then erasing them. Reading the essays collected in *Spiritual Disciplines* [1960], I got another idea to use drawings, also in *Mirage*, which I called “Endless Drawings” after those described in the *Malekulan Book of the Dead*, the tribal ritual book of New Guinea.<sup>1</sup> 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.—JJ

<sup>1</sup> In fact John Layard, in his essay “The Malekulan Journey of the Dead” (1937)—collected in Joseph Campbell, ed., *Spiritual Disciplines: Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, trans. Ralph Mannheim (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960)—discusses New Hebrides (today part of Vanuatu), close to New Guinea.



Stills from *Mirage* (1976, also known as *Mirage I*), a component of the multi-media installation *Mirage* (1976/1994/2005)

# Mirage II

*Mirage II*, 1976/2000

Video, black and white, sound, 30:00 min.  
Editing: Joan Jonas with Seth Price. Component in dual screening with *Mirage* (1976, film transferred to video) and the 1976/1994 and 1976/1994/2005 multi-media installations titled *Mirage*; also distributed as an independent video by EAI.

► Double video projection (with *Mirage I*), Joan Jonas. *Film and Video Work, 1968–1976*, rooftop of Dia Center for the Arts, New York, September 28, 2000

See pp. 218–35 for related works.

Invited to present a screening at Dia Center for the Arts, New York, in 2000, Jonas prepared a dual projection. One element was unedited film footage (some thirty minutes compared to the ten she used in her 1976 *Mirage* performance) of her chalk drawing, titled *Mirage I*. For the other projection, *Mirage II*, Jonas re-edited footage she had newly discovered of material shot around the same time as *Mirage I*: additional chalk drawing footage as well as commercials and news coverage shot off a television screen, landscape views of Sardinia, and night-time scenes of Jonas and artist Pat Steir (joined by an anonymous man) improvising with cones in the desolate streets of lower Manhattan's financial district, steam rising from the street grates.

The latter image prompted Jonas to reuse this footage again. It appears as one of her video backdrops in *Reading Dante* (2007–10), onto which she projected during the performance live feed of her drawing with chalk. She excerpted this combined image from a documentary video of the performance for the *Reading Dante* installations and edited it as a single-channel video, *Street Scene with Chalk* (2014); it was projected on a screen as part of *Joan Jonas: Light Time Tales* at HangarBicocca, Milan, 2014. —JS



Stills from *Mirage II* (1976/2000), a component of the multi-media installation *Mirage* (1976/1994/2005)