

Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

ARTWORK RELATED INFORMATION FORM

Artist: Joan Jonas

Title: Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll

Inv. no.: 1994.1.0173(1-78)

Period: 1972-1994

Materials and technique: Multi-media installation

Date: July 2019

Drawn up by (plus function): Rebecca Timmermans (Sculpture Conservator) / Sandra Weerdenburg (Head of Conservation)

Concerns: Request by *Artist Archives Initiative* for sharing information about this installation by Joan Jonas. Please see website for more information about this initiative:

<http://artistarchives.hosting.nyu.edu/Initiative/the-joan-jonas-knowledge-base>

Contact persons Artist Archives Initiative:

- CURATORIAL RESEARCH DIRECTOR | Barbara Clausen: Curator and Professor, Département d'histoire de l'art, Université du Québec à Montréal clausen.barbara@uqam.ca
- ACADEMIC RESEARCH DIRECTOR | Glenn Wharton: Clinical Professor, Museum Studies, New York University glenn.wharton@nyu.edu

The following information is agreed upon to share:

- A selection of photographs of the installation of the piece from 2007 (test / research presentation) and 2012 in Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.
- A list of the inventory of the work and the technical requirements
- The floorplan(s)
- The transcripts of the interviews with Joan Jonas in 2007

This information is attached in the appendices.

- Beside this a short ***explanation of the research project*** carried out at the Stedelijk Museum in 2006/2007 is included (Appendix I) and an example of the **object registration form** used for this project (Appendix II).

*** Appendices:**

- I. Short introduction on the research project carried out at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam in 2006/2007 (p.2)
- II. Example registration form per object, used during the 2006/7 project (p.4)
- III. Snapshots of the research presentation of Joan Jonas' *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* January 2007 (p.7)
- IV. Installation instructions *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* (version 2017). This includes the inventory list and a report about the installation of the work in the Stedelijk Museum in 2012 (p.11)
- V. The interview transcripts 2007 (p.32)

Appendix I

Research project Stedelijk Museum Joan Jonas' *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994)* and *Revolted by the thought of known places...Sweeney Astray (1994)* in 2006/2007

Anne Mink 2007 and Sandra Weerdenburg/Rebecca Timmermans 2012

History of acquisition

In the early 1990s, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam conceived the plan to dedicate a retrospective exhibition to Jonas' oeuvre. Since the re-enactment of the works was not an option, it was decided to convert the film and photo recordings, the props and everything else that was handed down from the performances into installations in collaboration with the artist. The installations attempted to give as complete a picture as possible of the form and content of the performances, as well as to evoke the atmosphere in which the works were created. Eventually Jonas made six installations for "Joan Jonas: Works 1968-1994", in which the material from performances from her entire oeuvre was arranged according to different themes. Because many props had been lost over the years, she had copied various objects or had them copied or searched for replacement objects. After the exhibition, two installations were purchased by the Stedelijk Museum. The first work concerns *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994)*, which resulted from the video performance series of the same name that Jonas made in the early 1970s. The second installation is *Revolted by the thought of known places...Sweeney Astray (1994)*.

Variable installations (situation 1994 until 2006)

The format developed by Jonas and the Stedelijk Museum for converting performances into installations served as an example for all retrospective exhibitions devoted to the artist that followed in Stuttgart, Berlin and New York, among others. For each exhibition, Jonas herself reassembled the installations in the available space. Sometimes she removed elements from it and sometimes she added elements as she deemed it necessary to do justice to the work. In other words: every time the installations were set up, they looked different. As a result, it became unclear at a certain point in time what exactly the installations consisted of or should consist of. Ten years after the first installation of the two Stedelijk works, the records contained ten different inventory lists. This caused problems with the preservation of the work: for example, objects could easily be lost. Also much information about the original and current condition of the works was missing, as well as the meaning of the material and the influence of its condition on the meaning. Also both installations contained (out) dated audio visual equipment which raised questions about the authenticity and importance of the original elements. Moreover, there was uncertainty about the way the works were to be presented in the future. If each time Jonas prepares the works herself and, in addition, changes the composition, to what extent is her presence an essential element of these installations? What to do if, for whatever reason, she is no longer able to install her work?

The research project

At the beginning of 2006 a research project was launched with the aim of answering as many as possible questions regarding the conservation and installation of the two works. Joan Jonas was so kind to come to Amsterdam and be part of the project, in doing so providing a huge amount of priceless information. The project was led by Sandra Weerdenburg (Head of the Conservation Department) in close cooperation with Dorine Mignot (former Curator Time-Based Media). Anne Mink, a student of Art History at the Radboud University in Nijmegen, carried out the research, which came to form a large part of her master thesis. Geurt Imanse (Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture), Jan van Adrichem (Head of Documentation and Research), Gert Hoogeveen (Head Audio Visual Department), Maurice Rummens (Member of the Research Staff), Rebecca Timmermans (Sculpture Conservator), Netta Krumperman (Coordinating

Conservator Applied Arts & Design) and Saskia Stokhof (Collection Registration), all from the Stedelijk Museum, were closely involved in the implementation. In the summer of 2006, Anne Mink described all the separate objects in the installations in the storage of the Stedelijk Museum (see appendix IV Installation instructions: 1. inventory list). In addition to a formal and technical description, a material specification and condition report were made of each installation element in collaboration with conservators of the museum (Please see appendix II for an example of the registration form). Also the place and relationships of the objects in the installations was a point of attention, later to be added upon by Joan Jonas.

Pilot installation

In the last ten days of January 2007, both installations were, under the guidance of Joan Jonas, installed in the temporary exhibition space of the Stedelijk Museum, SMCS (Please see appendix III snapshots pilot 2007) The installations were both extensively documented, covering not only installation aspects, but also discussing issues for future conservation, especially when they might have an effect on the presentation. Not all objects could be installed at this time because the condition did not allow it. For these objects a suitable replacement was used. The installations were not accessible for the public during the research period.

Interviews

Anne Mink, Dorine Mignot and Sandra Weerdenburg spoke extensively with Jonas about her work and method during the pilot presentation, as well as (future) conservation of the separate parts. During those interviews, there was also special attention for future installation in different-sized spaces; trying to define the margins, the do's and don'ts, for those variable circumstances. These interviews were filmed by Moniem Ibrahim from the audio visual department of the museum. The transcripts of these interviews are included in appendix V.

Final result

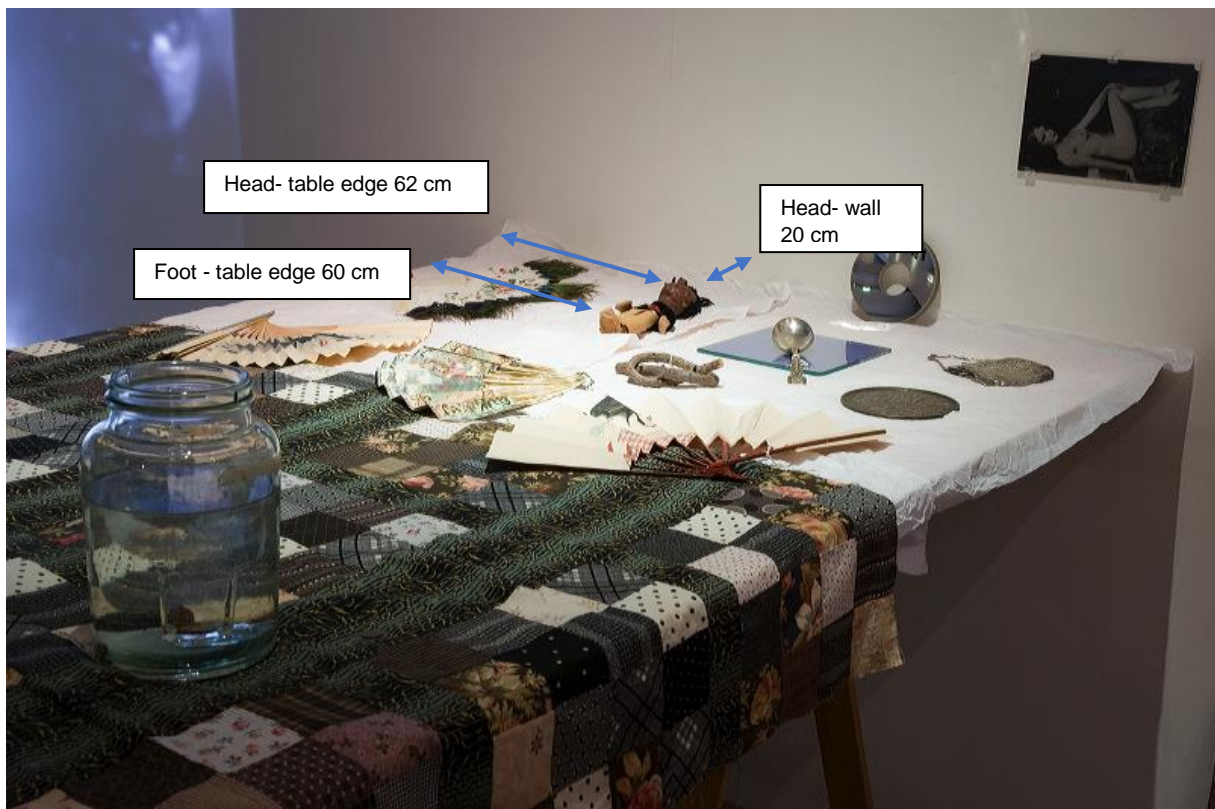
In 2012 the Stedelijk Museum reopened after a long period of renovation and extension. At this occasion we had the opportunity to install *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* in a space especially designed for the work. The outcome of the earlier research project was used to install the work in the best way possible (appendix IV Installation instructions: 2 Report of the installation in the exhibition 2012 for details and photos). Joan Jonas was present and very happy with the result. Consequently, this version can be used as an example for future installments. However it is important to realize that Joan Jonas always has to be informed and asked for advice for every new presentation. But if she cannot be present, we now have valid guideline to install the work in a responsible way, respecting the artist's wishes.

Appendix II A: Example of the *Joan Jonas Registration Form*, for the project in 2006

Joan Jonas, <i>Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll</i>, 1972-1994	
Number part	
Joan Jonas 1994.1.173 BK. Box.1/4-13 – no. 55 <i>Doll</i>	
Kind of the item (' found object ', prop, technical equipment, video capture, etc.)	
<i>Prop (Made by Jonas to replace the original)</i>	
Number	
1	
Description	
Description <i>(Overall Description: external features, with attention to how it is in each other's)</i>	A simple, hand-made doll of textile with an iron wire reinforced body and a painted papier-mâché head. The nose sticks out and the eyes and mouth are summarily referred to, respectively, black and red painted cavities. As hair there are black threads of wool glued on the head. The doll is dressed in a black velvet jacket, wrapped with a red leather (imitation or real?) small belt tied up with a blue woolen thread. The belt is decorated with small rectangular pieces of metal that is sewn with red yarn. The doll wears yellow cotton pants. Hands and feet are made out of pieces of felt, sewn with a coarse stitch. The feet are filled up. At the back protrudes at the height of the neck a piece of iron wire.
Dimensions <i>(In cm.-SM)</i>	31.5 x 8.5 width x depth height 6.7 cm
Origin/place in the installation	
Origin/meaning of the object/material	Joan Jonas has the pop made when she was a child. It shall draw up a so-called ' Navaho ', a ' Native American ' (Indian). The doll serves as replacement of a doll that Joan Jonas had gotten of her grandmother and that she used in her <i>Organic Honey</i> performances to outline with a black marker. The original doll got damaged by her dog (Interviews1 and 3, 23 and 26 January 2007).
Place/position	The doll is lying on his back on the part of the large table with cloth (72).
Other conditions set up <i>(Light, sound, etc.)</i>	Secure doll to the table, so that it cannot be removed. See "precautions set up Organic Honey '.
Material and condition registration	

<p>Material type (s) <i>(Wood, plastic, etc. Also: prefabricated, recycled, by Jonas homemade, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Papier-mâché, cotton, iron wire, felt, wool, paint, sewing thread, stuffing (feet and hands)</p> <p>Manual work</p>
<p>Current condition <i>(Damage? Restorations, repairs, modifications? If so, by whom?)</i></p>	<p>Presumable the doll is damaged during the show in Queens in 2004. Woolen hair is pulled out and the neck is partly loose. The papier-mâché head shows some losses. The fabric is faded and polluted. The felt is damaged by moths. Conservation of the doll is carried out after the pilot.</p> <p><i>Store advice</i> The doll should be kept separately in a box (Rebecca Timmermans)</p>
<p>Comments conservation material</p>	<p>The doll is not replaceable. If it gets damaged, it shall be restored. (Interview 3, January 26, 2007).</p>
<p>Other</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 26-06-2006 registered (2) <input type="checkbox"/> Wrapped in tissue paper, along with other objects wrapped in tissue paper in several layers of bubble wrap, in a cardboard box <input type="checkbox"/> Conservators Rebecca Timmermans and Sandra Weerdenburg have looked at the doll. 	

Appendix II B: Condition and location images at *Inventory form*, June 2006



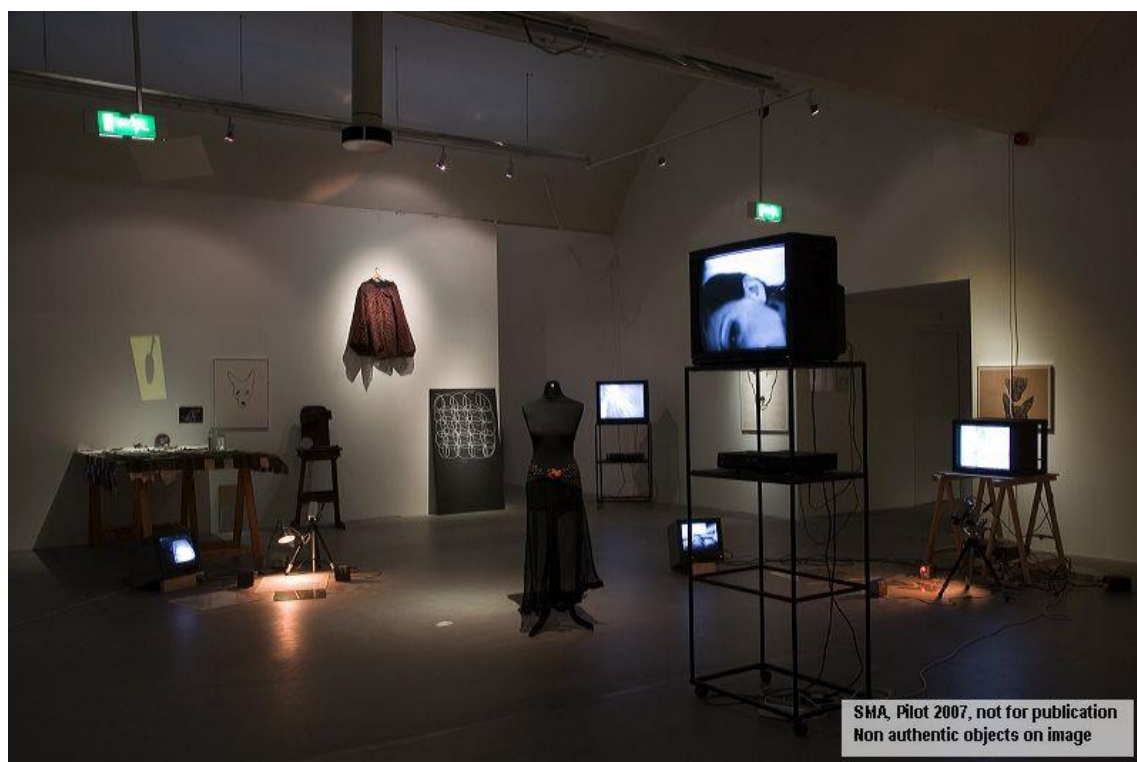
Pilot 2007: Position of the doll on the table (without paper protection underneath)

Appendix III: Snapshots research presentation of Joan Jonas' *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* in SMCS January 2007

NB: not all objects could be installed at this time because the condition did not allow it. For these objects a suitable replacement was used.



Pilot 2007 Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994)
Photo: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Jan. 2007 (not suitable for publication, non-authentic objects on image).



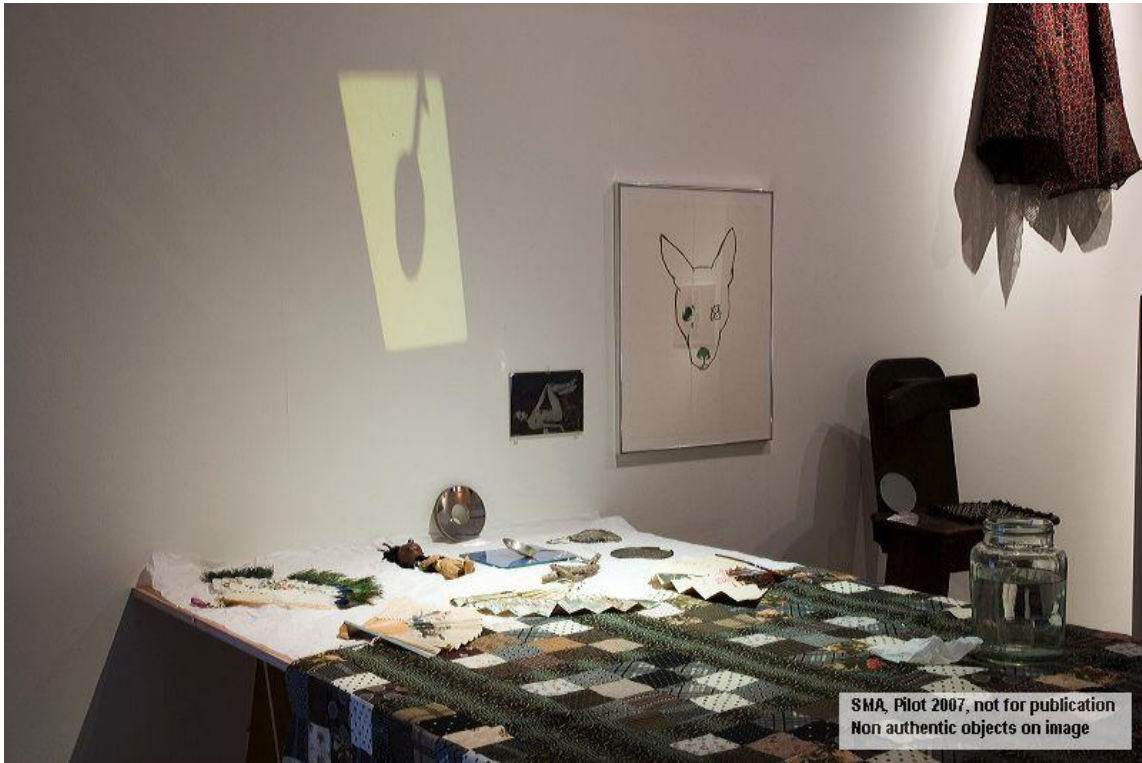
Pilot 2007 Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994)
Photo: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Jan. 2007 (not suitable for publication, non-authentic objects on image).



*Pilot 2007 Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994)
Photo: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Jan. 2007 (not suitable for publication, non-authentic objects on image).*



*Pilot 2007 Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994)
Photo: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Jan. 2007 (not suitable for publication, non-authentic objects on image).*



SMA, Pilot 2007, not for publication
Non authentic objects on image

*Pilot 2007 Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994)
Photo: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Jan. 2007 (not suitable for publication, non-authentic objects on image).*

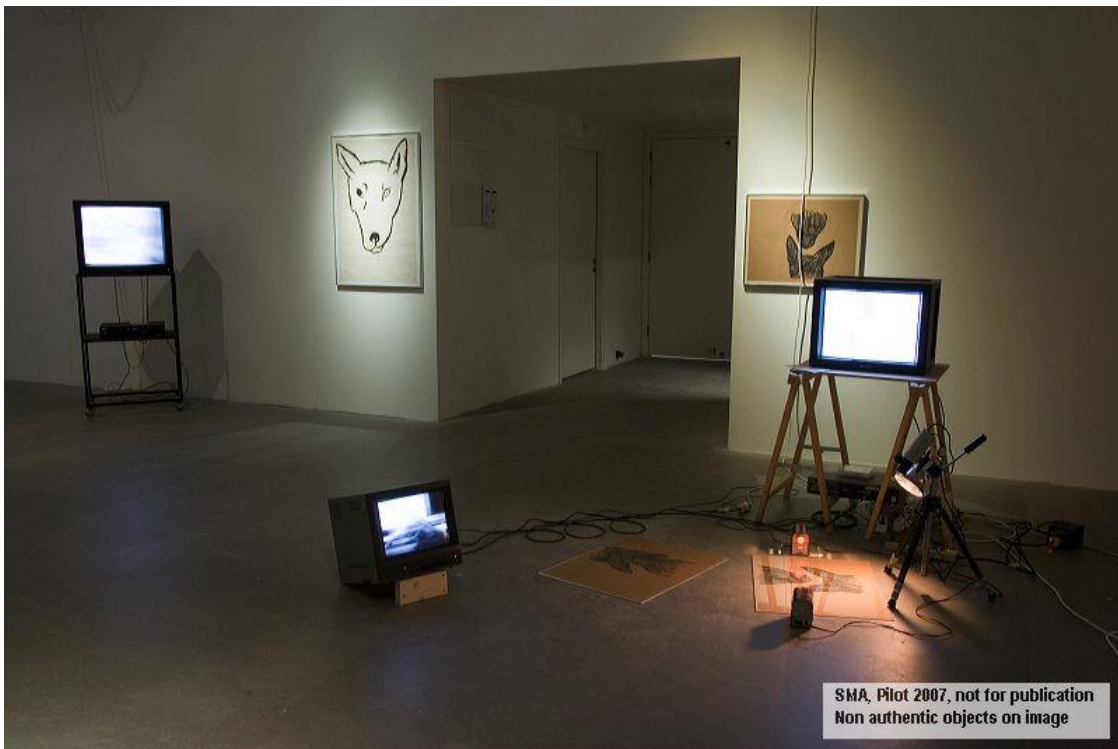


SMA, Pilot 2007, not for publication
Non authentic objects on image

*Pilot 2007 Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994)
Photo: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Jan. 2007 (not suitable for publication, non-authentic objects on image).*



Pilot 2007 Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994)
Photo: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Jan. 2007 (not suitable for publication, non-authentic objects on image).



Pilot 2007 Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994)
Photo: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Jan. 2007 (not suitable for publication, non-authentic objects on image).

Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

General installation instructions

Artist: Joan Jonas

Title: Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll

Inv. no.: 1994.1.0173(1-78)

Period: 1972/1994

Materials and technique: Multi-media

Date: 30-1-2017

Drawn up by (plus function): Rebecca Timmermans (Sculpture Conservator) / Gert Hoogeveen (Coordinator AV Art handling)

*Background information

This instruction is based on a research project that was carried out in cooperation with Joan Jonas, Dorine Mignot (former Curator Stedelijk Museum) and Anne Mink an art historian (in training) at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam in 2007. During this project two installations by Joan Jonas were investigated. In 2012 the outcome of this project was used to create a suitable space for *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* (please see photos in appendix 2).

Joan Jonas was present and very happy with the result. Consequently, this version can be used as an example for future installments. However it is important to realize that Joan Jonas always has to be informed and asked for advice for every new presentation. But if she cannot be present, we now have valid guideline to install the work in a responsible way, respecting the artist's wishes.

*General requirements museum space:

Climate and object safety

- Stable museum climate: Relative Humidity: 50% \pm 10% with a maximum cumulative fluctuation of 10% and T 21°C \pm 3°C in 24-hour period.
- The public is not allowed to touch the objects in the installation.
- A permanent guard in the room is required and a restricted amount of people may enter the installation at once (4 persons). This is necessary because the art works in this installation are vulnerable and partly on the floor.

Specification exhibition space

- Room is rectangle and approximately 10 x 11 meters.
- Two entries situated diagonal (preferable in the short wall/side of the room).
- When entering the room the visitor should see the projection of *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy* on the wall first.
- No pillars/columns in the room.
- Walls should be white.
- No carpet on the floor (preference for stone, wood or concrete floor).
- Jonas prefers a plain (simple) and white ceiling at least 3 meter high.
- The ceiling should be suitable to hang the spots/beamer and the headdress (nylon thread).
- Absolutely no entering light. If there is any window present it should be blinded.

Personnel needed to install and maintain

- Stedelijk Museum staff as couriers (one audio visual art handler and a conservator)
- Documentation on object level will be taken by the courier (this is not included in this document)

- Art handlers for unpacking and installation (lender)
- Staff from the Audio Visual Department (lender)
- Maintenance of the objects (dust removal, refill of the glass jar) during the exhibition by a conservator only (lender)

Extra equipment needed to install the work

- Hydraulic hoist or steps are needed to be able to hang the theater spots/beamer and the headdress
- 12/13 Fresnel type spotlight (LED) equipped with barn doors.
- 1 six channel dimmer rack.
- Lee no 202 daylight to tungsten filter gel, or equivalent.
- A 3000 ANSI lumen video projector, 4:3 aspect ratio
- 1 stereo amplifier, preferably small
- 2 small white speakers
- Mounting equipment for spotlights, projector and speakers
- Extension power cables

* **Appendices:**

1. Inventory list
2. Report of the installation in the exhibition Works in Place in Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (2012)
- 3: Floorplan, information audio visual equipment and data position objects in installation
4. Light plan
5. Packing information (not included)
6. Object specific information (not included)

Appendix 1: Inventory list Organic Honey ... (1994.1.173)

1. Video file Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy, Joan Jonas, 1972
- Beamer, media player (both not included)
- 2a. Video file Vertical Roll, Joan Jonas, 1972
- 2b. Monitor: 27" (Hantarex C-series with speakers)
- Media player (not included)
- 3a. Video file Anxious Automation, Richard Serra, Philip Glass, 1972
- 3b. Monitor: 14" (Sony PVM-1440 QM with speaker)
- Media player (not included)
- 4a. Video file Organic Honey's Vertical Roll, Joan Jonas, 1973
- 4b. Monitor: 27" (Hantarex C-series with speakers)
- Media player (not included)
- 5a. Video camera (Sanyo, type VCC-6570P) I, 'Live camera (Vertical role head of dog)'
- 5b. Monitor: 21" (Sony PVM-2130 QM)
- 5c. Tripod I
- 6a. Video camera II (Sanyo, type VCC-6570P) 'Live camera (drawings)'
- 6b. Monitor: 14" (Sony PVM-1440QM without speaker)
- 6c. Tripod II
- 7a. Video camera (Sanyo, type VCC-6570P) III 'Live camera (photos dogs)'
- 7b. Monitor 14" (Sony PVM-1440QM without speaker)
- 7c. Tripod III
8. Drawing 'dog' I
9. Blackboard Drawing I
10. Blackboard Drawing II Sun
- 11a. Blackboard Drawing III
- 11b. Blackboard Drawing IV
12. Mirror on wheels
13. Paper wall
14. Rectangular Mirror I
- 15a-d. Link chains - 4 PCs
16. Rectangular Mirror with 'q'
17. Rectangular Mirror II
18. Drawing with painter's tape I
19. Drawing with painter's tape II
20. Drawing 'part dogs head' I
21. Drawing 'part dogs head' II
22. Drawing 'part dogs head' III

23. Drawing 'dogs head ' II
24. Poster 'Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy' I
25. Poster 'Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy' II
26. Poster 'Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy' III
27. Poster 'Festival di Musica e Danza'
28. Photo 'Patchwork jacket'
29. Photo 'Organic Honey' mask
30. Photo 'Organic Honey' bust
31. Photo 'Organic Honey' waist
32. Photo nude masked woman
33. Photo dog I
34. Photo dog II
35. Photo dog III
36. Photo shadow dog
37. Accountant chair
38. Handheld fan I
39. Handheld fan II
40. Handheld fan III
41. Handheld fan IV
42. Silver-plated purse
43. Silver spoon
44. Round magnifying mirror with hole
45. Square two-way mirror
46. Round mirror
- 47a. Glass jar
- 47b. Shot glass
- 47c. American pennies
48. Plumage
49. Patchwork cloth
50. Belly Dancer Costume
- 51a. Silk gown
- 51b. Silk slip dress
52. Patchwork jacket
53. Knitted bag
54. Japanese mirror
55. Handmade doll
56. Knotted branch
58. Signal interrupter (transmitter) I

59. Signal interrupter (receiver) II
60. Signal interrupter (receiver) I
61. Signal interrupter (transmitter) II
62. Lamp aluminum I (E 27, 40W, mini globe, frosted)
63. Lamp aluminum II (E 27, 40W, mini globe, frosted)
64. Lamp aluminum III (E 27, 25W, mini globe, frosted)
65. Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy, Organic Honey's Vertical Roll, 1972/1994 (Photo)
66. Organic Honey's Vertical Roll, 1973 (Photo)
67. Stand I
68. Stand II
69. Trestle table top – small
70. Transformer I
71. Transformer II
72. Table top on trestles – large
73. Reflection on the wall
74. Wedge I
75. Wedge II
76. Wedge III
77. Mannequin black
78. Mannequin cream

Appendix 2A: Report of the installation of Joan Jonas' *Organic Honey ...* (1994.1.173) in the exhibition *Works in Place* in Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (2012)

Title exhibition/date: Works in Place, 23 September - 3 November 2012

Drawn-up by: Rebecca Timmermans (Sculpture Conservator, Stedelijk Museum)

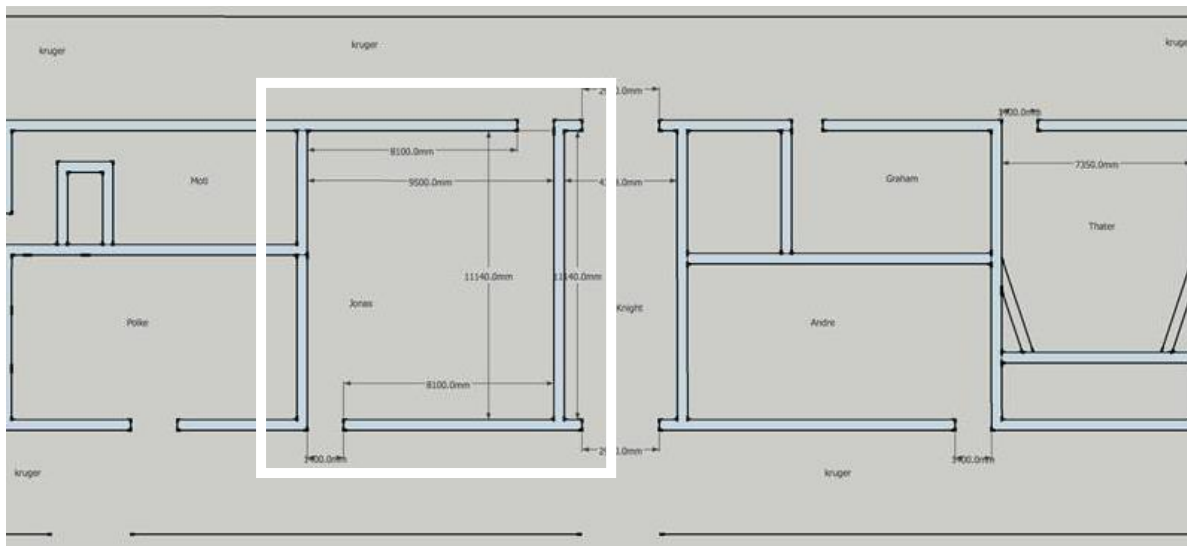
Images: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, RT

Date: September 2012

Specifications room Stedelijk Museum 2012 base -1.2^D

- The specially built room in our basement was 9,50 x 11,40 meter with a wall height of 4,60 meter.
- The ceiling was a vellum (white fabric).
- The entrances, diagonal positioned, were 1,40 meter wide. The room was designed with two entries only as Jonas wishes.
- For the lights/beamer 3 trusses for were used.
- Joan Jonas was consulted beforehand to approve all the decisions.

The work was installed by Stedelijk staff and Joan Jonas came the last day to oversee the last details.



Floorplan Base 2012

Changes compared to the pilot of 2007

- Dimensions room (smaller)
- No ceiling (this was not possible), vellum was chosen, did look acceptable.
- All conservation treatments are carried out.
- Beamer hanging on truss instead of pedestal (as intended).
- Wedges were made for monitors.
- Exchanged positions stand I (inv. no. 67) and stand II (inv.no. 68). Change made by Joan Jonas.
- Changed position: closer distance 90 cm between no. 22 and no. 23. Change made by Joan Jonas
- Changed position doll no. 55, not parallel to edge table anymore. Change made by Joan Jonas

Preventive measures

- A security guard was permanent present in the room
- Only 4 persons were allowed at a time in the room (one entrance was blocked with 'cord')

- Lines of black tape on the floor around the mannequins to keep the public at distance to prevent touching.
- All the objects on the table were secured with nylon threads to the table to prevent removal.
- All cables on the floor were taped or in another way be hidden in order to prevent stumbling by the public. Underneath the tables it is not necessary.

Appendix 2B Photos Jonas' *Organic...* (1972/1994) exhibition "Works in Place" (2012)

Photos of the installation taken by professional photographers of Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.



Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam 2012 base room -1.2D, Joan Jonas, *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* (1972/1994) Photo: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam



Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam 2012 base room -1.2D, Joan Jonas, *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* (1972/1994) Photo: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

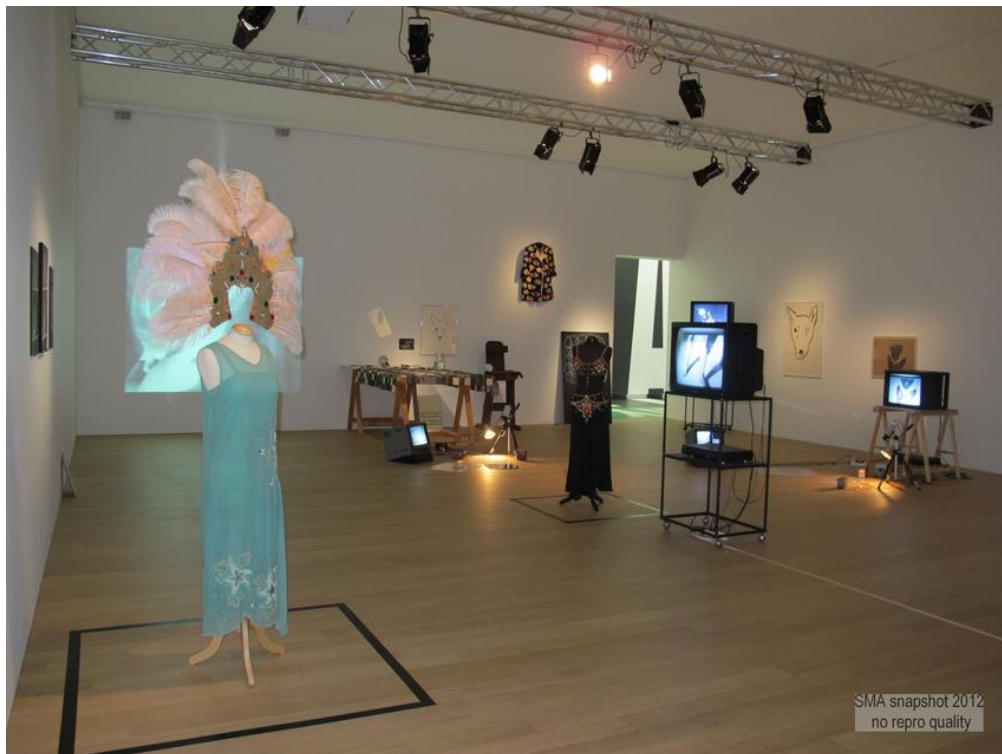


Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam 2012 base room -1.2D, Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994) Photo: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

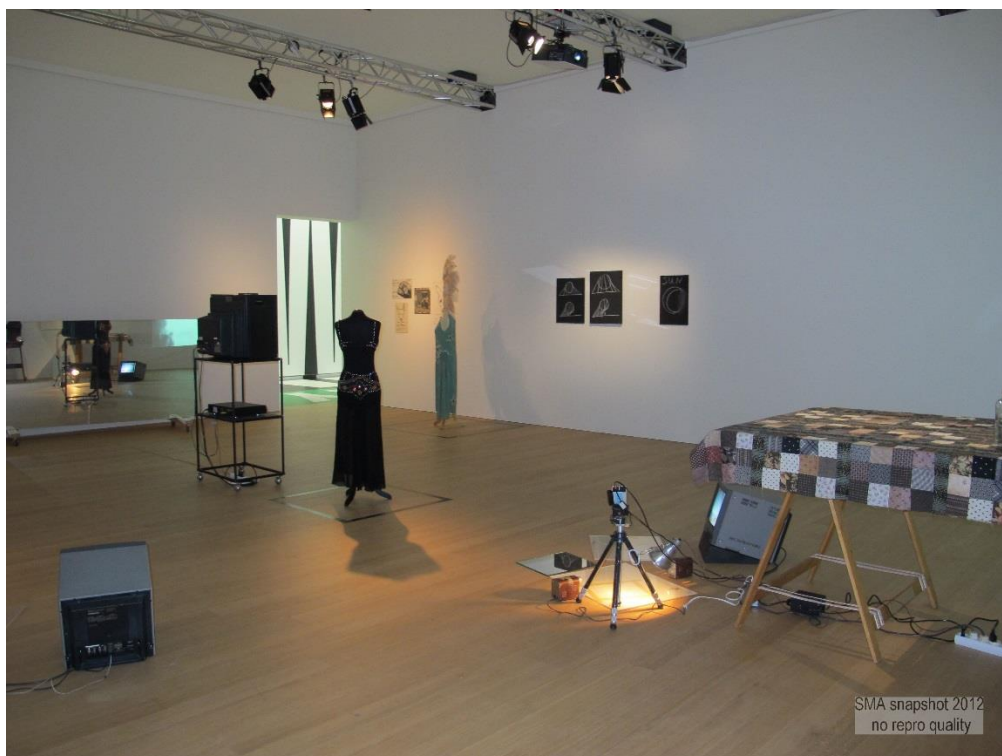
Appendix 2C Snapshots Jonas' *Organic... (1972/1994)* exhibition "Works in Place" (2012)

Photo: Rebecca Timmermans, January 2007 (not suitable for publication)

These images are taken to document the position of the objects (please see for a better representation of the lighting condition the photos taken by professional photographers of Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam).



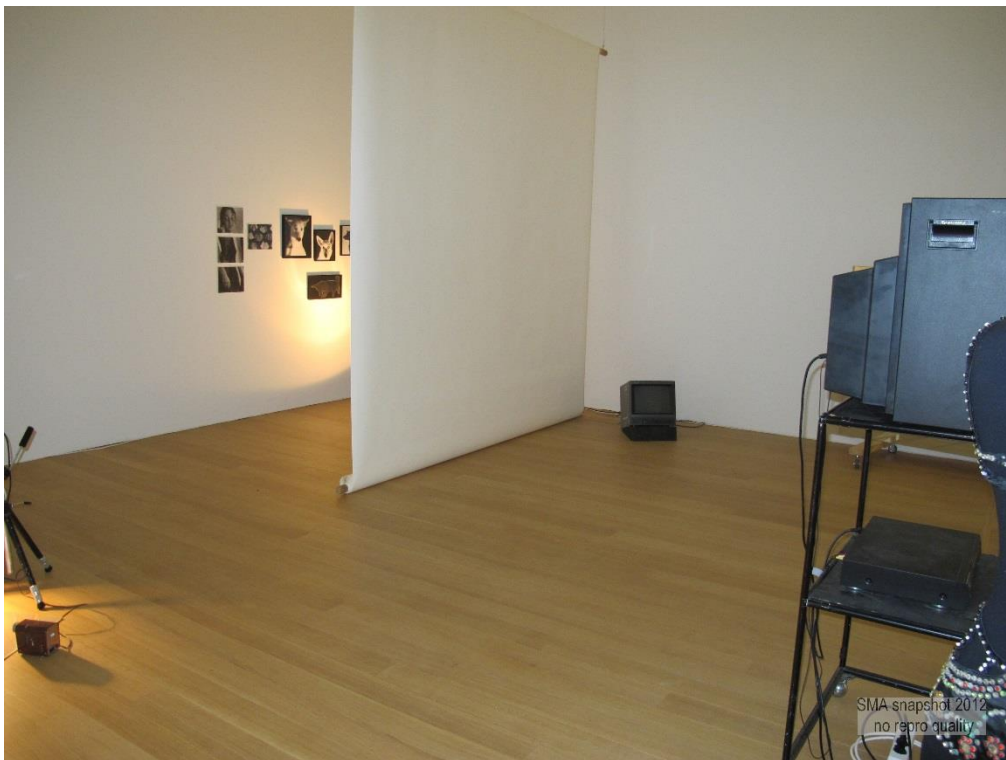
Snapshot Stedelijk Museum 2012 base room -1.2D, Joan Jonas, *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* (1972/1994) collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Photo: RT



Snapshot Stedelijk Museum 2012 base room -1.2D, Joan Jonas, *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* (1972/1994) collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Photo: RT



Snapshot Stedelijk Museum 2012 base room -1.2D, Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994) collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Photo: RT



Snapshot Stedelijk Museum 2012 base room -1.2D, Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994) collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Photo: RT



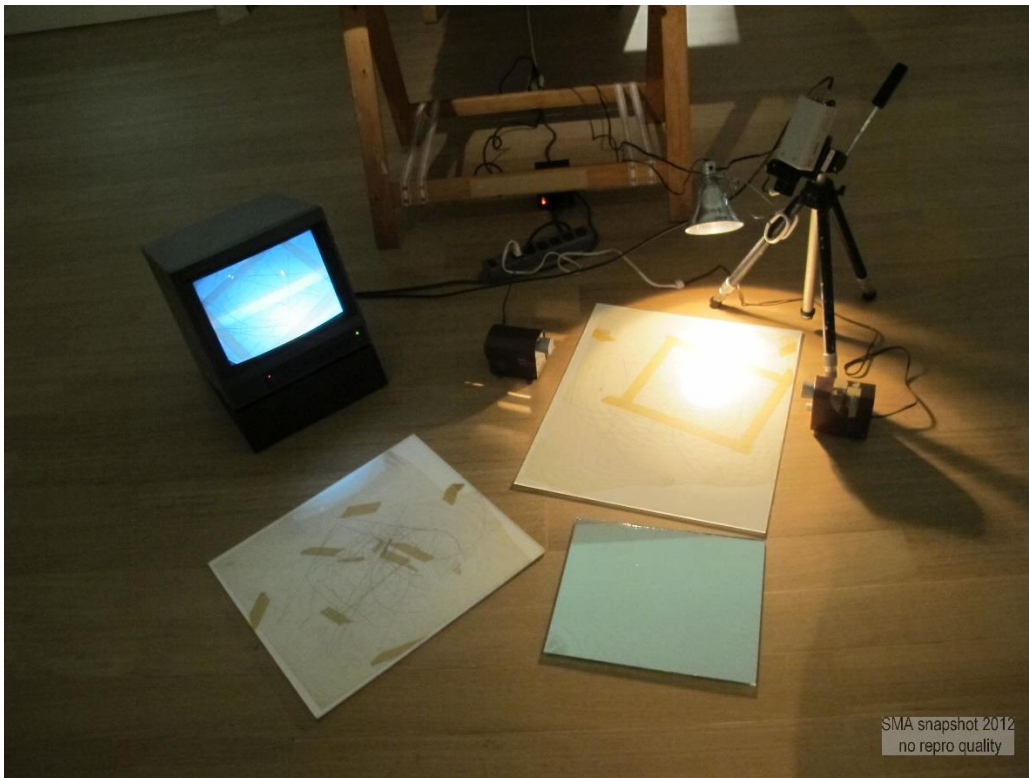
Snapshot Stedelijk Museum 2012 base room -1.2D, Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994) collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Photo: RT



Snapshot Stedelijk Museum 2012 base room -1.2D, Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994) collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Photo: RT



Snapshot Stedelijk Museum 2012 base room -1.2D, Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994) collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Photo: RT



Snapshot Stedelijk Museum 2012 base room -1.2D, Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994) collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Photo: RT



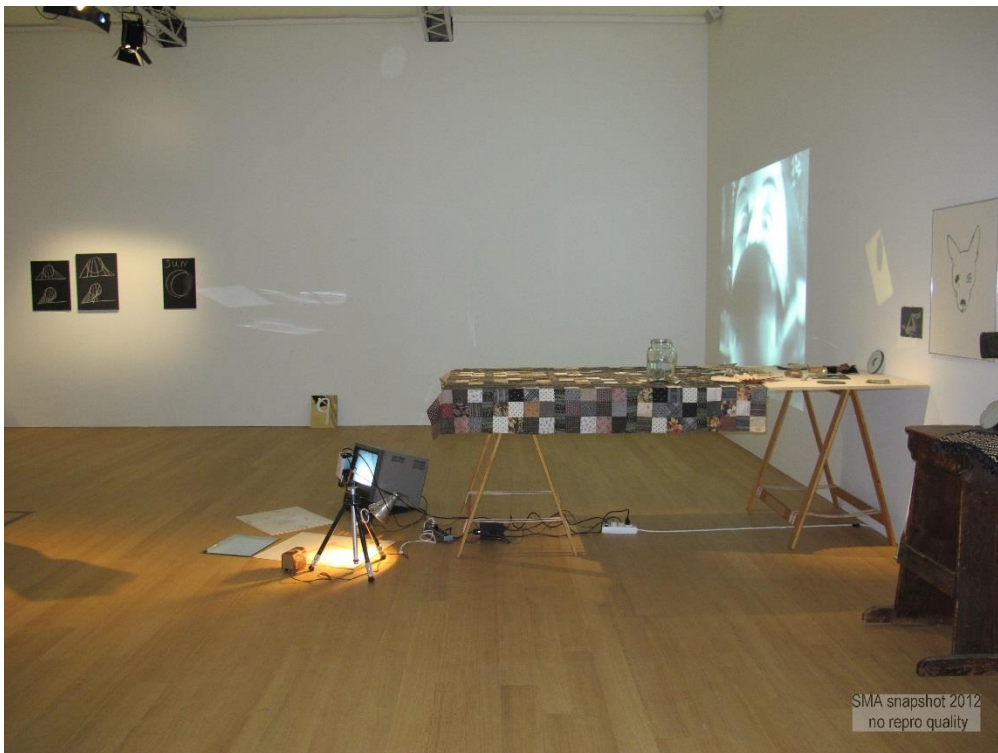
Snapshot Stedelijk Museum 2012 base room -1.2D, Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994) collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Photo: RT



Snapshot Stedelijk Museum 2012 base room -1.2D, Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994) collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Photo: RT



Snapshot Stedelijk Museum 2012 base room -1.2D, Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994) collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Photo: RT

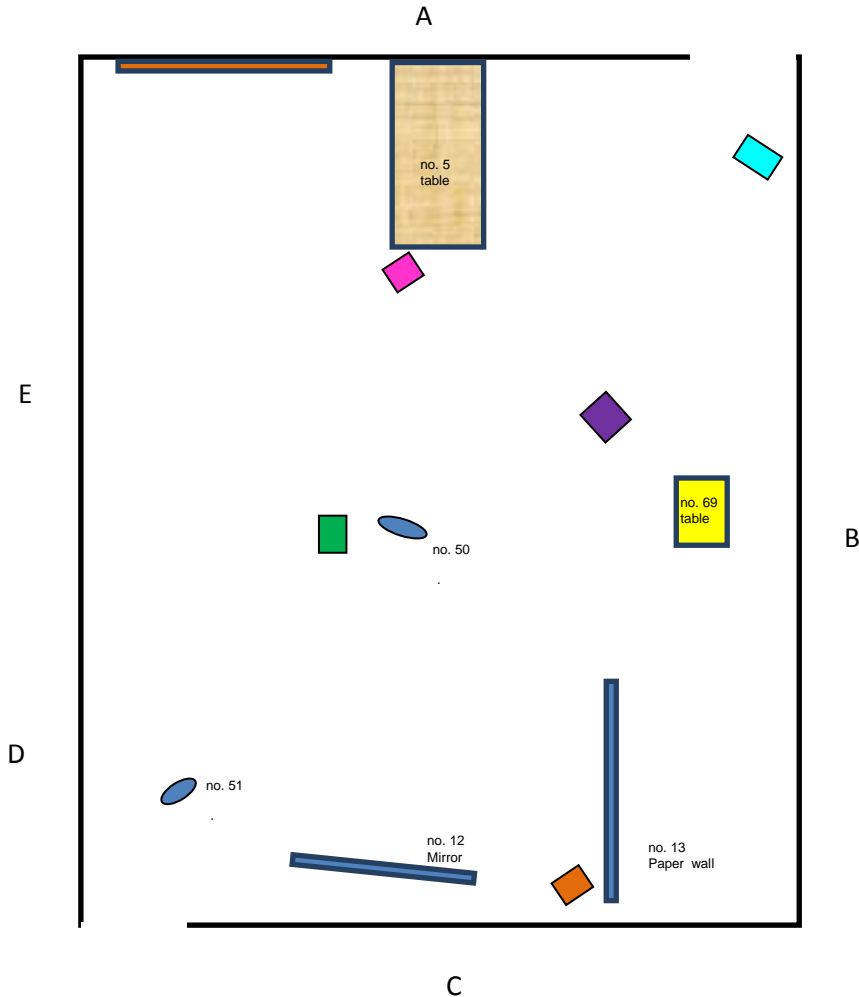


Snapshot Stedelijk Museum 2012 base room -1.2D, Joan Jonas, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994) collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Photo: RT

Appendix 3: J. Jonas, *Organic Honey ...* (1994.1.173): Floorplan, information audio visual equipment, data position objects in installation

Floorplan 2012 (bigger objects and audio visual equipment)

Exact position of object in object form in appendix 6 (*not included*).



Legend

 'Live camera (photos dogs)'

- Monitor: 14", h. 33 x w 34,5 x l 42
- Wedge

 'Vertical Roll'

Joan Jonas – Vertical Roll.

- Monitor (Hantarex C-series with speakers): 27", height 51,5 x width 63,3 x depth 46,5 cm
- Stand on wheels: height 150 x width 66 x depth 46,5 cm

■ 'Live camera (Vertical role head of dog)'

- Video camera I (Sanyo, type VCC 6570P)
- Tripod I
- Monitor (Sony PVM monitor): 21", height 40,5 x width 51,5 x depth 44 cm
- Stand: (total) height 75,3 x width 90 x depth 74,3
(table top) length 64 x width 60,2 x 1,2 cm
(Trestles opened) height 74x width 36 x depth 74,3 cm

■ 'Anxious Automation'

Richard Serra – Anxious Automation. Sound: Philip Glass.

- Monitor (Sony PVM with speaker): 14", height 34,5 x width 33 x depth 42 cm
- Wedge

■ 'Live camera (drawings)'

- Video camera II (Sanyo, type VCC 6570P)
- Tripod II
- Monitor: 14" (Sony PVM without speaker), height 33 x width 34,5 x depth 42 cm
- Wedge

■ 'Organic Honey's Vertical Roll'

Joan Jonas – Organic Honey's Vertical Roll.

- Monitor (Hantarex C-series with speakers),: 27", height 51,5 x width 63,3 x depth 46,5 cm
- Stand on wheels: height 104 x width 66 x depth 46,5 cm

■ 'Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy'

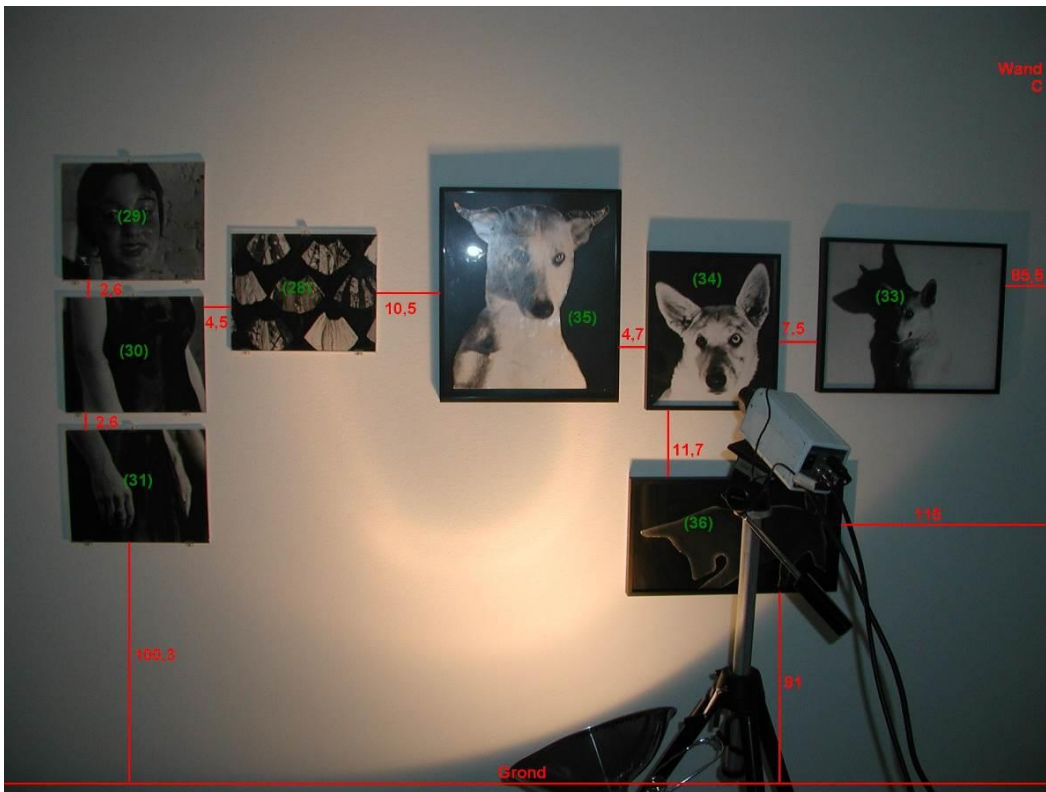
Joan Jonas – Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy

- video projector SD, 3000 Ansilumen with telephoto zoom lens hanging on the ceiling or truss
- Projector is hanging on the ceiling, DVD-player and amplifier out of sight.
- Projection on the wall: w.x h. 280x210 cm, 40 cm of the floor.
- Sound: two white speakers above projection.



A

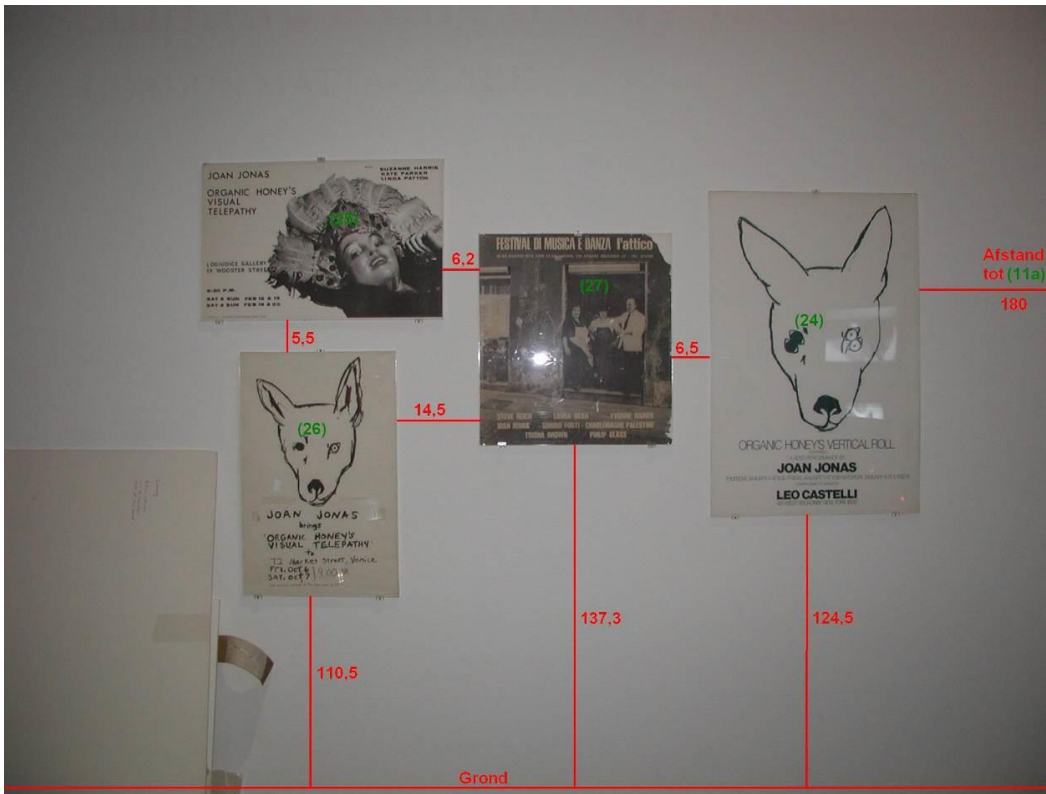
Position of wall works



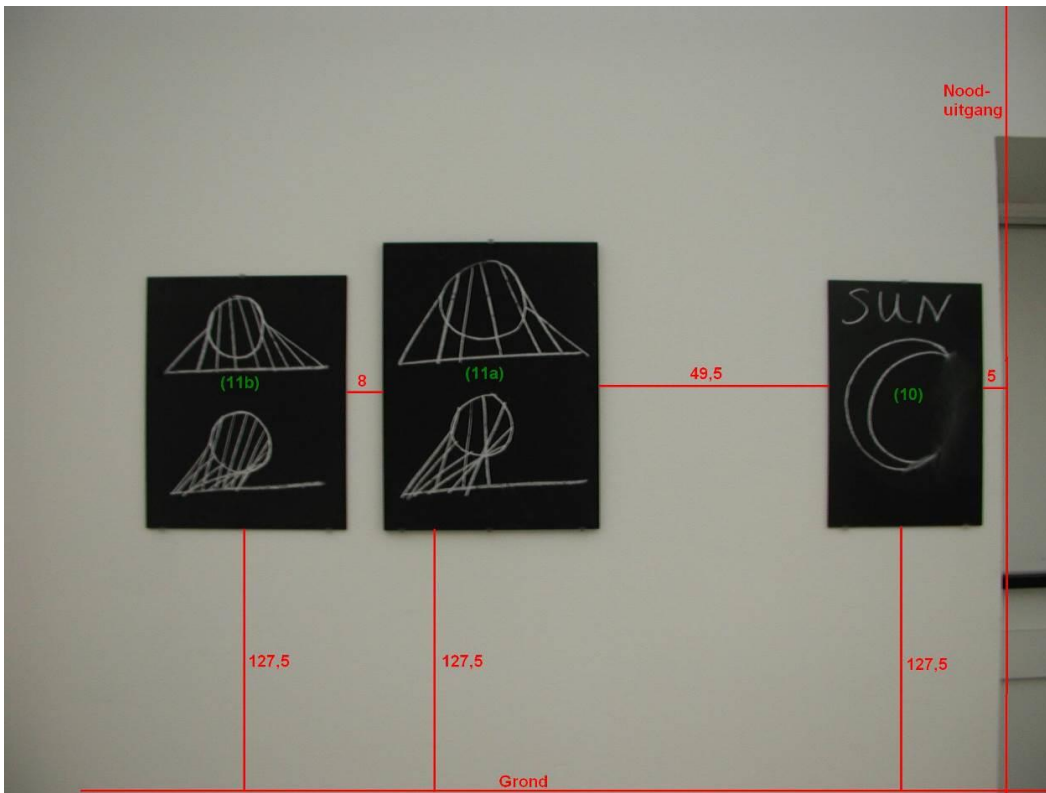
B (SMCS 2007) behind paper wall



C (SMCS 2007)



D (SMCS 2007)



E (SMCS 2007)

Appendix 4: light plan Organic Honey ... (1994.1.173)

(SMCS, A. Mink, January 2007)

General remarks made during interviews held with Joan Jonas on 26 and 29 January 2007 (interview 3 and 4):

- The exposure of the parts of the installation (photographs, drawings, posters, objects on the table, costumes) should be minimal (*JJ: "dimly lit, just the object (pinpoint), no spilling on the walls"*). The patchwork jacket and the dresses on the mannequins even less than the other parts are lit, this also from conservation point of view.
- The light must be so-called theatrical light, such as daylight (*JJ: "So it's not blue, it's not yellow, it's a cool light. Like daylight, a cool daylight. "*). Jonas insists that it is not the kind of exposure that often is used in galleries.
- No exposure on the mirrors.
- *"No daylight involved. I mean all the images, the things on the walls should be very, very dimly lit. (...) And the dimly lit table, and the chair. The objects on the walls, the costumes, the pictures on the wall. You don't have to lit the camera and the arrangement of the cameras: that's already light. But everything else (...). It shouldn't be too bright in here. "*

Light plan per group of objects (against the clock in)

For the installation the following spot light are needed (these are not included in the inventory):

-12/13 Fresnel type spotlight equipped with barn doors. Power consumption 500W halogen or a led equivalent.

-1 Six channel dimmer rack.



Snapshot ceiling Stedelijk Museum 2012 base room -1.2D, Joan Jonas, *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll (1972/1994)* collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Photo: RT.

Details light plan Joan Jonas' Organic Honey ... (1994.1.173)		
<i>Inventory number</i>	<i>Which element should be lit</i>	<i>remarks</i>
72 Table top on trestles – large	Two spot lights: one focused on the objects on the table in general and one separate on Glass jar (47a)	(32) Photo nude masked woman hanging on the wall doesn't need to be lit extra
37 Accountant chair	One small concentrated spot light focused on knitted bag (53)	
8 Drawing 'dog' I	One spot	
52 Patchwork jacket	Dimly lit by one spot	
23 Drawing 'dogs head' II	One spot	
20, 21 Drawing 'part dogs head' I,II	Lamp (63) clamped on tripod lit both drawings	
22 Drawing 'Part dogs head' III	One spot	
29-31 and 33-36 Photos behind paper wall	Lamp (62) clamped on tripod lit group of photos	Focus on center of group bundle of light spreads 10 cm around photo group
17 (Rectangular Mirror II) 18, 19 Drawing with painter's tape I,II	Lamp (64) clamped on tripod lit both drawings	
65, 66 Photos performance Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy, Organic Honey's Vertical Roll, 1972/1994	Both photos lit together with one spot	
24, 25, 26 Posters 'Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy' I, II, II and 27 Poster 'Festival di Musica e Danza'	All lit with one spot light	Less spill of light around objects as possible
11a and b Black board Drawing III, IV	One spot	
10 Black board Drawing II Sun	One spot	
77 Mannequin black	Dimly lit by one spot	
78 Mannequin cream	Dimly lit by one spot	

Appendix V Interviews Joan Jonas during pilot presentation *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy / Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* January 2007

Method

Joan Jonas has been interviewed several times by Anne Mink (interview 1-3) and by Sandra Weerdenburg (interview 4) during and between the installation periods. During the interviews Dorine Mignot (former Curator Time-Based Media) was constantly present and helped to clarify certain issues.

For compiling the questionnaires, the interview technique developed by the ICN and the SBMK, described in the publication *Modern Art Who Cares?* (Archetype, 2005), was the guiding principle. This means that the questions started more general and open, while during the interviews they increasingly zeroed in on specific conservation and installation issues. First of all, Jonas was extensively interviewed about her artistry, work and working method.

Subsequently, each installation dealt with issues such as the context from which the work originated, the interpretation of the work, the transition from performance to installation, and so on. She was then asked to discuss the origin, meaning and coherence for each installation element. Attempts have also been made to anticipate (future) presentations and conservation issues. The interviews were filmed and edited by Moniem Ibrahim and transcribed by Anne Mink.

NB: In the transcript numbers in square brackets [...] refer to the inventory number of the object being discussed.



Joan Jonas, Dorine Mignot, Anne Mink during interviewing at Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Photo: Rebecca Timmermans SMCS 2007



Joan Jonas and Sandra Weerdenburg during an interview at the SMCS 2007, screenshot interview 4

Interview with Joan Jonas (1) – ‘Artist and work I’

23 January 2007, interviewer: Anne Mink. Camera & montage: Moniem Ibrahim. Location: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, SMCS, director’s room. The interview was taken in the presence of Dorine Mignot.

AM: In the catalogue of the Stedelijk Museum retrospective of your work in 1994, the titles and dates of the installations were Organic Honey’s Visual Telepathy/Organic Honey’s Vertical Roll (1972/1994) and Revolted by The Thought of Known Places... Sweeney Astray (1994). Do you think these titles are correct?

JJ: Say that again.

AM: Are these titles correct?

JJ: Organic Honey’s...

AM: ...Visual Telepathy and Organic Honey’s Vertical Roll. The total, they should be like this?

JJ: No, the whole piece is called... oh, I see. Yeah, that’s correct.

AM: And Revolted by the Thought of Known Places... Sweeney Astray, that’s correct.

JJ: Yes.

AM: So the titles in the catalogue are correct. All right. And Dorine told me you discussed the titles of the DVD’s of the Sweeney Astray installation. Maybe we can have the list later on?

JJ: Definitely.

AM: All right. And the right dates are as well...

JJ: They are all the same date as the... I think it’s 1992 to 1994. And then there is a slash... the one I did in Queens, you know. (...) I changed the installation a little bit. So it’s 1992 to 1994 and then slash 2003. When was it? [deze datering heeft alleen betrekking op de Sweeney Astray installatie – AM 2009]

AM: 2003

JJ: No, it was earlier. No, later. Was it later?

AM: I’ll look it up for you.

JJ: Yeah... Yeah it was in 2003. It was after Documenta, that’s right.

AM: This was a question of Maurice. He asked: is it possible to translate the titles in Dutch, in case of exhibition or...

JJ: Well, I would say that you would have them next to each other and you could do it. But I wouldn’t want just the Dutch.

AM: No, all right.

DM: Finally it’s not the title but it’s just the translation, if that’s what you mean.

AM: Yes, a kind of explanation, also in the publications. All right. Now I want to discuss a little bit more of the content of the work, and how it.. in the total of your oeuvre. I would like to talk about what I call the fluxus element in your work.

JJ: What does that mean?

AM: Well, I mean that there's a kind of fluentness inherent to it. You pick objects and elements from your previous work, older work and it goes, it floats

JJ: Why fluxus?

AM: Fluent.

JJ: But it has another meaning in the art world. It's a movement, so it's confusing, anyway, for you, to use that word.

AM: Right, I won't use it again.

JJ: Well, I rehearse very much the movements and do them in a special way so that it is smooth.

AM: It's smooth?

JJ: I mean, I try to make it continuous and... It's choreographed, in other words, on purpose, that way. But I don't think of making it smooth. I just think about efficiently moving what's the best way to make that movement. But they are all task-oriented movements, which I rehearse to do them in a certain way.

AM: Yes, well, I wanted to ask whether my view of your work was concordant with how you view it. (...)

JJ: But I don't try to make fluent movements.

AM: No. But you look back. You take something...

JJ: I try to make efficient, and maybe graceful movements. But it's all for the camera, the most efficient and graceful way to do something

AM: Alright. But now you are talking about specifically moving around in your work, in your performances. But I am also talking about the way you use your objects, your props.

JJ: Well, it's the same thing.

AM: It's the same thing.

JJ: It's the same thing, the movement and the way I move around, it's all part of a movement. It's supposed to be unified. It's my movement that I do in my pieces. It's not this movement and then OK, here I am moving my props, another movement. It's all connected.

AM: Alright. In the early nineties, the Stedelijk Museum decided to make installations of your fluent performance work. The fluentness stopped right there. It became less...

JJ: I don't understand when you use the word 'my fluent performance work' and then.. It doesn't make sense to me. It has something to do with your terminology. Which is fine for you but I don't understand it.

AM: Yes, it's hard for me to explain what I mean right now.

JJ: You mean the performance is different from the installation.

AM: Yes, there is a kind of stability going on. The movement is out of it, or more or less out of it.

JJ: It's another form that the material takes. It's a translation of the original material in the performance into another situation. A different situation.

AM: How did you feel about this?

JJ: Well, I liked it, I found it very interesting. Well, it was a process. Briefly, Rudi Fuchs invited me to do the show and then Dorine was the curator and then we discussed a lot how to do it, before doing it. You know, how to show this work. And so it came out of that discussion that I had with Dorine and then also the desire to show each work in a different way so people could experience it again without performing it.

AM: So you liked it.

JJ: Yeah, I found it interesting for myself. I think for some people it was a kind of a shock and first they didn't like it because they missed the live performance element. But now they are used to it.

AM: Is it a kind of stadium in your work, going from performances to installations. You regard it as a logical next step?

JJ: I do, but it was also there before I went there, because I started out as a sculptor. And all the performances were kind of like stage sets. I mean, the way I set them up. A situation before a performance became a kind of visual stage set. So, yeah, it was a logical step, if I chose to take that step. You could see it as a logical step.

DM: But if I remember well, it was also that when we discussed things, it was also... perhaps we don't succeed and then the exhibition is not going to happen. And so it was something new, to do it.

JJ: Yeah, that's true.

DM: And, I think, anyway, I liked very much that there was the possibility that we could not succeed. That we could really try out. And then if Joan was happy with it, it would go on as an installation.

JJ: I forgotten that, but...

AM: But it felt good, so it continued.

JJ: Yes

AM: But yet the installations didn't exist in a totally fixed form, because you, especially with the Sweeney installation (...), I learned that sometimes you put something out and you put something in...

JJ: The Sweeney installations changed quite a bit, because that was a new piece and it started out as an installation. The other pieces I showed in that show started out as performances and then became installations. So they were all transformed by becoming installations, but at that point I fixed several of them by the number and the kind of object, the specific object number and videos were fixed at that point. However, each time there is a different space you have to arrange those things slightly differently. So now we are trying to make the space, you know, say this is the space and that's the way

it'll be. But before when I went to a different museum or space, these pieces would have to be rearranged differently, that's all, because to fit the space.

AM: Yes, but with the Organic Honey installation, there is indeed another follow because of the performance and then the installation and with Sweeney: installation, performance and then installation again. But... and maybe it differs also because Sweeney is (...) not as 'old' as Organic Honey. So it's a fresh work. And then I interpreted like this, that when the work is 'fresh', you are working with it...

JJ: With Sweeney, I had a lot of video that I shot. So the first time it was shown in the Stedelijk we only had one video projection. It was very simple. But I had been working on it in Berlin before I came to make the piece in Amsterdam. So then when I redid it for the Queens museum I went back into that material and edited a lot of it together. Because I was interested in what I shot in Berlin which wasn't used here in Holland because we wanted it just have the Toneelgroep Amsterdam in this particular version for the retrospective, without any of the Berlin version being in it. Because I made the installation in Berlin, before. (...) It was smaller physically. But it had two video elements in it. But I don't show it that way at all anymore. So this was a matter of going back into the piece and re-editing it actually. So it turns out quite differently, yeah.

AM: So that's a big difference between the two installations.

JJ: Organic Honey, I never re-edited anything. I didn't touch it. I just re-arranged it.

AM: Does the practice of adding and replacing elements, is it important for you. Is it important for the content of you work to add and replace?

JJ: Only if it's necessary or... Like Mirage, which is another piece and I showed it in the original Stedelijk show in 1994. In 2000 the DIA foundation in New York invited me to project some of my video works. They had a roof, showing of pieces projected on the rooftop. And so I thought of Mirage and this happened in another piece as well. I also had footage that I had shot for that in 1976 that I never used and so I started using that, the unedited footage, and that made it interesting for me. I went back into that piece and actually added an element and re-edited some old footage, to alter it a bit. So, some pieces it's interesting for me to do that and other pieces: no.

AM: No. And in the case of Organic Honey and Sweeney Astray?

JJ: Organic Honey (...) it's composed of a number of finished within themselves. And also I worked a lot on that, originally. So I have no desire to go back into it. Mirage was also finished but it has a very more abstract and open-ended feeling to it. So, I am interested in that I can always go back and... maybe do it again, I don't know. I don't think so, I think it has reached its final form. Anyway: some pieces yes, others no.

AM: Alright. So my next question was if there is a state of your work where you regard it to be finished?

JJ: You could say that it's arbitrary. I mean, it's my decision. But at some point I don't want to work on it anymore. And I have taken it to a point where I feel satisfied and it is finished. Like Sweeney: I am not going to work on Sweeney anymore, except maybe make some drawings. But I worked very hard on re-editing that material for the Queens show. And now I feel good that it's... I am very happy that it's part of the piece now. And it's a kind of a... cacophony. So it has become that. It's kind of discordant. And I like that aspect of it. You know, it has two different actors and these different locations, and... But somehow that came together for me. And I regret one thing: that I never recorded the whole thing with Irish people speaking. Just their voices, that's one thing I regret. So maybe I'll do that, I don't know. But somebody would have to help me do that.

AM: Then you would send it to the museum.

JJ: Probably [laughing].

DM: I can help you with that.

AM: OK, that would be fantastic.

JJ: Because we translated it into Dutch. (...) It was good, because people could understand it, but it should be in English, in Irish.

AM: Because the Irish is important for the content?

JJ: For the sound and the language, yes. I never understood it in Dutch.

AM: Because it's an Irish poem.

JJ: It's an Irish poem. Yeah, translated by Seamus Heaney, who is a contemporary poet, so.

AM: Well, we talk about Sweeney later I think. In the case of Organic Honey and your previous work, the mirror pieces. I was working on them because I wanted to get to know your work for my essay and for my own work. And I read about it (...) and I couldn't escape the thought that, although you may not want to explicitly talk about your intentions with it, I can't escape the thought that it has something to do with a certain consciousness of reality, experiencing of reality and consciousness of identity. What am I, what is me, what has my reflection to do with who I am? (...) Can you reflect on that a little bit? Can you explain maybe a little of your intentions, especially with Organic Honey?

JJ: Well, Organic Honey began actually when I got this Portapak in Japan and so it was a normal thing to sit in front of the camera and look at yourself on the monitor. And doing that I began to experiment with the way I looked using masks and objects and... So it was naturally leading to that question before in relation to performance. 'Who am I and what am I doing'. But not so much as the question of identity, the way I was asking it in Organic Honey. Also it had to do with the woman's movement. So it was questioning my female... what is there female about me or a woman. What does the word female mean? So I was looking for the idea. I was exploring the idea of female imagery and... Well I had just been to Japan so I was very influenced by Japanese theatre where they used masks a lot. And so that's one of the reasons I start using masks. To change my persona. And in Organic Honey I made this persona which I named Organic Honey. And it was a kind of like... a sort of my opposite. Not really, it wasn't totally opposite, but it became an opposite for me (...), a kind of character that I could step into. Still, I still think that when you do a performance you're not 'yourself'. I don't like the idea of 'myself', something or someone else. It doesn't have to be a specific character like theatre. But it is another kind of persona, in order to separate yourself from the every day. And as far as reality goes, I think reality is a relative thing. I was not in my real world, I was in this make-belief world of this performance, working on the performance at night, in my loft with the video. I think when the video camera first came out it was very magical for people to work with it and to perform in front of it. Many artists worked in their lofts alone. So it gave people the chance to do that, to make things alone. In film, you always need someone else to run the camera. But in video, you could just turn it on and step in front of it and make your own pieces without anybody being there. I mean, you work the other way too. Anyway. So, I think that answers your question.

AM: But also with the layering which you do with mirrors in combination with live feedback, I sense a kind of space research in it...

- JJ: I was really exploring what video was I had been very interested in film and I went to see a lot of film. And you might say I studied film and the history of film. And I was thinking of the medium of film in relation to my work and used it as a kind of structure and form to follow, while exploring what the medium of video was. So I was questioning that medium all the time, 'what can I do that's different in video?'. So all the videotapes are more or less about that. I mean, that's another level of what they're about, is exploring the medium and the space of the monitor, of the camera and so on.
- AM: And how the viewer conveys this space in the monitor and in real space. Yes, ok. What I was wondering, and this is maybe a foolish question, there is no mask in the installation [Organic Honey]. Did you have a special reason to leave it out?
- JJ: No, those masks don't exist anymore. They fell apart. I never found ones exactly like that. So it doesn't make sense to put a different ones in. I did put other substitutes... I substitute other things but... I guess I never... I couldn't find the original, or one exactly like it, it didn't make sense, because you would have seen immediately the difference. The fans and the other objects, it's not something you notice immediately. They [the masks] have a kind of aura about them. So that was the reason. They were made of very cheap plastic and it cracks.
- AM: And you got them from a shop, I remember.
- JJ: An erotic...
- AM: An erotic shop, yes. And you bought several of them because in the performances you were with other women who wore them.
- JJ: Yes, but I have now... I collect masks, so I have a lot of masks. And I have other plastic masks that are similar. But it's a different kind of person.
- AM: I got this very overall question. What do you think should be conveyed by the installations? What do you want the viewer to see? Can you say something about that? What do you want the viewer to see, is there some important aspect.
- JJ: Well, I want them to experience in some way, it's very difficult I am sure, the original work, the performance that the work comes from. Or, you know, (...) the work I make now there is no original work. There is a going back and forth. And then I went back and forth also between making video works and working on the performance and then turning it in an autonomous video work. So there was a going back and forth then. But I want them to have the atmosphere of the performance and I want them to experience it in some way or another. It's not the same. But I wanted them to experience that work. Because when you see all the videos separately – and also video art is a very esoteric form. At least it is much more public now. But for years, people didn't see that work [the performance]. Because it is like poetry. It's a very small audience, it doesn't exist in space. You have to go look at it somewhere. So I wanted people to experience it. A lot of people have seen it that wouldn't have seen it if it had just been left.
- AM: Performances were also small events.
- JJ: They were, then, they were.
- AM: So now there's a larger public that sees your work
- JJ: That's right, yes. But one more thing, if you had a hundred people come, then the piece got a reputation. So a lot of that work, you know, people would hear about it. So I used to go to these Jack Smith performances and there were only ten people there but those performances are very well known now. I mean, people don't know exactly what they

were. But all these events became something in people's consciousness, in that time in New York I am talking about.

AM: Yes, because when you were becoming active with your camera and your work, you were at the beginning of this movement, with all these experiences coming together, all these kind of art forms coming together.

JJ: Yes that's true, but that's also something that happens at any time, you know what I mean. Something would happen and it would become a kind of ongoing event in people's minds. So it wasn't just that time. It's a thing that happens. It has to do with rumor and...

AM: Yes, and getting known. And the last question of the overall [part] is, how do think these works Sweeney Astray and Organic Honey, relate to the total of your oeuvre? Can you say something about it? There's also, of course, a great difference between both works.

JJ: Organic Honey was my first major video work and it had a lot of... some of the work that was produced, like Vertical Roll and Left Side/Right Side and Duet and Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy, those were my first videotapes that I made. So it's a seminal work that you are thinking about. And that was the case in Organic Honey. The idea to dress up in costumes and play with my persona. It was the first time that I did that in that way. And so in that way it's special.

And then Sweeney is another story. Because it took me so long to work on Sweeney. You know, it started in 1992 and then 1994 and then 2003. It didn't come together in such a clear way. It is much more fragmented in a way than Organic Honey. It had to do with... it was actually the first piece... it has a lot to do with technology too, the camera's. After Organic Honey, after the seventies, these Portapaks went away. And then there were... I couldn't afford the big cameras. And also, I didn't have any way to edit my footage. So a lot of my work became, like Volcano Saga and Double Lunar Dogs, I made them in studios. I mean, I shot them, I had to hire a camera crew, because I didn't have my own camera, and edited them in studios. Then when Sweeney came in the early nineties, these small cameras were suddenly on the market that I could afford to buy. H8 I think they were called, and so that's when I started shooting myself again. I shot my own videos before even if there was another camera person. But it was all my framing and everything. And when the new camera came out in the nineties and I could again do my own camera work. That made a big difference in the work. So there is a lot of... so I shot a lot of footage when I was in Berlin. It was also very special because, although I had been in Berlin before, this time... it was the first time that I really thought of architecture in my work. Like Sans Souci or a place in that way probably. Or... it's not the first time no, but... all of my work has to do with a place, but... It was also another epic. It was in a series of epic work, so... I start working with epic ideas in Volcano Saga and then Sweeney is the second kind of epic poem and now I have just done another epic piece. It's the fourth. Lines in the Sand is another epic. So I started working with these large texts at that time. And so that's what makes... and then it also was the first time I made such a large piece with a theatre group, the Toneelgroep Amsterdam. So, I mean, it was difficult because it had so many different existences. Like first, I began in Berlin with one actor and did a series of videos with that actor using that table. That's where I made the table for the first time. And then I came here and did it with another actor and worked with a theatre group, and I did a very simple installation without any of the Berlin stuff. So when it came to doing it again I am glad I had the chance to do it again in Queens. I put up all those things together so it's a strange piece in that sense that it has two actors playing the main role. Although I didn't plan it that way. And it has these different locations and different lives, all in that same room. So that's different about that piece. And difficult.

AM: Yes, it's a compilation actually of three events: in the Stedelijk, before that in Germany and then in Queens. (...)

JJ: Yeah. And it has to do with my exploring East Germany after the wall came down.

AM: Yes, because a lot of films relate to East Germany. East Berlin Roads...

JJ: It's all about East Germany. All the Berlin stuff is East. And Sans Souci was in the East, and everything. So I saw Sweeney as being in the east. You know, it became a metaphor for a location for Sweeney. East Germany, Eastern Europe as an alienated figure. And then I also went to Ireland. That was another... All the slides were taken in Ireland, except for the figure, those were the Dutch actor, the body.

AM: Pierre Bokma.

JJ: Pierre Bokma, yes.

AM: It's kind of fragmented.

JJ: It's very fragmented.

AM: This location specificness. I think and interpret like this, that your work... you react to your environment when you make installations as when you make performances. So all the works were location specific in their way. Every time you made an installation it's made for the location, right?

JJ: Well, partly. Every time I make a piece it's made in a location. And then when I make the installation... this last Sweeney piece I made it for that [location]. It's difficult now because it was installed in that Queens space, which is a very strange space. And it worked in that space. Now we are doing it again in this space. It's difficult. It's not the same space. So in that sense it's not made for the location, it's made for the space each time... But now we are trying to make it a stable situation, so the space will always be the same.

AM: Well, it's not only the space to me, because also you use fragments and recordings of the environment and the people who live there, and the language and the recordings of the environment with you.

JJ: Well, that's true, but that's not about the space the piece exists in

AM: (...) How do you feel about the fact that no longer your work is made for the specific space, but more the space is made work-specific, you know what I mean. The space needs to be made for the work.

JJ: That's a luxury. I am really happy that this is happening here because I don't think that that happens very often. Well, maybe it does (...).

AM: Well, Dorine told me it's happening more and more. But how do you feel about the content... (..) Because to me this is quite a change in your work. The location-specificness turned into making the location work-specific. Do you know what I mean or am I too vague?

JJ: That's just a recent thing. Because until now I go to different places and work with the space that's there...

AM: Yes, that's why I am asking.

JJ: I think that this is unusual. Maybe museums will more and more do this.

AM: How do you feel about it?

JJ: Well, I think it's great. Because I am not going to be around. So I think that as much as possible that should happen. Absolutely.

AM: You like it, (...) ok, that's good to know. Well maybe you can tell us something more about your creative working process. You use props from your performances for you installation work. Can you say something about why you pick and the other one just leave out? Can you say something about how that works?

JJ: It's not about the installation. It's about the original piece. I originally pick the props for the piece. I get a lot of things... I just like them. And then I decide to use them. And so then I start to use them, they become part of the piece. They weren't necessarily chosen for that piece. But they become part of it through the process of working with them. And then they are part of the things that make the flavor of the piece, these different props, the ingredients. Organic Honey I would've put the original pieces in there. But I couldn't: my dog chewed them up. So I chose, you know, other fans and other... There are few of the original things there, still. But I chose other objects to substitute for those. But that's the only reason. And, as far as the objects go, mostly I only use the objects that I used in the performance. Or in the original, you know, situation. I don't choose different objects for the installations. Only when they are destroyed. And then the same category of objects.

AM: But in the Sweeney installation it's different for you?

JJ: Well, the Sweeney Astray installation is slightly different, because it could be tweaked a little bit more. But, you know, maybe I am going to make drawings for that because I don't see the drawings. The question is where to put them and things. So I might be adding a couple of things. I'll just decide where they could go and... nothing major though.

AM: So you are planning to add maybe some elements.

JJ: Some drawings, or photographs, that's it. They should be in it, anyway. I had them before and now they are not. So they should come back.

AM: So you can specify this later on, alright. So you said to me, you pick props for your performance work, you use them, they turn into props and then you put them in the installation. And only then they go in the installation. Can you tell me something about what are criteria, in what way do you gather objects and other material for your performances? Because that's where they originate from.

JJ: Sometimes the performance itself, like the text, a story or the idea, suggests an object. That's one way. I mean, for instance in Mirage and in Funnel I decided to work with the form of a cone. So I made cones first out of paper. And then I made them out of tin. I decided to use that form to work around and to use it in different ways. So the cone was a form that I worked with and invented ways to use it. And then the third way is I simply get objects that interest me and I put them in.

AM: They just come into mind?

JJ: Well, I see them... no. Most of the time I see them. If something comes into my mind it's usually about making something. But I go to flea markets and I look for things.

AM: That's where you get most of your objects.

JJ: Well, the found objects, yes.

AM: Because there are also personal, in my opinion, personal objects, like the doll in Organic Honey.

- JJ: Well, that doll [Organic Honey] is something I made, it's a personal thing.
- AM: Yes, and the previous one that your dog chewed up was from your grandmother you told me..
- JJ: That's right. Well, Organic Honey is special in that way. The things in it, it's the first time that I used objects like that in a performance. I did a little bit before but not... and so I used what I had in my possession. I already had a collection of objects. Some were given to me by my family, my grandmother. Others I had. So that's the first time I really did that. And then I have done that ever since. I worked in that way ever since.
- AM: Is it important for you that it is a kind of personal stuff?
- JJ: I don't think of it as personal. I mean, you know, those things were, because I already had them so you could say they're personal, and I made that doll. Now if I find something and I like it, it's not personal. It's just that I like it. It corresponds to something in me. But I don't think of it as being personal necessarily. Because I didn't have it before. Or someone gave it to me. Of course everybody has their own associations with their objects. So it's interesting, it's a whole other subject. You know, the use of objects.
- AM: But the personal stuff is not relating to the content of your work, that's what I am trying to figure out.
- JJ: In Organic Honey it was a way to build my character. What kind of objects does this character have? They become related to my work. To the content. Because I put it in and I react to them. You know, like a mask. I react to the mask and then it becomes me, part of me. And so it becomes part of the fabric of the work. It's more like weaving is another way to think about it, it's woven into the fabric of the work. But I don't think of how I am going to make it more personal. It's not my idea.
- AM: No because once (...) I read your quote that you said: I made it especially for the public. It's not about me, it's about what the public sees. (...) I thought it was in a conversation with Dorine, she said, sometimes she sees another object that fits more. You had something in your mind and it fits more and you want to replace it for that matter. Is that correct?
- JJ: I guess so. Do you remember something like that?
- DM: There was a relation, but I can't remember I said it now.
- JJ: Oh I see. I am sure that's true.
- DM: Oh I think it was with a cloth.
- JJ: The cloth in Sweeney, underneath that table? I think I just made that in the Queens museum. I don't know where the idea came from. I put that cloth and I had clay objects on it in Sweeney in the Queens museum. (...) It has something to do with the character. I mean, the context of the piece in relation to this man who lived up in his tree. For me it's like droppings, or something like that. (...)
- AM: So these clay... lumps, I don't know how to call it, they were thrown on the floor. That's how they got their form.
- JJ: Yes. Well I used clay in the piece in Amsterdam, actually. Janine Huizinga was throwing clay on the floor.

- AM: Yes, I have seen that fragment. (...) More specific what concerns the meaning of the material in your work. Because it's important when we look at conservation strategies, to know what is important of the material.
- JJ: Which material?
- AM: Well, maybe it's more a question for when we are over there, so we can discuss.. because there are very different kinds of objects in your work and I learned that sometimes you say you can replace it, it's no big deal, and with other objects it's very important they stay like they are. But maybe discuss this later on, maybe we can divide them into categories or something
- JJ: Yeah. I don't like...some things are manufactured. So they can easily be manufactured again. Other things are handmade and if you lose them it's hard to replace them. Or something very old, that you can't replace, special object. So these different kinds of things. Like the cones can be made again, in Mirage. They can be reproduced. They are not the original cones. They were made for the Stedelijk show. I had the original ones but I can remember they were all dented and bent. But some of them still exist. But we made new, more beautiful ones. And I don't mind doing that. I think its ok.
- AM: Well, maybe we can get through your work and say, this is replaceable when it's done exact the same way and this is not replaceable. This needs to be retouched or.. but we can do this later on. (...) Can you say something about working with assistants? Because with the Stedelijk retrospective, assistants of the museum helped. Were there in the past, concerning these works, were there other people involved?
- JJ: Absolutely.
- AM: And can you name some of them, the important persons.
- JJ: Well, each piece involved other people. Organic Honey involved a couple of different camera women. Roberta Neiman was the camera woman for Vertical Roll. I couldn't have done that by myself Babette Mangolte was the camera woman for the performance in the performance. Sometimes I was the camera person and I set the camera up and performed in front of it. And then there were other performers. In Organic Honey sometimes there were other performers in the performances. In Sweeney there were almost too many people involved. There were so many different manifestations. So, when there are too many people it becomes (...) more complex to put it all together. Because you have all these different looking people and you have to put it together. But yeah, there's always other people.
- AM: (...) You are talking about the performance and how it's made and that's with a lot of cooperation with a lot of people. But especially with making the installation
- JJ: Well even in the installation we shot some video that was used in the installation with Pierre Bokma and... so they came to the museum and.. because I wanted that video element that represented the fragment of the text. So somebody had to do that. And there were endless discussions, you know, with Dorine and the technicians at the Stedelijk were great, when we were first doing the show.. I am sure there was a lot of discussion with the technicians, right.
- DM: Yeah, sure
- JJ: I couldn't have done this show on my own. Nobody could, a show like this. You saw how many people it took to do this. And the performances I did, I could never rehearse it without, you know, eight people. (...) Even if I do a solo I need one other person to help me.

AM: But you chose persons at the place where it's actually happening.

JJ: Yeah, it depends. In this case yes, I chose people here, and in Berlin when I worked in Berlin. In other cases I bring somebody with me. (...)

AM: Yes, and who would that be. Friends, or..

JJ: No they are never friends. I mean, of course they become friends, but they are either an assistant or a performer. Like I have another piece I am working on now that I do in the past years, it has always been this one performer, who was one of my students in Stuttgart, you know. And now she's very good at doing this. So if she can come I ask her to come.

AM: And what's her name?

JJ: Ragony Hass, yeah.

AM: And returning to the material of your work, sorry for the abrupt...

DM: May I say it's twenty to three, so I don't know...

AM: Well then..

JJ: I think tomorrow morning we could start... Are we going to do it tomorrow morning? We should start early and then we have time.

AM: (...) Ok, we'll just continue tomorrow. I think that's better, because you have appointments and everything.

JJ: Yes, and I think next time we should have water.

AM: Yes!

Interview with Joan Jonas (2) – ‘Artist and work II’

24 January 2007, interviewer: Anne Mink. Camera & montage: Moniem Ibrahim. Location: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, SMCS, director’s room. The interview was taken in the presence of Dorine Mignot.

AM: OK Joan, let’s start the interview. This is the second interview. Yesterday you told me about the creative process preceding your performance work. You told me about it and how it went. Can you tell me a little bit more about the way... do you work from a concept, an idea that gradually develops, do you make sketches, that kind of things. Can you tell me something about that?

JJ: I do a little bit of everything. And different pieces have different ways of beginning. For instance, say with Organic Honey I just began with the camera and the monitor and the deck, sitting in front of the camera and experimenting with this new device. That was a very special moment. And I also had the idea of making something in which the audience... then the idea came to me that the audience would watch this process of me making the images in front of the camera. So that really began in that way. And then later when I worked with the text such as the Icelandic Volcano Saga I began with a story. And that happens when I start with a text. Then I analyze the text and in the Sweeney piece I began with a text but then while I was staying in Berlin and decided that that would be the location, I then just went out with my camera and filmed what I felt was interesting about Berlin. And then went to Ireland and captured typical Irish images and also ancient monuments. You know: stone walls, ancient monuments. So that gradually developed. And when I did the performance with the theatre piece, with the Toneelgroep, Pierre Bokma became an image. So it happens slowly and it develops differently in each piece.

AM: And you wrote a script for it?

JJ: The script you see in the books are all written afterwards. Before all of these pieces I do a lot of writing, taking notes, listing ideas. But none of that really... it all changes when you start actually doing it... That’s just a way of preparing. And of course I write down ideas and I have ideas and concepts which I take. But a lot of the development is trial and error and improvisation in the process. For instance with the Toneelgroep Amsterdam we worked on it for a month in the space with the theatre group. I didn’t know what..., I mean I had the props, I had the glass table, but I didn’t know what I was going to do.

AM: It just developed and in the end it was there.

JJ: Well, it developed, it was there, but... I had very good performers: Pierre Bokma and Gerardjan Rijnders. Pierre invented that character. The way he behaves: that’s his invention. I like to work with actors who are really good like that, that they can invent their own movements. Those were all his movements, I didn’t tell him. I mean, I think I told him some things. Sometimes I tell people exact what to do. But with somebody like him... Isn’t that true? He did that.

DM: I think so, yeah. You said some things and then he was finding his own performance. And he changed it also in the month. It became stronger. And as I remember right you really liked it then, how he developed it.

AM: So the images of the glass table where he lies on and... it is really an intense image. So that is also his own making?

JJ: Yes. And the reason I asked Gerardjan Rijnders to be in the piece (...) I wanted him in the piece because he is the director of the group and I know he would be an important liaison between me and the actors. Because first of all it was in Dutch. And I didn’t understand... it was difficult. I didn’t understand what the actors were saying. That was

what was hard about it maybe. Wouldn't do that again: direct something in a language I don't understand. But having him in the piece I think was a big help as a link between me and the actors.

DM: And the text was the Seamus Heaney text – the translation. So you knew everything, but not in ditto.

JJ: Yeah, before I did that, before I start working on the piece I had taken the text and made a script. I made a script with the text. But not with this stage directions or what the actors would do.

AM: And you wrote notes on it.

JJ: I was working on it, yes

AM: I saw it, so I was wondering...

JJ: Do they have a copy here?

AM: Yes, they do. Are there similarities, or... do you compare the way you make installations to the way you make your performances?

JJ: It is basically more or less the same process, yes. My work is performance-based. There is always an element of performance in the installation.

AM: That's where I went wrong yesterday, because I was trying to figure that out. More about the material (...) do the props, the material and other elements solely emanate from your performance work or do they also come when you made the installation? You picked something from the store or the flea market right here. Do they solely emanate from your performance work or are there other sources for the objects?

JJ: It's again the same thing. It's the performance and the installation are the same. They are not separated. I don't separate those things in my mind. It's just a translation from one to another. So like now I wouldn't go out to the flea market and find another prop for that piece. I have already done that. But while I was working on it in Amsterdam I went to the flea market a lot. None of the props are in the installation. There's a lot of objects in the boxes, they were in the performance, little things. But they don't seem to fit in the installation. That could be a thing I could some time do. But not now. Just make a table with all those props with a picture of them.

AM: I saw a lot of objects when I looked through the objects in the depot. (...)

JJ: Well, in the performance there's a photograph. I should... Maybe it would be nice to have some of the photographs in the installation. During the performance, Gerardjan Rijnders and Janine, the woman, were sitting at a table with all these props – these birds, these different kinds of birds I got from flea markets. It was kind of a deck. Well, it was a kind of a place where they could go when they were not performing. But that's not in here, it's too busy. I think it's better not to have it.

AM: OK, because I saw the birds and I was wondering where they were.

JJ: I mean I did include them in one installation, I think it was in Lyon, actually. I had a table with them on the table.

AM: When you'd have a bigger space, you'd like to...

JJ: Well, I'd really figure out how to do it. I don't think it would fit in this room with all those big projections. Right now, there's no place for it, You'd have to have a place for it. It's

something [touches her head with both hands]. In a way I think it's better to have photograph of them sitting there with the objects. Because I have those photographs.

AM: I have seen one.

JJ: We could think about putting in, I don't know, photographs.

AM: Well, we'll talk about it more later, you can think about it whatever you want to do with it. Because with the Sweeney installation when we [AM and DM] talked about it, you had a smaller version and there were larger versions of the Sweeney piece. Do you think it is important this possibility of versions, of making it smaller or larger, do you think it's important to keep that?

JJ: I do [think it's important to have different versions], but it can't happen unless I am there. So it can never happen. Nobody else could do it. So that's why it is important to make a decision about this and then leave it like that.

AM: And you don't want to, maybe, start large and we take out something.. I am just suggesting here...

JJ: Not now, no. Because the reason that happened with this particular piece and with other pieces is because I am working on it still. Like the Sweeney piece. (...) It started out... the first version at the Stedelijk was before I did the theatre piece. And we did just one little image, which is Pierre on the table. And also I, actually it was Dorines wish that it would be nothing but the Dutch, the people in the Dutch version of the piece would be in that installation at the Stedelijk. Because it was all about that moment in working with the Toneelgroep. And then later, when I had the chance to do it at Queens and it was a very big room, I really wanted to include the other material. And I think that makes it for me more interesting, more complete. Because I really like the footage from Berlin and the work that I did in that moment. Before I came to Amsterdam actually. Which in a way prepared me for the piece in Amsterdam. So when I was able to do it again, I wanted to include the process of the piece.

AM: And you want to keep the possibility, we'll talk about it later, but you want to keep the possibility perhaps, to make a larger version?

JJ: No. I don't think it would be good to make a larger version. It's not about making a larger version. It would just be about adding some little details on the side. (...) I really worked hard on this, the video projections and making decisions about that. I have no desire to go back and do that again.

DM: And within the time you made the installation in the Stedelijk, the theatre piece still had to be done. I think you didn't have edited the Berlin things yet. So it wasn't even possible to...

JJ: We thought about it I remember. And I had an edited version of the double screen you know, parts of that, but that just didn't work. It was very simple, I liked it, just one projection. Very simple.

AM: What do you think we should do with the objects, the birds?

JJ: That's a good question. I have to go look at them. (...) I know they just go round from one place to another.

DM: Some are great.

JJ: Yeah. Maybe we could think of a way of including them. I'll think about it, we'll go unpack them.

AM: Yes, Sweeney is not finished, we have to do a lot about it. We discuss Sweeney later on. What value do you attach to the original materials? And that's a hard question again because original is very relative. Maybe something that you can describe as 'your own hand' in your work? How do you reflect on that? Do you think it's important?

JJ: I do think it is really important. Because I think when that goes away there's a certain kind of... I have seen it in other people's work, it becomes... When somebody else does it, it becomes to clean in a way. And so it loses some... other people would disagree with me if I used the word aura, you know what I mean. So that's part of the idea of reproducing something. It's complicated, this issue. But, on the other hand, if something falls apart, I am not attached to it so much that I can't stand the thought of having it redone. Or substituting things that have disappeared.. I mean, that's still my hand, you know. I am still in charge of doing that. But I think if... I mean, one thing I thought about the costumes is I could make paper reproductions. It would be fun to make. But maybe that's a whole different piece, to make reproductions of certain objects. And I have another installation, The Juniper Tree, with paintings in it on cloth, and I photographed all of them very carefully in case they fall apart. And then I could print them and make... So I thought about that. I mean, that's still my hand of course. But I thought about how to save things.

AM: Even when you are talking to me about saving your stuff, it is that you are in charge. That's also the goal of this, that you can decide what happens with your work. We'll talk about the different elements, how you think about the conservation of it and how important they are. We'll talk about it later, in the space itself of Organic Honey, this afternoon. More about installing your work, because now I am asking more overall questions, were you in the past always present when your work was installed?

JJ: Always.

AM: And that's very important to you?

JJ: I don't think it could be done. I mean, so far. Because I was always in the process of adjusting the piece to a situation. I arrange everything. You know, it's a matter of arranging things.

AM: You were present yes. I had to ask for the record as well, I already thought so. Are there examples, maybe specifically for Organic Honey and Sweeney Astray, or other installations as well, where you were less content with the result?

JJ: Yes.

AM: And why? Can you say something about it?

JJ: Well, for instance certain rooms are beautiful and other rooms are not beautiful. And I like it to be a beautiful space (...). There were two situations. In Stuttgart I had the retrospective. And then the show went to Berlin, where it was in another space. Neither of those spaces were very inspiring. I was very happy to have the shows, but... Like there was a rug on the floor in Stuttgart. A grey rug. I didn't like that.

AM: What do you prefer?

JJ: [A wooden] floor or cement. Bare. Not a rug. I made the best of each situation. So I was very glad to have that show in Stuttgart. I wouldn't have said: no, I won't do it. And then, in Berlin, it was the same thing. The rooms were too small and it was... I was glad to have the show there too, I liked the philosophy of the people who ran the space and everything about it. But... it wasn't inspiring. So the work doesn't look as beautiful as it does... I just showed in Castello di Rivoli and they have really beautiful spaces. Big square rooms. Beautiful.

AM: And a high ceiling, is that important?

JJ: Yes, I like the high ceiling. If the ceiling is too low, or it looks like this [points to the modular ceiling], you know, industrial, it doesn't look so good. So, yes. And then I have been less crazy about, of course, some of my work. You're not crazy about everything you do.

AM: Does this apply to Organic Honey and Sweeney Astray?

JJ: I like those pieces. I wouldn't be doing them over and over again. But they look better in a better space. On the other hand, Sweeney.... I mean, that's not such a great space that we have it in now. But I think it'll look alright. If we could just get it arranged right, you know, with the projections, everything looking ok. Finally, if it's in a different space it will look ok. But everything looks better if it is in a beautiful space. Architectural space.

AM: Let's talk about your films. Recently, you sent the museum new versions of the Organic Honey tapes and the Sweeney Astray tapes. I was wondering, are some of them self-contained, in a way that they can't be incorporated in the installations. Some of the films you sent, are they apart from the installation?

JJ: The Organic Honey tapes are all separate, autonomous works. They have been ever since I made them. Except for the performance tape, and that's a document of one of the performances at Castelli Gallery. It was documented, that I edited for the situation. So it's shorter than the original piece, but it's an edited version. I would like to have a longer edited version of the whole thing. It should be.

AM: The version was edited in 1994, for the installation?

JJ: No, it was later. So it was added to the piece. But I thought it was important to have it as part of the piece, so people could see what the original performance looked like. So all the tapes in Organic Honey can be seen separate, actually.

AM: Does this apply for other elements of elements in the Organic Honey [installation]? It's just a question that needs to be asked.

JJ: No, nothing else. None of the elements would be interesting without everything going around it. Although when I look at it I get ideas about... You know, I like seeing for instance the part with the dog's heads and this monitor's got the dogs head going like this [makes a vertical roll movement]. And then there's another monitor over here with something else and... So I get ideas about what I might do for another piece from seeing that little arrangement.

AM: A new piece?

JJ: Yes I think of... possible, I don't know. But you don't use monitors anymore the way you used to. You know, it's all different. (...) But once they [the objects] become part of the piece, they're part of the piece. That's it. I never... I use my hoop over and over again, that's an abstract prop, it's a circle. But the dolls and the fans... never again. If I wear a costume in a piece I never wear in another.... Oh no, I have a skirt that I've been wearing in a lot of different pieces lately. But it's white, it's wrinkled and it's perfect for different things. But eventually it'll become part of a piece, you know. It's a kind of superstition that I have. That it becomes... it has a kind of smell, or aura, that has to do with that piece. So it can't be used in another piece.
But the Sweeney piece, those tapes, they work all together. Maybe the piece with Pierre in it, screaming, it could be seen... I mean, I think differently from live young video artists, they're not so young anymore, but..., the generation after me. Any of those elements they might show by themselves. I'm more interested in making a complicated

statement. So I think that the Pierre piece could be something on its own. But it interests me to have it in relation to the whole environment. And I didn't edit those pieces to be seen separately. I edited them to be seen with the group, together. So (...) I don't show them by themselves. I mean, maybe if I was going to give a lecture about that piece I would show parts of it.

AM: Well, I thought that films like Disturbances, Glass Puzzle and Upside Down and Backwards were added to Sweeney Astray previously. That is not correct?

JJ: No, they have nothing to do with Sweeney.

AM: No I was trying to figure out how that worked. My information was not correct.

JJ: No, they are earlier works, all of those.

AM: What, in your opinion, should be done with the old versions? Because you replaced it, you sent DVD's.

JJ: Of what, Sweeney Astray?

AM: Sweeney Astray, yes and Organic Honey.

JJ: Organic Honey, there were never... There are no old versions of Organic Honey.

AM: (...) I mean in terms of technology... tapes, DVD's

JJ: Those should be thrown away. That's just something that everybody should know. It's very simple. With video technology since the late sixties, Gert said every ten years, seven years, everything has to be updated to a new format, because they fall apart physically. So it's not about keeping old versions. It's not like keeping old drawings or... They don't work anymore. So now you get digi-beta master, because everything has been upgraded, they call it upgrading, to that format. So over these years I have constantly been upgrading. But I don't do it anymore, Electronic Arts Intermix takes care of that for me, all the tapes that they distribute. But these pieces that are... installations that they do not distribute, I have to keep an eye on and then, once I give you a digi-beta, than you keep an eye on it. And upgrade it. Keep it in a vault.

AM: So it's in the museum's hands from now on.

JJ: But you don't keep the old things. Otherwise you'd have...

DM: Up till now we didn't throw away things. Only when it's really not working anymore at all.

JJ: Yeah, you could keep it. I mean, I am just saying that for the installations you only use the upgraded versions. But it's good to keep the old ones, because... who knows. I mean, I kept my real to real from the early seventies until (...) I was teaching at UCLA in 1995. You know, for thirty, well... twenty years, and then I got enough money to have them all cleaned and transferred to [digi-] beta. So then I could use them. And so that's where that edited version came from. Just cleaning my old tapes. So I couldn't have worked with the real to real. But those are gone now, those real to reals that I had updated. I don't have them anymore.

AM: So you are not attached to technology? The image is more important.

JJ: I can't play them anymore. It's nothing for me. In video the work exists... it doesn't exist anymore for me on the real to reals, because... First of all, the people who cleaned them, kept them. They didn't give them back to me, you know, they keep them. They are

not precious objects. And I couldn't play them. (...) I mean, video technology you can't play, the old formats have no machines

AM: Some artists are really attached to technology and they try everything they can to keep the old machines, old tapes as hard as it is. Actually the impossibility of doing that is also...

JJ: I have an old machine and I don't even know if it works. I never try. (...) I don't know if you could play those old real to reals. You have to look and see if somebody has a machine.

DM: But they are nearly gone. We have one still.

JJ: But that's a museum. Well, for instance, I kept my real to real tapes when I went to Stuttgart. I had my old sound tapes and they re-mastered those. But they had to sit with tiny little cutting. Somebody did that for me there. That was great. Because there are no machines to play those. Well, they had a machine to play it. But it was useless for me in the form that it was. It's hard to explain it. But no, I am not attached. And the material is as good as it was then, now in the present format. There is no difference.

AM: Well, it looks like it's a tape, the image is nice, is good for you.

JJ: It is a tape, but it's a DVD. I mean it's a DVD. The DVD is not going to last. A DVD is a temporary object. The thing that's going to last is the digi-beta that's stored away.

AM: Yes, you have to reproduce it.

JJ: The DVD's are just little flat convenient ways of playing (...). DVD's are not archival, they last two or three years. (...) They look like they are, but they're not. If an artist is going to sell a piece, you do not sell a DVD.

AM: No, I know, you sell the digi-data and put that on a DVD

JJ: No you don't even give them the digi-data. Well, it's another issue. But the museum cannot trust a hard drive (...) You know what I mean. But you should look at the EAI's website. They have now on their website, or they will have soon, all this information about this. Because it's a problem. I talked to my young assistants, nobody knows. You know, these young artists coming out of art school, a lot of them don't know. Which is part of the aesthetic, of not caring, in a way. But, I think they do care and would care in the future.

AM: Earlier you brought it forward and in the Stedelijk catalogue, Dorine says that each installation made an attempt to evoke the atmosphere, the character and multi-layered imagery of the performance work. To what extent do you consider something like the 'spirit of time' when a performance work was made, to what extent do you think it's important that it's there, that you can see and experience that 'spirit of time'?

JJ: I think it's really important. But you could never experience it. I have no idea how people experience it. I don't know if you experience it, because I don't know how you experience it. The only way I can try to bring back the spirit of the time is in the videos, and in the original objects and the original arrangements. That's all I can do. So, the idea was to show everything that's had to do with each piece. That was the way I start to think about those installations, to include everything that was involved in each piece. So in Organic Honey it's all the videos that were... Organic Honey was the first video project in which I used that... in the process of making that piece and working on it for two years, developed a way of making autonomous videotapes. You know, autonomous works like a film, or a poem. So Vertical Roll, Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy, Duet, all were works that came out of the process of making Organic Honey. So then the performance

that you see on another monitor was the vehicle for making those autonomous works. And so I included all the works. But those autonomous works were made from elements in the performance, in the work of Organic Honey. So every single piece in that room is related to each other, intertwined. It's kind of like weaving, somebody said. And so the only thing that I can do is to include the sounds, the look, the feeling, by putting those together in a certain way. So that you get something of the feeling.

AM: Well, the technical devices are quite important, I think, for evolving the time, the age in which you made it.

JJ: What technical device?

AM: Well, the camera, the monitor...

JJ: The thing is, the cameras don't work anymore. I am not attached to old equipment that doesn't work. Because then I couldn't show the work. I can't do it. So eventually they probably won't have monitors. You have to put flat screens. It's great that we have these really good monitors. No, it's very important to have monitors. But like when I work now, I don't use monitors, I use flat screens for my work now. And for instance if I sell a work I don't use monitors anymore. They're huge, they are too big, they're ugly. I like those very classic boxes that are in the installation right now. It's very important to have this glass front, because all the tapes were made for this glass surface. But Organic Honey's Vertical Roll is projected because I like the scale of a big projection in relation to a performance. You get the feeling of a performance more when you see the scale, this big scale. So, I don't have any attachment to having everything exactly the way it was then.

AM: But it's important to know, because you can imitate a monitor, and then get the... more experiencing a monitor when you walk around. It's important to know whether you prefer that.

JJ: I prefer what there is now. But... I don't know. I guess you can build a box around a flats screen and make it look like a monitor. That's a good idea. We could think about that, could do that, yes, than you build a box around it, that's true. And I think you're right. You should have the experience of the monitors.

AM: Well that's my own opinion. Our opinion matters.

JJ: I tell you I haven't had to think about that with this piece yet. It's just that in my present work I think about it. But not yet for this piece. Because so far there are still monitors. But everything becomes obsolete, in technology.

AM: Yes, well in a few decennia the monitors will be gone. It's important to know what we should do with it.

JJ: No (...) I think that I could say that in the future they should make a black box to go around the flat screen. That's what I think.

AM: Right. You told me about the vitrines, the Plexiglas around the dresses you preferred so that people cannot touch it. You are thinking about preservation of your work. Do you have any other ideas about it? How we should preserve it?

JJ: You know, I tell you frankly. I only think about it as it comes up. Because I don't want to think too much about my past work. Because then it becomes a big job. It's enough that I have to think about my slide collection and the images that I have, hundreds of images that I have at home. That's enough, that's like driving me crazy. If I have to think now of future problems about preserving my work, it would drive me crazy. So I like this situation where there are people to help me to do that, and in particular like the dresses,

how to preserve the dresses. That's the problem now. So yes, I would like to think about that. And then I have other solutions, like I thought maybe I could make paper dresses to hang instead, I like the idea. And then it's made by me and it's part of the piece. Paper would last longer than cloth I think, actually. I think so, paper lasts for centuries, cloth disintegrates. It's interesting. Isn't that true, Dorine?

DM: Well I am just thinking. There exists old cloths as well, and exists old paper as well. It's also the way you preserve them.

JJ: The way they are preserved. But I mean, well anyway, I think it's interesting.

DM: Yeah, well it's an interesting idea anyway. But you have your own drawings instead of the cloths that are not, in this case, so good anymore.

JJ: Well those, like they said, they are not going to last for longer than another certain years, so what can I do? I don't think that they are integral to... I don't think the piece depends on those costumes hanging there. I mean, I think there could be photographs of them, that's what I think. It actually could be a substitute: photographs. It would be much easier to... big photographs you know, like life-size photographs. And it would be much easier for people to deal with those. I mean, I didn't think of that until now. But I wouldn't object to that for instance.

DM: But that's a real different feeling.

JJ: Very different feeling.

AM: And the presence of the dresses is very determining.

JJ: It has been great to have them in the piece so far.

AM: But as far as the life of the work concerns, you suggest, well, if the dresses can't be seen anymore, then pictures will be ok. That's what you are saying.

JJ: Yeah, why not? I mean, I have to adjust to that.

AM: Well we talked about DVD's and replacing material for the sake of storage and letting [the piece] go on. Dust and other things like stains, color fading, that kind of things, they may change the appearance of the work. How do you feel about that? Can you say something about it, when you look at your work?

JJ: I don't have any real feeling... like the headdress, I would like to put new feathers in the headdress. It looks a little bedraggled. I don't want it to get looking too pathetic, you know. I don't think you should be sentimental about these things. I really don't. I think it's very important to just go on with it. And if the dresses are all in tatters and rags, maybe that's interesting. You just let dissolve in front of the audiences eyes and you don't try to keep it. I haven't thought about it. I think that those dresses are impossible to save. And the only thing that can be repaired is the headdress. So that could be repaired. It's looking a little pathetic, I think.

AM: It needs to be more alive, with bravura.

JJ: Yeah.

AM: Well, ok, we can discuss this. But also with the chalk drawings: dust, smearing.

JJ: That I have to show you. I have noticed there are some smears. You can easily clean around the lines and then somebody can touch up the lines with a piece of chalk. That

can be kept. But people keep, you know, they touch. They are very fragile. And anybody can do that.

AM: Sandra had a few suggestions about it and we'll talk about it later. But in the overall meaning: dust and stains and scratches on the equipment, the electronic devices? I've seen some tape on it sometimes.

JJ: Where?

AM: On the electric eyes, the buzzer circuit.

JJ: No, you should take the tape off. But I don't mind if those looked all battered and old. They are interesting objects. I like them.

AM: You like the history of the objects.

JJ: Yes. I don't think they work anymore. But I like them being there.

AM: And the tripods, those are scratched, it doesn't matter.

JJ: It's alright, no.

AM: And mirrors can be cleaned?

JJ: Of course, yes. Everything should be dusted when possible. But the blackboards you shouldn't dust. You just have to let the dust. You can brush them off, you know, with a feather I think, and then clean them, you know, the smudges. Those have to be restored.

AM: Well, we can talk with Sandra about it. She's very good at... She's a conservator

JJ: I had these chalk drawings in Volcano Saga. I spent hours... I erased all the smears with an eraser, it took hours. And I touched up the lines. So that can be done. It was on paper.

AM: So retouching is a possibility.

JJ: Oh definitely.

AM: You even prefer it to smearing.

JJ: I do.

AM: Can you imagine a point, or a certain condition of your work, in which it cannot be installed anymore? It's maybe a wrong question for you, but can you imagine a state of your work of which you can say: I don't want it to be shown?

JJ: So far, no. Well maybe if you are sending it some place and you lose Organic Honey in a storm, the cargo ship, you know, the container falls off. I would be very sorry to lose the photographs of my dog, because I don't have any negatives. It would be hard to reproduce.

AM: I am referring to a kind of condition, a state the work is in.

JJ: I don't know yet. I can't answer that question.

AM: Ok, you cannot answer it, it's ok. Well actually, those were the overall questions I had for now. I ran out of questions, I am thinking...

DM: No that's fine. Because I think that Gijs wants to be in the room, because he knocked the door...

AM: Thank you so much Joan.

JJ: Thank you.

Interview 3 with Joan Jonas – ‘Organic Honey’

26 January 2007. Interviewer: Anne Mink. Camera & montage: Moniem Ibrahim. Location: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, SMCS, Organic Honey installation. The interview was taken in the presence of Dorine Mignot.

[The aim of this interview was to find out what aspects of the material are important for the meaning/content of Organic Honey and what consequences this meaning has for the installation and conservation of the work.]

AM: We are in the Organic Honey installation, the set-up, I'll try in this interview to figure out what aspects of the material are important for the meaning and the content [of Organic Honey] and furthermore for conservation (...) maybe. So I would like to propose to first pose some overall questions about space, about light and everything and then later on discuss things more piece by piece. Yes?
Do you regard Organic Honey as it is now, do you regard it as complete?

JJ: Yes

AM: Ok. So, in case of future installations...

JJ: Yes

[Later in the interview a few aspects came up that needed to be changed in future presentations of the installation, like lighting, placement of entrances, media equipment, cables, etc.]

AM: (...) is everything ok with the color of the wall...

JJ: It should be a white room, basically.

AM: And the floor?

JJ: On the floor it should either be stone, cement or wood.

AM: Lighting?

JJ: Lighting is not perfect, because it's not finished. There's all kinds of other light and it's not right yet. But we're working on that. It's not refined.

AM: Should there be daylight involved?

JJ: No daylight.

AM: So the fine-tuning of the light will go on later on.

JJ: I think so, we are working on that. I mean all the images, the things on the walls should be very very dimly lit. But that has to be written down. And the table dimly lit, and the chair. The objects on the walls, the costumes, the pictures on the wall. You don't have to light the camera and the arrangement of the cameras: that's already lit. And this is already lit behind this [the photo ensemble behind the paper wall]. But everything else: dimly lit, very dim. It shouldn't be too bright in here.

AM: The measurements of the space, do you think it's ok?

JJ: This is it. You know, we said that the space in Paris was smaller, but we are not in Paris anymore. But this is the way it was done in Paris. I think actually that's fine, yeah. I can't

imagine it... it could be half a foot or a foot smaller, you know, a square, but I think proportions should stay the same.

AM: Yes, and the placements of the objects is good like it is now.

JJ: Yes.

AM: Can you say something about how loud the audio should be?

JJ: You should be able to hear everything at the same time. Nothing in this room should be louder than anything else. You should hear all the different sounds all the time. But it shouldn't be too loud. Right now I sort of like I can hear that [OHVT], I can hear Vertical Roll, I can't hear Anxious Automation very well. I like to hear the music coming from that [OHVR]. So you have to just figure out. And you don't want to deafen the people.

AM: Can you tell me something about constraints on the (hired) technical devices, do you think the proportions are correct, are good, from the monitors?

JJ: Well that's a standard proportion, so I don't have any opinion on that. That's it.

AM: Do you like how it looks?

JJ: Yes I do. I like these monitors. They are very simple black boxes. They are classical monitors, you know, from a certain time. And they are well designed and I like that. I don't really like TV-sets that have these big backs and lots of junk around them. I like these simple black boxes. Or grey. Simple boxes. They should be black but grey is alright if they look like that.

AM: And you don't have a preference for brand or age or...

JJ: No. I have to trust the technician to get the best.

AM: How should the public gain access?

JJ: Well, in this room there could be an entrance here [points to corner entrance I] and an exit over there [points to corner entrance II]. I don't like that big door there [points to large northern entrance], that shouldn't be there. Because I can't really see (...) We have to talk about it. That dog photograph [23] could be moved a little bit. Each picture should be moved over a little bit toward each other when the door is not there. We have to talk about that. But there could be an exit over there [corner entrance II] and an entrance here [corner entrance I], because they always need... and nothing there either, I don't like that hole either [southern emergency exit].

AM: But in the beginning of the installation you told me, well, I imagined this as a [points to corner entrance I], that monitor over there, with the Organic Honey Vertical Roll, I imagined this wall closed.

JJ: Yeah, it was closed, since you'd have to have two...in a museum like the Stedelijk, they have an exit and an entrance. So I'd rather have it in the two corners, diagonally. I don't like these on the sides.

AM: And is there one [main] entrance for you?

JJ: No, for me, when I am making up the piece I stand here [corner entrance I] and I look at it as if from the entrance. But (...) I don't think you should control which side they come from.

AM: Did you apply the [named] criteria to previous installations, about the floor, about the walls, about the lighting...

JJ: No, because I never had the choice. No-one ever asked me, put it that way. And I had to accept what was there.

AM: You told me it [the position of the objects etc.] is fixed, so nothing can be moved within a certain margin?

JJ: No.

AM: Nothing on the table, nothing...

JJ: I'd say no. Why, you know? There's no real reason to.

AM: Then it's very clear for me now.

JJ: No, because I carefully put that monitor, for instance, just in that position. Everything is really placed with purpose. It's not just arbitrary.

AM: What do you think of the current condition [of Organic Honey]? Is it ok for you? Do you think it's in a good condition?

JJ: Yeah I do. The lighting is not finished. But I think it's in good condition, yeah. I mean, I think that table looked better when the paper isn't underneath the objects. That shouldn't be there.

AM: In your opinion, is there a discrepancy between previous installations and how it is now?

JJ: No.

AM: Well, I've asked this maybe a previous time, but to what extent is damage and decay for you acceptable? Is it ok for you to reflect on this right now or do you want to discuss this piece by piece?

JJ: It's really hard to say because some things... I wouldn't want to see the drawings all wrinkled and, you know, the glass broken and... I want the drawings to look like they look now, the way things look in a museum is always... you don't see damage to (...) objects, you really don't. So, the only thing we are really talking about really are the costumes and the fans on the table. Everything else is going to stay. Maybe the cloth is going to be... but that's in a very good condition right now. So the only thing that are a problem are the fans and the costumes. So, those things either have to be replaced or there has to be another way of thinking about showing them. Because we don't want the dressed to be hanging in rags, it's pathetic. I don't want that.

AM: Well, actually the further going on of the interview would be discussing it [the installation elements] piece by piece.

DM: I have one more question. You should also mention that this one [beamer of OHVT] has to hang, and the threads [cables] have to be bound [taped]. It gives a really different image.

AM: I was planning to ask this later on.

DM: No but you asked four times if everything is ok and it's not. You only said the lighting (...) and this thing [pedestal of the beamer for OHVT] is also really an object.

AM: And that should be hung.

JJ: Yes. The wires should be done in a certain way and the projectors should be hung. And I might add more performance photographs.

AM: Ok. It's good to know.

JJ: Alright. So I'll come right back, with the students.

[Here Joan Jonas gives a short résumé of the things that should be changed in the installation, for the record]

JJ: No actually in relation to this is the way it should be, I forgot to say the cables are a mess. They should be totally tied together going down one leg of whatever furniture they're on and going in one line to the wall, you know, taped down.

AM: In a straight line to the wall?

JJ: Well, they should go around, like... to the nearest... this should go straight back and over. It should not be a diagonal, you know. That can go straight back. The camera cables should not be tight... All the camera cables should go down the legs of the tripods. All those separate cables have to go down the legs of the tripods. Not hanging out like that.

AM: So you want them [the cables] to be as invisible as possible.

JJ: Yes.

AM: And you want them to be taped..?

JJ: Yes, on the floor.

AM: And the color should match..

JJ: The floor, yeah. In this room it would be a grey ... whatever.

AM: It must be as invisible as possible.

JJ: Yeah.

AM: Right, that's important. That little table over there, maybe we should go there?...

JJ: Yes, and this projector [OHVT] should be hanging and not... yes.

AM: What do you think of this table [with the closed circuit monitor and the drawings with the dog heads]?

JJ: I like this table.

AM: You like all of it?

JJ: I like all of it because it fits in with the other table. The aesthetic is the same, and it's rather delicate. I like the delicacy of the stands, you know, there is less material.

AM: The stands are coming from here. There are some paint stains on it, like white stains. Do you want especially these ones, or should we replace them by new ones.

JJ: Well I don't see any paint stains. No these are ok. (..) I think it's alright. I like it a kind of...

AM: And this apparatus [points to the Anxious Automation DVD-player on a small wooden table] here...

JJ: Should not be there. It should be hidden. (...) I mean, that's a mess down there. It should not be a mess like that.

AM: It should be clean.

JJ: Yes.

AM: And this device you want it to be hidden behind the wall or somewhere else?

JJ: Yeah. I want that hidden behind the wall. I think actually all the decks, if possible. I mean, this [the Anxious Automation DVD-player] in particular, because there is no place to put it here. I think it would be better if they were not showing.

AM: And that goes for all [the decks]?

JJ: I think so.

AM: All the issues we discuss now, we'll take care of, and then it's ok.

JJ: Yeah. And there should be water in that jar over there. Water in the jar with pennies in the jar. And the little glass in the jar.

AM: Maybe we should discuss the table right now.

JJ: Well, of course this paper should not be here. It's just for this table because the table wasn't clean. I think the objects are all right. They should be held down with wire, so they're anchored. So you drill holes in the table and you put wire around the objects holding them down.

AM: Why?

JJ: Because otherwise people lift them up and maybe take them. They are loose.

AM: It's for protection.

JJ: Yes, it is for protection. And there should be water in this jar [47a] up to here, about [3/4].

AM: You used this jar in your performance?

JJ: Yeah. And this [47b] goes in the water, like that, and you put the pennies in there.

AM: In the jar.

JJ: Some in the thing [47b] and some not.

AM: How many do you want in there?

JJ: I'll put some in before I leave. I mean, I'll leave some new ones.

AM: Before we discuss all these elements, maybe it's good and it's nice when you say something about the function or the meaning of the object, and then say something about the origin of it. And then we can talk about criteria for conservation and installation.

JJ: OK. This was my grandmother's spoon [43] and I kept it. I used it in this piece. This was actually one of the first images in this piece, hitting the mirror with the spoon. So, that's the whole image in the Vertical Roll and it was one of the first things... I did it with a hammer in that [OHVT], but then I used this spoon in this other one (VR, OHVR). And this was a mirror [54] that some friend gave me.

AM: Is it a mirror?

JJ: It's a Japanese mirror. It's supposed to have it polished. It's an old Japanese mirror. In Japan, I bought it, when I bought the first Portapak.

AM: In 1970.

JJ: Yeah. And then Larry Bell, who had a studio next-door to where I performed this piece in Los Angeles, gave me these mirrors [44, 45]. He made them. He's an artist who makes... he works with mirrored glass. He gave me these two objects.

AM: These are important.

JJ: Yes. I have always had them, since the beginning. I couldn't replace these, actually, if they broke. It would be...

AM: We should be very careful with these.

JJ: Yeah. And these are... you'll see in the videotape, here I make a drawing around objects. And that's what some of these were used for. You know, I made a drawing of lines, outlining objects. And some of these were for that drawing. This [32] appears in the Vertical Roll. It's part of the [makes a vertical roll movement], it's from a book on masks that I had. These fans [38-41] were props that I used in the performance.

AM: These fans particularly?

JJ: No, not these fans, but fans. They refer to the original fans, but these are not the original fans.

AM: These fans, you bought when?

JJ: I think we bought them when we did the piece in Amsterdam. I looked for them then.

AM: So you bought them here.

JJ: No, I may have bought them in New York.

AM: Yes. And the doll [55]?

JJ: I made the doll when I was about in second grade or third grade or fourth grade. It's a doll, it's supposed to be a Navaho, a Navaho Indian. A Native American, a Navaho. And it's kind of falling apart actually. I think the last time that people touched it, that was the trouble.

AM: Do you want the museum, the conservators, to look at it and fix it more or do you want to keep it like this?

JJ: No, I want it to be fixed. They could glue the hair down. And it could be... this is paper-maché, it could be fixed and touched [up]. And the head is falling off. (...) This should be fixed, actually. I would like that. And this [56] is something I found.

AM: And you made the knot yourself?

JJ: No, I didn't, no. Somebody else. It's a folk art object, you know, I didn't do it.

AM: Well, where did you find this?

JJ: I don't remember, I don't know.

AM: I wonder where you find these things, you know.

JJ: Some flea market, second hand store, some place. I think up in Canada maybe. I don't know.

AM: The fans, you said, were from 1994 or.. from a flea market and..

JJ: They are from all different places. I mean, I don't remember where I bought everything. I buy a lot of objects and I use some and I don't use others. But I buy the objects to use because I like them.

AM: Of the objects that are here, on this table, are there amongst them replaceable objects?

JJ: The fans could all be replaced. Nothing else could be... it would be hard to replace any of these things.

AM: Yes. Well when we find exactly the same purse as that one [42], then still?

JJ: Well, that would be all right with me. But I don't think you could find this, or this, or this [32, 44, 45, 54, 55, 56]. Unless you found the rest of the silver [referring to the spoon] that I sold. And you could use another jar, if this [47a] broke, if you got another big, kind of old jar, that would be all right.

AM: But within this jar you could see like corrosion, stains.

JJ: You can? Oh yes, it's from the pennies. It could be cleaned. You could clean it.

AM: Well, I think..

JJ: You think it gives it flavor?

AM: Do you think it's important that these stains are in?

JJ: I never thought of it.

AM: And now when you look at it?

JJ: I didn't notice it. I think it could be cleaned. Like this [tape rests on the jar], it could be cleaned off.

AM: Would you want it to be clean?

JJ: I don't know. It's a good question. This isn't the original jar by the way. I couldn't find the original jar. But I like this jar even better.

AM: But the stains are from the installation...

JJ: The stains are from the pennies, I think

AM: Yes ok, but.. Is it filled with water? You already said that right?

JJ: Yes, so they are always in there during the installation. I don't like this [tape rests] in particular. The stains could stay. This [tape rests] could be taken off.

AM: OK. But you don't know where it's from.

JJ: It's... I probably got it either in Holland or in New York, I don't know where. Because some things I got, a few things I got here, but not very many things.

AM: Maybe we leave the table, oh no, this, the cloth [49].

JJ: This is not the original. I got this in New York, definitely, and it's not the original. It's a quilt.. It's not a quilt, it's to be made into a quilt and I don't know how old it is. I got it in an antique store in New York City. Because the old one disappeared. I don't know where it went. Yes. But it was also an old quilt.

AM: And you chose this one...

JJ: I chose this one because I liked it. And it's very unusual actually, this. I never saw anything like it.

AM: No, me neither. So.. oh no, the table [72]. You said something about the original..

JJ: I think I have the original horses, which I am going to send if I have them. Before I leave we should see how high this is to make sure that they are the right height, because I like this height. I think it probably is, I remember. And then the table should just be what it is, a four by eight foot piece of plywood.

AM: And the wood color, is that ok?

JJ: It's just blond plywood. But it should be good plywood because otherwise it would start... you know, it shouldn't warp. You know the word warp? Sometimes it warps, it should not warp. (...) And this [53] has to be attached to the chair [37].

AM: How would you like it to be attached to the chair?

JJ: I think as delicately as possible. I can't remember.

AM: Is it in previous times attached to the chair?

JJ: Yes, because any of these things like this could be just easily taken.

AM: So the museum must find a way to almost invisibly attach them to the chair.

JJ: Yeah.

AM: And the mirror [46]?

JJ: No, because that could be replaced actually.

AM: It could be replaced? Where did you find this one?

JJ: I had it made, I think

AM: Because it's hand cut.

JJ: I think, first I found one and then I had this one made. Because I am not sure where the original one is. I don't know, I can't remember.

AM: Ok. But it's important that you say whether it can be replaced or not.

JJ: That can be replaced.

AM: When it's hand cut, is that important?

JJ: No.

AM: And the chair [37] itself..

JJ: The chair, I hope you won't have to replace it.

AM: No, I am not talking about replacing in the first place now.

JJ: The chair could be fixed. This [the backside] bothers me a little bit, it's coming off. It was fixed ones. And I don't know why that nail is there, exactly. If it's holding... it's not holding anything.

AM: You think it was there already, or not?

JJ: I think so. Maybe it should stay there, I don't know, but. If the chair gets loose, or anything like that, it should be fixed.

AM: Yes. And where did you find the chair?

JJ: I found it in the basement of my loft building in New York. It's an old accountants chair, you know, somebody who does numbers.

AM: And why did you chose this chair?

JJ: Because I liked it. I only have it because I liked it, so it became. When I was working on this piece, this was the chair. Well, the very first time I made this as a performance... actually Sol le Wit asked me to do something for his class. And so I went to a loft nearby and 1-12 Green Street, which was an alternative space at the time, and I made a kind of performance. The very first one, with this table, this chair and a monitor on the table, and I made that piece [OHVT]. That was when I made that, in front of an audience, yeah.

AM: In front of the class.

JJ: Well, I may have reshot it later, but I basically did those actions.

AM: Ok, so that's the first real performance. And did you make these drawings then?

JJ: This was the first drawing [23], I made this [8] later, for a second performance. I worked for two years on it. And so this was the second, soon after the first. But that was the first. But at first I had a Japanese scroll, you'll see, it's a Japanese image. But that became after when I did it in California. If you look at the book right away, same year I did it in California I put that in.

AM: You replaced the Japanese geisha...

JJ: No, I placed the geisha on the first performance in New York, in the Lo Guidice Gallery, the second performance had that image [23] and the third one in Castelli had this one [8].

AM: Do you like the way the drawings look, in the frames and everything?

JJ: Yes.

AM: And the height?

JJ: Yes, I do.

AM: Maybe we'll move on to this. It's a dummy, a replica of the fan jacket. You want it to be hanged on a hanger?

JJ: Yes, the restorer said that it should go on a special hanger with puffy things to support it.

AM: A body, yes. And you want it to be put high, like this?

JJ: Yeah, that way people don't touch it. That's one way to protect it, yeah. And also they are going to restore it a little bit, fix the things that are already still there, so they don't get worse.

AM: Ok. And where did you get the fan jacket?

JJ: I got it in California, the same place I got the dress and the belly dancing costume. At a flea market in Los Angeles.

AM: And your chalk board, chalk drawing [9]. It was made during an Organic Honey performance?

JJ: Yes, you know, I probably reconstructed it, but I made this drawing during the performance, in the performance.

AM: But this could be a reconstruction, later made.

JJ: Yes, it could be.

AM: Ok. Can you tell me something more about to do with it when it gets smeared or fingerprints...

JJ: If we walk over here. If you have a damp cloth you can go like that. With a damp cloth. And then a little piece of chalk, you could just... very lightly, somebody who knows how to. First you have to practice on another bard, to make sure... Because you can take a sharp piece and then it would look different, it should look the same.

AM: Well, Sandra, the restorer, told me that there are methods where you can put on a little layer on it, almost invisible to the eye, so you can fixate it.

JJ: Oh great.

AM: Is that a possibility for you?

JJ: Yes. But it should be fixed first. I mean, this should be restored a little bit. Maybe before I leave I should work on this a little bit. If you could get me some chalk, some school chalk.

AM: I'll discuss it with Sandra, because she's the head...

JJ: Ask her, because I could fix it before I leave. And then you could do that. But right now, it's a little smeared.

AM: And you don't like it to be smeared.

JJ: Well, I don't mind if it... it depends. It looks like it's smeared afterwards, I don't like that.

AM: Yes, so we have to discuss this later on. So you don't mind... because it's very inherent to the material that you can wipe it off. It's in the performance also that you draw and you wipe it out, you draw and you wipe. It's inherent to the chalk. Isn't it important that this [characteristic] is remained, the 'chalkiness'?

JJ: No. Because it is important that it's a drawing in the installation. It's important to me that this drawing is part of the installation.

AM: We talked about this [23], ehm...

JJ: These drawings [20, 21, 22] were made in the performance, all these three drawings. In relation to that [closed circuit circuit].

AM: In the Vertical Roll performance, or..?

JJ: Yeah, in the Vertical Roll.

AM: Can you say something about... Moniem can you film this image? Can you say something about how it works. What do we see here?

JJ: You see here the... it's called the vertical roll, and it's the out of sync bar, it's out of sync. manipulated by a little button, a little thing behind the monitor. And I told Gert that it should be set as slow as you could get it. Because if you do it too fast it'll go too fast. This is about right, like that.

AM: Is it important that the vertical roll on that monitor [playing the video Vertical Roll] corresponds?

JJ: No, you can't.

AM: But if it would be possible?

JJ: No, it's not important, I don't care. No, I like it out of sync. I like they are different.

AM: And how does the image... because I saw you moving the drawings.

JJ: Well, because around the vertical roll you have the top image to be part of the bottom image, so it becomes a dog's head. And on the paper it's split, and that is what interested me.

AM: Yes. And you did it with this one as well?

JJ: Yes, all these three drawings were

AM: You used them all [in the performance]. Can you maybe explain for the camera...

JJ: This is called a circuit breaker [58-61]. And it's a beam of light that's shining across at the other... whatever, receiver. And if you put your hand in the middle there, you break the circuit. And I had it in the piece when I was making that piece [OHVT] and performing. When I would step there, you would hear this loud buzzing noise, because the circuit was broken. It set off a sound. Let me show you. You can hear... this very faint clicking. You can't really hear. IT's not attached to anything [now]. It was attached to a sound [during the performance].

AM: Yes. So these ones are working?

JJ: Well, it could work, but it's not really working the way it should. But at least the lights are on, I like that.

AM: Because these ones are attached to a contact.

JJ: No, they're not. Well, they are not attached to something that makes the sound.

AM: No, ok, that's not what I meant. I meant this cable is connected...

JJ: Well, they are just plugged in, they are not attached to anything.

AM: You want the public to see that it's plugged in?

JJ: They can't.

AM: Because it's hidden.

JJ: They can't because the only way they see is when they put their hand down there.

AM: No, I am not talking about the buzzing sound. This implies that the device is on.

JJ: No, it has to be plugged in, yeah.

AM: I am asking you this also because that one is not plugged in.

JJ: They should both be plugged in.

AM: And the audience should see it.

JJ: Yeah. But if they can't plug it in.. I'd like to have them in.

[Here Joan takes a break to give an introduction of both installations to a small group of students of the Rijksacademie. After she had spoken with the students, she brought forward some more or less drastic changes with relation to the conservation of Organic Honey. Later that week, for instance after she had a talk with Sandra Weerdenburg, these changes were more thought over and nuanced.]

JJ: And I am also going to reproduce the costumes. Forget about the vitrines, get them copied. That's my new thought.

AM: Are you going to copy them?

JJ: No. We are going to have them done. But we'll find a way. Maybe there's a...

DM: We'll wait until Monday...

JJ: We'll talk about that, yeah.

AM: It's shocking news!

JJ: They can even use the same beads, you know what I mean. All the same beads. That could be the original material.

AM: You like the idea of getting a new dress.

JJ: Well, as (...) said, a vitrine will look... maybe it will look terrible. And it looks much nicer if they were just out, don't you think?

DM: You'd better make two [laughter].

JJ: Well you are right actually, yes two. Ok, that's settled, ok. We're going to reproduce the costumes, very clear. It's good to have an outsider with a clear..

AM: You like the idea of a dress in a space and not a box around it.

JJ: Yes I do. I think it looks nicer. It makes it friendly and more... performative.

AM: And keep the old ones?

JJ: Of course we'll keep the old ones. Except unless...

AM: Because you said something about the beads. You could find any beads

JJ: Well, we'll find other beads...

AM: Well, we'll discuss this Monday, you can think about it. Well, we stopped there. I think we've discussed this, this group. Maybe we can move to the paper wall [13]?

JJ: Ok.

AM: Can you tell me, Joan, where we are looking at?

JJ: Well, each... I worked on this performance for two years, until I decided that it was finished. I didn't want to work on it anymore. And each time I did the performance it was in a different space and I did it slightly differently. Because I was interested in both developing and experimenting with it. And, so... when I did it in Castelli, there was a back room. That was in '73 I think. And... I think that was the first time I did this. And I made these photographs and I put them in the back room. And so part of the action took place where the audience couldn't see it. So the camera woman and I... and you could see in that... it's not quite clear, the camera woman and I went into the back room and they couldn't see us, but she was videotaping these photographs and they appeared on the monitor. (...) And they could see me also, I was in the back room, and the photographs on the monitor. And then when I did it again at Toselli, and whenever I did it after that I used this paper wall. I was a little bit inspired by Japanese theatre, you know, the use of paper, making a wall. And that's when I used the paper wall. There are photographs of the Toselli performance in Milan, where I used the paper wall. And the photographs were behind the paper wall. And actually later I used this idea of the paper wall in other works: Glass Puzzle and Funnel, I made paper walls, so I developed this idea later.

AM: Where did you get this paper wall from?

JJ: This is a (...) photographic backdrop paper. It's just standard photographic backdrop paper, and you could get it anywhere. And if this tears, you should just get a new roll. But I like these wooden... are very important that they look like that. That's what I used originally, these long wooden dowels. But the paper you can reproduce.

AM: Did you make it yourself?

JJ: Probably, yeah. It's easy to make.

AM: Right. And those photographs [28-31, 33-36]?

JJ: Those photographs, they are all by different people. But I, you know, these photographs [28-31], that's me in the mask with the dress and the patterns were Babette Mangolte's. I asked her to do them. The dog photographs are all by different people, actually. I didn't make those dog photographs, other people did. And those are the only prints of those photographs. Probably, Babette has those negatives, but if you lose or... that's why I

wanted to copy those, because I don't mind copying photographs. I wouldn't want to lose those photographs. Maybe they should be copied, the museum should copy them (...), because it would be a shame to lose them.

AM: Is there a special reason why there is a list around the dog photos and these.

JJ: Well, you know, the dog and the woman are the two presences in the piece. (...) Oh that [the frame]. I didn't make a decision, that just happened. But I don't mind it. Because it looks kind of... the way it might have looked. The way I did it. I think originally I just had them on the wall, they probably didn't have any frame. But when they became part of the installation they were. I don't know why that is. Do you think some of them weren't in the original installation? I don't know.

DM: I think, from the beginning, probably you did it. No, I know the dogs were in a thing, they were already framed. And the three, I don't know

JJ: Anyway, I can't remember. But I don't mind having it like that. And then, now this [small grey closed circuit monitor behind the paper wall], is so to see what's behind the screen. The last time I did this I was able to have a close-up of one of those [dog] faces, it was just one face. I sort of like this, with the two faces, you know, that's because the camera could do that. So maybe we should... [to Dorine] Do you like that? We should leave it like that.

DM: There's something of the love for your dog's coming out of it, it's up.

JJ: Yeah, No, I like that image because it's part of what's back there, I like that.

AM: So this is your dog?

JJ: It was my dog, yeah.

AM: It died. Because you see a lot of.. she occurs all the time.

JJ: This dog is in this piece prominently, yeah. Because she was there, and so she became part of my vocabulary. It has to do with different things. With everyday life, my dog, and mythology, the animal, you know, becoming part of the piece. The part an animal plays in mythology as a companion

AM: It has a kind of symbolic, or metaphorical meaning..

JJ: Yes. And then in the piece I howl like a dog, so I become sort of like a dog also.

AM: And the howling you do beside a camera [monitor] on which you howl again. At the image.

JJ: Yes. I do it in different ways. I did it that way, I made a piece called Duet, and then in another performance I just came out and howled, and I had a black dress on. And that's when I was thinking of this writer, Djuna Barnes, she's a well-known, for some people, writer from the thirties I think, or forties. (...) One of her novels or poetic works has to do with a woman and a dog. So I was thinking about that, so. I altered it slightly in different performances, basically. So this mirror [12] was in the very first performance. It's not the same mirror, and it was on wheels and I had the mirror, because of my earlier work with mirrors I wanted to put a mirror... So the mirror... The only function it had in that first piece was, it was pushed in front of the audience, so the first thing the audience saw was themselves in the mirror. Because it related to the video work in which you see yourself and it related to the earlier mirror works in which the audience... And I like that, that reference. And then I think that was it.

AM: Well (...) I read about you saying it evokes a kind of awkwardness, when you look at yourself. The public looks at itself when the image is rolling in front of their eyes. And you liked that.

JJ: I did, yes. Well the other thing about this mirror I just remembered, it was part of the wall that was in a piece called Choreomania, that Richard Serra designed. And part of the wall was this mirror. The wall was three times this size. It was hanging vertically from the ceiling. So, when we took the wall apart we saved the mirror, and it was already framed on a piece of wood. So then when I did Organic Honey after that I had that prop and which as I do often is reuse props. So just put in on wheels and it became part of this piece.

AM: And is it this mirror exactly that you used in Choreomania.

JJ: Yes. I mean of course it's not the same mirror, it's been reproduced. But it's the same size exactly and the same [design].

AM: Who made this?

JJ: I think... you made it [points to Dorine]. The Stedelijk Museum made it.

AM: So when it breaks, we can rebuild it.

JJ: Definitely.

AM: Let's move over here.

JJ: Well, these [24-27] are all the posters I had left from the different performances. And there may be more but I don't have them. But... this [25] is the very first performance that I did at Lo Guidice gallery, and I am dressed up like Organic Honey. And actually Richard Serra took that photograph. Then the next performance [26] I think was in LA, Los Angeles, at the... I did it in the old Robert Irwin studio, which became the Ace gallery, and.. I made this drawing, I made the poster. This [27] was a festival, the very first time I was ever invited in being in a festival in Europe, and it was a series of festivals that actually Simone Forti and an Italian art dealer named Fabio Sergentini organized. (...) So that was the first time I was invited and it was very nice to be in this festival with these other people were friends and, you know, acquaintances, colleagues.

AM: And you kept these affiches at home, you stored them.

JJ: I kept them.

AM: And then you put them inside the installation.

JJ: And this poster [24] was made for that performance [OHVR] in '73. So, and I made that drawing for the poster. And it became part of the piece.

AM: And there is one of each?

JJ: I think I may have more of these [24], I may have one of this [27], one of this [26] and I have more of these [24].

AM: You say that some of them have a little bit tape on them...

JJ: No this one is the only one I have of this [26].

AM: No I think it's nice, it's not bad or anything

JJ: No I like it like that. It's old.

AM: Yes. Ok, that's about this. We talked about that [51a, 51b], so we leave it out now. This one as well [50]. Maybe about the chalk drawings. Because I was interested in what we are looking at.

JJ: The chalk drawings, yeah. You are looking at reproduced chalk drawings for this piece, That one over there [9], I made it in the performance and it's based on a drawing by a New Guinea tribe and it's called the Melukean Book of the Dead, New Guinea, and it's a drawing you make when you go from life to death and you have to go through this character named the devouring witch.

AM: I read about it.

JJ: Yeah, she starts the drawing and then you have to finish it. So you have to know all these drawings, but of course you don't know that when you see the piece. But I just want to reference that, because it's from another culture and it's important that people know that.

AM: How did you get in touch with this information?

JJ: It was in a book called... it's a well-known book about spiritual practices in which... I think Jung put it together, of different essays of different people about different spiritual practices. And they are in that essay about these drawings, there are several different... and I used several different... in Mirage I used those drawings. But (...) it's perfect for me for performance because it's one line and you never take your chalk off, you know.

AM: What is attractive to that kind of drawing? Why do you do that?

JJ: Well it's very performative if you watch somebody begin a drawing and then finish it in one gesture. It's about that one gesture

AM: It doesn't have a beginning or an ending..

JJ: It does have a beginning and end.

AM: Yes, but it doesn't look like it.

JJ: Maybe not. But you see where the line goes out of the picture.

AM: Yes that's true. So it's more that it's a performative act.

JJ: Yes, it has a lot of connotations, it has a lot of... that you might think of. It's abstract and it's on a grid, it's continuous, it's a looping... I don't know, there is a lot of... I mean, I don't want to say what it means. It is what it is. And then these other drawings... those two drawings [11a, 11b] are based on a performance I did outdoors, in which there is a circle and a line, and then we walk along the circle and the line with a long pole. And then when I made that performance, I made it first in Nova Scotia which called Beach Piece. I just made a circle and a line, a circle with sand and stones and a line with poles. And then when I made Songdelay, actually Gordon Matta Clark, was one of the people that painted a circle and a line on the pavement, and he and another performer walked around it with a pole. So it's exactly the pattern of the pole. You can walk along the length of the line and only halfway around the circle, or around the whole circle and halfway... it's like a piston in a car. So, when I start doing the Organic Honey pieces, I made this drawing. I make it in that tape [OHVT]. I put that drawing into that piece, that's what they are. That drawing of the sun [10], I think I made later but I liked it so I put it in this piece. Actually it was there, somehow, it started hanging around. It appeared, all of a sudden.

AM: Is it like a symbol?

JJ: Well that was part of a chalk drawing sequence which is called Mirage. But it appeared in this piece, so I left it. It's one of those...

AM: It's a coincidence.

JJ: Yeah, it's a corky thing. I think it fits in here, I like it.

AM: And did you remake those for the installation in 1994?

JJ: Yes. I think so. Yeah I did. I had to remake all those drawings because those did not survive.

AM: There is one mirror [16] over there.

JJ: That is another corky thing. I think that's from Juniper Tree. But it started to show up in this piece, so I left it. It's a kind of, you know, I like it. The number nine was important in that piece, and I painted on mirrors in that piece in that way. So this mirror probably belongs to Juniper Tree, but it showed up with this piece when it went places.

AM: Is this the original piece?

JJ: Yes, that's original.

AM: What paint is on it, what did you use?

JJ: I think just latex, yeah.

AM: But it's fragile on the mirror?

JJ: No, well it's not too fragile.

AM: Well, it's water based and it could come off. We can retouch this?

JJ: Yes.

AM: Do you want it to be retouched?

JJ: I wouldn't want it to disappear, than there's no point in having the mirror.

AM: That's the overall thing here going on, off course. Well... the headdress we discussed without the camera, and we have all the information I think...

JJ: That could be touched up, yeah, definitely. New feathers, new pink feathers. It's looking a little shabby. But we have to talk tomorrow with the restorer, or Monday, about all this. Because, you know, it's not easy for me to come here and make a decision about those dresses and things. Anyway, we'll talk about it Monday.

AM: It's also this to find out. So when you want to adapt, or you want to put it another... you just say it and we change it, so it's all your decision.

JJ: Yeah, right.

AM: we haven't discussed this group over here [closed circuit ensemble with drawings no.18 and no.19]

JJ: These two drawings were actually original ones that I did in the performances, and they were the drawings that are tracing lines around objects. So they were drawn... the reason that's [taped] frame there is because I made the frame to fit the monitor. So I told Gert really that this camera should be framing it. It shouldn't be like that, that frame should be in the monitor. But that's what those are.

AM: No Vertical Roll on the monitor?

JJ: No. This monitor represents the monitor that was in the performance, it was always the monitor the audience saw and the monitor I looked at during the performance

AM: There's a mirror [no. 17] here ...

JJ: Yeah, I put it there., because... I don't remember why these mirrors came into the work. But I am sure I did have mirrors, so I just started...

AM: You used mirrors in the performance.

JJ: I did, I did. So they are there. Maybe I put this mirror against the wall there. (...) I think I am going to put one of the mirrors against the wall. It's in the wrong place, I remember.

AM: Well, let me take the microphone then.

JJ: And this is a good mirror, it's all been beveled and everything. The mirrors should be cleaned.

AM: The mirrors should be clean.

JJ: I forgotten about that, it's funny.

[The last stage of the interview was reserved for adjusting the reflection of the mirror with the spoon on the wall, no. 73]

JJ: But it should look more like... like that. So you see it's a spoon.

AM: That's about it Joan. Thank you so much. You did a great job.

DM: You did it!

Interview with Joan Jonas (4) – ‘Organic Honey’ conservation issues

29 January 2007. Interviewer: Sandra Weerdenburg, Anne Mink. Camera & montage: Moniem Ibrahim. Location: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, SMCS, Organic Honey installation. The interview was taken in the presence of Dorine Mignot.

[The aim of this interview is to find out how the Stedelijk Museum should deal with current and future conservation issues of certain installation elements of Organic Honey].

SW: In the context of future conservation we would very much like to know two things. The first thing is can we, to prevent any smearing or smudges of the surface, can we fix the chalk if we can do that in a minimal way, so you will have hardly any differences in gloss or shine or.. I think that is possible now [no. 9].

JJ: Yes we can definitely.

SW: So we can do that to prevent smudging.

JJ: Yes, definitely.

SW: Do you accept a very small, it's always very difficult to talk in theory about appearances, but do you accept a very small change in appearance, like a very... It will not become shiny because for us that will change the whole aspect of chalk, but maybe a bit more of a contrast between the white?

JJ: No that's fine. I do accept that, yes.

SW: But we will try to prevent that, because you need to see very clear the character of the background and the chalk. Ok, well that's clear then. Thank you. And then the next question is, if in spite of this precaution the drawing is smeared or smudged by the public or some other mechanical impact, are we allowed to restore it to the state it is now?

JJ: Yes, you are. But I think it even needs repairing now a little bit. And the way I would do it, I mean, there is a couple of places... it's smudged there. I mean, I don't mind this smudge around that, but when the chalk itself is... it's obviously been touched. I see it there and here a little bit. And... there's little... I mean, I would do it myself.

SW: What do you want to repair; do you want the white more white or the black more black?

JJ: I want it, just take out the little smudge and put a little bit of white in there.

SW: OK.

JJ: So you could do that, especially in this area here (...)

SW: I think we have to try to bring back the contrast and the sharpness of the lines. Is that it?

JJ: Yeah, that's right. Yes. And it's easy to do actually. That's what I would like, because I like it to look... I like the whole thing to look like this, you know, if possible. (...)

SW: That's very clear, we could bring it back to this state.

JJ: Absolutely.

SW: Fine, thank you very much. And it's the same for all the chalk drawings?

JJ: All the chalk drawings, yes.

SW: But for this one [10], for me it's more difficult.

JJ: Which one?

SW: This one for me, it's more difficult [to see] what is the original state.

JJ: Just leave it like this, because this one I rubbed out... It's supposed to look rubbed out [no. 10]. So you could just leave that like that.

SW: Fine, ok.

JJ: And those [11a, 11b] are ok.

SW: Ok, we will make pictures of the state they are in now to be very sure of what we are talking about. We can do that this afternoon I think. Yes?

JJ: Yeah.

SW: Well that is it for as far as the chalk drawings are concerned for me. Thank you. And the part of the dolls [tailor dummies 78, 79 with dresses 50, 51] is more difficult. Because I have understood that in the interview Friday there was sort of a proposal to work structurally with dummy material instead of the original dresses...

JJ: Yes, I suddenly thought that... I mean it was actually, anyway, it was an outside opinion but it made sense to me that it may not look good to have vitrines in the middle of the space, because they will take up space. So, then I thought it would be better just to copy the costumes and not worry about them being copies. But then Dorine talked to somebody and they said that they would be all right for a few years, just like this.

SW: Yes... the problem is... and I talked it over with Netta, I talked it over again with her this morning, our textile conservator, I don't think the state of the dresses is a problem in exposing them. We can also give some internal support. The reason they are not on the dolls now is because the dolls were too big to fit them on. Were the dolls, had they been a bit smaller then we would have fitted them on. The conservation of the dresses... the coat [no. 52] needs conservation because the pieces of silk... but that's all doable, we can do that. So I don't think for a conservation point of view that's a problem. If you just hang them in not too much light, but that's also what you agreed on so that's not a problem. The problem is if the public tears or touches it. So my question is, because if we do want to use the originals, because attach a lot of value to them because they are the dresses that you have found and that have been in the installation since the beginning of the whole work. So to us, from a museum point of view [it is] an important factor to use the original ones. So what would you accept as a prevention, visually, or in another way, against the public.

JJ: What could there be?

SW: Well, we could put, for instance, very clear signs on already when people enter the room: 'you are not allowed to touch anything'.

JJ: Well, they shouldn't touch anything. Maybe there should be signs, because they shouldn't touch the things on the table either.

SW: And then there is infra-red. And that will give a bleep when somebody comes too close. But then some artists (...) are objecting to the bleep.

JJ: I don't know, it's interesting.

SW: So it warns people off by a sound. It's used a lot in exhibitions for paintings and also for installations...

JJ: Mmm. I don't mind it. I think there should be both: don't touch and bleeps. You know, a sign, because then...

DM: Do you prefer that to the boxes?

JJ: Yes, I do, yes. I prefer that to the boxes.

SW: Ok. And to push it one point further. If we forget the boxes, but are only talking about a sort of a small glass plate in front of it, so they cannot really approach it but it will not be a whole thing covering it.

JJ: You mean around the bottom or something?

SW: Yeah, a plate, something like this.

JJ: Well, you have to put it all around though, that's the trouble. You'd have to put it all around, right?

SW: Maybe only front and back... it doesn't have to be a whole plate covering it.

JJ: I see, yeah. No that's all right too.

SW: It's only to keep...

DM: Two plates?

JJ: Yes, two smaller plates so people are kept physically at a distance. (...) I am talking about art glass or Perspex on a very minimal stand. Something like that, I am just...

DM: Hanging or on the ground?

SW: You could also let it come from the air, then you are missing... maybe that's a better idea, then you are missing the legs.

JJ: Oh yeah, legs... hm.

SW: Yes, the legs will interfere with the legs of the [dolls].

JJ: I am not attached to those legs, I mean those...

SW: Yes, but visually it's having four legs.

JJ: Yeah, right, there will be more...

SW: So if we can, in a minimal way put some sort of glass plate only here and there [front and back], smaller...

DM: But it has to go nearly to the ground because the dresses are long.

SW: Yeah, but it is glass, it's like a barrier. Just to keep them away.

JJ: If there's glass, they won't touch it. That's a signal they won't... it's true.

DM: But I don't think it's nice to have just a thing here, from above.

JJ: It should be the whole thing...

SW: Yes, but we can divide some options and... well maybe we shouldn't go too much into detail now. It's about the principle: do you accept a minimal... not a whole box, but a minimal, transparent way of keeping the public at a distance, if infra-red and signs and guards are not doing the job.

JJ: Yes, I do. Ok, yes I do. I mean, particularly over there, because in the Queens show that doll [no. 55], I know they tried to... I mean, those should all be attached to the table. But they get really damaged when they try to pick them up, you know. So there should be infra-red around the table, I think.

SW: And then I have another question about the dolls. How is your own attachment to the dresses that are in the installation now?

JJ: My own attachment?

SW: Yeah, the meaning of them. Because you put them in, you found them... How important for you is the authenticity of those dresses? Their place in this installation?

JJ: If the copy looks exactly like them I don't mind if it's a copy. Is that what you are asking?

SW: Yeah... that's also one of the consequences. But I would also like to know the importance of these dresses themselves.

JJ: I think they give another kind of presence to the performer, you know, to me as a performer, and they were very important as my costumes in the piece. I wish I had more of them, you know. I mean, my other idea was just to put them in a flat frame, glass, like this, and lean them against the walls. Just put them in a frame and not have them on the dolls. Because I think they add, even when they are coming apart... that's another option we could talk about in a few years, to show them like this and just put them in a flat frame. Because I've seen it in dress stores where they have... there's a store in New York where she has Chinese paper dresses in a flat frame.

SW: But really like a painting, not a box but a frame.

JJ: I don't like the idea of a box, it takes up... then it becomes an object. But a frame, I sort of like. You know, with brown paper behind them or...

SW: But then the place in the installation will change.

JJ: Then it has to change.

SW: It will go to the wall.

JJ: It will go some place to the wall.

SW: Yeah, so we cannot oversee that right now.

JJ: No, but it's something to think about for the future. I mean, one could lean there and one could lean there [points to space next to no.16. And next to performance posters] at the entrance. There's a place, they don't have to be in the middle of the room.

DM: Yeah because you see if you watch the images, you'll see the same dress, you are wearing it. So it as a quality which is gone if it's...

JJ: And the color and everything. I also have more photographs I want to add to the installation, of the performance, that we could put there [above the mirror, no.12], you know, but that's another issue. Just a few more, because I think it's good for them to see the stills of the performance. It adds another dimension.

SW: Rebecca is bringing some photographs of earlier installations this afternoon, so... Then there was another question about the dolls. We do have to adapt the frames, because those ones are too big. Do you mind if we use those standards and just change the upper part to make it fit?

JJ: What do you mean, those standards?

SW: I mean, those standards are hired, we need just a standard for a doll, is it ok if we keep this and adapt the other part or do you want a totally different kind of standard?

JJ: No no, this is fine. And I didn't look like that anyway, you know. It's not my figure, it wasn't my figure.

SW: No, so if we adapt this upper part, this body, to fit the dress, make it smaller, because it's just polystyrene foam, we can adapt it.

JJ: Ok, fine.

SW: Or we can go to a simple structural thing, like a wooden lathwork or whatever. How should the doll and the standard look? Do you care?

JJ: I do care. I think they should be as simple as possible.

SW: As simple as possible. But it can be a body like this.

JJ: Yes it can be. I don't like for instance this turtle neck thing. I don't like that. I don't like this shiny stuff, it should be dull. But it's nice it's black. But it can be a dull fabric.

SW: A dull fabric with a normal round collar.

JJ: A wooden round neck, yes, or whatever.

SW: A wooden neck, yes. But you don't object to see the wood and the filling material.

JJ: No. No I don't. Not at all, no.

SW: So, not a collar, a round neck and...

JJ: I mean, I have to trust your taste. This, I don't like I have to say. There is something crummy about it.

SW: Too synthetic. Just a mat black cotton, something like that.

JJ: Yes, yes.

SW: And then the other question is: does it have to be black?

JJ: Well, I like the black here, with that costume. It's nice to have a black and a white one. So we are deciding on black for the belly dancing costume. Ok, and then the ecru for the green dress?

SW: Yes, because that was my last question. It's very interesting what you say about replicas and dummies. We do work with them in other types of art. So in the future, if there are serious problems with the fabric, or if we think it's getting too vulnerable or it's getting damaged. Then we are allowed to make a copy looking close to the original.

JJ: Yes, totally. Absolutely

DM: But there is a serious other option, to make it flat.

SW: Well, to make it flat, yeah.

JJ: Well, I mean I sort of... if I go to a show, it's nice to see the old thing.

SW: Yes that's my resistance against replacing when it's not necessary.

JJ: If it's possible, I mean, I like... My first thought actually, my first vision when this whole question came up recently was to make a flat... to put it in a frame.

SW: Yeah, and then we can keep it forever. I know we can keep it forever then.

JJ: And maybe you should do that right away, I don't know. It's just going to dissolve more and more, and get more torn. But maybe it's nice, torn in a frame, you know what I mean. You know I already... by the way the belly dancer had a piece of one of the beads missing, and I replaced it already. So if beads fall off, you can replace them, those paste beads, jewels. Because I don't think they should fall off, that shouldn't happen. It shouldn't be shown

SW: No, they should be kept more or less in the state they are in now.

JJ: They should be, yeah.

SW: But I don't think the degradation of the fabric will go very quickly. If it's exposed under the right conditions then that's basically meaning not too much light and that's fitting in with the whole concept of the installation.

JJ: Of course. This is too much light, right now.

SW: If we keep it under a low light exposure the biggest risk for the dresses is the mechanical damage and that's the handling or the public. So if we can keep that safe, I think there's no reason why we should not expose them on dolls for years. But it is very good, we need to know the options when it stops.

JJ: I wonder if it goes to another place that they will take the same options.

SW: Well, they have to expose it on our conditions. It's our responsibility, it's a museum

JJ: I see, ok.

DM: And what about the one hanging?

JJ: That one I really like. And don't... I think it would be hard to copy. I think they are going to restore the parts that are not completely gone, and I think that should be out as long as possible. Same thing for that: put away, but not copied.

SW: Yeah, but that one is not so much of a problem because it's hanging out of reach of the public, so I don't see a problem there And as far as I get it from Netta and as far as I can judge it myself, there was one piece of red silk of one of the applications falling off, and we tried to fit it on a doll that was already loose. So the restoration will be that, fixing the loose parts and then, since it's hanging, I don't see a big problem.

JJ: Yeah, well that's fine.

SW: We can consolidate it in such a way that it will be exposed. But it's very good now to know the options: framing and maybe, preferably not, but maybe in the end make replicas.

JJ: Ok, we'll leave it like that, that's good. And in the very end... but I like framing better than replicas.

SW: Yes because if you have to... I am not trying to be difficult I am just trying to get things sharp. If you have to choose between a framed original, the one you wore, the one you found and... I was amazed when I saw the green one [51a, 51b], it looks like a '20 dress, it's so beautiful, the fabric, and you will never get that in a copy. I am not trying to influence you, it's just... So except from the authenticity thing and the originality thing... if you have to choose between a replica or a framed alternative, what is your gut feeling?

JJ: I guess now I would say a frame, I guess. That was my first thought and...

SW: ...then it's probably your best.

JJ: Yeah.

SW: But then we have to very closely look at the position, but you already indicated

JJ: I think there's a space there and a space at the door. There is no other space in this room.

DM: Well, at the door or between the posters and the [chalk drawings].

JJ: Between the posters and the chalk drawings

SW: Ok, thank you very much. I think those were my most tormenting questions.

JJ: Well thank you, for being so thorough.

SW: That's my job [laughter].

[After this, some other questions came up about the placement and conservation of certain installation elements, and the interview was continued. The first question was how to attach the objects on the table to the table itself.]

JJ: Well, first you have to drill holes in the table and each thing has to be attached to the table.

SW: What is the reason of the attaching?

JJ: Because I was afraid people would take them. But maybe not. But this one [doll, 55], I would really be upset if this disappeared. (...) Maybe I should keep looking for fans in case...

SW: Why?

JJ: I am afraid they take...

SW: Extra ones, spare ones?

JJ: I am afraid they get taken.

SW: It's a good idea.

JJ: But this one [55], I could never replace that, you know.

DM: You made it yourself.

JJ: I made it when I was a child, so, it's a very special thing. So I think it should be attached to the table. And it has to be fixed a little bit. I think in Queens it got, they tried to pull it off the table, so it got...

SW: Ok, so the main thing here is that nothing of course, is allowed to be taken by the public, and maybe we need to do it both: both the infra-red... [and the attaching], because this is really important, it's is really irreplaceable. You have to take, I think, double care.

JJ: Yeah, and the spoon also, and the mirrors.

DM And the fans?

JJ: I mean, the fans are things, they were replaced, the original fans. But everything else is original.

SW: Yeah, so the only thing that may be replaced are the fans. Then it would be very nice if you...

JJ: I'll be looking for fans.

SW: And if you don't, if you don't have any spare ones, and if one is missing, can we replace it by something in that 'style', which is difficult, because what is the style of a fan, but...

JJ: Sure yes. Right, if you have something, yeah.

SW: But you really want four of them.

JJ: Well, I just, when you said that, I thought maybe if one disappears, three would be all right. But no less than three.

SW: Ok, but we have to take every precaution: both fixing and infra-red to prevent one from taking.

SW: And Joan, do you want to restore them [the fans]? Because some...

JJ: Well, this should be restored. These two [38, 39] need restoring.

SW: And is restoring just conservation or...

JJ: Conservation. No, it's just conservation.

SW: So only consolidating.

JJ: Yes. And I talked about the headdress; that needs restoring. It's getting a little bedraggled looking and... also because there has been several headdresses. I don't mind new feathers. The only thing you need to do is put pink feathers. Because the feathers are looking... unless you think they're all right. But they could be... all the feathers...

SW: They may be replaced when they are degraded.

JJ: Yes.

SW: Ok, that's very good to know. Well, I think that's it for Organic Honey. Thank you very much

JJ: That's it, ok, great. Thank you.

[After this, it was decided to go through the lighting plan and the positioning of the closed circuit ensembles one more time, to make sure that all Joan's wishes were clearly recorded.]

JJ: I think this is ok [photo's behind the paper wall], accept there's too much light spilling... it should be more evenly, you know, this should be going like this and over to the other edge, instead of going all the way over there, you know what I mean?

AM: Yes.

JJ: It should be better placed. I can't do it now, but...

AM: It should be more turned, more overall.

JJ: It should be, yeah, a little bit that way, because it's going right around the corner that way, it's not so good.

AM: The low position is good?

JJ: Yeah, it's ok. Yes it's fine.

[On Dorine's request, Joan points specifically to the wall where the light should be spotted. The next 'spot' is the closed circuit ensemble with the dog heads. Joan explains how this should be exactly installed]

JJ: Ok, now. This just got moved, so it was wrong. You look in the monitor... could you come closer please? ...to make sure that this [the half parts of the dog head] is coming together here, along this black line [the vertical roll bar], that there is a continuous line going down one side so it makes an image around the line, and that's done by placing that [the drawings] in the right position there.

AM: Is the spot ok for you?

JJ: The spot is ok.

AM: And the light?

JJ: They are fine. And the (...) circuit breakers should be on.

[Joan continues with lights on the pictures on the walls]

JJ: This is too bright. Everything should be lit just so you can see it, dimly lit. Not like in a gallery, it's a different, more theatrical idea, just dim.

AM: Should the light also be more concentrated?

JJ: Absolutely. There shouldn't be spill around. All these, the lighting now, there's much too much spill the walls should not be lit, just the image. The same with this: too bright, the walls should not be lit, just the image.

[The next part where Joan points to every object that must be lit, is not transcribed, because to understand, the recorded image is necessary. Joan talks about the fan jacket, all the drawings, photo's (except for 32] and posters, the accountant's chair, the objects on the table, the costumes and headdress (both 'very, very dimly lit, much dimmer even than the rest') and all the chalk drawings.]

JJ: You don't have to light the mirrors.

[Next part: closed circuit ensemble with the drawings of outlined objects]

JJ: the same problem about the framing. The other cameras are different from this camera. So you'll be able to frame... that [the taped outline] should be in the picture [on the monitor], like that. It should be framed like that, there, instead of this distant view.

AM: We need a zoom camera...

JJ: Well, this is like a wide angle lens, but the other lens will be easier to do that with. These [the closed circuit breakers] should be functioning, this should be turning on, the light there.

AM: And the tape? What do you think of this tape [on the circuit breakers]?

JJ: I don't know, I guess you could just leave it on, you shouldn't touch it.

[Next part: continuing of light plan]

JJ: The other thing is: the light should not be yellow. It should be a daylight. So it's not blue, it's not yellow, it's a cool light. Like a daylight, a cool daylight.

AM: Ok, I think we can arrange that. (...) And the position, Joan, is good as it is.

JJ: Yes, yes, it is.

AM: Then we are done with Organic Honey, thank you so much.

JJ: Ok.