

Chrissie Iles interviewed by Nesma Belkhodja, Barbara Clausen, Brandon Eng, Deena Engel, and Glenn Wharton, October 12, 2018

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<http://artistarchives.hosting.nyu.edu/JJKB/chrissie-iles-interview-october-2018/>

Glenn Wharton: Today is October 12, 2018. This is Glenn Wharton. I'm here with Chrissie Iles, the Anne & Joel Ehrenkranz curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art. I'm joined by my colleagues in the Artist Archives Initiative project, Barbara Clausen, Deena Engel, Brandon Eng, and Nesma Belkhodja. We're here to talk to Chrissie specifically about the work *Mirage* of Joan Jonas, it's here at the Whitney. First I'd just like to ask you about your relationship with *Mirage*.

Chrissie Iles: Maybe I should start by giving you a little bit of background about how I came to show *Mirage* and have a dialogue with Joan Jonas, which goes on till this day. When I was a curator in England, I'm from London, and as a curator of The Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, before coming to the Whitney Museum, I began, trained as an art historian, a thesis on Rembrandt, very traditional training. I started working with artists in an artist-studio-based alternative space in South London and at an early age became very exposed to time-based work, performance, projections, all kinds of things. So this became very important to me. It was very exciting. It was very experimental. I was exposed to the work of Joan Jonas's generation, first of all, in the British artists.

Chrissie Iles: So, when I went to work at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, which dealt with the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and our director David Elliott, who gave me a lot of freedom curatorially, one of the things I did was curate an exhibition of, it's called *Signs of the Times*. It was time-based works in England. It was *Signs of the Times*, film video and slide installation in Britain in the 1980s [*Signs of the Times—A Decade of Video, Films & Slide-Tape Installation in Britain 1980–1990*, 1990]. Nobody had ever done a show like that before and it was very large, it had a catalogue. And through it, I really entered a dialogue with British artists of Joan's generation in depth.

Chrissie Iles: I had been also drawn to this area through working as an assistant to Peter Kardia who was quite controversial in his teaching methods. A professor of sculpture first at Saint Martin's School of Art and then at the Royal College of Art in a department called the Environmental Media Department. At The

Museum of Modern Art Oxford, I also became exposed to experimental film and historical experimental film through the interest in film by my then director David Elliott who did shows like a big Eisenstein retrospective of his films that took up the entire museum as an exhibition. In other words, that early experience made me understand that experimental work, time-based work, performative work was very much part of the history of art.

Chrissie Iles:

We would do a Philip Guston painting show one minute and something very time-based the next. So I always understood it to be very integrated. It wasn't really taken that seriously or addressed at the Tate at the time, which was only at Millbank. They only had one video installation by Susan Hiller called *Belshazzar's Feast* from 1984 [*Belshazzar's Feast, the Writing on Your Wall, 1983–84*]. But what I did notice was there was a group of curators across Europe and America, who were video curators or film and video curators, who were doing very important work in museums. I wanted to be part of that group and part of that discussion. There was Christine Van Assche at the Pompidou Center who worked very much as a producer of new work. She commissioned a lot of new works by multiple generations of artists. So not only Joan's generation but also Douglas Gordon and the kind of 2000s, 1990s generation of artists.

Chrissie Iles:

There was Dorine Mignot at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. The Stedelijk Museum and Amsterdam in general had a very strong relationship with this generation of artists through their focus by curators and Rudi Fuchs as well, with conceptual artists, Lawrence Weiner and Alice Weiner had a barge there—they still have it—a boat there, and they moved back and forth. Marina Abramović was living there. Because Joan Jonas ended up teaching a lot in the Rijksakademie. There was a very sort of strong connection across back to the US and to New York in particular, with Amsterdam and New York at that moment. Christine brought Joan Jonas's *Organic Honey*, the installation version into the Stedelijk's collection, which was a very important moment. She also curated a very important group show of video installations.

Chrissie Iles:

There was Wulf Herzogenrath, who was director of the Kunstmuseum in Cologne, sorry, Kunstverein, in Cologne. He curated a very important show called *Video-Skulptur* [*Video-Skulptur, retrospectiv und aktuell, 1963–1989, 1989*] in the 1980s, which was shown in Cologne and also in Berlin and somewhere else. He was a very critical figure in Germany for video installation, video in particular. Peter Weibel who founded

ZKM [Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe] was not yet visible as a curatorial figure although he's been a major figure for many years now. There was nobody in Britain, but there was, in the US, John Hanhardt at the Whitney Museum, Barbara London at MoMA and Bob Riley at SFMOMA.

Chrissie Iles:

So this formed a kind of informal network of curators who were paying attention to time-based work. At that moment, film and video were also very much more separate. So when John Hanhardt left to go and be media curator at the Guggenheim, I canvassed David Ross to hire me. I said, "You need to build your collection because it only has about 28 works and it doesn't reflect the broader way in which time-based work and the moving image fits into the collection as a whole. It doesn't reflect what is going on in the States, which is an extraordinary moment, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s. You need to reflect that in both your programming." Which John had done, but really, you know, in big shows and also in collections. So he hired me and I started or in some cases continued the dialogue with Joan's generation, including Joan, Carolee Schneemann.

Chrissie Iles:

I was also interested in women and how women had worked with the moving image and video as part of a process-based approach to art making and a rejection of that sort of very male terrain, be it land art or sculpture. Interestingly, black artists, African American artists, during that period were not making film or video installations per se. They were working much more either with—like the L.A. Rebellion filmmakers—film, or they were making more kind of performative-based sculpture like Senga Nengudi and others. So I've been trying to correct that and sort of try and bring L.A. Rebellion filmmakers into the collection and other things, just to kind of really address whiteness, the way the moving image history has been written, which is largely male and nearly 100% white. So for eight years, I've been shifting that in the collection.

Chrissie Iles:

So we have the largest collection of black filmmakers and artists working with time-based media here, which I'm very proud of. And that's only the beginning as far as I'm concerned. So I also wanted to mention that because we shouldn't presume whiteness. However, whiteness was very much at the fore in the New York 1960s and 1970s art world and feminist art world and you know, as Ru's [Rujeko Hockley] show at the Brooklyn Museum points out [*We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965–85*, 2017], the feminism of the early 1970s in America did not work for black women. I just really feel strongly about that and have done for quite a while so I wanted to mention that.

Chrissie Iles:

All that having been said, when I came here and started to build the collection and also think about exhibitions, I realized that there were installations, moving image installations that had not been shown since they were first made and shown. Also, there was a very sort of strong division between the film world and the art world, much more so than I had seen, you know, growing up as a young curator in Britain. There was much more of a clear divide, and that anything to do with the moving image in America or in New York, and then in the museum world tended to be siloed and sort of over there somewhere. So I wanted to also change that and explore that. And in doing so I started a dialogue with a number of artists, including Carolee Schneemann and Joan Jonas, and started to put together the idea, which—I'd already had the idea for the show at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford for *Into the Light* [*Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art, 1964–1977*, Whitney Museum of American Art, 2001].

Chrissie Iles:

I had started coming to the Whitney to propose it as a show that would be at the Whitney and at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford. It would take up the entire—it was going to be like *Signs of the Times*, the next one and this time not Britain but America and then that would also open up a scholarly dialogue between what was happening in Britain, what was happening in America. And then in my head maybe the third one would be Europe. So I was trying to map this history. Because I saw that the older generation of video curators were very—in a way there's this ideological video art and video and then there was the film world. Joan was trying to bring the two together, but this is all occurring as the 1990s were beginning and so a new generation of artists who were not interested in being video artists. They were artists who were just picking up the camera.

Chrissie Iles:

So, one thing became very clear when I started the discussion with Joan, was that she epitomized this very sort of open structure of working that experimental filmmakers also brought with people like Bruce Conner. Which is very common actually in the photographic world historically, which is that for example Paul Strand would make a photograph and then he'd print another photograph where he'd crop it, and then another and another. There was not one original photograph from which everything else came or one portrait and that was it. There would be multiple portraits and you know, larger, smaller cropped in five different ways and different printings and different printers sometimes. This open way of working is also something that filmmakers, like Bruce Conner, were doing.

Chrissie Iles: So he would recycle imagery. You can see the same imagery in three different films and in a film installation. This is very at odds with the art world's focus on uniqueness and value based on uniqueness and high monetary value. I have never felt high monetary value was remotely relevant in the way that certainly I'm showing and building the collection and making shows. It's art historical value. So I've, you know, it's very critical in a hyper marketized environment that the art world now is to kind of assert that principle. So I proposed this show, which I had already been working on in England, to David Ross and the curators, and it got the green light. So I started working intensively on it to make an exhibition, which arrived in, it finally opened in October 2001 just weeks after 9/11. Is this ... Should I just keep going or do you want me to—

Glenn Wharton: Yes, if you could ... I mean, this is amazing because you're providing us with a really good art historical foundation, of what had been going on, what was going on. So it'll be really interesting I think now to focus on Joan, why you selected her and particularly *Mirage*.

Chrissie Iles: So, I should just mention also that I felt that it was very important to build this history into the collection. There was a small number of works mainly of Nam June Paik, a couple of Tony Oursler, Mary Lucier, Shigeko Kubota, very much with like video art. There wasn't any film. There was no film installation. I think there was one piece, a time-based work by Dennis Oppenheim, *Gingerbread Man* [1970] from the 1970s, but it was very limited. I got permission to form a new Acquisitions Committee, which took quite some time and was very administratively complicated but I did it, and recruited a group of people who were supporters, to be members of that committee and pay their dues so that we could start bringing work into the collection, moving image work into the collection. Because there was no video, there were no single screen videos like Bruce Nauman or Vito Acconci or Joan or anyone, because they were not editioned or unique.

Chrissie Iles: And so, I really wanted to address what I've just been describing in not only exhibitions but also the collection and actually break this unique or editioned pattern because it doesn't reflect the history accurately. I wanted to reflect and be very complete with the history and also bring in a focused group of films by experimental filmmakers to show this dialogue. Because Joan Jonas, who I started this extensive dialogue with—I was also talking a lot with Michael Heizer, Richard Serra, met Anthony McCall, Carolee, Dan Graham, Dennis Oppenheim. All the names you can think of from that period, male and female, I was

contacting and meeting. Also in my role as curator, it was important to introduce myself and actually say, “Okay, I am supporting you, and I want to have this dialogue with you.”

Chrissie Iles:

Another thing I should mention very quickly is *The American Century*. This is a very big show that happened in 1999 at the turn of the century [about] American art and you know, the hundred years of American Art. Part two was the 1950s to then present. I had quite a large budget to put together a film program. So I recruited three film programmers who are wonderful: Michael Hatton, Malcolm... I will remember his surname later, Bradley Eros and Brian Fry to work with me to put this program together, and we spent a lot of money on the most—it was the most extensive program of films and videos, including works from the 1970s, ever done. Literally we turned the film and video gallery in the Breuer building on the second floor... It was just non-stop. Everyone was coming up, it was like a stage and everyone had their 15 minutes. It was wonderful.

Chrissie Iles:

That was also a way of teaching myself and introducing myself to everyone. I was like, “Come and screen something, do something, do a performance, do a talk.” So that became this very energetic focus for six months. That included also two weeks of just sound works. So that really was a kind of fast-forward way to learn what I didn't know. I also met Jonas Mekas and asked him to teach me everything he knew and went through Anthology Film Archives' basement. Through all this dialogue and you know, Richard Serra ... I would have dinner with Richard Serra and Joan Jonas at Joan's house and Richard would say... I would talk about the importance of film to both of them because they were together for a long time and made films together, one film. I learned that this is a messy ... Oh, and I met Yvonne Rainer.

Chrissie Iles:

I was very enthusiastic about the ISP [Independent Study Program] and was talking with Ron [Clark] and everyone and Hal Foster and Benjamin Buchloh and everyone on the ISP program. And talking with Yvonne Rainer and looking at the Whitney's history of expanded moving image and performative work and realized Lucinda Childs had done her major work here. Trisha Brown, Yvonne Rainer's *Continuous Project-Altered Daily*, you know, asked her can we ... I mean, it's funny see the Judson show now [*Judson Dance Theater. The Work Is Never Done*, MoMA, 2019] because, you know, in the late 1990s I was trying to explore this with Yvonne and it was impossible. So what's happening now... I made a room of videos in the *American Century* show of performative video and that was—everyone got very excited by that. So I think it's important to remember that

at the time when I started *Into the Light* and Joan with *Mirage* and all the other works, there was almost no awareness of Judson, of video, of performance. It was a moment that was just... it was very low on the radar this period.

Glenn Wharton:

So, I'm a little bit worried about our time.

Chrissie Iles:

Yes.

Glenn Wharton:

So if we could focus on Joan and *Mirage* and why, maybe how she fit into this picture that you've laid out and why *Mirage* in particular was important to you.

Chrissie Iles:

I'm sorry to be so round this, but I do feel that, because of technology now as well, the historical difference... It's like trying to explain to us what life was like before the iPhone. When you really literally put the phone on and that was the interview. We want to underline how under the radar this work was, and how museums were not showing it or collecting it. And there are still very few museums if any that collect this historical work.

Glenn Wharton:

Why do you think that was? Why wasn't she being—

Chrissie Iles:

Because it wasn't visible. Partly because it wasn't visible, and because it was just a very... I mean, now young curators are hip, young anything is hip. Before, no. Before you had to ... You weren't taken seriously and you had to prove yourself. Likewise, anything time-based, anything experimental, it just wasn't of interest. Performance was not of interest.

Glenn Wharton:

But particularly Joan, do you think that she was not being recognized because of the nature of her work somehow? Or—

Chrissie Iles:

I think no one was being recognized. Joan was always recognized and respected as an artist and you know, she had *Organic Honey*, the installation in the Stedelijk. I think that in general America has always—American artists or artists living and working in America have always proved themselves in Europe before. Like Dan Flavin had I think 30 big shows in Europe before he had any major show in New York. Most of Judd's shows were in Europe, he had one show at the Whitney in 1968. I think America does not recognize or historically has not recognized its artists, its own family in general. Most American artists are appreciated and shown and collected in Europe much more before they get recognized here.

Chrissie Iles: So if you're working with time-based mediums, most curators and not that interested in time-based art. They certainly weren't when I arrived in New York or anyway, I'm not pointing the finger at my own institution. This is just in general. It just wasn't taken seriously. It was also invisible because it was in boxes in people's houses. So you know, like this is on the top shelf. When I was pulling things out for *Into the Light*, they hadn't been seen for 30 years. They were not paid attention to because also artists are only interested in what they're doing now. They are not interested in [inaudible].

Glenn Wharton: [inaudible] on top of just film-based [inaudible] the image-based works aren't being recognized, I would imagine a work like *Mirage*, which is so much more complicated to install or at least some versions of it are complicated to install, maybe some museums would be reluctant to show it.

Chrissie Iles: I one hundred percent know they did not know *Mirage* existed.

Glenn Wharton: Right.

Chrissie Iles: I mean, when I came to New York and started a dialogue with Joan, she was working on the *My Little Theaters* [*My New Theaters*]. She was not interested in her past. No artist is from that generation. No artist is from the current generation. They're interested in what they're working on now and what they're about to show. If you want to show something from ten years ago, or five years ago, or three years ago, or thirty years ago, you'll get shut down and you have to fight to show it. So, what Joan wanted to show me was what she was making right then. When I went to her studio, I was looking at the *My Little Theaters* [*My New Theaters*] and talking about those. Then I would say, "Oh, and, you know, also this." And she would say, "Oh yes, but, you know, this is what I'm working on now." And that's what every artist I've ever worked with does, and that's normal. So *Mirage* was not visible at all.

Glenn Wharton: Why were particularly interested in *Mirage* though?

Chrissie Iles: I was interested in *Mirage* because I felt that it really included a lot of things that the exhibition of *Into the Light* was interested in, which is I wanted to break out of this, "This is film, this is video art, and this is performance" and these sort of neat little categories, which was so clearly not how these artists and Joan were working. *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy* involved... the installation was in the Stedelijk and it was unique and it had objects. I didn't have the budget to ship the entire installation over from the Stedelijk. Also I wanted to do something different.

I wanted to show something that hadn't been shown just like you know, actually pretty much all the other work in *Into the Light* had not been seen since it was first made.

Chrissie Iles:

And so with *Mirage*, I understood that, like *Organic Honey*, Joan was always working in different ways: there was a performance version, a film or video version, an installation version. She didn't regard—you know, she would tear up drawings and she still does—she didn't regard these things as precious or something to be necessarily fixed. She liked working in this very fluid way. For me, it was very critical in the exhibition to reflect that fluidity of working.

Glenn Wharton:

How did you do that? How does one reflect fluidity in an installation?

Chrissie Iles:

By showing, I mean we had ... We didn't end up showing objects. I think because we ran out of time. Sometimes things happened just for very superficial reasons or practical reasons. There was the *Good Night Good Morning* video. And *Good Night Good Morning* exists as an independent video. Then there's the double screen *Mirage* piece. The other thing is that I felt that the importance of drawing in Joan's work was something that the right hand screen of *Mirage* really brought out and also her interest in the Hopi Indian sand ceremonies and the way in which she would also erase drawing. The premise of *Into the Light* was the projected image as part of a process-based approach to sculpture. So when David Joselit wrote an *Artforum* review where he accused me of failing to write a history of media art and absolutely, I wasn't writing history of media art. He completely didn't read the press release or the catalogue. This all is very much about... as part of a kind of postminimalist approach to sculptural space.

Chrissie Iles:

It has nothing to do with media art or video art or anything. I was precisely trying to get away from those categories and look at the way in which artists were working in this way that was very sculptural, but also installational, but also performative. And to kind of, in a way, make it impossible partly through the fluidity of the way some of them worked like Joan, and partly through the performative nature of works like the Simone Forti hologram [*Striding Crawling*, 1977], which hadn't been seen since the 1970s either, or the Robert Morris piece, which hadn't been seen since 1969 or 1968, to show that the fluidity existed, not only through the way we move through the space as viewers in certain case—like Anthony McCall, that film had never been seen in the art world either, or Morris. But in Joan's case, through the way in which you would take one video that existed

separately in its own right and bring it into something else that was also part of different kinds of iterations of the same thing, a little bit like *Organic Honey*, to kind of underline non-fixity as something and ephemerality—since paintings are ephemeral too—as something that was really important to address.

Glenn Wharton:

Perhaps you could walk us through the steps of when you decided that you would like to have *Mirage*. You said you were there meeting with Joan Jonas in her studio a number of times. You at a certain point decided on *Mirage*. What happened then with conversations with Joan? And then just the steps of getting it to the Whitney.

Chrissie Iles:

When I said I think we should show *Mirage*, I can't remember which ... I'll see if I can dig out the emails. But I can't remember the exact moment which we decided we were going to do this. When I said *Mirage* is the one to go for, I asked her how she wanted to show *Mirage*. What sort of iteration or how she wanted to show it. She said, "The two projections and then *Good Night Good Morning*." Then we talked about objects, but we just didn't have time to figure out... because she didn't have any there per se.

Glenn Wharton:

If you could like try to recall, I know it's a number of years ago but, was she very clear, this is the way I want it to be shown? Did it evolve in a dialogue with you? Or others?

Chrissie Iles:

She was pretty clear. But Joan is a very open person. She's a very precise person but she's very, she's not a rigid person. I certainly I'm not ... I don't have a heavy hand curatorially, I'm always guided by the artist. So I didn't sort of say, "Oh, I want to show it this way" and she had to acquiesce. It wasn't that way around. It was very much her saying, "Well, I think it should be like this." And me saying, "Okay." There was nothing to challenge about what she wanted, the way she wanted to do it. She was pretty clear about what she wanted to do. She was also not ... It wasn't like, "Well, this is how it has to be. This is how I always need to show it", which some artists are. "It's got to be like this and it's got to be like this. The projection has to be this size." Joan was not like that. She was very open and fluid about her, you know, the way she—

Barbara Clausen:

So in regard to *Mirage* which was shown already at the Stedelijk at the show a few years before, she was able to take it from that and change it.

Chrissie Iles:

Yes, I actually didn't pay attention to that show, or ask her about that at all. I think I was just focused on her thinking for this

show. Because I knew that she worked in a fluid way. So in a way I didn't want to be too kind of historicizing about it, because I didn't feel that would have been productive. Because I knew that there was no one way, one correct way to show it. It wasn't exactly a commission, but I wanted her to use this opportunity to do something. And I know the difference between an iteration that's fluid and then wanting to change the work. If she had wanted to change the work substantially, I would have ... An alarm bell would have rung. I have a very strong instinct about that.

Glenn Wharton:

Could you elaborate on that little bit? Not just from your point of view, but from hers. Because I imagine people that might be listening to this interview in the future might be curators, possibly long after Joan and all of us are gone. This will be a resource for them to decide how much variability, what would Joan have wanted in reinterpreting her work, specifically *Mirage* in this case.

Chrissie Iles:

Well, I don't see it as a reinterpretation, because there is no original to reinterpret. And that's the key. I think that the important thing is: it should never be the curator, in my opinion, who reinterprets something, just first of all. It all has to come from the artist. So the key is to actually, when the artist is around, get the artist's thoughts on something down on paper, and to get a very clear installation manual that says: these are the parameters. We try and be as thorough as possible with that. I'm pretty sure we have that with Joan, and if we don't, we will, because we're doing a big video preservation project and Mellon grant for the entire collection, which will include *Mirage*.

Chrissie Iles:

If there had been just one single way of showing one work, yes, then one would then have to say to the artist, "What are the parameters for showing it in different ways?" With *Mirage*, as with *Organic Honey* because this is ... I think Joan in a sense... The way she was thinking and thinks still was very connected to that kind of Bruce Conner or other, you know, this very almost film-based open fluidity, which is also I think, in Joan's case, related to storytelling. One of the things that really marks Joan's work is this deep rootedness in narrative and storytelling and fairy tales. They are, you know, verbal storytelling, passing things down orally through generations, especially in Europe, you know. Things change—sounds like Chinese doesn't it?—things change. There's no fixed way of telling a fairy story. It changes every time someone might elaborate on it or embellish it and shift it and it's like myth.

Chrissie Iles:

So I think that Joan's way of working, including with *Mirage*, is very much based on not only a very non-fixed approach to the way something was at the time, but also in her relationship to storytelling and fables and narrative and the creation of *Organic Honey* or *Mirage*. The creation of a multiple, of almost multiple voices, and multiple ... It's like the, not the death of the author, which is what the male artists were doing just as women and artists of color were finding their voice. The men go, "Wow, the voice isn't important." It's more multiple voices, this idea of multiplicity. This breaking down of the single white male sort of authoritative hero. So multiplicity of display, of interpretation, I think is also part of her relationship to that. And to her interest in [Jorge Luis] Borges and this idea of the labyrinth, because her, you know, she was very, very interested in Borges and this labyrinth sign.

Chrissie Iles:

So I think that rather than just taking it from the point of view of oh, how many screens, and how different is this, I think it's also important with *Mirage* and you know, Joan's approach to think about the rootedness of her thinking in not only multimedia if you'd like. She was dancing at Judson and she was, you know, gallery-sitting at the Greene Street gallery. She had people around at the loft, and she was making these performances, and she was making installations and she was... Her circle of friends was ... Yeah, her lover was Richard Serra. Very close friends were Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt. She was... lots of dancers around, they were going to Anthology all the time. We must be careful not to impose our own present day thinking on to a moment that was very rebellious. There's no way any of these artists thought their work would end up in museum collections. So there wasn't a need to kind of fix it in some way. Installation was barely called an installation, it was much more almost an extension of a performance.

Glenn Wharton:

I teach a course called The Museum Life of Contemporary Art. One of the points I always make is that the moment of acquisition is a major event in the life of a work of art because other players come in, other stakeholders are around the table. It's no longer just the artist deciding what this work can be. To some extent it gets fixed. Or even if it's fixed in some sense of variability or the artist transfers interpretive authority to the museum, that's the moment where it all needs to get nailed down, contracts need to be written, installation images get taken, installation manuals are put together. So, in that context, could you talk about *Mirage* and that moment when it came to the Whitney and how things maybe changed and the artist's relationship to it changed.

Chrissie Iles:

Well, what happens when any work, say moving image installations or quite particularly historical installations like *Mirage*, is that's just the beginning. So you're right. It's a major moment in the history of that artwork. But I was very conscious of not locking it down, not squeezing the life out of it. I remember having a, actually a panel discussion about how to collect performance or what the relationship with performance is to institutions. I think it was a Performa panel a few years ago at NYU, and I was on the panel with Martha Rosler. Martha Rosler said, "Well, what are you doing about radical work? Radical women's work and how do you collect that as an institution?" And I said to Martha, "Well, I put that question back to you, Martha. Should an institution collect that sort of work? Or should its radicality ... Does its radicality have a better chance of surviving outside the institution?"

Chrissie Iles:

So what happens in general to that? And I'm very aware of that with pieces like *Mirage*. My feeling is that there's two things, one is you just need to have an ongoing scholarly note-taking as a curator about these issues—as we are doing because this will also go into the Whitney's object files—and about the relationship of something ephemeral and the artist's intentions. This can go on until the curator dies. In my eighties I hope I will still be emailing the Whitney, "Don't forget this" or "What about this" or "Joan said this to me". It doesn't end. So you've got all these sort of scholarly layers for future curators to deal with. But then in the end, the responsibility also lies with the extent to which the curator in the future, and I say this on tape, listens to what the curator and the artists in the past have said and everybody else, and pays attention to the installation manual.

Chrissie Iles:

You can have a 30-page, perfectly outlined installation manual with photographs and diagrams and video footage, and the curator can still ignore it and get it wrong. That's one thing that really disturbs me in general about institutions is the way in which curators' egos or curators who think they have great ideas can really distort the work with all good intentions, because they haven't really understood the nature of the work. They put it into the framework of how the institutional or how the art world or how culture is now, for example. That's going to be even more urgent in the future. The further away you get from that moment, and the more accepted the sort of hyper capitalist, very professionalized, very... everything in neat boxes, the more controlled spaces are. I mean, these are works that by their nature are very fluid.

Chrissie Iles:

*Mirage* is a very performative work. Let's not gussy it up too much these works and make them, sometimes these films by

artists, they were little sketches, you know. Let's not over-monumentalize the 1970s and the experimental, performative, fluid nature of the way in which artists were working. There is a way in which it can become too Instagram-friendly and... you know what I mean? Just lose its radicality. Is it possible for any kind of radicality to be communicated in a museum? And like, I'm talking about museums in general where, you know, 65% of viewers are tourists and everything's mediated to within an inch of its life. What does it mean?

Glenn Wharton: How fixed would you say *Mirage* is at this point?

Chrissie Iles: Ours or the whole?

Glenn Wharton: Yours. In the future when new curators at the Whitney or people who loan it from or borrow it from the Whitney reinstall it, is it pretty fixed at this point that they have to have this in this corner and that in that corner? Or is there some interpretation allowable?

Chrissie Iles: I mean, I think that's really a question that we have to ask Joan. I haven't talked to her about *Mirage* for a long time because we were talking about other things, because we've now brought in *The Shape, The Scent, The Feel of Things*. So my recent conversations with Joan have been more around her new work and the dialogue we have about her work in general when we meet, which we do regularly for breakfast in Balthazar, and we discuss life and friends and art and her new work and the state of the world. We haven't had a formal meeting about *Mirage* for many, many years because, you know. We will do however, as part of MPI [Media Preservation Initiative]. So I'm happy to pass on to you the new conversation we will have about *Mirage*. And, you know, there comes the interesting question: artists will change their work, not because they work in a fluid way but because they get bored.

Chrissie Iles: So it's like for example, we have Bruce Nauman's *Thighing (Blue)* [1967]. The reason the film is blue is because the film lab made a mistake in the restoration of it. Then Nauman said, "I like that blue. This will be the film now." So I know that EAI [Electronic Arts Intermix] was like, "Uh, well. But it's black and white." So I think the compromise was you'd name it *Thighing (Blue)* but you know, this kind of thing happens quite frequently where artists decide they're going to shift things a little bit. So as a curator you have to—and this is where the judgment call comes—you have to weigh up when to accept that and when to challenge the artist on it. I think that the key is transparency in terms of your records as an institution. So for example, we have a Replication

Committee, which is I think unique in museums, headed by Carol Mancusi-Ungaro.

Chrissie Iles:

And any kind of change to the work in any way, be it pure replication in physical terms or some kind of shift in the way something is shown in any way, but the artist asks, we bring it to the Replication Committee, which consists of registrars, conservators, curators, our in-house lawyer. We all discuss it together and we come to a conclusion about it. Then the onus doesn't lie with just one, you know, the subjective interpretation of one curator, it's actually a committee and then the committee's recommendation is moved forward, and it's all notated.

Glenn Wharton:

Yes the Whitney has definitely created a really wonderful model with this Replication Committee, and I think museums around the world are looking at it and thinking about it.

Barbara Clausen:

Absolutely. One very precise question: EAI, because for many years it was ... It still is very important to the question of video, not just the diffusion, but also really working with institutions. *Mirage* too has different versions to it as a video work. Could you speak about that relationship between *Mirage*, the piece that's owned by the Whitney, and EAI?

Chrissie Iles:

Yes. I mean, one thing that museums have never grappled with, none of them, except maybe the Pompidou Center a little bit, is the concept of distribution. Distribution is something that EAI and Film Archives and film distributors do. Art museums collect and show videos or films that are editioned or unique. We are addressing distribution in the collection. I have made that a strong part of the collection. When I first came to the Whitney, when I established the committee, I also went to Leo Castelli and Ileana Sonnabend, who were both alive then and said, "I would like to recreate *Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films* as a special collection in the museum." And they gave it their blessing, gave me some films to start me off. So we've been bringing them all in ever since. Now, Joan's films and videos are part of that.

Chrissie Iles:

One of the reasons I wanted to do that was I wanted to... First of all this whole group of films and videos that were distributed by a gallery, which is a very interesting model and that's a whole subject in itself. The idea of distribution, the idea that artists wanted these works to be available and distributable and they were proposing another model of understanding how to collect an artwork and how to see an artwork in this way that isn't precious in the kind of rarity sense.

Chrissie Iles: So *Mirage* as distributed by EAI is part of that model. So I don't see the fact that *Mirage* is available also through EAI as any kind of issue because to me, it makes everything more interesting. Because if you have, you know, like, MoMA has *Mirage* but with objects. We have *Mirage* in another context without objects. Other people have *Mirage* the video, including libraries. So what is the relationship between a museum collection—which is after all a scholarly archive, at bottom its collection is the scholarly archive of cultural objects—and a library? Which is you know, the first museum was the Alexandria library in Egypt thousands of years ago. It's like this model of the museum as library, as a kind of a collection of culturally important artworks.

Chrissie Iles: The role of *Mirage*, the distributed video, single screen video, it will sit in a classroom on a shelf somewhere waiting to be shown to students. It will sit in the Whitney's cold storage as part of an installation. It will sit in MoMA. This is very exciting. Because if you think about it, how many portraits did Warhol make? And they are in museums all over the world. But people don't think about the fact that it's kind of similar, because there's such a, even though Warhol was very, you know, he said at one point he was making his paintings to finance his films, you know, film was so important to him.

Chrissie Iles: We have to break out of these binaries. As I think that the fact that *Mirage* exists in EAI as a distributed work is important. Also let's face it, what does distribution mean? We're not talking Star Wars here. I mean, this is only ever going to be, there is only ever going to be a limited number of distributed films and videos by artists in the world. Actually the number of them in collections and, you know, student libraries around the world well, is probably going to be smaller or no bigger than an editioned framed print by Louise Bourgeois or whoever, maybe four hundred. So it's no different to a limited edition print in the end. It's editioned almost by default.

Barbara Clausen: I have one more question with the installation of the videos. Joan is somebody who, as you said, the fluidity of your practice is also really related to the site-specificity of the spaces she works in. Were there any kinds of discussions that you remember in regard to the size of the space that she was presenting this projection in? Or what came before or after? Or the angle of the screens, etc.?

Chrissie Iles: Well, the room that I made available to Joan, the size of it, because I designed the exhibition with the construction manager working with us at the time at the Breuer... I designed the space because we had to make sixteen rooms. So that it was big

enough to have two projections and a monitor and really be in the space. But I couldn't go beyond a certain size because it was, you know, I had space limitations. So I got the size of the space that I could, the biggest I could get according to what I felt the piece needed... that's curatorial judgment. I said to Joan, "Here is the size on paper that we've sort of agreed the piece could be in and what do you think?" And Joan said, "Yes. That's fine." And so, the other question was the-

Glenn Wharton:

The monitors, the angles, the-

Chrissie Iles:

Well the angle we just did at the time. It was just so that you could see it. It was there, it was her saying, "Good night, good morning". It became her sort of space, almost like her studio or something. She is lying there going, "Good night, good morning". That was filmed in her studio in Mercer Street. Then the drawing. So, it was important that in a way she was lying on the floor of her studio and you can see the studio floor. So the monitor was on the floor and that was very important. So for me, it would be a travesty to put the monitor on a pedestal for example, because that is more like video art and creating, collecting, connect ... Something else, you know. The whole point was, it was on the floor. Because she was lying on the floor when she made it. Like the same way as she was with making *Vertical Roll* [1972]. It emphasizes the performative element, the performative roots of the way she was working.

Chrissie Iles:

And then the drawing on the blackboard. The projection we felt shouldn't be too large, because that would make it sort of too cinematic. So it's almost like the size would be like a large blackboard. So you almost... Again to kind of emphasize the performative nature of the work rather than a projection, because she's drawing in chalk and then erasing and drawing and erasing. So we moved around the size a little bit together until we got this size that felt like yes, you know, this feels like you're looking at her drawing on the blackboard. And that's what you're really focusing on, it's that process of drawing and erasure, drawing and erasure. Then the other screen, which had a, I mean—

Barbara Clausen:

*Volcano* [*Volcano Saga*, 1985].

Chrissie Iles:

*Volcano* and also TV footage.

Barbara Clausen:

Kennedy.

Chrissie Iles: Kennedy, etc. If you'd made that too big it would have felt out of proportion. It's really strange how some curators think that bigger is better and they automatically make something very large. First of all, the larger something is the more people keep away from it so they can look at it. The easiest way to push someone out of a room is to make a projection large. You want people to be in. In installing the work and working with Joan on that, I wanted to feel like you're in her studio watching her perform in these different ways saying, "Good night, good morning", drawing. Then the television, which was so ubiquitous then, because there was no iPhone, that was the way you got your news and everything. So that was there as a presence, but not some big cinematic presence. It wasn't you know—

Glenn Wharton: What would you say the ideal room size would be?

Chrissie Iles: I would say that the room size we had was pretty good. You know the last time it was shown at MoMA, it had more elements and objects so it needed that size. I thought that size worked well. It did feel very much more slick than when we showed it and less performative to me and more—

Glenn Wharton: What about light levels, audio levels?

Chrissie Iles: Light levels, we made the room ... We painted the room... What color did we paint the walls? I can't remember. I think they were white. There was no light there. I really didn't want the show overall to be this gloomy set of dark rooms. So we had a corridor that was low lit but lit that took you through a little bit like the dreamlands through the pieces so that you could feel like you were going in and coming out again without interrupting a flow, because you were sort of in a zone. So when you walked into *Mirage*, you were walking into... I wanted you to get the feeling you're walking into Joan performing. So you'd walk into the studio, and we are watching her performance. You would stay there and just be with her and I wanted people to feel their own bodily presence in relation to hers and for it, you know. So that's why when you walked in the projections were on the right and the monitor on the floor was sort of in front of you and a bit further way.

Glenn Wharton: Was it relatively dark in the room?

Chrissie Iles: Yes. Yeah. It was relatively dark and—

Glenn Wharton: And the volume?

- Chrissie Iles: The volume was not, I mean, the only ... The sounds were the relationship between her saying, "Good night, good morning", and the *May Windows* [1976]. The chalk drawing was silent. *Good Night Good Morning* was rhythmic. It was "Good night, good morning, good night, good morning..." So I wanted that to be audible but not completely because it was quite intimate. So it's really a balance between the sound of *Good Night Good Morning*, and *May Windows*, and the video projection. So I wanted her to be audible above the sound of the projection which she was but not so that she was chanting because it was an intimate thing of, "Good night, good morning...". I think we just balance that.
- Glenn Wharton: Were there benches in the room? Any furniture?
- Chrissie Iles: No. Because that would have ... Or was there? No, I honestly can't remember. We'd have to go back into the files. I think if there was, I mean, I'm actually... I don't like benches. I don't think they're comfortable. I think it creates a very formulaic experience. I actually like, if you're going to have anything in the room, almost like very, very large squishy sort of beanbag type of things that visually disappear. But if you really want to hang out in the room, instead of sitting on the floor, which is uncomfortable, you could just flop onto those and just be. So that you're not looking, because I think the thing about the bench is that it really is like a sort of a proscenium arch. It gives you, you know, it implies frontality because you've got to do that. Whereas this was very, a very performative environment. If I was doing it now, I would ask Joan about squishy things that you could just sit on and be. So as though you were sort of hanging out in her studio, watching her perform.
- Brandon Eng: I know that you've emphasized that there's sort of no original due to the iterative quality of these, but specifically with *Mirage*, had you seen it? Before you asked her to use this work, did you see it?
- Chrissie Iles: I had seen the single screen video and I knew *Good Night Good Morning* and *May Windows*. So I had looked at all her ... When I first came to New York—
- Brandon Eng: But you hadn't seen it in the installation versions and in Amsterdam or at ... Did you see the Dia, the dual projection that had been at Dia [dual projection of *Mirage* (1976) and *Mirage II* (1976/2000), *Film and Video Work, 1968–76*, Dia Center for the Arts, September 28, 2000]? Maybe that was—
- Chrissie Iles: That wasn't... That was afterwards.

Brandon Eng: Okay. So did you have—

Chrissie Iles: It hadn't been shown. It hadn't been shown except I think in the 1970s and like maybe in the Bay Area show that David Ross or someone did [*Performances/Video/Installations*, University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, 1980] and Amsterdam but that was before my time.

Brandon Eng: So when you were thinking of, when you were showing it, did you have some idea in your head of how you thought the work was? Or it was just based on the videos?

Chrissie Iles: I understood that I wanted to emphasize the sort of performative nature of all of the works and the way she wanted to put them together. Because she chose *May Windows* and *Good Night Good Morning*. So she sort of constructed it in a way. She said, "I will do this and this and this and this." And then we kind of talked about it together. I wanted to be very driven by her and what she wanted and by, in terms of the larger goal of the show which is just to bring together this group of works that, you know... It was part of this kind of extended process-based approach, performative approach to sculptural ideas through this mixture of the performative and the moving image.

Chrissie Iles: So that's why I knew that space should not just be projection, bench, you know, because this is not what that show was about at all. None of the works had benches I think. They were very much about this kind of circular quality. I mean most of the works in the show had a circular quality whether it was Nauman's *Spinning Spheres* [1970], the Morris piece [*Finch College Project*, 1969], Simone Forti [*Striding Crawling*, 1977], the move back and forth with *Line Describing a Cone* [Anthony McCall, 1973], Dennis Oppenheim's *Echo* [1973].

Chrissie Iles: All these works, I mean the striking thing about them when I was researching them all was the way in which they really push the viewer around the room. Just as in sculptural terms, artists were going into the corner in these spaces. Because it was all in a way about also the rejection of painting, which is a rejection of also the frontality of the single screen of cinema which is about, you know, the modernist painterly equivalent in moving image terms. So I did not want to make a show that was a bunch of single projections and benches. It was the opposite of that.

Chrissie Iles: So, in the case of *Mirage*, it was very important to feel... I mean, she said where all the elements should go. But in dialogue, because, you know, it didn't need me to sort of point out to her, the performative nature of her work. So she automatically...

Because none of her installations have that frontal, proscenium quality as in the cinema. "There is a projection, you sit and watch it." They all have this very, this sort of multiplicity of different elements, different sizes of screens, different positions, objects. That's the way she always works with her installations. So that appeared in the presentation very sort of organically.

Glenn Wharton:

As a conservator, I have to ask your thoughts about the media, about media migration. Not about the preservation of the files but in terms of the changeability. Also the monitors, do you think that they should always be CRT monitors? Can they be migrated to new media and shown in different ways as technology continues to move into the future?

Chrissie Iles:

I think that the monitor aspect on the ground, it's really critical that it's a 3:4 aspect ratio square monitor. Because that's so much about the state of video at that time, which was that you watch TV on television—oh sorry—you watch the news on television or in the cinema and in news clips. If you wanted to move and be outside you made little three-minute films because you had the cartridges and the Super 8 camera. If you wanted to make a video in your studio, you had heavy video equipment, and there was very little of it and you passed it around. And then the fact that she showed videos on box monitors or TV monitors was very, very important at the time.

Chrissie Iles:

I think when you show something on a flat screen, flat screens didn't appear till the 2000s. The flat screens are a 2000s media. Flat screens didn't exist in the 1990s, or the 1980s, or the 1970s, or 1960s. It's very much a 2000s thing, just like no one painted their walls dark grey till the late 1990s. So I think it's very, very important that just because you can shift things around it doesn't mean you should. I think that the problem with just saying "Oh, we could stick it on a flat screen," and most of them are 16:9 and even if they're 3:4... My nightmare is that you have a big group show of amazing historical works from the Whitney's collection in 2040 and they all look like they were made five years ago because everything is just like flat screens. And, you know, it's like Times Square, and everything will look the same.

Chrissie Iles:

So no, I don't think there should be... However, in terms of projection, I'm not a purist in terms of installation, of films in installations as opposed to say, the modernist screening of an extraordinary [Stan] Brakhage film on 35 or 16 mm. I think that's very different. But in terms of the way artists were using film, they used film because it was the easiest medium most of the time. Not because they were like [emphasizing] *film*. They weren't being you know, like avant-garde filmmakers about the

medium of film in most cases. It was just their friends were filmmakers. Bob [Robert] Fiore was around everywhere, Peter Campus was a filmmaker. It's just what they had. And film was just the default. It was the kind of home movie, it was the medium that everybody had much greater access to than video at the time, which was a professional format and new.

Chrissie Iles: So I think that the key is that you don't show things that were made to be projected on monitors, and you don't show things that were on monitors projected. And you don't show... I mean, I've seen curators show small Super 8 films projected 17 feet high covering an entire wall. It looked great. It looked great. But it looked also completely like some kind of illustration of something, you know.

Glenn Wharton: It was a reinterpretation of the work.

Chrissie Iles: It wasn't a reinterpretation of work, it was a mishanging of the work. It was like hanging a painting on its side to my mind. Because that's not how that ... It was Mary Kelly's *Post-Partum Document* and it took all the intimacy of that film away. It was right next to a Sol LeWitt wall drawing that had that kind of almost, belly button node. Visually it looked great, but it was completely—

Glenn Wharton: So it—

Chrissie Iles: So in terms of integrity—

Glenn Wharton: With Joan Jonas and *Mirage*, do you think it's important for curators, conservators and others in the future to honor the historicity in terms of the cube monitor?

Chrissie Iles: Absolutely. I think that it's very important to identify which video works cannot be shown on flat screens, and/or 16:9, and/or projected. You just have to grasp the nettle and, you know, keep those 3:4 aspect ratio square monitors around for those certain pieces of which *Mirage* or this element of *Mirage* is one, and which things can be... Which works and elements of work can be shown differently. So, it would be a disaster to me to show *Mirage* on three flat screens, one small and two large, one on the floor and two hanging on the wall. I mean that just... Forget it, that's not *Mirage*.

Barbara Clausen: I absolutely agree. I think also I heard Joan say, and she's probably going to talk about this precisely, she also conceived and thought of and produced her pieces for very specific sizes

and types of screens. So you can't just hang or put something on the wall if it's supposed to hang, etc. There's a real thought and linking of also how the body relates to screen. With *Good Morning Good Night*, I remember when we showed *After Mirage* [1976/2011] in Montreal, it was really important that the sound comes from the monitor.

Chrissie Iles: Yes. Absolutely.

Barbara Clausen: And that it's not somewhere else, some sound mix. So it's really like her, her body being part of that monitor. I know that you also took so much care of that.

Chrissie Iles: That's absolutely right. I think that the other thing that many curators do not think about is sound. Or do not understand in terms of the artists' intention. Sound is always considered a problem in a museum. It's always a problem. No curator likes it, the sound always gets turned down. It's a problem, especially when you have more than one work with sound. It's not something that most curators like. That may change in 30 years' time. But for the moment, it's the thing that gets paid least attention to in terms of any notations of works, or you know, interviews. People don't talk about the sound, but you're absolutely right. That's very precise that the video monitor, the sound has to come from that.

Chrissie Iles: You can't have *Good Night Good Morning* coming from— Because it's a cinematic experience to have the sound coming from over here or... And the source of the sound and the spatial qualities of the sound in relation to the intention of the work and the artist is critical.

Glenn Wharton: I'm very glad that we got to this level of detail, because I think these are the kinds of questions that people will have in the future when they work with Joan Jonas's work. Does anyone have any more questions for Chrissie? Or Chrissie, have we missed anything? Was there anything else you would like to say?

Chrissie Iles: Well looking at your list, where you say, "Exhibition of *Mirage* on loan in other institutions," I think that in terms of loans, you know, curating is a very personal thing. Not in terms of ego, but in terms of an understanding of a work. So if a loan request comes in for say *Mirage*, I look very carefully at, or any work, I always look carefully at the arguments being made by the curator. Like, can they borrow work from anywhere else? How important is this piece? And then I think you need to really supervise the installation of pieces in other museums, because every museum is different. They have different habits, different,

you know, levels of professionalism, different levels of AV expertise, different kinds of experiences. Some museums rarely show moving image work. Some museums show it all the time, you know.

Chrissie Iles:

Architecturally, what are the specifics of that institution space where they're going to show *Mirage*? Where are the doors? All kinds of information you need to find out. Because your entry into the pieces is crucial. Where the door is, is always crucial. The light, it's incredibly ... You see it all over the place with the Venice Biennale. There's a certain light bleed from you know, they'll put a very bright piece that's like a group of paintings next to *Mirage*, and it would bleed. All kinds of things you need to check and then, well, there's a lot of things people—you can't take anything for granted. So I think in terms of loans to other institutions, you know, if you're loaning paintings, there's a whole questionnaire that we send out. Obviously we're very rigorous about that in terms of climate control, in terms of security, all these things.

Chrissie Iles:

We need to make sure, all of us, that whenever we lend anything to another institution, we are finding out very specific things about how they intend to show it. What the space is, where the door is, no light bleeding. You know, many curators who I'm back and forth with about loans of moving image works are very good at going, "Oh, okay. Yes, absolutely will do this." And they're very good and they're very attentive, but you have to tell them what to be aware of. You can't assume the same level of understanding because maybe they just don't know or they don't know the work, you know, except through scholarship or reading or seeing it somewhere else.

Glenn Wharton:

Okay, that's helpful. Anything else?

Chrissie Iles:

Anything else. I think that something that needs to happen—which we will do with MPI, our Mellon-funded moving image preservation project, we're just beginning—one thing that hasn't really been done by any of us yet, but we're going to start doing, is talking to other institutions who own the same work. Or if a work is it a moving image work is editioned or, in this case, different iterations of the work. So, MoMA has another version of *Mirage*. We've never been in dialogue. We were very friendly, very friendly and close as institutions and curators and all the rest of it. But we've never sat down and had a formal discussion about the differences between MoMA's version of *Mirage* and ours, for example. So I don't know where all the other iterations of *Mirage* are. I also don't know how many copies of *Mirage* EAI has sold over the years, because, honestly, there's not the time

or the resources to sit down and do that sort of work. My focus is on making shows and bringing in the next group of works for the collection and building the collection in other ways.

Chrissie Iles:

So I do think that one thing we can all do is actually, and a very important part of the works' conservation as well, it's not just kind of making sure ours is perfect and we've got all our ducks in a row, but how to be in constant dialogue and have that information very easily available to scholars and future curators, sort of sharing of information about different iterations of *Mirage*. So that we really understand very thoroughly what it is and also what might be left in Joan's studio, notes. And I hadn't had time to talk—When you're putting the show together, you don't have time to go into depth with these things and then you're rushing to bring the work in and the movement. So you know, I would love to ask Joan, “What have you got about *Mirage* in your studio? Notes or, you know, that we can have copies of.” Because we in... You know, Farris Wahbeh, our head of... Carol [Mancusi-Ungaro] is our Head of Research, Farris is just you know, dealing with so many aspects of this in Archives. He is our Head of Archives.

Chrissie Iles:

He feels very strongly that it's not in—which is something that's happening now in archives—it's not necessarily crucial that we have the original bit of paper. It's more important that other people also have copies of that bit of paper. So for example, John Hanhardt because we don't take in archives, gave his archives to Bard [College] to CCS Bard archives. Now John Hanhardt's archives include I mean, he was at the Whitney for thirty years, so we know we want to go through these archives and make copies of any fragment of paper, anything related to us so that we have it. In the end, it doesn't matter to us whether it's the piece of paper he had in one of these files here ultimately, what it matters is we have the information all in one place.

Chrissie Iles:

So the same is true with *Mirage*. Whatever is in Joan's studio, it would be great to have copies here.

Barbara Clausen:

Well, and that's of course the whole core purpose of the Joan Jonas Knowledge Base. Because we are actually looking at every performance, every installation. Every institution that has... and at the artist's studio. So that's actually at the core of that.

Chrissie Iles:

That's fantastic.

Barbara Clausen:

So that's why, what you did today—

- Glenn Wharton: This is music to my ears as well, because what you described basically is the aim of the Artist Archives Initiative to create a non-institution-specific resource on individual artists. And having more conversations between institutions, researching with the artist in their archive, that's very much what we're all about here.
- Chrissie Iles: Well, I think that your model you are creating is very prescient because I think it's the way of the future. I think it's the way archives are moving in general. I think that in terms of a shared knowledge base, including an online maybe internal knowledge base, so that what you're doing is accessible online to this kind of group, certainly a group of all museums and places that own Joan's work. Then as another institution owns Joan's work, they become part of the group if you like. Because we're already thinking about this in terms of conservation. Is the way in which, especially with editioned works and co-owned works ... What you're doing is also part of a larger situation where we're finding ourselves increasingly co-owning things and sharing things and in this very technologically advanced online world, why wouldn't we do that.
- Glenn Wharton: Well, what a happy place to end the interview. With such good feedback on our work. So—
- Chrissie Iles: You're welcome. Thank you.
- Glenn Wharton: Thank you so much. We really appreciate your time.
- Chrissie Iles: You're welcome.

*This transcript is intended to provide an accessible form of interview audio content. It has been edited for factual accuracy and clarity. Any alterations are noted with brackets.*