

Joan Jonas on *Organic Honey* installations, interviewed by Barbara Clausen and Kristin Poor, December 22, 2020

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- Barbara Clausen: Hello. We're here again today with Joan Jonas. It's the 22nd of December 2020. This is the Joan Jonas Knowledge Base. Kristin Poor and I, Barbara Clausen, are interviewing Joan Jonas about *Organic Honey*, the performance and the installation, and this is the second part which is really concentrated on the installation, the development of the installation, and the work. And we'd like to start out by speaking about the evolution of the components. So how did you, almost at the end of the seventies, for your show at Berkeley, start to think about what you would leave behind in the exhibition space of this work?
- Joan Jonas: Well for my show in Berkeley...Berkeley, the show, was concentrated on, I think, five performances, live performances over a period of a month with a different performance every week. I never thought about the *Organic Honey* material being, as we say, an installation. It was simply a selection of objects and costumes that I put up in the space of the museum. I can't remember, we won't talk about the other components of that show. The final thing was I took over the whole museum, so everything was taken away, all the temporary collections of objects and props from each performance. But David Ross always refers to this as my first installation, and that's okay. But I really see the whole idea of making an installation, it's a work in itself. It's not just an arrangement. It is an arrangement of objects, but it's a very particular arrangement of objects in a three dimensional space with components such as sound, and light, and so on. So in the Stedelijk, it was just costumes and a few objects, as much as I remember.
- Barbara Clausen: Do you remember, did you have these objects and costumes and parts there before the performance and afterwards? Or were they only left in the space after the performance? What was the timing relationship?
- Joan Jonas: They were only left there after the performance. Yeah.
- Barbara Clausen: And was there any video included in that leaving behind?
- Joan Jonas: I didn't see any. I mean, we'd have to look at the picture. I don't remember. I don't think so. No.

Kristin Poor: I'll just add that our listeners should also take a look at the interview we did with you about the Berkeley exhibition, which we go into a bit more detail, too, with. Yes

Joan Jonas: But that's what I remember about Berkeley. I realized when I was interviewed about the Berkeley show, my memory was a little faulty and it took me a few minutes to realize exactly what I did there. So, I don't remember every single thing I did, but I definitely did the performance at Berkeley, as we know.

Kristin Poor: But you weren't thinking about it as an installation at that time?

Joan Jonas: Well, no. I mean, the performance itself...well, let me say something about my idea about installation. From the very beginning, I thought of the set up for *Organic Honey* as a movie set, a stage set. It was based on that Marilyn Monroe story. So I thought I was setting up a film set: the table, the objects, the drawing on the wall, the chair. This was in the gallery at 112 Greene Street. So I thought of that as a stage set and then when I did the performance at LoGiudice [Gallery], I moved that whole stage set into that gallery and enlarged it a bit by having a projection, as I spoke about.

Joan Jonas: But, the idea of [the] stage set really is, from the very beginning, what the installations were based on because whenever I did a performance, I made a situation, which you could call a stage set, which I felt transformed me when I stepped into it. That I stepped into a place of performance which was a different place from everyday life. So I stepped over a line in a way. So then when I began to think of...when I was transferring my ideas of performances to the so-called installations for the Stedelijk for a show that was about this transformation or translation, it was a step. It was the same stepping from sculpture and so on to performance and then stepping from performance to the space of installation, which was another form of my work.

Kristin Poor: Joan, could you take us through the process of putting together the installation for the Stedelijk exhibition?

Joan Jonas: Well, as I said before, Dorine Mignot was the curator of that show. She was, as I've said...I worked closely with Dorine more than almost any other...I mean, I work with many curators who are great, but Dorine was a friend. She was the kind of curator who became a friend of artists. She was very close to me. She wasn't an artist, but she was close to being an artist. But she was not in any way an artist. But she was a friend that you felt would become part of your life. She would come and stay with me and I would stay at her house and things like that. So when we began

to talk about...I mean, I became more of a friend of course during the process of this show than I had been before, because we hadn't worked together so closely at all. So we immediately saw the problems of making installations out of these performances, like how do you do that, and I told you this story already--

Joan Jonas: We collected all my props from all of my performances and put them in the middle of the floor in a big pile. It was like a Jack Smith pile of objects. And we immediately...it was just to prove to ourselves that you can't show it that way. That's not interesting. So immediately, the thinking became about showing these objects.

Joan Jonas: [...] So anyway, there was a big pile of objects in the middle of the floor. So immediately the idea, "Okay, these objects have to be within a context." So the *Organic Honey* installation--

Joan Jonas: Wait a minute. So that's when we decided and I don't remember exactly how the process went after that. But, basically the next thing I do remember is going to Amsterdam with everything that I chose, that were chosen, with all the props and objects and putting the piece together. It took quite a while because they allowed me—in Amsterdam, at the Stedelijk—to really spend time on it. We could ask them. There's no indication of how long it took and I don't know if they would remember. So I was very slow in deciding what to do with all these various installations including a new piece. Anyway, but the *Organic Honey*, if I look at the plan in the Stedelijk catalog, and there's also a little plan in the back of the Stedelijk catalog, that's the way I decided to show it. And it was kind of the basis of the way it was shown after that with small variations and the addition of certain elements, which I'll talk about later.

Joan Jonas: I mean, they say in the interview at the Stedelijk, and they're probably right, that I kept changing a little bit and taking something out and putting it in and they wanted there to be a final settled version, which is what they should have had. So I don't remember all those changes, but they weren't major changes. In Barcelona, I can't remember what I did. But anyway. And also it had a lot to do with the different spaces. Because my installations, unless there is a defined space of an installation, I fit the installations into a space that's given to me. That doesn't have to happen anymore, but, for instance, there's a photograph I guess a few years after the Stedelijk show.

Joan Jonas: I showed the piece in Los Angeles in a show curated by Ann Goldstein and Anne Rorimer and there was an installation in the

temporary museum in LA that was part of MOCA. It was kind of like a storefront space they gave me and there's a photograph of it that you can see. And so I arranged the pieces for that particular space. The audience would only be seeing it from that point of view of the storefront, which, I liked the idea. So they're all the same elements, but arranged that way. Subsequent installations and also the first one were rooms that you walked into.

Kristin Poor: And Joan, subsequent installations were rooms that you moved into.

Joan Jonas: Well, the room for the MOCA was the only room that looked like that. And then after that, I chose rooms or had more control over the shape of the room. So the installation was always what you see, basically after that and before the plan of the Stedelijk, which is the table with the projection right next to it of *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*. What I added, I don't remember when, was the video of *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, *Organic Honey's Vertical Roll*, which was the document, the documentation of the [Leo] Castelli space in [19]73. But I didn't make that video until later and I don't remember. I didn't have it written down when I made that. But then it was included. I didn't write this down--

Kristin Poor: Joan, could I ask you one question just backing up a bit? Can you tell us how you got from the pile of props of *Organic Honey* to the different sections and arrangements of the installation? Does that correspond to parts of the performance? How did you think through the division of the materials into these different groups and parts of the space?

Joan Jonas: Well, the division of the material in different groups had only to do with the work that they were from. In other words, I didn't mix them up at all. So all the pieces that pertained to *Organic Honey* went with that, *The Juniper Tree* all went with that, and so on.

Kristin Poor: And within *Organic Honey* itself there are objects grouped together on the table, there's other things here, there's drawings on the wall. How did you subdivide the materials related to *Organic Honey* around the space?

Joan Jonas: Well, first of all...well, I'll just say quickly that some things—as I say in the interview—were destroyed or lost. And so I had to, for that show, I had to replace, go to the flea market and buy fans and get another covering for the table. Oh yeah. Okay. Just refresh my memory. Where are we?

Barbara Clausen: You had some parts. It's interesting that you say that some things got lost over the years and that you had to replace them and find them and this is in response to Kristin's question also thinking about sequence within the performance, in relationship to the layout of the installation in the exhibition space.

Joan Jonas: Okay. All the objects that I replaced were in specific reference to objects that had been lost or destroyed. By the way, my dog, Sappho, chewed up my collection of incredible fans that belonged to my grandmother. So I had to replace all the fans, which was really a shame, but they're in the video of *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*. And then covering for the table and certain things. The costumes are the same. I didn't have those specific costumes in the first performance at LoGiudice. I got them when I went to California in [19]72, actually, and was working in Venice at Doug Christmas's space where we performed and made *Vertical Roll*. So those costumes came from that trip and I used them. That's when I began to use them. So my way of thinking about the installation was how to create the atmosphere, how do you get that. Because I never liked documents of my...now I allow it, and I've accepted it, but the documents—in the late sixties, early seventies, when we got the video cameras—of performances, they always had a funny, different mood from the actual performance.

Joan Jonas: So what I wanted to do was kind of create that mood. And one of the ways to do that was to, first of all, I included everything that had to do with *Organic Honey*. All the props I had. So the props were arranged partly on the table. It was based on that early performance when I had the jar on the table that I put the pennies into. Later in other performances, it wasn't on the table, but in the first one it was. I had to replace some of the objects that I drew around, and one of the objects that we didn't mention that's not given credit, the doll. The first doll I used belonged to my grandmother. It was a French knitted doll, named France, French. The second one was a doll that I made when I was in school, maybe in the second or third grade. And it's a doll of an Indian boy, so it's a Navajo doll. And so I put that doll in, in place of the other doll and so that was--

Joan Jonas: I'm not sure it was in the Stedelijk. I'm not sure. But I know it was in the Queens Museum because in the Queens Museum is where it got manhandled. Anyway, they allowed children into that and the children touched everything and the doll got damaged. But then it was fixed, as you see. It's discussed in the Stedelijk record of how to deal with the installation. And so that's what I did. And also I wanted in *Organic Honey*...in some of the others, it was a frontal. In *Organic Honey* it was not a

frontal experience. You walked in and you were surrounded. And so I played all the videos. And the reason they worked together—I wouldn't do that now with the work I do now—was because there was no language. Maybe I said, “left side right side.”

Joan Jonas:

There was just one little patch of music, the Reggae that played every few minutes and there were percussive sounds from way before, working with video in the late sixties, the outdoor pieces. I used percussive sounds, like hitting stones together, hitting blocks of wood together, which I then used in the *Organic Honey* piece, for instance, in *Vertical Roll*. So those sounds, the sounds of hitting wood together in *Vertical Roll*, other percussive sounds, worked all together and made kind of an atmosphere in the room. And then I also played all the videos, so you heard the howling every once in a while from *Duet*. Yeah.

Kristin Poor:

Joan, if you had to choose just a few words to describe the mood or the atmosphere of *Organic Honey* that you're hoping that the installation captures, what would they be?

Joan Jonas:

A little indescribable. Kind of mystery and...I don't know. It's hard to say. I think an audience member would have to say that. The atmosphere was created in a completely quiet room where you would just hear the sound of the performance, which are abstract sounds, and then you're looking at something that's kind of in another world and you have no reminders of the everyday world. I don't know how else to say it. It's not for me to say, in a way, but that's it.

Barbara Clausen:

I was also wondering about...you were talking about an installation that combines two works, *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy* performance and *Organic Honey's Vertical Roll*. Since both those pieces, as you've explained in the prior interview about the performance, are different. They're related but they're not the same. Could you speak about why you decided to still keep them together, to merge them in the installation? Could you speak a bit about that?

Joan Jonas:

Because I consider that *Organic Honey*—as I call it, project—to be one thing. And out of that one thing emerged different elements, some of which are autonomous videos like *Left Side Right Side*, *Vertical Roll*, *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*. Those are autonomous videos. But the information and imagery and actions are repeated and echoed throughout those works so that the *Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* is called that because I inserted sections of *Vertical Roll* in the performance. Actions that I did in the video. I didn't show the video of *Vertical Roll* in

the performance. I showed actions and I used the vertical roll. That was just part of a larger picture of elements that were in the first piece, like "this is my right eye and this is my left eye." So those were the same. So there were some same and some different, and that's why.

Barbara Clausen:

I also have a question about the time. It was very specific, 1990, in the early nineties when you and Dorine worked on this, when you worked on this installation. You had already...I'm specifically thinking of *Volcano Saga*, of other installations you were composing, putting together at the time. And you also knew, if I assume right, that you were not going to re-perform, you didn't have the intention of re-performing *Organic Honey*. You didn't throughout the eighties and you didn't have the intention in 1994. So I'm thinking about, did you feel the installation was something of a looking back, of recreating a scene? Did it have some kind of a reference to time for you to make this installation?

Joan Jonas:

I didn't really think of it as looking back, although in a way it was preserving a moment. In that sense, they're all presenting a moment the way any work...I mean, when you show one of your works, you don't think "I'm looking back", frankly. You're bringing it in the present and not looking back. You're looking at a work of art like any work of art that exists at a different time. So I didn't think of it in that way of looking back at all, actually. Yeah. And the reason...all of these works, they reach a certain point where I don't think that they need to be worked on anymore or changed or improved, and then I stop. *Mirage*, which we talk about in another context, was a work that I could always go back to. It's much more open and it doesn't depend on certain physical...although when I did it again at the Tate, it was difficult for me. Simple actions became difficult for me. *Organic Honey* would be impossible for me to re-perform. Maybe someday somebody will, but it will be a different piece.

Joan Jonas:

The performance existed at a time and space. Requires certain particular movements, but I could see that it could be a version of it. It would be an interpretation. You can never do...I don't believe that you can ever do the same performance, bring it back. And *Organic Honey* had so many finished works in it, like *Vertical Roll*. So in the installation, I show *Vertical Roll* and I show the performance of *Organic Honey's Vertical Roll*, the document. I'm not sure, I have to look at it again, but really basically I showed the *Vertical Roll* video. So I showed the finished videos, *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, *Vertical Roll*, *Duet*, and *Anxious Automation*, plus three live cameras, because I wanted to show also the relationship to the camera. So that's why

there's three live cameras in the work trained on a certain image, each time, of drawings. Different drawings, actually.

Joan Jonas: So those became part of it, to bring in that aspect of early video and the closed-circuit situation. So I was trying to show as much as possible of the moment and to make it be a coherent whole in this three dimensional [space]. And they wouldn't look at just one thing. They would look at more than one thing at the same time or they wouldn't sit and look at something all the way through. There are no benches, so they can't sit down. So it's really [...] for the audience, that piece.

Kristin Poor: Joan, it's really what for the audience? The audio cut out for a moment.

Joan Jonas: Immersive.

Kristin Poor: Immersive.

Joan Jonas: That's what I hope they all are, the installations. Immersive. Although some of my installations are frontal. You watch them from one viewpoint. But this *Organic Honey* is not a frontal piece, not seen from one viewpoint.

Barbara Clausen: Even though when it was performed it was, no? Because the audience was placed in the front.

Joan Jonas: I've never done...I don't do that. I mean, I do frontal performances. I suppose it's because I then have more control over what the audience is seeing. [...]

Kristin Poor: Joan, you mentioned the importance of the live feed or closed circuit cameras in the installation in relation to the performance. Could you also talk a bit about the circuit breaker and how that worked in the performance and in the installation?

Joan Jonas: Well, in the performance, which was from the very beginning, the first one in 112 Greene Street and also in LoGiudice and whenever I could...I found the circuit breaker in Canal Street. It was just one of those things that you find, in those days, that you could find. And the principle of the circuit breaker is that there are two little boxes with the lights and if you step into the middle of them, the light is broken and this buzzing sound happens. I have no idea where it came from or who made it or what it was for, but I really liked that interruption because that was one of my...I really thought of my work not to make the



audience comfortable all the time, and I like that very harsh interruption of the action and the sound.

Joan Jonas: So you hear that in the first video. And I used it in subsequent performances. I don't remember how long, but in the installation, it couldn't function, really, in the same way at all because you'd have to leave it on. You have to plug it in and it would have to last. So it would be there as objects. I guess they still have it. I don't know. The fact is that we haven't shown the *Organic Honey* work since the Queens Museum. Was that the last time it was...? Anyway, because one thing the Stedelijk does, if they own something and somebody borrows it, a museum borrows it, they send their own curators with it to set it up. I had it figured out, I have to say. Oh, the Queens Museum was 2003.

Kristin Poor: It was shown a few times after that, most recently at the Stedelijk Museum in 2012.

Joan Jonas: No, but that was different. Yeah, I know that, but what I'm saying is that it was shown at the Stedelijk because [...] I could not show it...

Kristin Poor: Outside of that. Oh, I see. Yes.

Joan Jonas: I couldn't show it in...it was shown in Stuttgart too. That was 2000.

Kristin Poor: And it was shown in Barcelona and Geneva in 2007 and 2008?

Joan Jonas: That's interesting. Anyway...

Kristin Poor: I think that's the last time it was shown outside of the Stedelijk.

Joan Jonas: Unless they have conditioned rooms, the climate. It's very fragile, all the material.

Joan Jonas: So anyway, it hasn't been shown for a while because of the fragility, except it was shown at the Stedelijk, but it was shown there because they own it and they could control how it's shown. And the Stedelijk finally showed it exactly how it's supposed to be shown. It was decided in...I think it was 2006 when we had that session with Dorine and the curators at the Stedelijk, which was fantastic. So when I read through that document, which is amazing, and anybody who shows the piece should have that document for sure.

- Barbara Clausen: And you can find that document on the Joan Jonas Knowledge Base.
- Joan Jonas: Yeah. But another aspect of the piece which I was reminded of...I mean, several aspects. So you have to think about the sound, and this is true for all my installations. It has to be adjusted when you're playing more than one sound at the same time. I don't have sync sound in any of my installations yet. I'm not against it, it's just that I don't have it. So you have to control the volume of each sound so that one doesn't overwhelm the other and so on and so forth. That's an issue. The other issue is the lighting, which I had forgotten to mention. And when I showed this work in Stuttgart, actually, for the first time, I had a student, Astrid Klein, who was my student and she was also a lighting designer. She worked in the theater. And so I had her do the lighting for the show in Stuttgart. I can't hear you, Barbara. So she did the lighting for the show in Stuttgart and the lighting in all of my work is very important. And she would not be available to do the lighting again, probably.
- Joan Jonas: But I always ask that they pay particular attention to the lighting. It's another part of the atmosphere. I don't like yellow lights. Most lighting is kind of warm, on the yellow side. I ask for daylight, which is closer to the blue scale. A cool light, not a warm light. A cool light, which really echoes the TV light in a way. But the lighting is very...it shouldn't be a bright room. The lighting should be just very...like a dim light. Not like lighting paintings in a gallery. So it's something to think about, how to do the lighting, which is always true of all of the works. And it's very clear that we are talking about that in the interview.
- Kristin Poor: Joan, may I ask you one more question about the circuit breaker because I've never been able to see the installation in person. Is it set up so that the viewer or visitor to the installation walks between the two pieces and feels that...?
- Joan Jonas: No.
- Kristin Poor: ...interactiveness? Or do you just hear the buzz in the installation space? Or what is it like in the installation?
- Joan Jonas: As far as I remember, I don't think it's set up. I think you hear it in the video, *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, for sure.
- Kristin Poor: I see.

Joan Jonas: But you can't walk between it because it was always set up right close to the...between the chair and the table, close to the wall, which is where I would be standing. So you don't...no, they don't walk between it and I wouldn't...I mean, maybe in some other situation I would say yes, but not. Never. No.

Kristin Poor: Okay. Thank you.

Joan Jonas: So then, I was thinking about what did I add or take away. The only thing, if I look at all the examples of the installation, it wasn't until...I can't remember what year. I added the *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy, Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* [(1973–99)], the performance video based on the documentation at Castelli. But I didn't make that until much later and I did notice what year, but I can't remember. [1999] I didn't write down what year we added that into the installation, but you can see very clearly that it wasn't there until...I'm not sure. Yeah.

Kristin Poor: That's something we can find out and come back to and add. [The video was completed in 1999, and so was likely first added to the installation in 2000 when it was shown in Stuttgart.]

Joan Jonas: Yeah. So the other thing to talk about a little bit are the blackboard drawings and I refer to this painter's tape, making a frame. So they asked me about the so-called blackboard drawings. I had a blackboard in my first...in the LoGiudice performance. And I drew on the blackboard a drawing that was from the performance outdoors, in which there is a circle and a line from *Songdelay* and it was in the Jones Beach Piece with people walking with a stick between them. One along the circle and one along the line. I don't want to explain it now, but...so I made a series of drawings based on that action, which is a circle and a line underneath it. One of my—you could call it—signature drawings. I don't know. It's obvious. The two basic elements of graphic. And then lines tracing the path first along the circle, all around the circle and halfway across the line and then all along the line and halfway around the circle, which is the pattern that the performers made when they walked those patterns on the circle and line.

Joan Jonas: So I made drawings. So I put those in *Organic Honey* and I think that drawing is included. I'm not sure, but I think so. And then there were other drawings because I was also, which I had forgotten, making drawings of the sun and the moon, and I put that in. I put those drawings in, so those are part of...they're on paper. I transferred them to paper, I noticed. And there's also on the floor, there are three drawings. One is in the live camera images, one is the drawing of the dog, half is at the top of the

page and half at the bottom with the vertical roll going on the monitor, which brings those two halves together. And then another one was the endless drawing. The looping drawing that I did in the performance, there's also a drawing of that on the blackboard, I guess. And a third one was...which right now I can't remember. There were three drawings, which right now I can't remember. Or three images for the live cameras. Yeah.

Barbara Clausen: For the live cameras, the third was like the mirror.

Joan Jonas: Oh.

Kristin Poor: ...the dog's head, and I believe there were drawings of objects that you had outlined.

Joan Jonas: Oh yeah. Yeah. That was...yeah.

Barbara Clausen: Now.

Joan Jonas: Okay, so there's one drawing they keep mentioning in the Stedelijk interview, painter's tape. And I looked at the images in the installation and there's one drawing on the floor that's framed with tape, which is what I did when I was drawing for the monitor, was to make a frame of what the monitor was seeing so that I could make a drawing within that frame. And I think that was the drawing tracing around the different objects for sure in that frame.

Kristin Poor: That's great. And then the third camera is trained on the images that are on the wall behind the paper screen.

Joan Jonas: No. Oh yes, the third camera. Yes, yes. Sorry, I forgot. Yes. Yeah. And as we've said before, that paper screen happened when I did the performance in the Toselli Gallery in Milan, and was because in the Castelli... I mean, Toselli. In the Castelli performance before that, I used the back room, but then the paper screen was used to make a separate space in subsequent situations.

Barbara Clausen: Is there still something you want to add about the installation itself or can we go into the...?

Joan Jonas: I think we can go on. I don't know. I don't think so.

Barbara Clausen: So one of the questions we had was what parts of *Organic Honey* carried over into subsequent work? So not necessarily in

the material sense, but in a sense of development of ideas or concepts that you were able to develop?

Joan Jonas:

Well, one that I've already mentioned was the making of *Vertical Roll*, which was made by filming with two cameras, one filming my actions and the other one filming, recording those actions on a monitor with the vertical roll, because as I said, you have to video, to make a recording of it. You can't just have it happen. And that idea I turned into a piece called *Glass Puzzle*, which was really all about the relation of the camera and the monitor and filming off the monitor with the camera and really developing that quite a bit further in *Glass Puzzle*. And I called it *Glass Puzzle* because it was really about the monitor being this box and I thought of myself climbing into the box and being in the box and so on, contained in the box. So that was one idea that developed out of *Organic Honey*. Another one is the use of paper walls. After that, I made several.

Joan Jonas:

*Funnel*. Yeah, *Funnel*. There was a piece called *Funnel*. And *Stage Sets*, using paper walls and making it a space, a sculptural space, and also a performance. So there were two elements that came out of that beginning to work with paper walls: *Funnel*, which was a performance in these receding paper walls and then *Stage Sets* in [19]76, which was an installation including paper walls and including reproductions of that chair that's in *Organic Honey*. So I took elements from my work and made another piece. So we made I don't know how many chairs, maybe eight, and they reproduced that chair. So there are eight chairs, copies of that chair that's in *Organic Honey*, that accounting chair. We made eight of those. Yeah. And then there were cones from another piece. But the paper walls were really a development out of *Organic Honey* and I think...I think those are the main things. Oh, the idea of blackboard drawings in *Mirage*. I say that was inspired by Maya Deren, but it was also a continuation.

Joan Jonas:

I had always been making these chalk drawings. Not so many, but I really concentrated on that in the *Mirage* piece, in making drawings on the blackboard. So those are, I think, the three main points that I thought of. I don't think there's anything else. Yeah. I mean, *Left Side Right Side* came out of this whole thing. It wasn't like "this is my right eye and this is my left eye," I made a whole...that was just an action in *Organic Honey* and an image of me trying to point to my right and left, but then I made a whole video based on that idea with a mirror and a camera and a monitor. These spaces were very ambiguous that you could make and also interesting to me within the space of the monitor and the relationship of the camera and the monitor. So during those years, that's what I really experimented with.

- Barbara Clausen: Could you, because we're speaking about those years, I'm kind of going backwards to move forwards. You often mention the influence that seeing Noh theater had on you and the very scripted and very sequenced procession of different figures that appear on the stage and the use of stage and forms of presentation. Was that of any influence for you for *Organic Honey*?
- Joan Jonas: I mean, it was...
- Barbara Clausen: Like [...].
- Joan Jonas: No, of course. Not directly. I mean, I started using masks because of the Noh theater and I first used them in *Songdelay*. Not extensively, but I had just come back from Japan, so I used a Canadian hockey mask in *Songdelay*, or in *Delay Delay* outdoors in Jones Beach. And then the use of a mask was basically, probably, the biggest, maybe the biggest influence. But the use of enriching...my work was always very minimal, the mirror pieces and the outdoor works. The outdoor works, I had certain props like the hoop and the rope and the shovel and other things, but then when I started working with the video indoors, which led to *Organic Honey*, I began to be able to use small things and show them to the camera.
- Joan Jonas: In a very abstract way, one of the things that appealed to me about the Noh drama was the simplicity of the props and objects. They would just use a stick or a bunch of sticks or a paper in a very simple and beautiful way to represent various things. So I didn't copy any of that, but it was something that I always loved, that form of theater. So I still look back at the Noh theater to be inspired.
- Barbara Clausen: Thank you. Can we speak a bit about the documentation, of the integration of documentation into the installation? There's in some, I remember the Queens [Museum], there is some documentation that is part of the installation.
- Joan Jonas: I think the only documentation is that...unless I showed...I don't remember showing any of that. But you were the first person to show all the documentation. I mean, we should mention that show, by the way. What was the name of it, Barbara? Sorry.
- Barbara Clausen: Well, the first one was in Vienna in 2005, which was *After the act[: the (re)presentation of performance art]*, and then the second one was in Montreal at the Phi Foundation. But the first one in Vienna was, because exactly, because we couldn't get the

installation from Amsterdam because we just didn't have the means to have a curator come and the condition reporting for the temperature and the climate, whatever, in the factory space of the Mumok. So then there was this idea just to show everything that you have in your archive. Yeah. But that wasn't the installation of *Organic Honey*, that was an installation of what you have in your studio archive, those documents.

Joan Jonas: Right. Well I think that...what year was that?

Barbara Clausen: 2005.

Joan Jonas: I'd have to look back at the books. I'm not sure what year I put in that. Well then I think after that, I made the video. I'm not sure. But probably that pushed me to look at that footage. I'm very critical of my own work and then sometimes looking at something like that, I feel uncomfortable. It's just totally out of control. So maybe it was after that that I was inspired. But anyway, at some point I was inspired to make the video based on that footage, on all of the archive, from that performance at Castelli. And I don't remember any other documentation in Queens. I think it was...maybe in Queens I included that.

Barbara Clausen: So you never showed...I mean, this is not about this part, but you never showed photographs of part of the installation of *Organic Honey*. Are there photographs, Kristin?

Kristin Poor: Well, there are photographs of the performance included in the installation, but you're asking a different question, Barbara?

Joan Jonas: Yeah.

Barbara Clausen: That's the question. In the Stedelijk installation, if there is any photographic documentation included.

Joan Jonas: Can I quickly look at the catalog? I have it right here.

Kristin Poor: In the...this doesn't have to be on the record, what I'm saying. Just in the Stedelijk document I'm looking at page twenty-eight. There are two photographs, I think from Rome, and then of course there are the posters.

Barbara Clausen: Yeah. So Joan, in the installation at the Stedelijk, there's the poster and two photographs from Rome.

Joan Jonas: Oh, really?

Kristin Poor: It looks like Rome. I'm not 100% sure. Sorry, my buzzer is going.

Joan Jonas: Okay, there's details. Costume. No, no. That's just the photograph of me. There's three or four photographs on top of each other of me. I'm just looking. I don't see any. Thirty-seven. We haven't mentioned the slides of the original performance. Oh yeah. Okay. So there's those, but that's Toselli. That was way after the Stedelijk exhibition. Toselli was 2003. No, no. Toselli was in the seventies.

Barbara Clausen: This is the one from 2007. This is from part of the Stedelijk report.

Joan Jonas: Okay, well that's the Toselli exhibition on the right.

Barbara Clausen: Yes.

Joan Jonas: I don't know what the one on the left is.

Barbara Clausen: Yeah.

Joan Jonas: I think the same, but I'm not sure.

Barbara Clausen: So for our listeners, you can find this in the Joan Jonas Knowledge Base in the section of performance documentation of *Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* and also in the other installation.

Joan Jonas: All right, well in the Stedelijk version of the very first version, there were thirty-seven slides from the original performance, which I had completely forgotten about actually. So that would be the record of the performance. And of course there wasn't the video based on the Castelli...it wasn't the video based on [that] yet. But in the Queens Museum, I don't think there's a list of everything that was in it. But the Queens is 2003. I don't see the...I mean there are dog drawings too, but the Queens Museum, they don't have a list of everything. So I don't see if the projection of these slides was in it. I'm not sure that's been in it for a while.

Barbara Clausen: Interesting. Kristin, do we still have one or two questions to slowly wrap it up?

Kristin Poor: Well, we've covered this a little bit, Joan, but we did want to ask explicitly about the conservation of the installation and your intentions around the exhibition for the future. You said, really, this document from the Stedelijk Museum is the key and I wondered if you still feel that way. Are there any things...?



- Joan Jonas: I don't have any control over it, Kristin. It's not my piece, it's their piece, so I don't have any...I mean, I could, of course. I have no desire to change it or to alter it. We did that and we spent...working with Dorine, and they providing that wonderful way of finalizing it, that's it. And I want it to be always as close to that as possible. It is what it is now. I have no desire to change it.
- Kristin Poor: That's great. So there's really a definitive document for this installation that should be the reference point for any future people who are looking.
- Joan Jonas: Yeah.
- Kristin Poor: ...at that work.
- Joan Jonas: Do they have a diagram there somewhere of...? They must. They must have it.
- Kristin Poor: They do, yes.
- Joan Jonas: Well anyway, that's it, and they were able to reconstruct it with Ann Goldstein. As I've said, there was a time when it was really badly done before Ann came to the museum. And when they were in the station in Amsterdam, they were closed for a while. Somebody installed it and didn't really look at that at all and so I heard it was so bad, they didn't want to tell me it was up. So that's what happens. It's a very thin line between it working and not working. So there you are. So when Ann came, she knew about that and so very nicely she put it in her first show. And they followed the directions and it was perfect. The only thing I would say is, typical of me, I came and I moved one of the monitors to another place. I just made one little difference, but I can't do that anymore.
- Joan Jonas: Maybe I can, but I won't be able to do that anymore. So it just has to be that, the way we decided on. And the Stedelijk, they're very good. I guess all museums do...I don't have any of my works in that kind of situation. I mean, just at MOMA, actually, and they of course know...I think the definitive version is the way it is now of *Mirage*. That's the definitive version at MoMA and they can always put it up that way. I was glad to have that second chance, because the first time it didn't totally work for me. It was in a corridor and now it has its own room and it's great. I really feel happy with that. So it's up to the museums who own...once a museum buys a piece and owns it, that's it. They take all the responsibility. So I just want to go on to other things.

That's the other thing, is I really don't want to be involved in this old work except for in this situation.

Kristin Poor:

Well, that's great. Thank you, Joan. This has been really enlightening.

Barbara Clausen:

Thank you.

Joan Jonas:

Okay, good. Thank you.