

Joan Jonas on *Joan Jonas: Works 1968–1994* at the Stedelijk Museum, interviewed by Barbara Clausen and Kristin Poor, September 16, 2019

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- Kristin Poor: Today is September 16, 2019. This is Kristin Poor and Barbara Clausen, and we are here sitting with Joan Jonas in her studio. Today we're going to be talking about the exhibition *Joan Jonas: Works 1968–1994*. It was held at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 1994.
- Barbara Clausen: Yes, hello. The exhibition was curated by Dorine Mignot. I think we'd like to start with the question of how did you meet Dorine Mignot?
- Joan Jonas: Well I'm sure I met her ... I began visiting Amsterdam in the 1970s. I'm not sure when. It was when Wies Smals was still running ...What was it called?
- Barbara Clausen: De Appel?
- Joan Jonas: De Appel. But she was tragically killed. So, then I did a performance of *Volcano Saga* in Amsterdam, when Saskia Bos was running De Appel. I'm sure I met Dorine at that time. I don't remember when I met her, but we became friends. By the way, she was a very nice, wonderful woman. I think that I was invited ... I remember I was living in Rome, and I went to Amsterdam in the 1970s to see a Lawrence Weiner show in the late 1970s. In the 1970s actually.
- Joan Jonas: At that time, I think Rudi [Fuchs] asked me to do the piece. Then it took years for it to actually take place. So, obviously, Amsterdam is not very big. I met Dorine, I'm sure, during the late 1970s or early 1980s, and she was unusual. She was very interested in all periods of art. So, she had, on her own, traveled all through South America, looking at indigenous art and so on.
- Joan Jonas: So, when Rudi asked me to do the show, it took a long time, I remember, for it to actually occur. During that time I was living in Berlin, and I began to work on this piece [*Revolted by the Thought of Known Places ...*] *Sweeney Astray*, which I was doing for the show in Amsterdam, by beginning to work with the text and with one of the main props at Kunst-Werke, which was the space in East Berlin run by Claes Oldenburg. It's the first show he had. I showed this video version of *Sweeney ...* which

consisted of ... The prop was a glass table on a wooden frame about four or five feet high, and the actress stood on the glass table, and the camera was underneath the table pointing up.

Joan Jonas: I used that, and I re-did that in Amsterdam, but it began in East Berlin. I decided to begin the piece, because I didn't want to wait, because I didn't know when they were going to get it together. So, the piece was in 1994, we probably started talking ... Rudi asked Dorine to be the curator. I mean Rudi was the one that initiated it, and then he asked Dorine to be the curator.

Joan Jonas: So I worked with Dorine from then on. Dorine came to New York, and we talked a lot about how it could happen, how I might ... I'd never had a show like this. So, one of the first things we did, it was really funny, we found all my props in the basement and upstairs, and we put them in a big pile in the middle of the room, back there, in that room there. It was a really big pile, just as a kind of joke. But also, obviously, you couldn't just show those props by themselves. So that's when we figured that you couldn't show props separate from some context: they didn't make sense. And that's how the thinking of the concept of the show, being that each piece would have its own space and room, and construction, and structure.

Barbara Clausen: Did you at that time think of these pieces in their arrangement as installations?

Joan Jonas: I did, but as Dorine says in her introduction, I did a lot of that thinking in Amsterdam, at the site. I remember they were impatient. They'd have to ask me again, "What do you want to do, Joan?" You know, I got there, and I had all the props and objects, and I think I decided on the structures. But deciding where to put them in the rooms and how to arrange things, that took a while. I was a little slow, because I'd never done it before and I wanted to be sure that it was right, and so on.

Joan Jonas: So then, that took place in the actual space, the arrangement and spacing of the elements. As you know, there were photographs, there were objects, there were videos and so on. There are many elements, photographs ... It's very hard to tell from looking at the catalogue what the show looked like, because the photographs are all photographs of performances. What you don't see is how the show looked, with the photographs on the walls and so on.

Kristin Poor: Backing up just a few moments, you mentioned that you were making a lot of changes in the space during the installation while

you were there. Could you talk about the kinds of things you were changing, once you got to Amsterdam?

Joan Jonas: Right away, we had to decide which room each piece went in, so it was a chronological arrangement. I didn't change the space itself, but I changed the position and arrangement of the elements in the space. Or, I just didn't do anything, and then I finally came to a conclusion about how to place things. So it's really a matter of arrangement and placement. See, I don't remember it clearly, so I don't know if I set things up totally and then took them down. I'm sure I did at some point, because I remember the preparators being a little irritated at me. That's the only time that I've had that experience, because I had to take time.

Kristin Poor: How was this exhibition different from prior exhibitions?

Joan Jonas: Well, I'd never had a retrospective, and I'd never exhibited my piece ... Even though I made stage sets—I mean what I considered stage sets, the one in Philadelphia was in 1977—I'd never had five works and these particular pieces. Stage sets developed organically on its own. It wasn't coming out of a performance. Although the elements were from performances, the actual *Stage Sets* work was a piece for that particular space, and it was a piece in itself. It didn't come from a performance. I never had an exhibition like this.

Joan Jonas: I did, in order to step into performance, I'd find a way to think about my performances, in that I would build a stage set or a space to perform in, that I could step into and then make the transition or transform myself into another state of mind in the set or the stage set. But I never exhibited them, which means I had to set them up to have a certain point of view. For instance, in the first room in which there are several pieces, I had to set them up. The *Mirror Pieces*, the outdoor pieces, and this moving wall that Richard Serra designed: I had to figure out how those were going to be shown in relation to each other. And also, how to show the *Mirror Pieces*. So, I think, it was first time that I had a row of mirrors leaning against the wall, with a circle of stones, and so on.

Barbara Clausen: You also integrated videotapes, and 16 mm film.

Joan Jonas: Well, I think in the situations where it was appropriate, they were projected, or they were on monitors. It seems to me, in the mirror room, there was a projection on the wall, which hung from the ceiling, which was from *Choreomania*. Because I had

used projections, it seems to be another projection. I'm not sure what that is, sorry. But, yeah.

Barbara Clausen: *Songdelay. Wind and Songdelay.*

Joan Jonas: I think I projected *Songdelay* on the wall, but there were photographs, still images—you know, photos, not projections—throughout the piece.

Barbara Clausen: Yeah, in the catalogue, you can also see that there's a specific installation at the end. They made little floor plans that are available in the catalogue to see each of the installations of the pieces in there. Maybe we should say which artworks were part of the show?

Kristin Poor: So there were five new installations, Joan, right? That were based on your previous works? The *Mirror Pieces* and outdoor pieces, which you were just discussing. There was *Organic Honey* ...

Barbara Clausen: Which was also purchased by the museum.

Joan Jonas: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kristin Poor: *Mirage, The Juniper Tree, and Volcano Saga.*

Joan Jonas: Oh was that in it? Are you sure?

Kristin Poor: And you created the new piece, *Sweeney Astray*, for this exhibition.

Joan Jonas: *Volcano Saga*, I'm sure it was just the video. It wasn't the installation. It says here *Variations on a Scene*. That must have been just images. That was an outdoor piece, so it was included in this room. There were slide projections. *Songdelay* was a video projection. *Choreomania* was the major prop, the wall, and there were slide projections projected on the wall.

Joan Jonas: The *Nova Scotia Beach Dance* involved ... It's a little confusing. But anyway, *The Nova Scotia Beach Dance* was probably photographs. *Delay Delay* was a projection ... I think both a projection and photographs. The *Jones Beach Piece* was photographs. There were some props, like the wood blocks, the mirror costumes for the *Mirror Piece*, *Wind*, which was my first video. *Mirror Check* was either a photograph or a projection. I think it was a photograph. The *Mirror Pieces* were objects and photographs probably.

- Barbara Clausen: Then for *Mirage*, for *Organic Honey*, you also had your own separate space, if I remember.
- Joan Jonas: Well no, so then that was the first room: the outdoor pieces, the *Mirror Pieces*, representing the outdoor work, the *Mirror Pieces*, and some of the outdoor performances. Then, in the second room, there was *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, which was my first video performance. And I thought of these pieces in the round, so I didn't, in this case ... I thought of *Organic Honey's* ... piece being all around, because there were so many elements, and I wanted to have them ... The videos all played together, not in sync with each other, so that they were syncopated. In other words, each one started and started, but the sounds kind of worked together. They were all percussive sounds, with a little bit of singing and howling.
- Joan Jonas: So there were how many videos? There was *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, *Vertical Roll*, *Anxious Automation* that Richard Serra did that I performed in. There were thirty-seven slides of the original performance.
- Joan Jonas: Then I had situations set up with closed-circuit cameras connected to monitors. The closed-circuit cameras represented ... I think there were ... How many closed-circuit cameras? I think three. They represented moments when I used ... We had a live camera in the performance, which recorded and transmitted the image of the performers—myself and two other performers—to a projection on the wall or to a monitor. I experimented with the video camera quite a bit at that time so we wanted to represent the use of the relation of the camera to the space and also the use of the camera. So that's why we had these live situations in which the camera was trained on a piece of paper where there was a drawing that I made in relation to the camera, and so on.
- Kristin Poor: Joan, how did you choose these works for the show? When you were looking at everything you'd made, how did you choose these?
- Joan Jonas: Well, if you think about it, I chose the ones I thought were the best. And it was only in 1994. It was almost everything I'd done since 1968. The *Mirror Pieces*, *Organic ...*, my first video piece, *Volcano Saga*. *Volcano Saga* was shown as a video, I guess, and so on. And *Mirage*. And *The Juniper Tree*.
- Barbara Clausen: *Volcano Saga*, just so you know, was actually shown as an installation.

- Joan Jonas: It was? Where?
- Barbara Clausen: You had small black mirrors, triangles—pretty much all the elements—glass, projections, circles. But you also showed the video, of course.
- Joan Jonas: Okay, so we had *Organic Honey*, I called it *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy/Vertical Roll* because the piece had a two-year lifetime. Each year it wasn't that different, but I added elements so that the concept became slightly different. So *Vertical Roll* entered into it in the second year, 1973. Is there anything else you want me to say about *Organic Honey*?
- Barbara Clausen: No, I think that's fine. I think one of the interesting things about many of the installations, as we come to see, is that they also have a status between your studio ... They have a studio quality and at the same time they allow the visitor to really step inside your work space and your performance space. I was just thinking about how you arranged part of those ... What was the narrative for people to walk through, or how did you think of installing them?
- Joan Jonas: Well I didn't have it one path, but each piece had its own kind of arrangement. I wanted the viewer to walk into the piece because I didn't want them to be outside of it looking in, the way they would be in the performance. So all of my performances practically, the audience is sitting and looking. It's a frontal situation, whereas in my installations, the audience is immersed. It's an immersive situation, so the sound is all around, and the images and so on are all around the viewer. The viewer can look at ... They don't have to look at anything in ... They don't have to look at one after another in a certain order, of the live video or the objects. They can take their time and make their own path through the work. What I did do was arrange the work chronologically. So the next piece after the *Organic ... Organic Honey* had the most elements, I think of all the works: objects and videos, because it was such an important transitional piece, where I transitioned from outdoor and mirror into video.
- Joan Jonas: This was the first version of *Mirage* as an installation. Again, it became more frontal, although I see that there were ... I mean there were photographs in it. One wall had the main stage with a projection and a monitor right next to the projection. Another wall had photographs of the performance to show the different moments, by Babette Mangolte. Another wall had twenty-five slides of the original performance.

Joan Jonas: Then I see that there was a small group of the main prop, of cones in the room. So this was how *Mirage* began, and as the years have gone on I've added. I didn't make new things for *Mirage*. I did actually make new things. But I included more of the elements that were in *Mirage*, in the original performance. There's a final version that MoMA now owns. For instance, there were originally paper cones, now they're tin in the MoMA version. There's a double projection over the stage, whereas it was a single projection at the Stedelijk. So it became more complex. *Mirage* was something ... *Organic Honey* was pretty much figured out. I never wanted to change it. But *Mirage* I went back to and went into it again and brought elements out that had not been seen originally.

Joan Jonas: *The Juniper Tree*, again, this was a piece totally developed in my loft, in the space at the loft, and wasn't changed at all when it was transferred into an exhibition space, because we made it ... I worked with Pamela Raffaelli, we made it together for actually this very loft that we're sitting in, for this space. It's made of a moving part that is manipulated and moved during the performance. I made paintings during the performance, so it includes these paintings on cloth that I made during the performance, red and white. And the stage set, but this whole thing was a stage set: the background of the cloth, the drawings on cloth, the structural object that represented the house, a ladder, which represented the tree, and the juniper tree, and so on, and other drawings and objects.

Joan Jonas: I think now, in addition to that, there is a projection of slides that were images of the performance and the soundtrack, because we performed it. We performed it before that but I'm not sure if I included the soundtrack at the Stedelijk. Simone Forti was in it, and Lindsay Graham, Lindsay Smith and Kiki Smith were performing in it at Danspace, in I think the late 1970s actually, before the Stedelijk performance. So, let me see ... Is the soundtrack in this?

Barbara Clausen: Not here. It's not.

Joan Jonas: No. If it's not listed, then it wasn't. Then I had no sound. Now the next piece in the next room was *Volcano Saga*. Here again, it's shown as it was as a performance with this ramp, although it's in a corner—the original performance was probably not in a corner in that same way—with the hanging piece of glass behind it and the slide projections on that glass of the performance and of images I took when I went to Iceland, a series of landscape images. I mixed those up and made a kind of narrative that

represented the performance and included the landscape photographs in the projections.

Joan Jonas: I included drawings that were done during the performance. I mean, in all these works there are drawings that I did that related to the performances and that were done during and in the performances. For instance, I drew on this ramp. There are eight white chalk drawings on black paper: those were drawn during the performance. Then various props and objects. I don't see any sound, it's strange because—

Barbara Clausen: It's strange because *Volcano Saga* does have sound.

Joan Jonas: I think it may be ... No it says ... Okay. We played the videotape, the entire videotape. The installation consists of a projection of the video on the back wall and then against the same wall of the ramp, and the projection of the slides. So there were two, there was a double big projection of large images. One was a moving piece called *Volcano Saga* which is shown as an autonomous work in itself, but I also included it in the piece.

Joan Jonas: Of course as usual, there were other versions that I did of this performance where I didn't have the final edited version of the *Volcano Saga*. But this is what happened here. So a lot of drawings were including in this show at the Stedelijk, in each piece.

Joan Jonas: Then the last room, *Revolted by the Thought of Known Places ... Sweeney Astray*, this is a piece I made. I began working on this, as I said before, in Berlin, and also in Germany in general. I went to Potsdam; I did a lot of recording in Potsdam. Because it was about a king, I wanted to record those beautiful buildings.

Barbara Clausen: In Sanssouci?

Joan Jonas: Yeah, Sanssouci. It was beautiful. As I said before I had made this table, glass on a wooden structure, and showed it at Kunst-Werke in Berlin several years earlier. Then I made it again, but on a metal frame, much more solid. The wooden frame kind of swayed back and forth. We were very lucky. But it was on a metal frame, and we worked with that before ... Dorine didn't want me to show anything that I had made before coming to Amsterdam, of this, in the installation. So I didn't show the parts I shot in Germany, in East Berlin, as part of this piece until the Queens Museum, when I showed everything, when I included everything. It was quite big.



- Joan Jonas: In this case it was simpler. It was a projection of ... The actors lie underneath the table on the floor. The camera is pointing up towards the glass table. The actor is standing on the glass table so you see him from below. You also see the reflection of the actors underneath the table on the glass. So you got this double image. It was a completely different sound. Harry de Wit, a Dutch composer, was commissioned to do the sound. Of course there were slides as usual. I made these moving screens on wheels with curtains that projected ... I made a lot of images. I went to Ireland to do research for *Sweeney* ... and I took a lot of photographs of stone walls and landscapes and gardens. I projected those on these curtains. I made a very big photograph of a tree, because trees are so important in the mythology of the Irish, so that's it. But that tree photograph of course is in all the installations.
- Barbara Clausen: We can also see this in the installation here, in the image of the tree installation.
- Joan Jonas: Right. So when I install this piece now, it includes all these elements plus projections. I went back to Berlin when the wall came down, when they were pulling the wall down, so now that footage is included on a monitor as a kind of document. Because it all related, to me, to the idea of the king, and the falling apart, and chaos.
- Barbara Clausen: So you added certain elements then afterwards, to the pieces?
- Joan Jonas: Yeah. I mean there are elements I'd shot before the show.
- Barbara Clausen: Another outdoor piece that was a part of that, that subsequently became... was *Variations on a Scene* which you documented in a video screen. That's here, in the exhibition itself.
- Joan Jonas: Oh yeah. I forgot about that. Yeah
- Barbara Clausen: Which is interesting too that you really jump through different time periods, over—
- Joan Jonas: That's true.
- Barbara Clausen: ... over a certain period of time. So it really was a space, actually that first space that had *Choreomania* going up to *Variations on a Scene*, which is really interesting.
- Kristin Poor: Which was 1990.

- Joan Jonas: Essentially, because this first page, with the notes of what was in that first room is twice as big as ... Almost. *Organic Honey* is pretty big. But this is the longest list of participants and elements.
- Barbara Clausen: In the process of working through that exhibition on site, do you remember people that you—and of course you worked with Dorine Mignot, the curator—do you remember other technicians or people that you worked with within the museum or in Amsterdam that were important for you at that time?
- Joan Jonas: Yeah, there was a woman ... Because I wanted to choose a young woman to be my double in the *Sweeney* ... piece. So now I can't remember her name.
- Barbara Clausen: We have a couple of names here by people. Karen ...
- Joan Jonas: Oh of course, I mean this is involved in the performance of *Sweeney Astray*. Karen Post, I knew her and she played a dancer in the performance but she wasn't ... I guess she was in the ... and Harry De Wit, of course. No their names aren't here. I can't remember what Stephen Vitiello did in it.
- Barbara Clausen: I think he was responsible for organizing all the videos to come to the Stedelijk.
- Joan Jonas: Maybe.
- Barbara Clausen: And he was mentioned by some of the conservators in the Stedelijk, having documented that he was the one responsible to just insure that the image quality was to the scale of what you've ... Because the scale of the images was something also, that I think ... Did you set that at that time, being for installations that images had a certain size and dimension?
- Joan Jonas: No.
- Barbara Clausen: Okay.
- Joan Jonas: No, that's one thing that's ... I always regret that I don't say what size it's going to be, so I have to invent it each time. So then I resort to making them the size that looks the best in the space. To this day.
- Kristin Poor: It's something you really like to adjust on site ...

- Joan Jonas: No, it's just that I never wrote it down. Nobody measured it for me. So for the Stedelijk show, it was never measured. So, there are no dimensions of any of the screens. It should have been, but I wasn't used to keeping track of everything.
- Kristin Poor: This *Choreomania* wall that was in the first gallery, was that built for the Amsterdam installation?
- Joan Jonas: I think it was built ... They wouldn't have shipped it from New York. But it was designed by Richard Serra. It was first built in my loft on Grand Street. And that was built for the show in Amsterdam.
- Kristin Poor: So you rebuilt it then?
- Joan Jonas: Yeah.
- Barbara Clausen: Do you remember what was the programming in conjunction with the exhibition? What were the performances that were presented?
- Joan Jonas: Just *Sweeney Astray*.
- Barbara Clausen: It was *Sweeney Astray*?
- Joan Jonas: I think it was just *Sweeney Astray*, which I did after. I mean after the show opened then I spent a month developing that performance. At this other place, the Westergasfabriek.
- Barbara Clausen: Westergasfabriek, very important performance space. Theater space, actually.
- Kristin Poor: Are there any themes, or threads through the show that you see?
- Joan Jonas: You know, there are themes and threads through my work. I wouldn't say that I thought particularly through that show. You know, a lot of work like this, it's like every day, arranging in a logical way and placing. It's not about big ideas. It's about ... Well, you come to those big ideas, by the way. You make the arrangements. I come from the bottom: making the arrangements and placing. I don't think, "I want the idea of blah blah." It comes out of the juxtaposition of things. Until I did the show at the HangarBicocca, that's when I really saw big relationships and themes because all the pieces were in the same room, and you could stand and see several pieces juxtaposed. You could see a projection here and one in the

distance, and they'd be relating to each other. In the earlier shows I didn't have that experience.

Barbara Clausen:

That's also going to be ... that's our other exhibition case study for the Joan Jonas Knowledge Base, so this is so valuable to have, to know how the effect of this show in 1994 ... Because you've had other retrospectives between the show in Milan in 2015 and the show at the Stedelijk in 1994. There were a series of exhibitions, which we'll talk about in another interview in more details, but I think really the sense of how is this exhibition important for subsequent exhibitions is really ...

Joan Jonas:

Well it's the first exhibition of my ... So every exhibition ... If I could think of what came after that ...

Barbara Clausen:

Stuttgart.

Joan Jonas:

Oh Stuttgart. I'd had the experience of showing in Amsterdam so I based ... I would probably begin as I had in Amsterdam. And some of the works would have to be arranged in a different way, but mostly no: they would be arranged in the same way. The only thing, I remember in Stuttgart, it was quite a different kind of space. It was bigger, there were more pieces, and it was linear. In Amsterdam the rooms were not exactly linear, not in a straight line, kind of a zigzag. But in Stuttgart, they were all around this one courtyard, one after another, room after another.

Barbara Clausen:

So it was really like a loop?

Joan Jonas:

Yeah, I'd have to look at those pictures again and remind myself. But certainly Amsterdam enabled me to go on. You know, I never had that problem again of having to solve, "How am I going to do this?" You know, that was it. Amsterdam got me totally into it. Then I became certainly interested in this problem of the idea of an installation and an immersive situation, and the relationships of the elements in the room to each other and so on.

Barbara Clausen:

Can you maybe speak about the catalogue and the publication a little bit? Because this is a very interesting catalogue.

Joan Jonas:

Well the catalogue was done actually by a man who designed theater catalogues, catalogues for theater. I like the design. So there are several different threads of the photographs. Again, the one small problem of my work is in the catalogues: there are never photographs of the installation, because the catalogue is

done before the show. Which is too bad, because then nobody knows what it means for me to make an installation unless they've seen one. But anyway, so this catalogue has ... There are photographs of my work, and there are photographs that were shown in the installations. They're photographs of the original performances. But also, I asked a number of artists to write something about my work, and I like that very much. That's a part of the catalogue I really like.

Joan Jonas: So I asked friends, they're all friends, but they're artists—some not artists, but mostly artists—to write something about my work. I didn't ask them to write a kind of scholarly thing, but just to write about a memory they had, or something. So that's part of this catalogue.

Barbara Clausen: Can you tell us who those artists were?

Joan Jonas: Lawrence Weiner, Susan Rothenberg, Mary Heilmann, Richard Serra, Alvin Curran—Alvin Curran is a composer who I worked with—Simone Forti, Robin Winters, Alice Weiner. I think that's it. I really found that very interesting, to get these different approaches and points of view. Of course, they surprised me in what they did. I thought they were going to write about some specific memory they had but no, they wrote an original impression of me or impression of an atmosphere and so on. Or a poem, and so on. But I really liked that aspect of it.

Joan Jonas: And then I have, I call it a *Sweeney* ... working script, so in the back of the catalogue there's ... I made diagrams of many scenes, it says, in *Sweeney* ... Because the objects were moved around, they were on wheels, so we could move things. So there is, it says, thirty-one scenes.

Barbara Clausen: *Sweeney* ... was so important because it was really *the* work that you made on the occasion of this exhibition. It was also the only performance that was really highlighted next to the exhibition.

Joan Jonas: Yes, and it was done in collaboration with a theater group, the Toneelgroep. I had never worked with that kind of theater group. Even if I worked with the Wooster group, this was a very different situation where I directed the piece and worked with actors who were really theater people.

Kristin Poor: Do you see *Sweeney Astray* as being more connected to the theatrical?

Joan Jonas: Well because it had actors, a little bit. The guy who played Sweeney, he was really good, and I don't think anybody but an actor ... I mean by actor I mean someone who's really skilled with their voice in relation to their body and movement and emotion. Not that they be emotive, but there had to be some feeling. He was really good. I don't think a regular ... You know, somebody like Spalding Gray would have done it in a very deadpan monotone. But this actor got really into it. That interested me quite a bit, and that was the last time I did that, I have to say, which is too bad.

Barbara Clausen: Oh really? You've never worked with a theater company, like producing?

Joan Jonas: No.

Barbara Clausen: Interesting. I think conservation concerns for the future ... Is this exhibition for you important for future conservators and curators? If they look at the Joan Jonas Knowledge Base, is this show an exhibition you would say they should really study before they embark on working with you?

Joan Jonas: Oh why not? I mean it's simple. It's a way to begin. But I wouldn't put this show up again like that because some of the pieces, like *Mirage*, should be shown the way it is, the present version. And the same with *Sweeney Astray*: it was in the HangarBicocca, I really liked it there.

Barbara Clausen: So it's important to kind of be aware of that history of how your works were exhibited but to take the last shows that you've authorized as the starting point for further development?

Joan Jonas: Exactly. Yes.

Barbara Clausen: It's a very important point.

Kristin Poor: Yes. Do you have any other thoughts or ideas that are particularly significant about this exhibition, for you today, looking back on it?

Joan Jonas: Well after that exhibition I believe I came back to New York, I started to work, to make those *My New Theater* pieces. Because I'd just done this big, big production with a theater group, and I thought, "Oh I just want to make small stages". Of course I changed and I didn't stick with that, but that's where that idea for *My New Theater* came out of, that experience. So that's important.

- Kristin Poor: That's so interesting.
- Barbara Clausen: That is so interesting.
- Joan Jonas: And then, you know, I had other shows, which was great. It wouldn't have happened if I hadn't had this show. I'm not sure. There was a show in Barcelona, there was ... I can't remember the different places. Oh, Stuttgart. Barcelona.
- Barbara Clausen: Barcelona, absolutely. And then on and on. Yeah.
- Kristin Poor: It was a turning point.
- Joan Jonas: It was because I was able to step ... You know, during a performance people think of me that way, but I don't do live performances continuously. I like to do these other forms, work in these other forms. I think the work grows in that way, through these other forms and is perceived differently, and that interests me.
- Kristin Poor: So this was really a moment when you weren't appearing in your performances as much anymore, right?
- Joan Jonas: Yeah, and I worked with other people a lot more. And then I started doing these big pieces, like *Lines in the Sand* and, you know, the pieces that led up to *Dia*. No, I started doing little performances a lot, with my students. Because then in 1994, I taught in Stuttgart after that, and I did a lot of work with my students, experimenting, with my students. Small performances, odd things that I've never done again.
- Kristin Poor: And that was a way of developing new ideas for you? Or was it for the students?
- Joan Jonas: Yeah. It was a way to work up ... I knew that *Dia* was coming at some point. So it was a way to work up to *Dia*. Because having a big show at a place like *Dia*, you have to prepare for it. You know, what are you going to do? I had no idea, so yeah.
- Kristin Poor: And was that stepping away from being in performances, yourself personally, that was happening at this moment—of course you were in performances again later—but was that also part of how you were thinking about the installations, or—
- Joan Jonas: A little bit, but also I began to work with my students and have them perform. Even though I'd worked with other people in the Stedelijk, with the theater group, I began more and more to

work with other people. I mean I had before, too. You know, it was an on-again, off-again situation. But more and more over the years I've enjoyed working with other people.

Kristin Poor: Great. Are there any people we should talk to about this? We've mentioned some of them, Stephen [Vitiello]—

Joan Jonas: This woman, Jeanine [Huizinga].

Kristin Poor: Jeanine, okay.

Joan Jonas: She's in Amsterdam. She was my assistant, and she was going to play me actually, in the piece. Her name must be here someplace.

Kristin Poor: We'll find it.

Joan Jonas: I'm sure. I mean it must be in here. It's funny.

Kristin Poor: We can check the acknowledgements there and maybe find her name and add it as a follow-up. So Joan, I just want to say thank you on behalf of the Joan Jonas Knowledge Base. This has been so helpful.

Joan Jonas: Oh you're welcome.

Barbara Clausen: Thank you very much.

Joan Jonas: Thank you for doing this. This is important too.

Barbara Clausen: Thank you.