

JOAN JONAS

Zweigstelle Capitain VII - C.A. S.A. Palazzo Degas, Napoli

March 22 – May 16, 2025

Galerie Gisela Capitain is delighted to announce Zweigstelle Capitain VII at C.A.S.A, Palazzo Degas, Naples with a solo exhibition of US American artist Joan Jonas.

Joan Jonas is one of the most impactful American artists to emerge in the late 1960s and early 1970s. A pioneer of video and performance art, her projects and experiments were fundamental in establishing video performance art and video installation as artistic media. Her influence has extended to conceptual art, theater, and other visual media. Over a career spanning six decades, Jonas's work explores themes of identity, memory, gender, and nature—often interweaving mythology and contemporary life in complex and poetic ways.

In this exhibition in Naples, the viewer is invited to explore Jonas's immersive multimedia installation *Volcano Saga*, which marks a significant evolution in Jonas's longstanding investigation of myth, nature, and the human experience.

I see Volcano Saga as the beginning of my synthesizing the development of female character, the story as mirror, and the volcanic landscapes as representation of narrative.¹

Drawing from the rich traditions of storytelling, mythology, and personal memory, *Volcano Saga* weaves together layered visual narratives that evoke the power and unpredictability of volcanic landscapes. Through a mesmerizing combination of video projections, performance, and sculptural installations, Jonas creates a world that is at once ancient and contemporary. The work references the mythological figure of the volcano as a symbol of destruction and rebirth, while also invoking the artist's own experiences and observations of nature's dramatic forces.

Jonas's innovative use of technology, such as video projections and mirror effects, allows for a fluid interchange between the digital and the physical, where the boundaries of space, time, and perspective are constantly shifting. The viewer becomes part of the environment Jonas creates, surrounded by dynamic images and sounds that challenge our perception of reality. Themes of transformation and cyclical change run throughout the piece, highlighting Jonas's ongoing interest in the interplay between the natural world and human consciousness.

The installation is an invitation to step into a visually and emotionally charged world where elemental forces shape the narrative, and where mythology serves as both a mirror and a lens through which we view our contemporary world. As with much of Jonas's work, the piece embodies a poetic meditation on the fragility of existence, the resilience of nature, and the mysteries that lie just beyond our understanding.

Volcano Saga reimagines the thirteenth-century Icelandic Laxdæla saga and was originally performed live, featuring Jonas on stage narrating the folktale about a woman named Gudrun whose adventures revolved around four mysterious dreams that required the services of a soothsayer. It began as a performance with film and video components, which Jonas performed eight times between 1985 and 1987. In 1989 Jonas adapted the story into a video featuring actors Tilda Swinton and Ron Vawter. In the video Swinton and Vawter appear superimposed over images of the Icelandic landscape—which itself becomes a kind of character. In 1994 *Volcano Saga* was presented as a multimedia installation at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam with slides of

¹ Joan Jonas in: Joan Jonas: Performance Video Installation, Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2001

Jonas's 1987 performance at the Performing Garage, New York, drawings, props and performance footage. The 1994 installation was updated in 2011 with footage of an early performance from 1986. In 2024 *Volcano Saga* was part of the comprehensive retrospective *Joan Jonas: Good Night Good Morning* at MoMA, New York.

Joan Jonas, born 1936 in New York, lives and works in New York. Her work has been featured in major solo exhibitions worldwide, including Dia Art Foundation, Beacon; Haus der Kunst, Munich, Pinacoteca de São Paulo; Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid; Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto; the Venice Biennial; Documenta, Kassel; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Guggenheim Museum, New York and the Tate Modern, London among others.

Jonas's innovative practice continues to influence generations of artists working at the intersection of performance, video, and installation.

In collaboration with Galerie Gisela Capitain, the Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn and the Association Amici dell'Acquario, Joan Jonas will present a selection of drawings at the Acquario di Napoli inspired by scientific watercolours from the Historical Archives.

The exhibition at the Acquario will be on view from March 24 - May 4, 2025.

Program Zweigstelle Capitain VII

Saturday, March 22

Opening reception 6 - 9 pm

Reading performance by Joan Jonas

Monday, March 24

Reading Performance by Joan Jonas

Opening reception 6 - 8 pm

at Acquario di Napoli

Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn

Villa Comunale

80121 Napoli

Saturday, April 26

Screening - Asta Nielsen

Introduction by Karola Gramann,

Heide Schlüpmann and Gina Annunziata

7.30 pm

Friday, May 16

Finissage

Bruno Leone - *Guarattelle* theater

7.30 pm

Zweigstelle Capitain VII

at C.A.S.A

Palazzo Degas

Calata Trinità Maggiore, 53

80134 Napoli, Italia

Opening hours

Wednesday - Saturday

11 am - 1 pm and 3 - 7 pm

and by appointment

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