

On Sunday, April 30th, Joan Jonas will be inaugurating GBE's new gallery home on West 127th Street.

Extending across three floors, this exhibition marks the United States premiere of two largescale, multi-channel video installations as well as drawings, props and ephemera culled from Jonas's more than 50-year history of multi-disciplinary practice. Incorporating video installation, performance and drawing, it is the largest exhibition of Jonas's work in New York in over a decade.

On view are the drawings, props, ephemera and found objects that have inhabited or informed Jonas's artistic output to date on the ground floor. These include body drawings, in which Jonas outlines the contours of her body on paper with oil stick or charcoal during live performances, which suggest ghostly specters of absence. Models of houses made in Nova Scotia, which appear in numerous videos over the past twenty years, are on view alongside colorful drawings of these houses as well as drawings of birds, a subject Jonas has been exploring for the past two years. Also on view is video documentation of Jonas's most recent performance "They Come to Us without a Word" in which she performs with her frequent collaborator, the composer and pianist, Jason Moran.

On the 2nd floor is Reanimation, a masterwork containing four large video projections, handbuilt projection screens, two custom-designed theater boxes with videos and benches, a crystal sculpture and multiple drawings. Beginning in 2010 as a lecture performance at MIT and developed over two years, Reanimation was formally presented as an installation and a performance for the first time at DOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel, Germany in 2012. Inspired by Icelandic writer Halldór Laxness's novel *Under the Glacier* (1968), Reanimation looks at the miraculous and precarious aspects of the natural world. In an introduction Susan Sontag wrote that it is the only book she knows that fits into all categories of "the outlying precincts of the novel's main tradition...science fiction, tale, fable, allegory, philosophical novel, dream novel...it is a work of supreme derision and freedom and wit." Similarly defying categorization, Reanimation is a juxtaposition of phantasmagoric multi-channel video footage and audio, including extracted segments of text by Laxness spoken by Jonas, sound effects made by Jonas, and Sami yoik singer Ánde Somby. Video documentation of the performance "Reanimation" in which Jonas performs on stage with Jason Moran is on view in the adjacent gallery.

As the United States representative at the 56th Venice Biennale, Jonas's installation, *They Come to Us without a Word*, focused on the rapidly changing world humans share with other creatures. On the top floor Jonas presents her largest work since the Biennale, *Stream or River, Flight or Pattern*,

as an extension of these environmental and temporal concerns. As with much of Jonas's oeuvre, the work was partly inspired by her long-standing interest in the Noh theater's nonlinear, abstract nature, in particular the plays translated by Ezra Pound and Ernest Fenollosa more than 100 years ago. Joan describes her process in making the work:

*During the past year I was particularly interested in the mosaic floors of Venice, birds caged in Singapore, Genoa's graveyard, redwoods in California and various trees of Spain. With simple performances in projections of mosaics, trees, and passageways a montage was fashioned that includes beautiful birds that dance and preen, talk, and finally gaze at us with curiosity, longing and a sense of loneliness. This is a visual narrative that relates to our world of animals, of life, of death, of beauty and sadness.*

Shown for the first time in 2016 at Fundación Botín in Santander, Spain, as an installation with two videos, Jonas has since added a third video, incorporating recent footage of performance near her home in Nova Scotia, as well as travels to Cambodia and Vietnam. Hanging from the ceiling are delicate paper kites Jonas found in a village near Hanoi that specializes in traditional kite-making, which she then painted and altered by hand.

Joan Jonas (b. 1936, New York) has exhibited and performed her work at museums and large scale group exhibitions internationally, including documenta 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, and 13; the 2008 Sydney Biennial; the 2008 Yokohama Triennial; Taipei Biennial; and the 28th Sao Paulo Biennial. She has recently presented solo exhibitions at Akureyri Art Museum, Akureyri; National Gallery of Iceland, Reykjavik; DHC/ART Foundation for Contemporary Art, Montreal; Fundación Botín, Santander; NTU Centre for Contemporary Art, Singapore; HangarBicocca, Milan; MIT List Center for Visual Arts, Cambridge; Malmö Konsthall, Malmö; CCA Kitakyushu, Japan; Contemporary Art Museum, Houston; CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco; and the United States Pavilion for the 56th Edition of the Venice Biennial. \*Walter Benjamin, The Arcades Project

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