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In the 1970s and '80s, Jonas actively participated in the performance scene of downtown Manhattan, presenting collaborative iterations of her own works as well as performing with theatrical troupes like the Wooster Group. Displayed here are photographs from these activities. Drawing partly from her experiences within this downtown arts community, Jonas would craft her own artistic language combining elements of theater and conceptual art. As the artist recalls, "I developed my voice through practice and . . . in speaking lines. I spent a lot of time recording my voice, listening to it, doing it again, recording it."

Organic Honey's Vertical Roll was performed twelve times between 1972 and 1980. This video shows the only recorded performance, at the Castelli Gallery in 1973. It opens with a re-staging of Jonas's 1970 work *Mirror Check*. The artist then reappears dressed in a silk gown and mask and sketches a dog's portrait onto paper. A video camera meanwhile transmits the process to a small monitor—a setup recreated in the 1994 installation derived from this work. As both an ongoing mirror and recording tool, the camera allows Jonas to manipulate how the audience accesses her image. The result is a destabilizing, fragmenting effect: "No one had all the information. I thought I had, but it was an illusion," she says.

Commissioned for this exhibition, *To Touch Sound* is a tribute to marine biologist David Gruber and his study of sperm whale communication. Displayed inside the work's "theater box" sculpture is a poetic video reflection comprising scenes of movement by choreographer-dancers Ishmael Houston Jones and Emily Coates, a performance by dancer Malcolm Moran, and footage of sleeping whales. Gruber also contributed unprecedented footage of a sperm whale birth and vampire squids. The work includes audio of Jonas reading "Ode to Things" (1954) by Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, a text that evokes the profound nature of an individual's relationship to the world.

Displayed at various heights, many of these drawings of sea creatures were created in the artist's studio based on her research on aquariums, while others were completed during the performance *Moving Off the Land* (2019). These latter sketches are representative of Jonas's "body drawings," works generated before an audience by pressing a large piece of paper against her body and tracing its contours. In a nearby example, she evokes an octopus by adding the circular outlines of suckers to the legs of her drawing, transforming the figure into a hybrid, aquatic life form. These works, Jonas explains, are "different than drawing alone in my studio, where there are no witnesses. The performance affects the drawing."

Installed within one of Jonas's "theater box" sculptures, this video component of *Moving Off the Land II* features underwater footage recorded in Jamaica, alongside audio of a conversation between Jonas and Jamaican fisherman George Williams. In the video Williams contrasts commercial fishing practices in Jamaica with the methods of the elder fishers from his youth, who heeded the dangers of overfishing and could discern the migration patterns of fish by reading the stars. As the camera floats among schools of fish, undulating aquatic plant life, and ornate coral formations, Williams offers the viewer a cautionary appeal: "Protect the environment and our fishing industry."

Reanimation takes inspiration from Icelandic writer Halldór Laxness's 1968 novel *Under the Glacier*, in particular, according to the artist, "its focus on the poetic presence of glaciers, nature, and its creatures." Shot on Norway's Lofoten Islands, the installation's dreamlike images of glaciers and dark tunnels are intercut with footage of Jonas drip-painting on snow or drawing on paper. Light from the work's four video projections bounces onto a crystal sculpture at center, which casts shadows and reflections onto nearby shoji screens. The work's swelling soundtrack, composed by Jonas and American jazz musician Jason Moran, pays further tribute to influences from the artist's travels, incorporating yoik songs by Indigenous Sámi composer and activist Ánde Somby.

“Kites soaring like birds,” states Jonas, are plentiful in meaning. They can be used “to judge distance, to signal, to carry fire, to banish evil, for communication, to carry a child, to carry an adult, to bear a message.” After first working with kites in Kitakyushu, Japan, Jonas traveled with her mentee and fellow artist Thao Nguyen Phan to Vietnam, where she learned about the kite-making practices of Indigenous Jarai craftspeople. The kites overhead are made with bamboo and handmade Dó paper using traditional methods and hand-painted by Jonas.

Images of water appear throughout Jonas’s early practice, and in *Moving Off the Land*, the sea finally takes centerstage. Originally conceived as a lecture-demonstration and later adapted into a performance and installation, the work is informed by the artist’s years of interdisciplinary research, including with marine biologist David Gruber. Incorporating ideas from a range of literary and scientific texts, *Moving Off the Land* presents the ocean as a threatened ecosystem, a repository of mythology (including the myth of the mermaid), and a site for transformative encounters with animal life. Reflecting on water’s significance, Jonas remarks, “The sea has been this vast, hidden, unconscious thing. We came from the sea.”

Double Lunar Rabbits explores two similar folktales about the myth of the rabbit in the moon, one in Japanese and one in Aztec legend. Both stories involve the self-sacrifice of a rabbit, who is later rewarded by having his likeness carved into the moon—an image commonly identified in its craters. Filmed in Kitakyushu, Japan, during the artist’s residency there, Jonas’s work shows a young dancer who portrays each character as she moves through the city. Projected onto translucent curved surfaces evocative of Japanese shoji screens, the videos—first shown in Kitakyushu—demonstrate Jonas’s recurring interest in animals, masks, and the lessons of fables.

Beginning in 2007, Jonas developed a multicomponent work comprising readings, performances, videos, and an installation based on Dante Alighieri’s *The Divine Comedy*—a fourteenth-century Italian narrative poem that recounts the author’s journeys through the fictional realms Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso. This 2016 video shows previous versions of *Reading Dante*, in which Jonas and Ragani Haas perform in front of a projected video while using many of the masks and props displayed nearby. It is, Jonas explains, “an amalgam of locations and spaces,” combining readings of Dante’s text recorded in various places with scenes of children rearranging model houses at Jonas’s summer home in Nova Scotia and footage from her travels to Mexico City.

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Searching for new narrative methods, Jonas first developed *Volcano Saga* in 1985 after visiting Iceland with video artist Steina Vasulka. The performance is an interpretation of the Laxdaela Saga, a thirteenth-century Icelandic folktale about a woman and her four dreams. 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. Subsequently developed into an installation, *Volcano Saga* was in Jonas’s words, “the beginning of my synthesizing the development of the female character, the story as a mirror, and the volcanic landscapes as representation of narrative.”

Playing with tropes of truth and illusion, *Lines in the Sand* combines stage elements and props from an earlier performance of the same name, photographs taken by Jonas's grandmother during a trip to Egypt in 1910, and shots of the Las Vegas desert and the Luxor Hotel. The installation was inspired by the epic poem *Helen in Egypt* (1951–55), by American writer H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), which revises the myth of the Trojan War as a conflict waged not in Helen's name, but for political opportunity. By posing a new story for the figure of Helen, *Lines in the Sand* reimagines the myths surrounding the role of women as well as those used as justifications for war.

Jonas created her My New Theater works—a series of portable “theater box” sculptures—from, in her words, “a desire to continue to perform, but in situations that would not always require a physical presence.” These sculptures draw influence from the artist's fascination with children's puppet theater and early modern viewing devices such as camera obscura. Jonas includes in this work a miniature stage set and a video depicting step dancers and folk musicians in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada—where Jonas has lived and worked intermittently since the 1970s.

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The Juniper Tree is based on a fairy tale of the same name that was written down by the Brothers Grimm but, like many folk stories, was historically told and retold mostly by women. Jonas’s interpretation began as a performance for children in 1976 and later developed into collaborative and solo versions before becoming an installation. Although this work seems to turn away from the artist’s frequent engagement with film and video, it continues Jonas’s interest in narrative. She was concerned with, in her words, “the technology of the human voice box handed down.”

Mirage began in 1976 as a performance at New York's Anthology Film Archives, in which Jonas explored movement in relation to the changing size and shape of the film screen. In 1994 she reimagined the work as an installation, incorporating sculptural elements, chalkboard drawings, and videos that had appeared in the 1976 performance. The artist's preoccupation with transformation is evident in the work's repeated forms—such as its towering cones, which both recall an erupting volcano and can become a device for voice projection when taken up by Jonas or the performers. This play with images and objects reflects Jonas's ongoing interest in the repetition and recurrence involved in games.

In *Glass Puzzle* Jonas and performer Lois Lane move in synchronized motion. The 1974 black-and-white video shows the figures in multiple interior spaces, altered to appear multidimensional or excessively flat through superimposition, light, or footage of a screen within a screen. "I like to juxtapose high tech with the original gesture," Jonas explains. "In that way the touch, the body, and the machine are put into play." After locating color footage of the video, the artist re-produced the work in 2000 as an installation, incorporating play with space and further doubling the female form.

By the 1970s Jonas began to play with narrative and increasingly turned to video effects and animation to articulate her performances in new mediums. For her first video works, the artist drew from the conventions of early cinema, while also exploring what was particular to the new medium of video. For *I Want to Live in the Country (And Other Romances)* she edits herself in as the protagonist, narrator, and audience, appearing in the corner to watch the image of a screen within a screen. In the 1980s, Jonas experimented with special effects more than ever before with *Double Lunar Dogs*—a performance she later shot on film and transformed into moving image.

Jonas's Organic Honey persona made her first appearance in this video, filmed at 112 Greene Street in New York. Dressed in a mask bought in an erotic shop and a thrifted headpiece, Jonas videotaped herself performing as the character with a collection of props, including a mirror, a doll, a jar of water, and a blackboard. Her actions range from playful to somewhat menacing—at one point Organic Honey uses a metal spoon to repeatedly strike her own reflection. This work is also Jonas's first performance to include live drawing for the camera, a gesture that would recur throughout the artist's career.

After making the video version of *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy* in 1972, Jonas arranged its elements into a performance of the same name for which video was a major component. Jonas similarly adapted the video *Vertical Roll* into the performance *Organic Honey's Vertical Roll*, both in 1972. During these performances, viewers could see the artist both in person and through two live video feeds filmed by a camerawoman—one presented on a monitor and another as a projection. The performances also included two monitors displaying earlier single-channel videos, Richard Serra's *Anxious Automation* (1971) and Jonas's own *Duet* (1972).

Born in 1932, Jack Smith was an experimental performer and filmmaker whose campy, queer, and subversive style parodied Hollywood's lush aesthetics and other elements of popular culture. Jonas was strongly impacted by his loft performances in New York City in the early 1970s. In her words, "He was charming, funny, mad. His images were and are beautiful, sensuous, and exotic. . . . Jack Smith had a profound effect on all who experienced his work."

“I thought of the monitor as a box into which I could crawl,” Jonas once remarked. Following *Vertical Roll* (1972), the artist continued experimenting with black-and-white, single-channel video as a rich medium for reflecting and refracting images of the body. In *Barking* American dancer Simone Forti moves around the frame led by the sound of her dog barking. For *Left Side Right Side* Jonas repeatedly marks or points to her features in front of the camera, showing the differences between a mirror and a monitor. Finally, in *Disturbances*, Jonas captures a pool’s reflection, document how both the water, acting as a mirror, and the monitor distort the image of the body.

In *Vertical Roll*, “I reveal the mechanics of illusion,” notes Jonas. The work centers on the artist’s manipulation of a glitch that occurs on television monitors when the receiving and transmitting frequencies are out of sync, creating a rolling horizontal black bar on the screen. The work was made with two cameras. One recorded Jonas’s performance in the persona of Organic Honey and passed its image via live feed to a television monitor with the vertical roll effect. The second camera recorded this monitor’s screen to produce the final video. Jonas separately recorded herself hitting a block of wood to make sound, which she then added to the video.

Since her 1994 retrospective exhibition at Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum, Jonas has created multimedia installations developed from her past performances and videos. The artist describes this practice as one of "poetic license," in which she "translates the work from one medium to another." The *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy/Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* installation is composed of the two titular videos, photographs and costumes from prior performances, as well as recreated props. For the present exhibition, Jonas adjusted the elements of the existing installation in relation to the space at MoMA.

For this work, staged on a riverfront in Lower Manhattan, fourteen performers struck together pieces of wood, drew shapes on the ground with props, and used mirrors to refract sunlight while an audience watched from afar. The discrepancy between these visible actions and the sounds that reached the audience expresses the depth of the landscape. This was further amplified by the artist's use of wide-angle and telephoto lenses—the latter enabling close ups—in the resulting film. *Songdelay* demonstrates Jonas's interest in space and, in her words, "ways of dislocating it, attenuating it, flattening it, turning it inside out, always attempting to explore it."

Delay Delay was performed in Lower Manhattan within a grid of ten city blocks bound by vacant lots and leveled buildings and overlooking the West Side Highway and the Hudson River. Clad in white, the performers were dispersed along the perimeter of the area. They then configured themselves in various arrangements and clapped together blocks of wood in dramatic overhead arcs. Perched on a nearby roof, the audience could see the choreographies as they happened, while the sounds of the performer's actions were delayed by the distance—an effect termed "desynchronization" by critic Douglas Crimp. "It was based on the idea of how our perception of image and movement is altered by distance," Jonas recalls.

In 1969 Jonas presented one of her earliest live works, *Mirror Piece I*, in which performers carried mirrors in choreographed sequences before an audience. The mirrors at times reflected the spectators, incorporating them into the space of the action. The performance's second iteration, *Mirror Piece II*, introduced heavier mirrors with thicker panes of glass. The additional weight produced slower, more deliberate choreographies and a feeling of unease amongst both the performers and onlookers. Together these works would establish Jonas as an early champion of performance art at the turn of the 1970s.

In *Mirror Check* Jonas uses a small handheld mirror to inspect her naked body in front of an audience. Though her movements were visible to the spectators, Jonas did not allow them to see the fragmented image reflected in the mirror. As the artist recalls, "*Mirror Check* was inspired by the situation in the late 1960s and early '70s of the women's movement and the idea of a woman reversing the gaze and claiming her body as her own." First performed as part of *Mirror Piece II* (1970), the work was subsequently documented on its own.

Performed in Jonas's SoHo loft, *Choreomania* featured a partially mirrored wall, designed by artist Richard Serra, that was suspended from the ceiling and served as both prop and sculpture. Using handles on the back, performers were able to climb the wall and swing it as they moved around it. They also enacted various gestures, clapped wooden blocks, and manipulated colored lights and props. "The main function of the wall is to fragment the performance," the artist explains. "The performance action is seen only around the wall's four edges." Jonas concluded the performance by projecting images onto the wall influenced by her art history studies, including Egyptian frescos, Medieval paintings, and Renaissance portraits.

During a trip to Japan in 1970, Jonas often attended Noh and Kabuki theater—performance forms incorporating traditional costumes, music, and choreography. She was inspired by the genres' use of music, movement, and sound, as well as their characteristic play of concealing and revealing. "All parts . . . in the Noh are played by men wearing masks," she recalls. "Props, elegantly simple, moved by the players represent elements in the narrative." These theatrical structures would influence Jonas's own use of masks and props. Sound was another key aspect for the artist: the resonant wooden instruments employed in Noh and Kabuki informed Jonas's inclusion of percussion in her early outdoor performances.

"The idea of the double runs through my work," observes Jonas. Inspired by Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges whose writing imagined that mirrors could open up alternate worlds and possibilities, Jonas began to use reflective surfaces to fragment images, flatten perspective, and double figures and environments. At once a technological device and a theatrical prop, these mirrors allowed the artist to, in her words, "alter the audience's experience of the space." Filmed in her loft on Grand Street with no audience, *Nudes with Mirrors* was an improvised performance captured by Jonas on her Super 8 camera.

In her first performance, *Oad Lau*, Jonas recites passages from Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges's short story collection *Labyrinths* while moving stiffly in a garment adorned with small mirrors. Meanwhile, other performers assemble a structure of strings and plastic sheets, forming what the artist calls a "water level in the performance." Jonas titled the work after Oued Laou, Morocco, a fishing village on the Mediterranean coast, where she lived in 1966. "I believe the name means 'watering place,'" she explains. "I liked the name—and I can see now that the idea of a watering place became a very basic element in my work, as generative source, as mirror, as reflection." Jonas would later use the mirror dress seen here in her outdoor work *Wind* (1968).

Wind takes place on a beach in Long Island on the coldest day of the year. Strong gusts batter the performers as they attempt to complete choreographed tasks for the camera. According to Jonas, "the wind became a character and a force," an idea that anticipates her ongoing interest in the agency of natural elements such as air, water, and lava. The mirrored clothing featured in the work also inaugurates a recurring element of the artist's practice: the use of reflective surfaces to create refracted doublings of performers and environments.

This work was made in the summer of 2006 in Jonas's Nova Scotia home. It reuses the format of a 1976 video in which the artist recorded herself reciting "good morning" each day upon waking and "good night" to the camera before retiring for bed. For Jonas, the repurposing of elements from past projects is a strategy that creates a dialogue across time. "The style of performance is straightforward," she observes of this 2006 work, "but more playful or contrived, perhaps affected by the experience of years of performing." Here, Jonas addresses the camera through a convex mirror that distorts her home, a testament to her longstanding interest in manipulating space.