



Photo: *The Shape, the Scent, the Feel of Things*, Joan Jonas, performance at Dia Beacon, 2005. Photo by Paula Court.

**U.S. PAVILION AT 56TH INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA TO FEATURE NEW INSTALLATION BY JOAN JONAS
PRESENTED BY THE MIT LIST VISUAL ARTS CENTER**

CAMBRIDGE, MA, October 7, 2014—The MIT List Visual Arts Center, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, will present Joan Jonas as the representative for the United States at La Biennale di Venezia 56th International Art Exhibition, on view May 9 – November 22, 2015. Jonas, a pioneering figure in performance art and video, will create a new multimedia installation that will transform the entirety of the Pavilion's five galleries into a dynamically immersive environment.

Jonas has been a tenured visual arts professor at MIT for the past 15 years, and is currently Professor Emerita in the MIT Program in Art, Culture, and Technology (ACT). Curated by Paul C. Ha, Director of the MIT List Visual Arts Center and commissioner for the project; and Ute Meta Bauer, currently the Director of the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore and previously the Founding Director of the Program in Art, Culture, and Technology (ACT) at MIT, Jonas's installation for the U.S. Pavilion will be an exceptional moment in her longstanding relationship with MIT.

For the five galleries of the U.S. Pavilion, Joan Jonas will conceive a new complex of works, creating a multilayered ambience, incorporating video, drawings, objects, and sound. Literature has always been an inspiration and source for Jonas, and the project for Venice will extend her investigation into the work of Halldór Laxness and his writing on the spiritual aspects of nature, but will focus on other literary sources.

The List is renowned for presenting groundbreaking contemporary artwork and has always served as a creative laboratory where artists are free to experiment—a leadership position that has been affirmed by the Center's selection as the commissioning institution for the U.S. Pavilion for the third time in the past 15 years, having organized the Pavilions by Fred Wilson in 2003 and Ann Hamilton in 1999.

"Joan's voice and vision have been powerful forces in contemporary art for five decades, and I am thrilled that we will present her latest work in Venice, one of the most iconic forums for the presentation of cutting-edge artwork," said Paul Ha, Director of the MIT List Visual Arts Center. "Joan's selection is not only an acknowledgement of her outstanding contributions to the art world thus far, but also an investment in the innovative promise of her future work."

Jonas has continued to work with a multimedia approach throughout her career, being one of the first artists to explore the potential of the video camera as a tool for image-making and the TV monitor as a sculptural object. At the same time, Jonas experimented in her performances with incorporating the body into the visual field. Her installations and performances bring these components together through drawing, props, and objects to create works reflecting her research in relation to space, narrative, or storytelling, and materials as they are altered through various technologies such as the mirror, video, and distance. In Venice, she will work with these diverse aspects of her practice to create five distinct rooms, with common themes unifying and resonating in the entire space, relating to the present condition of the world in poetic terms.

Jonas's work developed out of her art history studies and sculptural practice, and expanded to performance and film in the 1960s through her involvement with the New York avant-garde scene. Her work has had a significant influence on contemporary art to date, as she has continued to be a major figure in the fields of performance and video art throughout the past five decades.

In conjunction with the presentation of her new work at the U.S. Pavilion, the List will present several of Jonas's most significant, single-channel video works, selected from her 40-year career, in an exhibition in the List's Bakalar Gallery from April 7 through July 5, 2015. The intimate exhibition will provide important background and context for Jonas's new work on view simultaneously in Venice, and will share with local audiences the pivotal videos and performances that led to the artist's selection as the U.S. representative for the 2015 Venice Biennale.

"As I know from working with Joan as both a curator and educator, one does not only see her work, one experiences it. Her performances make a lasting impression, and her ability to work with spaces in a sensual way will most certainly turn a visit to the U.S. Pavilion in Venice into a profound encounter," said Ute Meta Bauer, Director of the Centre for Contemporary Art at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

"We are especially proud to be presenting an MIT professor as the representative artist for the U.S. at the Venice Biennale," said Philip S. Khoury, Ford International Professor of History and Associate Provost, who oversees the arts at MIT. "Joan's fearlessly experimental work is emblematic of MIT and the List's mission to foster the creation of intellectually investigative, challenging artwork, and we have no doubt that her installation for the U.S. Pavilion will push new boundaries and captivate audiences in ways that were previously unimaginable."

To learn more about Joan Jonas and the U.S. Pavilion, please visit <http://joanjonasvenice2015.com>

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Joan Jonas (b. 1936, New York, NY, USA) Jonas is a pioneer of video and performance art, and an acclaimed multimedia artist whose work typically encompasses video, performance, installation, sound, text, and drawing. Trained in art history and sculpture, Jonas was a central figure in the performance art movement of the late 1960s, and her experiments and productions in the late 1960s and early 1970s continue to be crucial to the development of many contemporary art genres, from performance and video to conceptual art and theater. Since 1968, her practice has explored ways of seeing, the rhythms of ritual, and the authority of objects and gestures.

The recipient of numerous honors and awards, Jonas's most recent solo exhibitions include those at HangarBicocca, Milan (Fall 2014); Centre for Contemporary Art, Kitakyushu Project Gallery, Japan (2014); Kulturhuset Stadsteatern Stockholm (2013); Proyecto Paralelo, Mexico (2013); Contemporary Art Museum, Houston (2013); Bergen Kunsthall, Norway (2011); and Museum of Modern Art, New York

(2010). She has been represented in dOCUMENTA in Kassel, Germany, six times since 1972, and has had major retrospectives at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Galerie der Stadt Stuttgart, Germany; and the Queens Museum of Art, New York. Joan Jonas is a New York native and she continues to live and work in New York City. She received a B.A. in Art History from Mount Holyoke College in 1958, studied sculpture at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and received an M.F.A. in Sculpture from Columbia University in 1965. Jonas has taught at MIT since 1998, and is currently Professor Emerita in the MIT Program in Art, Culture, and Technology.

ABOUT THE COMMISSIONER/CURATORS

Paul C. Ha is the Director of the MIT List Visual Arts Center, and has more than 25 years of professional experience in art and museum administration, fundraising, curating, and teaching. Since joining the List in 2012, Ha has founded the exhibition program *List Projects*, which commissions emerging artists to create site-specific installations at the museum. As the inaugural Director of the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis from 2002 to 2011, he developed new programming that expanded the Museum's audiences both locally and internationally, raised more than \$40 million for the institution and established a \$5-million endowment—the Museum's first, and positioned CAM as a leader in the contemporary art field. Ha has curated and worked with over 100 artists in solo and group exhibitions, and many artists received their first major museum exhibitions under his leadership at the List Center and the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, as well as when he was Director at White Columns gallery in New York, and Deputy Director of Programs and External Affairs at Yale University Art Gallery.

Ute Meta Bauer is a veteran curator of exhibitions and presentations on contemporary art, film, video, and sound, with a focus on transdisciplinary formats. She is the Founding Director of the Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore (CCA) at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), where she is also a professor in the School of Art, Media, and Design. She recently curated *Theatrical Fields*, commissioned by Bildmuseet Umeå, Sweden (2013-14), which includes various works by Joan Jonas and that is currently being shown at the CCA in Singapore. Bauer is a former MIT professor, having served as the Founding Director of the Program in Art, Culture, and Technology at MIT's School of Architecture and Planning, and as Director of the MIT Visual Arts Program from 2005-2009. She was Co-Director of the World Biennial Forum No. 1 with Hou Hanru, Gwangju, Korea (2012); Artistic Director of the 3rd Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art (2004); and Co-Curator of Documenta 11 (2001–2002) on the team of Okwui Enwezor. She has edited numerous publications, most recently, *World Biennale Forum No 1 – Shifting Gravity and AR – Artistic Research* (both published in 2013).

ABOUT LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

The Venice Biennale dates to 1895, when the first International Art Exhibition was organized. It is one of the most important international biennials and cultural institutions in the world, introducing hundreds of thousands of visitors to exciting new art every two years. The 56th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia (May 9 – November 22, 2015) is directed by Okwui Enwezor, a curator, art critic, and writer, and the Director of the Haus der Kunst, Munich.

ABOUT THE MIT LIST VISUAL ARTS CENTER

The List Visual Arts Center is a creative laboratory that provides artists with a space to freely experiment and push existing boundaries. As the contemporary art museum at MIT, the List presents a dynamic program of six to nine special exhibitions in its galleries annually, a program of evolving site-specific work by emerging artists known as the *List Projects*, as well as a broad range of educational programs, events, and scholarly publications. Beyond the full slate of special exhibitions and projects it presents each year, the List also maintains and adds to MIT's permanent collection; commissions new works through the MIT Percent-for-Art program, a collection of more than 50 site-specific artworks throughout the campus; and oversees the Student Loan Art Program, which lends more than 500 works of art annually to MIT undergraduate and graduate students.

Originally named the Hayden Gallery, MIT established this center for the visual arts in 1950 to provide a dedicated structure upon which to build the university's existing relationship to the arts. It was renamed the List Visual Arts Center in 1985 in recognition of a gift from Vera and Albert List, and relocated to its

current, expanded location in the Wiesner Building, which was designed by MIT Alumnus I. M. Pei (B.S. Architecture, 1940) and Partners Architects.

For more information, visit: <http://listart.mit.edu>

ABOUT THE ARTS AT MIT

Nearly 80 percent of incoming freshmen have prior training in the arts and nearly 50 percent of all MIT undergraduates enroll in arts courses each year. The arts at MIT connect creative minds across disciplines and encourage a lifetime of exploration and self-discovery. As an example, MIT's visiting artists program enables contemporary artists to engage with MIT's unparalleled environment of pioneering research, unbounded risk-taking, and imaginative problem solving, and has previously hosted artists such as Olafur Eliasson, Trevor Paglen, Tomás Saraceno, Vik Muniz, Mel Chin, and Rick Lowe.

The arts strengthen MIT's commitment to the aesthetic, human, and social dimensions of research and innovation. Artistic knowledge and creation exemplify MIT's motto—*mens et manus*, mind and hand. The arts are essential to MIT's mission to build a better society and meet the challenges of the 21st century.

For more information, visit: <http://arts.mit.edu>

ABOUT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) promotes international mutual understanding through a wide range of academic, cultural, professional, and sports exchange programs. ECA exchanges engage youth, students, educators, artists, athletes, and emerging leaders in many fields in the United States and in more than 160 countries. Alumni of ECA exchanges comprise over one million people around the world, including more than 40 Nobel Laureates and more than 300 current or former heads of state and government around the world.

For more information, visit: <http://www.exchanges.state.gov/us>

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