

JOAN JONAS

Acquario - Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn, Naples

March 24 – May 4, 2025

Galerie Gisela Capitain is pleased to announce an exhibition by US American artist Joan Jonas at the historical Acquario di Napoli.

In collaboration with 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 watercolors from the Aquarium's historical archive.

Joan Jonas is one of the most important American artists to emerge in the late 1960s and early 1970s. She is a pioneer in video and performance art, her projects and experiments were influential in establishing video performance art and video installation as artistic mediums. Her influence has extended to Conceptual art, theater, and other visual mediums.

Jonas is known for her innovative work that blends various media, to explore themes of storytelling, identity, and mythology. Her work often incorporates elements from literature, history, and folklore, creating immersive and thought-provoking experiences.

Joan Jonas' *Fish Drawings*, on view at the Acquario di Napoli, are a captivating series of works inspired by a blend of personal discoveries, artistic experimentation, and a deep engagement with nature. Jonas developed a fascination with fish when she found a Japanese fish dictionary in a second-hand store in San Diego. She copied the detailed color illustrations of various fish species and began repeatedly drawing them in blue ink, a process that led to an exploration of form and movement. The *Fish Drawings* were not only developed as a performative practice but also became part of a broader engagement with themes such as underwater worlds, glacial melting, and imagined aquatic environments.

In the context of *Moving Off the Land* (from 2016 onwards), and her collaboration with marine biologist David Gruber, Jonas deepened her interest in marine ecosystems. Here, she incorporated fish drawings into immersive installations, enhanced by video works and objects such as mirrors and glass sculptures, to create a multimedia experience of the marine world.

A significant element of Joan Jonas's recent artistic output, encompassing performances, installations and video works, has been inspired by her profound passion for nature and animal life. The subjects she chose to represent this passion include, but are not limited to, strange deep-sea creatures and her beloved dog. The central theme of Jonas's work is the role played by the ocean in cultures throughout history as a totemic, spiritual and ecological touchstone. In preparation for her projects, she conducted extensive research in aquariums around the world as well as in the waters off the coast of Jamaica.

The Acquario di Napoli therefore represents a particularly significant exhibition space for Joan Jonas. The Acquario of the Stazione Zoologica opened its door in 1874. It is the only aquarium from the 19th century still in place in its original structure. Jonas's exhibition at the Acquario di Napoli creates a meaningful dialogue with her show at C.A.S.A. - Palazzo Degas, where her seminal multimedia installation *Vulcano Saga* is presented.

Major retrospectives include Jonas's 2003 exhibition at the Queens Museum and the 2014 Tate Modern show. In 2015, Jonas represented the United States at the Venice Biennale with *They Come to Us Without a Word*. More recently, her 2018 MoMA retrospective solidified her legacy as a trailblazer in video and performance art, influencing generations of artists worldwide. Jonas was the subject of a further solo exhibition at the MoMA in New York in the year 2024. In 2024 Joan Jonas was awarded with the Nam June Paik Prize.

Joan Jonas at Acquario - Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn, Naples

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Opening and Reading Performance by Joan Jonas Monday, March 24, 2025, 6-9 pm

Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn
Villa Comunale
80121 Napoli
Opening hours Tuesday - Sunday, 9am - 5pm

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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