

# MARC SELWYN FINE ART

## Dear Sid, with Love Sari Dienes: The Hollywood Rubbings July 8 – August 19, 2017



Sari Dienes *Marx Brothers*, 1955  
Copyright © Sari Dienes Foundation/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

Marc Selwyn Fine Art is pleased to announce the first solo Los Angeles presentation of the work of Sari Dienes and the first exhibition of the artist's Hollywood rubbings, created here from 1955 to 1956.

Sari Dienes (Hungarian/American, 1898-1992) had a career spanning six decades and worked in a wide range of media, including paintings, drawings, sculptures, ceramics, sound installations and performance art. From 1928-1935, she studied in Paris and London with Fernand Léger, Henry Moore and others. By the early 1950's, Dienes began making large-scale rubbings of the urban landscape, merging frottage, assemblage and the collection of found objects. Various materials were collected from her walkabouts in New York's densely populated borough of Manhattan. She believed "nothing is so humble that it cannot be made into art," which led her to incorporate bones, lint, Styrofoam, banana skins and other forms of detritus into her works. These otherwise discarded objects, along with the imperfections and texture of aging sidewalks, became the subjects of her exuberant transfer drawings.

Dienes' working process had a profound effect on other important American artists such as John Cage, Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, all of whom were her friends. Johns periodically assisted Dienes in the making of her urban rubbings. He stated "She was very uninhibited, I thought. People would come up and ask what was going on, and she would talk as she continued to work, in the middle of the street." Her obituary from 1992 noted that she gave Rauschenberg the large stuffed eagle he used in *Canyon*, 1959 (collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York) one of his most significant combine paintings. These stories and many more percolate throughout Dienes' history.

During a trip to Los Angeles in 1955, the artist continued her pioneering use of non-traditional materials and appropriation by documenting the sidewalk at Grauman's

## M A R C S E L W Y N F I N E A R T

Chinese Theatre. The famous courtyard where Hollywood stars made impressions of their hands, feet and personal items became the subject of Dienes' compositions. Her indexical appropriation of the environment is evident throughout the series. This exhibition contains fourteen of the artist's Hollywood Rubbings and includes silver screen icons such as Ginger Rogers, Carmen Miranda and the Marx Brothers among others.

In *Marx Brothers*, 1956, burnt sienna tones activate a static moment in time, creating a luminous space of gestural marks. Intimate nuances appear in the unevenness of the pavement, lyrical handwriting of the entertainers and a small harp etched into concrete.

Dienes exhibited nationally and internationally beginning in the early 1940s, with notable exhibitions at Betty Parsons Gallery and A.I.R. Gallery in New York. In 2014, Sari Dienes had her first ever museum solo show at The Drawing Center, New York. Recently, in 2015, Dienes was included in *Apparitions: Frottages and Rubbings 1860 to Now*, at Hammer Museum, Los Angeles and Menil Museum, Houston, curated by Allegra Pesenti. Her work has been included in major museum exhibitions, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, The Art Institute of Chicago, the Rhode Island School of Design, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston and the Wadsworth Atheneum in Connecticut. Dienes is in the permanent collection of institutions such as Museum of Modern Art, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Virginia Museum of Fine Art and Menil Drawing Institute, among others.