



Sari Dienes in Stony Point, New York, 1971. Photograph by Peter Moore. © Northwestern University Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University

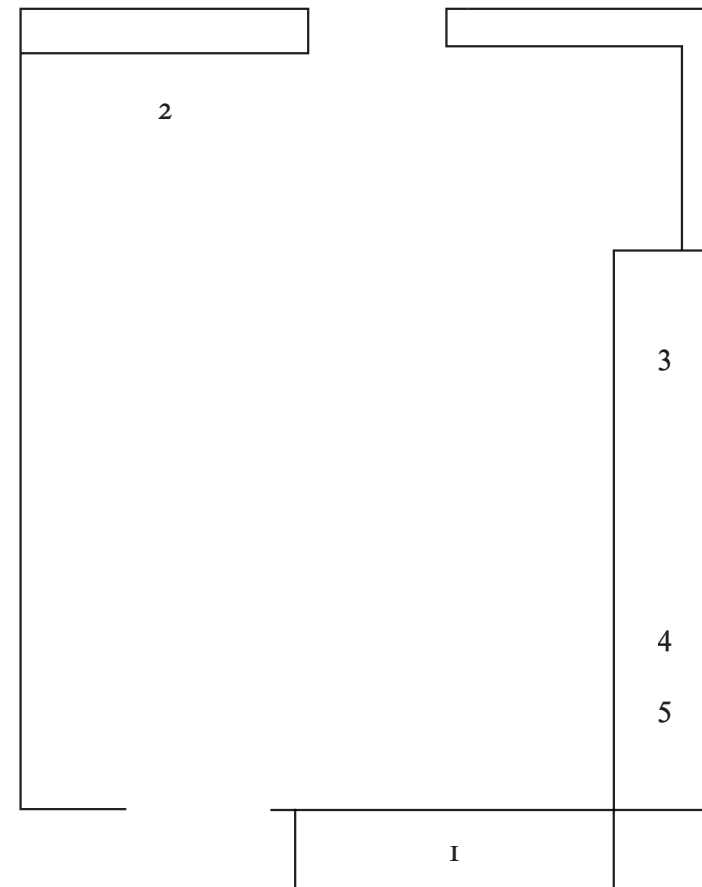
Sari Dienes (1898, Debrecen, Hungary–1992, Stony Point, New York) was a Hungarian-American artist. Across a career spanning six decades, she moved between painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, textile design, set and costume design, sound art, and performance. Beginning in 1953, she developed a new technique in which she used a printer's brayer and ink to take impressions of objects and surfaces. She soon carried this method out onto the streets of New York at night, where—assisted by friends—she rubbed manhole covers, subway gratings, and sidewalk slabs, capturing the imprint of the urban environment. These large-scale *Sidewalk Rubbings*, first shown at Betty Parsons in New York in 1954, mark a shift away from Abstract Expressionism's dominance toward figuration, indexicality, and the incorporation of found objects in postwar American art.

In 1955–56, Sari Dienes's rubbings and plaster collages were exhibited in the windows of Bonwit Teller, a Fifth Avenue department store in Manhattan. The arrangements were commissioned by the store's art director Gene Moore, who was known for giving emerging artists a lot of creative freedom. Among those invited were Susan Weil, Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg, and Jasper Johns, who worked under the joint pseudonym "Matson Jones."

Sari Dienes was a founding member of the feminist A.I.R. Gallery in New York. Her work is part of the collections of institutions including MoMA, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Guggenheim Museum, and the Menil Drawing Institute in Houston. In recent years, her practice has received renewed attention, including a solo exhibition at the Boca Raton Museum of Art (2023) and her work featured in group exhibitions at MoMA (2023–2025), Museum Tinguely (2024–2025) and the Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein (2024–2025).

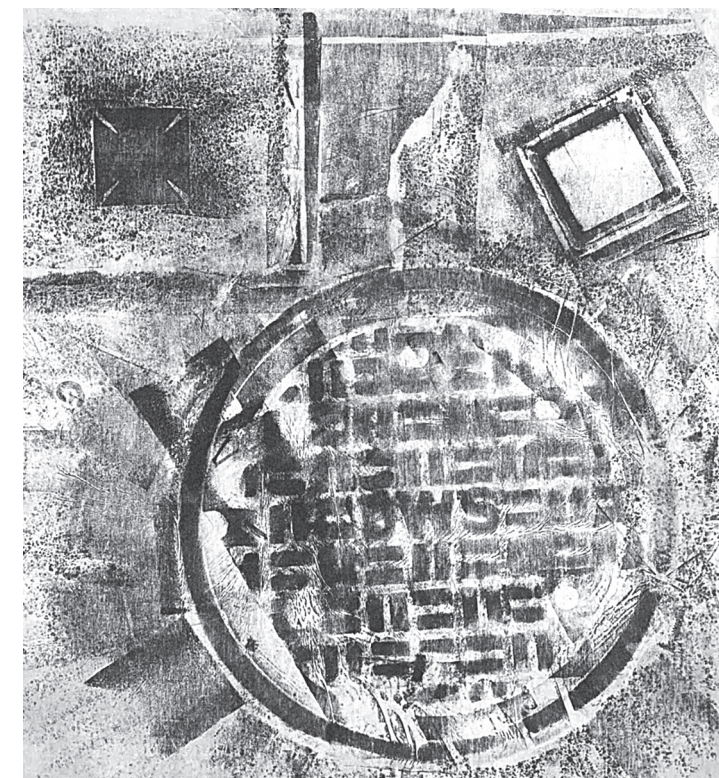


University. Peter Moore Photography Archive, libraries.



I
Sari Dienes
Snow Painting, 1971
Inkjet prints
25.5 × 17 cm,
17 cm × 23.5 cm

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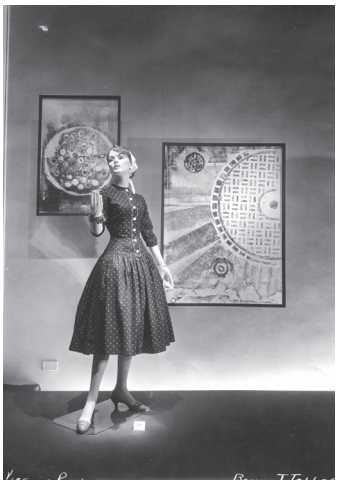
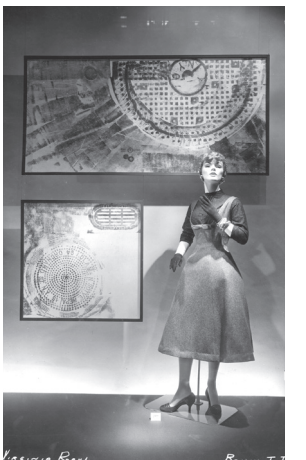
2
Sari Dienes
Subway Screen, c. 1953
184 × 124 cm
Ink (rubbings) on paper
mounted in two-part
wooden frame; black in
tracing of subway screen
and manhole on webril
tissue

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3
Sari Dienes
DWS, c. 1953
Ink rubbing on webril
109.2 × 99.1 cm

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Firestone Gallery,
New York

4
Sari Dienes's rubbings,
c. 1953–1955
installed in Toyoko
Department Store
Gallery in Tokyo, 1958



5
Sari Dienes's street
rubbings, c.1953
installed in Bonwit Teller
window display July 1955.
Window Design by
Gene Moore. Photograph
by Virginia Roehl
Inkjet prints
16.5 × 24 cm, 15 × 24 cm

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PASSING THROUGH unfolds as a series of various exhibition formats and publications across Düsseldorf and beyond. Each project takes place over a single weekend at a different location, presenting one body of work and spanning across a range of mediums. What began as the challenge of finding a permanent space is read here as a possibility, letting each site's specific context shape how the project unfolds. The series invites artists across generations whose work engages with their environment as well as with the conditions and structures of artistic production and presentation.

The second part of PASSING THROUGH takes the form of a publication series. Each printed edition extends, contextualizes or comments on the works on view—through visual and archival material, essays or personal research. Sent out to interested readers, these publications make the series tangible beyond digital documentation.

PASSING THROUGH is organized by Franca Zitta. The conceptual and graphic design is developed in collaboration with Maud Vervenne.

This exhibition takes place at Linienstraße, an artist-run space and studio in Düsseldorf, located in a former greengrocer's. By combining art production and exhibition making in the same space, the project looks for forms of collaboration, on-site production and uncharted dialogue.

A very warm thank you to Alabel Chapin, Jennifer Samet and Emma Tomicic of Eric Firestone Gallery, Barbara Pollitt and R.I.P. Hayman of the Sari Dienes Foundation, Dorothee Mosters, Vanessa Bollmann, Maud Vervenne, Monika Zitta, Alan Cohen, Mari van Stokkum and Nura Afnan-Samandari, Thomas Neumann, Sophie Urban and Simon Wienk-Borgert of Linienstraße.

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