

Arrangements by Marie Cosindas

January 16th – March 8, 2014

Almost fifty years after her first museum exhibition, Bruce Silverstein Gallery is honored to present *Arrangements by Marie Cosindas*, featuring thirty-five of the artist's photographs from the 1960s-80s. In addition to images that have never been exhibited, this show includes works from the historic Museum of Modern Art exhibition of her color photographs in 1966.

Arrangements is Cosindas' term for her richly layered assemblages created primarily in her Boston studio, and in later years, around the world, from found or borrowed objects—fabrics, flowers, figurines, jewelry, perfume bottles, tarot cards and other such treasures which came to define her signature style. Often pyramidal in structure, the artist's baroque compositions are filled with an old world style of excess delightfully bordering on kitsch. Cosindas prefers the term *Arrangement* to "still life" for this body of work, as she wishes to highlight the very active role she played in the construction of these images as well as the intense engagement required from the viewer in order to absorb their varied textures, patterns, colors and minute details. For Cosindas, the resulting image and viewing experience is anything but still.

Now reemerging as a cult figure in this medium, Cosindas was one of America's best-known photographers in the 1960s-80s following her exhibitions at MoMA (her first solo show, and a pioneering feat for a woman artist in this period), the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1966; the Chicago Art Institute, 1967; the International Center of Photography, 1978; and John Szarkowski's landmark exhibition, *Mirrors and Windows*, 1978.

Cosindas studied at the Modern School of Fashion Design and attended evening classes at the Boston Museum School as her first interest was drawing and painting. On a trip to Greece in 1959 to make photographs to be used in her paintings, Cosindas discovered instead that these images did not need to be translated into another medium for she was satisfied creatively by the photographic process. In 1961 Edward Steichen viewed her first black and white portfolio and purchased three images, one for himself, and two for the collection of the Museum of Modern Art. Later that year she studied with Ansel Adams who told Cosindas she was "thinking in color" despite her use of black and white film. Throughout the 1960s Cosindas organized and hosted four workshops on photography and invited Minor White to conduct them in her studio. In 1962 the Polaroid Corporation asked Cosindas to experiment with the company's new instant color film, and by 1965 she worked entirely in color and acted as an advisor to Polaroid, reporting on her experience with the film's capabilities and properties. Cosindas' work helped lead to the recognition of color photography as an acceptable artistic medium in an era when it was largely associated with advertising and other commercial ends. John Szarkowski, the esteemed curator who gave Cosindas her first solo exhibition, labeled her work as one of the few "conspicuous successes" in color photography prior to William Eggleston. By the end of the 1960s she had received a Guggenheim grant to continue working in color, a Rockefeller grant to make films for PBS Boston, and honorary degrees from Philadelphia Moore College of Art and the Art Institute Boston. In 1978, a monograph of her work *Marie Cosindas Color Photographs* featuring an essay by Tom Wolfe was published by New York Graphic Society.

Cosindas was recently the subject of a retrospective at the Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth and was honored with a lifetime achievement award from the Photographic Resource Center, Boston. Bruce Silverstein featured Cosindas' work in the 2010 exhibition, *Beyond Color: Color in American Photography 1950-1970*.

A catalogue has been published in conjunction with our current exhibition featuring an essay by Lisa Hostetler.