

**Andres de Dienes: *Beyond Monroe***

Opening Reception: Friday, 12 June 2026

12 June – 31 July 2026

64 Grosvenor Street Mayfair London W1K 4PZ



Left to right: Andre de Dienes, *Untitled (Marilyn Monroe)*, Beverly Hills, California, 1953; Andre de Dienes, *Untitled (Marilyn Monroe)*, Tobay Beach, Oyster Bay, New York, 1949 © André de Dienes / MUUS Collection, courtesy of Upsilon Gallery.

Upsilon Gallery is pleased to present André de Dienes: *Beyond Monroe*, an exhibition celebrating the enduring photographic legacy of André de Dienes and his intimate portrayal of Marilyn Monroe in the centenary year of her birth. Bringing together a significant body of photographs produced between 1945 and 1956, the exhibition offers a rare opportunity to reconsider Monroe not as a fixed cultural icon, but as a figure in continual formation.

Widely recognised for his enduring photographic relationship with Monroe, de Dienes first met the future star in 1945, when she was still known as Norma Jeane and only nineteen years old. The resulting photographs trace a prolonged process of self-construction, capturing moments of vulnerability, performance and experimentation



before Monroe's image solidified into one of the most recognisable personas of the twentieth century.

Rather than presenting a retrospective mythology, *Beyond Monroe* foregrounds the fluidity and uncertainty that characterised Monroe's early years before the camera. Photographed across beaches, cafés and open landscapes, de Dienes' images possess an atmosphere of striking intimacy and psychological depth. Removed from the highly controlled environment of studio portraiture, these photographs reveal a more exploratory and unresolved presence, one negotiating the very conditions of visibility and fame.

As Monroe's public identity evolved throughout the 1950s, de Dienes continued to capture moments that resisted the polished certainty of celebrity culture. While traces of glamour and stylisation increasingly emerge, the photographs maintain an unusual sense of inwardness. Monroe's gaze frequently appears distant or ambiguous, complicating the relationship between subject and viewer and suggesting an interiority that exceeds the image itself.

The exhibition also examines the broader transformation of image culture in mid-twentieth century America. De Dienes' photographs occupy a critical position within the emergence of modern celebrity, revealing how identity is simultaneously constructed and mediated through acts of posing, framing and repetition. His work neither fully embraces nor rejects the machinery of fame, instead inhabiting a space where authenticity and performance remain inseparable.

*Beyond Monroe* ultimately invites viewers to reconsider Monroe through a more nuanced lens: not as a completed icon, but as a subject continually shaped through photography, performance and cultural projection. The exhibition reveals the enduring power of de Dienes' images precisely through their refusal to resolve these tensions, offering instead a compelling meditation on identity, visibility and the instability of representation.

### **About André de Dienes**

André de Dienes (1913–1985) was a Hungarian photographer renowned for his intimate portraits of Marilyn Monroe and his pioneering approach to nude photography within natural landscapes. Bridging fashion, portraiture and fine art photography, his work is



distinguished by its spontaneity, psychological sensitivity and atmospheric immediacy. Though not fully recognised by institutions during his lifetime, de Dienes is now regarded as a significant figure in twentieth-century photography, with works held in numerous public and private collections internationally.

De Dienes travelled extensively throughout Europe and North Africa before emigrating to the United States in 1938. While contributing to publications including *Vogue* and *Life*, he increasingly moved away from commercial assignments in favour of a more personal artistic practice centred on portraiture and the nude. His photographs are recognised for their distinctive ability to merge figure, landscape and narrative, creating images that balance intimacy with cinematic atmosphere. His work has since been exhibited internationally, including at the National Portrait Gallery, and presented at major international photography fairs such as Paris Photo and the AIPAD Photography Show.

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