

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Suellen Rocca: In Dreams, The Last Works**

November 5 – December 23, 2021

Opening: Thursday, November 4, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **Suellen Rocca: In Dreams, The Last Works**, the next exhibition in his gallery at 523 West 24th Street. The exhibition focuses on the paintings and drawings Rocca made in the ten years prior to her unexpected death in 2020.

Rocca described the imagery in her work as deeply personal, even those taken from popular culture. The images of a chair, bed, and table are derived from doll house furniture from the 1950s that she discovered in her basement. The recurring images of fish and torsos originate from a dream she had while studying the symbolism of fish in the work of Max Beckmann. The artist has said that she used them to signify a sense of “not being able to hold onto things.”

The two last paintings that Rocca completed in 2020 show her uniting the images of the torso with her hieroglyphic, pattern-like drawings. This impulse to return to her past and to mine a personal lexicon of images is rooted in the artist’s intense desire to look carefully. “What I tell my students now is you need to look,” Rocca said, “because after we think we’ve seen things we don’t look at them anymore.”

Suellen Rocca (1943–2020) was one of the original members of the Hairy Who, a group of six visionary artists who first exhibited together in Chicago in 1966. The group’s exhibitions, which took place in Chicago and other cities between 1966 and 1969, drew national and international attention and went on to influence several generations of artists.

In 2016 Matthew Marks Gallery presented Rocca’s first one-person exhibition in New York, “Suellen Rocca: Bare Shouldered Beauty, Works from 1965 to 1969.” This was followed two years later by a survey of her drawings made between 1981 and 2017. In 2020 the Vienna Secession organized the first one-person exhibition of her work in Europe. It included many of the paintings and drawings in the current exhibition, which were completed just before her untimely death.

**Suellen Rocca: In Dreams, The Last Works** is on view at 523 West 24th Street from November 5 – December 23, 2021, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

For additional information, please contact Ted Turner at 212-243-0200 or [ted@matthewmarks.com](mailto:ted@matthewmarks.com).