

VAN DOREN WAXTER

Richard Diebenkorn *Works on Paper 1946-1992*

March 3 – April 23, 2022
23 East 73rd Street
2nd & 3rd Floor Galleries



Untitled (Invented Head), 1971, Gouache and graphite on paper, 16 3/8 x 11 3/4 in.

Van Doren Waxter is pleased to announce the retrospective *Richard Diebenkorn: Works on Paper 1946-1992* at its 1907 historical townhouse at 23 East 73rd Street from March 3 to April 23, 2022. The exhibition has been organized with the Richard Diebenkorn Foundation and includes rarely seen material from every period of the singular and distinguished American artist's body of work. The sheets on view evince the artist's love of mark marking and use of paper as a medium. The retrospective takes place during the artist's (b. April 22, 1922) centennial celebration #Diebenkorn100, a year-long series of nationwide museum installations and digital activities spanning his figurative and landscape art to his epic cycle of abstraction, the Ocean Park series. The retrospective is accompanied by a handsome exhibition catalogue with full color reproductions.

The show presents the artist's early experiments with materials he used throughout his career, such as watercolor, crayon, and collage beginning with works like *Untitled* (1946), a bright, luminous object that reveals the influence of Arshile Gorky, Joan Miró, and William Baziotes, and an angular, spiky abstraction (also 1946) that invokes Surrealism and the fractured planes of Cubism.

A somber 1964 gouache and charcoal drawing made after the artist's father passed away and during a period in which he worked mostly on paper producing dark and dense still lifes, depicts a striped, articulated pillow and low divan in the artist's Berkeley Hills studio. The work belongs to a group of "some of the most beloved of the family," the artist's daughter Gretchen Diebenkorn Grant writes in a recent monograph (Rizzoli, 2019) that features "inanimate objects that my father looked at and handled on a daily basis at home and in his studio" such as his glasses, scissors, a magnifying glass, knives, forks, and spoons. Diebenkorn produced the largest number of works on paper during his Berkeley years when he worked representationally; the show includes affecting still lifes and black and white nudes.

A highly chromatic, jewel-like 1971 crayon and graphite on paper, made the same year the artist first exhibited his Ocean Park works on paper, represents his skill with color and creating illusionistic three-dimensional space on paper and is inscribed in the lower edge to his wife, "For Phyllis with all my love." A 1985 Ocean Park sheet, a glowing collage made with etching, is striking for its sparkling, pastel hued bands and geometric shapes. His

paintings on paper from this period are astonishing for their “lightness of touch,” Ruth E. Fine asserts in the artist’s catalogue raisonné (Yale University Press, 2016) and are “assured and vigorous, yet delicate and graceful in their sensuousness.”



Untitled, 1980, Gouache on paper, 25 x 19 ¼ in.

In 1980, the artist began his Clubs and Spades series of works on paper containing symbols and heraldic imagery that had fascinated him since he was a young person. The show includes a number of works from the series, from an energetic, highly activated gouache on paper (pictured) in which free floating shapes and symbols hover against a creamy substrate (1981) to a vertical sheet (1980) in rich hues of blue, red, and green painted on a slick, glossy technical paper.



Untitled, c. 1988, Pasted paper, pasted printed paper, acrylic, gouache, graphite, and ink on paper, 9 x 12 in.

The presentation includes work from the artist’s Healdsburg period and his final years—Diebenkorn called the view of Mount Saint Helena from the front porch “my Mont Saint-Victoire” or “la Montagne de Cézanne” after the famous peak Cézanne painted in Aix-en-Provence, France. Jane Livingston, who organized the seminal *The Art of Richard Diebenkorn* (1997) at the Whitney Museum of American Art, remarks of the period in the artist’s catalogue raisonné, “Works created in the Healdsburg years...reach back constantly to earlier themes...and incorporate something new, as well—an elusive quality, something like an unashamed decorativeness and openheartedness.”

An intricate and complex acrylic, gouache, graphite, and ink on pasted paper (c. 1988, pictured), represents the artist's ability at layering papers to create luminescence. A significantly scaled charcoal (c. 1988), the largest sheet in the show measuring more than three feet tall, depicts with tenderness the interior of the artist's studio, which the artist and his wife had converted the year prior from a garage with clerestory windows to let in the artist's preferred northern light.

Special Talk @vandorenwaxter via Instagram Live

On Thursday, April 14 at 1:00 p.m. Eastern on Instagram Live @vandorenwaxter, the artist's daughter, Gretchen Diebenkorn Grant and Daisy Murray Holman, Head of Archives at the Richard Diebenkorn Foundation, will discuss from the artist's former home and studio in Healdsburg, California: the works on view at Van Doren Waxter and a new body of research developed by the foundation during the artist's centennial year, #Diebenkorn100 that looks at rarely seen photographs taken by the artist between 1963 and 1987. The photographs reveal how the artist was "always looking, framing" and integrating his surroundings into his painting and drawing vocabulary.

About the artist

Richard Diebenkorn was born in Portland, Oregon in 1922. He attended Stanford University from 1940 to 1943 and was awarded his Bachelor of Arts in 1949. He studied at the University of California, Berkeley in 1943 and attended California School of Fine Arts in 1946. He received his Master of Arts from the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque in 1951. The artist's earliest abstractions were made while he lived in Sausalito, California (1946–1949), Albuquerque (1950–1952) and Urbana, Illinois (1952–1953). In 1953 he moved to Berkeley, continuing his work in abstraction. The year 1955 marks the beginning of a period of more than a decade that the artist worked from direct observation making figurative works from a model, along with still lifes, landscapes, and interiors. From 1966 to 1988 he lived in Santa Monica, taught at the University of California, Los Angeles from 1966 to 1973, and began his Ocean Park cycle in 1967. He moved to Healdsburg, California in 1988 where he worked exclusively on drawings and prints until his death in 1993.

Recent and significant exhibitions include *Richard Diebenkorn: The Sketchbooks Revealed* (2015–2016), Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University; *Matisse/Diebenkorn* (2016–2017), organized by the Baltimore Museum of Art and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and *Richard Diebenkorn: Beginnings, 1942–1955* (2017–2019), organized by the Richard Diebenkorn Foundation in Berkeley in conjunction with the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento; traveled to David Owsley Museum of Art, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana; Portland Art Museum, Oregon; Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art, Pepperdine University, Malibu, California; and Academy Art Museum, Easton, Maryland.

In 2016, the artist was the subject of *Richard Diebenkorn: The Catalogue Raisonné* (Yale University Press), the definitive resource of the artist's sketches; drawings; paintings on paper, board, canvas; and sculptural objects.

Gallery Information

23 East 73rd Street, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10021
Tel: 212 445 0444
info@vandorenwaxter.com
vandorenwaxter.com

Media Relations

Brent Foster Jones
press@vandorenwaxter.com, tel: 917-280-6217