

Richard Diebenkorn

The Sackler Wing

14 March – 7 June 2015

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In March 2015 the Royal Academy of Arts will present a survey of Richard Diebenkorn's figurative and abstract works to a UK audience for the first time in almost twenty-five years. Celebrated as a post-war Master in his native United States, the exhibition will serve as an opportunity to discover the importance of Diebenkorn (1922-1993) within the canon of American painting.

Richard Diebenkorn will be a focused exploration of the artist's ever-changing, always compelling career across four decades, shifting from the abstract to the figurative in both painting and works on paper. The exhibition will comprise over 50 works with significant loans from public and private collections in the United States and Europe.

Diebenkorn created an exceptional and consistently intriguing body of work. The exhibition will reveal the vital role he played in the development of American art, and will be arranged to reflect the three distinct periods of his work. During the early stage of his career in the 1950s he gained recognition as a leading abstract expressionist yet in 1955 he turned his attention to figurative painting, considered at the time as a surprising and unfashionable shift, although he achieved considerable success working in this genre. In 1967, having relocated to Southern California from the San Francisco Bay Area, he returned to abstract paintings and drawings beginning a second long and highly successful period in this style. The exhibition will highlight his staunch artistic independence and will show the ease of movement between styles, which were hallmarks of his career.

The first gallery will explore Diebenkorn's early abstract work, produced for his Museum of Fine Arts exhibition in Albuquerque, New Mexico and during a teaching post that followed in Urbana, Illinois between 1950 and 1952, as well as the earliest abstract works he produced in Berkeley, California. The second gallery will focus on works made during his return to figurative and landscape studies in Berkeley, California between 1955 and 1966, when he became known as a successful Bay Area Figurative artist. The last gallery will display his largest and perhaps most famous body of work, the non-objective *Ocean Park* series created between 1967 and 1988 in Southern California.

Diebenkorn was strongly associated with California and the American West, where he lived and worked for most of his life. The quintessential colourist, his sumptuous palette and compositions reveal an exquisite sensitivity to his environment and geography, capturing a sense of the light and space of the various locations in which he worked. For Diebenkorn, each work was a search for

'rightness', an attempt to solve complex and often self-imposed compositional and spatial problems, so that each work becomes a perfectly balanced resolution.

Despite his deserved recognition in the United States, Diebenkorn's work has been less widely exhibited in Europe. The only major solo exhibition was at the Whitechapel Gallery in 1991 and he was elected an Honorary Academician in 1992, shortly before his death in 1993, a testament to the level of esteem in which he was held by fellow artists.

Richard Diebenkorn will demonstrate the variety and subtlety of the artist's oeuvre and the ease of his transition from abstraction to figuration and back again, reinvigorating his position as a modern American Master.

Organisation

Richard Diebenkorn has been organised by the Royal Academy of Arts, London. It will be guest curated by Sarah C. Bancroft, curator of the exhibition *Richard Diebenkorn: The Ocean Park Series* (Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Orange County Museum of Art, and Corcoran Gallery of Art, 2011-12), with Edith Devaney, Exhibition Curator at the Royal Academy. The exhibition has the full co-operation of the Richard Diebenkorn family and estate (including the artist's widow Phyllis Diebenkorn), and the Richard Diebenkorn Foundation.

Supporter

The Terra Foundation for American Art is dedicated to fostering exploration, understanding, and enjoyment of the visual arts of the United States for national and international audiences. Recognising the importance of experiencing original works of art, the foundation provides opportunities for interaction and study, beginning with the presentation and growth of its own art collection in Chicago. To further cross-cultural dialogue on American art, the foundation supports and collaborates on innovative exhibitions, research, and educational programmes. Implicit in such activities is the belief that art has the potential both to distinguish cultures and to unite them.

Catalogue

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with contributions from Sarah C. Bancroft, Edith Devaney and Steven Nash.

Dates and Opening Hours

Press View:	Tuesday 10 March, 10am – 2pm
Open to public:	Saturday 14 March – Sunday 7 June 2015
	10am – 6pm daily (last admission 5.30pm)
	Fridays until 10pm (last admission 9.30pm)

Admission

£11.50 full price (including Gift Aid donation); concessions available; children under 16 and Friends of the RA go free.

Tickets

Tickets for *Richard Diebenkorn* are available daily at the RA or online at www.royalacademy.org.uk.
Group bookings: Groups of 10+ are asked to book in advance. Telephone 020 7300 8027 or email adultgroups@royalacademy.org.uk.

Images

Publicity images for *Richard Diebenkorn* can be obtained from Picselect, the Press Association's image service for press use. Please register at www.picselect.com and once registered go to the Royal Academy folder in the Arts section of Picselect.

Social Media

Join the discussion about the exhibition online at:

[@royalacademy #Diebenkorn](http://www.twitter.com)

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About the Royal Academy of Arts

The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by King George III in 1768. It has a unique position in being an independent, privately funded institution led by eminent artists and architects whose purpose is to be a clear, strong voice for art and artists. Its public programme promotes the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the visual arts through exhibitions, education and debate.

For further press information, please contact Annabel Potter on 020 7300 5614 or annabel.potter@royalacademy.org.uk

For public information, please print 020 7300 8000 or www.royalacademy.org.uk
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