



GEMINI G.E.L. AT JONI MOISANT WEYL

Richard Diebenkorn

Born:

Portland, Oregon, 1922

At age two Richard Diebenkorn moved with his parents to San Francisco. He became aware of his interest in art at an early age, and later a World War II Marine Corps assignment enabled him to study paintings in East Coast collections. Among the artists whose work intrigued him was Henri Matisse. The evolutionary process evident in Matisse's paintings and his flattening of space through a linear structure were of particular interest.

In 1946 Diebenkorn enrolled in the California School of Fine Arts, San Francisco, and with a grant-in-aid to bring California artists to the New York art world, spent late 1946 to early 1947 in Woodstock. Later that year he joined the staff at California School of Fine Arts, where he taught intermittently until 1966 (when he began teaching at the University of California at Los Angeles and established a studio in the Ocean Park section of Santa Monica). In 1950 Diebenkorn enrolled at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, receiving his M.F.A. the following year. The sparse, desert landscape led to new visual responses, among them emblematic structures bearing a relationship to some of his more recent work. In the early 1950's Diebenkorn settled in Berkeley where, with David Park and Elmer Bischoff, he was at the heart of the Bay Area scene. His art moved from flattened, structured abstraction with allusions of landscape, toward figuration, employing both still life and his better-known figure compositions. Since 1966, however, abstractions, especially his Ocean Park images, have dominated his art.

Diebenkorn began making etchings and drypoints at Crown Point Press in 1964. Most of his prints have been published there. He has also worked at Tamarind and Gemini. Among Diebenkorn's exhibitions are those organized by the Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco (1948); the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (1954); the Pasadena Art Museum (1960); the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco (1963); the Washington Gallery of Modern Art, Washington D.C. (1964); Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City (1968); the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1969); the Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo (1976); and the University of California Art Museum, Santa Barbara (1979).

In the spring of 1988, Richard and Phyllis Diebenkorn moved from Santa Monica to Healdsburg, California, to a rural home near the Russian River, overlooking vineyards and scrub-oak hillsides. In his Healdsburg studio he worked in mostly small scale, producing some of the most gem-like, quirkily decorative, and perfectly executed, works of his life. Though he experienced serious health problems during much of his time in Healdsburg, he was able to continue his restless exploration of form and color and poetic metaphor. Virtually all of the Healdsburg work was abstract. However, in one of his last ambitious print series, done in 1990, he represented variations on the theme of a coat on a hanger. The late etchings, meant to illustrate a luxury edition book of poems by W.B. Yeats published by San Francisco's Arion Press, constitute a kind of valedictory gesture.

In late 1992, the Diebenkorns were forced to take up residence at their Berkeley apartment in order to be nearer to medical treatment. They looked forward to returning to Healdsburg, but were never able to do so. Richard Diebenkorn died there on March 30, 1993.