

Richard Diebenkorn

By Sarah Bancroft

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Beloved artist Richard Diebenkorn (1922–1993) is best known for paintings that powerfully evoke the California coast from San Francisco to Los Angeles. A West Coast native, Diebenkorn captured the light and color of the land and sea in a way that resonates with anyone who has spent time there. This volume contains a biographical introduction by Sarah C. Bancroft, an essay on Diebenkorn's influences by Steven Nash, and an essay on Diebenkorn's works on paper by Edith Devaney. Together these bring the artist's rich, four-decade-long career into focus. The book covers Diebenkorn's three distinct periods, which saw him gain recognition as a leading Abstract Expressionist in the early 1950s, then turn to figurative painting, before embarking on a highly successful period of abstract paintings and drawings— the Ocean Park Series. It is the perfect introduction to the work of this seminal California artist.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
Richard Diebenkorn is an expanded edition of Gerald Nordland's authoritative study of the painter, first published in 1987 and now reissued by Rizzoli, a leading publisher of fine-art books. Diebenkorn, who died in 1993, long ago entered the pantheon of great modernist artists. He was an early abstract expressionist, then went through a less successful stage of figural painting. Abruptly changing direction in the late 1960s, he rediscovered abstraction in an extraordinary series of grandly conceived paintings titled "Ocean Park," produced over a span of nearly 20 years. With strong vertical and diagonal constructions serving as structure for large areas of fresh, lyrical color, the elegant juxtapositions and satisfying geometry of "Ocean Park" make it his masterpiece; almost half this oversize book is devoted to the series. Nordland's descriptions and analyses of the paintings, based on 40 years' study of Diebenkorn's life and work, guide the reader to a deeper understanding of the painter's intentions and achievements. The text is clear, straightforward, and largely convincing, though there is surprisingly little comparative material by other artists. Graceful, understated design that complements the paintings, and extremely sensitive color reproduction, make the book itself aesthetically satisfying and a pleasure to look at. This new edition of *Richard Diebenkorn* maintains the book's status as the definitive study of one of America's most influential 20th-century artists. --*John Stevenson*

From Library Journal
This is a first monograph on a major modern American painter most often associated with the rise of Abstract Expressionism in the 1940s and 1950s. Nordland knows his subject; the text is celebratory, and perhaps not as critical as desirable, but the insights are succinct. Portraying Diebenkorn's achievements chronologically, it includes discussion of his alternative work in the figurative mode. The text focuses largely on visual description of the painter's themes, but the excellent plates and exhibition history attest to the artist's "master" status. Well designed for academic library use, whether for studio or art historical research, the book is also a viable, if expensive, option for general collections since Diebenkorn's work is found in many museums. Paula A. Baxter, NYPL
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Review
"[a] luminous book..."

David Coggins, www.huffingtonpost.com, 1/12/12

"Seminal artwork from one of California's best-known artists is gathered here in this beautifully reproduced exhibition catalog."

Los Angeles Times, 12/4/11

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