



Richard Diebenkorn and Kathan Brown at Crown Point Press, San Francisco, 1982

Richard Diebenkorn (1922-1993) is most well-known for his large-scale, abstract paintings of carefully arranged geometries in mostly vertical compositions, balancing line, color, and space in the service of his particularly Californian light. Through the application of different printmaking methods, Diebenkorn's prints allowed him to continue to build upon these themes, on a smaller scale. This is clear in *Ochre*, 1983, a color woodcut. Printed by Tadashi Toda under the supervision of Kathan Brown at Crown Point Press, San Francisco—with whom Diebenkorn collaborated since he began to explore printmaking in 1961. *Ochre* emphasizes a satisfying composition reflective of Diebenkorn's purposeful employment of varied linemaking, balanced forms, and concentrated application of color emblematic of his mature career.

Born in 1922 in Portland, Oregon, Diebenkorn grew up San Francisco and spent most of his life in California. He worked for much of his career as a teaching artist in various universities such as University of California, Los Angeles and the University of Southern California. Diebenkorn had a wide range of artistic influences from Paul Cézanne and Henri Matisse to Hans Hofmann, to Abstract Expressionism, then well in-vogue on the East coast. However, rather than copying any past or concurring style, Diebenkorn synthesized what interested him into a practice uniquely his own. This culminated in his most well-known series, *Ocean Park*, beginning in 1967: it features architecturally-balanced abstract compositions dependent on his environment—a celebration of the constant light flooding into his Santa Monica studio.

A formidable painter and independent spirit, Richard Diebenkorn remained a resolutely West Coast artist despite the dominance of the New York art scene. He was among the few individuals who navigated between abstract and figurative modes of painting with critical success over the course of his career. Beginning in the late 1940s, Diebenkorn periodically turned to printmaking as a means of reevaluating his creative process and reworking his ideas, eventually completing approximately two hundred prints. Preferring to work in intaglio mediums, he established an important collaborative relationship in the 1960s with printer Kathan Brown at Crown Point Press.

In the mid-1950s Diebenkorn began working in a loose figurative style that he developed after abandoning the abstraction for which he had first received attention. In 1966 he embarked on a monumental abstract series that would occupy him for the next twenty years, the approximately one hundred fifty paintings entitled *Ocean Park*. Named for the Santa Monica neighborhood where he had a studio, the large-scale *Ocean Park* paintings deal with concerns of space and surface in a luminous palette inspired by the California landscape around him.



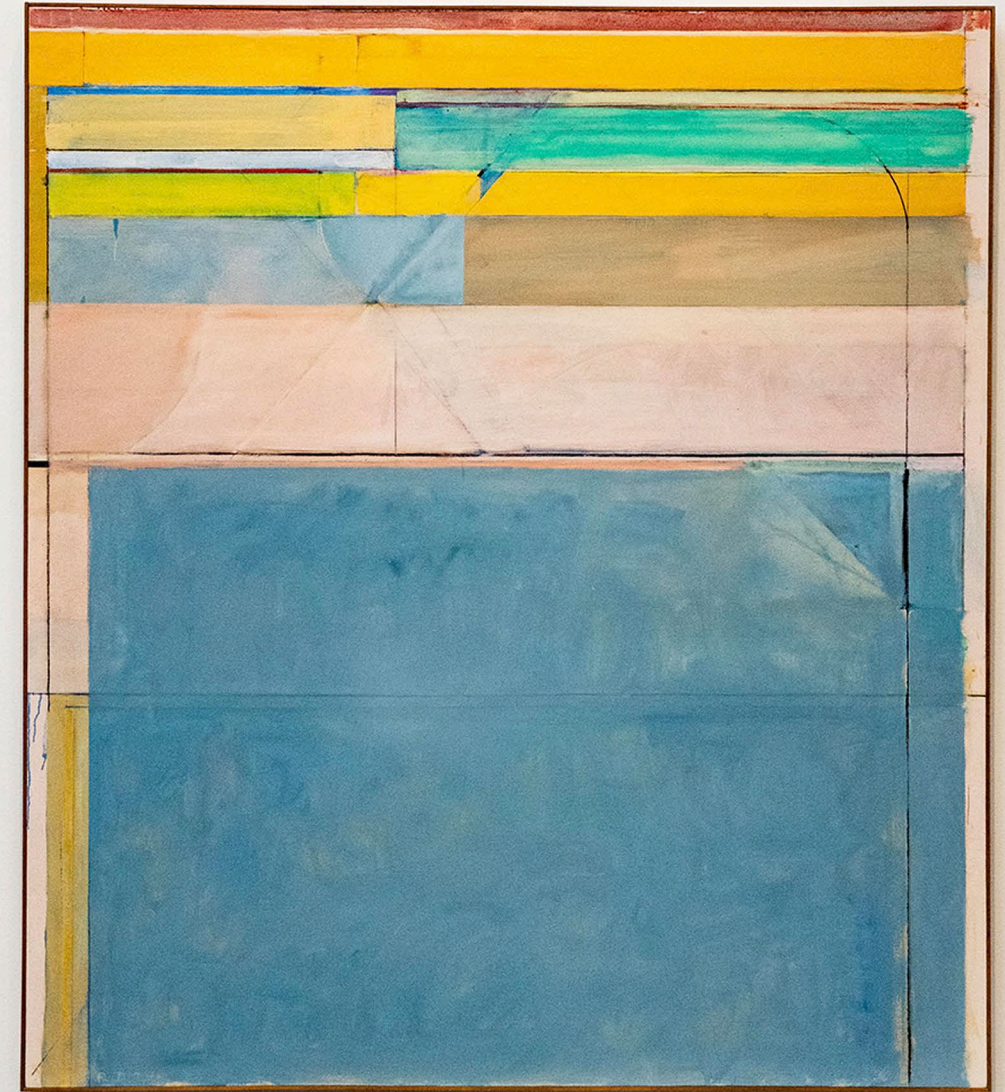
Despite his inherent abilities as a colorist, Diebenkorn had long resisted using color in his prints, in part because he feared that technical difficulties would prevent him from achieving the results he desired. However, with Brown's encouragement, he began the series Eight Color Etchings in 1980. This group, which includes Ochre, successfully translates the formal concerns, aesthetic sensibility, and luminescent, transparent, layered color of the Ocean Park paintings. Pleased with the results, Diebenkorn continued making color prints in a variety of techniques until his death in 1993.

Kathan Brown remarked:

"Balanced and harmonious yet gritty and in flux, Diebenkorn's work is truly his own. He was never obsessed with originality and didn't press forward with the huge confidence of some of the New York painters. His modest independence-both in his person and in his art-kept his work from being easily labeled and promoted in New York and Europe. Acclaim came slowly in those places, though he is world-renowned now. For as long as I can remember Diebenkorn's work has been respected by virtually all the artists I admire. And it has the near-adulation of many people who find in it something which matters personally to them. Perhaps when we can distance ourselves from the violence and turmoil which plague our lives, we will find Diebenkorn's subtlety of tension, his doubt and restrained beauty in his work to be characteristic of our age."



Unique hand painted study for Ochre as reproduced in:
Richard Diebenkorn The Ocean Park Series, Sarah C. Bancroft, Prestel, 2011, plate 100 pg. 181



Ocean Park 116, 1979 de Young Museum, San Francisco
© Richard Diebenkorn Foundation



RICHARD DIEBENKORN

Ochre, 1983

Color woodcut on Mitsumata paper

sheet: 27 3/8 x 38 1/4 inches

image: 24 7/8 x 35 5/8 inches

frame: 28 1/2 x 39 1/4 inches

Edition of 200 with 20 AP's

signed with initials dated and numbered 'RD 83' in pencil lower margin

Published by Crown Point Press, Oakland (with their blindstamp)

Printed by Tadashi Toda

Literature

Richard Diebenkorn Prints 1961-1992, Kathan Brown, 2012, Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, illustrated in full color, pg 39.

Richard Diebenkorn The Ocean Park Series, Sarah C. Bancroft, Prestel, 2011,
study for Ochre: Untitled #13, 1983 gouache, acrylic and crayon on paper 25 x 36 inches, illustrated in full color, plate 100 pg. 181

Selected Museum Collections

Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago

San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose

High Museum of Art, Atlanta