

# The drawings of Richard Diebenkorn

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THE DRAWINGS OF  
RICHARD DIEBENKORN



JOHN ELDERFIELD

## The Drawings of Richard Diebenkorn

JOHN ELDERFIELD

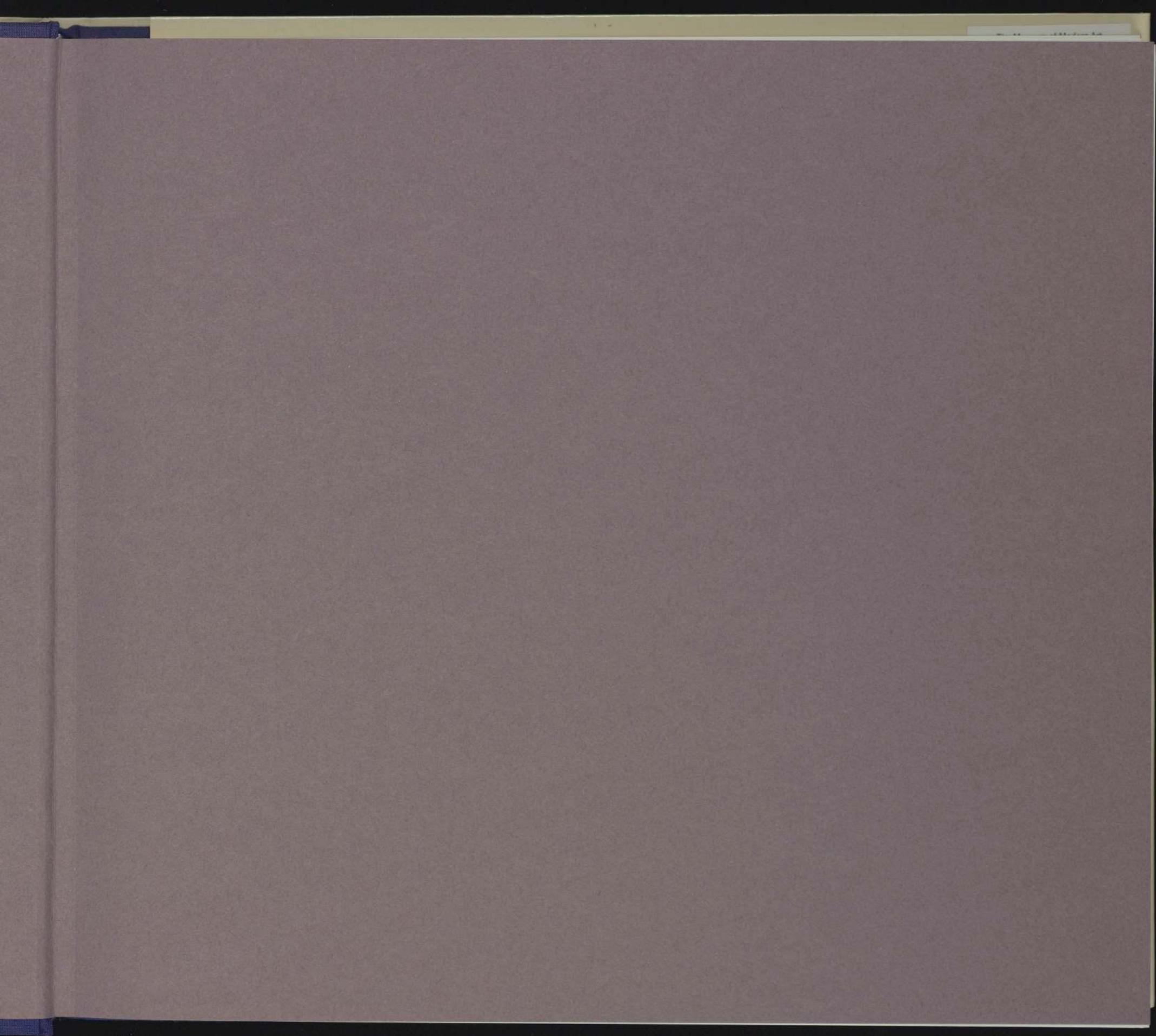
This volume is the most complete study yet published of the drawings of Richard Diebenkorn. It contains not only drawings in the traditional mediums of pencil, ink, charcoal, and so on, but also more complex works in color, including gouaches, watercolors, and works in mixed mediums.

The 184 drawings reproduced here (85 of them in color) span the artist's career, presenting in depth the three major periods of his work. Diebenkorn first attracted notice for the highly personal form of Abstract Expressionism, often evocative of landscape, that he developed in the early fifties, while working in the San Francisco Bay area and in New Mexico. By 1956, his search for a new direction in his art had led him to representation, and over the next decade he gained increasing recognition as a figurative painter. In 1966 he moved to Santa Monica and a year later began the acclaimed Ocean Park series, the abstract paintings that have firmly established him among the finest of contemporary artists.

Despite Diebenkorn's renown as a painter, his drawings are not well known. This is especially surprising since many of them are so highly developed as to approach the threshold of painting. In his essay for this book, John Elderfield pursues the stylistic evolution of the works on paper and their intimate relationship with the paintings. Proposing that the act of drawing is itself a key to Diebenkorn's central preoccupations as an artist, in whatever medium he happens to be working, the text offers an illuminating view of his work as a whole.

John Elderfield is Director of the Department of Drawings at The Museum of Modern Art, New York. His previous books include *The "Wild Beasts": Fauvism and Its Affinities*; *The Drawings of Henri Matisse*; *Kurt Schwitters*; *Morris Louis*; and *The Modern Drawing*.

204 pages, 212 illustrations (85 in color)



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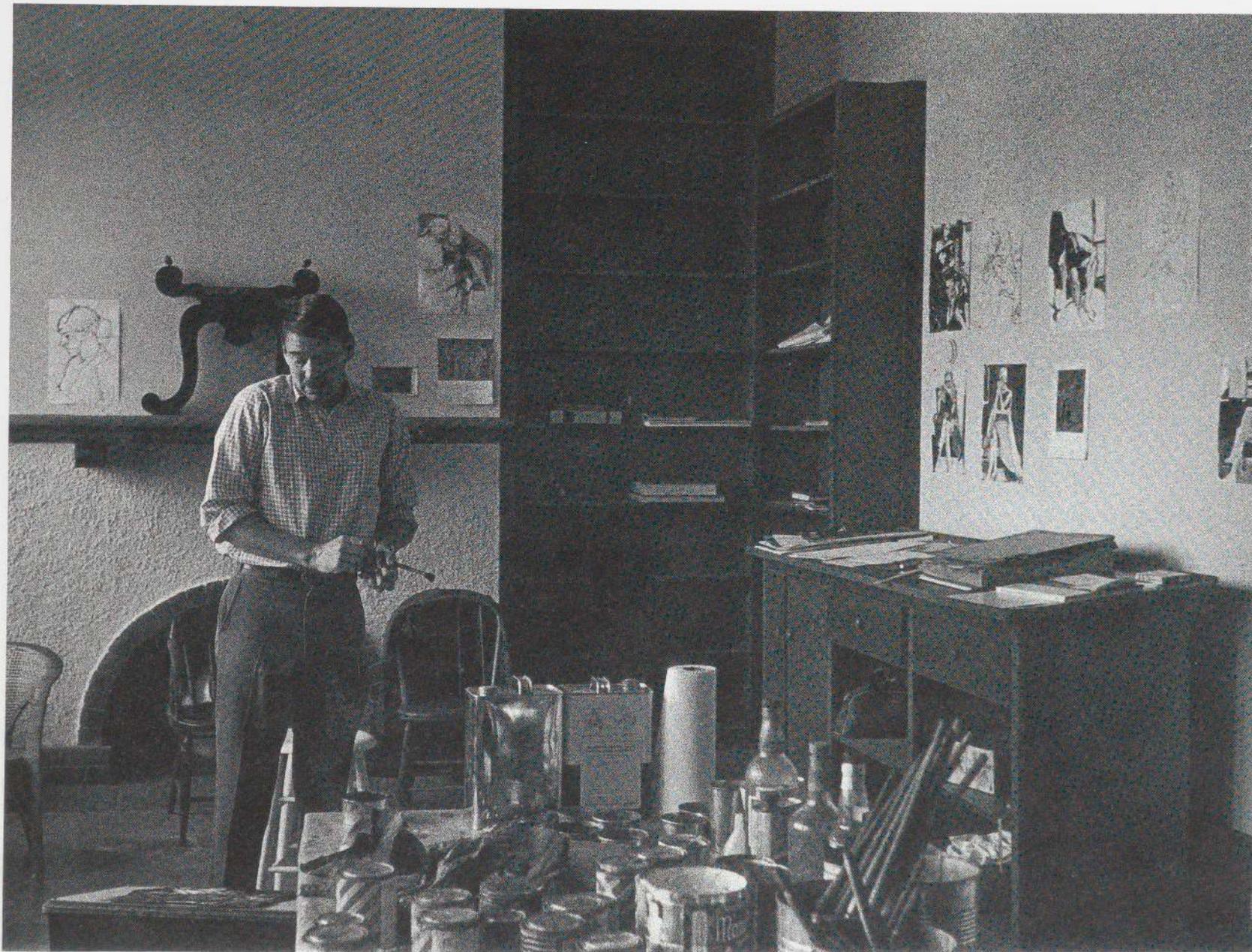
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JOHN ELDERFIELD

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Frontispiece: Richard Diebenkorn in his Stanford studio, 1963–64

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## PREFACE

This book offers the first comprehensive overview of the drawings of Richard Diebenkorn and accompanies an exhibition of these works organized by The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The artist describes as drawings all of his unique works on paper, with the exception of monotypes. We have followed his usage. This book and exhibition therefore contain, in addition to drawings in the traditional mediums of pencil, ink, charcoal, and so on, more complex and colored works that are as fully developed as any of the artist's paintings—though different in intent, as the text of this book seeks to explain.

Diebenkorn was born in 1922 and came to artistic maturity in the late 1940s. The drawings shown here date from 1948 to the present, comprising a retrospective of forty years of his art, presented in three groups: works of the early abstract period (c. 1948–55), the representational period (c. 1956–67), and the later abstract, so-called Ocean Park period (c. 1967–88). While Diebenkorn's paintings are extremely well known, his drawings are not. He has had only two small museum-organized survey exhibitions of drawings: at the University of California, Santa Cruz, in 1974, and as part of the larger retrospective exhibition organized by the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, in 1976. Although his drawings have been represented in general drawing surveys and in publications, it has been through a very restricted number of works. This is especially true of the pre-Ocean Park drawings. As a result, the full range of his drawings is simply unknown. Testimony of this is the fact that about a third of the 184 drawings shown here have never been seen publicly before, about half have not previously been published, and more than three-quarters have never previously been exhibited by a museum.

Part of our aim has been simply to make accessible, as never before, Diebenkorn's drawings. But we have not tried to be purely reportorial. Although the Ocean Park period occupies, chronologically, one-half of the forty years represented here, the works of this

period are relatively better known than those of the two earlier periods and demand so much attention, as fully developed, independent works of art, as to call for limitation of the number to be seen together in one place. Therefore, each of the three periods has been given approximately the same weight, numerically. The Ocean Park period retains its emphasis because representation of the two earlier periods, and especially of the first, includes less fully developed works. However, the selection as a whole is biased in favor of the more complex of Diebenkorn's drawings, since these tend to be of higher quality. Where quality and unfamiliarity coincided, as for example in the charcoal drawings of 1966–67, we chose a larger number of works than proportional representation would have suggested. In short, the selection of this exhibition does not only survey Diebenkorn's drawings but also offers a very decided view of them. The exhibition is recorded in the plates of this book.

The text of this book has more to say in justification of the view of Diebenkorn's drawings that informed their selection. But, mainly, it comprises a series of reflections on these works, their meaning and their interrelationship, with its own particular view.

The exhibition is supported by grants from The Bohen Foundation and the New York State Council on the Arts, for which The Museum of Modern Art is deeply grateful. The three museums where the exhibition is seen after its New York showing have also supported its organization, for which we thank Earl A. Powell III, Director of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, John R. Lane, Director of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and Laughlin Phillips, Director of The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C. And we are deeply indebted to the many lenders to the exhibition, whose names are listed on page 203. Without their cooperation, the exhibition would not have been possible.

The idea that there should be an exhibition of Diebenkorn's drawings was originally proposed to the artist by both the author of

this book and by Maurice Tuchman, Senior Curator of Twentieth-Century Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. It seemed to make sense to combine efforts, and the basic conception and initial selection of the exhibition were established, therefore, by the two of us working in close collaboration with the artist. Richard Newlin, who had recently researched a publication on the Ocean Park drawings and who would become copublisher of this book with the Museum, was soon drawn into this process. So was Beatrice Kernan, Assistant Curator in the Department of Drawings at The Museum of Modern Art, who also took on administrative responsibility for the exhibition when the decision was made that it should be organized from New York under my direction. I am deeply grateful to my collaborators. I thank Mr. Tuchman for his enthusiastic involvement in the curatorial evolution of the exhibition and its selection. I thank Mr. Newlin for his commitment to this whole project; also his staff, especially Marilyn Muller and Yoko Saito, who aided the production of such a splendid book. And I thank Ms. Kernan, as I have had good cause to do before, for her exemplary professionalism. She has been ingenious and tireless in locating elusive drawings. Her advice and independent judgment have been invaluable in the selection of the exhibition and in the preparation of the book.

Also in the Department of Drawings at The Museum of Modern Art, Kevin Robbins and Kathleen Curry were deeply involved in this whole project. I thank them for their support and their enthusiasm. Others in the Museum who assisted its development are Harriet Bee, Bryn Jayes, Antoinette King, Nancy Kranz, Jerome Neuner, Richard Palmer, Edward Powers, James Snyder, Sarah Tappen, and Richard Tooke. I appreciate their help. I also wish to thank Michael Hentges, Director of the Museum's Department of Graphics, for his vital contribution to the project. And I particularly want to thank James Leggio, who edited this book and thereby improved it.

For their help in locating loans or in other research, we are most grateful to Lawrence Rubin, Ann Freedman, and Carol Corey of M. Knoedler & Co.; to Elinor Poindexter and Harold Fondren; and to John Berggruen, Paul Kantor, and Gilbert Lloyd. We additionally thank David Anderson, Elizabeth C. Baker, Charles Campbell, James Corcoran, Betty Cunningham, B. C. Holland, Caroline Jones, Jennifer Long, Duncan MacGuigan, Barbara Mathes, Robert McDaniel, Sara Shott, Joyce Strauss, and Virginia Zabriskie.

Most important of all: neither the exhibition nor the book would have been possible without the close and continuous support of Richard Diebenkorn himself. He has given generously of his time, advice, and opinions; has allowed access to the contents of his studio; has lent to the exhibition, collaborated in its selection, and advised on locating works. And Phyllis Diebenkorn, too, has most graciously shared ideas and information, making an important contribution to this project. We have been most fortunate in having their cooperation.

It remains only to add a few explanatory notes. The sources of quotations and details of the publications cited in the text may be found in the Bibliographical Note, on page 198. Since the text is not organized chronologically, as the plates are, readers less familiar with the facts of Diebenkorn's development may wish first to consult the Chronology, which begins on page 199. All works reproduced in the plates are presented in the New York showing of the exhibition. The works are all on white or near-white paper, unless otherwise noted in the captions. Dimensions are given first in inches, then in centimeters, height preceding width, and refer to the full sheet. The titles and dates of the works have been reviewed by the artist and in some cases amend previously published designations. All untitled works bear the name of their place of execution, in parentheses.

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*Sometimes I believe most in the imagination for a long time, and then, without reasoning about it, turn to reality and believe in that and that alone. But both of these things project themselves endlessly and I want them to do just that.*

WALLACE STEVENS

# THE DRAWINGS OF RICHARD DIEBENKORN

## 1. *Thinking in Drawing*

Drawing has the reputation of being the most spontaneous of the visual arts; Diebenkorn, of being the most deliberative of our major contemporary artists. Neither reputation is undeserved. But it is nevertheless true that drawing is central to Diebenkorn's achievement.

When we talk of drawing as spontaneous, we refer not only to the sense of immediacy produced by the finest drawings, but also to how a drawing's very identity presents itself to us, to an extent beyond that of any other work of visual art, as the direct record of the movement of the artist's hand. A drawing is intrinsically the record of movement in time. Hence, it can indeed be more purely impulsive than any other work of visual art—unless another such work partakes of drawing as its very structure. More often, of course, a drawing comprises a network of recorded movements, which tend usually to slow in their accumulation. And our appreciation of a drawing like this requires that we retrace these movements, their duration and their accumulation, from the evidence they have left behind. Just like a Diebenkorn.

In 1974, I had occasion to ask Diebenkorn to contribute a short statement about his work. His response was this: "When a picture is right and complete there is a cumulative excitement in the sequential encounters with the parts until the work is completely (or as completely as possible) experienced. The pitch of 'right' response mounts, *if the chain isn't broken*, to an extreme and often physical sympathy with the presentation." Rereading this, I am struck by its pertinence to the experience of drawings; also, by the fact that Diebenkorn writes as an observer of his art, almost as if he were its critic, not its creator. He tells of his work as a temporal experience and he looks back on it to do so. And he tells of (at least, of the possibility of) complete experience and "right" response to his work, thereby revealing his concern that the observer—in this case himself and inevitably always himself—experience what he intended. This is perhaps the most important of the reasons why drawing is so crucial to Diebenkorn's art. It allows him access to what he intended.

Drawing can be retraced. A work that is built from drawing is built from the history of its own making; it is its own autobiography. In Diebenkorn's case, his drawings proclaim their history. He tells us frankly what it took to bring each drawing to its conclusion. This is not to say that Diebenkorn is a diaristic artist; rather, that he does not pretend to be an infallible one. It is not his aim to record the process of creation, but neither will he conceal the trial and error of this process. Since nothing can be unsaid, even when it does not say what he means, it can only be rephrased. But he does insist on being precise. So, everything must be rephrased until he does say what he means, which he knows fully only by reflecting on his own statements.

Thinking in drawing is therefore of major importance to Diebenkorn. But let us be clear about one thing from the start. Diebenkorn is a painter. He thinks first and foremost in paint, in the matter of chroma and pigment. Drawing as such is subsidiary to his main activity as a painter—as it was for the painters of the past whose drawings we especially prize. However, as with many of those painters, his thinking in paint includes thinking in drawing to an important extent. By this I mean not only that he paints in line as well as area or that, when he puts down the brush and picks up charcoal to draw on the canvas, such drawing is included in the activity of painting. (Not painting or drawing but looking and pondering is also included.) More crucially, the activity of drawing is what sustains the activity of painting by forming a contrast and complement to the spreading of areas of paint. The two follow each other and accompany each other in the progress of a painting, most notably in the Ocean Park series (fig. 1). Thus, the artist changes pace as he is painting, addressing the spread of the surface then dividing it, enlarging and opening space then contracting it, destroying an image then restoring it. And in this process, drawing particularly is what will postulate the order the artist seeks. The drawn line offers a hypothesis about the nature of that order, something to be tested in painting, which will discover whether it can be allowed to stand. At times, therefore, drawing posits a grand design, a latticework of options to be considered one by one. At others, it functions rather like those gouged holes modelers will sometimes put in their sculptures to provide a way back into a work that has come to an impasse: as an irritant and means of reentry. And at yet others, it will be a finally resolving component, the necessary girder that makes the structure stable and complete. (I have never watched Diebenkorn working: it is the history contained in his pictures themselves that suggests this account of what their making requires.)

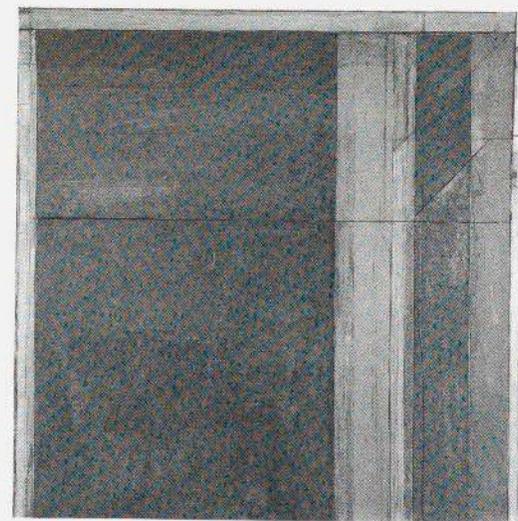


FIG. 1. Richard Diebenkorn. *Ocean Park No. 111*. 1978. Oil on canvas, 93 × 93" (236.2 × 236.2 cm). Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

I cannot imagine that the use of line and area actually alternate in a regular sequence in Diebenkorn's painting practice. Nor can I imagine that it is always clear what constitutes line as opposed to area. Still, his paintings are now constructed of a linear framework. They present themselves as affirmatively relational works whose internal relationships are established by drawing: by the drawing of the edges of areas and by the drawing of lines that cut through areas, dividing them, or across areas, directing their painterly flow. For all this, however, drawing as such—as something crisply, insistently graphic; as something sharp in its cutting—seems often a somewhat fugitive element in the paintings, hardly quite there for itself alone. Lines embed themselves in color areas, and the eye slips over them, led almost unknowingly in the directions they propose. They will cluster away from immediate address to the viewer, along the top of the picture or down the sides. They can seem extremely reticent, hardly assertive at all; and when they are boldly expressed it is often in a form confusable with area: broadened and opaqued so that they do not bound or divide but have an individual tactile presence of their own. But drawing runs through Diebenkorn's compositions, and if it does not insist on its importance it is because its importance is that of mortar between bricks, hardly noticeable at times but what holds the structure together and keeps it firm.

But why does drawing have this role, especially in the Ocean Park series? Why does the progress of his paintings so depend on it? I said that drawing is important to Diebenkorn because it allows him access to what he intended. It does more than this, something more specific than this. In the process of painting, drawing mainly sustains what is intended, namely the articulation of the subject of his painting. The aim of that whole process, clearly, is the realization of his subject. And everything in that process is done in the hope that it will bring on or along that realization. But drawing particularly, because it identifies things, will keep on marking out what that subject might be, will keep on drawing it out when it seems to be submerging, and will keep on claiming for itself the deciding role in what that subject might be. At times, the artist refuses it that role, but his refusal will not diminish its importance; will not hide it, certainly.

What I have been describing in Diebenkorn's paintings is largely true of the works on paper he has made that offer themselves almost as paintings. But it is not entirely true. To begin with, such works do not truly approximate paintings but, rather, channel proximate ambitions deemed inappropriate for painting (including the

creation of works of small size). And they uncover ambitions for painting too. Insofar as drawing is concerned, they usually display it more than do the paintings. If I am right that drawing is what sustains Diebenkorn's subjects in the process of painting, this is also to say, therefore, that these works on paper display Diebenkorn's subjects more explicitly than do his paintings: not more literally or more descriptively but more explicitly, more immediately. The works on paper are generally less aloof than the paintings, speaking to us with greater intimacy about the artist's emotive concerns. They confide in us more.

We see in these works, more than in the paintings, how Diebenkorn seems to think aloud in drawing until he discovers his subject, which is his aim. In the case of his representational work, a nominal subject—the observed motif—obviously exists prior to his drawing. However, the process of drawing which represents that nominal subject is also a process of pictorial discovery, whose visible record becomes, in effect, a subject in its own right. This can be seen most noticeably in those representational drawings made from softer mediums, like charcoal, which clearly reveal the record of their making. Here, visible corrections and alterations—which are no more than discarded means insofar as representation of the nominal subject is concerned—are pictorially as important as any final, definitive mark. Some drawing mediums, notably ink drawings, will not allow of alteration in quite the same way. In these, however, the artist will often accumulate definitions—repeating lines or superimposing washes—until he finds the one that he thinks is correct. In either case, alterations and definitions are equally significant in that “chain” of affective parts of which Diebenkorn spoke, and which creates what may be called the “internal” subject of his work.

In the case of his representational drawings, the process of pictorial discovery, whose record constitutes this internal subject, aims at realization of the nominal subject, the observed motif. In effect, the internal subject manifests the artist's understanding of, or emotional reaction to, the nominal subject. In the case of his abstract drawings, where there is no nominal subject, there can be of course no aim other than realization of the internal subject. But this is not to say that his abstract drawings are therefore cut off from all reference to the observed world, only that their contact with it is not tied to specific reference. Here, the process of pictorial discovery itself becomes, for Diebenkorn, a way of understanding and reacting to the observed world. At times, parts of these abstract drawings do contain specific references: many of the early abstract drawings contain references to landscape; some of the Ocean Park drawings contain references to earlier works of art. But they mainly refer not specifi-

cally at all; rather, by the record of their creation that they display. When Diebenkorn was a student, his teacher, David Park, had him make a sequence of drawings modeled after Wallace Stevens's poem "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird." As with the thirteen variations in the Stevens poem, each drawing had to restate, and therefore reinterpret, the nominal subject through the imaginative means of creation. In Diebenkorn's simpler abstract drawings (which mostly date from the earlier abstract period), he seems to offer series of such single, separate interpretations of the world. But in the more complex drawings, which compare to paintings, it is as if thirteen ways, and more, of looking at the world are accumulated in a single work. As we retrace the layers of their accumulation, we retrace the multiplicity of their interpretation; as "the pitch of 'right' response mounts," we re-create the totality of their discovery, and hence the wholeness of their world.

With few exceptions, those works on paper that compare to paintings date from Diebenkorn's periods as an abstract artist; that is to say, from about 1948 to 1955 and from 1967 to the present. In these periods, the more fully realized a work on paper becomes, the more closely it bears comparison with a painting. In the first abstract period, relatively few works bear such a comparison; many more are unequivocally drawings. In the second abstract period, the reverse is true. But virtually all of Diebenkorn's works on paper of these periods can be said to form a single gradient of realization that stretches from drawing to painting—at least, from drawing almost to painting. For drawing is carried up to the limits of painting and stops there, where it can enquire about those limits as well as about its own. This is most noticeable in the second abstract period, for there the gradient is also chronological. With very few exceptions, the earliest works on paper in the Ocean Park series present themselves clearly as drawings. They gradually become more complex drawings. Color appears and with it, necessarily, area; and by the mid-1970s they have become something other than drawings, but not paintings either.

In the first abstract period, the much fewer fully realized works on paper seem to cluster at the beginning and toward the end of the period: when Diebenkorn was breaking through to his mature style, and when he was questioning where it had led him. This argues a broadly experimental, explorative purpose for these works and for their separation, to some degree, from the usually smaller works on paper that are unquestionably drawings and that proliferate throughout this period, but mainly in its established middle years, as agents of more local, more occasional experimentation. Be this as it may, many of the small drawings are themselves more careful and considered

than they appear at first sight. Taken together, the works on paper of this period too reveal a singleness of conception that varies according to technical complexity. They too occupy different positions on a single gradient that stretches from the abbreviated notation right up to the very threshold of painting itself.

This is not the case with Diebenkorn's works on paper of his representational period, about 1956–67. This period produced numerous works on paper that are extremely full and complex in their realization—and far, far more quick studies from the model. But with very few exceptions, even the most technically complex of these works are not confusable with the contemporaneous paintings.

Drawing, I said earlier, is what marks out the subject in Diebenkorn's art. His representational drawings not only begin from confrontation with a specific, nominal subject, the observed motif (a number of the abstract drawings do so too). Additionally, they insist on preserving the reality of that motif, and whatever the artist's imagination does to the motif, it is with the aim of holding on to its reality. This being so, the direction of the artistic process, though local to a particular work, exceeds that work, creating and storing knowledge of the observed reality of its specific, nominal subject, which may find other, alternative forms of expression outside that particular work. The abstract drawings, by contrast, mainly store knowledge of how an invented, unspecific reality is gradually discovered in the course of their making: it is that explorative process which is preserved to produce other, alternative forms of expression in other works. This is why the abstract drawings are differentiated mainly by the degree of their complexity, which usually means by the nature of their medium, and in each of the periods of their production form a single gradient of realization. The representational drawings too can be differentiated by the nature of the medium that is used, which often means that the differences between them, too, lie in the degree of their complexity. But the crucial differences among them derive from their comprising different, alternative versions of reality (of the same or similar depicted subjects) that different mediums allow to be produced. Of course, differences of medium mean a lot in the abstract work. However, in the representational work they mean more. The representational works do not merely vary in complexity according to their medium: they vary in conception as well. And if the version of reality available to ink drawing is different from that available to charcoal, for example, then the version of reality available to drawing as a whole is necessarily different from that available to painting. In the representational period, there is therefore no single gradient of realization that stretches from drawing almost to painting as there is in the abstract periods.

However, in both the representational and the abstract periods, the most accomplished of Diebenkorn's drawings, by and large, are those of some complexity. He is a deliberative artist whose work is at its best when it accumulates what it has to say. But if our connoisseurship rejects many of his quickly conceived drawings—and his does too—our understanding of artistic practice knows that the works we do prize depend for their existence on these others also having been made. By now, he no longer makes such drawings. But in the first abstract and particularly in the representational period, they proliferate in their hundreds. In the first abstract period, these quickly conceived drawings are essentially spontaneous inventions; in the representational period, spontaneous records of observation of the model. In either case, success or failure is immediate and irreversible. Many do fail. For Diebenkorn, it seems, the quicker the line, the less meaning it attracts to itself along its course. In one important respect, however, whether they succeed or they fail is entirely beside the point. Progress in art is the result of risking incompetence, of taking such chances that failure is often inevitable. The important thing about these drawings is what the artist learns in making them. By making hundreds of these drawings, Diebenkorn learns what constitutes his identity as a draftsman, what is habitual, what particular marks and movements seem most personally felt. In the first abstract period, he additionally learns about composing a surface, about pattern and movement across the surface, and about line—how it will be seen to refer in certain circumstances and configurations and not in others. In the representational period, he also thus accumulates knowledge of his models, learns which poses he finds most revealing, learns which models can best stimulate that revelation. These spontaneous drawings therefore exist in their hundreds for their occasional epiphanies. But they also exist because that is what an artist does, enjoys doing, and does for no other purpose than to keep active as an artist; for the craft and the ritual of art.

He no longer makes such drawings. Each drawing he now makes effectively comprises an accumulation of such drawings. Each drawing now contains the history of his learning while it was being made. I began by observing that our appreciation of a complex drawing requires that we retrace the history of its creation. Diebenkorn, now, has developed a form of drawing which allows us an extremely intimate access to its history. But all of his more complex drawings do so to varying degrees. Indeed, their level of achievement is partly attributable to their frankness, which is also to say, to their revelation. By this I do not mean that they whisper confidences to us. They are neither collusive nor confessional works. But they are revealing works, even more

revealing than Diebenkorn's paintings: they tell us more of his explorations, of his learning to make them. Because of this, they can be more unguarded works than his paintings, admitting into them more idiosyncratic incidents than seem appropriate to his paintings. Thus, while some do closely approach the condition of being paintings, even these function not as paintings but somewhat like flanking panels to paintings, where, traditionally, greater artistic license is allowed—somewhat like those in one of Diebenkorn's earliest artistic inspirations, the Bayeux Tapestry, where (he remembers) "the major events are central and in flanking panels above and below there are dead men and devils and coats of arms—therefore, these dialogues paralleling one another, horizontally."

## 2. Continuity

Diebenkorn came to maturity as an abstract artist (fig. 2). Eventually, he became a representational artist (fig. 3). And later, he became an abstract artist again (see fig. 1). The relationship of abstraction and representation—and, more basically, of imagination and reality—is crucial to his work as a whole. It is also crucial to his work in each of the three periods of his career.

His early abstract work comes close at times to pure automatism, particularly in some of the spontaneous ink drawings. They can seem simply the inventions of their method of making. But even these are vehicles of signification: they condense memories of the external world. Conversely, in his figurative work, the artist's absorption in representation does not negate his absorption in material. This is not to say that he simply uses representational subject matter as a way of making what is finally abstract art. Of course, his version of representation would hardly have been possible without his experience of abstraction and candidly acknowledges that fact. But nothing in his representational work is there for solely pictorial reasons, for pictorial reasons apart from representational reasons. Only now, the pictorial and the representational—absorption in the material and in the depicted subject—are as one. Finally, in returning to abstraction, Diebenkorn does not abandon reference to the external world. By this, I do not mean that the Ocean Park series comprises abstract views of the environs of his Santa Monica studio. If we thus reduce these works to descriptions we lose sight of their mystery and therefore of their potency. I mean, rather, that in working his material Diebenkorn works also with his environs in his mind.

Diebenkorn's art, both as a whole and in its parts, suggests discussion in terms of



FIG. 2. Richard Diebenkorn. *Painting II*. 1949. Oil on canvas, 47 × 35½" (119.4 × 90.2 cm). The Oakland Museum. Gift of the Estate of Howard E. Johnson

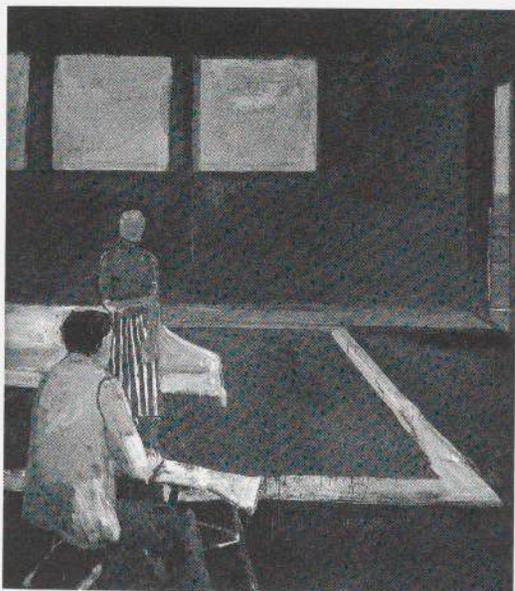


FIG. 3. Richard Diebenkorn. *Man and Woman in a Large Room*. 1957. Oil on canvas,  $71\frac{1}{8} \times 62\frac{1}{2}$ " (180.7 × 158.8 cm). Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

the relationship between abstraction (and the formalizing imagination of the artist) on the one hand, and representation (and the external reality that comprises his subject) on the other. It seems not only to exhibit such a relationship, as all pictorial art to some degree must do. It seems also to depend on such a relationship. That is, it depends on being perceived both as a construction of forms (and therefore as the reimagining of earlier forms in the history of art) and as a construction of images (and therefore as the reimagining of objects and events external to art as well as within art's history). In each of Diebenkorn's three periods, the relationship between abstraction and representation is different in that it reveals different characteristics, different emphases. Still, the manifestation of such a relationship is quintessential to Diebenkorn's style. This is also to say that his style, which maintains the relationship I am describing, is constant but has differing characteristics and emphases associated with it in different periods. What I wish to discuss now is that constant, immutably fixed style.

In stressing the unity of Diebenkorn's achievement, I am indebted to Richard Wollheim's analysis of style, and in particular to his insistence that an artist's style (by which he means far more than a language of form) should no more be thought of as susceptible to fragmentation than his personality. Included in Wollheim's analysis are two warnings that are especially pertinent to a consideration of this artist. Style, he says, should not be confused with signature, with an artist's superficial mannerisms; and not every artist, he says, has a style of his own. These are pertinent to Diebenkorn because he has taken so much from earlier modern art and confesses it openly in his work. When we try to say what is particular to his style, therefore, we need to consider how it differs from those of his main sources. But in doing so we must not simply assume that his differences from his predecessors will be what characterize his style as his. More likely, they will characterize his signature as his. This is to agree with the traditional modernist claim that what makes any artist's achievement worthy of our attention is not something distinct from, or even contrasted with, the achievement present in his sources; and that an artist's achievement is properly judged not by his additions to what he takes from his sources but by his ability to pass on what he takes. Therefore, when we try to say what is particular to Diebenkorn's style, we will, in part, be trying to say how that ability is manifested. Of course, to pass on is not merely to repeat: repetition dilutes. It is to renew and refresh. So what we will be looking for here is how Diebenkorn reimagines the past in what he does; what his particular relationship with the past comprises. Moreover, the fact that his art suggests discussion in terms of such a relationship, that it appears to depend upon such a

relationship with the past (not merely to exhibit it, as all art must do), leads to the conclusion that it too, like the relationship of abstraction and representation, and of imagination and reality, is quintessential to Diebenkorn's style.

I am stressing the concept of relationship as basic to Diebenkorn's style. This has particular relevance to his drawings and works on paper. It has general relevance to these works because they ask to be studied in terms of their relationship to Diebenkorn's paintings, on which they depend for their meaning and to which they contribute their own. But it has particular relevance to these works because, as we have seen, they reveal more of the artist's explorations than his paintings do. Therefore, they reveal more than his paintings do how the particular kinds of relationship that are central to his style are established as his own. And this we need to know because there is nothing at all unusual about an art that finds its meaning in the relationship between its formal and iconographical imperatives or in the relationship of both to their art-historical past. Tension between the illustrated and what does the illustrating, and between the individual style and its sources, is common to much post-medieval, not merely modern, art. If Diebenkorn's style is to be understood as individual, we need to know what is individual to the relationships on which it seems to depend.

One of the things that Diebenkorn's drawings and works on paper tell us more clearly than do his paintings is that the force and longevity of these relationships are maintained by virtue of their flexibility. We know from his paintings that the relationship of abstraction and representation has shifted dramatically in its emphasis on two occasions, producing the three distinctive periods of his art, and that the artist's engagement with the art of the past has shifted in emphasis concurrently. What the drawings and works on paper show is a continuing pattern of shift and adjustment in the relationship between abstraction and representation and in the artist's relationship to his art-historical past. More often than not, these are adjustments within the emphasis of a particular period, and as such are no different in kind from those that occur in the paintings, although frequently greater in degree. Hence, for example, the extreme abstraction of some of the charcoal drawings of the representational period (pp. 132, 143) is far greater than that of any representational painting but nevertheless remains within the context of representation. At times, however, the shifts are disruptive of the emphasis of a particular period, seemingly designed both to maintain the force of that emphasis by challenging it and to nurture separately on paper what painting cannot quite cope with at the moment. Hence, for example, the iconic clubs and spades drawings (pp. 178-81) within the relational Ocean Park period challenge the abstrac-

tion of that period by challenging its relational basis. But either way, these shifts and adjustments do not only diversify the emphasis of a particular period. They are, ultimately, progressive as well. They are ways of trying to do whatever possibly can be done with that emphasis in mind. Consequently, they are ways of trying to exhaust that emphasis and thus either change it or demonstrate its apparent inexhaustibility. Compared to his paintings, Diebenkorn's drawings and works on paper can seem more restless and impatient; not more rushed or impulsive, but imminent with more, with new and different versions of themselves.

Another thing they tell us, even more clearly than the paintings do, is that in the relationship of abstraction and representation, neither side can exist entirely without the other. The drawings make this particularly clear. Drawing is inherently a process of abstraction. In the representational work, we see directly how external reality is reshaped in the very means of its representation, not even as a matter of choice. And drawing is inherently a means of signification. In the abstract work, we see directly how external reality is invoked by line, even when line also functions as a purely perceptual stimulant, and again not as a matter of choice. We see in these drawings, then, as in virtually all drawings, how abstraction and representation cannot finally be separated but inherently coalesce. However, the force of these drawings, as of the paintings too, nevertheless depends on the tension produced by something referential that insists on its abstraction or by something abstract that insists on referring. This clearly *is* a matter of choice.

A useful analogy here is again Wallace Stevens's "variation" poems, where each principal metaphor is a different variation or restatement of the theme (the internal subject) of the work—a theme that in its nominal aspect is external to the work, borrowed from reality, but that in its more essential poetic aspect is internal to the work, subsisting in its imaginative structure of (verbal) materials. This is easier to understand in the context of Diebenkorn's representational works, which have a recognizable nominal subject. Here, the images in these works can easily be thought of as variations that the artist's imagination makes on the theme of reality, variations that are also on the internal pictorial theme of the work. But this holds for his abstract works as well. Either way, the pictorial theme cannot be described by specific reference to reality for it opposes specific reality. It is the product of imagination in confrontation with reality: in tension with reality (as manifested in the nominal subject) in the representational work; interrogative of it in the abstract work, where there is no nominal subject. Either way, the imaginative pictorial theme is separated from reality. At least, it is if it is

vigorous and strong. If it is weak, it will surrender to reality, in which case a stupid realism will result where imagination is stifled and the nominal subject too will seem feeble or dull. (As Stevens observed, "The purely realistic mind never experiences any passion for reality.") Or it will retreat from reality, from the truly imaginative world into a merely imaginary one. For while the pictorial theme is separated from reality, it must confront it lest its own variations become merely arbitrary abstractions bespeaking solipsism. The opposite of stupid realism is stupid abstraction; there, "Imagination soon exhausts itself/In artifice too tenuous to sustain."

Diebenkorn's course has kept him both from realism without abstraction and from abstraction without realism, but it has kept him further from the first of these. His art will step up to the very threshold of imaginary abstraction, will even at times seem to cross that threshold (only, however, to remind us that it still interrogates the world), but it does not approach the opposite extreme; it will never merely describe, will never merely accumulate description. Even at its most descriptive—as, for example, in the drawings made looking out of the studio window (pp. 144, 145) and in some of the still lifes (pp. 116, 117)—it will remind us of what has been left out. And with that reminder will come another one: of the intervention in the world on the image-maker's part. Diebenkorn insists that the intentions and practices of his abstract and representational work are quite different. (I will examine them presently.) Clearly, he is correct in doing so. What links these bodies of work, however, is that both edit the world for their meaning. Whether the artist believes most in reality or whether he believes most in the imagination, whether he is selecting from the richness of phenomenal nature or from the material he has at hand, he is forever altering and adjusting the framework of reality for his own purposes. He is forever trying to do something with the shape of the world.

He is essentially a pragmatist. Certain works of the Ocean Park series have evoked comparison to Mondrian. But Diebenkorn is deeply suspicious of the transcendental. His geometry does not express some hidden, noumenal reality behind the external reality of things as they are. If Diebenkorn's work is, indeed, the product of his imagination engaged in active confrontation with reality, then he simply cannot entertain belief in any hidden reality. Such a "reality" would not be external to the artist but, rather, the projection of his imagination. This would make his work merely narcissistic: the product of his imagination confronting its own projection. Diebenkorn's work is autobiographical in the sense that every work tells of its own history and that many works tell of the artist's whole history up to the moment of their

completion. But it is never just private, never bound up with its history; it does not create a secret world. Rather, the world that it shapes is chosen from the public domain. Even at its most abstract, it confronts the same external reality that we know too, a phenomenal, ever-changing reality, and reimagines it. And because reality is like this, the artist's work too must constantly change: not wildly or gratuitously (the point is not to rove about in the world but to imagine its multiple identities); rather, repetitively. "Notice that the classics went on redoing the same painting and always differently," one of Diebenkorn's most admired artists, Matisse, once said.

In the Ocean Park series, for example, each new work is more than simply a new version of the same subject. Each new work discovers a new subject. The same is true of Diebenkorn's other series: the groups of similar abstract drawings from the early 1950s; the groups of drawings of the same model from the mid-1960s; the set of still-life drawings using the same objects, also from the mid-1960s; and so on. Each time the motif is reimagined, it becomes a new motif. That is also to say, each time the motif becomes a realized subject, it becomes a new subject. This is most noticeable in the figure drawings, where (as in many of Matisse's serial figure drawings) we see not so much different versions of the same personality but versions of a multiple personality. Different forms and inflections of drawing distinguish quite different people, even in the same pose. But so do different poses. So poses are repeated and then varied to discover what causes character to change. Legs splay and cross as bold movements across the sheet. Arms fold in or reach around the body, or they expand it. The body often either slumps back to display itself as an arrangement, a pattern, or leans forward to compose a pattern of limbs close to the surface and then another pattern, of torso, chair, background, behind it. Diebenkorn is always composing his subjects, ordering their shape. Forms are overlapped by other forms to weld everything together in that particular pose. And these forms are almost as manipulable, and as capable of being scattered, as the knives and scissors in the still lifes, which they resemble at times. Like the still lifes too, the figure drawings squeeze their subjects into a few parallel slivers of space parallel to the surface of the sheet and hold them there. If the model is shown performing some action, she performs it very slowly indeed. Usually, she is immobile. The eroticism of the body reveals itself simply by holding a pose—in its intermittence: in the intermittence of hands brought together and held for that moment in that particular pose; in the intermittence of that part of the body suddenly revealed by limbs as they form that particular pose.

We should notice at this point that, by and large, Diebenkorn's best figure

drawings are frontally composed. He faces his subjects and enlarges them across the surface, sacrificing proportion if necessary for pattern, thereby discovering a sequence of contours—some arabesque, some geometric—that read almost autonomously as condensations of carnal knowledge. At times, these recall the linear clusters of his early abstract period; at others, the scaffold constructions of his later abstract period. While every drawing discovers a different subject, every subject connects.

We should also notice that while Diebenkorn faces his subjects, they generally do not face him. His models usually look down or away. They seem self-absorbed. Part of the reason for this is that Diebenkorn does not want to make psychological contact with the face. He wants us to grasp the meaning of a work from the whole composition and not have it filtered through the personality of the model. (This is also why he spreads a sense of corporeality beyond the contours of the model: to give the sheet as a whole a living vibrancy.) But there is another reason. It can be discovered in the kind of self-absorption his models display. They are not melancholy, or secretive, or brooding, or even bored. They seem quietly contented, self-assured, harmonious, at peace of mind. They may look distorted, dissonant, altered from what we expect to see. But they tell of the harmoniousness of their condition. In this respect too, Diebenkorn's representational work connects with his abstractions. Whether he believes most in reality or most in the imagination, he seems to believe most of all in depicting his subjects as perfected and self-contained. Such an ambition does not preclude the existence of what he refers to as "tension beneath calm." But it does mean that the struggle of creation can never be allowed to produce something that seems a struggle. That would be incoherent, incompletely formed. The point, he says, is "to get all the elements right."

It is clear, nevertheless, that to get everything right, and thus find calm, involves a very considerable struggle. As I said earlier, the complex drawings in particular tell us that. Each one of these works is the product of repetition—of accumulating propositions until the precise one is found—and therefore a microcosm of the method of Diebenkorn's art as a whole. But whether we examine what happens in one of his works or in a sequence of works, one thing is inescapable. His art is a struggle because its aim of harmony is born in anxiety. Diebenkorn might say with Matisse, "I am amazed that some people can be so lacking in anxiety as to imagine that they have grasped the truth of their art on the first try." And Diebenkorn's anxieties come down in the end to what Matisse's were: anxiety about his ability to keep making, while working, the series of imaginative, pictorial discoveries that are in some sense the

inner, continuing subject of all his art; about his ability to find the appropriate, personal formal language to do so; and about the conflict, built into art itself, between art as a construction of images that recall external reality and art as a construction of forms with their own independent history and their own properties. No number of completed and perfected works will ever assuage these anxieties, nor finally is that their aim. Again with Matisse, Diebenkorn might say, "I believe that the artist's personality affirms itself by the struggle he has survived."

### 3. *Change*

I have been stressing the continuity of Diebenkorn's art: how the unity of his achievement proceeds from a relationship between abstraction and representation, and between imagination and reality, that reveals different emphasis in different periods, but that persists through them just the same. Now I want to consider the extent to which his art does change from period to period. It changes drastically in intention and practice. It changes no less drastically, it seems, in the relationships I have been discussing, but especially in that between form and subject—first discovering its subject from absorption in form, then its form from absorption in subject, then again its subject from its form. In doing so, however, it does not produce three styles; rather, three versions of a single style. Paradoxically, these changes from abstract to representational and to abstract again—by periodically reversing the relationship between form and subject—have served to maintain for Diebenkorn's art its continuing ability to secure such a relationship, however it is framed. Continuity is preserved not only by repetition, but by an alternation of generations. For the danger of mere repetition is that the artist becomes the prisoner or performer of his style.

How, then, and precisely why, does Diebenkorn's art change? Let us look first at the change from abstraction to representation that took place around 1956 and then at the opposite change that took place about a decade later.

Diebenkorn's first mature abstract pictures were made in Sausalito (prior to 1950), when he was teaching in nearby San Francisco; in Albuquerque, New Mexico (1950–52), where he was enrolled as a graduate student on the G.I. Bill; in Urbana, Illinois (1952–53), where he taught for an academic year; and in Berkeley, California (1953–55), where he returned, after a short stay in New York, to work full time on his art. These early abstract pictures were mainly additive in their conception, built around drawn armatures of the kind that were practiced on paper in their hundreds.

There was a lot of covering over, a lot of revision, in the process of working, but no more than is common in a free painterly art. The drawing, particularly, in these pictures insisted on referring to observed and remembered motifs, usually landscape motifs. The order the artist sought was one that included such reference whether or not its inclusion was itself sought. But it was through the logic of internal construction that order was found.

The style of these pictures varied very significantly according to where they were painted. They also varied according to Diebenkorn's use of what were then his principal sources, the first-generation Abstract Expressionist painters, including William Bazotes, Willem de Kooning, Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko, and Clyfford Still. But what they had in common was a method of construction (deriving from Abstract Expressionism) whereby the picture was discovered in the means of its making. This required of the artist that he refuse all constraints other than those the development of the picture created, and that he nurture the development of the picture through his emotional response to each passage he painted—the picture thus growing through chains of such responses. This method produced superlative pictures for some seven years and numerous inspired drawings and works on paper. Its stress on invention arising through moments of spontaneous action, separated if necessary by moments of deliberation, meant that it was appropriate to everything from the single hasty notation to the complex work that accumulated scores of such notations. Its success most crucially depended, however, upon the artist maintaining unselfconsciousness—or a stance of unselfconsciousness—about his actions, like an actor who disappears completely into his role, denying the presence of the audience and the audience's complicity in what he does. The most carefully considered of actions were not precluded by such a stance: it encouraged them insofar as it encouraged close attention to the means of making. (Only by his mastery of his craft can the actor disappear into his role.) But if the artist came to feel like a performer, apparent in what he did, even to himself, the process could not work. He came to feel like that, he has said, by late in 1955.

Using "the superemotional to get 'in gear' with a painting" no longer worked. "Something was missing in the process—I sensed an emptiness—as though I was a performer." The process had become habitual: "I felt that I had been putting things together too much in accord with how I thought painting *ought to be*, and that can be fine but, at the same time, it can start to be a 'fixed' or 'static' image of painting." Moreover, once his self-consciousness intruded itself into his actions, there was no longer any inevitability about them. There was no reason why a particular configuration had to have a particular place. There were just too many choices available. Among



FIG. 4. Richard Diebenkorn. *Abstract Expressionist Painter*. 1955. Pencil and ink on paper, 15½ × 12" (39.4 × 30.5 cm). Private collection

Diebenkorn's dense ink drawings of 1955 are a group that parody Abstract Expressionist painters excitedly performing at their canvases (fig. 4). This freedom was now a constraint.

It was by accepting constraint that he found new freedom. What seemed wrong about working abstractly now was that "there was nothing hard to come up against." He felt the need, he recalled, "for an art that was more contemplative and possibly even in the nature of problem solving." Working from nature and from the figure provided it. "One of the reasons I got into figurative or representational painting... was that I wanted my ideas to be 'worked on,' changed, altered, by what was 'out there.'" He turned to representation, then, because a depicted subject offers a necessary resistance to the imagination that confronts it, the imagination that has exhausted itself in artifice too tenuous to sustain. Because external reality offers this resistance, the artist does not merely work on what is out there. What is out there will also work on him, on his ideas, changing and altering them. It is a faculty of reality thus to challenge the imagination and make it fight back. Reality is therefore to be acknowledged as concrete and external and existing in its individual aspects. "Does it *matter* if it is a woman in a striped dress or a vertical?" an interviewer asks, thinking perhaps of a work like the Hirshhorn drawing of 1957 (p. 103). "Absolutely yes." At times, critics said "I was really only *using* representational material as a peg on which to hang my conception of painting. That offended me *mightily* because it was *absolutely not true!*" The interviewer begins to understand: "Whereas, if you have a woman in a striped dress, you are forced to deal with *her* reality." "Absolutely! Yes." Therefore, "abstraction and representation are totally different worlds—different laws—different methodology."

But we should not expect an outside event to explain an artistic change, the artist warns us. Neither should we expect that external reality itself, that Diebenkorn's address to it, will explain his artistic change. His address to reality was the result, not the cause, of that change. It was not external reality as such, but what it called up from the artist that mattered: emotional reactions to particular things. Not simply emotion—abstract art had offered that in plenty—but guided emotion; emotion guided by contact with the facts of external reality and manifested in the facts of pictorial construction.

Drawing is important to all this because drawing is inherently a process of making equivalence; and the draftsman cannot pretend, as the painter can, that his available means will produce other than abstract equivalents of what he sees. Painting, too, is of course finally a process of equivalence. We know that Claude, a pioneer in mixing opaque colors and matching them to nature, took home his mixed sequences

of colors for use in a picture that stayed there on his easel. But even then (especially then), the use of these colors, so disinterestedly mixed, depended on preferences about nature that arose in the practice of painting. In the end, the painter chooses such versions of things as he likes. And how could it be otherwise? But drawing, unlike painting, picks out the artist's preferences at once. His means are immediately at hand and therefore his meanings are given immediately. He can change them, of course, and probably will, but because there need be no mixing, the process of matching is bound to be different. The medium as such can even be ignored, considered purely instrumentally, as an agent of signification like the pen or pencil in writing, and nothing more. But even when it is attended to, that attention will not be essential to realization of the motif (although it will usually enhance its realization); all that will be essential is the artist's attentiveness to the motif.

Well before Diebenkorn began painting representationally, he was drawing representationally—"not taking it all that seriously but as a sort of exercise in seeing," he has said. Representational drawing is essentially an exercise in seeing, I have suggested. Eventually, for Diebenkorn, it became more than that, as he began to make more complex drawings, completed away from the model. But working directly and solely from the model began his move into representation in the first place.

When Diebenkorn returned to the Bay Area in the late summer of 1953, he reestablished contact with David Park and Elmer Bischoff, who had been his colleagues in the period prior to 1950, when all three were seeking their identities as abstract artists. In Diebenkorn's absence, Park and Bischoff had turned to representation. Diebenkorn continued to paint abstractly at Berkeley. However, he soon began to draw from the model with his friends in the evenings. Drawing from the model may well have encouraged if not actually unearthed his feeling that his abstract paintings were becoming "performed." Certainly, it offered him sight of a conception of art as a discipline in a way that was quite new to him—a traditional way that he had never properly allowed himself to consider, having committed himself to abstraction as a student in 1946. He had made representational drawings as a student, and on occasion since then. These had generally contributed to the image-bank of his paintings, which themselves, at times, had been covertly representational. However, what Park and Bischoff were doing, and what Diebenkorn found himself admiring, was making paintings and drawings directly from experience in a way that looked back beyond Abstract Expressionism to the early modern artists that had impressed Diebenkorn before he even knew about Abstract Expressionism, artists such as Hopper, Matisse, and Cézanne.



FIG. 5. Richard Diebenkorn. *Berkeley 46*. 1955. Oil on canvas,  $58\frac{7}{8} \times 61\frac{7}{8}$ " (149.6  $\times$  157.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Gifford Phillips

The experience of New York painting had by no means shut out the availability of these sources to him. (I will come back to this point later.) But it had checked their availability. To return to his home base in the Bay Area after a nomadic life for the past few years, most recently in New York, and gradually establish himself there, may well have encouraged him to set aside his dependence on New York art, as Park and Bischoff had, and to renew contact with his artistic roots in European modernism and traditional artistic procedures.

The abstract paintings that Diebenkorn made in Berkeley (fig. 5) gradually came to depend more purely on their handling for their coherence than had any of his previous abstract paintings, and less on their design. Previously, their accumulated incident had been drawn incident as well as, and independent of, painterly incident. We see this in the ambitious works on paper throughout the early abstract period. Those made in Berkeley (pp. 86–97) embed their drawing in their painterliness more than do the preceding works. But it remains drawing. In the later Berkeley paintings, however, the drawn incident mutates into painterliness. The broad, frayed-edge lines and planes in these paintings are drawn, but exist more purely as marks, as perceptual stimulants. There are far fewer cursive, determinedly linear marks that seem to imply an external image. Reference (to landscape) proceeds from their painterliness, and from the illusionism it creates, but less now from their drawing.

This had become true also of de Kooning's paintings, to which Diebenkorn's 1955 Berkeley paintings are closer than any of his previous works. The illusionism of these Berkeley paintings made them amenable to representation, just as de Kooning's paintings had become thus amenable, first in the *Woman* series of 1952. It would be wrong, however, to think of Diebenkorn's representational art (and Park's and Bischoff's too) as continuous with that of the New York School in the 1950s. Not only is it more baldly representational than most New York art, more relaxed in its affection for both its represented subjects and its representational means. (Fairfield Porter and Alex Katz are exceptions.) Additionally, representation, at least for Diebenkorn, was not simply a consequence of the increased illusionism of his abstract art, as even the most distinguished critic of this period has suggested. It was almost an escape from illusionism: from generalized illusionism into particularized representation; from illusionism so abstracted as to exclude specific imagery to representation so clear and simple as hardly to require the illusion of depth for its legibility, since the image content itself seemed to provide it. Writing in 1961, Gifford Phillips observed that Diebenkorn "has developed a concern with *composition*, whereas most painters today are principally concerned with *space*." We should add to this that when abstraction was shifting his

attention to space, representation returned it to composition. Also, that if it was the increasing illusionism of his abstract paintings that opened the way to representation, it was the imagistic reference missing from these paintings, but not from his immediately preceding ones, that Diebenkorn rediscovered there. By drawing again, by designing again, and by sharpening the graphic organization of his pictures, Diebenkorn not only found his way into a new representational mode. He also found a way of retrieving in that new mode the specific incident and the expansive layout of his earlier abstract art—and of joining its achievement to an even more ambitious enterprise that engaged the great art of early modernism.

I will be discussing later, and in some detail, the nature of that engagement. But now, pursuing the theme of change in Diebenkorn's art (which, already, we see is yet another but broader instance of how it accumulates meaning), I want to turn to the change that took him from representation to abstraction again.

In 1966, Diebenkorn moved from Northern to Southern California, from Berkeley to Santa Monica, where he found a studio in the Ocean Park district. Sam Francis was about to vacate this studio. However, it took him six months to arrange to leave. During that time, Diebenkorn worked in a room in the same building. It was small and windowless, not conducive to painting. So Diebenkorn worked solely on paper. The drawings he produced "were representational, but they were getting very, very flat. Very, very simplified. It represented a great change in my figurative painting." The drawings in question include a great series in charcoal, heavily worked and extensively revised until they comprise condensed symbols for the body of the model (pp. 130–43); some works in pencil and crayon where an almost geometric scaffold of echoing severe lines composes the body of the model (p. 106); and some boldly designed, extremely flattened studies of this drawing studio itself (pp. 119–21). "Maybe somebody from the outside . . . would have known what was about to happen," Diebenkorn says. "But I didn't. I didn't see the signs. Then, one day, I was thinking about abstract painting again. As soon as I moved into Sam's space, I did about four large canvases—still representational, but, again, much flatter. Then, suddenly, I abandoned the figure altogether."

How simple this sounds; then how decisive. Of course, it was not as simple as that, nor was it accomplished without "the utmost trepidation and great difficulty." The artist used these words when replying to an interviewer who had spoken of his "capacity to move back and forth between figuration and abstraction." To put it like that, Diebenkorn replied, "makes it sound as though 'I know how to do it,' and this is

very far from the case." In the early days of the representational period, he says, "I had all sorts of moments and days and weeks when I would go back to abstract painting. I would think that I had made a very bad and hasty decision and decide, let's go back to abstract painting. Of course, that happened again many times during the Ocean Park period, when I would go back to representational painting." Once the emphasis of a particular period finally does get established, doubts of this kind are assuaged. But others remain. The notion of Diebenkorn's art as divisible into three periods, though apt and reasonable in itself, may lead to the conclusion that it comprises three periods of confidence and stability divided by two shorter periods of trepidation and instability. This would be a wrong conclusion. True, his art steadies and consolidates in each of the three periods, but he is also beset by doubts—because he puts in question what he values most. Diebenkorn's turn to abstraction again in 1967 was not simply the result of an enforced period of making drawings which became very flat and simplified. These drawings were made, and produced the results they did, because of doubts that persisted throughout the representational period itself.

Some of these doubts still pertained to the viability of making representational art again. Diebenkorn was apparently worrying about that even in the late 1950s. After the first few, highly productive years of representational work, he seems to have floundered for a while before reimmersing himself more completely in the variety of its implications. Hence, for example, there are relatively few fully realized representational drawings of the 1950s, and many of the quickly conceived ones are somewhat awkward. In the later 1950s, he was teaching himself to draw again and not until the 1960s did he do so with complete fluency. As his art settled in the early 1960s, however, yet other doubts emerged, among them whether his return not so much to representation but to a community of representation was limiting his freedom. He had worried about this as early as 1957, when the exhibition "Contemporary Bay Area Figurative Painting" was being organized at the Oakland Art Museum. "I hated being labeled," Diebenkorn says. "I just hated this thing of getting people together and forming a school. I remember feeling wildly threatened by that." Strong words. But as we have seen, one of the anxieties that propels Diebenkorn's art is his anxiety about the self-containment of his created world. He courts the intrusion of other creators, but they threaten it just the same. Moreover, the mere fact that he had become a representational artist did not mean that his aims were identical to those of his colleagues. Indeed, the development of his representational work—toward an increasingly geometric surface organization—came to separate it from the works of the colleagues he admired, and to

attract imitation by colleagues he did not. Gradually, he said, "*I left my figurative friends behind.* I found myself *not* having those conversations in the evening, as we did while we were drawing. And then David [Park] died [in 1960], and Frank Lobdell took his place in the drawing group." In the early 1960s, Diebenkorn thus isolated himself and his created world. He moved to Southern California a few years later.

Before he moved, however, a sequence of events occurred in 1964 that surely contributed to his eventual return to abstraction, if only because they intruded into his self-contained world, temporarily stopping him from painting. His father died that year. Diebenkorn had become artist-in-residence at Stanford University the preceding fall, and there gradually concentrated on drawing and had his first exhibition of drawings. He began making etchings and drypoints. An important retrospective exhibition of his paintings took place in Washington, D.C., New York City, and Newport Beach, California, which allowed him to reflect on what he had achieved as a representational artist. And an important early influence was suddenly reintroduced into his creative world: he visited the Soviet Union for the first time, where he was profoundly affected by the Matisse's in the Hermitage and Pushkin museums.

#### 4. Sources

The relationship of Diebenkorn's art to Matisse's has been noted so often by critics that it has become almost a barrier to appreciation. It is natural to wonder whether it has not, perhaps, been overrated. "I don't feel that it has been overrated," the artist replies. "How can I explain to you my relationship to Matisse?"

I said earlier that Diebenkorn's relationship with the art-historical past is such as to force itself into discussion of his art. Before continuing with what happened in the mid-1960s, I now want to turn backward in time and say something about Diebenkorn's art-historical sources (particularly about Matisse but also about other sources). This will help us to understand why Diebenkorn again became an abstract artist—and add to our understanding of why he became a representational artist first.

Our starting point is the spring of 1943. Then, Diebenkorn was a twenty-one-year-old third-year art student at Stanford University. His drawing teacher, Daniel Mendelowitz, took him to Sarah Stein's house in Palo Alto. "Right there," Diebenkorn says, "I made contact with Matisse, and it has just stuck with me all the way." He also made contact with Picasso and Cézanne, and the latter became his principal admiration. Indeed, if forced to say which artist has made the most profound impact on him,

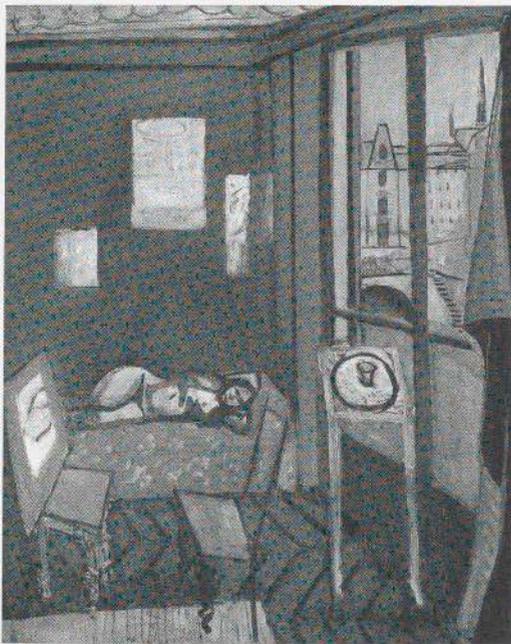


FIG. 6. Henri Matisse. *The Studio, Quai St.-Michel*. 1916. Oil on canvas,  $57\frac{1}{2} \times 45\frac{1}{16}$ " ( $146 \times 116$  cm). The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

Diebenkorn would still place Cézanne slightly above Matisse. But among the lessons of Matisse for Diebenkorn has been his interpretation of Cézanne; Diebenkorn seems to have learned more about Cézanne from Matisse than directly from Cézanne himself. At first, however, it was Cézanne rather than Matisse who stylistically affected his work, and earlier admirations, notably Hopper, who affected it even more. But one particular Matisse did affect him profoundly. This was *The Studio, Quai St.-Michel* of 1916 (fig. 6), in The Phillips Collection, which he first visited in 1944, while stationed at a Marine Corps base in Quantico, Virginia. (He had enlisted in the summer of 1943 and been sent to study for a semester at the University of California at Berkeley, where he took painting classes from Erle Loran, the author of a famous book on Cézanne's compositional methods; then he was transferred east.) At the Phillips, Diebenkorn was impressed also by Cézanne, Bonnard, and Braque. He also visited the Philadelphia Museum of Art and The Museum of Modern Art, and there was introduced to a range of modern art unavailable in San Francisco. Arp, González, Klee, Miró, Mondrian, and Schwitters were added to his roster of admirations. But the 1916 Matisse at the Phillips became a sort of talisman.

*The Studio, Quai St.-Michel* is, if not the greatest Matisse picture of that great year for Matisse, then probably the most moving—and the most Cézannesque, in its frank display of the empirical means of its making, and in its treatment of space as possessed of a density and opulence as rich as that of the nude who reclines sensually within it. The insistent architecture of this work is what is often said to have influenced Diebenkorn most. This is not entirely a hindsight reading, based on compositional echoes of the Matisse in works of the representational and Ocean Park periods, for the structure of this picture seems to have afforded a crucial link between Diebenkorn's earliest interests—Hopper and then Cézanne—and his interest in contemporary art, which began in the mid-1940s. He later observed: "One of the stylistic features after World War II, between 1948–50, was the concern with the framing edge. There was historical precedent for this but new was to use it directly as a dynamic aid in forming space." When Diebenkorn came to the point, in the late 1940s, of involving himself in that concern, Matisse's picture was as important a historical precedent as any for doing so. From the very beginning of his artistic maturity, represented here by the ambitious works on paper of 1948 and 1949 (p. 62), we see him clustering incident near the framing edges and holding it there by drawing that is parallel to them, then cantilevering more isolated motifs into the open center. He is forever working around the edges then coming into the center. This provides a sense of waiting and moving that

multiplies the temporal associations already evoked by the very accumulation of marks that comprise each work. We see this right through his career.

But there is another, and I think more crucial, way in which this Matisse affected Diebenkorn: in the nature of its pictorial space. The corporeality of the space is such as to unify in space, which is also to say in the corporeality of the surface, the separate images pictured within it. Not only do figure and ground—the latter as pictorially positive as the former—seem to fluctuate and to interchange in importance: that lesson was crucial, and we see it made use of already in the aforementioned early works. But also, space is shown as actually an attribute of the surface, and the surface vibrates like a translucent skin as if the space it encloses is the full and living space within the body. And the metaphor for the body it suggests gains specific meaning because it is suffused with resonances of the main depicted subject, the reclining nude, who spreads herself to our gaze as the picture does. This has obvious reference to what I have been saying about the continuity in Diebenkorn's work, whether representational or abstract, of its being perceived as both a construction of forms and a construction of images. Whether representational or abstract, Diebenkorn's work consistently seeks, in the process of pictorial discovery, to awaken the surface until it is suffused with corporeal resonances, whether specifiable or not, that in themselves seem almost to constitute its subject. This is most noticeable, of course, in the representational work and particularly in the denser drawings, whose surfaces seem to be full and weighty and also open to the eye, and through which the presence of their depicted subjects seems to spread. It is also to be seen, however, in many of the abstract drawings, and in the Ocean Park series it is what accounts for their seeming filled not really by light that is conceived as something entirely permeable or purely optical, but rather by light as something apparently liquid and palpable; by a body of light.

It is also worth mention here that Diebenkorn has said he finds some of Matisse's later pictures of Laurette reclining, of which the Phillips picture is the prototype, to be perhaps the most erotic of modern works of art. This statement may help us to understand some part of the corporeality of his own work.

The privilege of a fresh experience is one thing; the problem of learning from it is quite another. It was only gradually that Diebenkorn came to terms with the Phillips picture and Matisse in general. As I have indicated, his first mature works began that process, and fostered its development. They also show Diebenkorn beginning to come to terms with, and make something original from, the contemporary art he knew. Of course, nearly all major new art seems to emerge in this way. But what is particularly

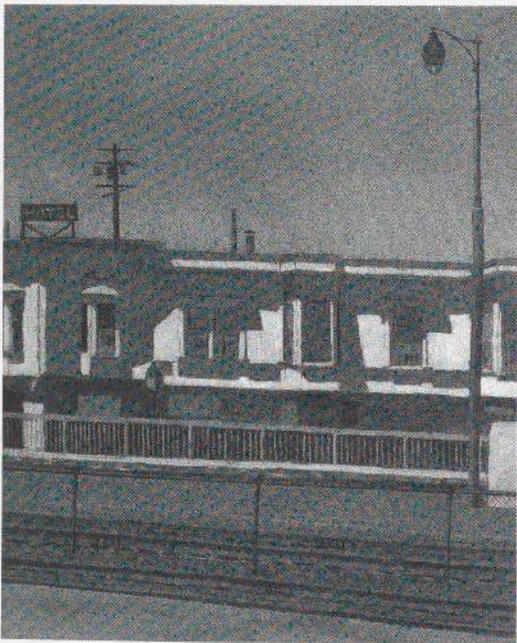


FIG. 7. Richard Diebenkorn. *Palo Alto Circle*. 1943. Oil on canvas, 19 $\frac{3}{4}$   $\times$  16" (50.2  $\times$  40.6 cm). Private collection

interesting about Diebenkorn's achievement of maturity as an artist is how the process of assimilating contemporary idioms not only led him forward to something in advance of his immediate sources but also backward to something original transmitted through them: to what those sources had taken from their sources, Matisse among them. This is also ultimately true of genuine artistic innovation, but it rarely presents itself quite as baldly as it does with Diebenkorn, or quite as persistently. For what is also unusual about Diebenkorn is that this retrieval of the past through innovation does not only accompany his initial breakthrough to artistic maturity but keeps on happening thereafter, increasing rather than diminishing, and maintains the momentum of his art thereafter as much as anything else does. This too is ultimately true, to some degree, of all genuine artistic development, whose surprise is partly in recalling what we had forgotten. In Diebenkorn's case, though, it is more than this. It is as if the process of discovery that produces his development is simultaneously a process of recall.

Diebenkorn is also unusual in being one of the earliest modern artists whose development effectively begins in abstraction. As a student at Stanford, he had worked representationally, of course, and his earliest extant works are representational, among them a 1943, Hopper-influenced picture called *Palo Alto Circle* (fig. 7). But the development that leads to his artistic maturity is not a development from representation to abstraction. It is abstract from the start.

It began in 1944, in the Marine base at Quantico, with some tentative abstract watercolors. His idea of abstraction, then, was mainly informed by the early modern art he was starting to confront at first hand. Then, on leave in San Francisco in 1945, he came across some copies of Wolfgang Paalen's magazine, *Dyn*. Their illustrations of contemporary art, particularly of works by Motherwell and Baziotés, began to affect him too. Back in California in 1945–46 (where he enrolled in the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco) and then in Woodstock, New York, in 1946–47 (where he lived on a travel scholarship), his work mainly reflected the influence of these artists and of the Cubist and Surrealist underpinnings of their styles. It was not until he returned to San Francisco to take up a teaching appointment at the School of Fine Arts that his work began to escape a certain cramped reticence, largely due to his sudden exposure to the work, and personality, of Clyfford Still, who had just joined the faculty (fig. 8). From Still, Diebenkorn learned to compose from intuitively discovered zones or areas reaching to each other across the surface rather than from drawn Cubist geometry. Still's presence is very noticeable in Diebenkorn's large works on paper of

1948 and 1949 (p. 66). So, at times, are Gottlieb's and Rothko's. (The latter was an occasional teacher at the same school.) From Rothko's *Slow Swirl by the Edge of the Sea* of 1944 (fig. 9), then at the San Francisco Museum of Art, Diebenkorn learned how a loose and allusive form of drawing could be used in counterpoint with fields of color (p. 63). And from de Kooning's black-and-white pictures (fig. 10), which Diebenkorn first saw in reproduction in 1948, he learned that such drawing could be used to form interlocking planes that read as if transparent, thereby designing the spread of the surface as an open continuum. His own large black-and-white drawings of 1949 clearly reveal that learning (pp. 64, 65). They also reveal the influence of Gorky as well as of certain earlier admirations, notably of Miró. But they are already his own. Even before Diebenkorn moved to Albuquerque in January 1950 and enrolled at the University of New Mexico, where he produced his first important body of work, he was already a strikingly original artist. Something very dramatic had happened in that 1947-49 period to transform a rather timid artist into a bold and ambitious one.

It was, I suggest, the example as well as the art of Clyfford Still that mobilized Diebenkorn at this early moment of his career. His earliest admirations had been European modernists and Americans strongly influenced by European modernism and loyal to its ideals. The importance to Diebenkorn of Still (and to a lesser extent of Rothko) was not only stylistic but also in the older artist's confrontational attitude toward history. Still spoke (and Rothko did) of the necessity of breaking with the European past, thereby to avoid tutelage and provincialism; he spoke aggressively of this, and of art as a liberating, emotional force produced by social outsiders, and his art spoke of this too. For Diebenkorn, Still was a necessary irritant, encouraging him to grow as an artist alone. In this respect, he countered the influence of Matisse and of European modernism. But additionally, Still himself became someone to oppose, and there is a strong element of competitiveness with him in Diebenkorn's early work. This manifests itself both in its borrowings from and transformations of aspects of Still's style and in its refusal to accept his message that art must avoid traditional sources and procedures in order to be vital and new. And it manifests itself with a stubbornness of purpose quite equal to Still's in its own way, and to Matisse's. It is as if Still unearthed in the naturally reticent Diebenkorn a quality of intransigent determination whose extent the younger man had not previously known, either in himself or in earlier artists, including Matisse, whom he admired. Henceforward, Diebenkorn continues to accept influences but now he knows how to dominate them.

Because this happened before 1950, before first-generation Abstract Expres-



FIG. 8. Clyfford Still. *Untitled*, 1946-48. Oil on canvas, 61 $\frac{3}{4}$  × 44 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (156.8 × 113 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Arthur Hoppock Hearn and George A. Hearn Funds, 1977

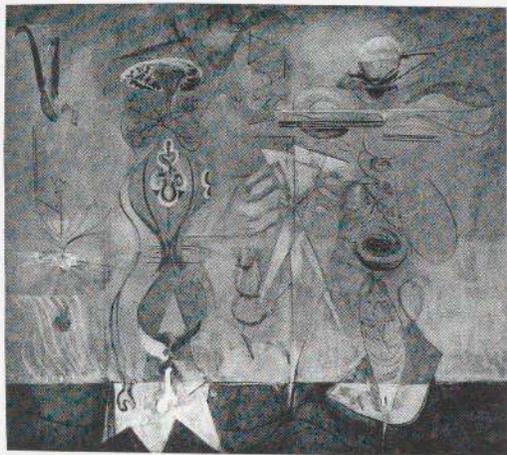


FIG. 9. Mark Rothko. *Slow Swirl by the Edge of the Sea*. 1944. Oil on canvas, 75 $\frac{3}{8}$  × 84 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (191.4 × 215.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Bequest of Mrs. Mark Rothko

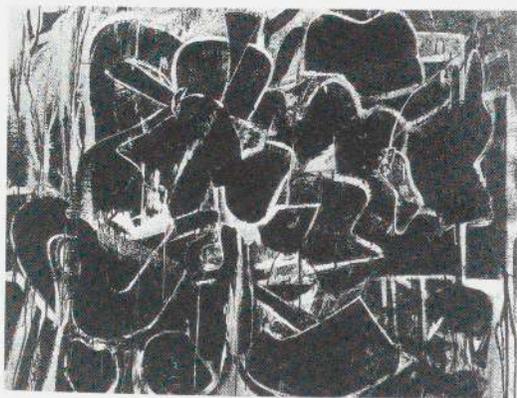


FIG. 10. Willem de Kooning. *Painting*. 1948. Enamel and oil on canvas, 42 $\frac{7}{8}$  × 56 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (108.3 × 142.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

sionism reached the climax of its development, Diebenkorn came to artistic maturity not really as a second-generation artist, although chronologically he belongs with that generation and often is treated as part of it. Rather, he should be thought of with older artists such as James Brooks, Philip Guston, Franz Kline, and Bradley Walker Tomlin. Like Diebenkorn, these artists developed their mature styles on the basis of the early work of other Abstract Expressionists, but did so virtually at the same time as some of the Abstract Expressionists from whom they learned reached their own mature styles. He differs, however, from these artists, and from their seniors, in that whereas most Abstract Expressionists discovered their individual styles only when they had finally worked through their influences, Diebenkorn continued to work through such influences in the context of an already established individual style.

Hence, at Albuquerque, he continued to be affected by his pre-1950 models. He also rediscovered earlier admirations, including Motherwell, Klee, and, surprisingly, González, after whose example he made some welded metal sculptures (fig. 11). The experience of drawing literally in space undoubtedly influenced, and responded to, the increasingly wire-like tangibility of line in the works on paper. That same characteristic of his line led him to new admirations, including Tanguy. The drawings of this period (pp. 67–79) reveal all of these sources. But they are far less elegant than their sources. The jolt that Still had created in San Francisco had led Diebenkorn to value awkwardness and roughness as a way of avoiding received European taste. He continued to foster these qualities for his art. They show in the bold matter-of-factness of his drawing. They also show in his willingness to use sources outside the modern tradition, including his childhood interest in heraldry and the Bayeux Tapestry and his enjoyment of comic-strip cartoons, especially the *Krazy Kat* comics of George Herriman. Simultaneously, though, he found himself attracted to those contemporary artists who did seem to maintain links with the European tradition, and preserved a referential quality in his work. If anything, that increased rather than diminished at Albuquerque: both in the generalized landscape connotations afforded by layered fields of color and in the ideographic symbols that overlaid these fields (fig. 12). Figures, animals, sexual symbols, the artist's initials, R. C. D., lurk in the small ink drawings and in the paintings that they accompanied. "Objectness would occasionally pop up again," Diebenkorn remembers, "so I would accept it—and exaggerate it."

These two more conservative features of his work—its link with European-influenced art and its referential aspects—coincidentally were sustained, midway through his period in Albuquerque, when he flew back to San Francisco for a visit. At

the San Francisco Museum of Art, he saw a retrospective exhibition of Gorky's work, which soon affected the character of his drawing, producing a more subtle variety of line and greater sense of reciprocity between line and softly shaded area. But the flight over the desert (Diebenkorn's first) was no less exciting to him. "The aerial view," he said, "showed me a rich variety of ways of treating a flat plane—like flattened mud or paint. Forms operating in shallow depth reveal a huge range of possibilities available to the painter."

Diebenkorn's late work at Albuquerque does indeed seem to analogize the experience of looking down on the world to map out its geography. In contrast, the work he made at Urbana, Illinois (where he moved in the autumn of 1952 to teach for a year), returns to a frontal view, seemingly lifting up the world for our inspection (fig. 13). It makes a point of its uprightness. In the paintings, forms shift back spatially as they rise, even at times to the extent of showing obvious horizons near their top edges. In the drawings (pp. 80, 81, 84), the artist practices making geometric scaffolds that will hold these forms on the surface. And he starts filling the sheets more densely with cursive signs and with spots and scribbles that float between and around the geometric scaffolds. Also, in the watercolors and gouaches (pp. 82, 83), he uses color in larger, contrasting areas of greater intensity.

These changes are partly attributable to the change of environment from a spare desert landscape with intense, color-bleaching light to a small and undramatic Midwestern town, from which (since the artist found it uncongenial) the studio-invented forms and colors may signify a retreat. Some, however, almost certainly reflect renewal of contact with Matisse at the exhibition organized by Alfred Barr, originally for The Museum of Modern Art, which Diebenkorn saw in Los Angeles in the summer of 1952 before moving to Urbana. The return to uprightness, as much as the heightened color, would seem to be a reaction to Matisse. In the paintings, this leads Diebenkorn back through Matisse to Cézanne at times. The broad staccato patterns of black and white in the drawings recall late Matisse drawings. However, they also recall Miró and even Pollock. Their density is new to Diebenkorn, as is their abruptness. The Albuquerque drawings are lighter and sparer. Both in drawing and in painting, Diebenkorn turns gradually from openness to compactness. After the move to Berkeley in 1953, some of his drawings return to the lighter mode, becoming quite playful in their inventiveness in the process (pp. 88, 93). Others, however, increase in density. The Berkeley gouaches, in particular, comprise boldly patterned interchanges of lights and darks, of light, aerated washes around dark, ideographic symbols and broad, landscape-derived motifs (pp. 91, 94, 95).

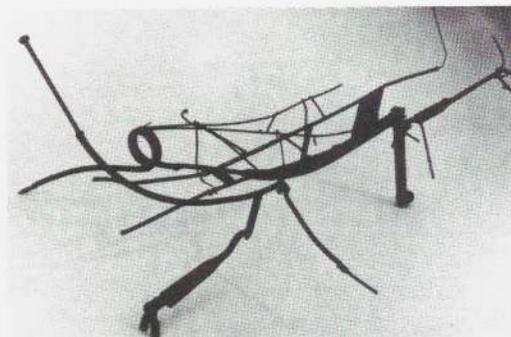


FIG. 11. Richard Diebenkorn. *Untitled*. 1951. Welded scrap iron; length approx. 48" (122 cm). Private collection, Albuquerque

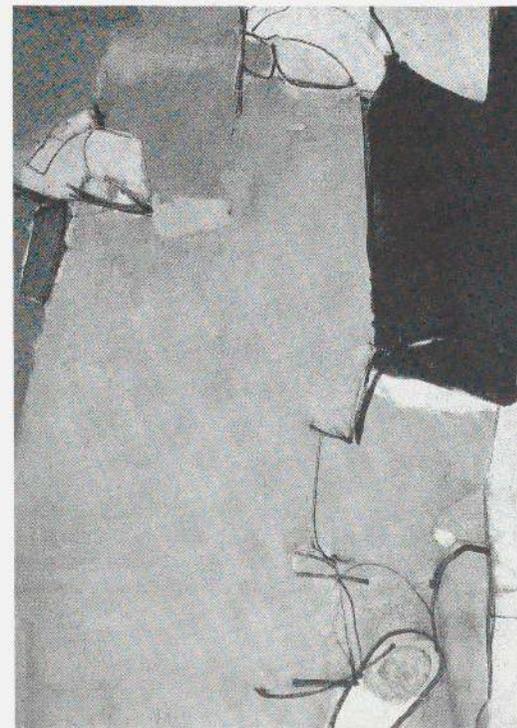


FIG. 12. Richard Diebenkorn. *Untitled*. 1951. Oil on canvas, 55 × 35" (139.7 × 88.9 cm). University Art Museum, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque

I have already explained how, in the paintings made at Berkeley, the drawn incident mutated into painterliness, leading Diebenkorn into a de Kooning-like style, and how he became dissatisfied with abstraction by late in 1955. He came to feel that he was following too much his ideas about what painting should be like and wanted, instead, his ideas to be “worked on” by external reality. We now see the extent to which his art as a whole prior to 1955 developed by assimilating ideas about what art should be like, particularly contemporary ideas but also older ideas through contemporary ones. He was dominating these ideas, making them his own. And external reality, not only these ideas, fueled his invention. Nevertheless, his development thus far had been mainly a matter of aggressively pushing his art until it had challenged all that he admired in contemporary art and arrived at a position in the forefront of the avant-garde. The abstract art he made in Berkeley was shocking to many people for its vehemence and for its extremity. He had, in fact, successfully responded to the challenge presented by Clyfford Still in San Francisco, and began to be hailed as the West Coast’s leading Abstract Expressionist artist. Yet further evidence of the quality of intransigence unearthed by contact with Still is that, all this accomplished, Diebenkorn soon questioned where it had led him. His answer was that in moving aggressively forward he was losing contact with his past.

His turn to representation was not simply a return to tradition. But it was partly that. It was partly a new beginning that stepped off, in 1956, the escalator of the avant-garde. In both of these respects, it was an attempt to set aside change and settle on something explicitly his own. Diebenkorn’s work does change, of course, over the decade that he was a representational artist. Its main change, however, took place during the late 1950s, when he was discovering what was explicitly his own. Thereafter, its differences are mainly in the different mediums that he used; until 1966–67, when he discovered that representation itself had become inhibiting to his freedom.

It is important to be clear about why representation became thus inhibiting. This was not simply because representation, per se, did not allow the same freedom as abstraction did. I know it is often said that full freedom of invention is entirely possible only in an art of absolute abstraction, specifically in one based on automatic procedures, where the artist becomes so absorbed in the process of working his materials that no restraining distance exists between artist and art. To work from nature—indeed, to conceive of art as the realization of a specifiable subject—is therefore thought to be inhibiting of freedom because it intrudes subject matter between artist and art. This is simply wrong. The representational artist no less than the abstract artist can discover that deep communion of self and artistic material at which auto-

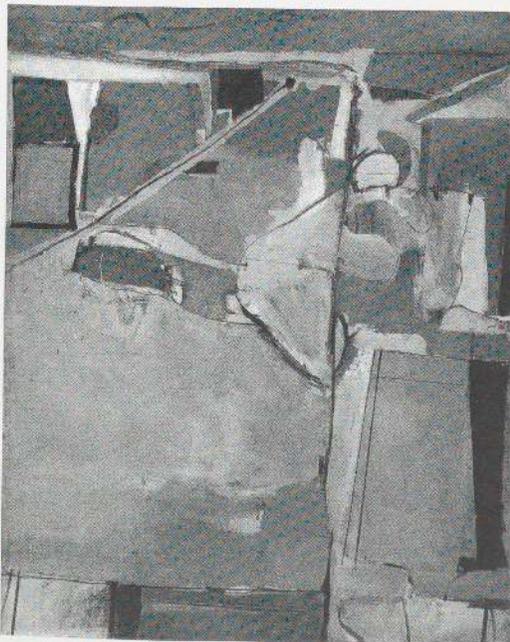


FIG. 13. Richard Diebenkorn. *Urbana No. 5 (Beachtown)*. 1953. Oil on canvas, 68 × 53½" (172.8 × 135.9 cm). Collection Mr. and Mrs. Gifford Phillips, New York

matism aims; only it will be found through absorption in the depicted subject along with the artistic material: in the artist's sense of envelopment by that subject, by the feelings that subject evokes, by the vibrating substance of sight itself, or by memories of these things—and in the artist's dawning recognition, while working, that working means giving oneself up to the depicted subject until a kind of match is made where artist and subject and art are one.

Representation became inhibiting for Diebenkorn not merely because subject and art began to compete for his attention. This was only how his dissatisfaction with representation manifested itself. He has said that he eventually found himself being forced to remove passages he wanted to keep “in order to make it right with this figure, this environment, this representation. It was a kind of compromise.” But tension between the illustrated subject and the means of its illustration is intrinsic to modern representational art. Diebenkorn is saying that he eventually found this tension unbearable. However, he is describing the symptom of his dissatisfaction with representation and not its cause. Its cause, I suggest, was not simply that he discovered he could not enjoy the same freedom in representation as abstraction. It was that he discovered he could not enjoy the same freedom in representation as the early modern representational artists he admired, notably Matisse, and therefore could not challenge them in representation because he was inhibited there in a way they were not. “For instance,” he observed, “interiors have roughly a certain kind of light, as opposed to exterior, but I could be envious of a Matisse who could use the same kind of color in the interior as in the exterior. It was as though I had some curious set of rules hanging heavy over my head. And in that sense, I guess I'm not that abstract a painter.” By which he means that, for him, “abstraction and representation are totally different worlds” in a way that they were not for Matisse. That was one of the lessons of the Matisses he saw in 1964 when he visited the Soviet Union.

### 5. Subjects

This was the moment at which I left Diebenkorn when discussing the theme of change in his work as change in the relationship of form and subject. Since then, we have discovered that change in his work is also attributable to change in his relationship to the work of other artists. His turn to representation was a turn away from dependence upon contemporary developments and toward engagement with the art-historical past. We now see why the idea of being part of a contemporary West Coast school was

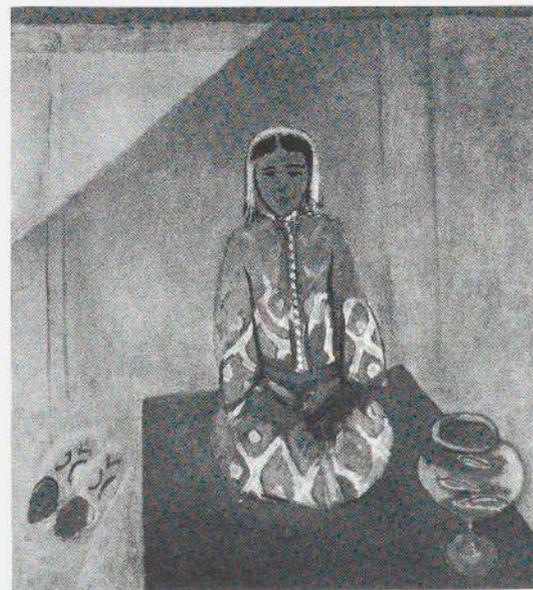


FIG. 14. Henri Matisse. *Zorah on the Terrace*. 1912. Oil on canvas, 45 $\frac{1}{16}$  × 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (116 × 100 cm). The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

anathema to him: not only because it threatened the self-containment of his creative world, but also because it threatened to intrude the collectively contemporary at a time when he was seeking an individual relationship to the past. The experience of Matisse in 1964 was so important because it forced him to readdress that relationship. The result, brought on by additional exposure to the work of Matisse in 1966, was that he drastically altered his art and found a way of engaging the past in both individual and contemporary terms.

The Matisse that particularly impressed Diebenkorn in Russia—*Conversation*, *Harmony in Red*, *The Painter's Family*, and the Moroccan triptych (fig. 14)—were those that addressed subjects similar to those he had been using, but with greater freedom from verisimilitude than he had been able to allow. The homage to Matisse he made on his return, *Recollections of a Visit to Leningrad* of 1965 (fig. 15), only confirms that Matisse's freedom in representation was not for him. It was the year after this that Diebenkorn moved south to Santa Monica, stopped painting for six months, and made the sequence of representational drawings I mentioned earlier which led to his abandoning representation for abstraction at the end of 1967. Before actually moving south, however, he visited Los Angeles early in 1966 to see the Matisse retrospective there at the University of California Art Gallery. Included in it were two astonishing pictures, exhibited in the United States for the first time, the *Open Window*, *Collioure*, and the *View of Notre-Dame*, both of 1914 (figs. 16, 17). These showed an even more abstract Matisse than did the Soviet pictures, revealing how a representational impulse could be transformed into an almost non-representational art: not by abstracting the subject away—that would be a terrible compromise—but by abstracting to discover the subject anew. They also revealed two ways of achieving this: in the one, by areas of omission which exclude what is unnecessary to realize the reality of the subject; in the other, by lines of commission, in which are entrusted what is necessary to its realization. Common to both is the implication that only through the process of working with the reality of the external, depicted subject can the material, internal subject of the picture be revealed.

None of this was new, in principle, to Diebenkorn; only in degree. The process of making his representational works began “out of a relationship with things or people,” and involved working until a pictorial equivalent had been found for that relationship. When he began the Ocean Park series, he soon realized it was “the same activity as always, the same searching for subject.” Only now, the search was purely internal to each work. Matisse did not teach him that. Matisse did teach him, however, that his art

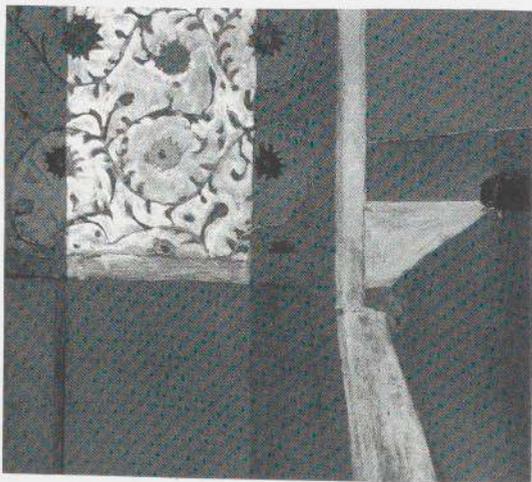


FIG. 15. Richard Diebenkorn. *Recollections of a Visit to Leningrad*. 1965. Oil on canvas, 73 × 84" (185.5 × 213.4 cm). Collection Mr. and Mrs. Hunter Land, San Francisco

could manage without specific representation and still convey the reality of a subject. Matisse also showed him how this could be achieved by the simplest of means—and that in moments of difficulty the artist should have the courage to return to the purity of the means.

This is not to say that the subject of the Ocean Park series is that area of Santa Monica in the same way that the subject of the *View of Notre-Dame* is that cathedral. For what had become troubling to Diebenkorn about his representational work was that he could not so drastically alter a represented subject as Matisse could without feeling he had somehow done violence to it. As I said earlier, he is not the kind of artist who seeks to expose some hidden reality behind the reality of things as they are. In this respect, his method differs from Matisse's as well as Mondrian's; it is closer to Cézanne's. For Diebenkorn, as for Cézanne, reality is external and visible and exists in its particular aspects. So, in his representational work, he articulates his sensations in detail, working toward the whole from the parts, and realizes his depicted subject through an exploration of formal concerns, the adjustment and balance of parts over time—the pursuit of pictorial discoveries whose visible record becomes a subject in its own right. Matisse, in contrast, would adjust and balance the parts to re-create that initial vision of the whole which first experience of the subject had provided. It follows, therefore, that Diebenkorn could not reasonably neglect or unreasonably alter the experience of his eyes. That would produce monsters, particularly when working from the model. And this became the problem. "I wanted it both ways," he says. "A figure with a credible face—but also a painting wherein the shapes, including the face shape, worked with the all-over power that I'd come to feel was a requisite of a total work." So there was a compromise. "The face had to lose a measure of its personality. The first response in taking it had to be relational. . . . This compromise with the completeness of the face . . . was a large one . . . one that perhaps undermined my figurative resolve in the long run."

So, what happened, he was asked: "Did you start 'seeing' differently?" Did the things he previously had seen as representational "start forming themselves as a more abstract composition?" Of course not. That was the very problem: that things would already start forming themselves abstractly, thereby losing a measure of their particular character. What was demanded, on the contrary, was not starting to look abstractly but stopping from doing so—by looking somewhere else: not at something requiring abstraction but at something already abstract. And I do not only refer to the work of art itself, although Diebenkorn did now begin to work not from subject to picture but

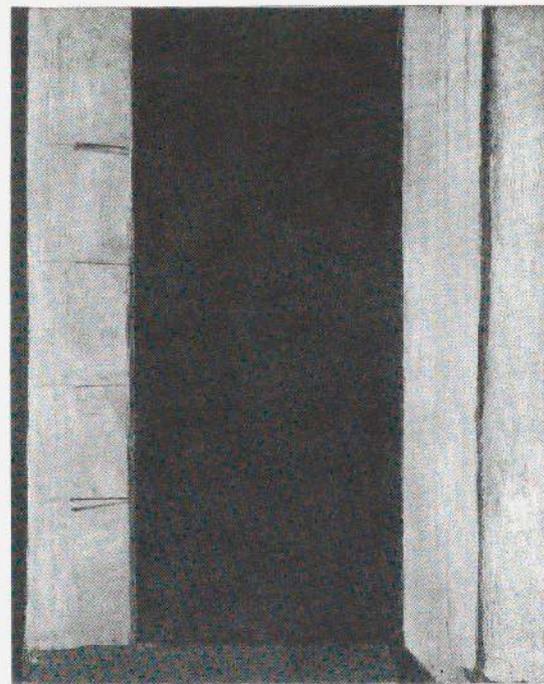


FIG. 16. Henri Matisse. *Open Window, Collioure*. 1914. Oil on canvas, 45 $\frac{7}{8}$  × 34 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (116.5 × 88 cm). Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

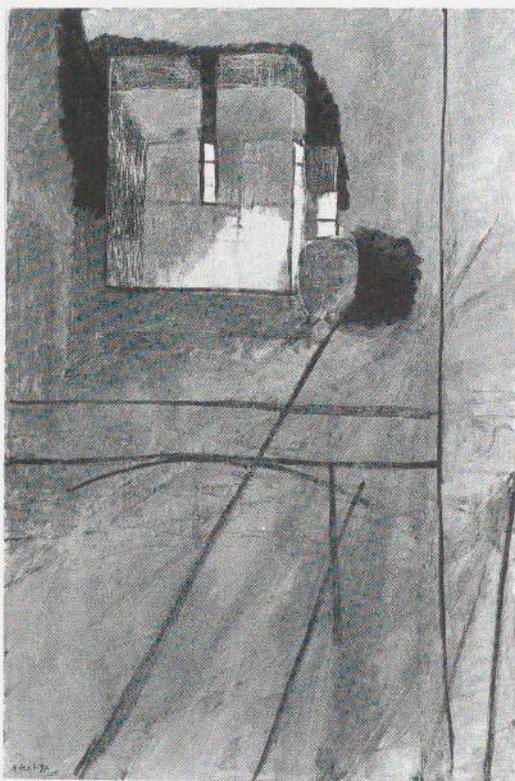


FIG. 17. Henri Matisse. *View of Notre-Dame*. 1914. Oil on canvas,  $58 \times 37\frac{1}{8}$ " ( $147.3 \times 94.3$  cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

from picture to subject. I also refer to properties that the picture and any external subject had most essentially in common: their dependence on and departure from frontality, symmetry, uprightness, axiality, density, gravity, coloredness, tonality, flatness, spatiality—and the relationships between these things. “I didn’t start seeing differently,” he said. “I simply saw *different things*.”

Although working now from attributes of things, from the normative properties of things, this does not suddenly make him an essentialist artist. His basic procedures do not alter. He still adjusts parts to discover the whole and thereby realize what I have been calling his internal subject. He does not start working differently. He simply works with different things. “It interests me,” he observes, “. . . that the different forms painters use, such as landscape, still life, or figure, bring out very different qualities. I see this in most painters of the past and certainly in myself. In this time there is one more option—that of not representing, which can bring out yet another set of things.” Abstraction brings out for Diebenkorn sets of relationships between sets of norms, discovered in the process of working, that gain meaning because they are particular to the materials and support on which he works and refer to his, and our, experience of the world. This requires, initially, “days of some real dismal dragging around, hoping that something will get together and strike a spark,” then, subsequently, months of nurturing the work until the relationships “stay put” and “look as though they were *meant* to be there,” he says. “That’s my idea of ‘meaning.’”

Diebenkorn’s basic procedures do not alter. Their emphasis does. Like his earlier abstract work, the Ocean Park work is composed additively. In each, he builds networks of relationships. In doing so, however, he cancels relationships that do not seem meant. These do not “stay put” but are effaced and overlaid by new ones to a far greater extent and with greater frankness than obtained earlier. They are submerged, we might say, but not quite drowned by those that do seem meant. For his works of the Ocean Park series—on paper and canvas alike—discover their definitive meanings not by destroying what seems less than definitive. The process of their creation cannot be halted to do that. Rather, the indefinite gradually concedes to the definite as the artist looks for “errors,” as he puts it, in what he makes.

The implication of this is that there exists some objective visual truth which can be stated and that the artist demands of himself absolute veracity in its utterance. Also, that this requires in practice not merely honesty, in speaking what he believes to be his truth, but probity, tried integrity, in speaking against dissimulation and inexactitude as well. Not that exactitude is truth, for the completed and finished work will not exhibit

finish as an index of its completion. Rather, it will have grown to the level of finish required to complete it once the artist has said what he means by correcting what he does not.

"The face had to *lose* a measure of its personality" because "the first response in taking it had to be relational." Diebenkorn's new work consists entirely of its relationships. Its subject exists entirely in its syntax. Therein lies the abstractness of the Ocean Park series, its unlikeness to Ocean Park itself. Much has been written about how the geometry of this series refers to the beach architecture of that part of Santa Monica. What is most striking about such a comparison, however, is just how unlike that environment the Ocean Park works are. As Susan Larsen has observed: "Nowhere in Ocean Park, a crowded but affable district of small shops, apartments, and older residential buildings, will one find the towering vertical planes, sweeping diagonal thrusts of color, and calligraphic interstices typical of Diebenkorn's paintings; that sensibility belongs to the artist, who brought it with him when he came here." Very occasionally, Diebenkorn does abstract from his environment, as can be seen from a drawing of 1975 (p.152), careful inspection of which reveals the bough of a tree and foliage outside his studio window and a lorgnette hanging in front of the window. It would be quite wrong, however, to look for the meaning even of this work in terms of a veiled subject matter that needs to be deciphered. Even with this work, where there is such veiled subject matter, our understanding will be sadly incomplete if we remain satisfied with merely identifying the vestigial motif that was the starting point. Here, the decipherable elements exist in relationships that are clearly more important to the artist than what they are made from. They, not the decipherable elements, embody the true, internal subject of the work, which cannot be described by direct reference to external reality because the relationships that embody this subject describe underlying preferences about the very shape of reality. This is true, too, of the works not begun from observed motifs. If they allude to external reality, it is to a version of external reality—a rearrangement of its relationships—that the artist has made under his control.

"The arrangement contains the desire of/The artist," is how Wallace Stevens puts it. Therefore, the artist need not desire to represent the world directly; he "walks easily/The unpainted shore, accepts the world/As anything but sculpture."

The artist's arrangements embody his subject by choosing what he desires not from the world, usually, but *of* the world. Insofar as he not only builds but then chooses from what he has built, his choosing is akin to discovering within the

plenitude of phenomenal nature those elements that best express his response to it. Once a work is under way, the artist will be looking in it for such a response. Each session with the work will address what are perceived as deficiencies in it, and in that sense will build on the achievement of the preceding session. But since the preceding session did not produce the required response, in another sense each new session is an entirely new start, requiring total reconception of the work. In this respect, Diebenkorn's method is like both Matisse's and Cézanne's. It recalls the Cézanne who told Vollard, when the latter alluded to two patches of bare canvas in the hands of his portrait: "Just understand, if I put something there at random, I should have to go over the whole picture again starting from that spot." It recalls the Matisse who said that when he made a portrait, each new session produced virtually a new portrait, "not one that I am improving, but a quite different one that I am beginning over again," until "the one which revealed most of the sitter's real personality" is discovered. So, everything is continually reedited. At times, the act of deletion not of addition will be what produces the required response; the removal of incident will uncover it; and it will be experienced as a flood of relief. But however it is discovered, it will be discovered within the flux of creation: as a momentary, provisional stability in relationships that are potentially always in flux. Not merely by suspending, by representing, that flux: the pentimenti in the Ocean Park series are not diaristic reminiscences. Diebenkorn's art is complete only when it emerges from its vacillations, when it looms out from the history of its making to disclose itself there.

The same is generally true of the relationship of the Ocean Park series to its art-historical sources. It emerges from them by disclosing itself against their background. Diebenkorn has always been a synthesizing artist and his syntheses have been both complex and cumulative. The originality of his early abstract period lay not only in its combination of features of Abstract Expressionist color-field and gesture painting but also in its combination of them with features of the work of earlier artists, from Cézanne to Matisse to Miró. In his representational period, most of the same sources persisted but were shuffled in importance, and in that shuffling some were brought closer to the center, pulling in yet other sources (Matisse attracting Bonnard and reattracting Hopper), and thus were strengthened, while others were moved to the perimeters, away from what had attracted them (Miró away from Abstract Expressionist color-field painting), and thus were weakened. Likewise, Diebenkorn's sources in the Ocean Park period include the sources of the preceding periods, certain additional attracted sources (early modern and contemporary geometric art)—and, of

course, his own preceding art, which carries the earlier sources. In this regard, the Ocean Park series is the densest with sources of any, suggesting that Diebenkorn's development has been a struggle not to free himself from his sources but to allow himself the freedom to use ever more sources; not to rid himself of his history but to accumulate it. Again, this is not for diaristic reasons, but rather because the kind of meaning he seeks, the kind of response he seeks, will only be found by searching within the richness of history, too. The method of the Ocean Park work, of each and every Ocean Park work, is a microcosm of such accumulation and sifting, in history and in the phenomenal world.

It is not enough to say, then, that the internal subject of Diebenkorn's work is the record of the formalizing imagination of the artist in confrontation with external reality. This formalizing imagination itself is the product of his confrontation with the past. His sources in the past are what furnish the means of realizing his subject; therefore, his subject includes them.

When Diebenkorn takes from the past he does so under a certain description of his sources. He chooses from the public domain with the implicit expectation that his choices will evoke in the viewer feelings toward his sources similar to those that he experiences, that they will disclose his feelings to the viewer—both about these sources, about what they mean for him, and about the subject of his art, which becomes clearer by being associated with something already in the public domain. As Richard Wollheim, to whom these remarks are indebted, points out, borrowing has therefore an inherently instrumental aspect. In Diebenkorn's case, as we have already noticed, his art as a whole has an inherently instrumental aspect. It is forever altering and adjusting external reality for its own purposes. His alteration and adjustment of the art of the past for the present purposes of his art is paralleled by, and includes, his wish to do something with the shape of the world.

All art can be said to harbor, to some extent, that impossible wish. But some more than other seems actually to wrestle with the shape of the world: as the artist shows it to us, it is something he has put into shape, something that he has formed. When Diebenkorn spoke of what he wanted from abstraction, when he began the Ocean Park series, it was control that he emphasized: "My idea was simply to get all the elements right. By that I mean *everything*: color, form, space, line, composition, what all this might add up to—everything at once." Again, we are reminded of the method of Cézanne, in particular, as he explained it to Joachim Gasquet (and as quoted, interestingly enough, in the book on Cézanne by Erle Loran, Diebenkorn's

teacher): bringing his hands slowly together and interlacing his fingers, he said, "There mustn't be a single link too loose, not a crevice through which may escape the emotion, the light, the truth." For Diebenkorn, as well as for Cézanne, it is this model of hermetic perfection that makes each work a long and painful struggle to produce. This struggle is local to each work. But it also exceeds each work because it is a struggle with the shape of the world and with the shape of the world as formed by other artists, which resist this artist. So, individual battles are won only to be fought again: a relentless process of repetition. I have heard it said that the artist who repeats himself is taking the comfortable path. (I have heard it said of this artist.) Mannerism, of course, is deplorable. And repetition, in some hands, can lead to tedium just as variety, in others, can lead to entertainment. But it is a poor understanding of artistic psychology that does not see how the artist who repeats and repeats is taking a most uncomfortable path. It will never afford the satisfaction of leading to the end it promises.

## 6. *Articulations*

Representation eventually became a compromise for Diebenkorn because it placed him in the grip of its "curious set of rules" just as abstraction, earlier, had become a compromise because he found himself constrained by its rules. And yet, the issue is not quite so simple as Diebenkorn always wanting to impose his control on whatever he does. His art is indeed classical, in Paul Valéry's definition, in that he seeks mastery over his resources. He regulates the world, sets it in order, and therefore aims not only at giving pleasure but at attaining beauty, with giving things a form that makes us think not of existing nature but of something less accidental and more universal. He maintains the greatest possible distance between the conception of a work and its final realization, allowing himself the time to cultivate the associations of what he does: to trim and prune and select them. And in doing all this, he dislikes being commanded either by his subjects or by his formal means, seeking rather to control his subjects by controlling his means. "But it sometimes happens," as Valéry says, "that mastery is taken off its guard."

It happens often with Diebenkorn. He is always taking himself off guard, surrendering mastery for intuition and probity for surprise. In a risky search for accident, he keeps challenging his control.

Drawing, I have been claiming, is what postulates order in Diebenkorn's art. It

would seem to follow, therefore, that color (and its spreading as area) is what challenges the order that line (and its enclosure of shape) establishes. To some extent this is true. And yet, color is not a separable element of construction in Diebenkorn's work. I know that he is often mainly applauded for his color. Of course, it is intrinsic to his achievement. From the very beginning of his career, he was an instinctive colorist, and one most striking feature of his development has been the way that his color sense seems to blossom over the years. In the Ocean Park series, the sheer range not merely of color but of feeling evoked by color is extraordinary. But it is tonally controlled color. To look at the works on paper of the Ocean Park series, as well as at the paintings, is to see that he rarely composes purely from color, from the sheer juxtaposition of hues; rarely from juxtaposed, large areas at high density. Color, usually, is tonally softened and scumbled. And when high-intensity colors appear, more often than not they cluster together in small, vivid segments at the sides of broad, open areas of unnameable hue, or they flash out from such areas, frequently between such areas (pp. 168, 169). I referred earlier to how, in the figurative drawings, the eroticism of the body is often expressed in the intermittence of a part or segment of the body revealed by the chosen pose. The colored sensuality of the Ocean Park series reveals itself similarly: where the tonal fabric gapes to reveal color. "Is not the most erotic portion of a body *where the garment gapes?*" asks Roland Barthes. Likewise in Diebenkorn's abstractions, "It is this flash which seduces, or rather: the staging of an appearance-as-disappearance."

So, color cannot be separated from drawing. It flashes through these compositions, disclosing their structure, like drawing. As Barthes says, the warmer parts of the anecdote "are always at its articulations: whatever furthers the solution of the riddle." Let us look at these articulations more closely.

We should notice, first, that from the very beginning in the late 1940s, Diebenkorn draws images or signs and makes networks of them. He will string out a line and hang loops around it. And he will form chains of loops, then clusters. At times, the links are broken and the elements scatter across the sheet. But eventually, they recombine. By the mid-1950s, it is clear that Diebenkorn is composing from sequences of enclosures. The lines that form these enclosures insistently refer: we read them as signs. But we also read them as boundaries, as divisions. The same is true of the lines in Diebenkorn's representational drawings. By the 1960s, certainly, he is composing from linked sequences of containing, flat enclosures. Their linear boundaries now refer to the contours of the body, or parts of the body, or to the edges of objects and architecture.



FIG. 18. Unknown Rajput artist, Kishangarh school. *Woman in Profile*. c. 1780. Ink with traces of charcoal on paper, 11¾ × 8¼" (29.8 × 21 cm). Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn

As such, they often describe volume. But this is largely a matter of connotation. Diebenkorn's line is frequently dense and heavy but it is not a sculptural line. It is flat and frontal and frequently is pulled free from shading, the better to project onto the surface. On the surface, it forms interlocking areas of pattern, areas that denote space or background interlocking with areas that denote figures or objects in space or against background. And the more complex the drawing, the more complex (and therefore ambiguous) the sense of interchange between areas becomes. For when Diebenkorn can modulate the density and the character of his filling of these areas (and can choose which ones not to fill at all), he gains the freedom to make the most subtle adjustments and reciprocations between what reads as volume and what reads as space, what reads as full and what reads as empty. This is especially to be seen in the wash drawings. But even through the most ambiguous of such interchanges run the networks of lines that bound the different areas, thread together their design, tailor the identity of the depicted subject, and reveal the artist's response to it in doing so.

At times, these lines are given in negative. At others, they are produced simply by the meeting of two sharply contrasted areas. Both can be seen in an audacious wash drawing of 1967, showing a seated woman with a parasol or umbrella (p. 122). Regardless of how the lines are formed, the identity of the subject is manifested as an attribute of their continuity. In 1954, it is worth noting, Diebenkorn became interested in Indian miniatures and drawings after learning about the influence on Matisse of Oriental art, and collected some, preferring the Rajput ones most (fig. 18). As in those works, the drawing in his own avoids unnecessary detail and runs around open areas symbolic of volume and space to provide a continuum of sensual response to the subject. And as in those works, the clear articulation of the different areas expresses the body as an accumulation of rhythmical inflections. Therefore, the continuity of the subject (which is also to say of the sheet it designs) is not only linear. It exists as much in the sense of substance that flows from area to area or that shifts in character from area to area—that in either case builds up in our experience of a work, and seems to grow in the experience like a sound that grows louder the closer we are to its source.

In my experience of the more complex drawings, the growth of this corporeal resonance curiously alters how their lines are perceived: it swells out between them. In the charcoals particularly, the heavily drawn contours can therefore seem almost to cut into the sheet: to read not as projections onto the surface but as clefts or channels in the surface; not merely as the densest elements but as the deepest. I am somewhat reminded (despite the vast difference in style) of how drawing functions in the paint-

ings of Ingres like the stitching of padded cushions. And I notice that one of the most abstracted of the charcoals (it is based on a drawing at Montauban [fig. 19]) bears that painter's initials as its title (p. 143).

The effect that I am describing may also be found in some works on paper of the Ocean Park series, though there it often combines with drawing that does project onto the surface, and with drawing that appears to float on and over the surface. But wherever it occurs, it should not be thought of simply as voluptuousness swelling against the rectitude of its containing contours. True, it is from the rough or velvety texture of the charcoals, from the emulsive richness of the wash drawings, and from the infinitely complex scumbled fields of the works of the Ocean Park series, that their radiating warmth mainly glows. And true, drawing does link across the surface to hold in "the emotion, the light, the truth." But drawing also particularizes the voluptuousness of these works. I spoke earlier of the self-absorption of the figures in Diebenkorn's work. We might notice now that his figure drawings rarely afford a clear view of the floor and therefore set back their depicted subjects in their own space, apart from the viewer. These subjects are accessible to us mainly in their elevation. Often, they seem to have only an elevation and no ground plan—as Philip Rawson describes such an effect, at its source, in the work of Cézanne. This is partly to reinforce the fact that they are accessible to us through our sense of sight. However, it is also to accumulate in their elevation, and hence make available to our sight, their tactility, which swells out. The line drawing in these works—and in the Ocean Park works too—does not only contain their tactility and therefore their intimacy. It frames and articulates these things. The figures may behave as if we are not there but they dispose themselves for our benefit. Drawing thus disposes them. It does control what they may reveal. But sometimes, mastery is taken off its guard.

In nearly all of Diebenkorn's drawings, we see what might be thought of as lapses of mastery. We see this most evidently in the way that areas are filled. Here, accident clearly is courted, and one reason why the complex drawings are the richest is that they allow accidents to happen more. I do not mean that the results look accidental. Rather, that while Diebenkorn fills areas very deliberately, he seems also to do so on the border of inattention at the same time. (Walter Sickert compared this way of working to paring one's nails.) There is an element of dreaming, of fantasy, in this way of working, and no art can quite manage without it, for during it the mind can wander and imagine even as the hand is occupied. It is possible, of course, to draw—to draw lines—in this way. This is the premise of automatic drawing, from Arp to



FIG. 19. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. *Study for an Odalisque*. n.d. Black chalk on paper, 9 $\frac{3}{8}$  × 8" (23.4 × 20.2 cm). Musée Ingres, Montauban

Miró to Pollock, though it is not restricted to automatic drawing by any means, or to abstract or modern art by any means. We see it in some of Diebenkorn's drawings, but usually in his abstract ones: alone, often, in his early abstract drawings; in company with a less freely intuitive way of working in his Ocean Park drawings—in company with drawing of control. His representational drawings, in contrast, are dominated by drawing of control. Here, whether the model is present or not, the mind of the artist does not wander freely but concentrates on the model, and what he draws is aimed at something very specific: at realizing the emotional interest aroused by the model. So the drawing itself must be specific. But this controlling kind of drawing, too, shows lapses of mastery.

It sometimes reveals dreaming, as when a line trails off almost absentmindedly, or when an apparently less essential part of the subject is put in quickly and summarily and just left like that. The artist realizes, of course, that nothing is inessential. He has come to value these more cursory sections and says he learned from Matisse that he must resist the temptation, as a work nears its completion, to improve something that seems to stick out as wrong or incomplete. "You'll try to fix it and find out it was the key to the whole thing, and you've ruined it." So you must "forgo the temptation of fixing that one more place."

But mastery is mainly taken off its guard, in this controlling kind of drawing, in a different way: by the reality of the observed subject. In the representational drawings, his ideas were "'worked on,' changed, altered, by what was 'out there.'" So, line will stop and struggle at a particularly charged moment, or will dig into the sheet, or will have to be pulled rudely around an important contour, or will hesitate there and have to be redrawn. The representational drawings are full of such reworkings. They are not so much second thoughts as moments when first thoughts are caught off their guard. They show the artist, in the process of drawing a line, being caught off his guard by a reaction to the reality of the observed subject, as it is emerging under his hand, whose intensity is such as to challenge the continuity of that process. Control unexpectedly gapes at the warmest parts. In extreme cases, the artist stammers to say what he means, then tries again. We value the splendid clumsiness that often results. It is the ultimate deftness of a great draftsman to be so unforgiving of mere skill.

Among the marvels of the Ocean Park series is their combination of the two kinds of line drawing that I have been describing. He began this series with control foremost in his mind. He used a ruler to draw lines. "I'd tried to draw straight lines by hand," he says. "The problem was that I really didn't want gesture, or the way

hesitation could seem like a lead into gesture.” And he even attempted working on graph paper so that he could transfer a precisely formed composition onto canvas. That did not work. Using a ruler did. But more often than not, it seems to have been a way of speeding rather than precisizing the development of work. The ruled lines that we do see, in the works on paper at least, often appear to have been among the last elements added to a composition, as if the artist says: enough of this hesitation; this is exactly how it must be. And yet, we also see that many such definitive lines have been painted out. In any case, Diebenkorn seems incapable of ruling a line that is exactly straight. As in the representational drawings, these lines of control respond to what happens along their course. Not every visible line that composes the grillwork is of this kind. Some are intuitive, dreaming lines. In effect, Diebenkorn combines now the approaches to line drawing of his early abstract and his representational periods. As I have observed before, his art accumulates as it develops. But if the works of the Ocean Park series are the richest and fullest of Diebenkorn’s career, it is not because their value is in their accretion. It is in what happens in their accretion.

This is another reason why line drawing is so important. It not only allows the artist intuitively to wander and determinedly to struggle for control. It also serves to bind together everything that he does. Much earlier, we noticed how drawing in Diebenkorn’s paintings functions as mortar between bricks to keep the structure firmly together. Subsequently, we saw how extended sessions of drawing mediated the transition between his abstract and representational and then representational and abstract periods. Recently, it has become clear that line drawing is often enclosure drawing: it forms signs or images, but additionally networks of them. In the Ocean Park series, it defines the segments from which each work is made. The making of each work takes so long because it is a matter of amalgamating parts. Each part must be defined exactly and no part can be defined in isolation. So line and the adjustment of line slowly, arduously, amalgamate the corpus of parts, weaving them into one fabric. When the artist’s control of line gapes, therefore, so does the fabric. And the artist has come to welcome this happening. Talking once of a Hofmann painting he admired, he drew attention to “one little corner area—you could put your hand over it—that concedes the viewer a peek at the amorphousness beneath. Just a little peek—that idea really interests me.”

The amorphousness beneath, beyond his control but only revealed because he is controlling, is not the sunshine of California. Nevertheless, the character of the light evoked by the Ocean Park series does refer to the place of its creation. Diebenkorn has observed that whereas a traditional artist’s development might take him from concen-

tration on still life to landscape and then to the figure, "beyond that is the area of space, mood, and light" which can form the subject of the abstract artist. The works of the Ocean Park series, he adds, "permit an all-over light which wasn't possible... in the representational works, which seem somewhat dingy by comparison." His gradual discovery of this light in his work, as a constant of his work, helped to consolidate this series, whose constancy is in its sense of place and whose repetitions are his attempts to formulate it.

All this said, however, Diebenkorn's deepest feeling is not simply for space and light: when he lists these as his interests, he places mood between them. Neither is his feeling, finally, for place. It is, rather, for his own sense of place: he does not only look out on the world but examines his place in the world as he does so. The character of his art has always been so intimately related to the character of his environment that he could well say, with Constable: "Still I should paint my own places best"—but only with the corollary, "Painting is with me but another word for feeling."

The works of the Ocean Park series are species of windows or portals but also interior pictures. Remembering Matisse's *The Studio, Quai St.-Michel* (fig. 6), we can see that they recall not so much the view through the window there; rather, the ghost-like pictures shown on the studio wall above the sensuous body of the model. Like those mysterious apparitions, Diebenkorn's Ocean Park works allude to the world outside and, simultaneously, stir thoughts about the body. They allude to architecture but also to human architecture. They are windows but also containers. And similar to the surface of Matisse's painting, their surfaces vibrate like a translucent skin, as if the space they enclose is the full and living space within the body.

They are, of course, abstract works of art, and no more describe the body than they describe architecture. Indeed, the associations that they evoke are evoked only intermittently; are never before us in their entirety; and therefore also remind us of the stability, by contrast, of the works from which they derive. With that reminder comes another: of what it might mean to exist independently of association or distraction. This, of course, has human significance too.

## 7. *Descriptions without Place*

The works on paper of the Ocean Park series are not studies for the paintings. Neither are they ways of learning how to make paintings. "A way is just what I don't want," he says. "With each new painting, I find a way all too soon, and that's when the trouble starts." Working on paper is useful and necessary, however. "There's much drawing

beforehand," he says, "but the paintings don't necessarily come out of the drawings. But it's the bent. It's the way that brings me to a *kind* of imagery." It brings a kind of imagery to the threshold of painting. And each work on paper is a prolonged meditation on what drawing can accomplish at the threshold of painting. Among their discoveries are these.

First: something done on paper cannot be worked quite as long as something on canvas. There will be a point beyond which the surface can be bruised no more and will actually collapse in final failure. So paper is intrinsically more suited to a swifter, more spontaneous and light-handed approach. Some of the works on paper, therefore, are extremely spare: the smallest possible number of notations that will suffice to realize their composition. However, since the bruises do show more on paper than on canvas, perhaps the work on paper should not dodge them after all but, instead, accumulate them, making such a work far more explicitly a record of their accumulation than a painting can be (p. 165). And should the surface of the paper become unduly clogged, if the artist acts quickly enough, and if it is the right kind of paper, then it can be wiped clean. So Diebenkorn prefers shiny, coated paper. He began occasionally to use it at Albuquerque (earlier, if one counts his first childhood drawings on his father's shirt cardboards) and now uses it almost exclusively. Now, he also uses masking devices to preserve the sections of a drawing he likes while scrubbing out others (pp. 185, 193). Often, this generates new imagery.

Second: something done on paper, however, need not be wiped clean if it is not working. Neither does it have to be painted out. It can be patched. This option is not available to painting: not to Diebenkorn's painting. Some of his works on paper therefore comprise dense sandwiches of paper, almost (p. 159). But they are never collages that draw attention to the disparate character of their parts. For the point is always to adjust each fragment until the parts disappear into the whole. In works of this kind, the artist does physically, materially, what he does more often by the adjustment of linear boundaries: amalgamate a corpus of parts. At times, he will thus enlarge a work in its making (p. 157), something impossible for him in painting. There will be a limit, though, beyond which a work cannot be enlarged. The fragile space of his modern abstraction needs the firmer support of canvas over a large area. Conversely, paper more readily allows the creation of small, fully realized abstract works than canvas does. "A small *canvas* usually becomes for me an unfeasible miniature," Diebenkorn says. "Paper, I find, is something else, lending itself to the different scale of the small size."



FIG. 20. Richard Diebenkorn. *Untitled*. 1968. Leather, cloth, wood, and string; height approx. 30" (76.2 cm). Private collection

Third: the different scale of the small size is the scale of things close at hand. It is the scale established by the hand and the wrist and by the arm bent rather than extended. Everything is closer and more enclosed. Everything is therefore more intimate as well. And yet, the intimacy of these small works is that of research done privately but for publication, almost like scientific experiments. They do, in fact, test ideas. And while no painting will duplicate what a work on paper discovers (although an occasional print will), parts of paintings will remember parts of works on paper. In this respect, these works on paper are drawings, and the artist refers to them as such regardless of the fact that "many of them are fully developed paintings" of a small size. They often begin, he says, "as sketchy explorations of ideas" and as such constitute "a kind of tryout or rehearsal of general possibilities" for the larger works on canvas. The spare and summary pure line drawings have that function. But insofar as usually they grow from their sketchy beginnings, at a certain point in their growth usually they cease to have that function and grow on to become complete and independent works. However, images discovered in these independent drawings constantly are crossbred, hybridized, and new drawings grow out of them. Images on paper constantly are dissected and reassembled from one work to the next, altering in the process. Apparently completed drawings are framed and taken home for further, prolonged inspection. Many end up back in the studio to have their faults corrected. At times, they change so drastically as hardly to be recognizable as the same works anymore. Diebenkorn's constant reworkings of his images are almost as obsessive as Ingres's were, or Degas's. Like Degas (whose work he deeply admires), he could well say: "It is essential to redo the same subject ten times, one hundred times." And he sometimes seems, like Degas (in Dan Hofstadter's description), "a sort of neoclassicist of the self who regarded his own works as the classics to be copied and restored." By continuing to redo the same subject, however, he not only stays constant and faithful to his past; he also reimagines it as his future.

The earliest drawings of the Ocean Park series are dated 1970, three years later than the earliest paintings. The first painting of the series was made very near the end of 1967. For part of 1968, Diebenkorn was incapacitated by a back operation and kept from his studio. It seems likely that some of the drawings dated 1970 were begun the previous year. Still, it is interesting to note that, as was the case at the beginning of his representational period, it was only after the first spurt of inspiration in painting that he started regularly to produce independent and ambitious drawings as well. This argues a consolidating impulse for these works: that they began as a way of catching

up with and reexamining what he had been doing in painting and thus as a way of readying himself for new painting. They have continued to fulfill that function. Therefore, at times (even for lengthy periods) he works only on paper.

While Diebenkorn was recuperating after his back operation in 1968, he made a group of strange, fetish-like objects reminiscent partly of tribal masks and partly of California funk art (fig. 20). Then, in 1970, when the Ocean Park series was consolidating and the first drawings in the series were completed, he participated in a program organized by the Department of the Interior in which artists were asked to document water-reclamation projects: taken up in a helicopter, he photographed the Salt River Canyon in Arizona (figs. 21, 22), and also made drawings from a pinnacle overlooking the canyon. The development of the Ocean Park series—and we see this especially in the drawings—seems to move around the opposite poles these two experiences symbolize. I do not mean that he makes fetishes and he makes maps. He has never later used these experiences to provide the subject matter of his work. But his work, he says, is “always swinging back and forth between pared-down simplicity and an attempt to hold on to the incidentals.” He wants to preserve the incidentals, to retain what seems particular, iconic, and charged; and he also wants an open and spare relational art. He wants something near and urgent that is also distanced and harmonized. But there will be times when he wants one of these options more than he wants the other. This we see more clearly from the drawings than from the paintings, most notably from the appearance of depicted images in the clubs and spades series of 1980–81 between periods of affirmatively relational works, but also from shifts of emphasis within distinct periods of work. In this regard, these Ocean Park drawings confirm something that I have said is true of Diebenkorn’s art as a whole: that sometimes he believes most in the imagination for a long time and then he turns to reality and believes most in that. Only now, his pictorial form is so constructed as to accommodate them both. Within it, both imagination and reality project themselves endlessly and he wants them to do just that.

All this said, the Ocean Park drawings do not only swing back and forth between these two options. They also progress. And in their progression they reveal something that I have also said is true of Diebenkorn’s art as a whole: that his art alters as he reimagines the past. Only now, his pictorial form is so constructed as to allow him to do so rapaciously and systematically—to what extent becomes clear once we realize that the development of these drawings effectively recapitulates the development of early modernism. They begin not only as rehearsals for paintings. They also rehearse *that*.



FIGS. 21, 22. Richard Diebenkorn. Aerial photographs, Arizona, 1970

The early drawings—say, those dating from 1970 to 1974 (when Diebenkorn moved to a new studio on Main Street in Santa Monica, after giving up his teaching position at the University of California at Los Angeles)—swing back and forth between comprising pared-down, rough geometric motifs and dense accumulations of such motifs. The sparer drawings include some groups of works based on common images: for example, a vertically divided field, the left side cut by a diagonal, the right by an ogee curve (p. 158); and a field divided by a pair of parallel diagonals that move down the sheet from left to right, the one on the left shifting suddenly to the vertical to parallel drawing at the left edge of the sheet, the one on the right running off the right edge of the sheet (pp. 154, 156). Within these groups, differences of inflection in their drawing, tonality, color, and choice of medium distinguish the individual works. Throughout the Ocean Park series, Diebenkorn has continued to make such groups of similar but individually distinct drawings. But insofar as his drawings become more complex, they move further from their original idea or format—to associate themselves with the ideas or formats of other groups of works. Additionally, he makes individual drawings, of varying complexity, outside of groups. The compositions of these drawings intersect with each other, and with those of the drawings within groups, to produce a large, extended family of related works. It would be possible to trace in detail how one branch of the family relates to another; how likenesses between branches occur in the most unlikely features at times; how one branch produces more offshoots than another. All this is there to see in the Ocean Park series taken as a whole. So is the way that during a particular period of its growth certain common characteristics proliferate. They will persist beyond the period of their proliferation. Nothing stops growing. But some things grow more vigorously in one period than in another.

Among the generic likenesses of the early Ocean Park drawings are these. They comprise open, geometric lattices, the regularity of whose geometry is upset by variations in the thickness or direction or consistency of line, by various surface imperfections including the cancellation of lines, by pockets of incident set into the geometric lattices, and by the way that the orientation of the lattices frequently seems displaced somewhat from the geometry of the sheets they occupy. They are affirmatively frontal works and with rare exceptions works of a vertical format whose drawing recapitulates the drawing of their edges. Most are monochromatic and even when (exceptionally) they contain multiple, high-pitched colors, they are tonally conceived works. Compositionally, some invoke the portal imagery of Diebenkorn's preceding representational period; others, his memories of the two 1914 Matisses that



so impressed him in 1966. Many recast what Diebenkorn learned from those Matisse into a geometrically more complex and more Cubist format and thereby engage that area of pictorial concern addressed earlier by the window paintings of Robert Delaunay (fig. 23). They remain indubitably Diebenkorn's own. In no sense are they historicist works. And yet, they do take hold of that area of earlier modernist art where abstraction and representation coexisted in intuitively formed geometry, and reimagine it at Ocean Park.

In the mid- and later 1970s, culminating in the very large number of drawings that Diebenkorn made in 1977–78, the geometry of the series becomes more regular and more consistently complex. Only rarely now are works composed from a few broad areas. The sparer works are spare because of their simplicity of medium not of composition, and these are small in number. Moreover, the elements that upset the regularity of the geometry do so more subtly, seeming more to inflect it than to subvert it as they did previously. The imagistic impulse does not entirely disappear, finding expression in the beginning of a (still continuing) group of drawings of arch motifs (pp. 164, 165), but the general effect now is of surface continuum. This manifests itself in two main ways: first, in a sequence of richly colored drawings (p. 161); second, in a sequence of grisailles (pp. 162–65). The colored drawings are still tonal in conception, and need to be, lest the colors that occupy the different compartments of the grid become isolated from each other like panes of a stained-glass window. But their color is more affective than that of the few earlier colored drawings. It will range from a pastel-like delicacy to something warm and sonorous to an effect of drenched intensity like color revealed by wetting a pebble or stone. And it will always allow the light of the paper to appear in it, never so opaquing the surface as to seal it, only enough to make an emulsive skin. Some of the grisaille drawings approach that condition in the density of their drawn and redrawn lines. Diebenkorn had made occasional works of this kind in the early 1970s, but now they proliferate to an extraordinary range of compositional options and emotional effect. There is no sense of bravado in their command of the medium, but they are works of great virtuosity just the same. Their restriction of means is that of a solo instrument performed to perfection: not as a segment of some larger orchestration but as a condensation of such an orchestration, as full and varied as it is and more intense, if anything, for the purity of the means.

Like some of the earlier drawings, these mid-1970s grisailles recall Delaunay's window compositions. However, their more searching, meditative spirit is closer to

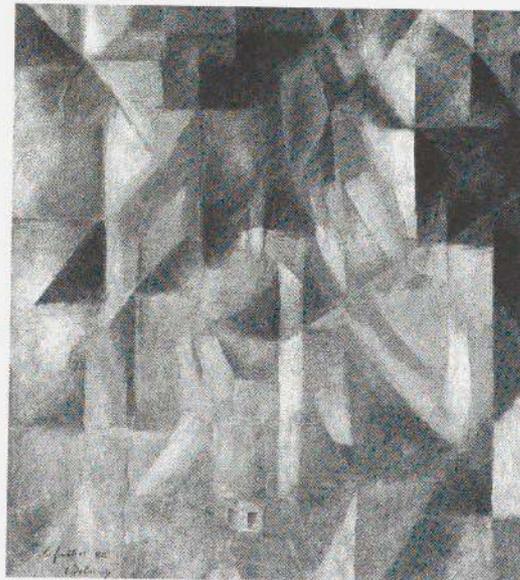


FIG. 23. Robert Delaunay. *Windows*. 1912. Encaustic on canvas, 31½ × 27¾" (79.9 × 70 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection

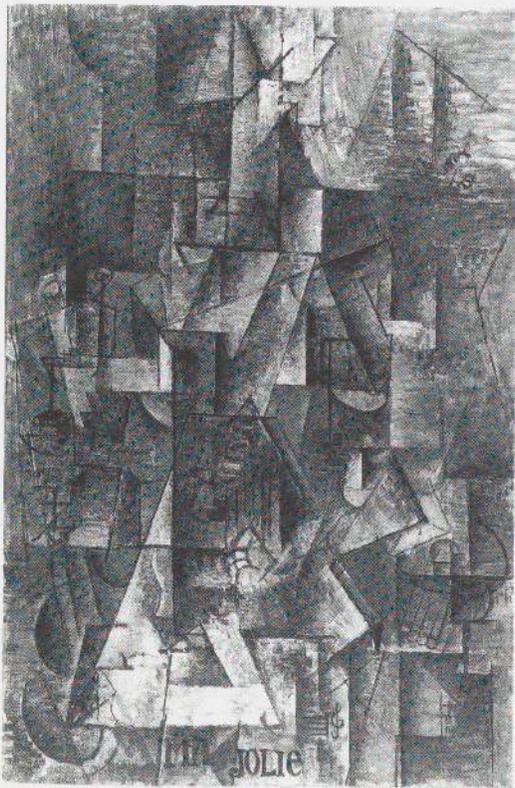


FIG. 24. Pablo Picasso. "Ma Jolie." 1911-12. Oil on canvas, 39 $\frac{3}{8}$  × 25 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (100 × 65.4 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest

that of Analytical Cubism. I am reminded of pictures like Picasso's "Ma Jolie" of 1911-12 (fig. 24): not only by the fractured, shaded lines hovering in an indeterminate, atmospheric space but also by the sense of objects having been pried apart to release an internal light that is too mysterious to be called worldly. Of all of Diebenkorn's Ocean Park drawings, these in particular seem metaphorical of the living internal body. The vertical ones have the mass without massiveness of bodies. The audacious subgroup of horizontals unfold their bodily architecture until it is stretched out in front of us as if unrolled from the volume of the body.

Occasional drawings of this period use more crisply articulated and less rectilinear geometry, thereby engaging with artists further afield from the center of Cubism. One such drawing of 1977 (p. 167) thus engages the Mondrian of 1912-14 (fig. 25). Another 1977 drawing (p. 169) introduces panels of color in a grisaille-type work, thereby combining the options of the mid-1970s. In doing so, this drawing addresses issues analogous to those addressed by Cubist collages. By the end of the 1970s, Diebenkorn has taken the logical next step. A superlative drawing of 1979, flatter and denser than those I have been discussing and flag-like in its composition (p. 175), recalls Synthetic Cubism, in particular Picasso's *The Studio* of 1927-28 (fig. 26). Also in the late 1970s, Diebenkorn combined the two options of the mid-1970s in a different way: by composing continuous grids whose drawing articulates a single color (p. 176 [right]). In works of this kind, he comes close to being a pure color-field artist. But the drawing insistently designs or divides the field, which partakes of the density of drawing. At times, parallel lines or bands of contrasting color flash around the perimeters of the field, rolling back space there to project forward the field, thus weighting it (p. 168). Frequently, drawing will seem to cut into the field (p. 177), as did the heavily drawn contours of some of the representational drawings (p. 132). And, also in the late 1970s, having carried his art to a level of geometric abstraction very far from those drawings, Diebenkorn recalls them in a group of drawings with arabesque, scrolling forms like the contours of sections of the body (pp. 172, 173).

Even knowing these works, what follows still comes as a surprise, namely the iconic clubs and spades of 1980-81 (pp. 179-81). A small group of complex drawings, made late in 1980, announced it (p. 178). Their scatter of images recalls Diebenkorn's still-life drawings and also possibly, Richard Newlin surmises, Miró's *The Beautiful Bird Revealing the Unknown to a Pair of Lovers* of 1941 (fig. 27). But Diebenkorn has erased, in effect, the curvilinear grid that linked the images in the Miró, choosing from the complex drawings the clubs and spades that appear among less specifiable

forms. "I had always used these signs in my work almost from my beginnings," the artist observes, "but always peripherally, incidentally, and perhaps whimsically." He had been fascinated by their shapes since childhood, when he had painted them on homemade shields. They appear in occasional drawings of the early abstract period. One of the 1955 drawings parodying Abstract Expressionist painters shows a figure with a club motif on his back. (The aim of the parody, perhaps, is modern, playing-card flatness.) And the trees in some of the representational works (for example, in a 1966 acrylic [p. 146]) strongly resemble clubs or spades. But now, Diebenkorn chose to deal with them "directly—as theme and variation," he said. "I discovered that these symbols had for me a much greater emotional charge than I realized." They mutate endlessly. They are threatening, then benign; they are trees, then fruit, then whole landscapes; they recall Arp, then the cutouts of Matisse, then motifs from Diebenkorn's own earliest mature drawings of 1948–49. They also mark a decisive break in the Ocean Park series, which will never be quite the same after.

Some of the broad, opaque horizontals that Diebenkorn made in 1981, as he exhausted the clubs and spades theme, carry memories of the theme in their drawing (pp. 182, 183). But it is the urgency of the theme, more than its specific shape vocabulary, that mainly altered what came after. The drawings of the 1980s are tougher and bolder, admit more discordant shapes and colors, risk more in the process of their creation and in the mutation of imagery within that process. The artist will mask out and scrub out with greater vehemence, producing a more surprising variety of images and, often, dismantling the characteristic Ocean Park scaffolding as he does so. The bold, squarish drawings of 1983 (p. 185) achieve a new form of monumentality that presses the sheet outward, intolerant of confining geometry. And when geometry was reestablished in the mid-1980s, it was of a rougher, more vernacular kind than that of the fine, Gothic traceries of the earlier work. At times, he seems to be composing from slabs of stone. In any case, the geometric grille is now an option in his work and no longer its method of control. In one drawing of 1987, what is almost a still life blossoms in an eccentric cluster of freely invented forms (p. 192 [right]). In another, of 1986, huge, gray, organic shapes inflate within its body (p. 189).

"There are beings who do not feel that they have acted—that they have accomplished anything—if they have not done so in opposition to themselves." This is Valéry on Degas. It seems an odd comment at first, not because it emphasizes will power but because of where it claims will power is exercised. However, Valéry is arguing that Degas was never satisfied with the products of his spontaneity; there-

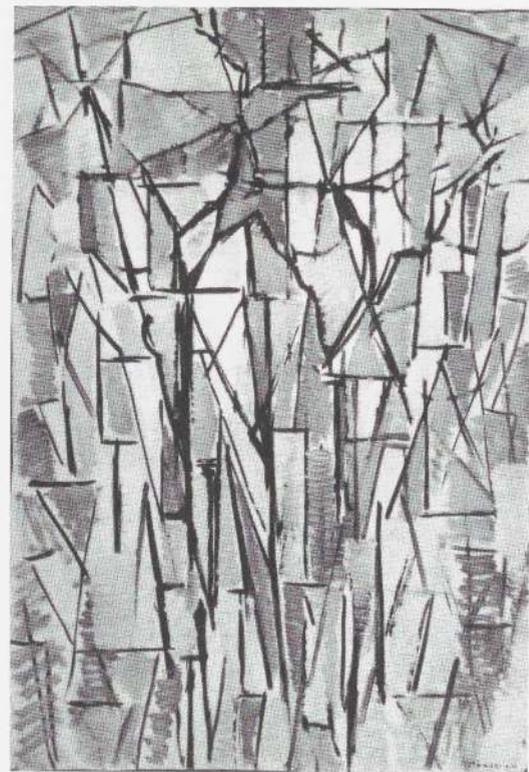


FIG. 25. Piet Mondrian. *Composition with Trees*. c. 1912. Oil on canvas, 38 $\frac{5}{8}$  × 25 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (98.1 × 65.1 cm). Gemeentemuseum, The Hague

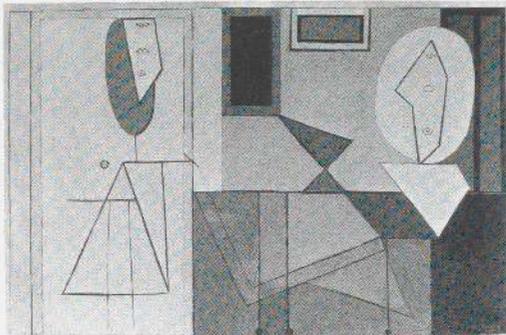


FIG. 26. Pablo Picasso. *The Studio*. 1927-28. Oil on canvas, 59 × 91" (149.9 × 231.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.

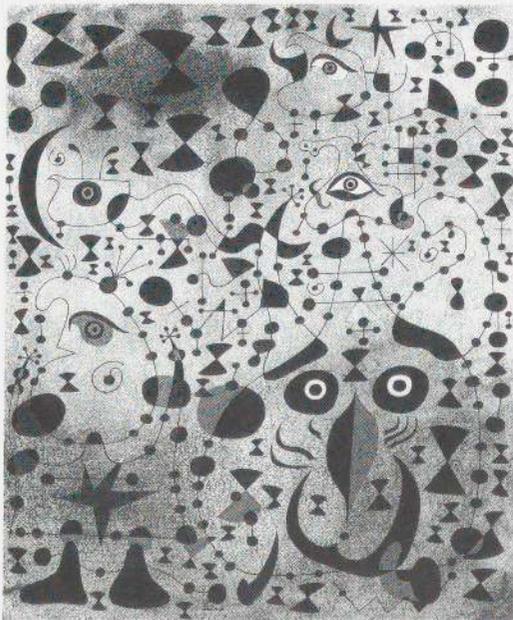


FIG. 27. Joan Miró. *The Beautiful Bird Revealing the Unknown to a Pair of Lovers*. 1941. Gouache and oil wash on paper, 18 × 15" (45.7 × 38.1 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest

fore, had always to be acting against it, against himself. I began this discussion of Diebenkorn's work by saying that drawing has the reputation of being the most spontaneous of the visual arts, and Diebenkorn of being the most deliberative of our major contemporary artists. I have subsequently argued that drawing, nevertheless, is central to his achievement. But this is not, I think, because it symbolizes the spontaneity with which he, too, is never satisfied, therefore focusing his will power to oppose and exceed the spontaneous. It is partly that. But it is also, I think, because this process focuses something even deeper. Experience tells us that those actions which require us to oppose ourselves are not only our most difficult, but are also those we know to be our most selfless and disinterested. Other, spontaneous actions may be equally so, but do not tell us that they are so in their very performance. In Diebenkorn's case, I suspect that the act of drawing forces him into a kind of self-examination (one that artists only fully know) wherein his own handwriting, his very signature, as it emerges under his hand, becomes a challenge to himself. And if the result is to be more than merely self-projection, if it is to communicate beyond himself, he has to act in opposition to himself, selflessly and disinterestedly. And by acting thus, by constantly challenging himself, he comes to know himself better, and we are glad to know him better too.

Even as these last sentences were written, Diebenkorn uprooted himself from Santa Monica, where he had been living for twenty years. It is reasonable to assume that the Ocean Park series is therefore over. It is unreasonable to assume that the new Diebenkorn, back in Northern California, will be unlike the one we know. (No definitive conclusions should be drawn from the few works he has made at Healdsburg [pp. 196, 197].) The images may well change but if they do it will not be, finally, because the environment changes, because external reality changes, but simply because reality is external. And as long as some reality is external, there can be change. Diebenkorn's art is particular to his environment but it is more particular to his meeting with what is external to himself, and is therefore what Wallace Stevens called a "description without place." His art is where, at the moment of creation, he confronts everything external, in art and the world alike: "where/Dazzle yields to a clarity and we observe."



EARLY ABSTRACT DRAWINGS



*Untitled (Sausalito)*. 1948-49  
Oil and gouache  
26¼ × 20¼" (66.7 × 51.5 cm)  
Private collection

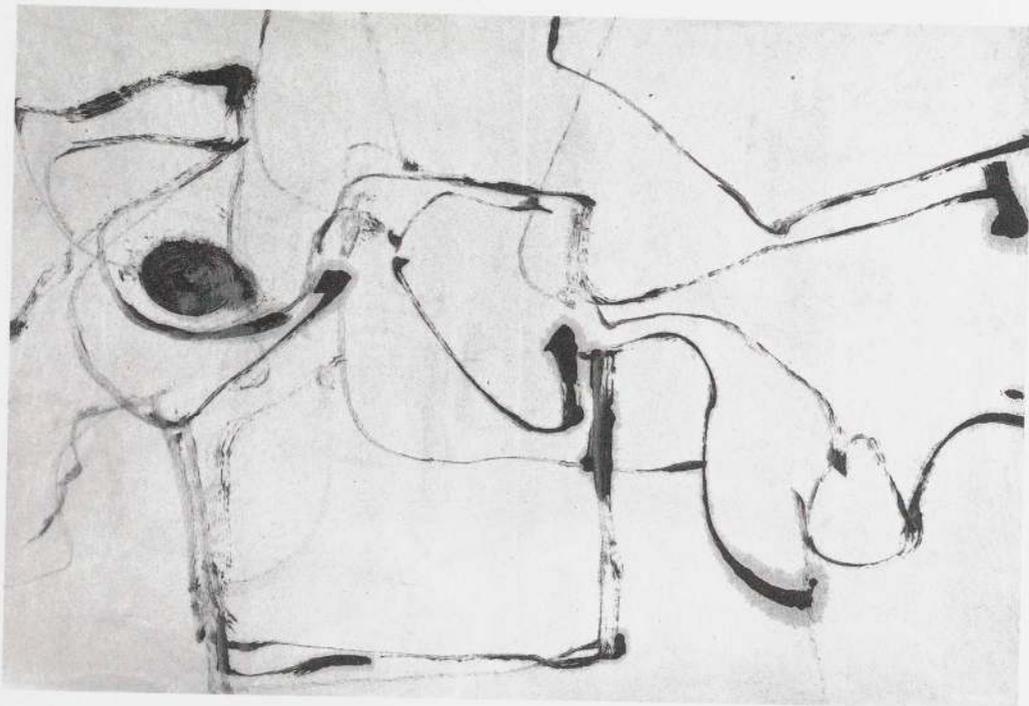


*Untitled (Sausalito)*. 1949  
Oil, gouache, and ink  
23¾ × 18" (60.5 × 45.8 cm)  
Private collection



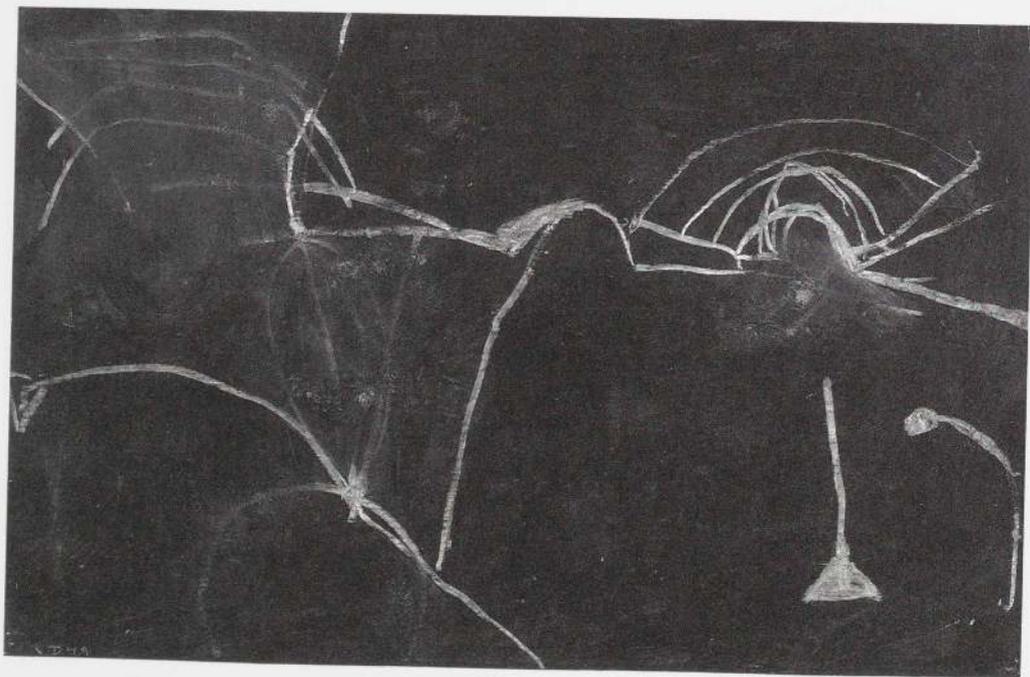
*Untitled (Sausalito)*, 1948

Oil, gouache, and ink  
22 $\frac{5}{16}$  × 18 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (57.4 × 45.9 cm)  
Private collection



*Untitled (Sausalito), 1949*

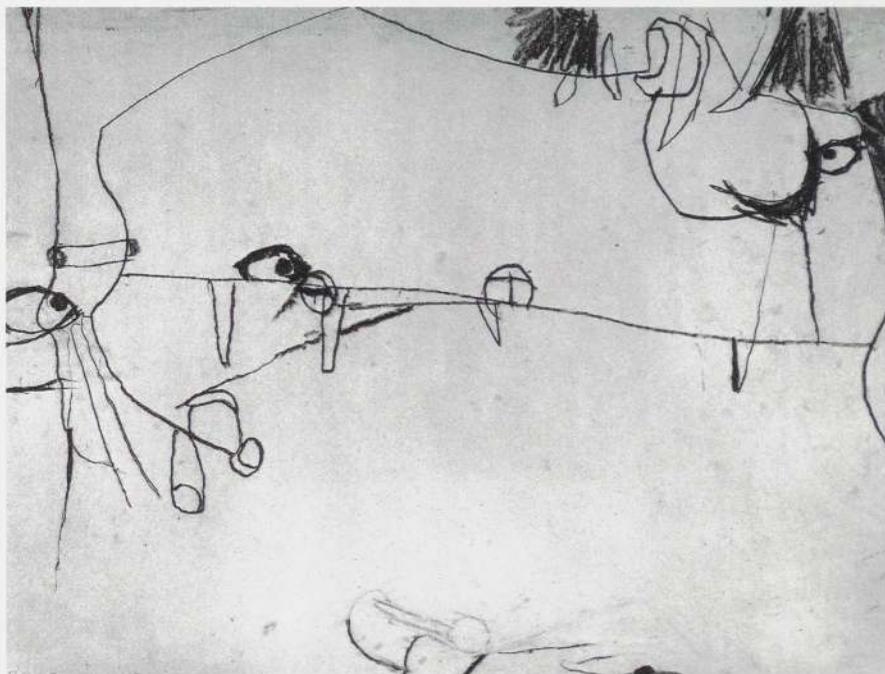
Oil on brown paper  
20<sup>9</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 30<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" (52.2 × 76.7 cm)  
Collection Gretchen and Richard Grant



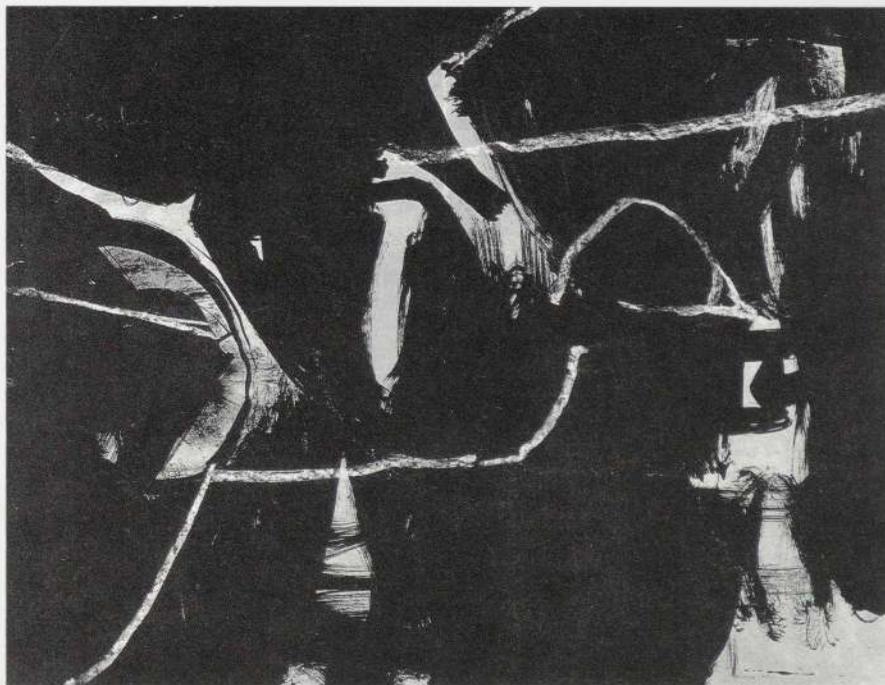
*Untitled (Sausalito), 1949*

Gouache and chalk  
18 × 28<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (45.8 × 71.4 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn

*Untitled (Sausalito)*, 1949  
Black chalk on brown paper  
18 × 23 7/8" (45.8 × 60.7 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn



*Untitled (Sausalito)*, 1949  
Gouache and chalk on brown paper  
21 1/6 × 26 3/4" (53.5 × 68 cm)  
Private collection





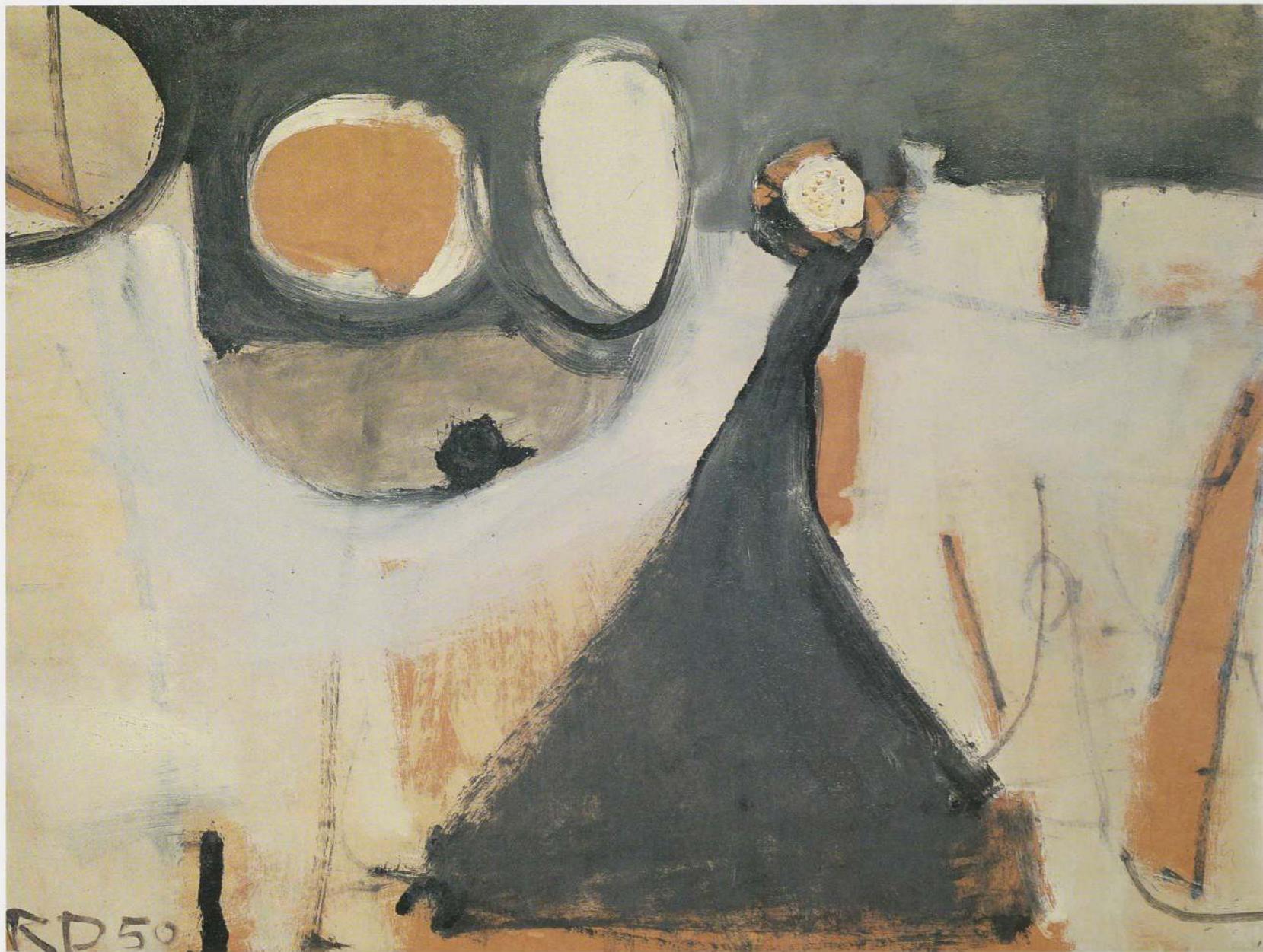
*Untitled (Sausalito)*, 1949

Oil and gouache  
23<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 18" (60.7 × 45.9 cm)  
Private collection



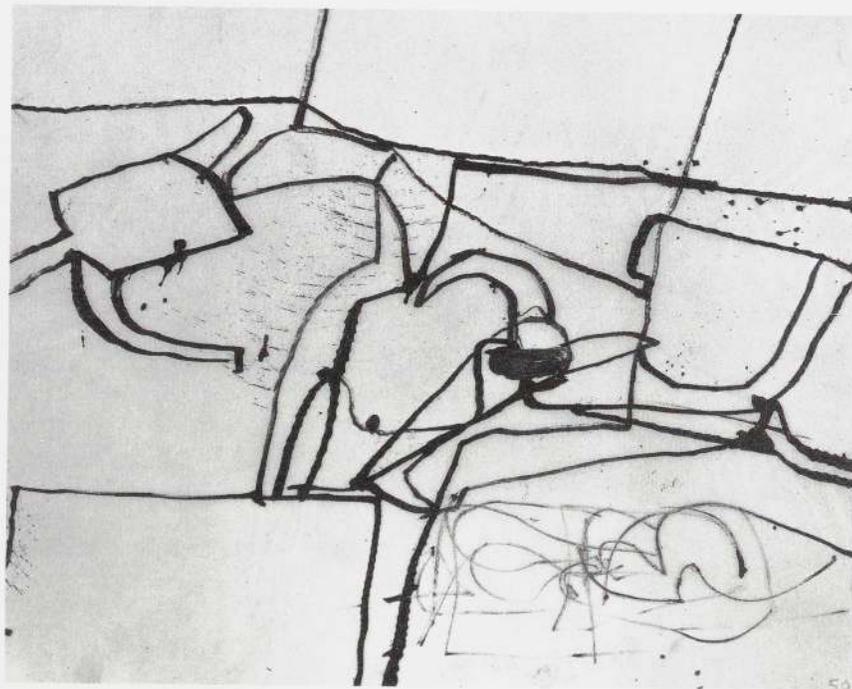
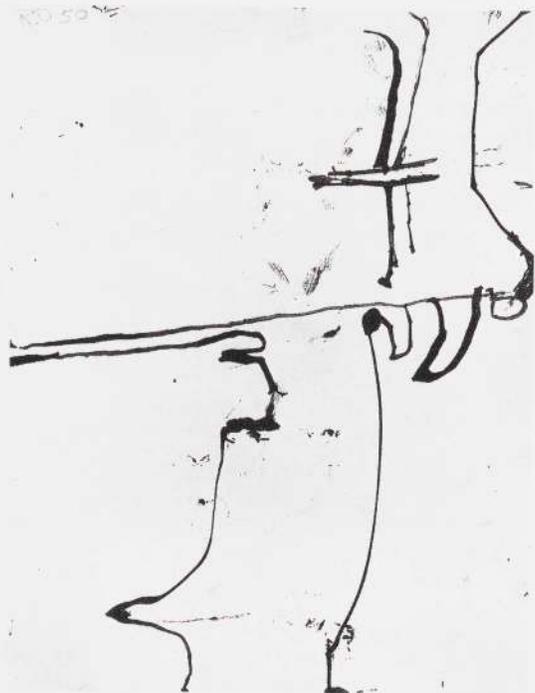
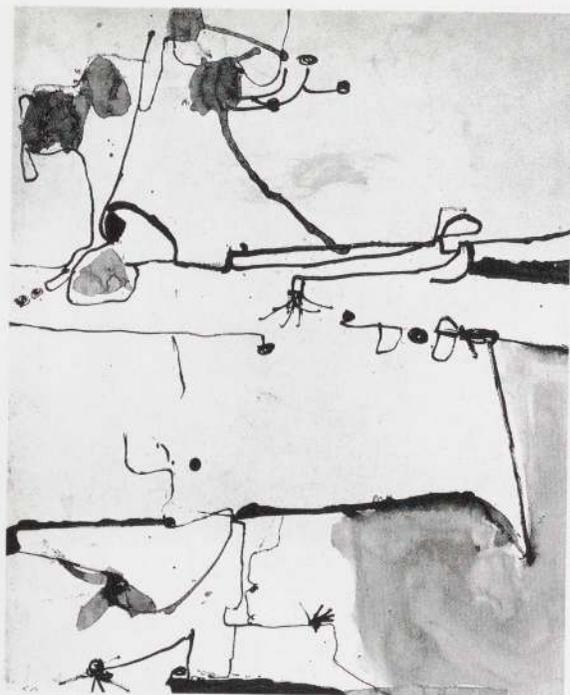
*Untitled (Sausalito)*, 1949

Oil, gouache, and colored ink  
21<sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 17<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" (55.4 × 45.6 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn



*Untitled (Albuquerque)*, 1950

Oil on brown paper  
18½ × 24¾" (47 × 63 cm)  
Collection Paul Kantor



OPPOSITE, LEFT:

*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1950

Ink  
17 × 14" (43.1 × 35.6 cm)  
Private collection

OPPOSITE, RIGHT:

*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1950

Ink  
11 × 8½" (28 × 21.6 cm)  
Private collection

OPPOSITE, LEFT:

*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1950

Ink  
23¾ × 18¼" (60.4 × 47.4 cm)  
Private collection

OPPOSITE, RIGHT:

*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1950

Ink  
11 × 14" (28 × 35.5 cm)  
Private collection

*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1950

Oil on brown paper  
25½ × 22" (65 × 56 cm)  
Collection Paul Kantor





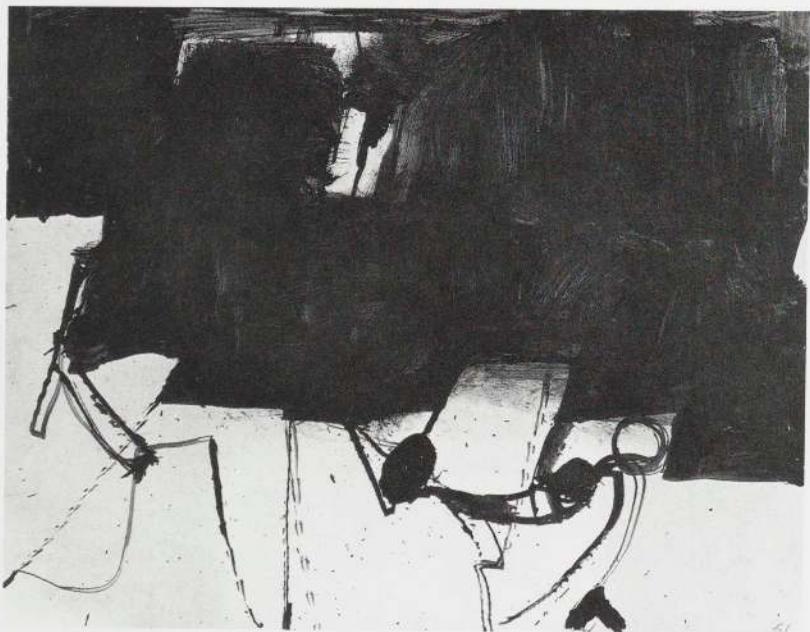
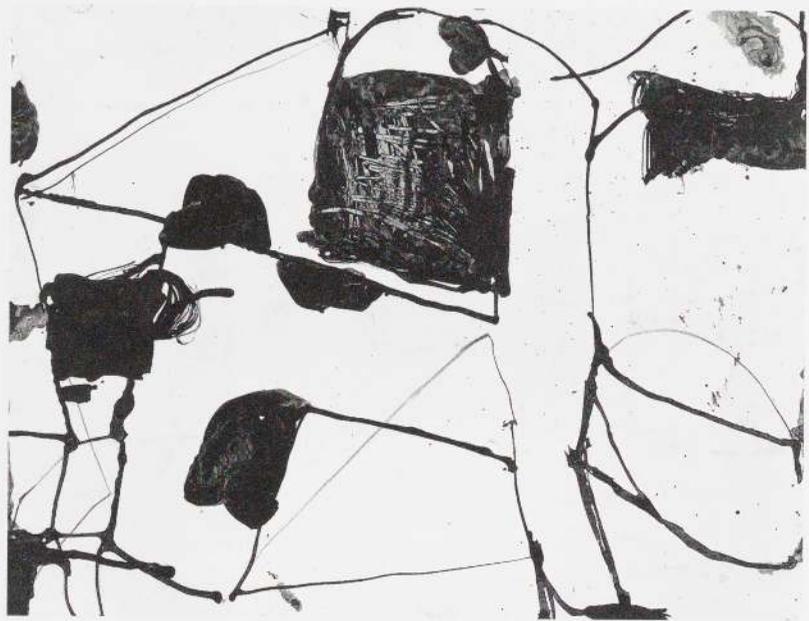
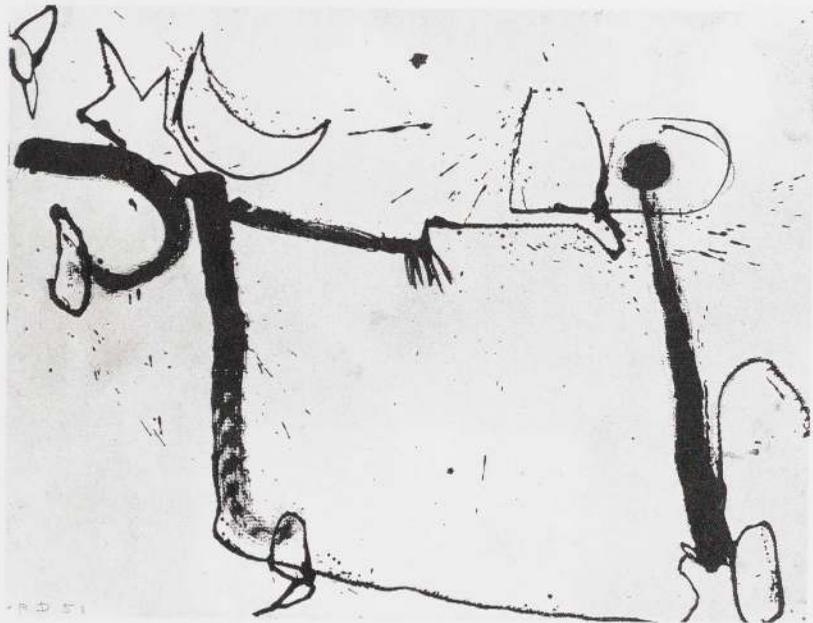
*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1950

Oil, ink, and gouache  
38 × 30" (96.5 × 76.3 cm)  
Private collection



*Untitled (Albuquerque)*, 1950

Oil, ink, and gouache  
39 $\frac{7}{16}$  × 30" (99.6 × 76.3 cm)  
Private collection



OPPOSITE, LEFT:

*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1951

Ink  
9½ × 12½" (24.1 × 31.7 cm)  
Private collection

OPPOSITE, RIGHT:

*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1951

Gouache  
11 × 14½" (28 × 35.8 cm)  
Private collection

OPPOSITE, LEFT:

*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1951

Gouache  
11½ × 14½" (28.2 × 35.6 cm)  
Private collection

OPPOSITE, RIGHT:

*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1951

Watercolor and gouache  
11 × 14" (27.9 × 35.6 cm)  
Collection Leopold S. Tuchman  
and Cynthia S. Monaco

*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1951

Ink and pencil  
17 × 14" (43.2 × 35.6 cm)  
The Montclair Art Museum. Purchased with  
funds from the Florence Schuman Fund





*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1951

Gouache and oilstick  
11 × 14" (28 × 35.5 cm)  
Private collection



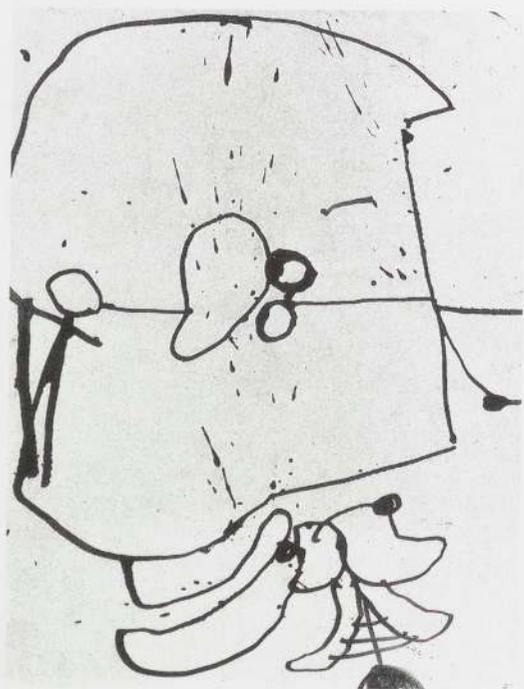
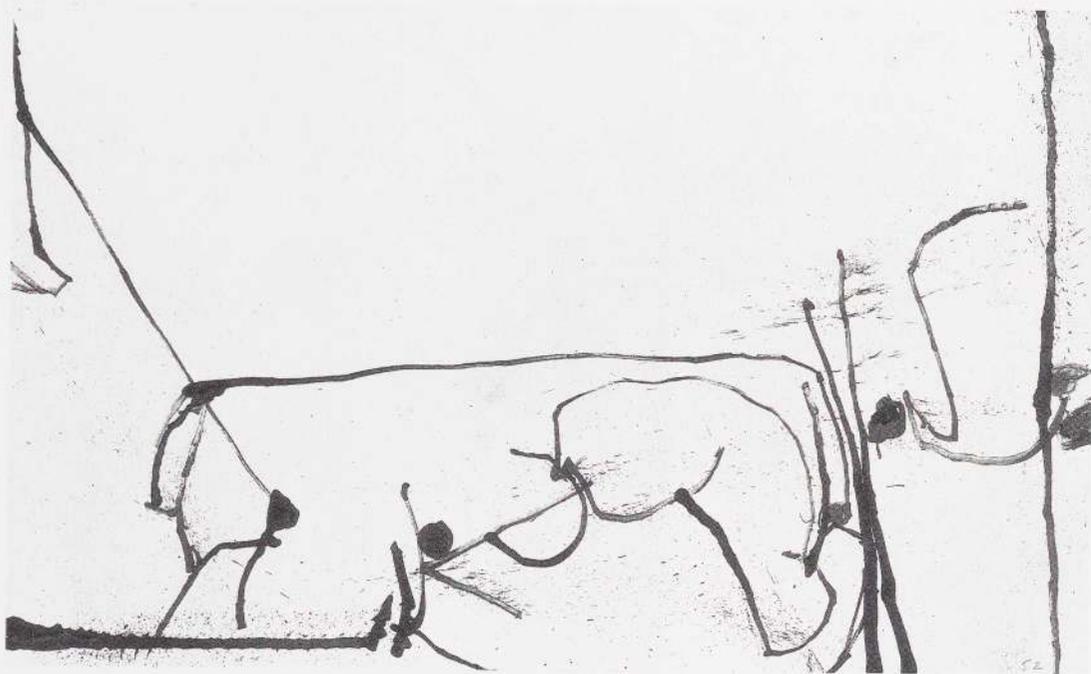
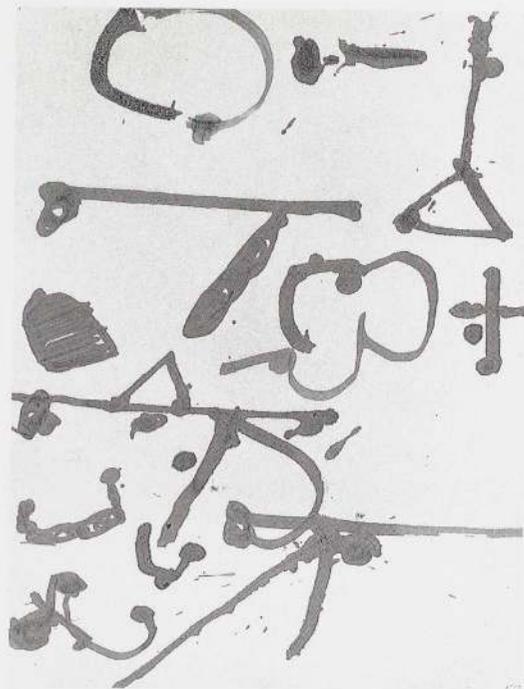
*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1951

Ink and oilstick  
8 7/16 × 14 1/16" (21.8 × 35.8 cm)  
Private collection



*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1951

Gouache, ink, and watercolor  
27 × 24" (68.5 × 60.9 cm)  
North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh.  
Bequest of W. R. Valentiner



OPPOSITE, LEFT:

*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1952

Colored ink  
11<sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (30 × 23 cm)  
Private collection

OPPOSITE, RIGHT:

*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1952

Ink on colored paper  
8<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 14" (21.8 × 35.6 cm)  
Private collection

OPPOSITE, LEFT:

*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1951

Ink  
11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 8<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (28.1 × 22 cm)  
Private collection

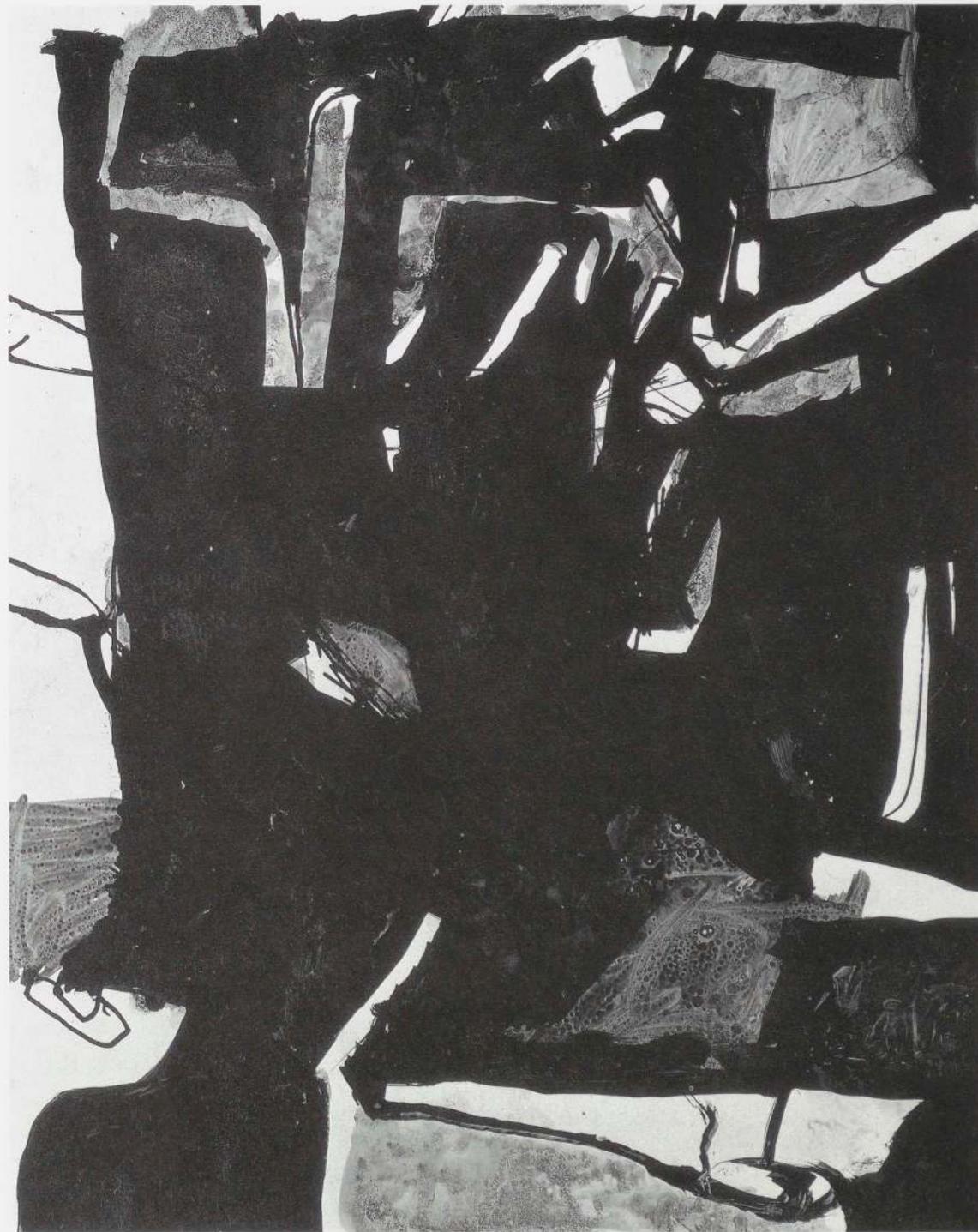
OPPOSITE, RIGHT:

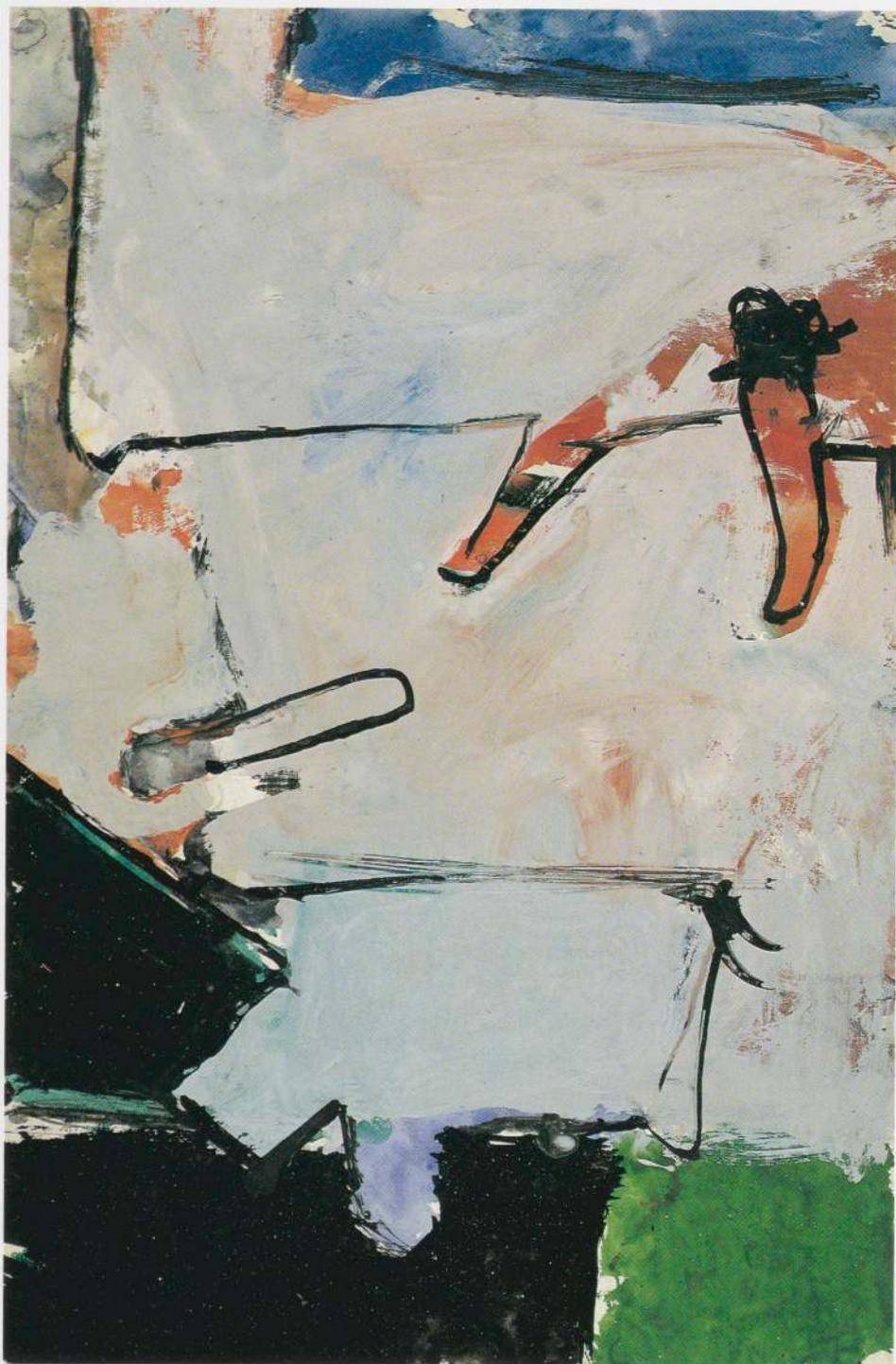
*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1951

Ink, gouache, and rubber cement  
on torn-and-pasted paper  
8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> × 14" (21.6 × 35.6 cm)  
Collection Gretchen and Richard Grant

*Untitled (Albuquerque)*. 1951

Ink  
14 × 11" (35.6 × 27.9 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Gifford Phillips





*Untitled (Albuquerque)*, 1951

Gouache, ink, and watercolor  
19 × 12<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (48.2 × 31.2 cm)  
Private collection



*Untitled (Albuquerque)*, 1951

Watercolor

17 × 14" (43.2 × 35.6 cm)

Collection Gretchen and Richard Grant



*Untitled (Urbana)*, 1952  
Ink and colored ink on torn-and-pasted paper  
11<sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" (30 × 26.7 cm)  
Collection Gretchen and Richard Grant



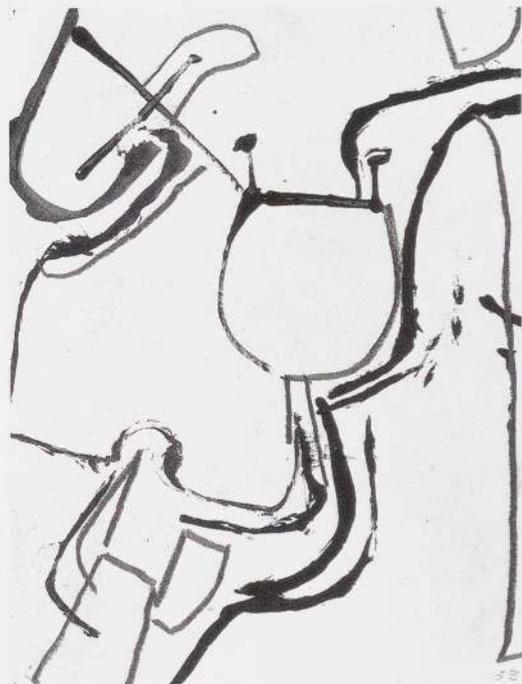
*Untitled (Urbana)*, 1952  
Oilstick and gouache  
10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> × 10" (26.7 × 25.4 cm)  
Private collection



LEFT:

*Untitled (Urbana)*, 1953

Ink and graphite  
12 × 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (30.5 × 23.2 cm)  
Private collection



RIGHT:

*Untitled (Urbana)*, 1953

Ink  
12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 9<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (30.7 × 24.5 cm)  
Private collection



LEFT:

*Untitled (Urbana)*, 1953

Ink  
19<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 16" (48.4 × 40.5 cm)  
Private collection



RIGHT:

*Untitled (Urbana)*, 1953

Ink  
12 × 9<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (30.5 × 24.2 cm)  
Private collection



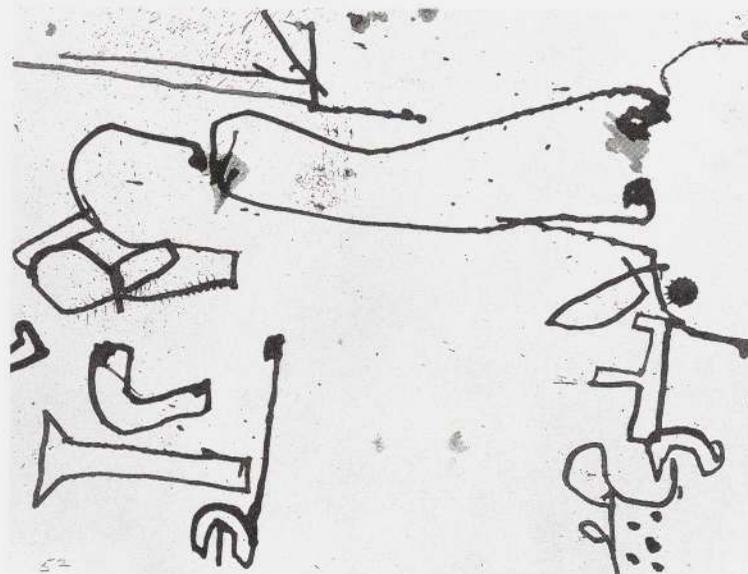


*Untitled (Urbana)*. 1953  
Watercolor, ink, and pencil  
15½ × 18¾" (39.4 × 47.6 cm)  
Collection Marcia S. Weisman



*Untitled (Urbana)*. 1952

Oil  
11 × 10¼" (27.9 × 26 cm)  
Collection Norman and Lisette Ackenberg



LEFT:  
*Untitled (Urbana)*, 1953  
Ink and colored ink  
14½ × 11½" (36.8 × 29.2 cm)  
Private collection

RIGHT:  
*Untitled (Urbana)*, 1952  
Ink  
8⅞ × 11⅞" (21.8 × 28.2 cm)  
Private collection

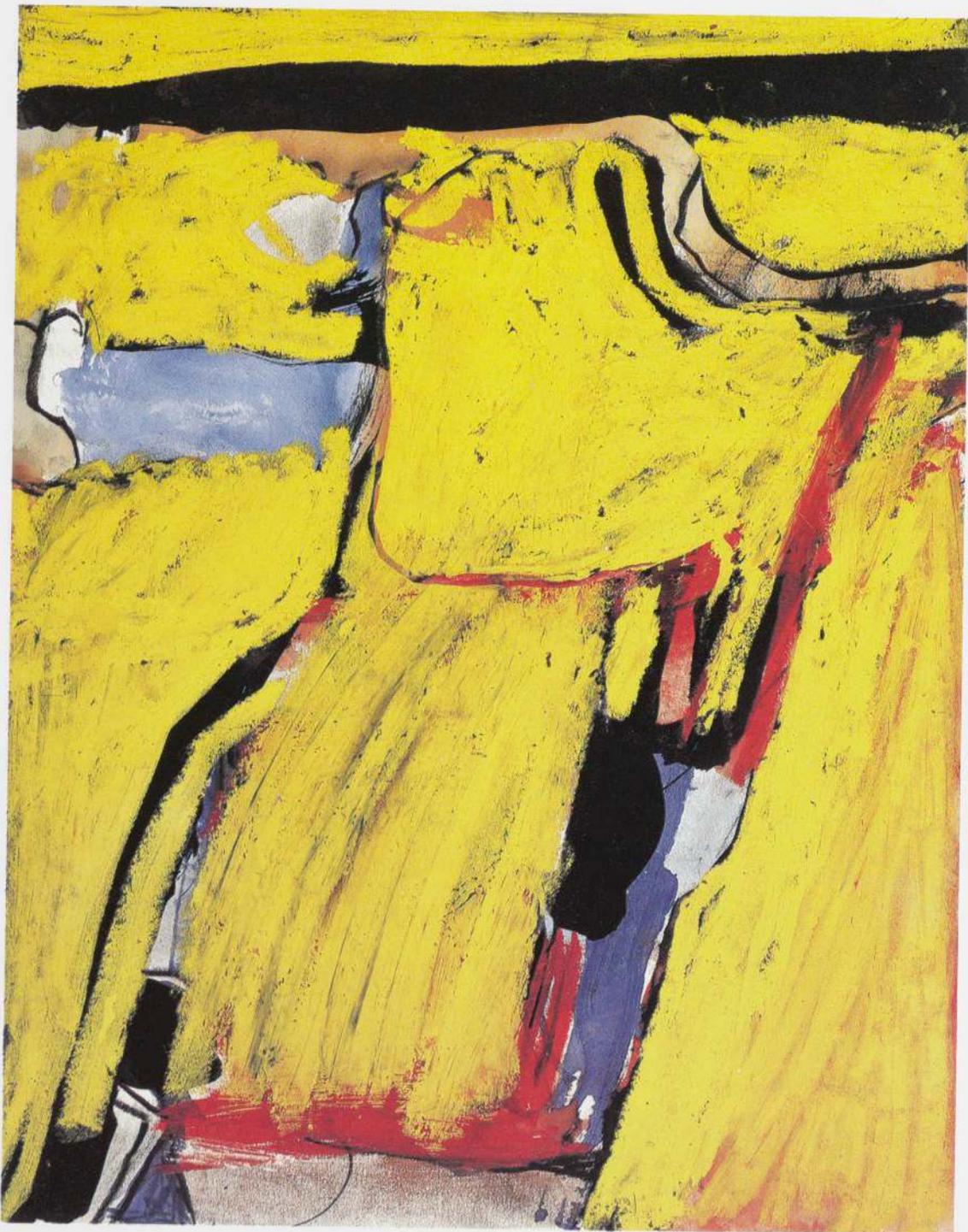


LEFT:  
*Untitled (Urbana)*, 1953  
Ink  
11¾ × 9" (29.8 × 22.9 cm)  
Private collection, New York

RIGHT:  
*Untitled (Urbana)*, 1953  
Ink and colored ink  
11¾ × 8⅞" (29.7 × 22.5 cm)  
Collection Paul Kantor



*Untitled (Urbana)*, 1952  
Ink and gouache  
13 1/2 x 11 1/2" (34.3 x 29 cm)  
Collection Chris J. Diebenkorn



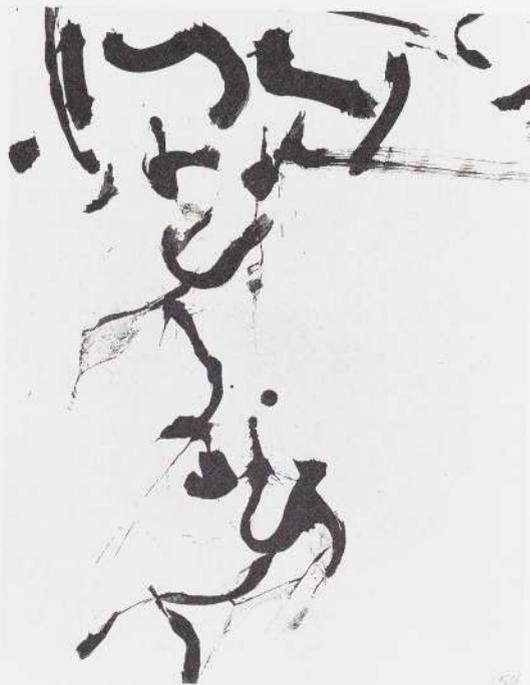
*Untitled (Berkeley)*. 1953–54

Oil, ink, watercolor, and charcoal  
14 × 10<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (35.6 × 27.7 cm)

Private collection



*Untitled (Berkeley)*. 1954  
Gouache, watercolor, ink, and charcoal  
14½ × 11½" (36.9 × 29.3 cm)  
Private collection



LEFT:

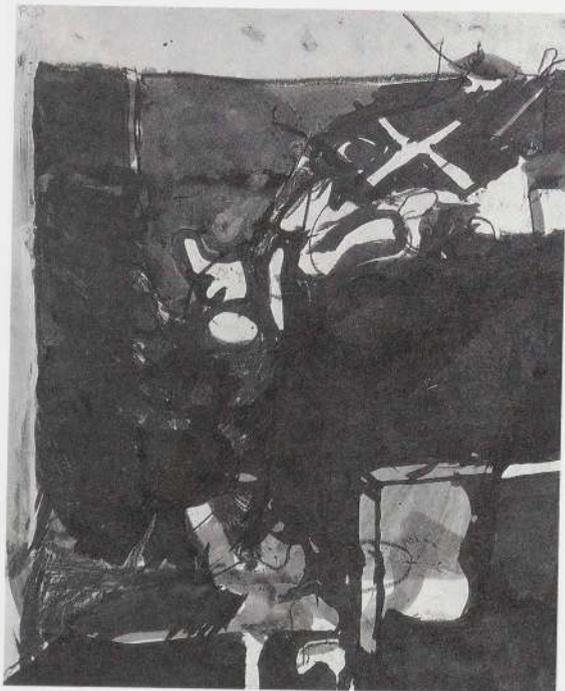
*Untitled (Berkeley)*. 1954

Ink  
17 × 14" (43.2 × 35.5 cm)  
Private collection

RIGHT:

*Untitled (Berkeley)*. 1954

Ink  
11 × 8½" (28 × 21.5 cm)  
Private collection



LEFT:

*Untitled (Berkeley)*. 1954

Ink, gouache, and charcoal  
14⅙ × 11⅓" (35.7 × 28.9 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn

RIGHT:

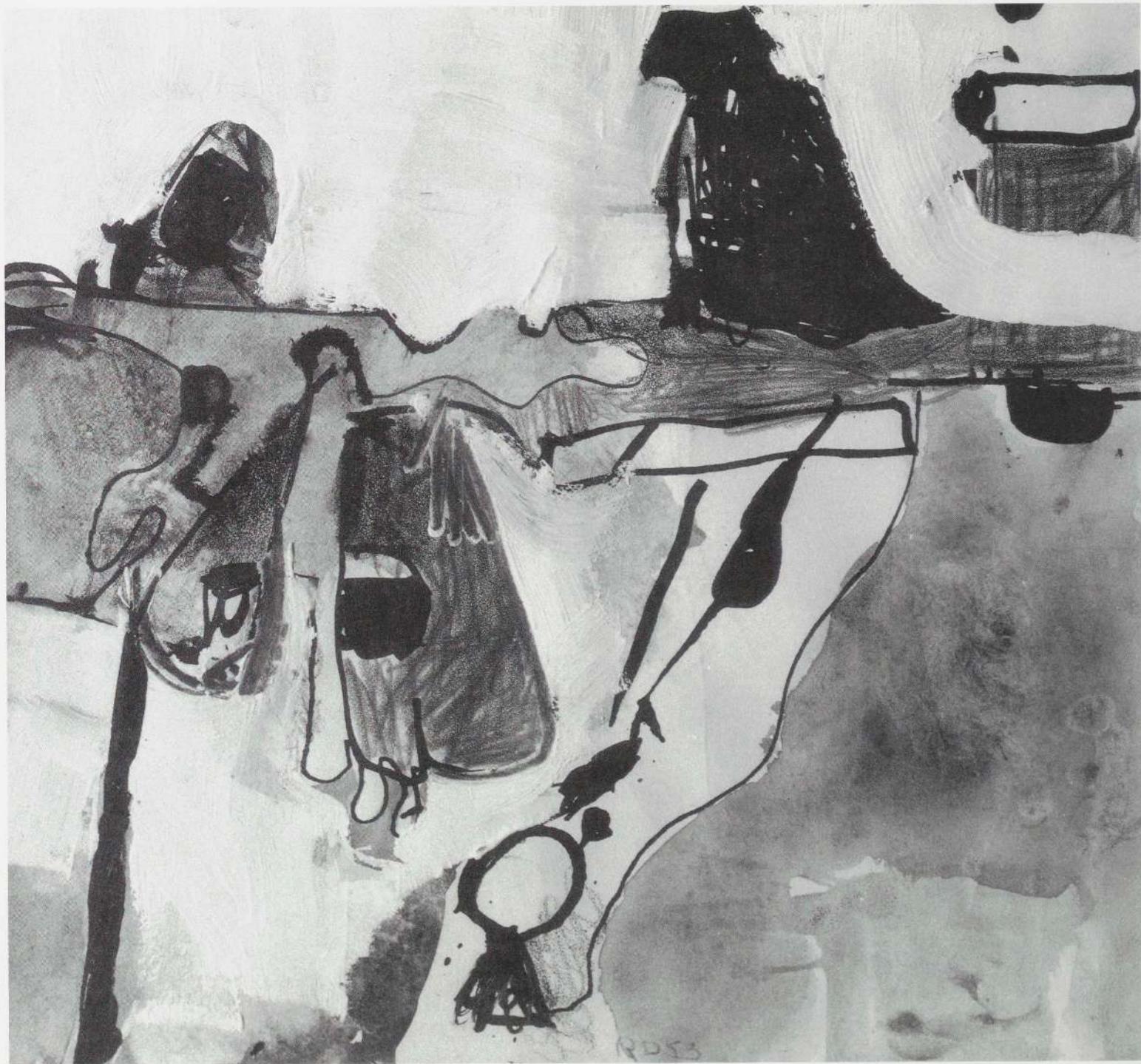
*Untitled (Berkeley)*. 1954

Ink  
11¾ × 9¼" (29.8 × 23.5 cm)  
Private collection, New York

OPPOSITE:

*Untitled (Berkeley)*. 1953

Ink, gouache, and pencil  
10½ × 11⅓" (26.7 × 28.4 cm)  
Collection Janie C. Lee





*Untitled (Berkeley)*. 1954  
 Watercolor, gouache, and pencil  
 15½ × 12½" (39.4 × 31.8 cm)  
 Collection John and Mary Pappajohn

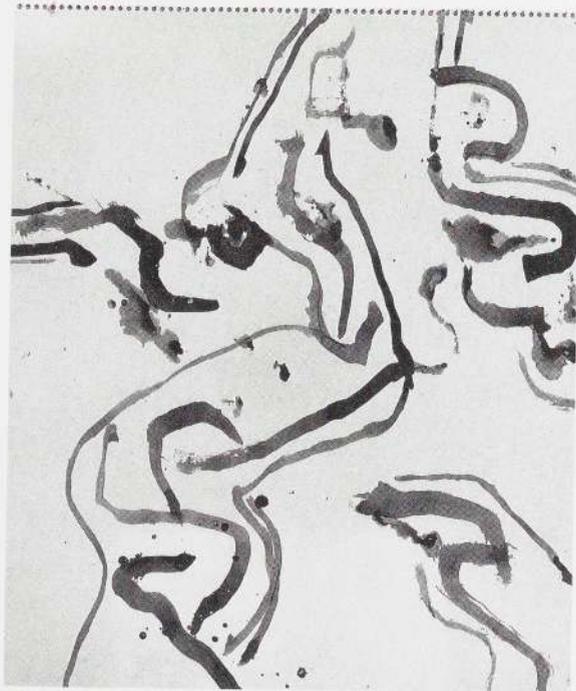


*Untitled (Berkeley)*. 1954  
 Watercolor, gouache, and crayon  
 15¼ × 12¼" (38.7 × 31.1 cm)  
 Yale University Art Gallery,  
 New Haven, Connecticut.  
 Henry Sage Goodwin, B.A. 1927, Fund

OPPOSITE:

*Untitled (Berkeley)*. 1955  
 Oil, ink, and gouache  
 14 × 17" (35.6 × 43.2 cm)  
 Solomon & Co. Fine Art, New York





LEFT:

*Untitled (Berkeley)*, 1955

Ink

11 × 8½" (28 × 21.5 cm)

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn

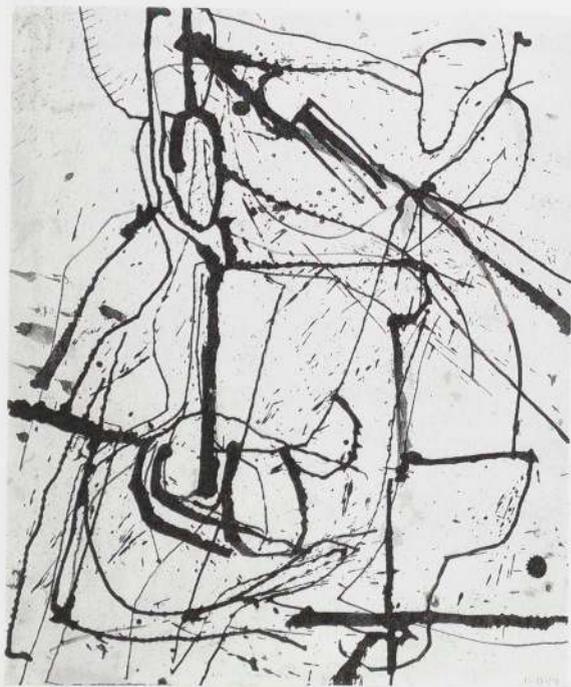
RIGHT:

*Untitled (Berkeley)*, 1955

Ink

16½ × 13¾" (42.6 × 35.3 cm)

Private collection



LEFT:

*Untitled (Berkeley)*, 1954

Ink

16⅞ × 13⅞" (42.9 × 35.2 cm)

Collection Duncan MacGuigan

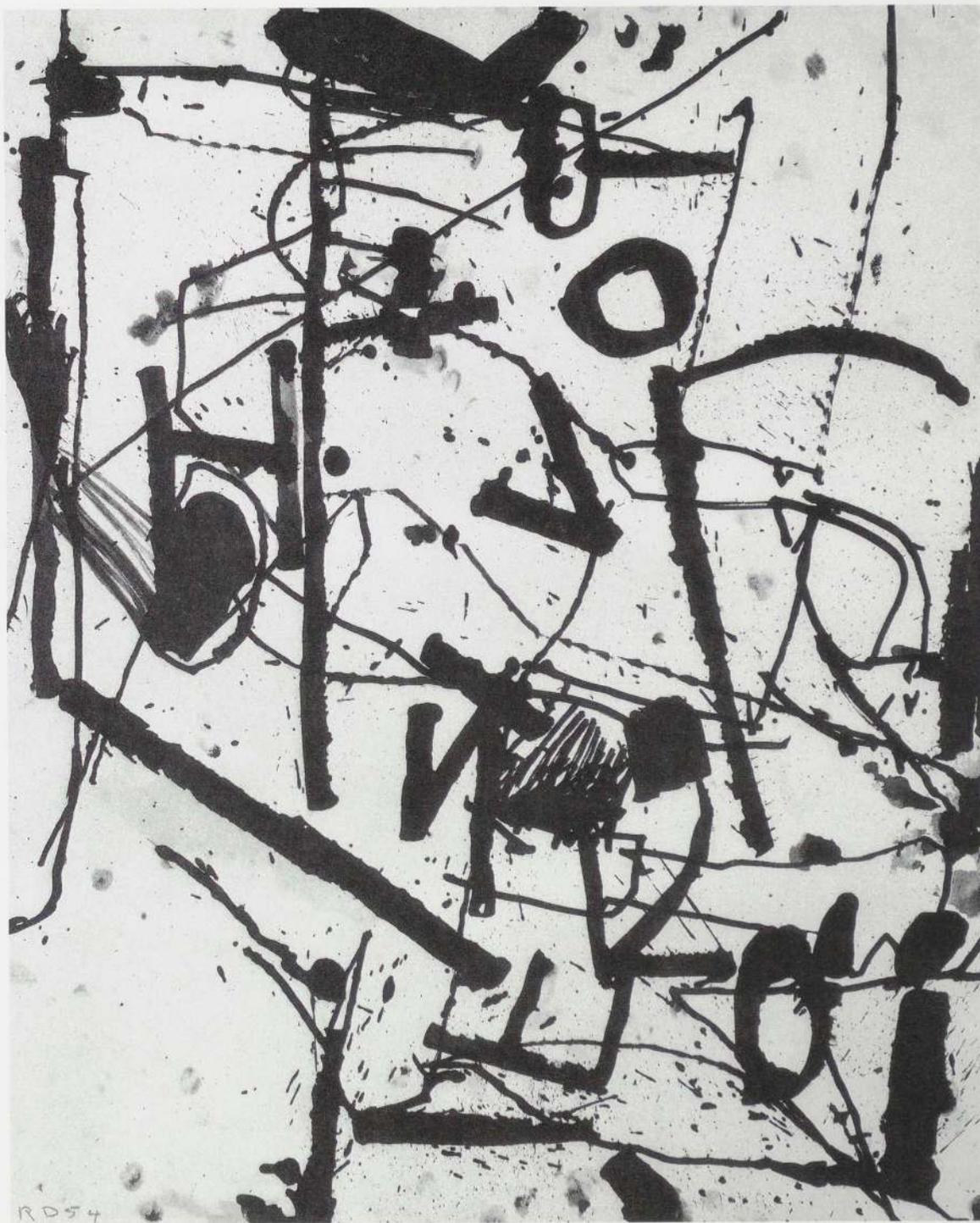
RIGHT:

*Untitled (Berkeley)*, 1954

Ink

17⅞ × 12" (43.5 × 30.4 cm)

Collection Paul Kantor



*Untitled (Berkeley)* 1954  
Ink  
16½ × 14" (41.9 × 35.6 cm)  
Collection Joan and George Anderman



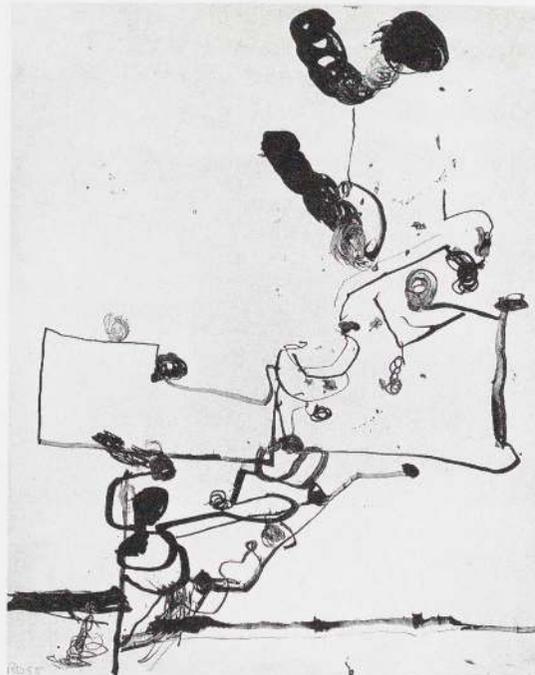
*Untitled (Berkeley). 1955*

Gouache, ink, and oilstick on torn-and-pasted paper  
18¾ × 19" (47.6 × 48.3 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn



*Untitled (Berkeley)*. 1955

Oil, ink, and pencil  
20 × 18" (50.8 × 45.7 cm)  
Collection James Barron



LEFT:

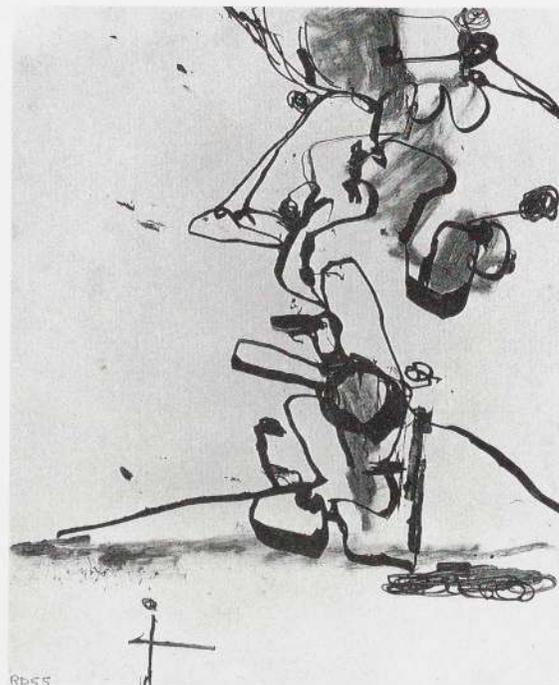
*Untitled (Berkeley). 1955*

Ink and gouache  
11 × 8<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" (28 × 21.8 cm)  
Private collection

RIGHT:

*Untitled (Berkeley). 1955*

Ink  
15<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 12" (38.6 × 30.5 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn



LEFT:

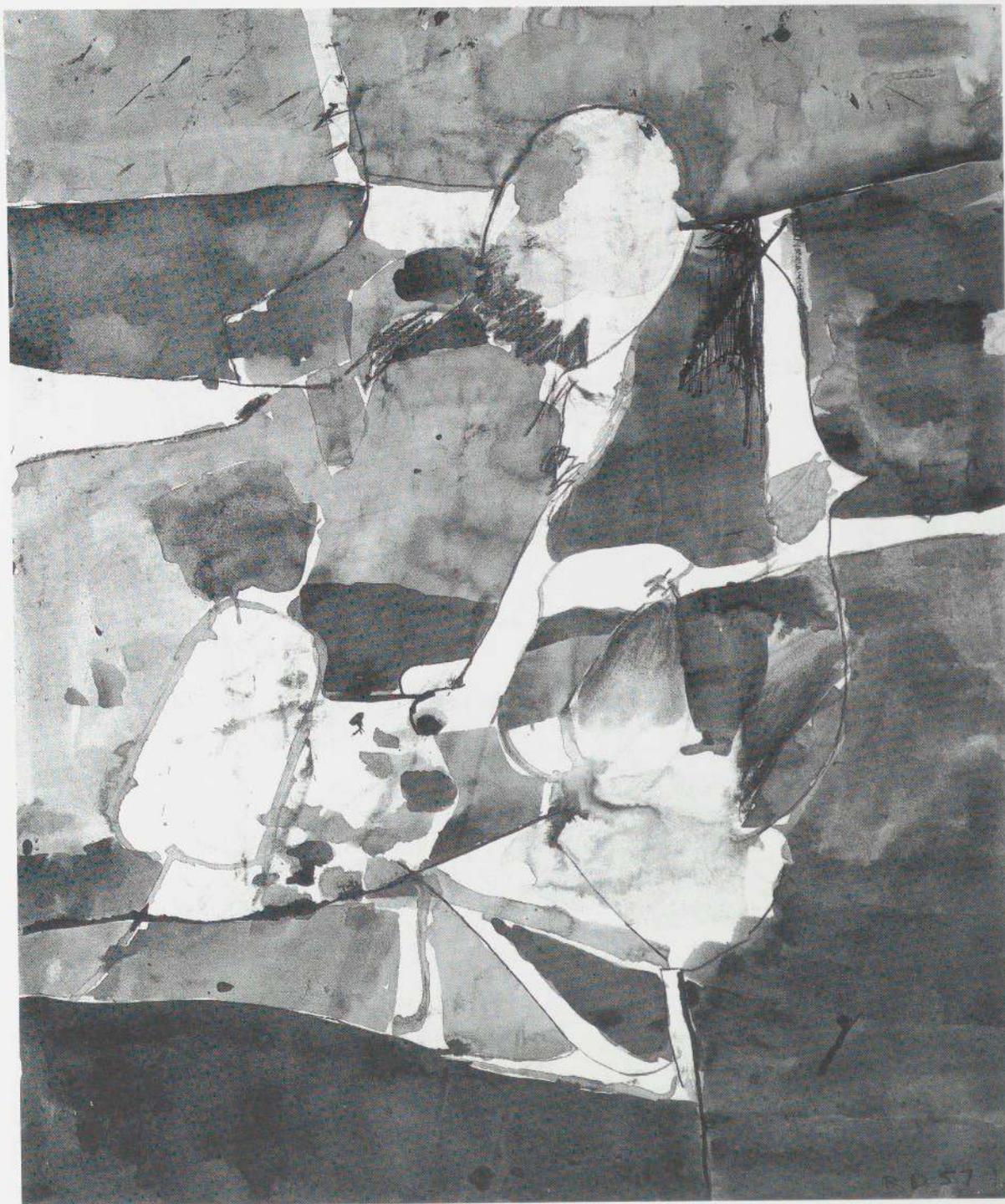
*Untitled (Berkeley). 1955*

Ink  
14<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (37.5 × 30.9 cm)  
Private collection

RIGHT:

*Untitled (Berkeley). 1955*

Ink  
14<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (37.4 × 30.9 cm)  
Private collection

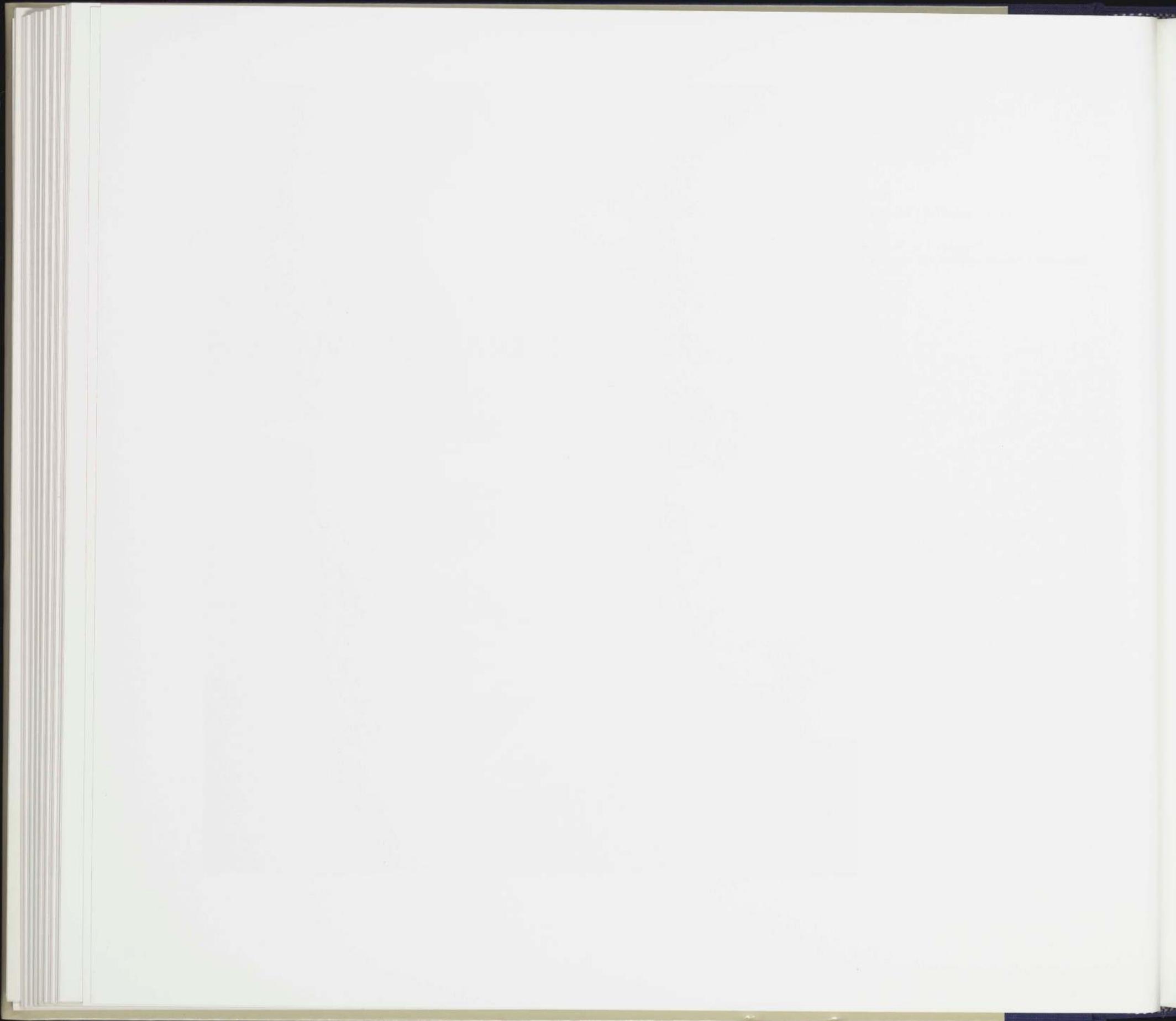


*Untitled (Berkeley)*, 1957

Ink and charcoal

17 $\frac{1}{16}$  × 14" (43.4 × 35.7 cm)

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn





# REPRESENTATIONAL DRAWINGS



OPPOSITE:

*Seated Man under Window.* 1956

Ink and watercolor  
14 × 17" (35.6 × 43.2 cm)  
The Michael and Dorothy  
Blankfort Collection



*The Drinker.* 1957

Gouache and pencil  
16¾ × 13⅞" (42.5 × 35.2 cm)  
Yale University Art Gallery,  
New Haven, Connecticut.  
The Katherine Ordway Collection



*Woman in Chair*, 1957

Acrylic and pencil  
13 <sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 10 <sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" (35.4 × 27.8 cm)  
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden,  
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.  
Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1966



*Woman by Window.* 1957

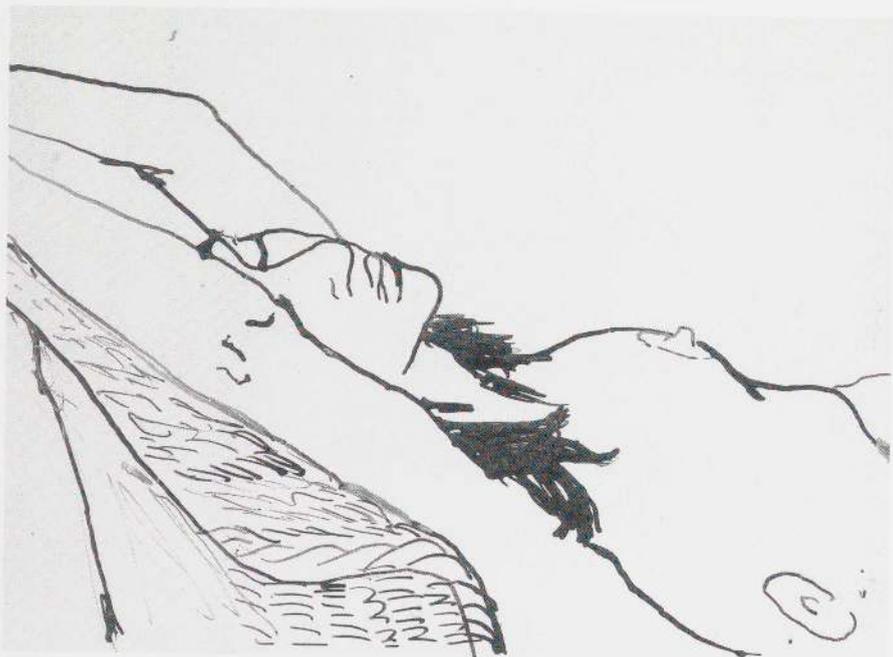
Gouache and ink

17 × 13 7/8" (43.1 × 35.3 cm)

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden,  
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1966





*Woman Leaning Back in Chair. 1963–64*

Ink  
12 $\frac{5}{16}$  × 17" (31.9 × 43.2 cm)  
Private collection



*Woman Leaning Back in Chair. 1963–64*

Ink  
13 $\frac{1}{16}$  × 17" (34.7 × 43.2 cm)  
Private collection



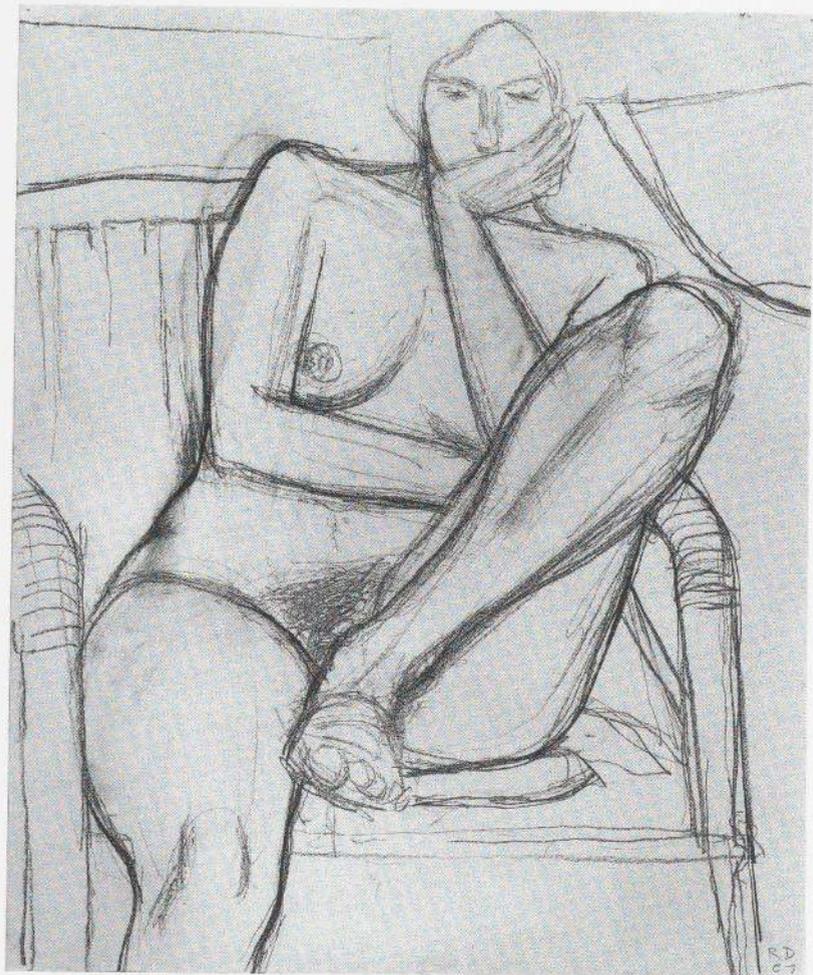
*Seated Woman, Reaching Down.* 1960

Charcoal  
16 x 11" (40.7 x 28 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn



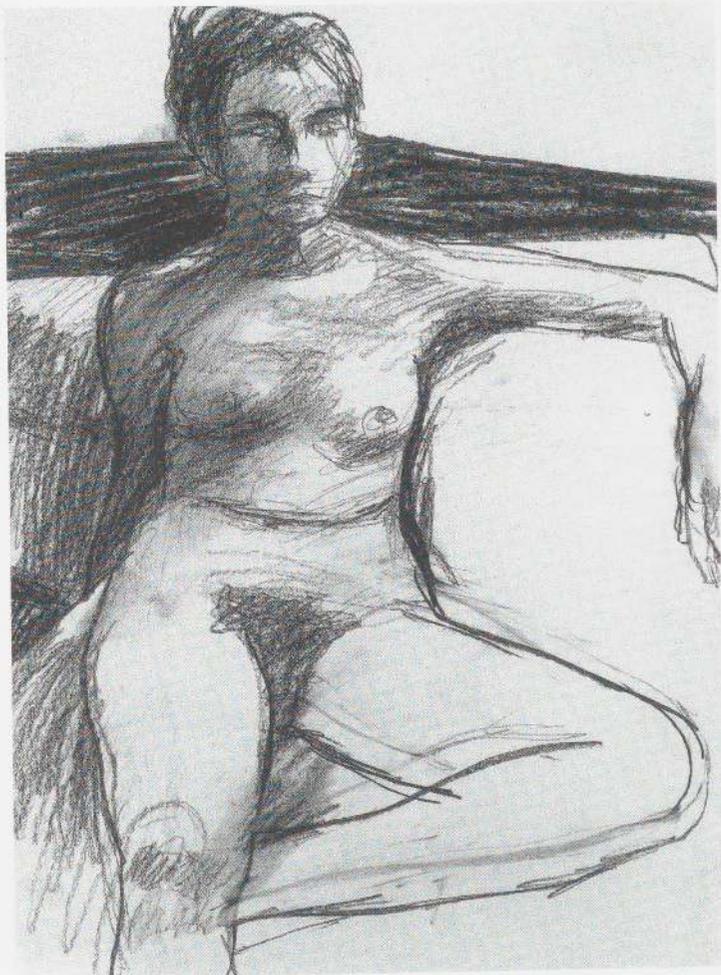
*Seated Nude.* 1967

Conté crayon  
23½ × 18½" (59.7 × 47 cm)  
Collection Ronald and Lenore Lopaty



*Seated Nude, Leg Raised.* 1967

Charcoal  
17 × 14" (43.1 × 35.5 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn



*Seated Nude.* 1960  
Conté crayon  
17 × 12½" (43.2 × 31.8 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. William Brice

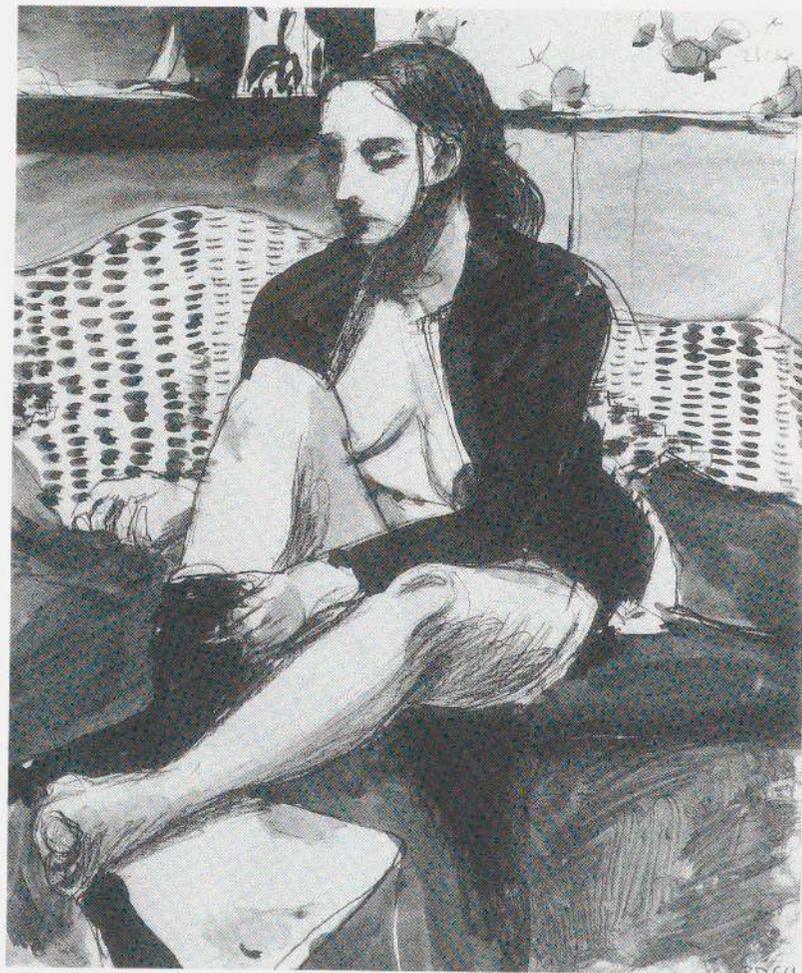


*Seated Woman.* 1965  
Conté crayon  
17 × 14" (43.2 × 35.6 cm)  
Collection Edward M. Benesch



*Seated Woman, Patterned Robe.* 1963

Ink and conté crayon  
17×13<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (43.2×35.2 cm)  
The Baltimore Museum of Art.  
Gift of Edward M. Benesch for the  
Thomas E. Benesch Memorial Collection



*Seated Woman, Wicker Couch.* 1964

Watercolor, gouache, and conté crayon  
17×14" (43.2×35.6 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard McDonough



*Seated Woman, Tennis Sweater.* 1966

Ink and charcoal

20<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 17" (53.1 × 43.2 cm)

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn



*Reclining Woman.* 1967

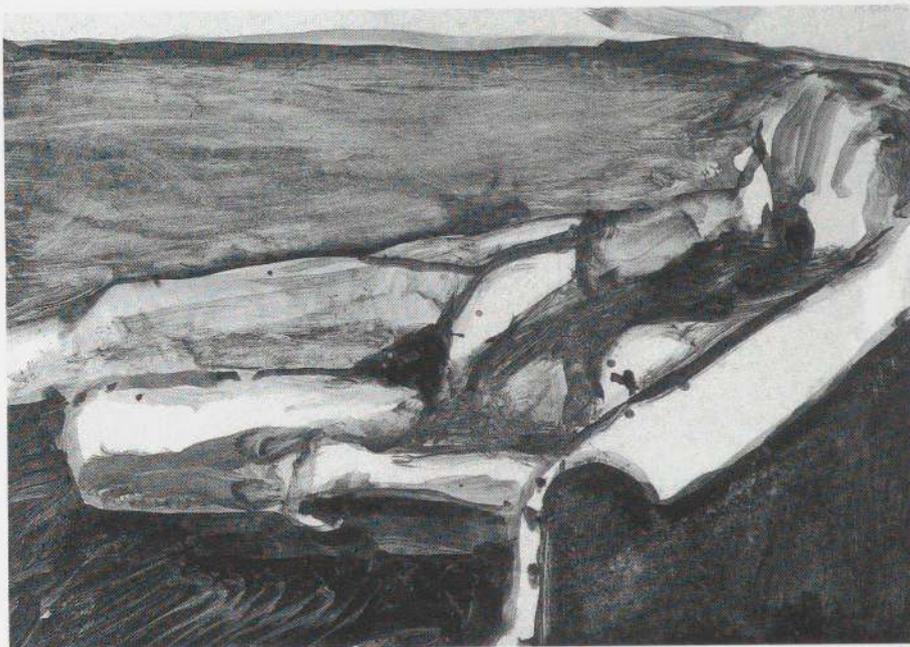
Ink and conté crayon  
13<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 17" (35.5 × 43.2 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn



*Reclining Woman.* 1964

Ink and conté crayon  
11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 17<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" (28.6 × 44.5 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. John Berggruen

*Reclining Nude, Side View.* 1964  
Gouache  
12½ × 16¼" (31.8 × 42.5 cm)  
Collection Helyn and Ralph Goldenberg



*Reclining Nude, Side View.* 1964  
Ink and conté crayon  
13⅞ × 16⅞" (35.2 × 42.9 cm)  
Robert Hull Fleming Museum,  
University of Vermont, Burlington





*Woman in Chaise.* 1965

Crayon and gouache  
17 × 12½" (43.2 × 31.8 cm)  
Yale University Art Gallery,  
New Haven, Connecticut.  
Gift of Richard Brown Baker, B.A. 1935



*Seated Woman, Striped Dress.* 1965

Conté crayon  
19 × 23 3/4" (48.3 × 60.3 cm)  
Collection Lee G. Rubenstein



*Woman, Hand on Head.* 1962

Conté crayon  
12½ × 17" (31.8 × 43.2 cm)  
Collection Maybelle Bayly Wolfe



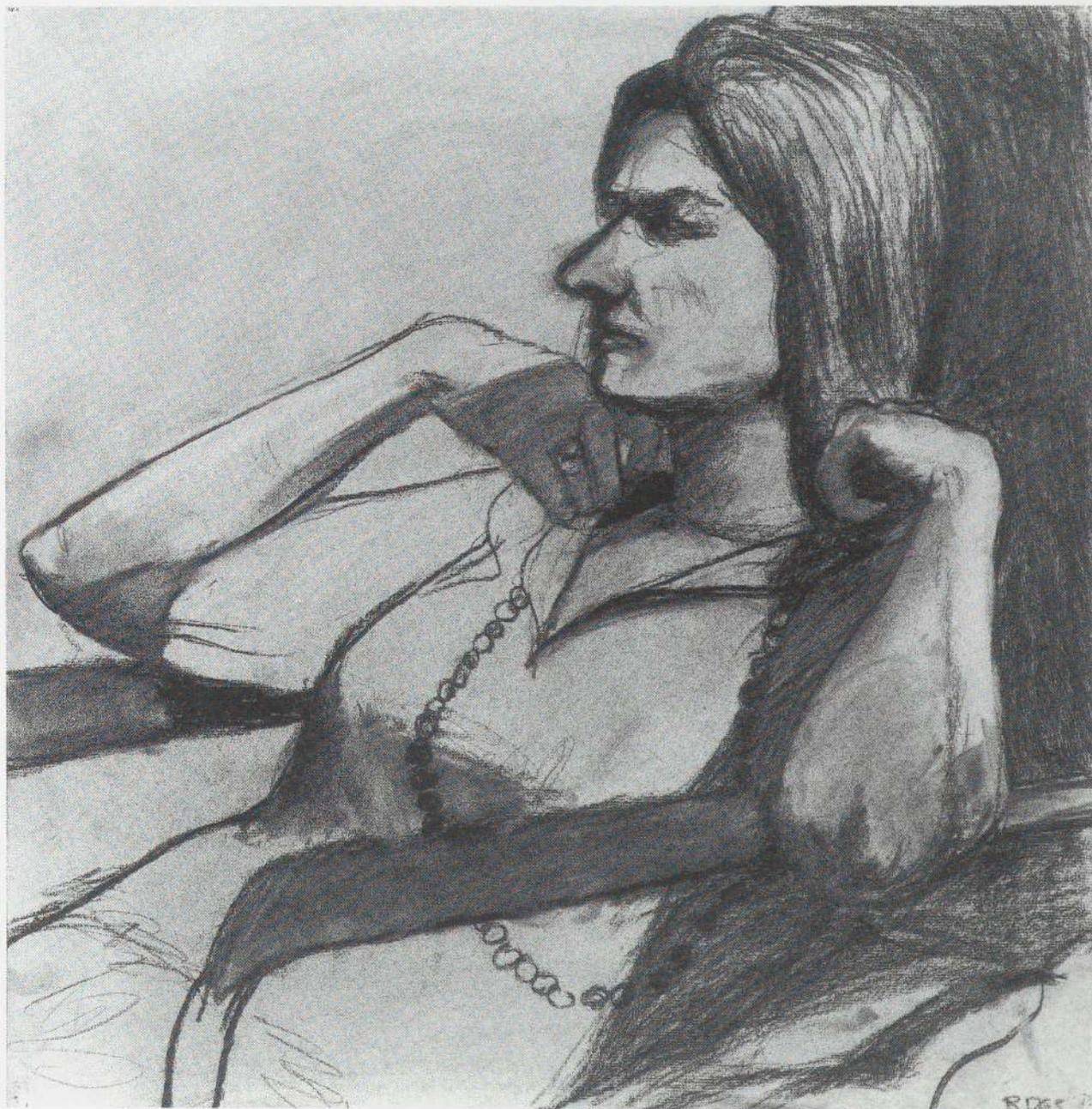
*Reclining Nude.* 1967

Charcoal  
14 × 17" (35.6 × 43.2 cm)  
Collection Elinor Poindexter



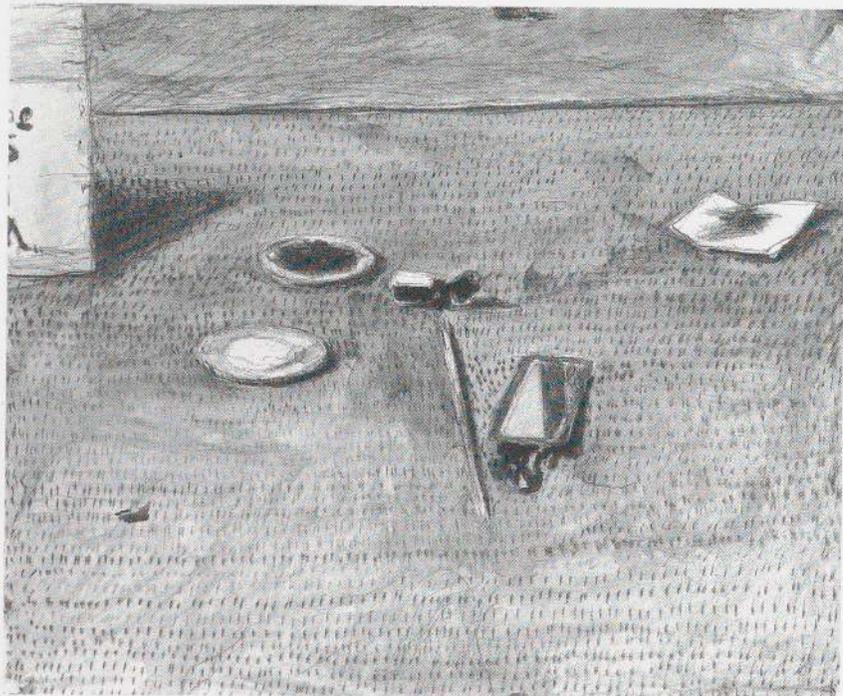
*Seated Nude on Folding Chair.* 1967

Ink and charcoal  
24¾ × 19" (62.9 × 48.2 cm)  
Collection Mrs. Paul Landau



*Seated Woman with Necklace.* 1965

Charcoal  
19 1/8 x 19 1/8" (48.6 x 48.6 cm)  
Collection Caroline B. Marcuse

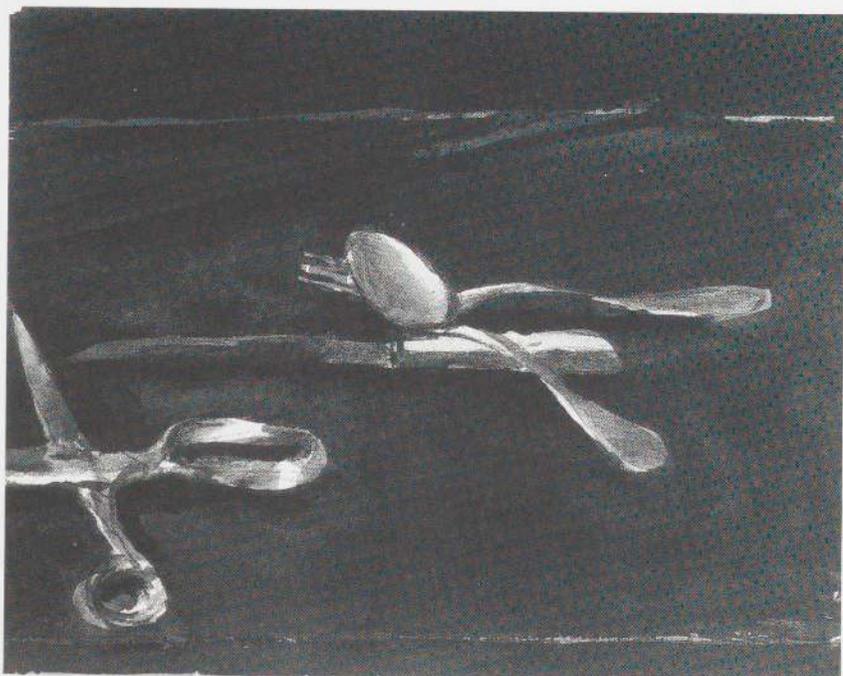


*Still Life, Textured Cloth.* 1965

Ink and charcoal

13<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 16<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" (35.5 × 43.1 cm)

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn

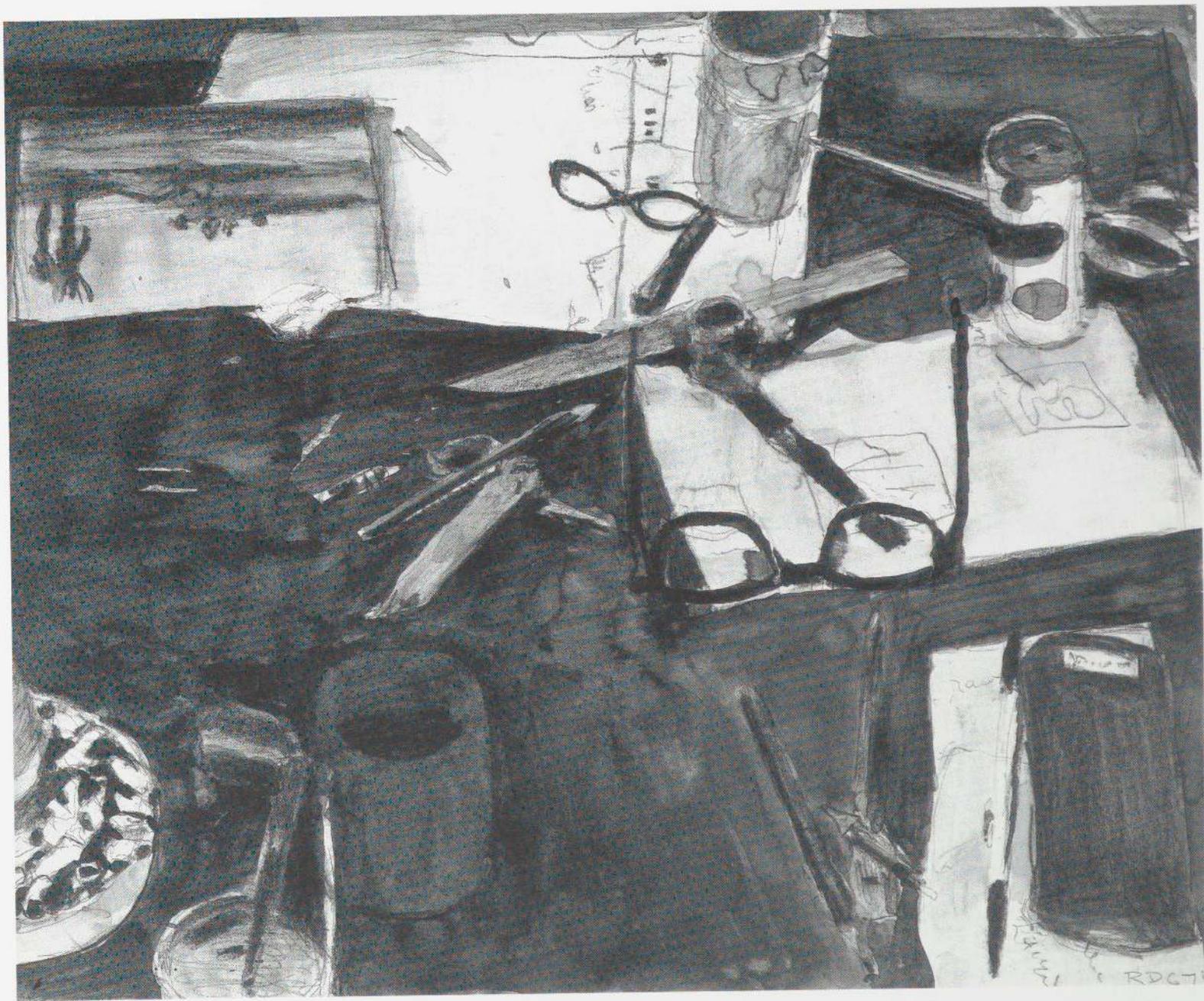


*Still Life: Scissors and Silverware.* 1964

Ink and conté crayon

9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> × 12" (24.1 × 30.5 cm)

Collection Theophilus Brown



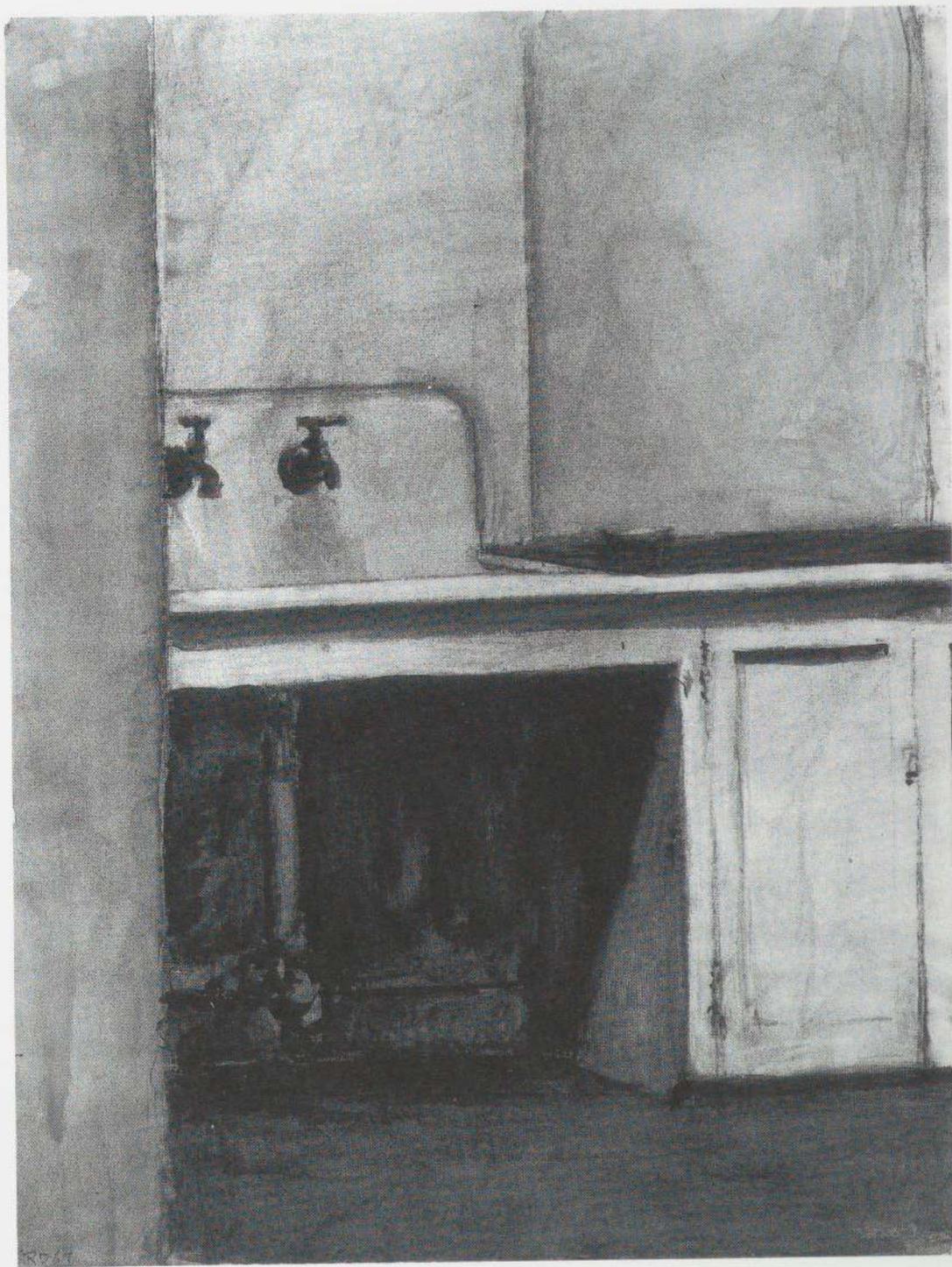
*Still Life: Cigarette Butts and Glasses.* 1967

Ink, conté crayon, charcoal, and ballpoint pen  
13<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 16<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" (35.3 × 42.6 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn

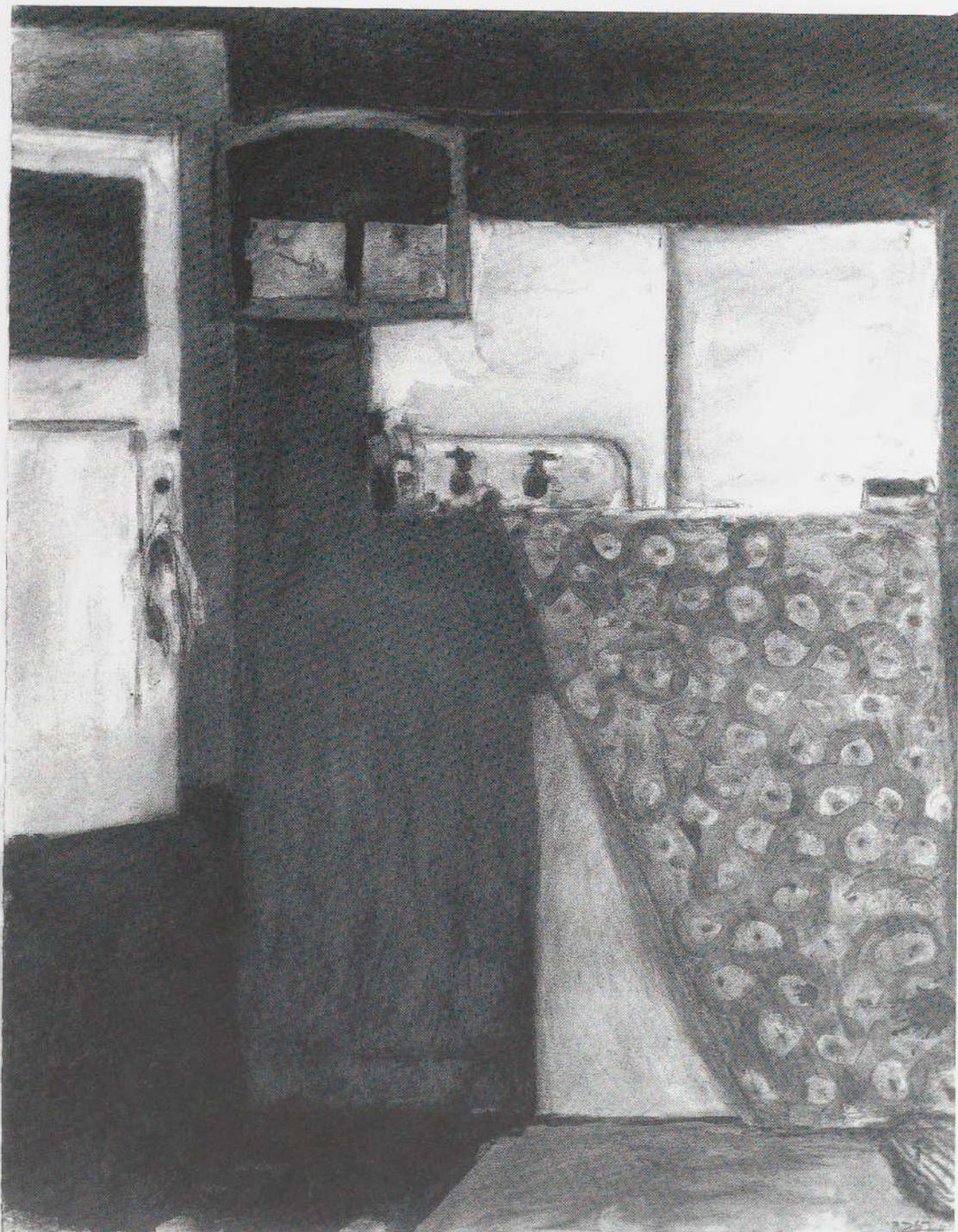


*Still Life, Table Top, Cane Chair.* 1964

Ink and conté crayon  
17 × 12½" (43.2 × 31.8 cm)  
Collection Chris J. Diebenkorn



*Sink*. 1967  
Charcoal and ink  
24 $\frac{3}{4}$  × 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (62.9 × 47.6 cm)  
The Baltimore Museum of Art.  
Thomas E. Benesch Memorial  
Collection



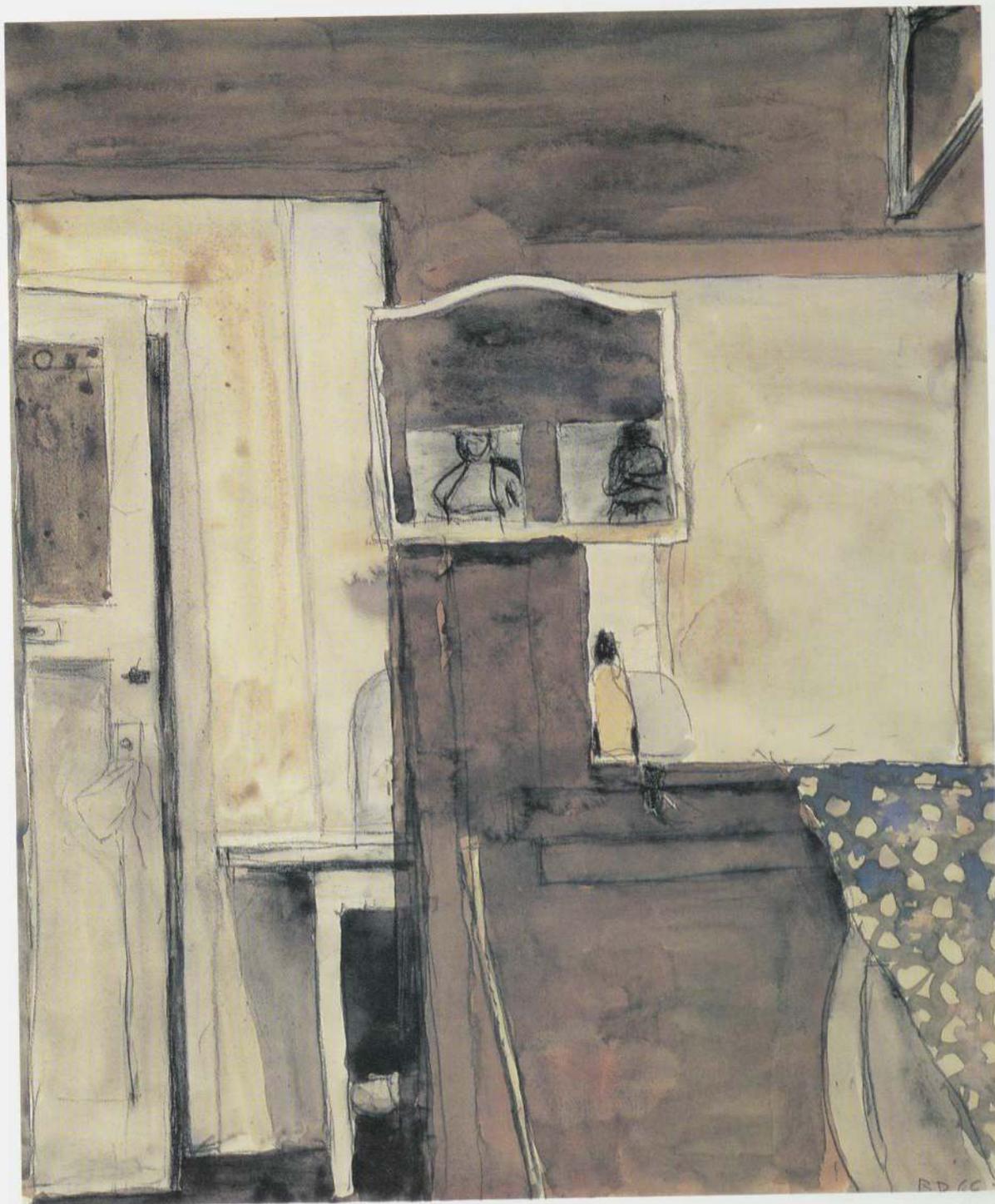
*Interior with Mirror.* 1967

Charcoal and gouache

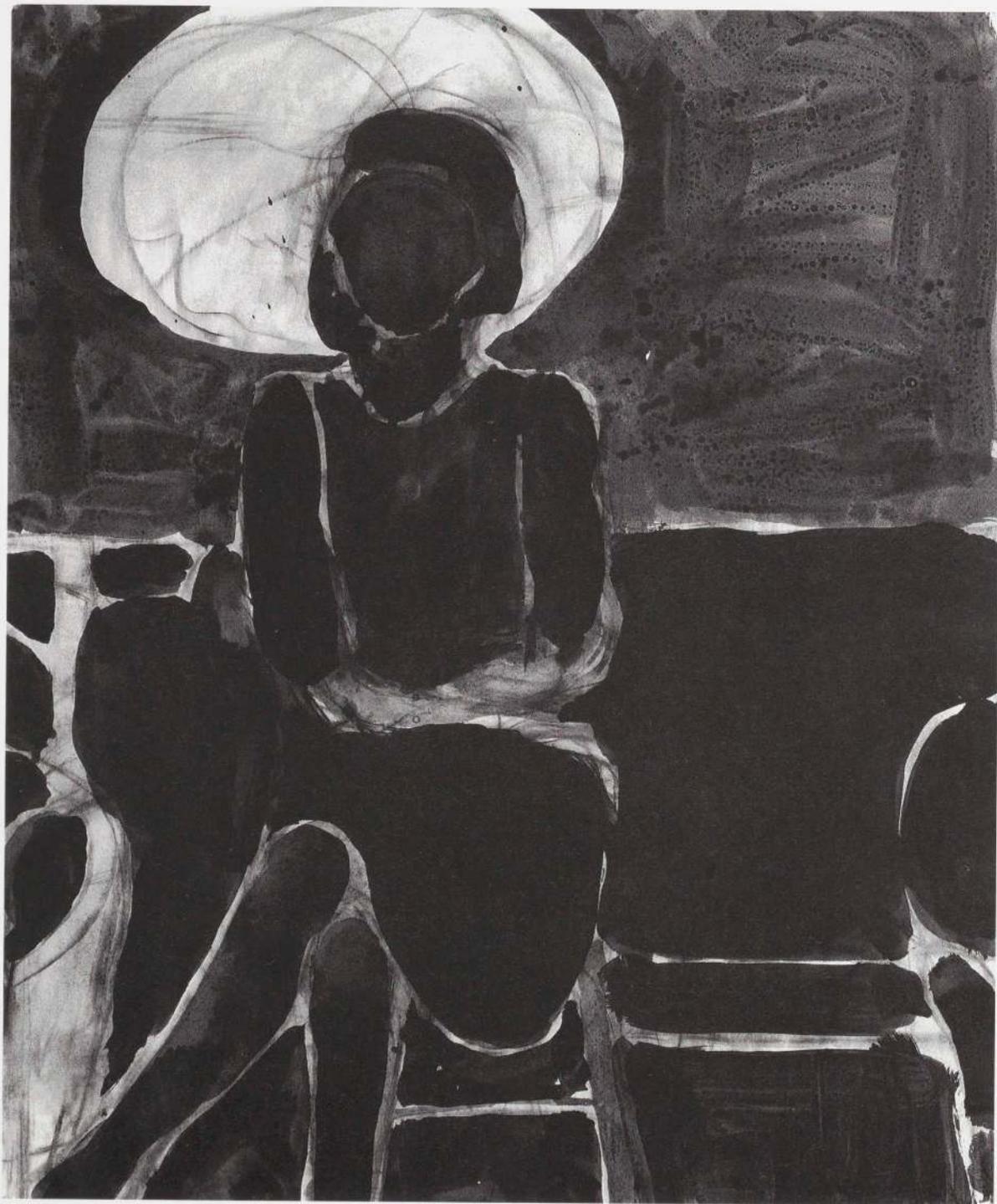
24½ × 19" (62.2 × 48.3 cm)

Private collection, courtesy

Vanderwoude Tananbaum Gallery, New York



*Interior with Mirror*. 1966  
Watercolor, charcoal, and conté crayon  
16<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 14" (43.1 × 35.6 cm)  
Collection Chris J. Diebenkorn



*Seated Woman, Umbrella.* 1967

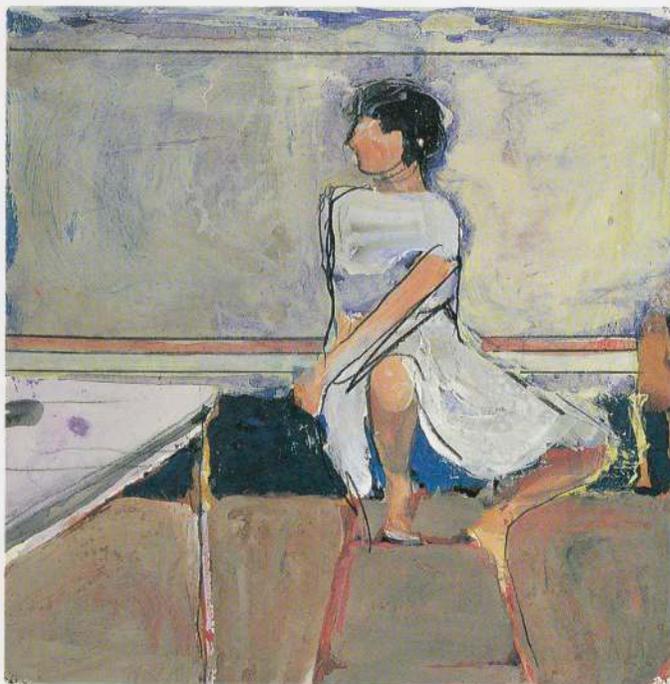
Ink and charcoal

17×14" (43.2×35.6 cm)

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn



*Striped Blouse*, 1966  
Ink and pencil  
27 $\frac{1}{4}$  × 22 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (69.2 × 57.8 cm)  
Collection Gretchen and Richard Grant



*Woman on Stool. 1965*

Gouache and pencil  
12 $\frac{3}{8}$  × 12 $\frac{1}{6}$ " (31.5 × 30.7 cm)  
Private collection

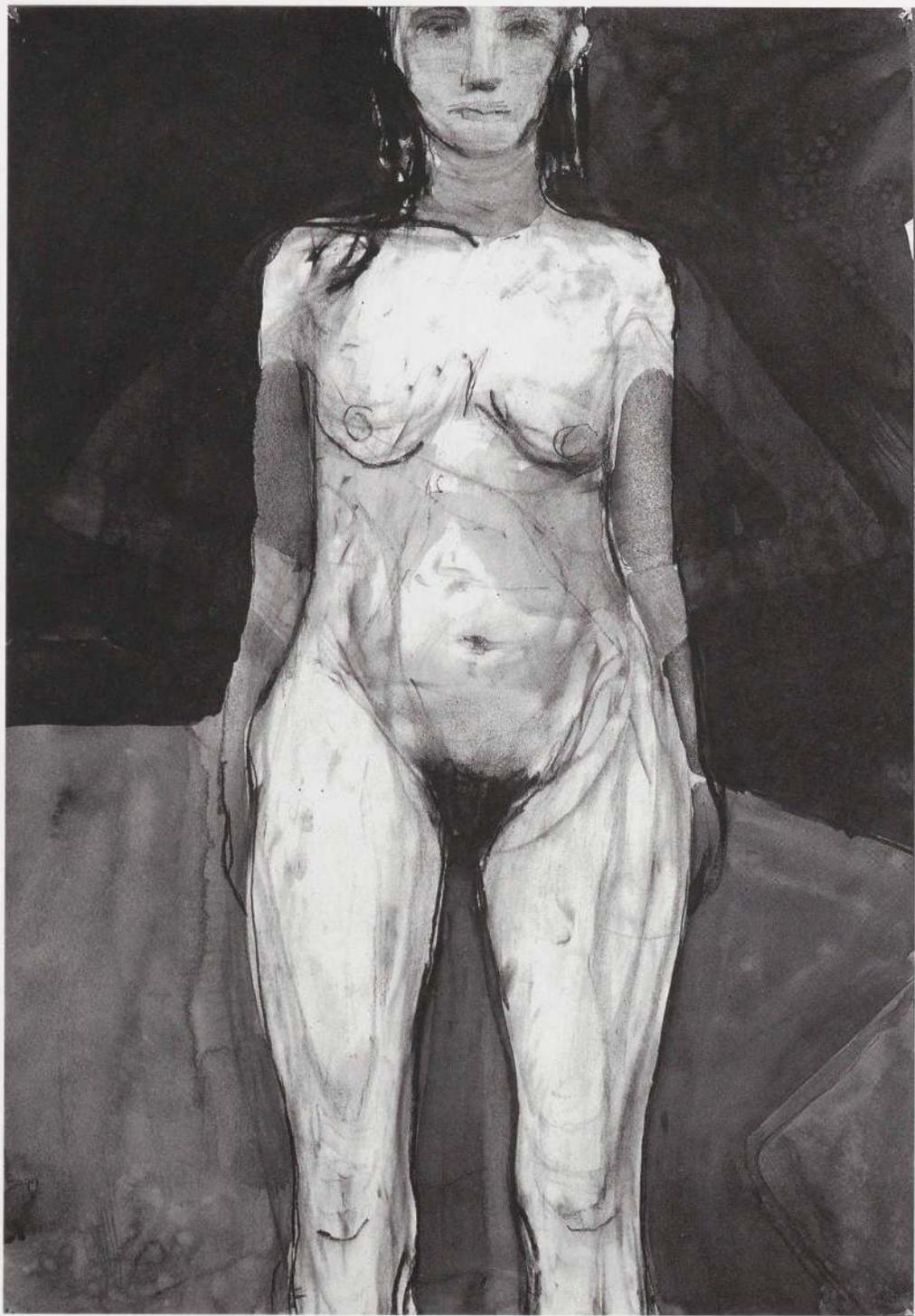


*Seated Woman, Legs Crossed. 1965*

Watercolor, gouache, and ink  
12 $\frac{1}{4}$  × 17" (31.1 × 43.2 cm)  
The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco,  
Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts.  
Bequest of Beatrice Judd Ryan



*Seated Woman, Patterned Dress.* 1966  
 Watercolor, charcoal, gouache, and conté crayon  
 31 × 24¼" (78.7 × 61.6 cm)  
 The University at Albany,  
 State University of New York



*Standing Nude.* 1965–66

Ink, watercolor, and charcoal  
16<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 11<sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" (43 × 30.3 cm)

Collection Gretchen and Richard Grant

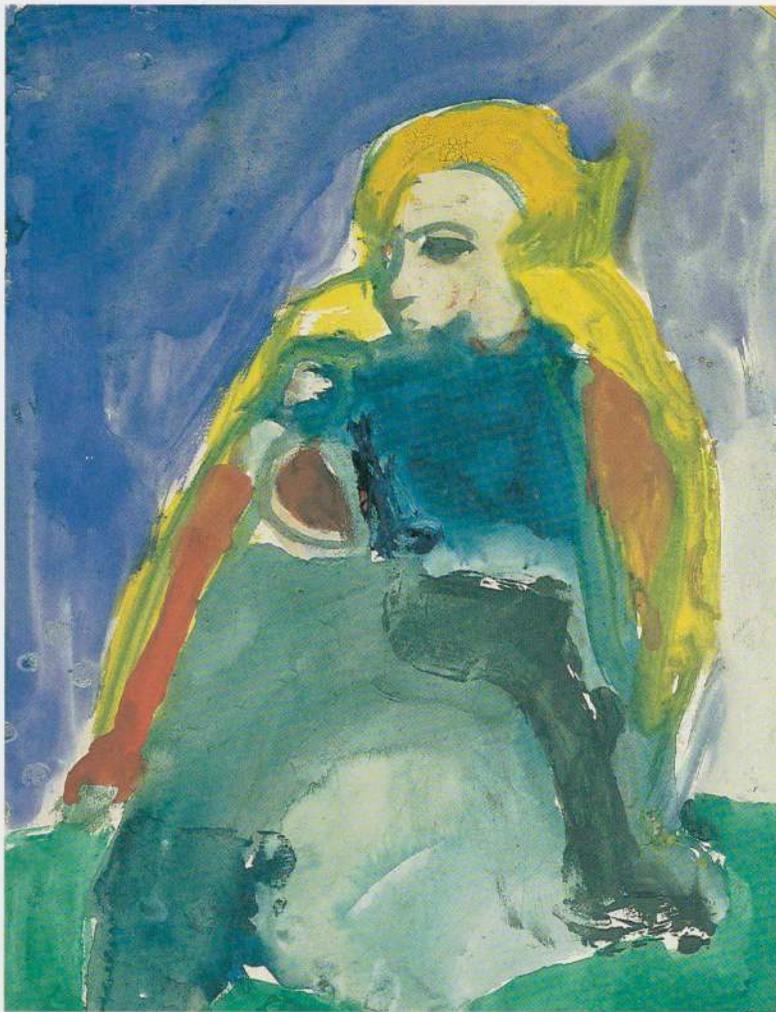


*Seated Nude, Black Chair.* 1967

Ink, charcoal, and gouache

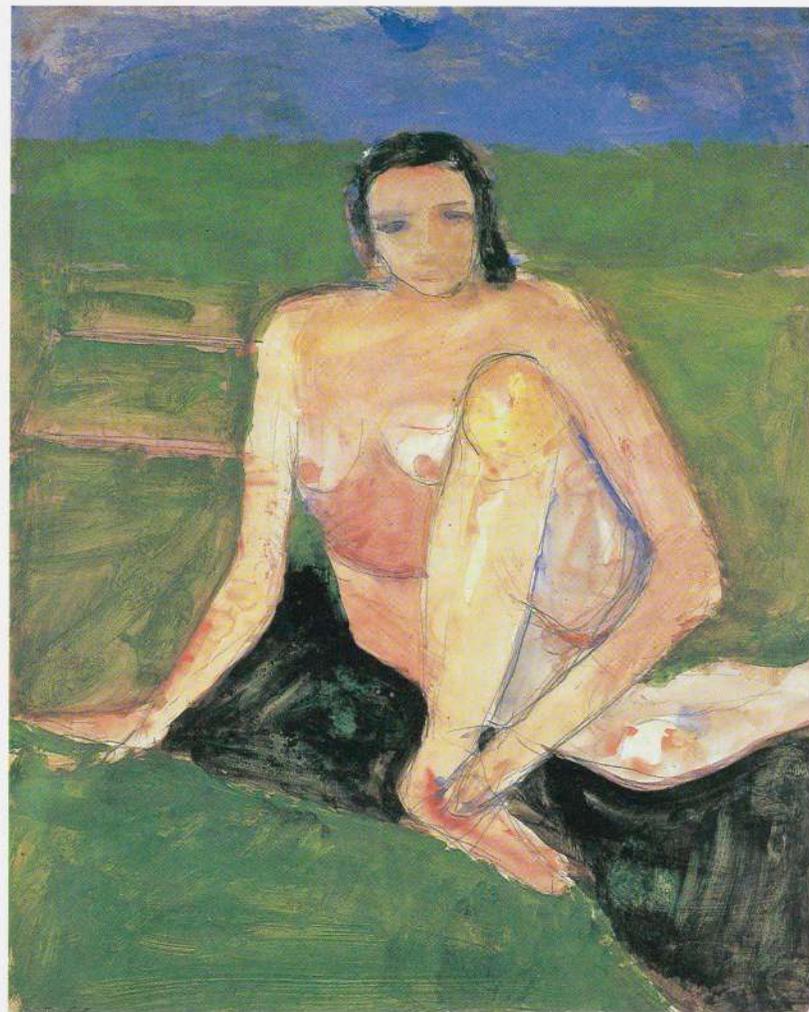
13 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 16 <sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" (35.2 × 43 cm)

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn



*Seated Woman.* 1956

Gouache  
13½ × 10½" (34.3 × 26.7 cm)  
Collection Richard and Barbara Stone



*Seated Nude, Outside.* 1966

Gouache  
23 × 18" (58.4 × 45.7 cm)  
Collection Bryan and Aileen Cooke



*Woman on Beach.* 1964  
Watercolor  
16½ × 12½" (41.9 × 31.8 cm)  
Solomon & Co. Fine Art, New York

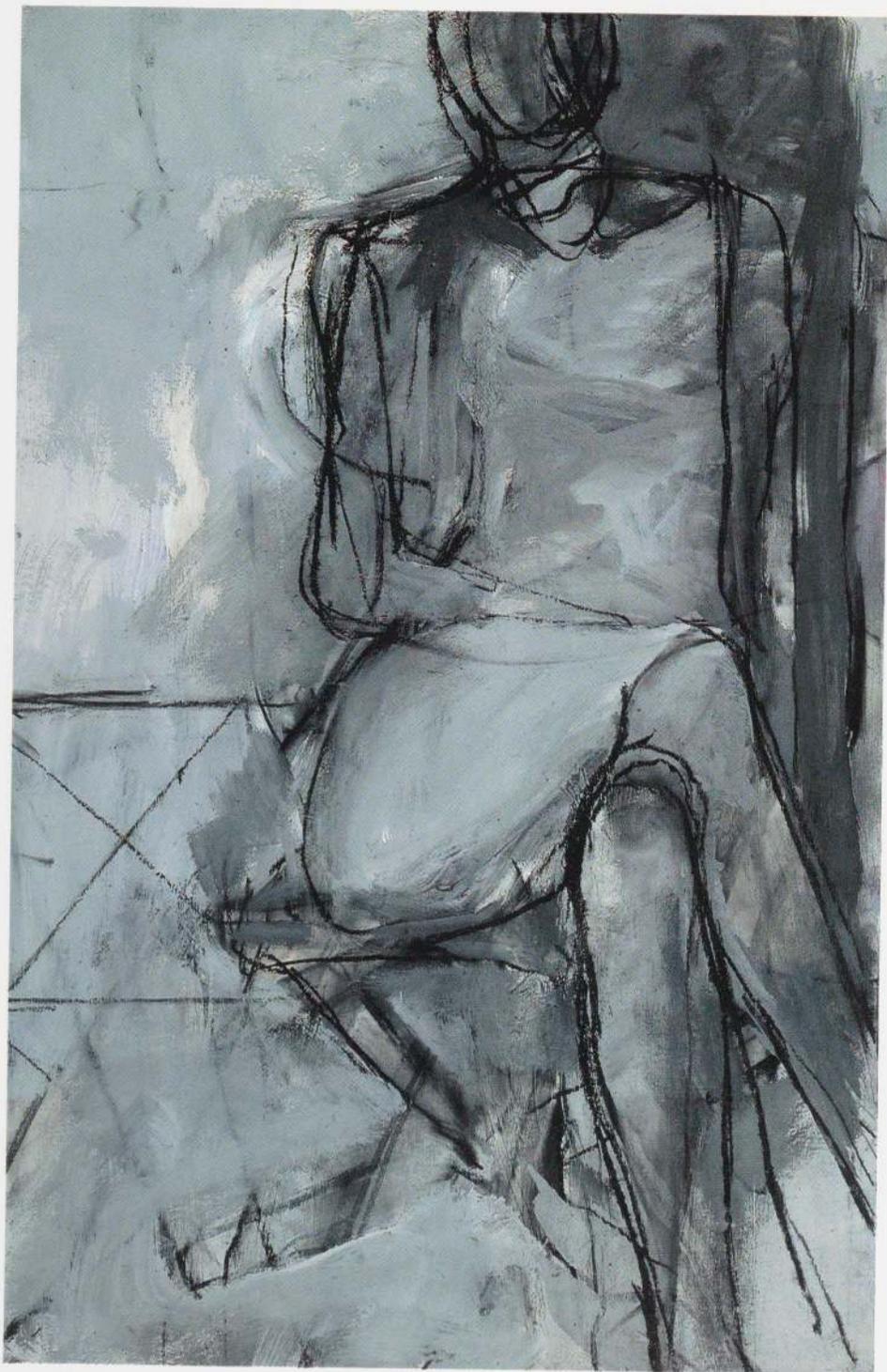


*Seated Woman*. 1965–66

Charcoal  
23½ × 19" (59.7 × 48.3 cm)  
Collection Marcia S. Weisman



*Seated Woman.* 1966  
Charcoal  
28½ × 23½" (72.4 × 59.7 cm)  
Private collection



*Seated Woman*, 1966  
Acrylic and charcoal  
31 × 19<sup>15/16</sup>" (78.7 × 50.7 cm)  
Private collection



*Seated Woman*. 1966  
Charcoal  
24½ × 18¾" (62.2 × 47.6 cm)  
Collection Marc and Victoria W. Martin



*Seated Nude. 1966*  
Charcoal  
25 x 19<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" (63.5 x 48.5 cm)  
Private collection



*Standing Nude. 1967*  
Charcoal  
23<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 18<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (60.3 x 47.9 cm)  
Collection Victor H. Palmieri



*Seated Nude, Profile.* 1966

Charcoal  
24 × 19" (61 × 48.2 cm)  
Private collection



*Seated Nude*. 1966

Charcoal  
33 × 23½" (84.8 × 59.6 cm)  
Private collection



*Seated Nude*. 1966  
Charcoal  
25 × 19" (63.5 × 48.2 cm)  
Private collection

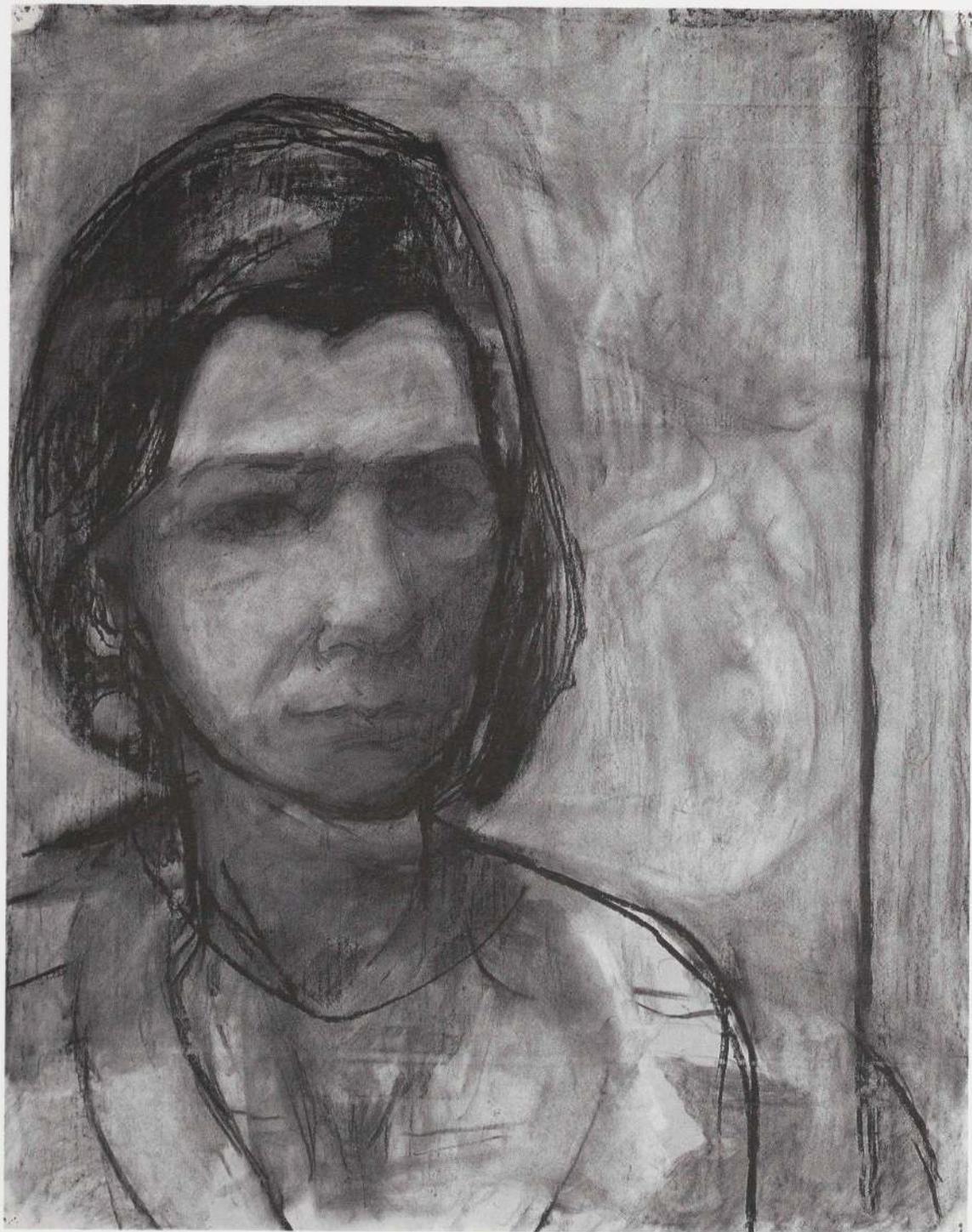


*Seated Woman.* 1965  
Charcoal  
23 $\frac{3}{4}$  × 19" (60.3 × 48.3 cm)  
Collection Norma Zeller



*Reclining Woman*. 1966

Charcoal  
19 × 25" (48.2 × 63.5 cm)  
Private collection



*Head of a Woman.* 1966

Charcoal  
23<sup>1</sup>/<sub>6</sub> × 18<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (60.2 × 48 cm)  
Private collection



*Seated Woman, Head in Hand.* 1966

Charcoal  
25 × 19" (63.5 × 48.2 cm)  
Collection Chris J. Diebenkorn



*Standing Nude. 1966*

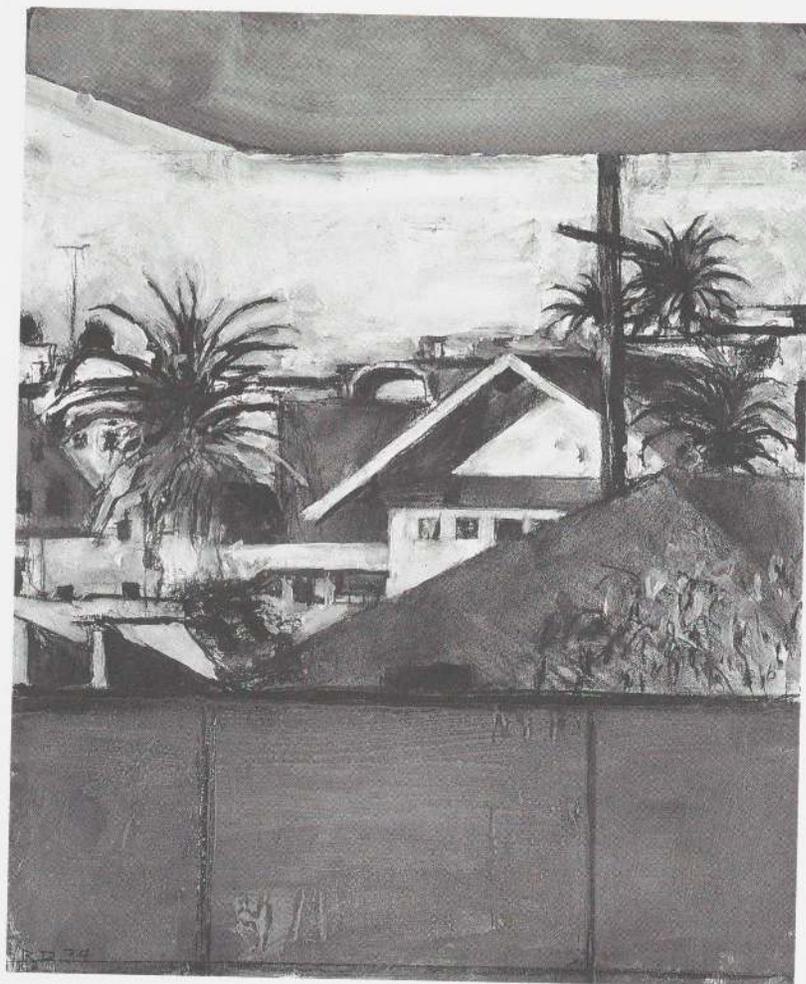
Charcoal  
25 × 19" (63.5 × 48.3 cm)  
Private collection



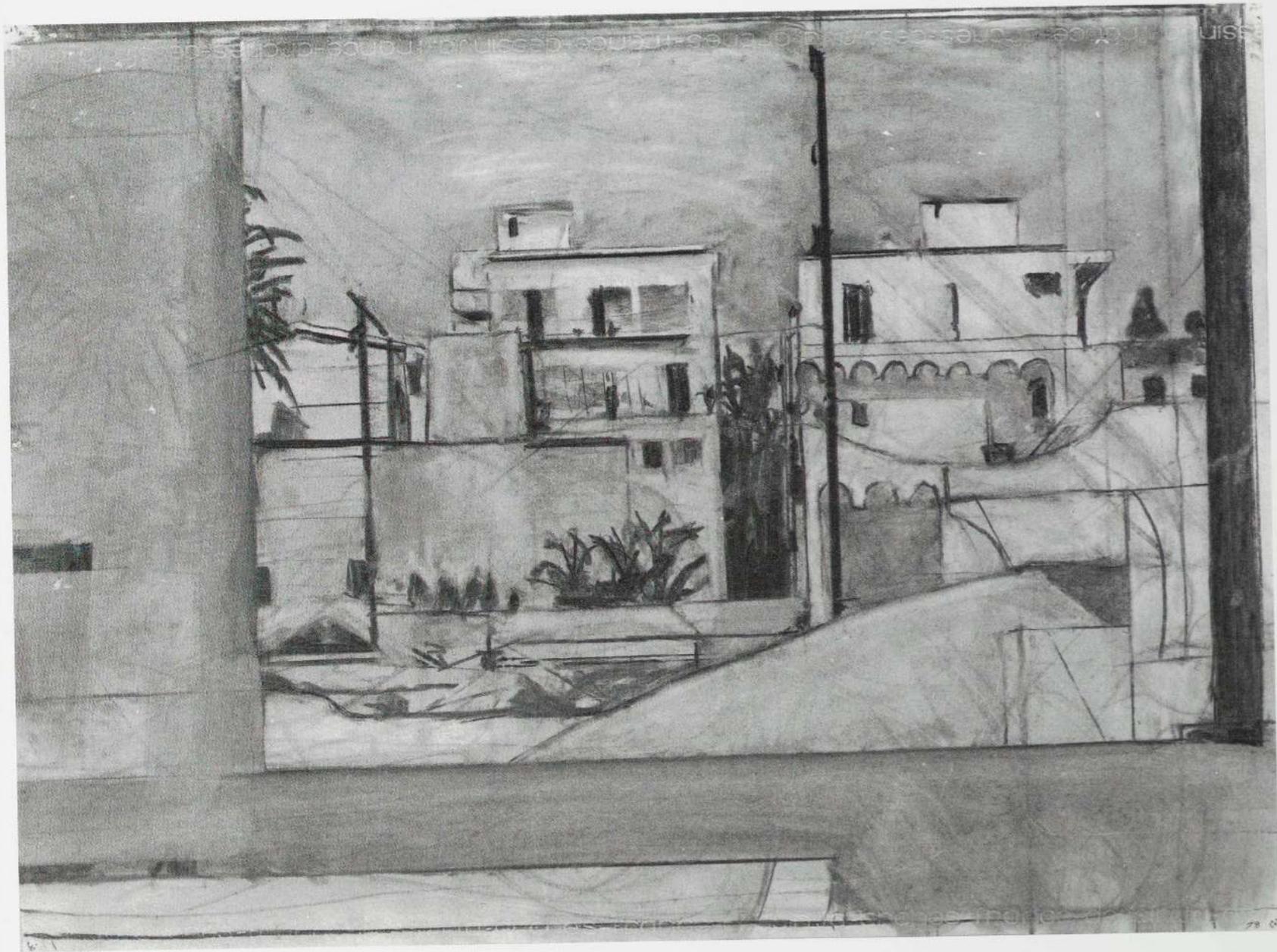
*J. A. D. I.* 1966  
Charcoal  
25 $\frac{1}{8}$  × 19" (64 × 48.3 cm)  
Private collection



*View from Studio, Ocean Park. 1969*  
 Acrylic, charcoal, and ink  
 17×14" (43.2×35.5 cm)  
 Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn



*View from Studio, Ocean Park. 1974*  
 Acrylic, charcoal, and ink  
 16¾×13⅛" (42.5×35.1 cm)  
 Collection Santa Cruz Island Foundation



*View from Studio, Ocean Park. 1978*

Charcoal  
22 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 29 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (56.3 x 76.1 cm)  
Collection Chris J. Diebenkorn



*Invented Landscape*. 1966

Acrylic  
19 × 25" (48.3 × 63.5 cm)

The Oakland Museum.

Gift of the Estate of Howard E. Johnson



*Invented Landscape*. 1977  
Gouache and crayon  
17×14" (43.2×35.6 cm)  
Collection Chris J. Diebenkorn



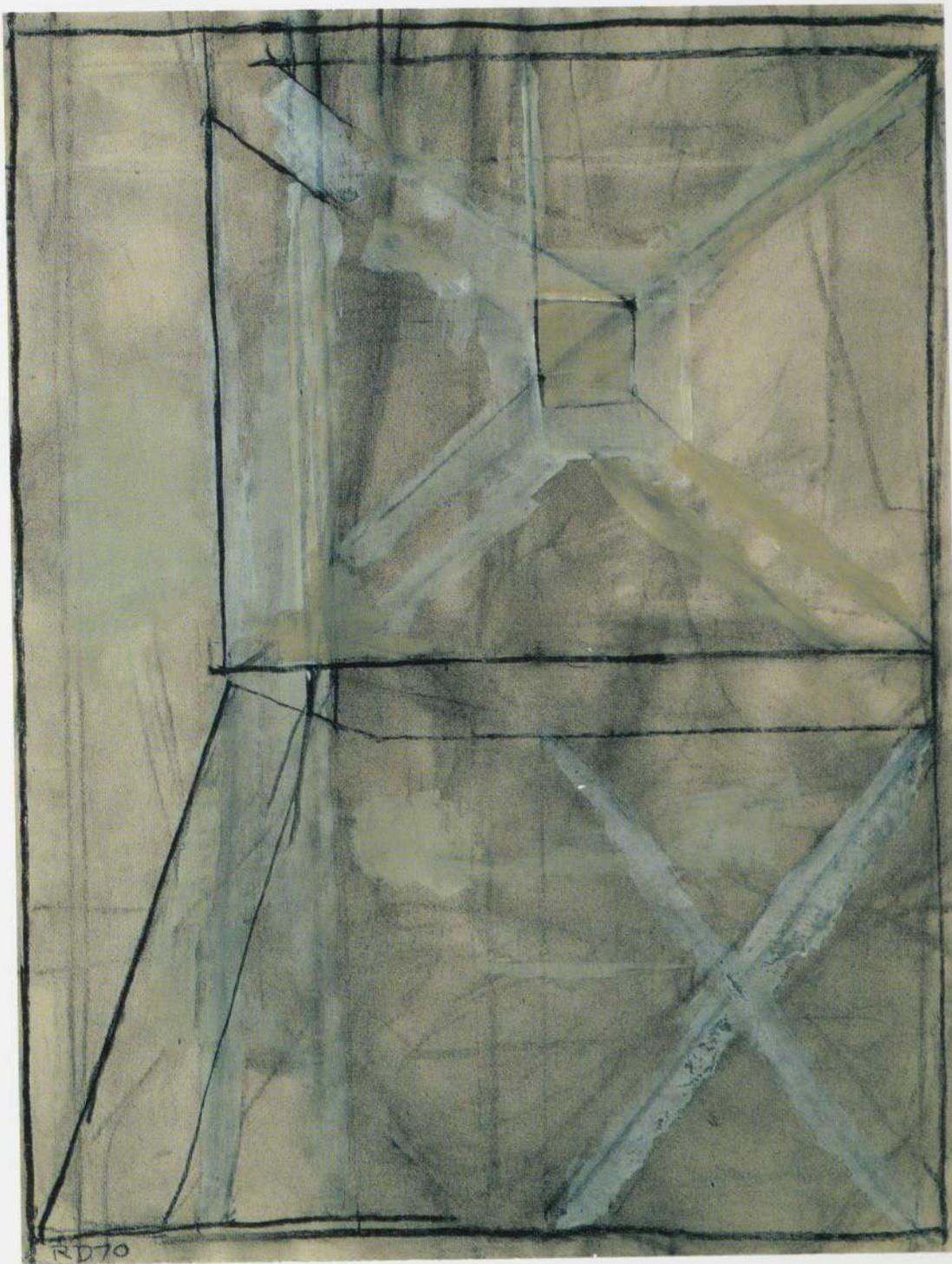
LATER ABSTRACT DRAWINGS



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1971

Acrylic, gouache, and charcoal  
28 $\frac{3}{4}$  × 12 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (73 × 30.6 cm)  
Private collection

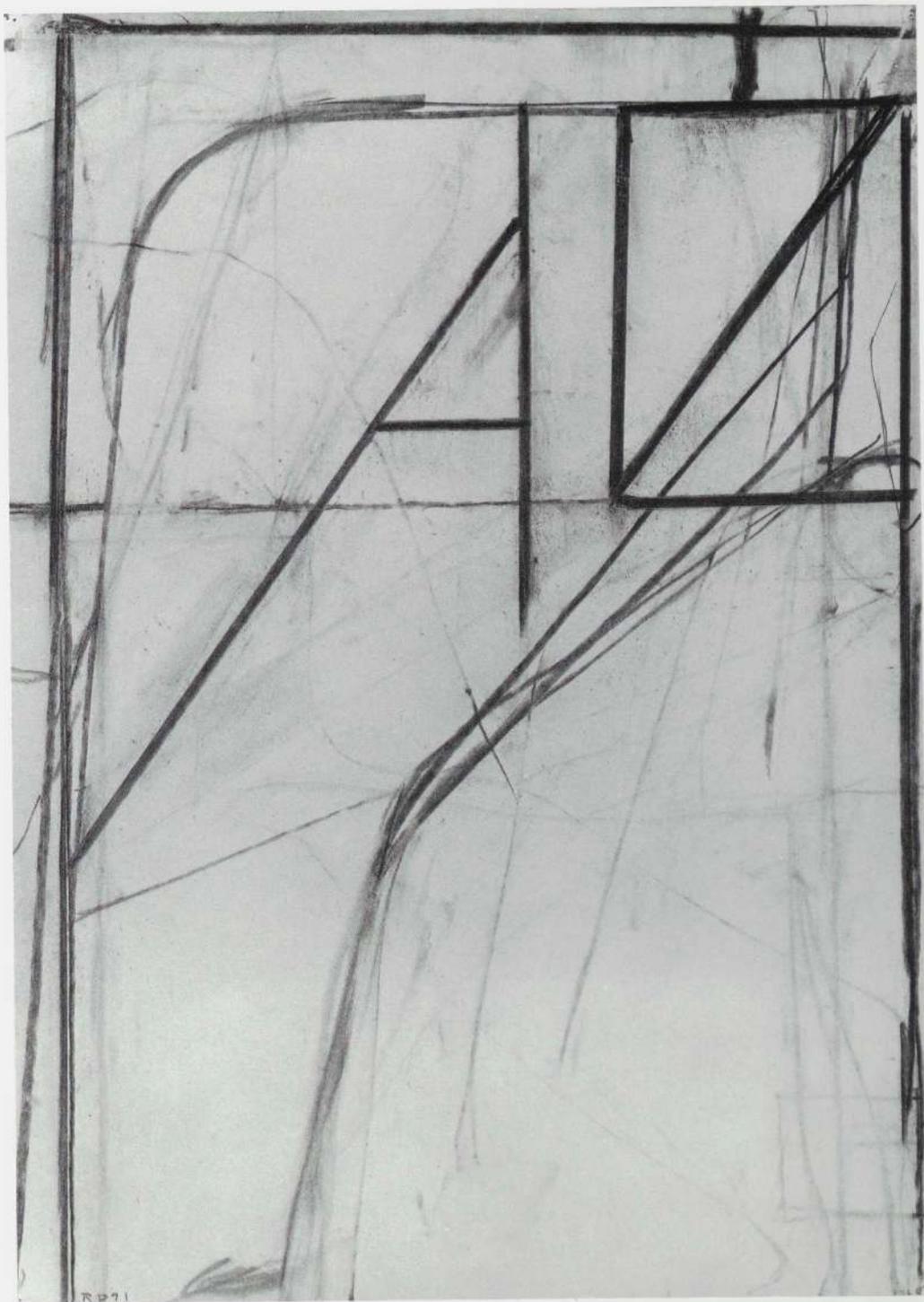
*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1970  
Charcoal, gouache, and cut-and-pasted paper  
25 × 18" (63.5 × 45.7 cm)  
Private collection, California





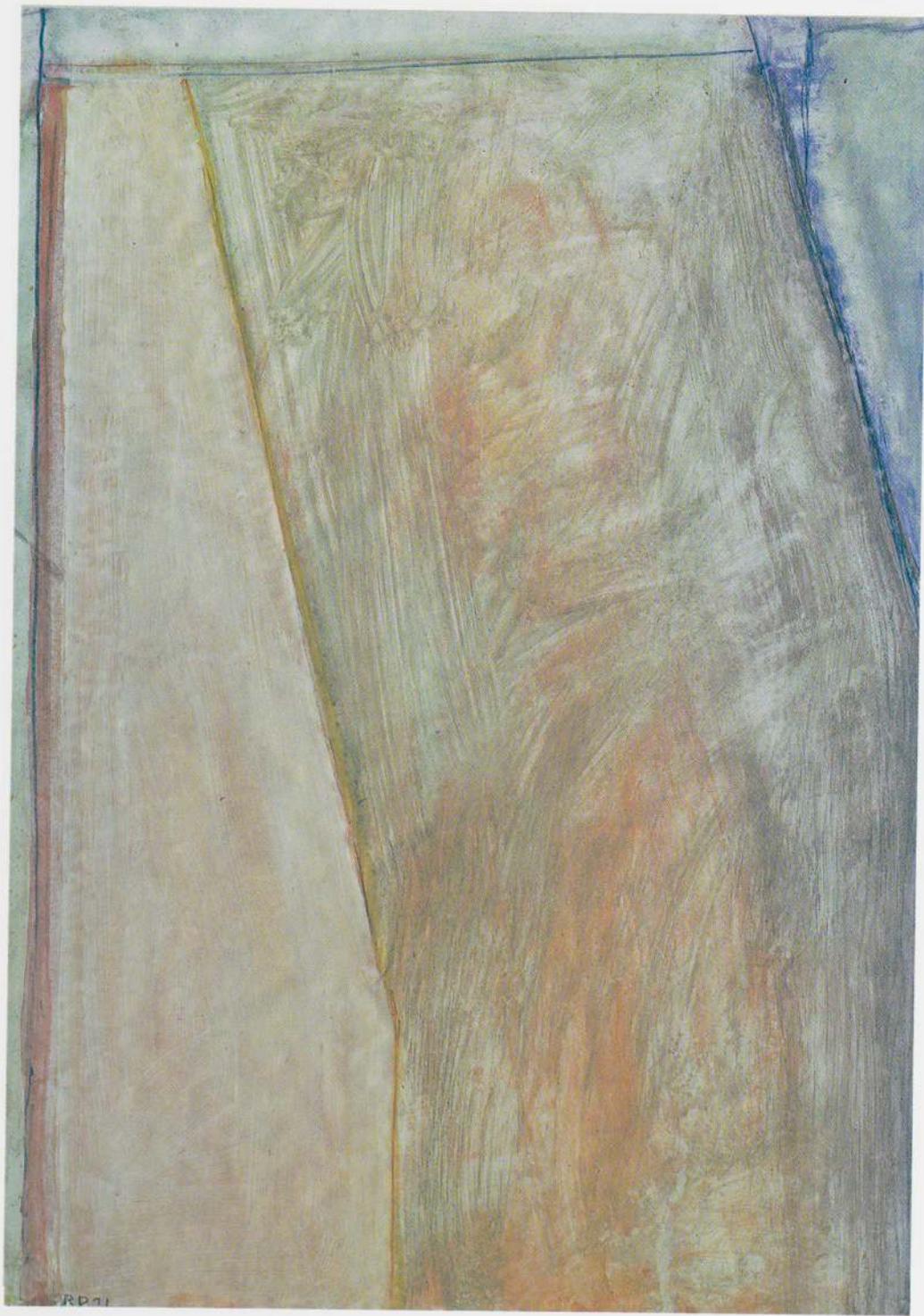
*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1975

Charcoal  
23<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 18<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" (60.6 × 48 cm)  
Private collection



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1971

Charcoal  
26 3/4 x 18 1/16" (66.7 x 47.5 cm)  
Private collection

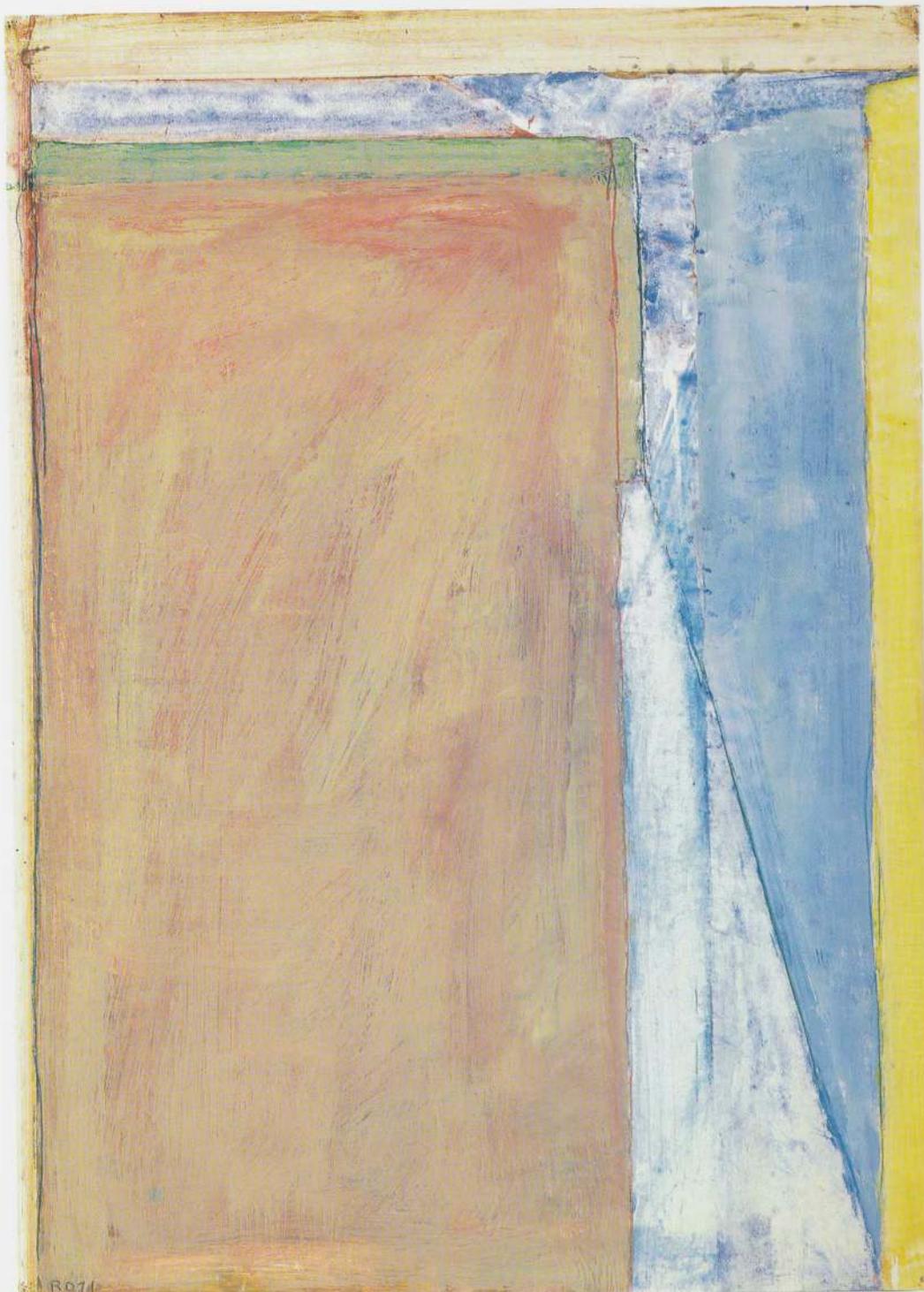


*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1971

Gouache and crayon

25 × 18" (63.5 × 45.7 cm)

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Tully M. Friedman



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1971  
Acrylic, gouache, crayon, and charcoal  
25 × 17<sup>15/16</sup>" (63.5 × 45.7 cm)  
Private collection



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1971

Charcoal and gouache  
25 × 18" (63.5 × 45.7 cm)  
Collection Harold Fondren



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1974–75

Acrylic, gouache, and crayon  
on cut-and-pasted paper  
29 × 22" (73.7 × 55.9 cm)  
Collection Maybelle Bayly Wolfe



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1972

Acrylic, watercolor, and charcoal on graph paper  
22 $\frac{1}{16}$  × 17" (56 × 43.2 cm)  
Private collection



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1973

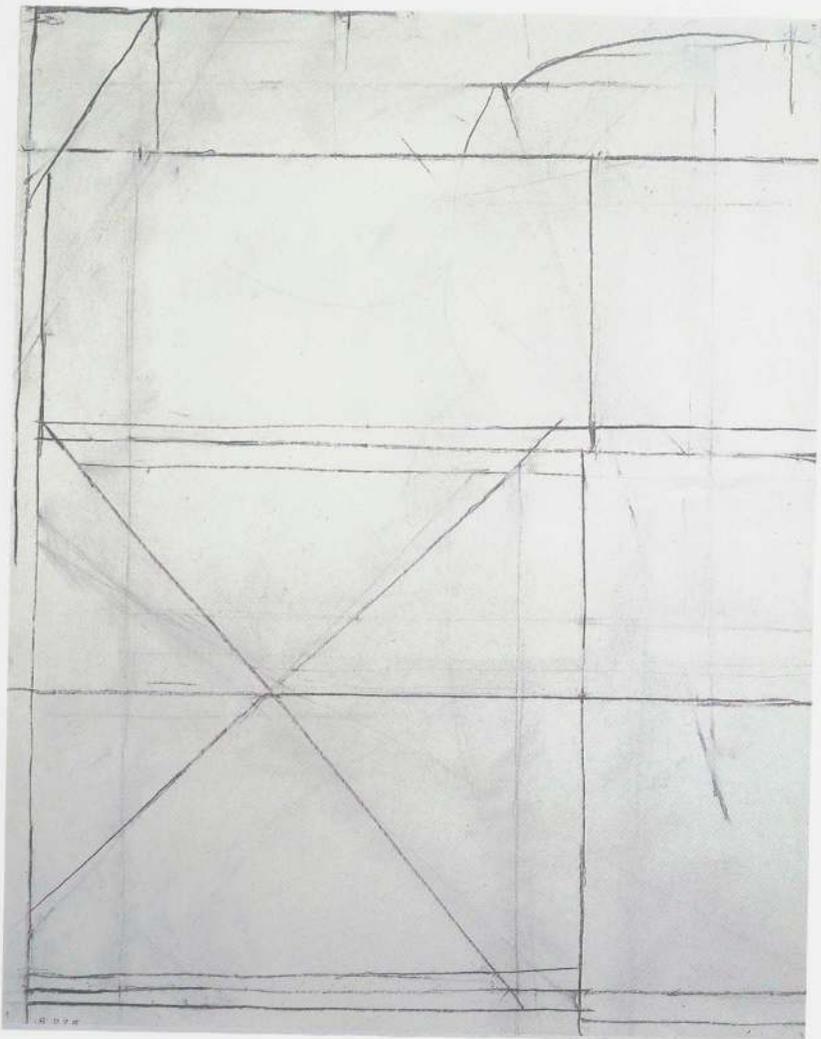
Ink and gouache  
23 $\frac{15}{16}$  × 18 $\frac{15}{16}$ " (60.8 × 48.2 cm)  
Private collection

OPPOSITE:

*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1973

Acrylic, gouache, crayon, and charcoal  
on cut-and-pasted paper  
27 $\frac{1}{2}$  × 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (69.9 × 69.9 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Darwin R. Reedy





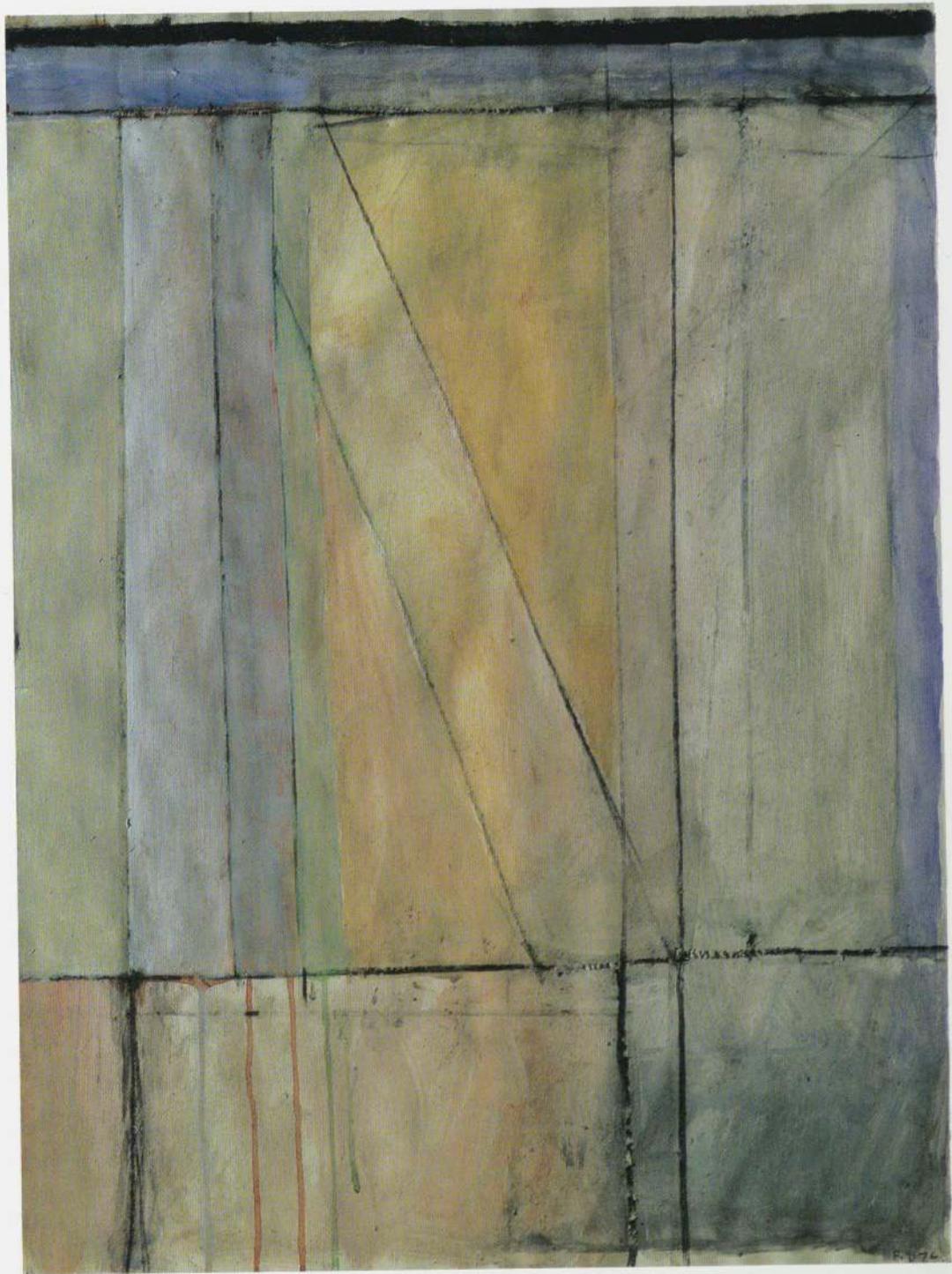
*Untitled (Ocean Park). 1975*

Charcoal  
29 × 23¼" (73.7 × 59.1 cm)  
Collection Mrs. Hannelore B. Schulhof

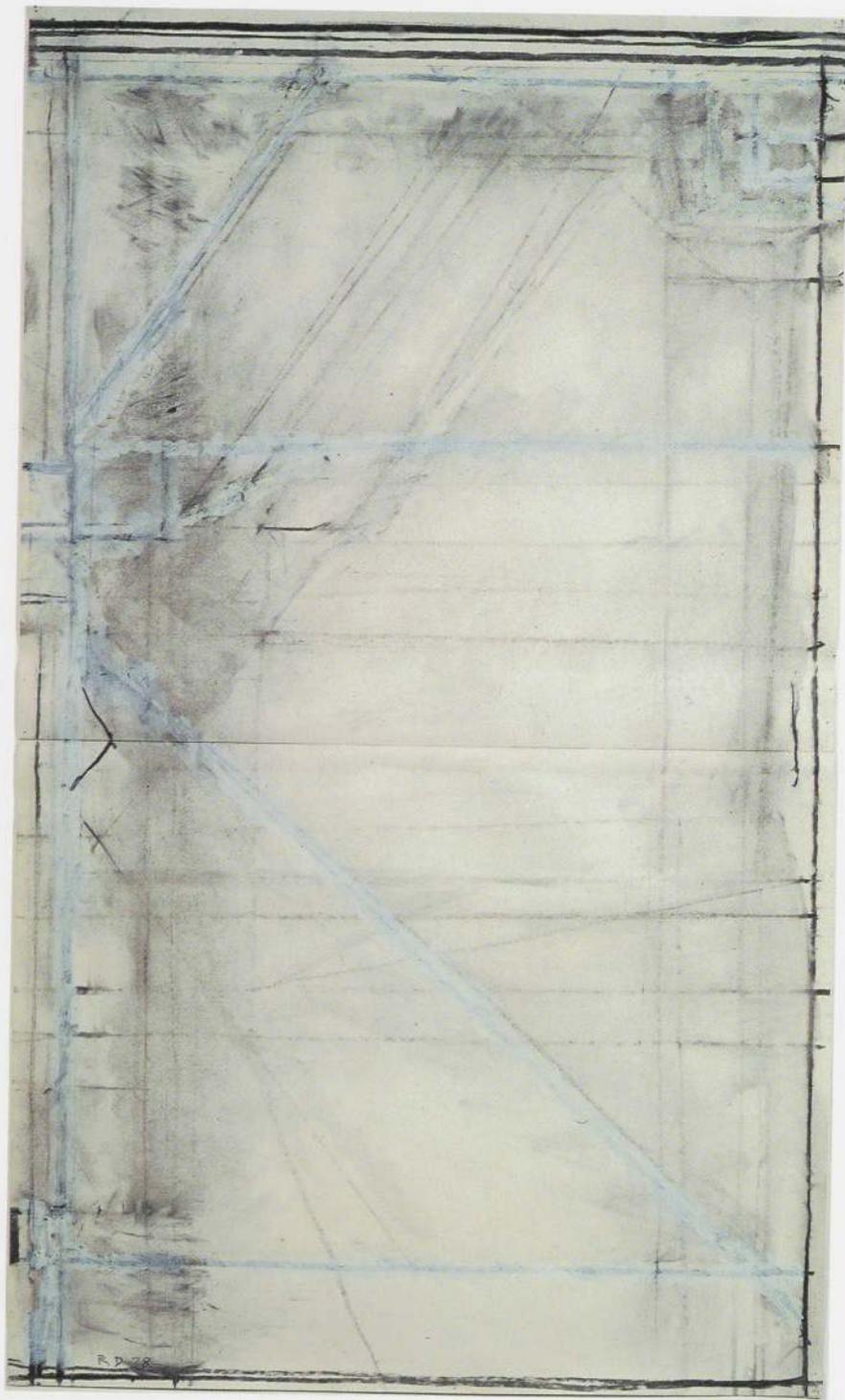


*Untitled (Ocean Park). 1975*

Acrylic and charcoal  
26¼ × 20¾" (66.7 × 51.4 cm)  
Private collection



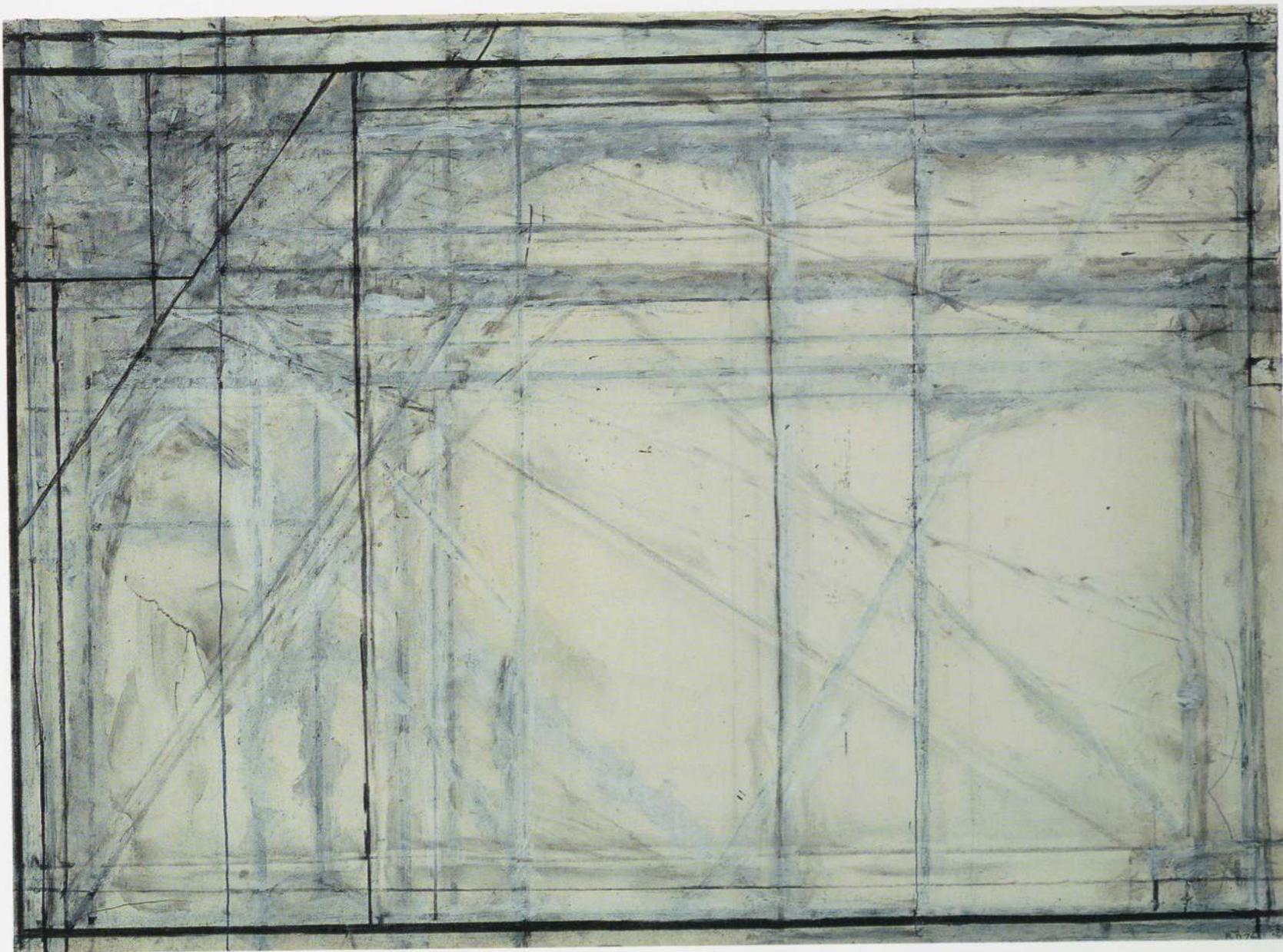
*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1976  
Gouache and charcoal  
30¼ × 22¼" (76.8 × 56.5 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. John Berggruen



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1978

Charcoal, crayon, and gouache  
23 $\frac{3}{8}$  × 16 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (59.4 × 42.9 cm)

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Douglas R. Feuring



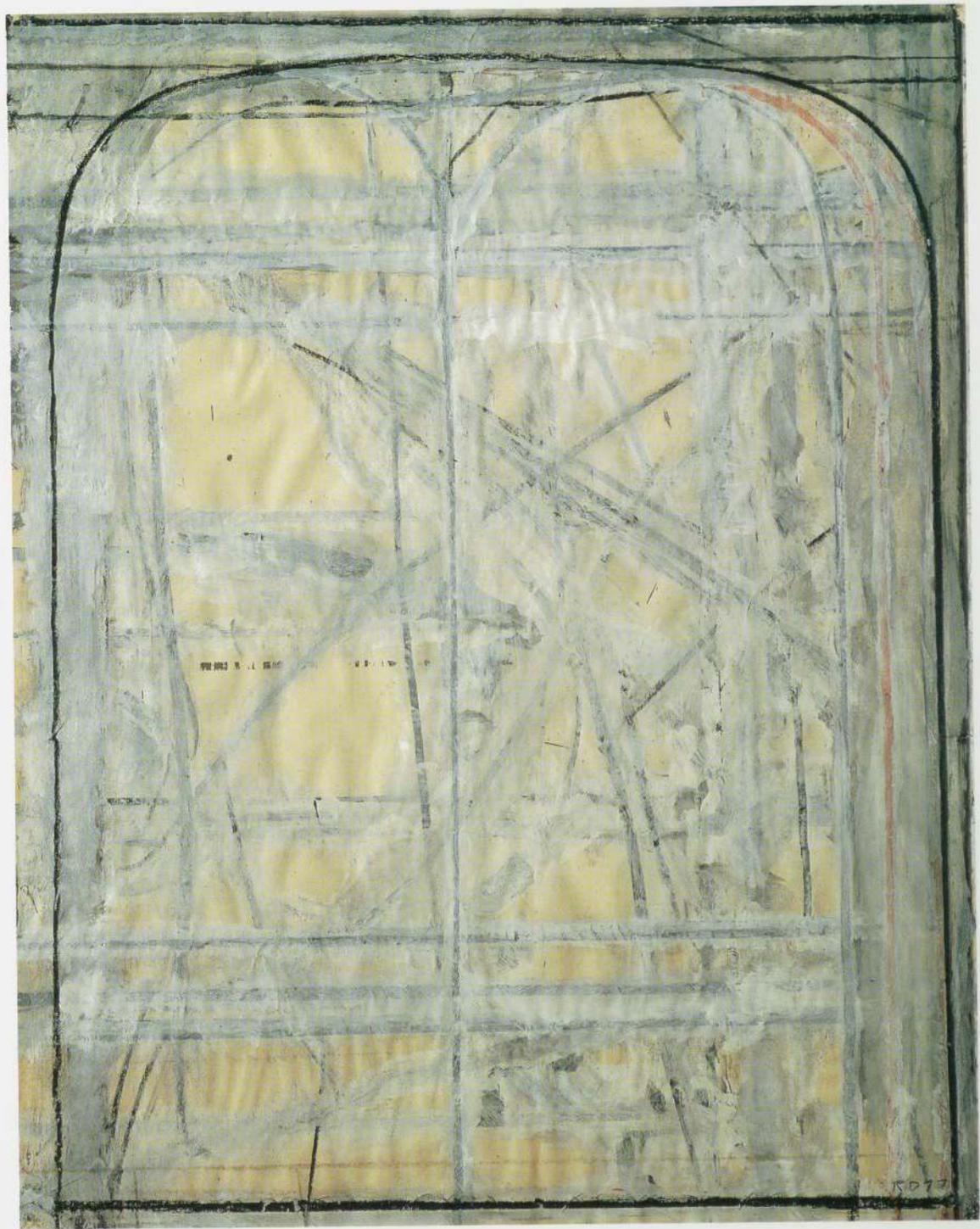
*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1976

Acrylic, gouache, crayon, and charcoal  
22½ × 31" (57.2 × 78.7 cm)  
Private collection, California

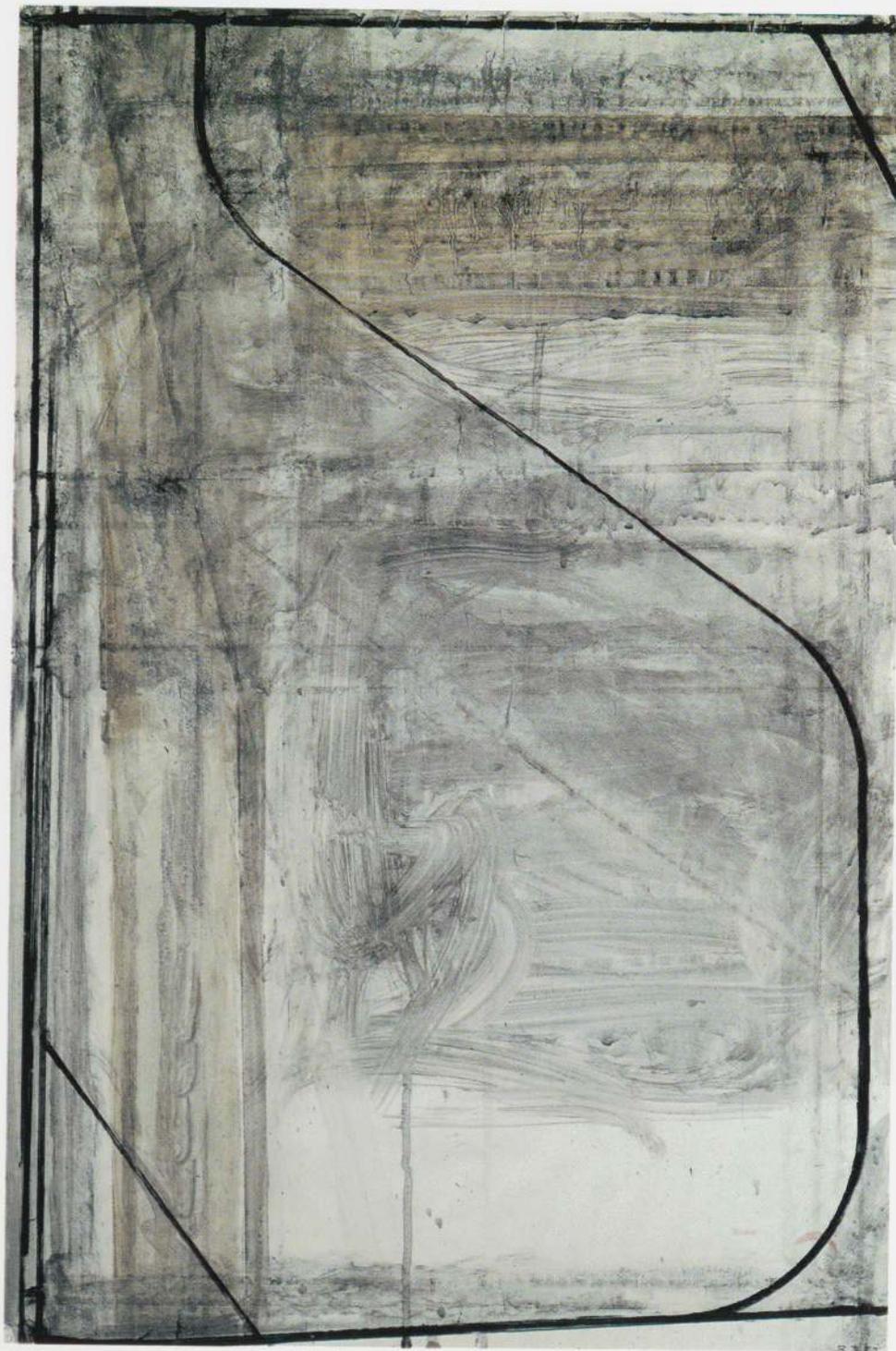


*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1977

Acrylic, gouache, crayon, and charcoal  
on cut-and-pasted paper  
28½ × 16¾" (72.4 × 42.5 cm)  
Private collection

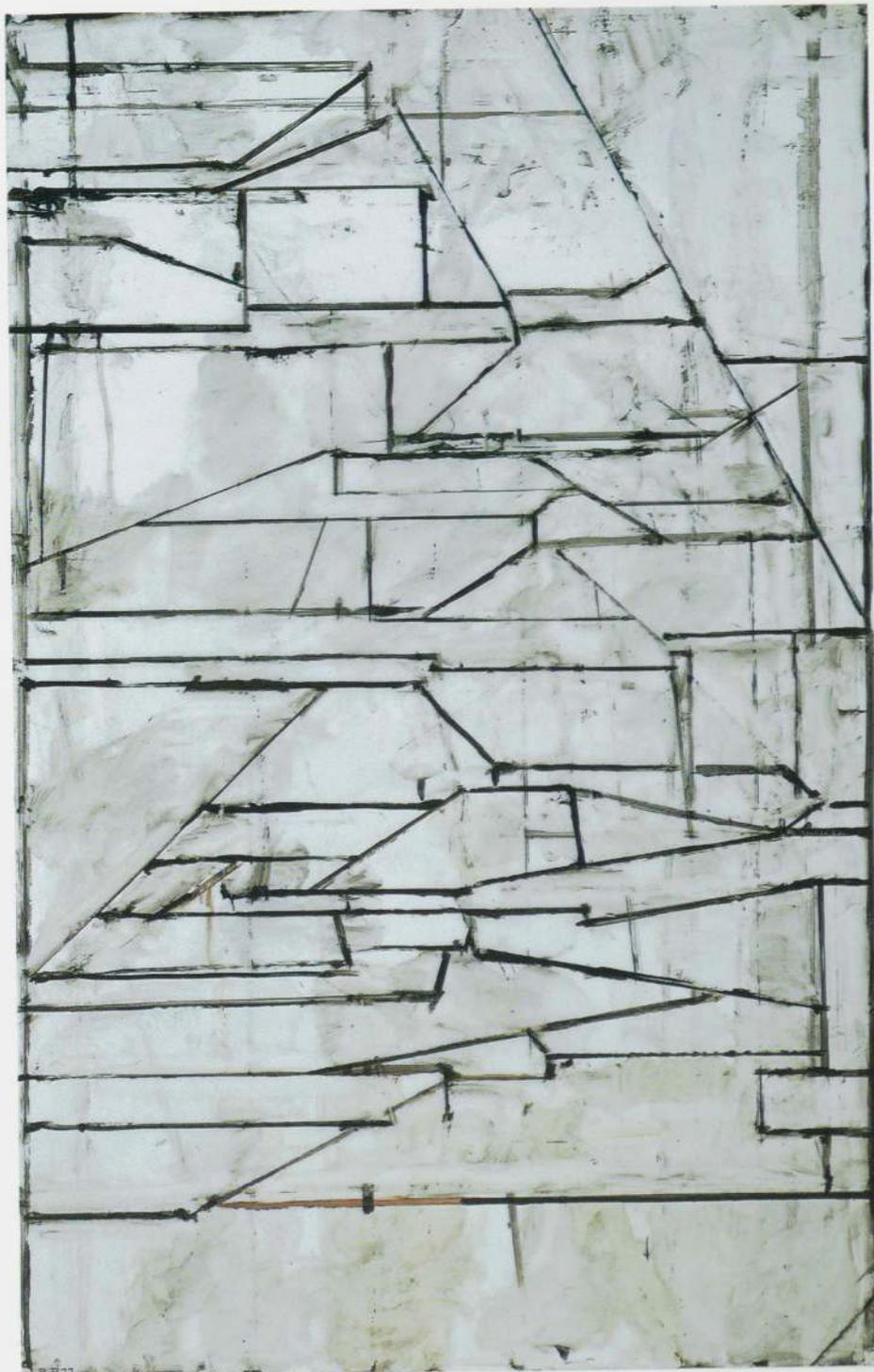


*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1977  
Acrylic, gouache, crayon, and charcoal  
18½ × 13½" (47 × 34.5 cm)  
Private collection

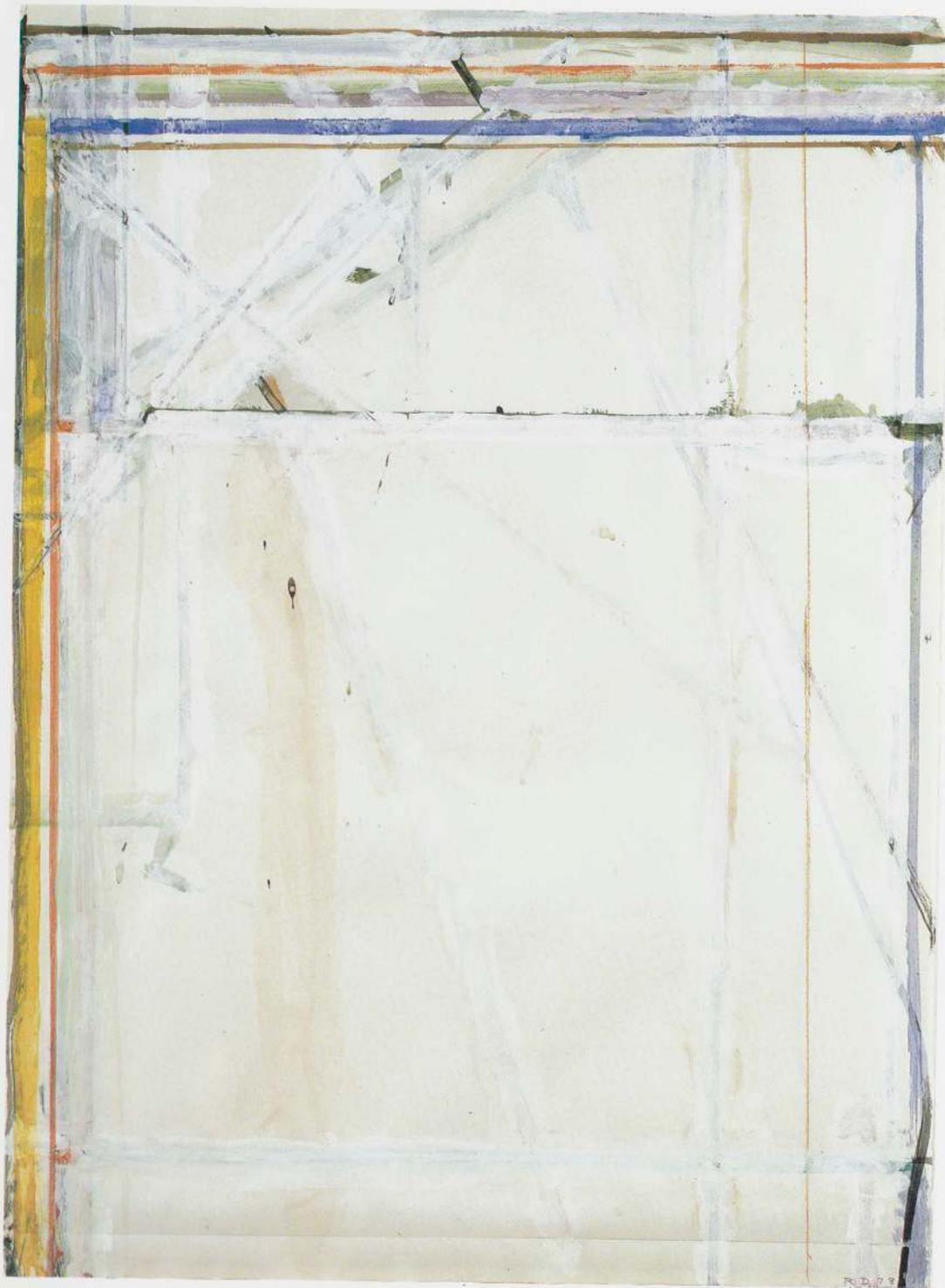


*Untitled (Ocean Park), 1977*

Acrylic, gouache, and crayon  
29 $\frac{3}{4}$  × 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (75.6 × 50.2 cm)  
The Picker Art Gallery, Colgate University,  
Hamilton, New York. The Luther W. Brady  
Collection of Works on Paper



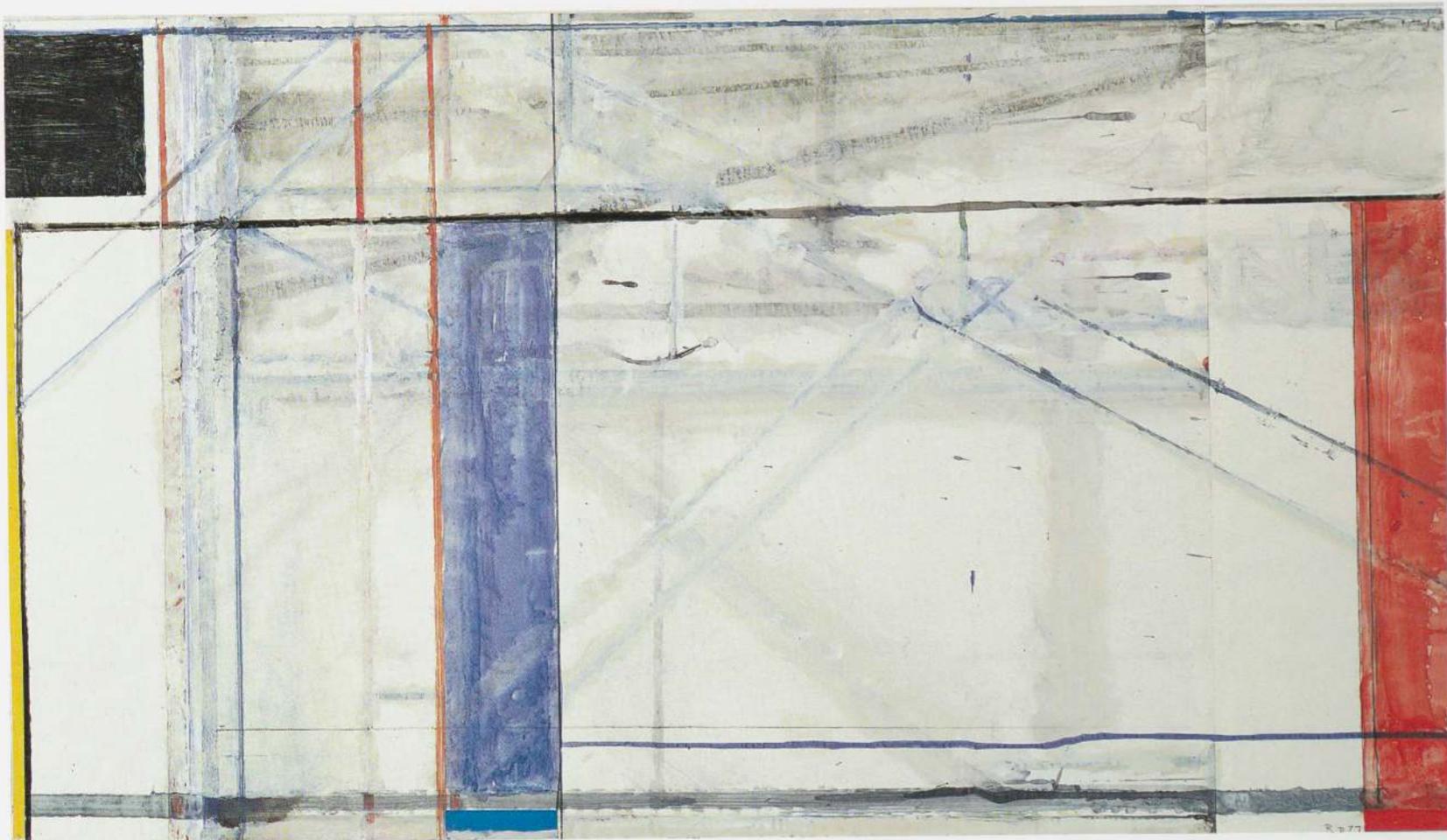
*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1977  
Acrylic, gouache, crayon, and charcoal  
34 $\frac{1}{4}$  × 22" (87 × 55.9 cm)  
Collection Eugene Istomin



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1978

Acrylic, gouache, and crayon on  
cut-and-pasted paper  
30 × 22" (76.2 × 55.9 cm)

Collection Katharine and Martin Manulis



*Untitled (Ocean Park). 1977*

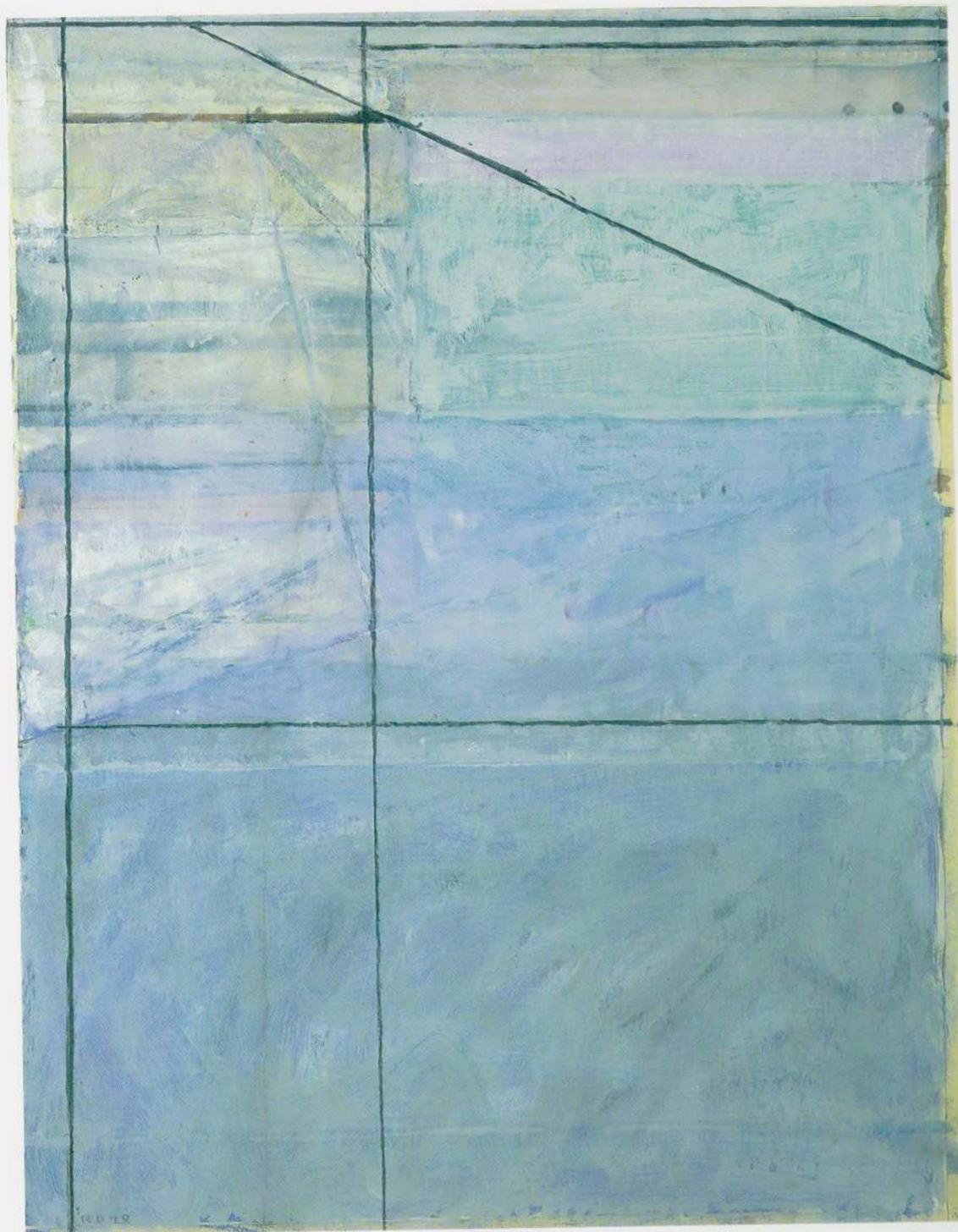
Acrylic, gouache, watercolor, cut-and-pasted paper,  
and pencil on cut-and-pasted paper  
18¼ × 32¾" (47.6 × 83.2 cm)  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase



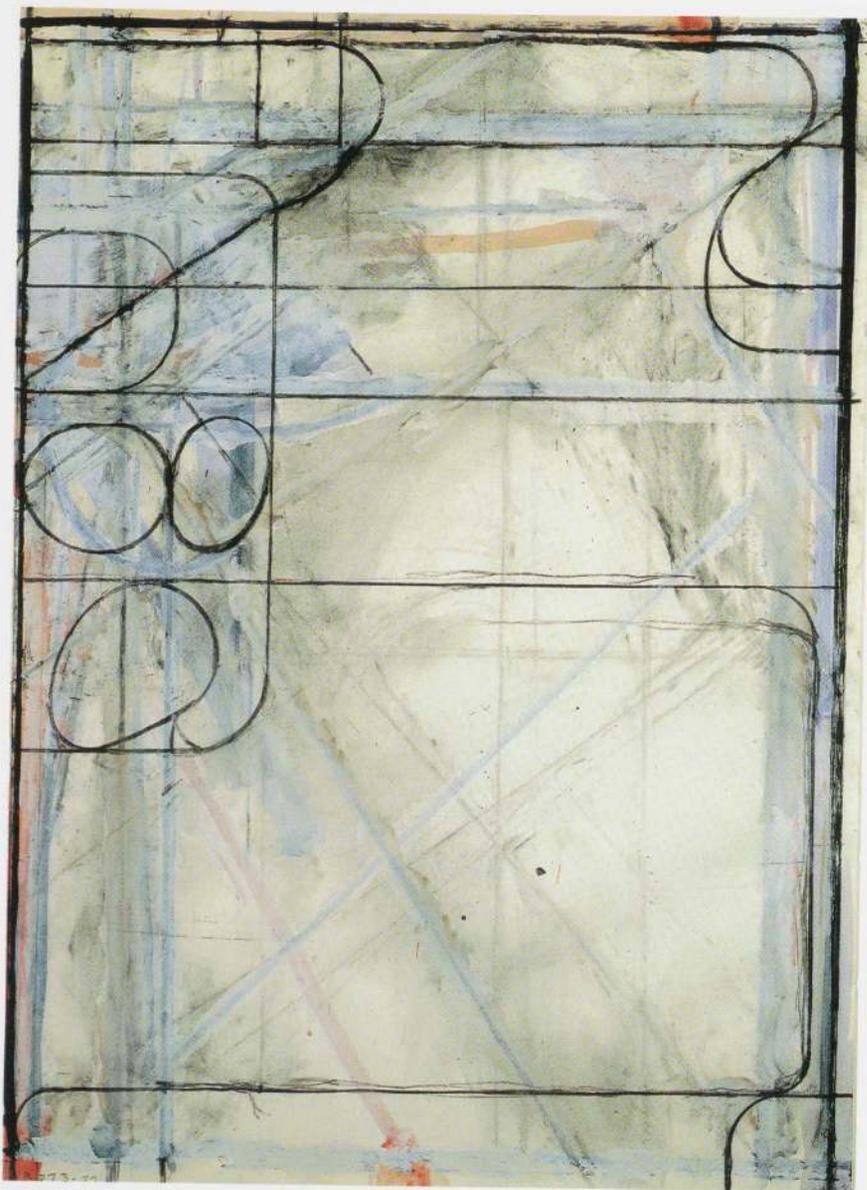
*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1978

Acrylic, gouache, and crayon  
28½ × 22" (72.4 × 55.9 cm)

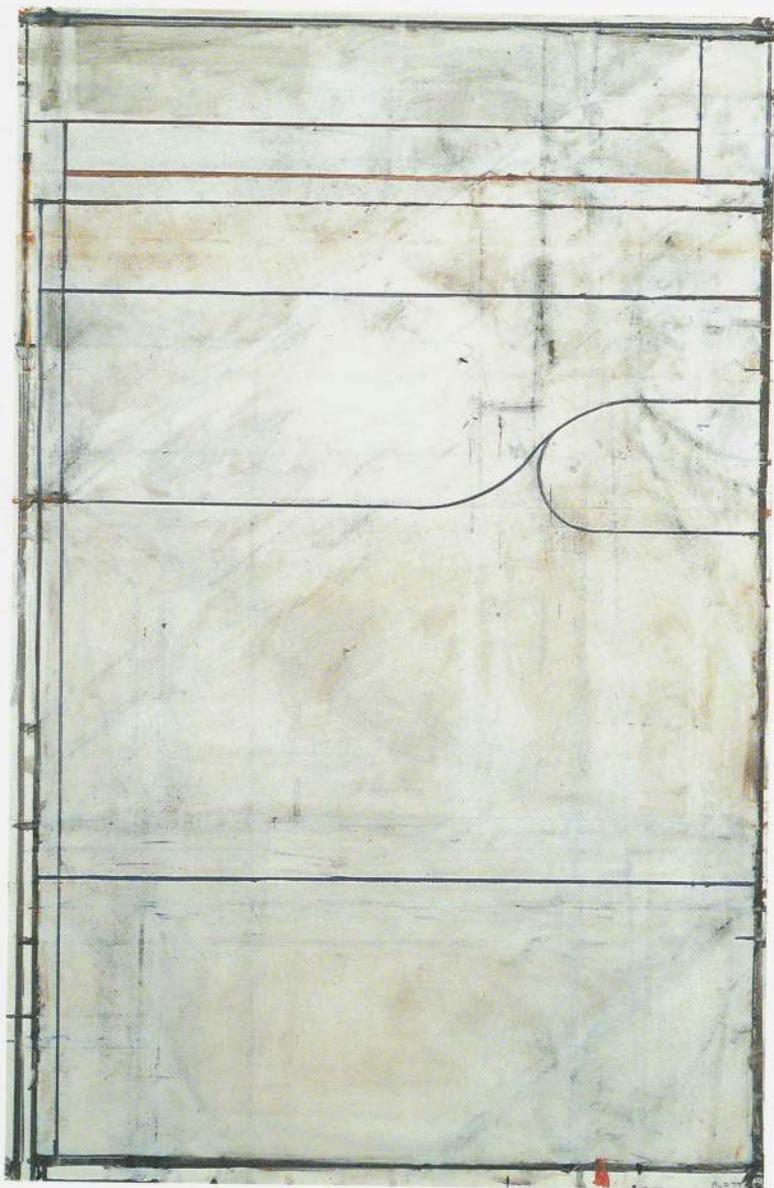
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Donald B. Marron



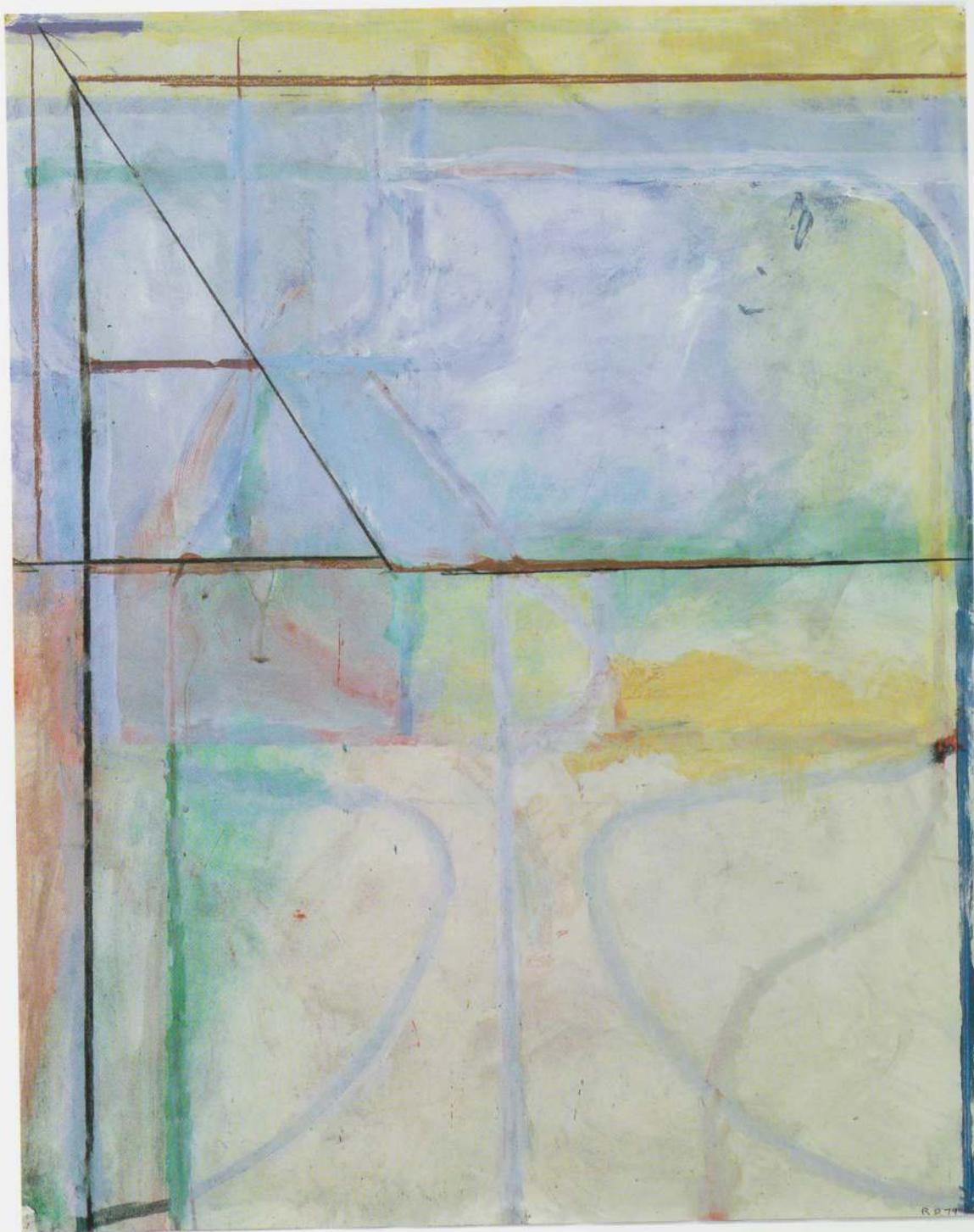
*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1978  
Acrylic, gouache, crayon, and charcoal  
28¼ × 22" (71.8 × 55.9 cm)  
Collection Ann and Robert L. Freedman



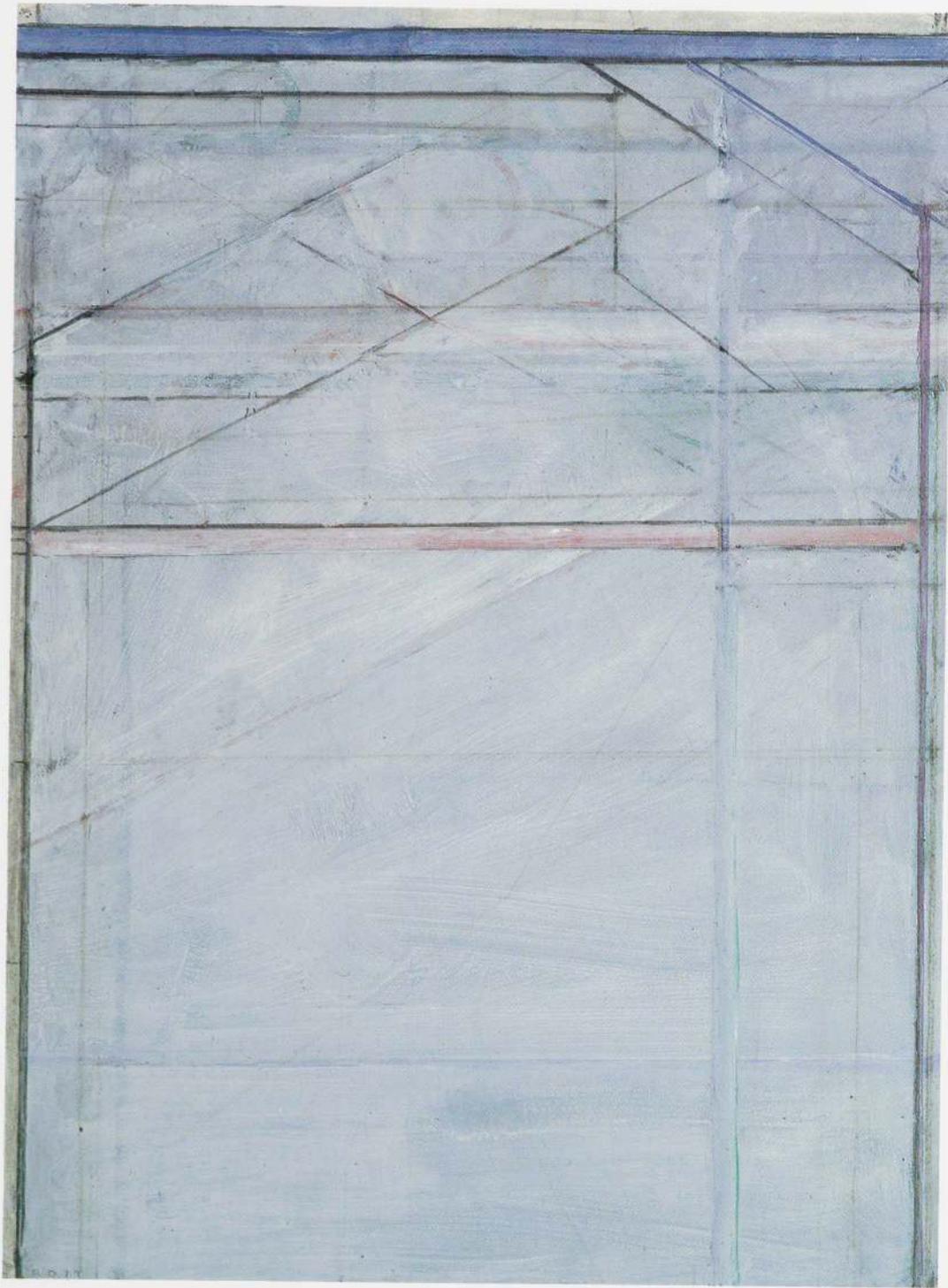
*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1973-79  
Acrylic, gouache, crayon, and charcoal  
30 x 22" (76.2 x 55.9 cm)  
Collection Marjorie Swig Ehrlich



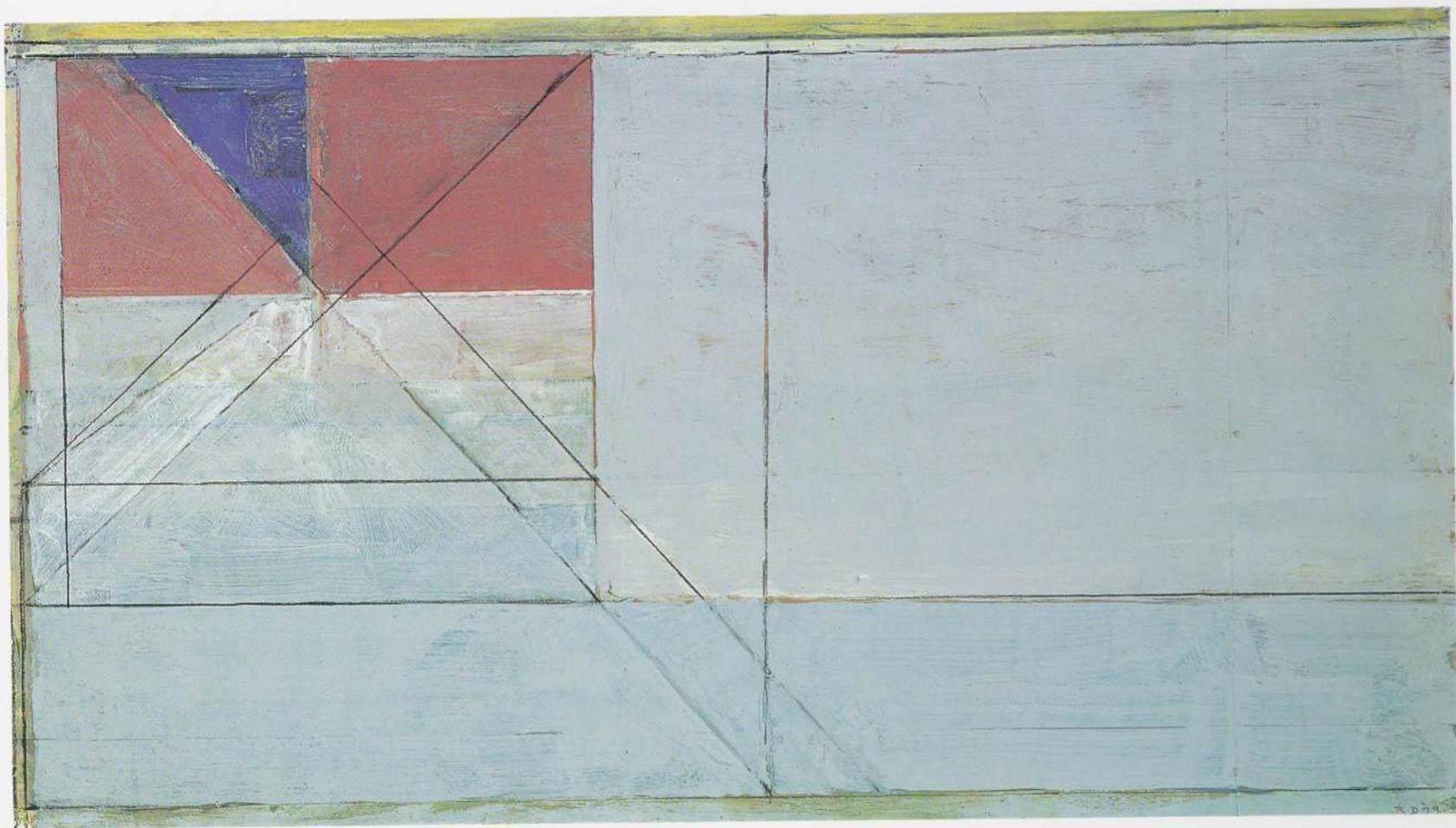
*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1979  
Acrylic, gouache, crayon, and charcoal  
34 1/4 x 22 1/4" (87 x 56.5 cm)  
Collection Janie C. Lee



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1979  
Acrylic, gouache, crayon, and charcoal  
29 × 23" (73.7 × 58.4 cm)  
Collection Barry and Gail Berkus

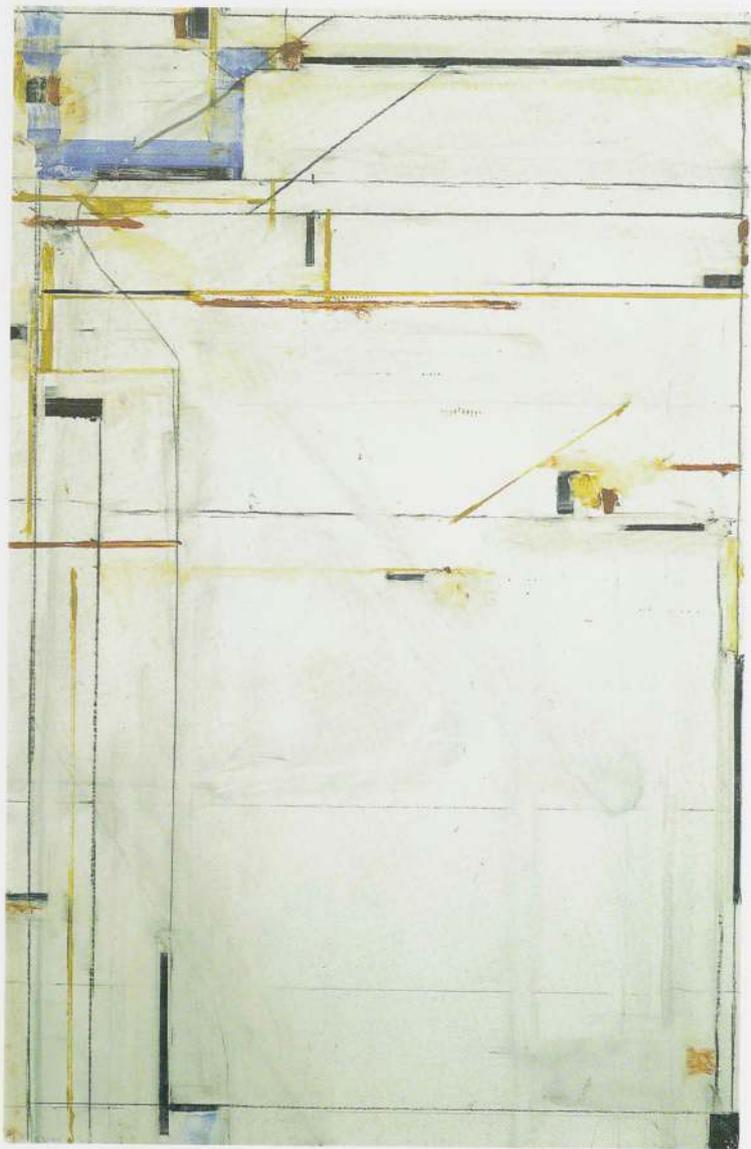


*Untitled (Ocean Park), 1979*  
Acrylic, gouache, crayon, and charcoal  
30 × 22" (76.2 × 55.9 cm)  
Private collection



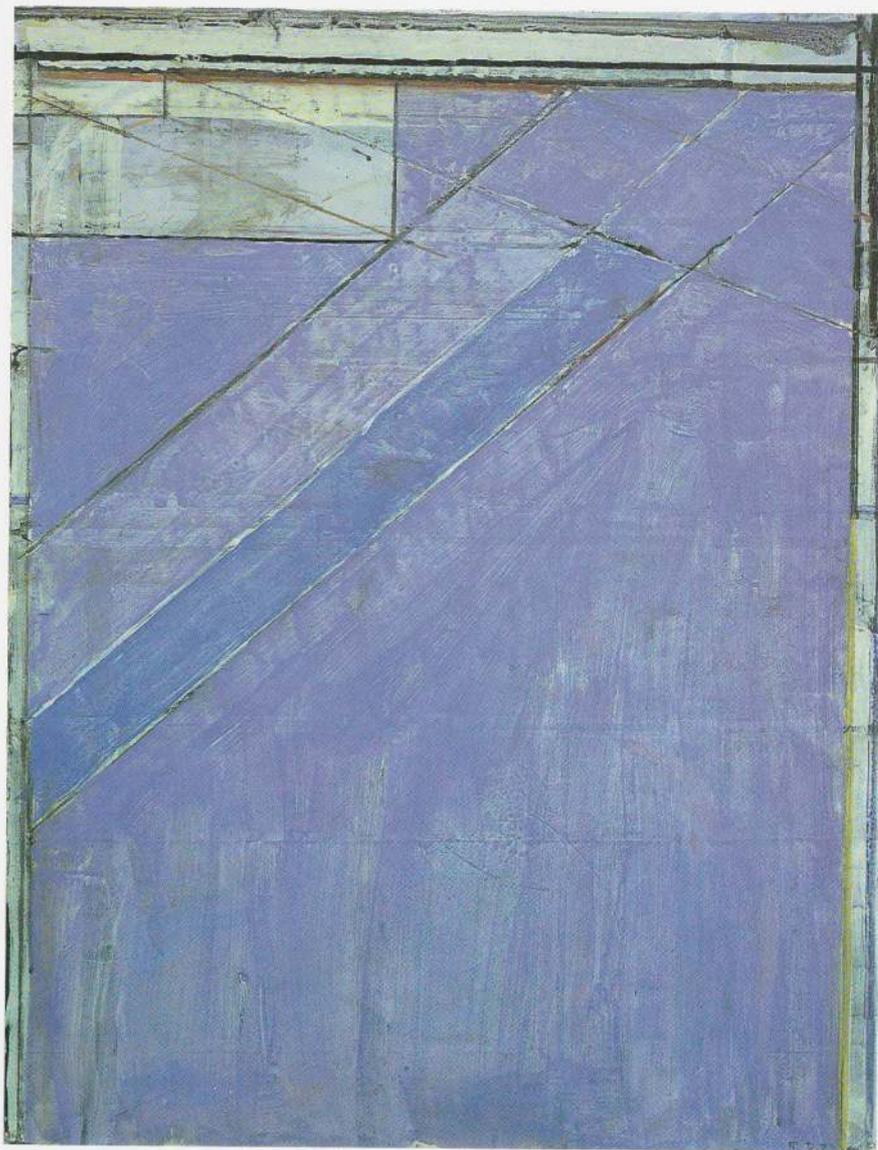
*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1979

Acrylic, gouache, crayon, and charcoal  
on cut-and-pasted paper  
16 $\frac{3}{4}$  × 30" (42.6 × 76.2 cm)  
Private collection, California



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1980

Acrylic, gouache, crayon and charcoal  
35 × 22½" (88.9 × 57.2 cm)  
Collection Ann and Robert L. Freedman



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1979

Acrylic, gouache, charcoal, and ink  
25½ × 19½" (64.8 × 49.5 cm)  
Collection Leslie A. Feely

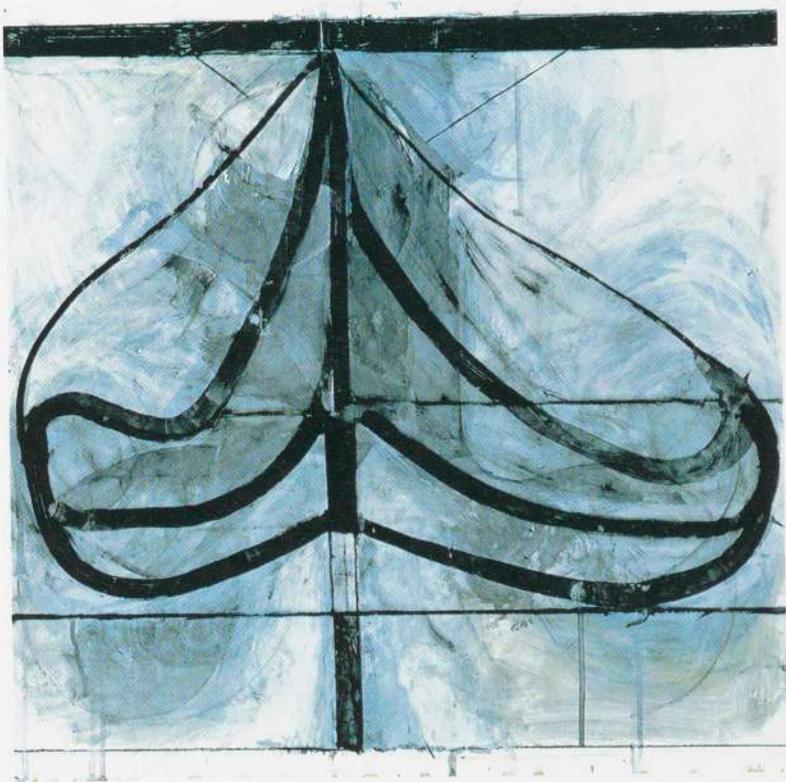


*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1980  
Oil, charcoal, and cut-and-pasted paper  
on cardboard  
15 $\frac{3}{8}$  × 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (39 × 31.8 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Roger S. Berlind

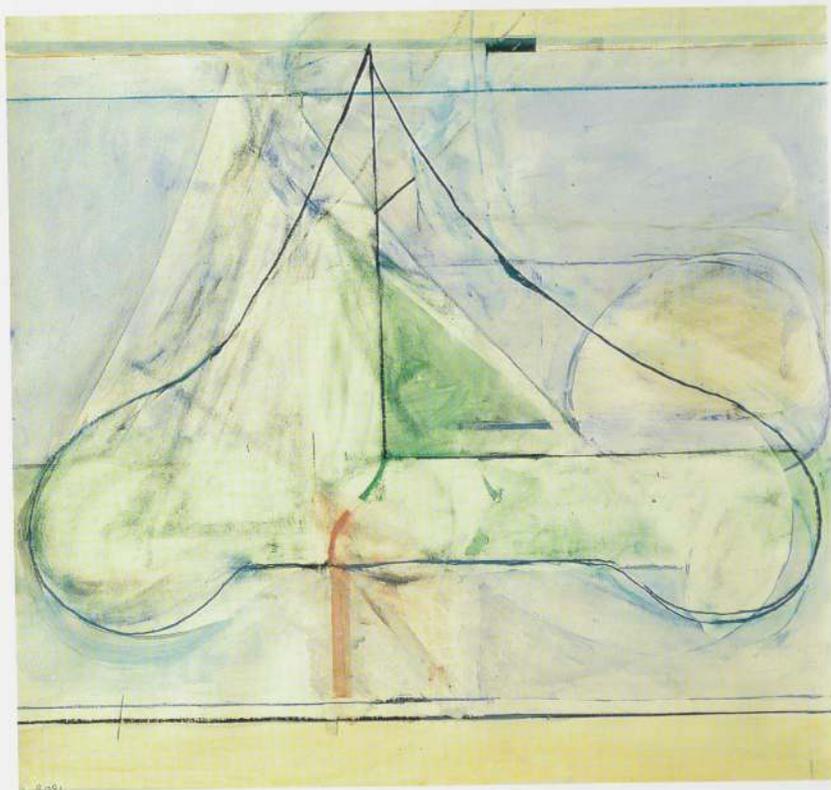


*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1980

Gouache, pastel, ink, and cut-and-pasted paper  
25 1/8 x 19 (63.7 x 48.3 cm)  
Collection Chris J. Diebenkorn



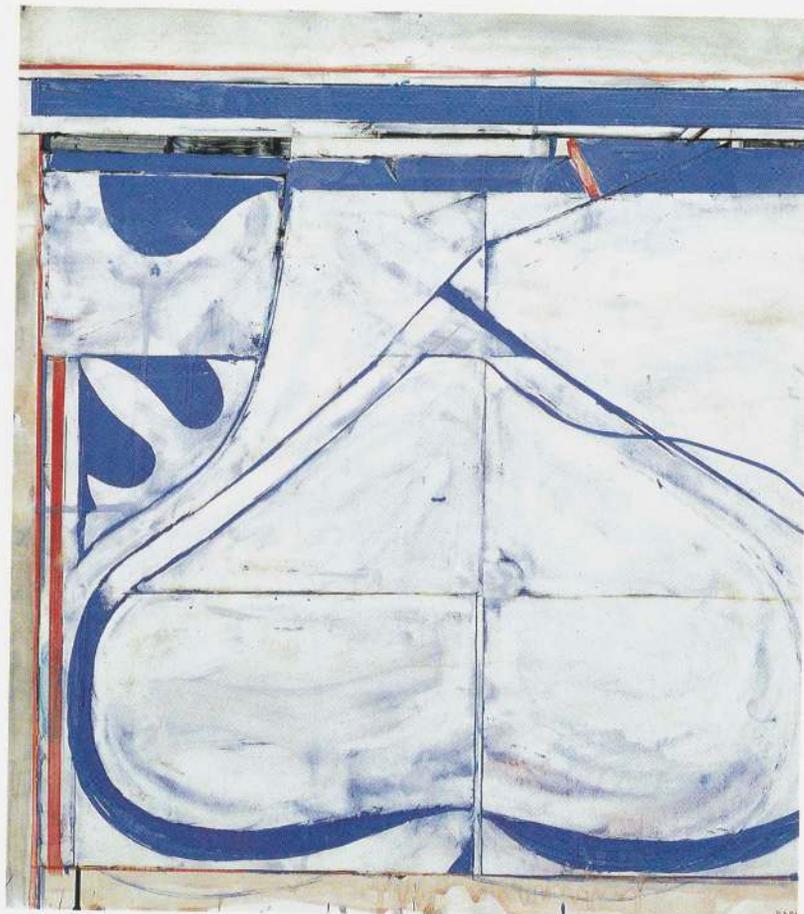
*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1981  
Acrylic, gouache, charcoal, and crayon  
25 × 25" (63.5 × 63.5 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Tom Seaver



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1981  
Gouache and crayon  
25 × 26" (63.5 × 66 cm)  
Private collection, California



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1981  
Gouache and crayon  
28 x 25" (71.1 x 63.5 cm)  
Collection Mrs. Wellington Henderson



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1981  
Gouache and crayon  
27½ x 25" (69.9 x 63.5 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. John Berggruen



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1981

Gouache and crayon  
25 × 27" (63.5 × 68.6 cm)  
Collection Mrs. Lawrence Rubin



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1983

Acrylic, gouache, and crayon

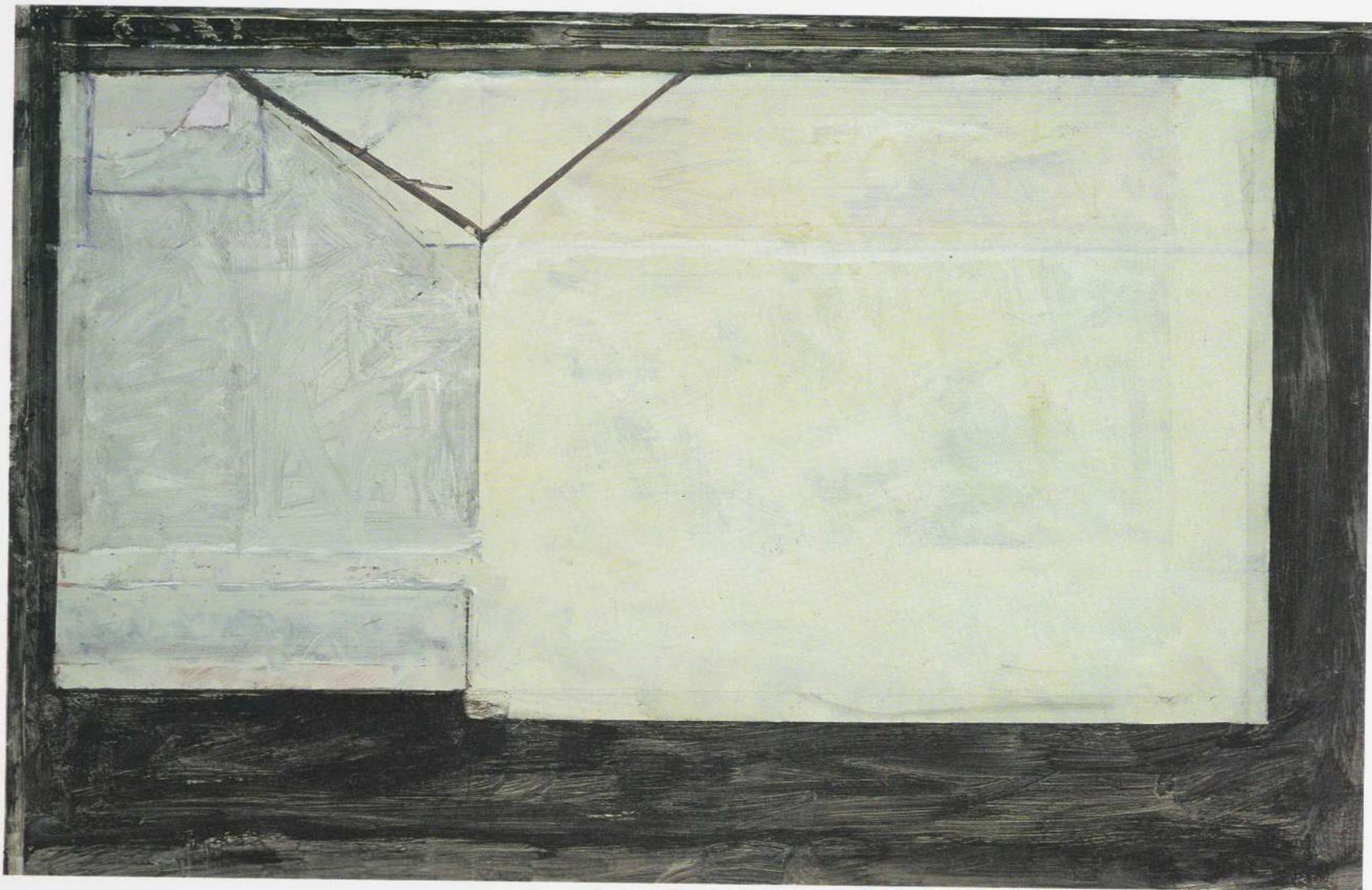
25 × 36" (63.5 × 91.5 cm)

Collection PaineWebber Group Inc.



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1981

Oil, gouache, and crayon  
25 x 38" (63.5 x 96.5 cm)  
Collection William A. M. Burden & Co.



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1984

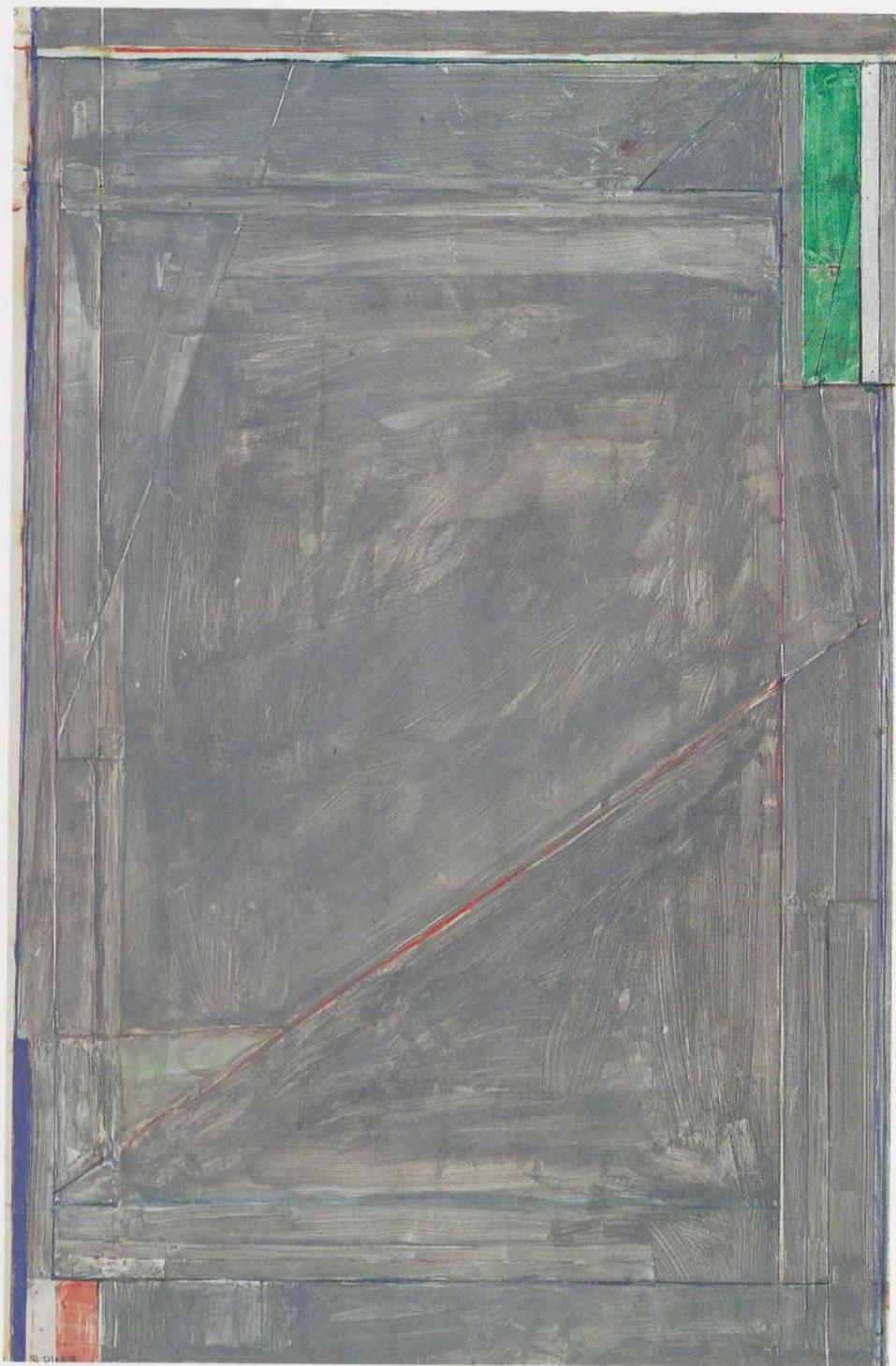
Acrylic, gouache, crayon, and cut-and-pasted  
paper on cut-and-pasted paper  
25 x 38<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" (63.5 x 98.4 cm)

Private collection



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1983

Acrylic, gouache, and crayon  
25 x 27" (63.5 x 68.6 cm)  
Collection Gretchen and Richard Grant

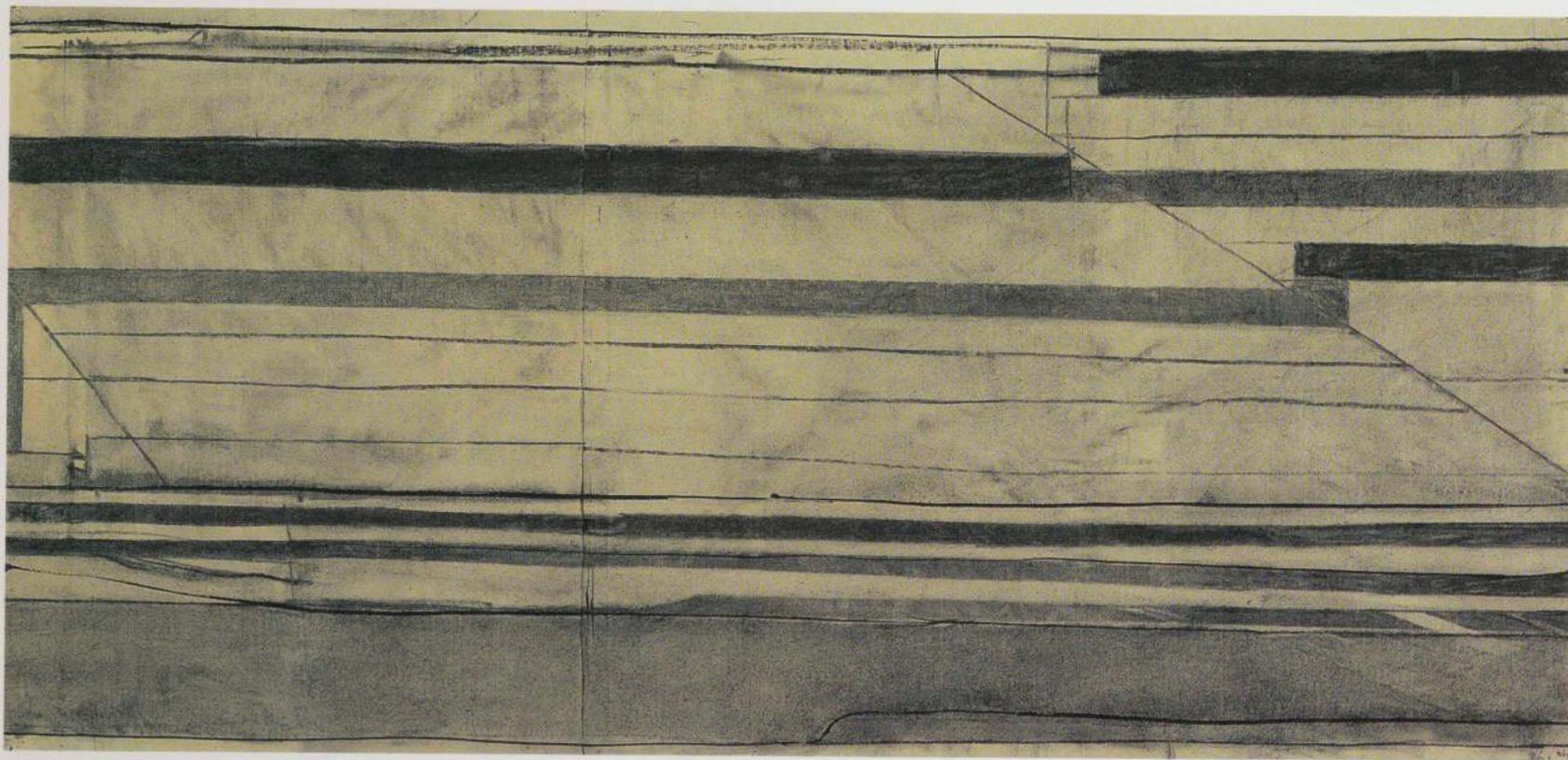


*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1983

Acrylic, gouache, crayon, and cut-and-pasted  
paper on cut-and-pasted paper  
38 × 25" (96.5 × 63.5 cm)  
Collection Richard Newlin



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1984  
Acrylic, gouache, and crayon  
36 × 25" (91.4 × 63.5 cm)  
Collection Donald and Barbara Zucker



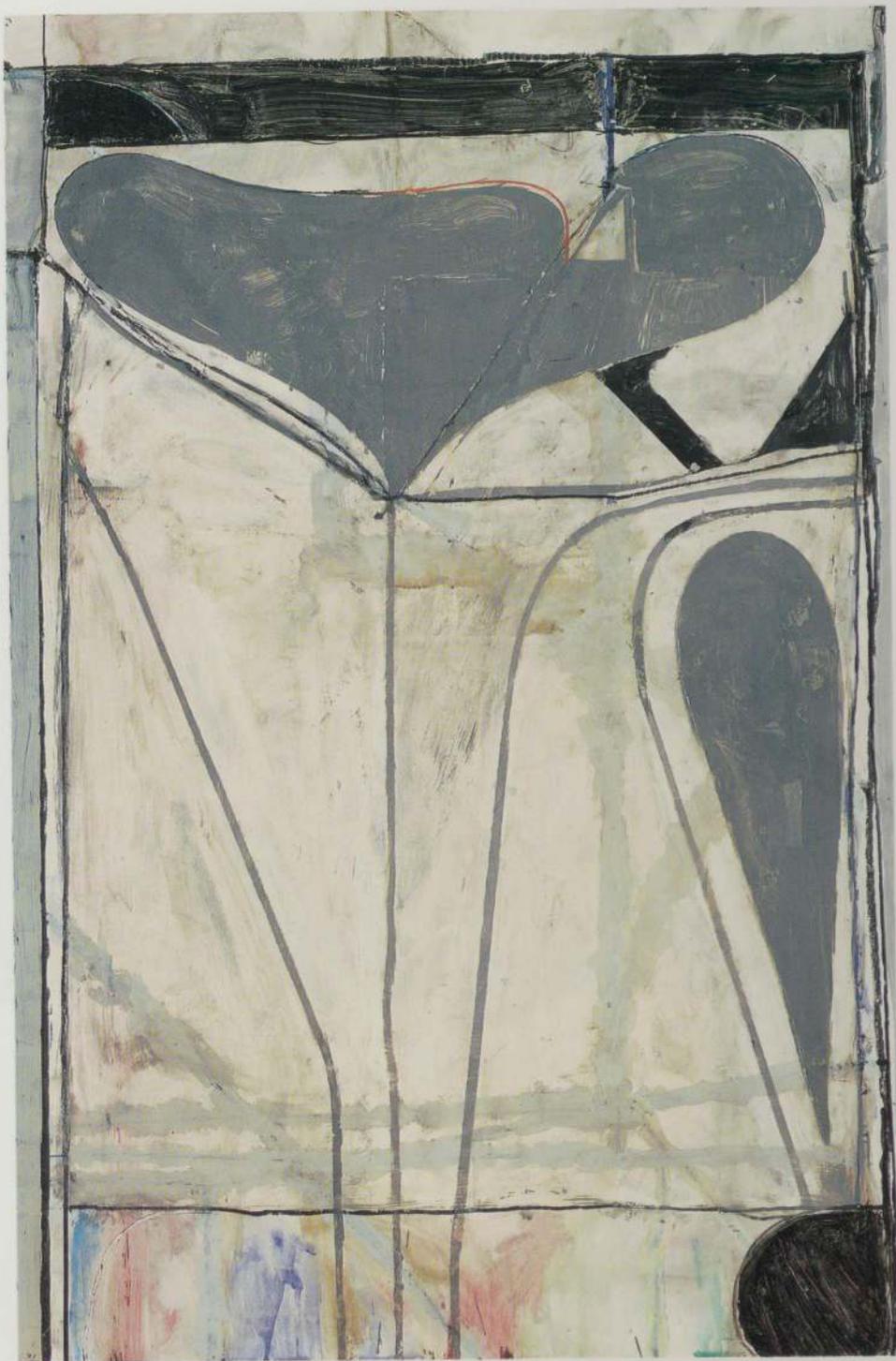
*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1986

Charcoal and ink

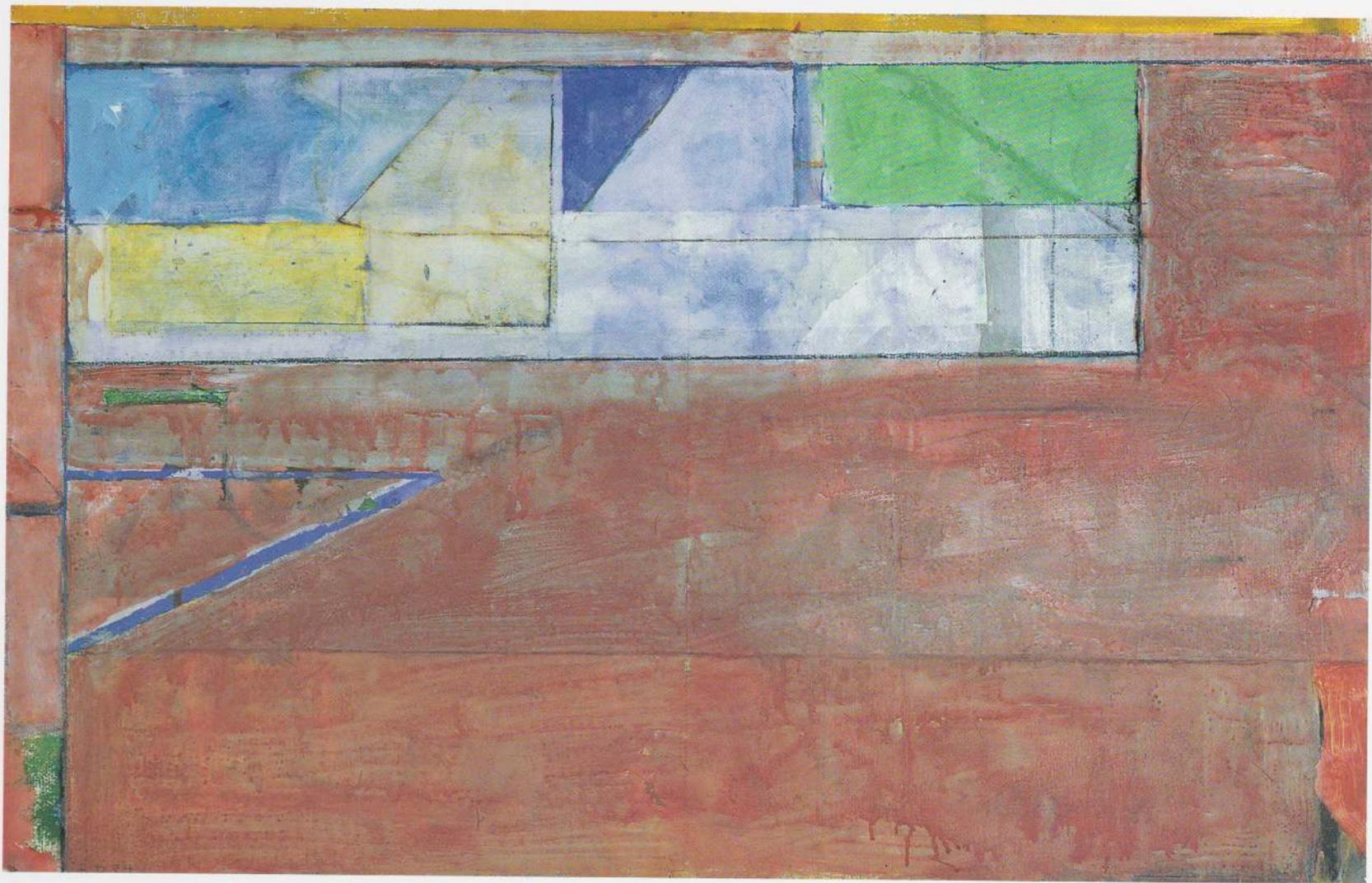
18 x 37" (45.7 x 93.9 cm)

The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Gift of the Denise and Andrew Saul Fund

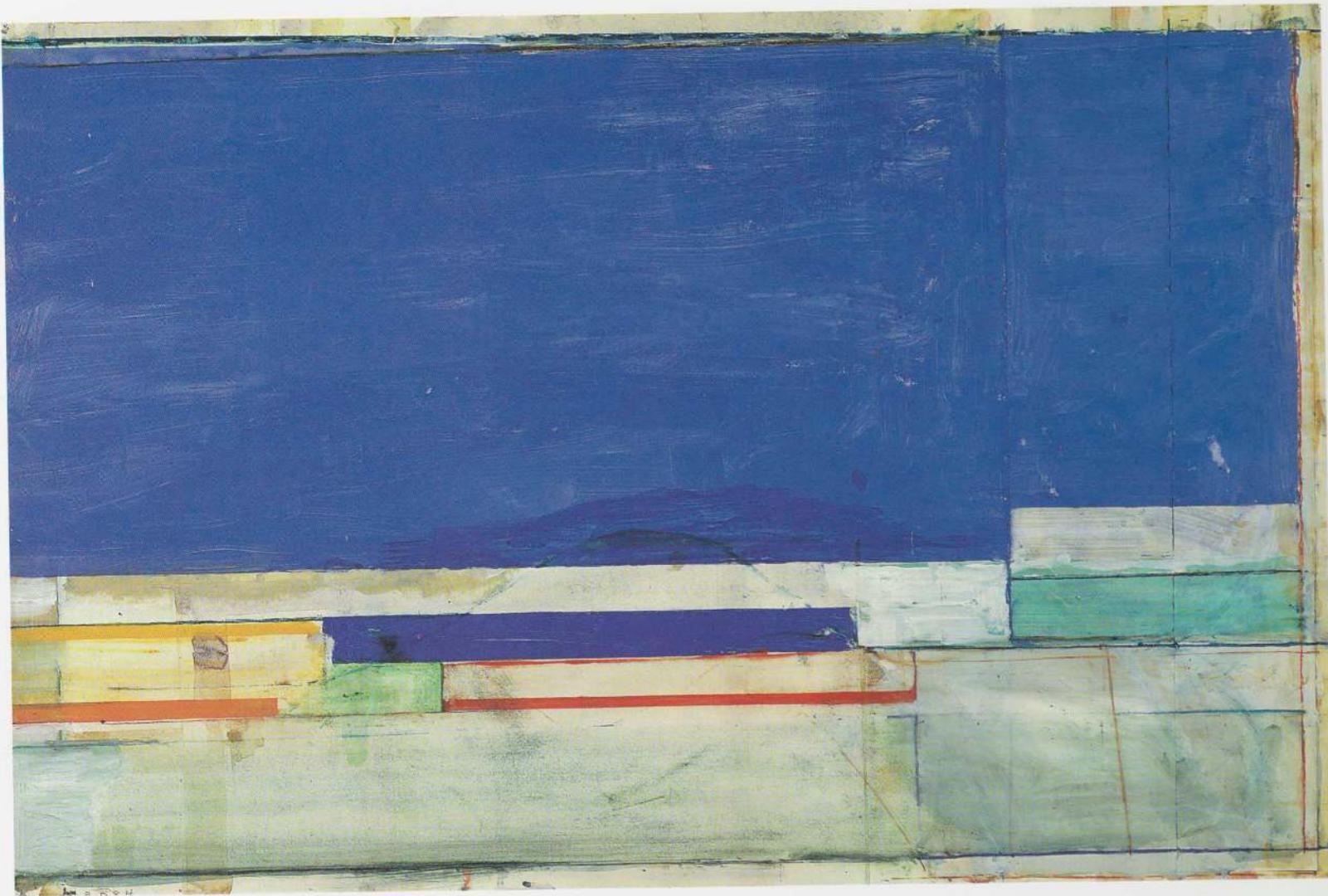


*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1986  
Acrylic, gouache, and crayon  
38 × 25" (96.5 × 63.5 cm)  
Collection Bud Yorkin



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1984

Acrylic, gouache, and crayon  
24 × 38" (61 × 96.5 cm)  
Collection Jack Falvey



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1984

Acrylic, gouache, crayon, and cut-and-pasted  
paper on cut-and-pasted paper  
25 × 38" (63.5 × 96.5 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. I. D. Flores III



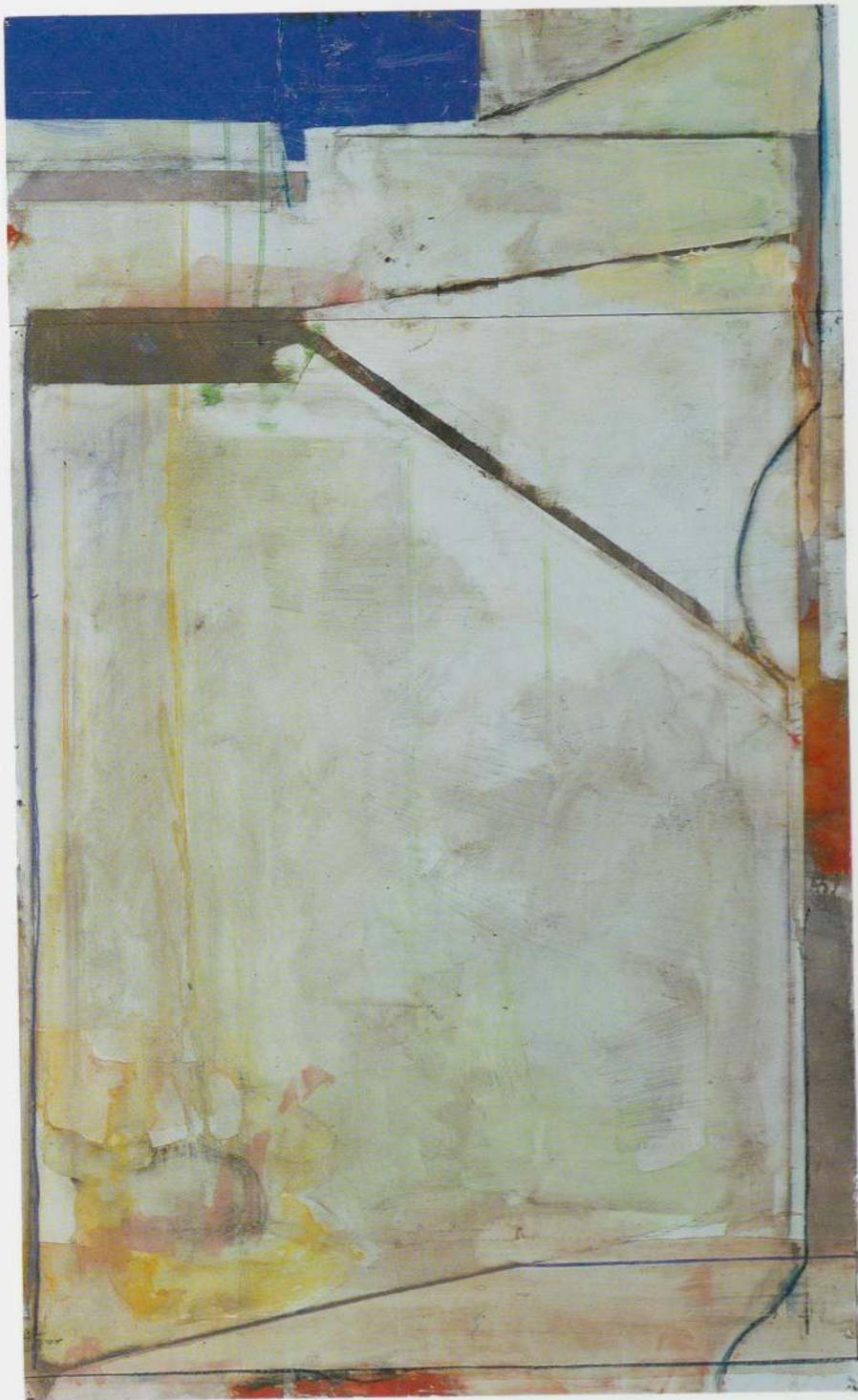
*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1987

Acrylic, gouache, oil, crayon, and pencil  
on cut-and-pasted paper  
38 × 25" (96.5 × 63.5 cm)  
Collection Diane and Steven Jacobson



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1987

Acrylic, gouache, and crayon  
38 × 25" (96.5 × 63.5 cm)  
Collection Hans Mautner



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*, 1985

Acrylic, gouache, and crayon  
38 × 23" (96.5 × 58.4 cm)  
Collection Hans Mautner



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1986

Acrylic, gouache, and crayon  
17 × 29" (43.2 × 73.7 cm)  
Private collection



*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1987  
Acrylic, gouache, crayon, and pencil  
on cut-and-pasted paper  
43 × 22½" (109.2 × 57.2 cm)  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Fayez Sarofim



*Untitled (Healdsburg)*. 1988

Oil, acrylic, crayon, pencil, and  
cut-and-pasted paper  
32 × 20" (81.3 × 50.8 cm)  
Private collection



*Untitled (Healdsburg)*, 1988

Oil and pencil  
38 × 25" (96.5 × 63.5 cm)  
Private collection

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The main sources of information on Diebenkorn's art are *Richard Diebenkorn: Paintings and Drawings, 1943-1976*, exhibition catalogue (Buffalo, N.Y.: Albright-Knox Art Gallery, 1976), which contains a most informative essay by Maurice Tuchman on "Diebenkorn's Early Years"; and Gerald Nordland, *Richard Diebenkorn* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), which contains a useful bibliography. For the drawings, two exhibition catalogues are of particular interest: *Drawings by Richard Diebenkorn* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Art Gallery, 1965) and *Richard Diebenkorn: Drawings, 1944-1973* (Santa Cruz, Calif.: Mary Porter Sesnon Gallery, University of California, 1974); so are the illustrated brochures for the artist's exhibitions of drawings at M. Knoedler & Co., New York, in 1982, 1984, and 1987. And *Richard Diebenkorn: Works on Paper* (Houston: Houston Fine Art Press, 1987) offers a generous selection of reproductions of Ocean Park drawings, with a fine introduction by Richard Newlin. I have benefited from all these sources.

The statements by the artist that I have quoted derive from the Albright-Knox catalogue, from Gerald Nordland's book, from my conversations with Diebenkorn, but mainly from the following sources: Gail R. Scott, *New Paintings by Richard Diebenkorn*, exhibition catalogue (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1969); Gerald Nordland, Introduction to *Richard Diebenkorn: The Ocean Park Series—Recent Work*, exhibition catalogue (New York: Marlborough Gallery, 1971); Jane Livingston, "Matisse's Tea," *Los Angeles County Museum of Art Bulletin*, vol. 20, no. 2 (1974), pp. 46-57; "Statements: Richard Diebenkorn," *Studio International*, vol. 188, no. 968 (July/August 1974), p. 14; Roberta J. M. Olson, "Thus Spake Diebenkorn," *Soho Weekly News*, vol. 4, no. 38 (June 23, 1977); *Pentimenti: Seeing and Then Seeing Again—A Dialogue Between Richard Diebenkorn and Jan Butterfield*, brochure (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1983); *Drawings Since 1974*, exhibition catalogue (Washington, D.C.: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, 1984); John Gruen, "Richard Diebenkorn: 'The Idea Is to Get Everything Right,'" *Art News*, vol. 85, no. 9 (November 1986), pp. 80-87; John Gruen, "Richard Diebenkorn: Radiant Vistas from Ocean Park," *Architectural Digest*, vol. 43, no. 11 (November 1986), pp. 52-60A; Dan Hofstadter, "Profiles (Richard Diebenkorn): Almost Free of the Mirror," *The New Yorker*, vol. 62, no. 29 (September 7, 1987), pp. 54-73.

In addition to all these, I have referred to or particularly benefited from the following writings on the artist: Gifford Phillips, Introduction to *Richard Diebenkorn*, exhibition catalogue (Washington, D.C.: The Phillips

Collection, 1961); Clement Greenberg, "After Abstract Expressionism," *Art International*, vol. 6, no. 8 (October 1962), pp. 24-32; Hilton Kramer, "Pure and Impure Diebenkorn," *Arts*, vol. 38, no. 3 (December 1963), pp. 46-53; Hilton Kramer, "Art Mailbag: Concerning the Diebenkorn Case," *New York Times*, June 12, 1966, sect. 3, p. 22; John Russell, Introduction to *Richard Diebenkorn: The Ocean Park Series—Recent Work*, exhibition catalogue (London: Marlborough Fine Art, 1973); Nancy Marmer, "Richard Diebenkorn: Pacific Extensions," *Art in America*, vol. 66, no. 1 (January/February 1978), pp. 95-99; Dore Ashton, Introduction to *Richard Diebenkorn: Small Paintings from Ocean Park* (San Francisco: Hine; Houston: Houston Fine Art Press, 1985); Susan C. Larsen, "Cultivated Canvases," *Artforum*, vol. 24, no. 5 (January 1986), pp. 66-71; and Arthur C. Danto, "Paint-ing in Ocean Park," *The Times Literary Supplement*, no. 4,441 (May 13-19, 1988), p. 537.

The epigraph from Wallace Stevens comes from the *Letters of Wallace Stevens*, ed. Holly Stevens (New York: Knopf, 1967); I have additionally quoted from "So-and-So Reclining on Her Couch" and "Description without Place" in *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Knopf, 1985) and from an early version of "The Comedian as the Letter C" called "From the Journal of Crispin," reprinted in Frank Doggett and Robert Buttel, eds., *Wallace Stevens: A Celebration* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980). My discussion of Stevens's "variation" poems is indebted to Northrop Frye, "Wallace Stevens and the Variation Form," in his *Spiritus Mundi: Essays on Literature, Myth and Society* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1976). The quotations from Matisse are in Jack Flam's translations, from his *Matisse on Art* (London: Phaidon, 1973), and those from Cézanne are taken from Ambroise Vollard, *Paul Cézanne* (Paris: Vollard, 1919) and Erle Loran, *Cézanne's Composition: Analysis of His Form with Diagrams and Photographs of His Motifs* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1963). My references to Roland Barthes are to *The Pleasure of the Text* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1975), and to Valéry are to "Literature" in *Selected Writings of Paul Valéry* (New York: New Directions, 1964) and to *Degas, Manet, Morisot* (New York: Pantheon, 1960); I was directed to the latter by Dan Hofstadter, "Writing About Degas," *The New Criterion*, vol. 6, no. 9 (May 1988), pp. 60-68, from which I also quote. My understanding of drawing has benefited from Philip Rawson, *Drawing* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969; 2nd ed., Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), and I owe a great debt of gratitude to Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987).

# CHRONOLOGY

Within the chronology, entries in *italics* introduce the major groups of the artist's drawings. The selected listing of exhibitions includes all one-artist exhibitions of drawings.

1922

Richard Clifford Diebenkorn born on April 22 in Portland, Oregon, the only child of Richard Clifford Diebenkorn, a sales executive, and his wife, the former Dorothy Stephens.

1924–37

Moves with his family to San Francisco (in 1924).

Interest in art and literature encouraged by his maternal grandmother, Florence Stephens, a lawyer, short-story writer, poet, and amateur artist, with whom he frequently spends his childhood summers. Through her, introduced to the illustrated books of Howard Pyle and N. C. Wyeth and the paintings of Frederic Remington, Charles Russell, and Will James.

Inspired by adventure stories, the Bayeux Tapestry, and heraldry, makes illustrations that are among the sources of his later clubs and spades motifs.

1937–40

Attends Lowell High School, San Francisco.

## College Years 1940–43

1940

Fall. Enrolls at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, to study liberal arts.

1942

Signs up to enter the Marine Corps after graduation.

1942–43

In his third year at Stanford, concentrates on art, taking painting classes under Victor Arnautoff and watercolor and drawing classes under Daniel Mendelowitz, who nurtures his interest in the work of Arthur Dove, Charles Sheeler, and especially Edward Hopper, and who also takes him to visit Sarah Stein's house in Palo Alto, where he first sees works by Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse, and Pablo Picasso.

Paints landscapes and urban scenes around Stanford, including *Palo Alto Circle* of 1943 (illustrated p. 33).

1943

June. Marries Phyllis Gilman, a fellow student at Stanford.

Called up by the Marine Corps and transferred for the summer semester to the University of California at Berkeley, where he is assigned to study physics and art. Studies painting with Erle Loran, drawing with Worth Ryder, and the history of art with Eugene Neuhaus.

## War Service 1943–45

Fall. Transferred to Parris Island, South Carolina, for basic training, then to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina (winter–spring 1944), and then to Quantico, Virginia (summer–fall 1944), where he is initially enrolled in Officer Candidate School before being transferred to the Photographic Section to make maps.

1944

From Quantico, regularly visits The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., where he sees works by Pierre Bonnard, Georges Braque, Cézanne, Matisse, and Picasso, and is particularly impressed by Matisse's *The Studio, Quai St.-Michel* of 1916 (p. 31). Also visits the Philadelphia Museum of Art and The Museum of Modern Art, New York, where he sees works by Jean Arp, Julio González, Paul Klee, Joan Miró, Piet Mondrian, and Kurt Schwitters.

Makes first abstract watercolors, as well as representational drawings.

1945

January. Transferred to Camp Pendleton, California.

Learns of the work of William Baziotès and Robert Motherwell through reproductions in *Dyn* magazine.

May. Birth of daughter, Gretchen.

Transferred to Hawaii; remains there until he is discharged from the Marine Corps in the fall and returns to California, to his parents' house at Atherton.

## Postwar Years 1946–48

1946

January. Enrolls for one semester at the California School of Fine Arts (C.S.F.A.), San Francisco, on the G.I. Bill. Studies painting with David Park, who soon becomes a close friend and colleague.

Fall. Awarded the Albert Bender

Grant-in-Aid fellowship, allowing him to live and work in Woodstock, New York, for nine months, and make visits to New York City. Meets Baziotès, Raoul Hague, Mark Rothko, and Bradley Walker Tomlin.

Paints small canvases influenced by Motherwell and Baziotès and their Cubist sources, notably Picasso.

1947

Spring. Returns to San Francisco; in late summer establishes house and studio in Sausalito, north of the city.

July. Sees Clyfford Still exhibition at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco.

August. Birth of son, Christopher.

Fall. Takes up faculty appointment at the C.S.F.A.—teaching life drawing, painting and drawing, and composition—a position he will hold until the end of 1949. Reestablishes contact with Park and meets other fellow teachers Elmer Bischoff, Edward Corbett, Hassel Smith, and Still. Begins weekly studio discussion meetings with Park and Bischoff, soon joined by Smith.

Friendships with students John Hultberg and Frank Lobdell. Publication of *Drawings*, ed. Frank Lobdell (Mill Valley, Calif.: Eric T. Liden, 1947), which reproduces works by Diebenkorn, Lobdell, Hultberg, George Stillman, James Budd Dixon, and Walt Kuhlman.

Becomes increasingly aware of contemporary art, in part from Clement Greenberg's articles in *The Nation* and *Partisan Review*.

1948

February. Awarded Emmanuel Walter Purchase Prize at the "67 Annual Exhibition: Oil, Tempera and Sculpture," San Francisco Museum of Art.

June. First one-artist exhibition, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco. Canvases are now larger, more abstract, and more freely painted, but still based on Cubist gridded formats.

## Early Abstract Period 1948-55

SAUSALITO, 1948-49. *Continues to live and work in Sausalito, and to teach at the C.S.F.A. Absorbing the influence of Abstract Expressionist artists, among them Rothko, Still, and Willem de Kooning, makes first mature work, including large, freely painted works on paper in oil and gouache and smaller black-and-white drawings. (For Sausalito drawings, see pp. 62-66.)*

1949

Summer. Again sees Rothko, who is a guest instructor at the C.S.F.A.

Fall. Awarded B.A. degree from Stanford University, based on past studies, teaching, and military experience.

1950

January. Enrolls in M.F.A. program at the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque on the G.I. Bill. Moves to Albuquerque, where he lives for first eighteen months on a ranch.

ALBUQUERQUE, 1950-52. *His work now includes subjects abstracted from landscape and animal motifs. Makes numerous small, spontaneous ink drawings and some larger gouaches and oils on paper. These reveal his interest in abstract Surrealists, Miró, and Yves Tanguy, as well as Gorky, Adolph Gottlieb, Klee, and Motherwell. Also derives imagery from cartoons (especially the Krazy Kat comics of George Herriman), heraldry, and the Bayeux Tapestry. (For Albuquerque drawings, see pp. 67-79.) In addition to painting and drawing, briefly experiments in monotype printing and makes a few González-influenced*

*welded metal sculptures (p. 36).*

February-March. Sausalito paintings and sculptures are exhibited at the Lucien Labaudt Gallery, San Francisco, in a two-artist show with Hassel Smith.

1951

Spring. Receives M.F.A. degree and has Master's Degree Exhibition, University Art Gallery, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

June-July. Albuquerque paintings shown in the exhibition "Contemporary Painting in the United States," Los Angeles County Museum.

Summer. Takes first civilian flight, from New Mexico to San Francisco, and is impressed by aerial views of desert. Sees Gorky exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Art (May-July).

Fall. Returns to Albuquerque for second year as a special student, again on the G.I. Bill.

Painting is chosen for illustration in Robert Motherwell's anthology *Modern Artists in America* (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1951).

1952

Summer. Returns to California, staying with his wife's family, near Pomona. Sees the Matisse retrospective exhibition organized by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., for The Museum of Modern Art, in its showing at the Municipal Art Galleries, Los Angeles (July-August).

Fall. Joins the faculty of the Art Department, University of Illinois at Urbana, where he teaches drawing and painting to architecture students for one academic year.

URBANA, 1952-53. *At Urbana, continues to make numerous small, spontaneous ink drawings. These become heavier in their lines and more geometric in their organization. Some gouaches are of much higher keyed color than before. (For Urbana drawings, see pp. 80-85.)*

November-December. His first one-artist exhibition at a commercial gal-

lery is held at the Paul Kantor Gallery, Los Angeles, which continues to represent him until 1956.

1953

Summer. Leaves Urbana. On a short stay in New York City, meets Franz Kline.

September. Returning to California, settles in Berkeley and works full time on his art.

BERKELEY, 1953-55. *At Berkeley, makes a broad range of ink drawings: some are more complex versions of the gridded Urbana formats; some are fluid and wire-like, comparable to the Albuquerque drawings; and others are more spontaneous and painterly. The gouaches are denser than previously, showing heavy graphic elements embedded within richly articulated fields. The canvases of this period eventually become so painterly as to expel denotative drawing. (For Berkeley drawings, see pp. 86-97.)*

Fall. Resumes studio meetings with Park and Bischoff, who in his absence have become representational artists (in 1950 and 1952, respectively). Though continuing to paint and draw abstractly, he begins weekly drawing sessions from the model with his two friends.

Awarded the Abraham Rosenberg Fellowship for Advanced Studies in Art, enabling him to concentrate on his painting and drawing.

Winter. Makes the first of two groups of fetish-like objects.

1954

Begins collecting Indian miniatures and drawings (p. 47).

Growing reputation leads to inclusion in the exhibition "Three Bay Region Artists" at the San Francisco Museum of Art (August-September) and one-artist exhibitions at the Paul Kantor Gallery, Los Angeles (March), and the Allan Frumkin Gallery, Chicago. Is also represented in The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's exhibition "Younger American Painters" (May-July), which travels after its New York

showing to the San Francisco Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum, and elsewhere.

1955

January. Begins teaching at the California College of Arts and Crafts; continues until June 1960.

Beginning of international reputation: represented in the exhibition "Young Painters" (April-May), organized by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, Rome, which subsequently travels to Paris and Brussels, and in the Bienal de São Paulo (July-October). Also exhibits in the Pittsburgh International at the Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh; in the biennial exhibition of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; and in the annual exhibitions of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; hereafter is frequently represented in national surveys. Has a one-artist exhibition in the Art Department of the University of California at Berkeley.

Late in the year, makes first tentative representational paintings.

## Representational Period 1956-67

*By the end of 1956 is consistently painting in a representational manner. Continues to draw from the model with Park and Bischoff until Park's death in 1960, when Park's place in the group is taken by Lobdell, and thereafter until 1965; also draws from the model independently. Few fully realized drawings date before 1960 and these tend to be much rougher than those that follow. In the 1960s, produces a broad range of extremely sophisticated, complex works in pencil and crayon, ink wash, and charcoal, and a smaller number of colored drawings. Figure subjects dominate but there are notable groups of still lifes (many dating from 1964) and architectural and landscape subjects (most dating from toward the end of the representational period). This period reaches its climax in an important series of charcoal figure drawings of 1966-67 whose simplification and flatness adumbrate the Ocean Park abstractions that follow. (For*

representational drawings, see pp. 100–47.)

1956

February–March. In his first one-artist exhibition in New York, Berkeley abstractions are shown at the Poindexter Gallery, which will continue to represent him and to exhibit his work regularly until 1971.

Summer. Stops painting for two months while building a studio in the backyard of his house at Berkeley.

September. A one-artist exhibition at the Oakland Art Museum is the first to include examples of his representational work.

1957

May. Herschel B. Chipp's article "Diebenkorn Paints a Picture," published in *Art News*, makes the new representational manner widely known.

September. Agrees to be included, along with Park, Bischoff, and others, in the exhibition "Contemporary Bay Area Figurative Painting," organized by Paul Mills at the Oakland Art Museum (subsequently shown at the Los Angeles County Museum), despite reservations about being associated with a school or movement.

1958

February–March. One-artist exhibition at the Poindexter Gallery, New York, the first full-scale showing of his figurative work, receives critical acclaim.

Winter. Begins using new, "triangle" studio in Oakland.

1959

September–November. Represented in the exhibition "New Images of Man," The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

1960

September–October. Retrospective exhibition of his works from 1952 to 1960, including drawings, Pasadena Art Museum.

October–November. Works from 1957

to 1960 are shown in the exhibition "Recent Paintings by Richard Diebenkorn," California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco.

1961

May–June. Exhibition of his paintings from 1958 to 1960, The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

Summer. Is visiting instructor in painting at the University of California at Los Angeles and guest artist at the Tamarind Lithography Workshop, Los Angeles.

Fall. Begins teaching at the San Francisco Art Institute; continues intermittently until 1966.

1962

May–June. One-artist exhibition, National Institute of Arts and Letters, New York

Summer. Fellowship at the Tamarind Lithography Workshop, Los Angeles.

1963

April–June. Represented in the exhibition "Drawings by Bischoff, Diebenkorn, and Lobdell," Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco.

September–October. Exhibition of his paintings from 1961 to 1963, The M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco.

Fall. Becomes artist-in-residence for an academic year at Stanford University, where he paints until concentrating on drawing in 1964.

1964

April. Exhibition "Drawings by Richard Diebenkorn" held at the Stanford University Art Gallery, Palo Alto, followed by a publication of the same title (in 1965) documenting the exhibition. This is his first one-artist exhibition of drawings.

June. Death of father.

Fall. Travels abroad for three months under the aegis of the U.S. State

Department's Cultural Exchange Program. Spends one month in the Soviet Union as a guest of the Soviet Artists' Union; sees the Matisse in the Pushkin and Hermitage museums. Continues on to Romania, Yugoslavia, England, and Germany.

Begins making etchings and dry-points, published by Crown Point Press, Oakland, in 1965.

November–December. Retrospective exhibition of his paintings from 1948 to 1963, Washington Gallery of Modern Art, Washington, D.C.; subsequently travels to The Jewish Museum, New York, and the Pavilion Gallery, Newport Beach, California.

No paintings are completed during this year.

1965

October. Exhibition "Recent Drawings by Richard Diebenkorn," Paul Kantor Gallery, Los Angeles.

1966

January–February. Sees Matisse exhibition at the University of California Art Gallery, Los Angeles, which includes *View of Notre-Dame* and *Open Window, Collioure*, both of 1914 (pp. 40, 41), exhibited in the United States for the first time.

May–June. Exhibition "Drawings by Richard Diebenkorn," Poindexter Gallery, New York.

Summer. Travels in southern France and Germany.

Fall. Accepts appointment as Professor of Art at the University of California at Los Angeles and moves to Santa Monica. Finds a studio (being vacated by Sam Francis) in the Ocean Park district, on Main Street at Ashland. Waiting for the studio to become available, works for six months in the same building in a small, windowless room (which can be seen in the drawings on pp. 119–21), where he makes highly simplified figurative drawings (pp. 130–43).

Elected to the National Council on the Arts, serving through 1968.

1967

January–February. Exhibition "Richard Diebenkorn: Works on Paper," The Waddington Galleries, London.

May–June. Elected a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, New York, and given a one-artist exhibition.

Spring. Moves into the Ocean Park studio when Francis leaves. There makes his last few representational paintings.

December. "Drawings by Richard Diebenkorn," an exhibition of representational works, Peale Galleries, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia (through January 1968).

## Ocean Park Period 1967–88

*Although the first Ocean Park painting was completed before the end of 1967, no Ocean Park drawings appear to date before 1970. (Some of these drawings, however, must certainly have been begun in 1969.) The earliest Ocean Park drawings are usually very spare and schematic. Those before 1974 only rarely contain color. By the mid-1970s, they are generally more complex, often colored, and as fully realized as the contemporaneous paintings. In the second half of the 1970s, they increase in sophistication; a subgroup of arch motifs is begun; and important sequences of grisailles and of arabesque compositions are produced. In 1980–81, the clubs and spades series appear, and thereafter the relational Ocean Park format is less a given than an option. The drawings of the 1980s are, increasingly, tougher and bolder than those of the preceding decade. Masking is used to generate imagery, and the range of the shape vocabulary is greater and more allusive than before. (For Ocean Park drawings, see pp. 150–95.)*

1968

February. Undergoes a back operation that leaves him incapacitated for two months, during which time he makes a second group of fetish-like objects (p. 53).

May. First exhibition of Ocean Park paintings, Poindexter Gallery, New York.

June–October. Represented in the exhibition “The Figurative Tradition in Recent American Art,” American Pavilion, Venice Biennale.

December. The exhibition “Richard Diebenkorn: Recent Drawings” opens at the Poindexter Gallery, New York (through January), and “Richard Diebenkorn,” an exhibition of drawings, opens at the Richmond Art Center, Richmond, California (through February); both show representational drawings only.

Awarded the Carol H. Beck Gold Medal, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia.

1969

June–July. One-artist exhibition, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, is the first exhibition of Ocean Park paintings in Los Angeles.

November. Ocean Park paintings are shown at the Poindexter Gallery, New York.

1970

First dated drawings of the Ocean Park series.

Participates in a Department of the Interior program, documenting a water-reclamation project at Salt River Canyon, Arizona; makes drawings and photographs (pp. 54, 55).

1971

March. Exhibition “Richard Diebenkorn: Drawings 1970–71, ‘Ocean Park,’” Poindexter Gallery, New York.

December. First exhibition of paintings at the Marlborough Gallery, New York, his new dealer, which will continue to represent him until 1977.

1972

October. Exhibition of Ocean Park paintings, San Francisco Museum of Art (through January 1973).

Fall. Begins yearlong leave of absence from the University of California at Los Angeles.

1973

June–July. One-artist exhibition of drawings at Robert Mondavi Gallery, Oakville, California.

Fall. Resigns professorial position at the University of California at Los Angeles.

1974

February–March. First retrospective exhibition of drawings, “Richard Diebenkorn: Drawings, 1944–1973,” Mary Porter Sesnon Gallery, University of California at Santa Cruz, accompanied by a publication of the same title.

New studio is built on Main Street near Ocean Park Boulevard.

1975

February. Exhibition “Richard Diebenkorn: Early Abstract Works, 1948–1955” at the James Corcoran Gallery, Los Angeles, and subsequently at the John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco.

Awarded an honorary doctorate in fine arts, San Francisco Art Institute.

1976

November. Major retrospective exhibition, “Richard Diebenkorn: Paintings and Drawings, 1943–1976,” at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo (through January 1977), accompanied by a publication of the same title. Exhibition is subsequently shown at the Cincinnati Art Museum; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and The Oakland Museum.

1977

May–June. First exhibition of paintings at M. Knoedler & Co., New York, his present dealer.

1978

February–June. Lives and works in the south of France.

July–October. One-artist exhibition American Pavilion, Venice Biennale.

Awarded the Edward MacDowell Medal, MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, New Hampshire.

Makes a wooden relief construction which includes club motif.

1979

Awarded the Skowhegan Medal for Painting, Skowhegan School of Art, Skowhegan, Maine.

Made a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Boston.

1980

Makes a small group of complex clubs and spades drawings, which will be developed extensively the following year.

1981

Concentrates almost exclusively on drawing during this and the subsequent two years, completing no paintings until 1984.

Publication of *Richard Diebenkorn: Etchings and Drypoints, 1949–1980* (Houston: Houston Fine Art Press).

1982

January. Exhibition of clubs and spades series of drawings, M. Knoedler & Co., New York.

Made a Fellow of the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence.

Awarded an honorary doctorate in fine arts, Occidental College, Los Angeles.

1983

May–July. Retrospective exhibition, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

May–June. One-artist exhibition of drawings, John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco.

1984

May. One-artist exhibition of drawings, M. Knoedler & Co., New York.

August. Death of mother.

Made an Associate of the National Academy of Design, New York.

1985

May. Elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters and given a one-artist exhibition at the National Institute of Arts and Letters, New York (through June).

May–September. Exhibition “Richard Diebenkorn: An Intimate View,” Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, subsequently shown at The Brooklyn Museum (September–December); accompanied by publication of *Richard Diebenkorn: Small Paintings from Ocean Park* (San Francisco: Hine; Houston: Houston Fine Art Press).

Awarded an honorary doctorate in fine arts, University of New Mexico at Albuquerque.

1986

December. In the exhibition “Individuals: A Selected History of Contemporary Art, 1945–1986,” which opens the new Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, is represented with a group of Ocean Park paintings (through January 1988).

1987

November. One-artist exhibition of drawings, M. Knoedler & Co., New York.

Awarded the U.C.L.A. Medal by the University of California at Los Angeles.

Publication of *Richard Diebenkorn: Works on Paper* (Houston: Houston Fine Art Press).

Publication of Gerald Nordland, *Richard Diebenkorn* (New York: Rizzoli).

1988

Spring. Moves from Santa Monica to Healdsburg, in Northern California. Begins new series of works (pp. 196, 197).

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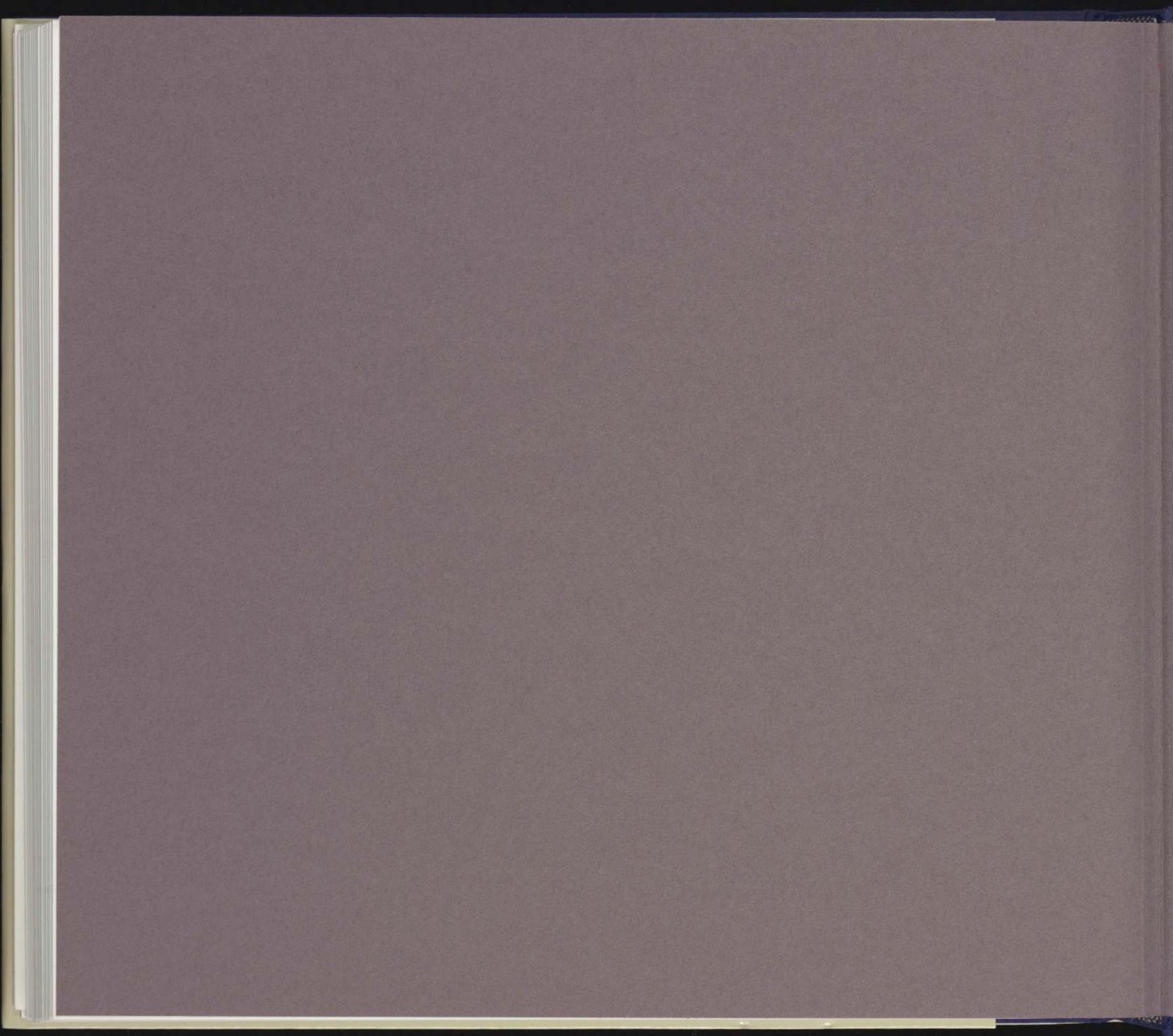
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Modern Art



2884

inz





FRONT COVER:

*Seated Woman*. 1966

Acrylic and charcoal  
31 × 19<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" (78.7 × 50.7 cm)  
Private collection

BACK COVER:

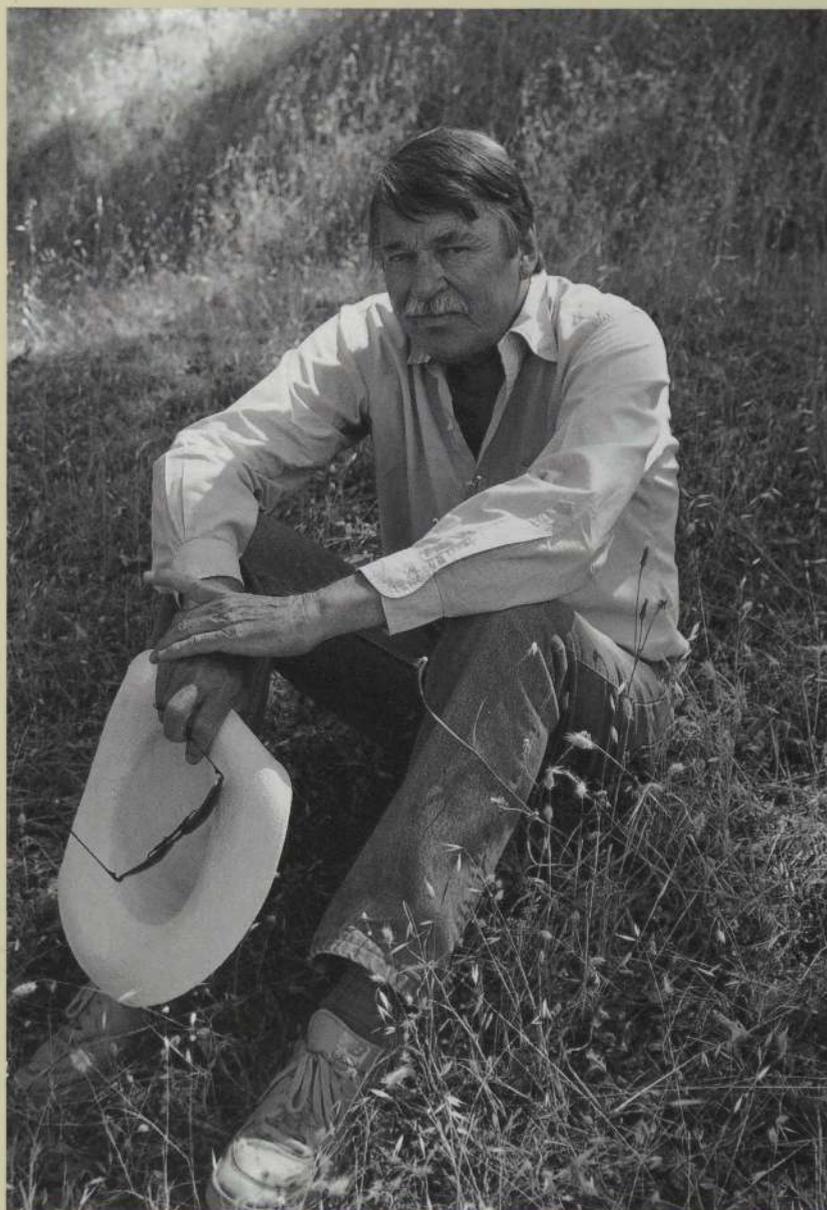
*Untitled (Ocean Park)*. 1979

Acrylic, gouache, crayon, and  
charcoal on cut-and-pasted paper  
16<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 30" (42.6 × 76.2 cm)  
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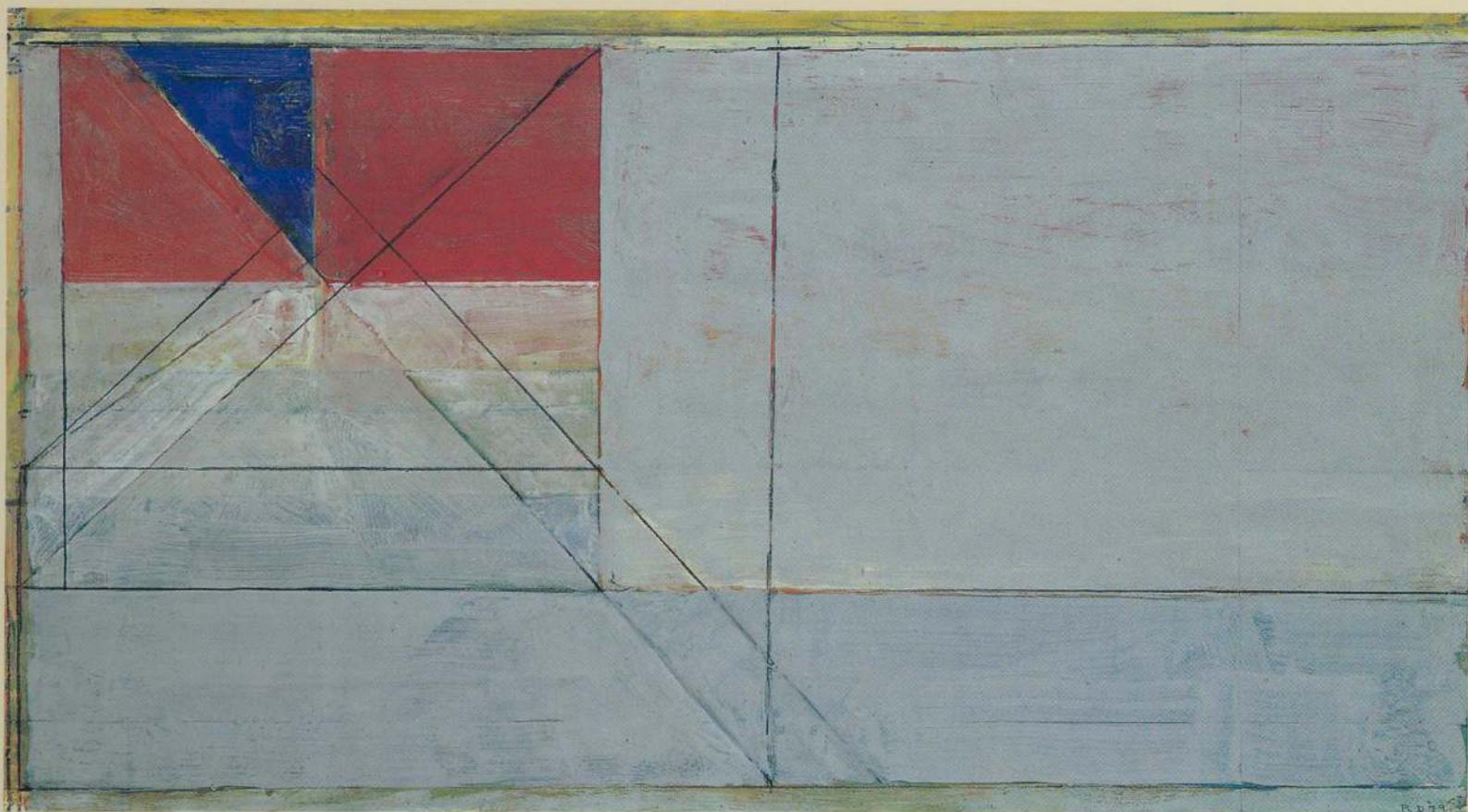
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