

BY ROBERTA CARASSO

REMEMBERING OCEAN PARK

Richard Diebenkorn (1922-1993) was one of the finest American artists of the 20th century. The San Francisco native's paintings, drawings, prints, and collage are in collections in the most prestigious national and international museums. As a younger artist, Diebenkorn



Richard Diebenkorn, *Untitled*, 1975, acrylic, gouache, and pasted paper on paper, 11.75 inches x 8.5 inches

shadows, and straight and curvilinear markings gave him an expanded perception of spatial possibilities. In 1966, Diebenkorn and his family moved to Santa Monica after he accepted a professorship at UCLA, and he established a new studio in its Ocean Park section. The light and colors of the area had an enormous effect on his aesthetic, and the Ocean Park series reflected those ideas. The paintings are reminiscent of his first plane ride, with architectonic, straight lines, geometric configurations, layer upon layer of sea breeze colors, and even contrasting areas of somber grays.

Artists have their particular way of creating. Diebenkorn worked in groups, in a family of art that could not be separated or distributed until that particular group within the Ocean Park series was complete. Each in the series was either an essential point or counterpoint to another, and to the whole. As he created, scraped, layered, scraped again, and built, the series became, as critic Susan Landauer wrote, "luxuriant, sensual, meaty." When a problem needed to be solved in one series, he got new perspective by working in a different medium. Seeing the demands of paint by questioning, perceiving and responding to the process of collage was like seeing the land anew from the heights of an airplane.

■ **SEE IT** :: Richard Diebenkorn: The Ocean Park Series is at the Orange County Museum of Art through May 27, 850 San Clemente Dr., Newport Beach.

949.759.1122 :: ocma.net

was recognized for his original vision, garnering prizes and cutting-edge exhibitions on the west and east coasts. The Orange County art lover is privileged to experience a majestic retrospective of Diebenkorn's most famed paintings at OCMA's exhibition, the Ocean Park Series.

Diebenkorn was one of the original Bay Area Figurative artists – a movement native to northern California. Not confined to a particular style or mode of creating, Diebenkorn welcomed artistic challenges and had the muscle to realize the demands of each, whether working figuratively or abstractly. In 1951, for example, he flew in a plane, seeing, for the first time, the land from the air. The tilt of the earth, divisions of fields, earthly color palettes, gliding

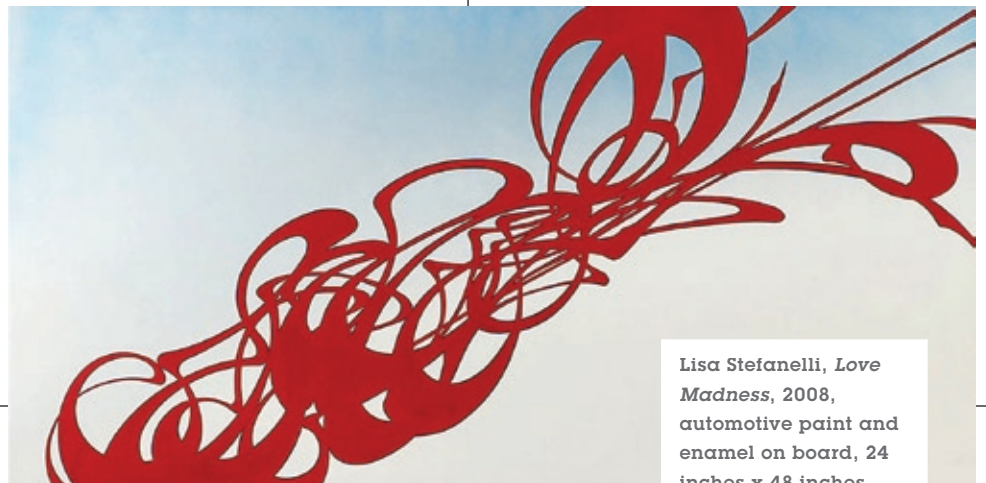
In Delicate

There's a brand new gallery in town: The George Gallery, featuring art made by exceptional women. It is named for the literary giant Aurora Dupin, who called herself George Sand to get noticed in a then-man's world. Now, New York-based Lisa Stefanelli, a featured artist at George Gallery, creates paintings that are crisp curvilinear blue or red ribbon-like shapes. In several paintings there are small effervescent bubbles that add lightness and a sense of upward suspension. The art moves helter-skelter, revealing an interplay of light, space and form, a dynamic execution that conveys a sense of freedom and mobility. Stefanelli, once a professional ice skater, translates her ability to jump, turn and weave into paint on a canvas.

Unlike many artists, whose processes can be seen in the way paint is applied, Stefanelli intentionally disguises her arduous process. Her "cover your tracks" way of working requires awareness of each minute mark she puts on or takes off. Stefanelli juxtaposes conflicts and chaos with serenity. The final work is clean, graceful and appears deceptively simple, endowing her art with mystery. First, she takes the new wood panel to an auto body shop to be sprayed with a solvent-based paint. She then brings it to her studio and draws with oil-based paint. When complete, she returns to the body shop to have up to 15 industrial clear coats put over the image. The coating seals and flattens the image, giving it a strong atmospheric presence. It is the same process one might require when fixing dents in a car, but Stefanelli turns it into profound works of art.

■ **VIEW IT** :: Lisa Stefanelli: (In) Delicate is at The George Gallery through June 7, 354 N. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach

949.715.4377 :: thegeorgegallery.com



Lisa Stefanelli, *Love Madness*, 2008, automotive paint and enamel on board, 24 inches x 48 inches