

THE BMA PRESENTS FIRST EXHIBITION TO SHOW THE INFLUENCE OF HENRI MATISSE ON RICHARD DIEBENKORN

Landmark exhibition will offer an unprecedented view of both artists

BALTIMORE, MD (May 12, 2016)—The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) presents the first major exhibition to explore the profound influence of French artist Henri Matisse on the work of American artist Richard Diebenkorn. Co-organized with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) and on view at the BMA October 23, 2016 – January 29, 2017, *Matisse/Diebenkorn* brings together 92 objects—including 36 paintings and drawings by Matisse and 56 paintings and drawings by Diebenkorn—drawn from museums and private collections throughout the U.S. and Europe. These extraordinary artworks reveal the lasting power of Diebenkorn’s firsthand experiences of the French artist’s work and present a new view of both artists. The BMA is the only East Coast venue for this ticketed exhibition.



Henri Matisse. *View of Notre Dame*. 1914. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. ©2016 Succession H. Matisse/ARS NY

Richard Diebenkorn. *Ocean Park #79*. 1975. Philadelphia Museum of Art. ©2016 The Richard Diebenkorn Foundation



Henri Matisse. *The Yellow Dress*. 1929-31. The Baltimore Museum of Art. ©2016 Succession H. Matisse/ARS NY



Richard Diebenkorn. *Seated Figure with Hat*. 1967. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. ©2016 The Richard Diebenkorn Foundation

“While much has been written about Matisse’s influence on Diebenkorn, this is the first major exhibition to illustrate the powerful influence of Matisse’s work on one of America’s most significant artists,” said Senior Curator of European Painting & Sculpture Katy Rothkopf. “We have carefully selected works by Matisse that Diebenkorn would have known, providing visitors to the BMA’s exhibition with the unprecedented opportunity to discover Matisse through Diebenkorn’s eyes.”

Throughout his long and successful career, Richard Diebenkorn (1922-1993) was more inspired by Henri Matisse (1869-1954) than any other artist. Organized chronologically through Diebenkorn’s career, the exhibition illuminates how this influence evolved over time through different pairings and groupings of both artists’ work. The exhibition begins in the 1940s with some of the first Matisse works that Diebenkorn saw in the Palo Alto home of Sarah Stein, one of the French artist’s first patrons. Following that introduction, he sought every opportunity to see Matisse’s work. While stationed at Quantico, Virginia, during World War II, Diebenkorn pursued a serious study of Matisse’s paintings in East Coast museums, including The Phillips Collection in Washington D.C., The Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the BMA. These seminal examples introduced Diebenkorn to the motifs, palette, and techniques that would later have a tremendous resonance in his own paintings and drawings.

The exhibition also features outstanding examples of Diebenkorn’s Urbana and Berkeley abstractions (1953-55) that demonstrate the significant impact of his visit to a Matisse retrospective in Los Angeles in 1952. A rich selection of exceptional paintings and drawings from the artist’s representational period (1955-67) illustrate his shift from abstraction towards identifiable subject matter and are paired with some of Matisse’s own compositions that were of particular relevance. Diebenkorn saw extensive collections of works by Matisse in the State Hermitage Museum and the Pushkin Museum during a trip to the Soviet Union in 1964. This was followed by a visit two years later to a major Matisse retrospective in Los Angeles, where he saw over 300 artworks. Two highly significant Matisse paintings that Diebenkorn saw in the 1966 retrospective are featured in the exhibition.

Diebenkorn returned to abstraction in 1967, soon after moving to Southern California and establishing a studio in the Ocean Park neighborhood of Santa Monica, where he created his most celebrated works—large-scale, color and light-filled abstractions. The exhibition will conclude with nine of these luminous *Ocean Park* paintings (1968-80) juxtaposed with a selection of Matisse's most influential works.

Exhibition Organization & Sponsorship

Matisse/Diebenkorn is co-organized by The Baltimore Museum of Art and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition is curated in Baltimore by BMA Senior Curator of European Paintings & Sculpture Katy Rothkopf.

Major Support for *Matisse/Diebenkorn* has been provided by The Henry Luce Foundation and Terra Foundation for American Art. The exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. The Baltimore presentation of the exhibition is made possible by Ellen W. P. Wasserman, Jeanette C. and Stanley H. Kimmel, Tony and Lynn Deering, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Corporate sponsorship is provided by Bank of America and Transamerica, Education Partner.

Ticket Information

Tickets are available through artbma.org and at the BMA Box Office beginning September 1. Prices are \$17.50 for adults, \$15 for seniors and groups of 10 or more, \$10 for students with ID, and \$7.50 for ages 7-18. BMA Members and children ages 6 and under are admitted free. For more information, call 443-573-1701.

Tour Dates

The Baltimore Museum of Art: October 23, 2016-January 29, 2017

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art: March 11-May 29, 2017

Exhibition Catalogue

A fully illustrated catalogue includes essays that examine Diebenkorn's interactions with Matisse's work throughout his long career by *Matisse/Diebenkorn* co-curators Katy Rothkopf, BMA Senior Curator of European Painting & Sculpture, and Janet Bishop, SFMOMA Thomas Weisel Family Curator of Painting and Sculpture. Both. It also includes an introductory essay by John Elderfield, Allen R. Adler Distinguished Curator and Lecturer at the Princeton University Art Museum and Chief Curator Emeritus of Painting and Sculpture at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, who has curated groundbreaking exhibitions on both artists. Jodi Roberts, Halperin Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art at the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University contributes an essay regarding the relationship between Matisse's drawings and Diebenkorn's drawings. The exhibition catalogue will be co-published with DelMonico Books/Prestel. It is available at the BMA Shop and online for \$39.95 beginning in October.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

The Baltimore Museum of Art is home to an internationally renowned collection of 19th-century, modern, and contemporary art. Founded in 1914 with a single painting, the BMA today has 95,000 works of art—including the largest public holding of works by Henri Matisse in the world. Throughout the museum, visitors will find an outstanding selection of American and European painting, sculpture, and decorative arts; works by established and emerging contemporary artists; 2,000 years of art from China; stunning Antioch mosaics; and an exceptional collection of objects from Africa. The BMA's galleries also showcase examples from one of the nation's finest collections of prints, drawings, and photographs and exquisite textiles from around the world. The 210,000-square-foot museum is distinguished by a grand historic building designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped sculpture gardens that is an oasis in the city. Since 2006, the BMA has provided free general admission so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.