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PRESS RELEASE | NEW YORK | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 18 OCTOBER 2023

RICHARD DIEBENKORN'S *RECOLLECTIONS OF A VISIT TO LENINGRAD* TO HIGHLIGHT 20TH CENTURY EVENING SALE



RICHARD DIEBENKORN (1922-1993)
Recollections of a Visit to Leningrad
oil on canvas
Painted in 1965.
Estimate on Request

NEW YORK – Christie's is thrilled to announce *Recollections of a Visit to Leningrad*, the seminal 1965 masterwork by Richard Diebenkorn, will be among the leading highlights in the 20th Century Evening Sale on November 9, 2023. This painting, which heralds the artist's iconic *Ocean Park* series, is estimated in excess of \$25 million and is poised to reset Diebenkorn's record at auction.

Max Carter, Christie's Vice Chairman of 20th and 21st Century Art, remarks: "*Diebenkorn once told Wayne Thiebaud that in his painting he was trying to work out 'a combining' of Matisse and Mondrian. Recollections of a Visit to Leningrad, which commemorates his visit to the Soviet Union in 1964 and the ideals of cultural exchange, represents the triumph of this vision. Its breathtaking color is worthy of Matisse. Its forms build upon the striking asymmetries of Mondrian. It is the ultimate hinge masterpiece.*"

Sara Friedlander, Christie's Deputy Chairman, Post-War and Contemporary Art, remarks: *"Richard Diebenkorn and his wife Phyllis traveled to the Soviet Union in the beginning of Fall 1964. It was their first time leaving the United States. This lifechanging voyage was thanks to the diplomacy seeking efforts by President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev who organized an exchange program for artists. During the course of the tour, Diebenkorn saw dozens of works by Matisse, one of the most important artistic influences in the life and career of the California-based artist. Diebenkorn was deeply moved by the Matisse paintings he encountered—he had previously seen them only in his books. This trip marks a turning point in the artist's artistic practice. Returning home, his work began to shift away from figuration, a dominate characteristic of his previous work. He embarked on what would become a lifelong pursuit into the exploration of abstraction."*

Richard Grant, Diebenkorn Foundation Executive Director, remarks: *"To me, this work appears to be the quintessential beginning of Ocean Park."*

Based on the west coast, Diebenkorn was a singular figure in his generation, with an oeuvre that evolved seemingly in diametric opposition to the formal trends favored by his contemporaries. His dedication to his own instincts and artistic sensibilities—regardless of stylistic fads—remains one of his defining characteristics. *Recollections of a Visit to Leningrad* is a superb example. It is simultaneously demonstrative of his intense gratitude for a masterful Impressionist artist whom he so deeply admired and representative of a profound and intimate moment, pivotal in the arc of his life's work. In the same private collection since 1969, the work has only had only one owner. The work was featured as the cover of the exhibition catalogue for the highly lauded Matisse/Diebenkorn exhibition, held at The Baltimore Museum of Art October 2016 – January 2017 and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art March – May 2017.

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PRESS CONTACT: Jessica Stanley | jstanley@christies.com | 212 636 2680

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* Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.

*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium.

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