Sotheby’s to Offer One of the Most Iconic Works by Georgia O’Keeffe Ever to Appear at Auction

**JIMSON WEED/WHITE FLOWER NO. 1 IS ESTIMATED TO ACHIEVE $10/15 MILLION IN THE NOVEMBER SALE OF AMERICAN ART**

*One of Three Works by the Artist On Offer from the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, Sold to Benefit the Acquisitions Fund*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE; August 19, 2014—Santa Fe, New Mexico—Sotheby’s is honored to announce that it will offer one of the most iconic works by Georgia O’Keeffe ever to appear at auction, as the centerpiece of its American Art sale in New York on 20 November 2014. *Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1* is one of the most well-known examples of O’Keeffe’s celebrated flower paintings, which stand among the most recognizable images in both art history and popular culture. The painting is one of three works by the American artist that are on offer from the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum in Santa Fe, New Mexico, which are being sold to benefit its Acquisitions Fund.

*Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1* will be on view in Los Angeles and Hong Kong, before returning to New York for exhibition in Sotheby’s York Avenue galleries beginning...
15 November**. The work comes to auction with an estimate of $10/15 million*, well in excess of the artist’s auction record***. Also on offer from the Museum’s collection and sold to benefit the Acquisitions Fund is On the Old Santa Fe Road, estimated at $2/3 million, and Untitled (Skunk cabbage), estimated at $500/750,000.

“This deaccession is part of the maturation of the Georgia O’Keeffe institution and aligns with our future collecting strategy, coupled with planned giving and donations,” said Rob Kret, Director of the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum. “This has been a thoughtful process that has unfolded over the course of more than a year, and the deaccession is fully supported by the donor of the three works and was unanimously approved by the Georgia O’Keeffe board of directors. All of the income from this sale will be used for future acquisitions to support the growth of our dynamic, vibrant O’Keeffe collection.”

Cody Hartley, Director of Curatorial Affairs at the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, said: “Letting go of these pieces is a sacrifice, and we do not take this decision lightly. We are fortunate to have equally strong examples of similar subjects, including the masterful Bella Donna, which bears a close resemblance to Jimson Weed. Through this sale we have the opportunity to substantially fund an acquisitions endowment that will allow us to be competitive when pursuing iconic O’Keeffe masterworks. This sale will provide funding to strengthen and refine our collection, allowing us to represent the full breadth of Georgia O’Keeffe’s artistic accomplishments.”

Elizabeth Goldberg, Head of Sotheby’s American Art Department, commented: “It is a great privilege to offer the remarkable Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1 on behalf of the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum. While the artist’s celebrated flower paintings make up a relatively small portion of her prolific career, they are firmly planted in the popular consciousness. Among this series, Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1 is a particularly stunning and familiar example, painted in a large scale that distinguishes it within her oeuvre. O’Keeffe worked throughout her life to express her unique, uncompromising and crystal-clear vision, and today she is one of few distinctly-American artists with truly international appeal.”

Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1 was owned originally by the artist’s sister Anita O’Keeffe Young, whose estate was sold at Sotheby’s in December 1987. It was subsequently included in two private collections before being donated to the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum by The Burnett Foundation in 1996. The work hung in the White House for 6 years at the request of First Lady Laura Bush, and has been featured in nearly every major retrospective on the artist, including those at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Whitney Museum of American Art.
The earliest recorded examples of Georgia O’Keeffe’s magnified flower images date to 1924, though she painted flowers on a smaller scale even earlier. Although connotations of sexuality and gender were continuously ascribed to these works, O’Keeffe rejected these types of associations. The intent behind these images was to express the exuberance with which she personally experienced the natural world, as well as to compel her viewer to observe what is in reality a small and delicate entity in a new and more profound way.

The flower paintings were shown first in the “Seven Americans” exhibition, organized by her then-husband Alfred Stieglitz at the Anderson Galleries in March 1925. O’Keeffe’s work was exhibited alongside others by John Marin, Arthur Dove, Charles Demuth, Paul Strand and Stieglitz himself. Unlike these painters, O’Keeffe had not studied outside of the United States, and her pieces were praised for being free of European models and antecedents.

O’Keeffe first saw Jimson weed growing in northern New Mexico – a setting that would come to define much of her career – and painted the present work in 1932. At a significant 48 by 40 inches, Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1 is one of the rare instances early in her career that O’Keeffe chose a canvas size noticeably larger than her usual format. The same year, the artist had started plans for a mural construction for Radio City Music Hall, which was then under construction in Rockefeller Center. This may have led her to experiment with a larger format in her paintings.

Also on offer from the Museum’s collection and benefiting the Acquisitions Fund is On the Old Santa Fe Road (est. $2/3 million), which attests to the deep inspiration O’Keeffe gleaned from the stark simplicity of the desert landscape of New Mexico – the place she made her permanent home in 1949. O’Keeffe’s depiction captures the rugged geological forms and brilliant colors of the American Southwest. While On the Old Santa Fe Road emphasizes the incredible vastness of this dramatic environment, Untitled (Skunk Cabbage), made prior to her first visit to New Mexico in 1929, focuses on the smaller form of this distinctive plant, one of the first to bloom in the spring (est. $500/750,000).

ABOUT THE GEORGIA O’KEEFFE MUSEUM
To inspire all current and future generations, the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum preserves, presents and advances the artistic legacy of Georgia O’Keeffe and modernism through innovative public engagement, education, and research. Opened in Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1997, the Museum counts O’Keeffe’s two New Mexico homes as part of its extended collection. The Museum’s collections, exhibitions, research center, publications and educational programs contribute to scholarly discourse and serve a diverse audience. For more information please visit www.okeeffemuseum.org.
**EXHIBITION CALENDAR**
Sotheby’s Los Angeles
22 & 23 September

Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre
3 – 5 October

*** The current auction record for a work by Georgia O’Keeffe is $6.2 million, set at Christie’s New York in May 2001

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*Estimates do not include buyer’s premium and prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer’s premium.

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