The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum is pleased to present “Georgia O’Keeffe and Ansel Adams: the Hawaii Pictures” to open February 2014

The Exhibition will be the first to feature work produced in and about Hawaii by two iconic American Masters

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE; November 21, 2013—Santa Fe, New Mexico—The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum is proud to announce the opening of the first exhibition of 2014, “Georgia O’Keeffe and Ansel Adams: The Hawaii Pictures.” Organized by Theresa Papanikolas, Honolulu Museum of Art’s curator for European and American Art, the exhibition will bring together for the first time works inspired by the natural beauty of Hawaii as uniquely experienced by each artist. The show will run from February 7, 2014 through September 14, 2014.

Georgia O’Keeffe and Ansel Adams are two of America’s most influential modernists, each celebrated for their interpretations of particular places - O’Keeffe, the American Southwest and Adams, Yosemite National Park; both are revered for their ability to capture and translate their experience of natural beauty onto paper for their audience. The two met in 1929 in Taos, New Mexico and developed a lifelong friendship through a mutual admiration and devotion to the natural world.

The exhibition includes works from O’Keeffe’s trip to Honolulu and neighboring islands in 1939, commissioned by The Hawaiian Pineapple Company (now the Dole Company). On her two-month stay she visited Hawaii’s vast array of natural wonders, isolating single forms and creating modern, abstracted compositions based on observation of the natural world. O’Keeffe went beyond painting the popular stereotypical Hawaii, approaching each piece with an original perspective drawn from her well-established practice of landscape and still-life painting.

“O’Keeffe was an experienced colorist; she also deployed a dramatic palette to intensify the exotic beauty of specific landscapes and flowers she encountered in the islands,” said Carolyn Kastner, Curator of the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum. O’Keeffe unveils the subject in her own authentic and personal response, exposing the inescapable beauty of the form itself. Each piece is sophisticated in palette, it reflects and reinforces her characteristically modernist dissection of landscape and botanical life.
Ansel Adams’ photographs of Hawaii were also commissioned, first in 1948 for the Department of the Interior, and in 1957 for a commemorative publication for Bishop National Bank of Hawaii (currently First Hawaiian Bank). Like O’Keeffe, Adams sought to reveal a nontraditional view of the islands, aiming to capture a sense of place with his unique style and showing the viewer the connection between the land and its inhabitants. In a letter written by Adams in 1938 he explains, “If I have any niche at all in the photographic presentation of America, I think it would be chiefly to show the land and the sky as the settings for human activity.” The exhibition showcases Adams’ abilities as a modern photographer to offer penetrating and revelatory insight about his subjects with absolute technical mastery of the photographic process.

“The exhibition builds on the concept of the 2008 exhibition Georgia O’Keeffe and Ansel Adams: Natural Affinities to analyze how each artist responded to an unfamiliar tropical environment, despite an initial hesitation and the predominance of tourist imagery,” said Kastner. “As pointed out by exhibition organizer Theresa Papanikolas, curator of the Honolulu Museum of Art, neither artist followed the familiar clichés of ‘moonlit seas, swaying coconut palms, and the ubiquitous profile of Diamond Head,’ which defined the islands in the popular visual culture of the time.”

A catalogue of essays written by Theresa Papanikolas and Anne Hammond will accompany the exhibition, comparing and contrasting the artists’ personal approach to their craft. The essays explore how O’Keeffe and Adams avoided popular stereotypes in formulating their artistic expressions of how they experienced Hawaii.

###

**ABOUT GEORGIA O’KEEFFE MUSEUM:**

The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum is dedicated to the artistic legacy of Georgia O'Keeffe, her life, American modernism, and public engagement. Located in Santa Fe, NM, the Museum’s collections, exhibits, research center, publications and education programs contribute to scholarly discourse and serve diverse audiences. The largest single repository of the artist’s work in the world, it is the only museum in the world dedicated to an internationally known American woman artist and is the most visited art museum in New Mexico.

**ABOUT THE EXHIBITION:** Georgia O’Keeffe and Ansel Adams: The Hawaii Pictures was organized by the Honolulu Museum of Art. This exhibition and related programming were made possible in part by a generous grant from the Burnett Foundation. Additional support was provided by New Mexico Arts, a division of the department of Cultural Affairs and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Santa Fe Arts Commission and the 1% lodgers’ tax.