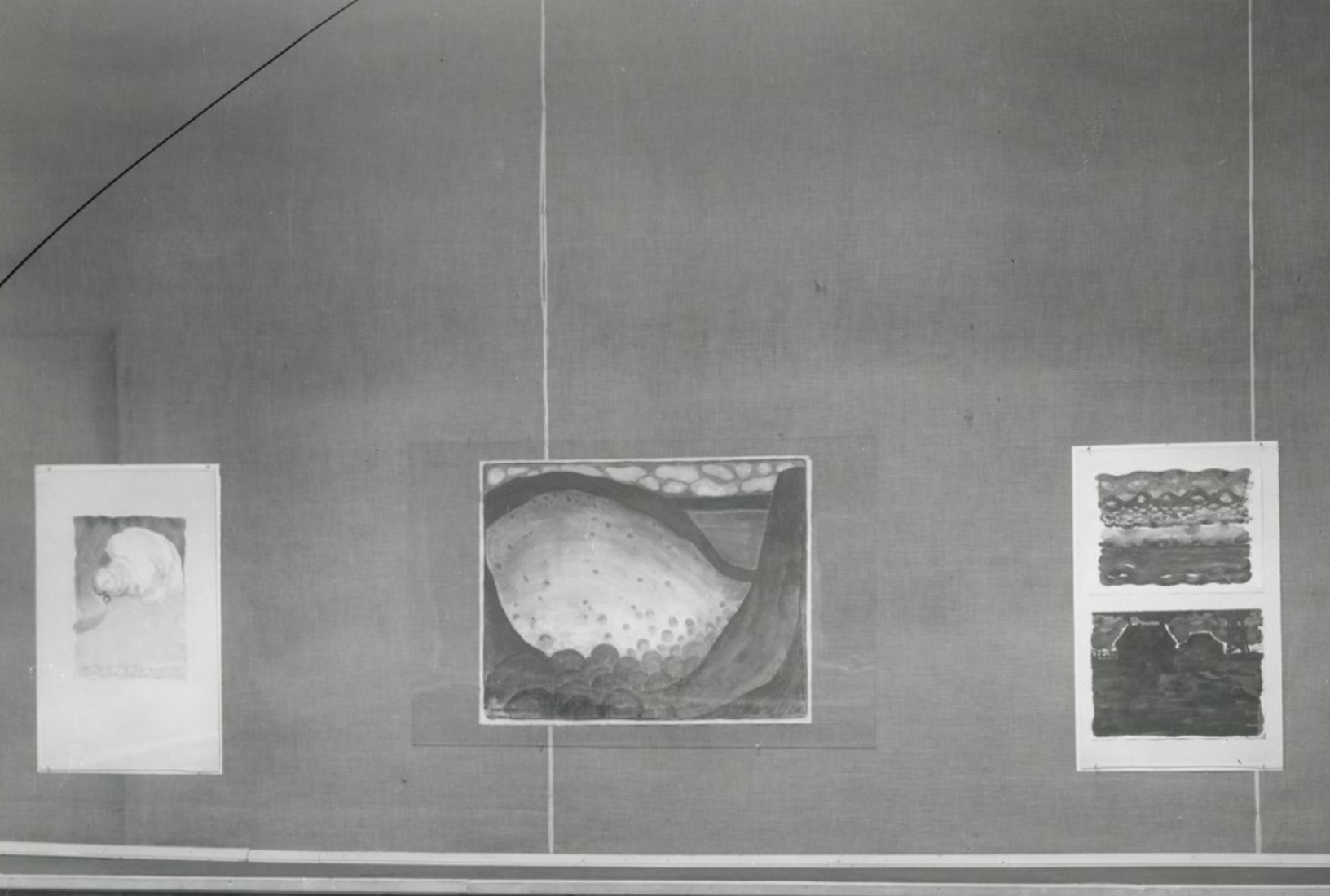

Exhibiting O'Keeffe

The Making of an American Modernist

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum

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Introduction

Ariel Plotek, Georgia O'Keeffe Museum

Alfred Stieglitz. *Georgia O'Keeffe*, 1918. Platinum print, 9 1/4 x 7 1/4 in. Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation. View on the O'Keeffe Museum website.

Barbara Buhler Lynes's *O'Keeffe, Stieglitz and the Critics, 1916-1929* was published in 1989, three years after Georgia O'Keeffe's death, and three years before Lynes was asked to write *Georgia O'Keeffe: Catalogue Raisonné*, published in 1999. The 1989 publication was as thorough a review of O'Keeffe's early critical literature as anyone could have undertaken at this time; it was exhaustively footnoted, with a selected bibliography running to 18 pages. Absent from this study, however, was much of O'Keeffe's personal correspondence, including hundreds of letters exchanged in these years between Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz. This material, held at the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University, was restricted (per O'Keeffe's instructions) for 25 years after her death. Contained within this correspondence are glimpses of O'Keeffe's and Stieglitz's personal responses to this very public criticism—insights that were not available to Lynes in 1989. Nevertheless, *O'Keeffe, Stieglitz and the Critics* remains a work of reference. It details the early reception of O'Keeffe's art in New York and the exhibitions that made her the most-talked-about artist in the country. The present publication stands in this tradition.

There would have been no critics without exhibitions, and the history of O'Keeffe's exhibitions (and their accompanying literature) continues to this day. We understood, from the outset, that no publication of this kind could hope to have the "final word." It fell to us, therefore, to make a selection: a handful of case studies that together could form a narrative. In making this selection we sought help, and I would like to gratefully acknowledge input received from the curatorial and research team including Jennifer Foley, Liz Ehrnst, and Liz Neely as well as from the authors of the essays, whom we also consulted on this question. We concluded that we would concentrate on exhibitions organized during the artist's lifetime, selecting pivotal examples from 1917 to 1955. The result is the four essays that follow. The first and last of these, by Alexandra Dean and Amy Von Lintel, in fact address more than a single exhibition. Dean revisits the critical responses to O'Keeffe's earliest exhibitions in New York, the origin of the "cult of personality" surrounding the artist, and more broadly the boundaries between her art and life; Von Lintel tells the story of O'Keeffe's connection to the West by way of Texas, including exhibitions in both

Dallas and Fort Worth. The second and third essays in this group, by Sarah Kelly Oehler and Barbara Lynes, focus on O'Keeffe's first retrospective exhibitions in Chicago and New York; at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1943, and the Museum of Modern Art in 1946.

In place of a single "institutional" account, we are gratified that these four contributors offer a plurality of voices. Nevertheless, certain themes run throughout this publication that weave these individual narratives together. Alongside contemporary responses to O'Keeffe's art, we witness an early emphasis on the identity of the artist herself in discussions of these exhibitions. This is nowhere more emphatically seen than in the phrase, attributed to Alfred Stieglitz, "Finally a woman on paper." Lynes' debunking of this quote's being uttered by him in 1915 as mere legend serves to recall that the O'Keeffe narrative is still very subject to revision, even as it illustrates the durability of the prejudices and apocrypha that continue to shape our understanding of Georgia O'Keeffe.

New York, 1917–1925

Alexandra Dean, Georgia O'Keeffe Museum

Figure 1. Alfred Stieglitz. *Georgia O'Keeffe*, 1920–22 . Gelatin silver print, 4 1/2 x 3 9/16 in. Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation. View on the O'Keeffe Museum website.

In 1927, artist and critic Frances O'Brien visited her friend Georgia O'Keeffe on the 28th floor of the Shelton Hotel. O'Brien observed the painter in her element, working quietly in the apartment she shared with her husband and promoter, the photographer Alfred Stieglitz. The result of O'Brien's visit was a richly detailed, if brief, profile of O'Keeffe featured in a series of "Personality Portraits" called Americans We Like for the progressive biweekly magazine *The Nation*. In the piece, O'Brien noted that "Georgia O'Keeffe has never allowed her life to be one thing and her painting another" and offered up a series of incisive observations about the painter's looks, clothes, and lifestyle.[1]

O'Brien's article was hardly the first to emphasize O'Keeffe's physical and social identity in addition to her artwork; rather, it reflects a widespread tendency on the part of critics and the public to connect O'Keeffe's work to other elements of her life, something that permeates much of past and present scholarship on the artist. An avowed individualist, O'Keeffe's dress, relationships, and style of living set her apart from other women of the time and invited this sort of interpretation. It also contributed to the formation of a cult of personality that fuels her continued mythologization.[2] This phenomenon has outlasted O'Keeffe herself—it appears even in more recent retrospectives of the artist: A 2000 exhibition at the Phillips Collection featured massive black-and-white photographs of the artist and her living space in conjunction with paintings of objects in her home. The Brooklyn Museum's 2017 show *Living Modern* displayed images of O'Keeffe as well as her personal effects side-by-side with her artworks.[3]

This cult of personality, a force that has so thoroughly shaped O'Keeffe's image as an artist, coalesced quite early in her career—as early as 1917 and 1923, the dates of her first and second solo exhibitions. Reviews of her shows, profiles such as O'Brien's, and public reception of her work combined to bring O'Keeffe a kind of notoriety that would set the tone for the rest of her career. This fame was the result of Stieglitz's mythmaking, O'Keeffe's own deliberate forms of self-fashioning, and the various early critical and public response to her emergence as an artistic force, which confounded, and occasionally pleased, both O'Keeffe and Stieglitz.

Stieglitz's promotion of O'Keeffe began in earnest in 1915, when her friend Anita Pollitzer showed Stieglitz a few of the artist's drawings. His alleged reaction—"finally, a woman on paper!"—has become part of the mythology of O'Keeffe and of her relationship with Stieglitz.[4] Though in recent years the truth of this account has come into question, outlined in the essay by Barbara Buhler Lynes, it persists because it reflects Stieglitz's future treatment of O'Keeffe's public persona.[5] Acting as mentor, professional manager, and, eventually, romantic partner to O'Keeffe, Stieglitz encouraged both the public and the critics to examine the painter's work through the lens of her personal identity, with particular focus on two elements: her gender and her nationality.

Stieglitz began showing O'Keeffe's work at his 291 gallery in 1916 and later at Anderson Galleries in New York. The photographer was a self-proclaimed "feminine feminist"—he believed that there were essential and irreconcilable differences between men and women, and that these differences were reflected in their art.[6] He had a hyper-idealized concept of woman; in Pollitzer's words, he was a "composite of the romantic heroines of Wagner and of Goethe . . . and [held] a personal belief in what modern woman could accomplish."[7] O'Keeffe's early work corresponded with Stieglitz's notions of womanhood. Her paintings of flowers, a stereotypically feminine subject, evoked the forms of the female body for viewers, critics, and Stieglitz himself (figure 2).

The photographer's attitudes were also reflected in his approach to marketing O'Keeffe's exhibitions; the catalogue for her 1923 show at

Figure 2. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Series I White & Blue Flower Shapes*, 1919. Oil on board, 19 7/8 x 15 3/4 in. Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation. View on the O'Keeffe Museum website.

Anderson Galleries included a Stieglitz-approved essay by fellow painter Mardsen Hartley. The piece positioned O'Keeffe as a "sexually obsessed," distinctly feminine artist whose work was inexorably bound up with her body and self-perception.[8] Hartley's words colored much contemporary criticism regarding O'Keeffe's work, as did Stieglitz's decision to exhibit his photographs of the painter in 1921. These included nude images of O'Keeffe as well as photographs of her in front of her work—the curves of her face and body reflected in the organic, abstracted forms of her drawings and paintings (figure 3). These images, in the eyes of critics and the public, underscored Stieglitz's argument that O'Keeffe's work reflected her femininity.[9]

In addition to marketing O'Keeffe as a woman painter, Stieglitz did much to promote an image of her as an essentially American artist, and, more broadly, as a quintessential American. In the late 1910s, the photographer, who had long been a champion of modern art, began to narrow his focus to art made in the United States. O'Keeffe, as one of the artists he exhibited most often, necessarily became a part of this project. Tellingly, Stieglitz titled her 1923 exhibition *Alfred Stieglitz Presents One Hundred Pictures: Oils, Water-colors, Pastels, Drawings, by Georgia O'Keeffe, American*, placing particular emphasis on her nationality. In a group exhibition of 1925, Stieglitz further highlighted the Americanness of both O'Keeffe and the other artists featured at his galleries. His essay in the catalogue for the exhibition asked: "Are the pictures or their makers an integral part of the America of to-day?".[10] Though the other artists included in the exhibition, such as Arthur Dove, Mardsen Hartley, John Marin, and Paul Strand, were more often used as representatives of the American form of modernism Stieglitz hoped to promote, O'Keeffe's art and personal circumstances were uniquely well-suited to this approach. She was born on a farm in a small town in Wisconsin, and during her youth and early adulthood lived in Virginia, South Carolina, and Texas. Her background in the American West

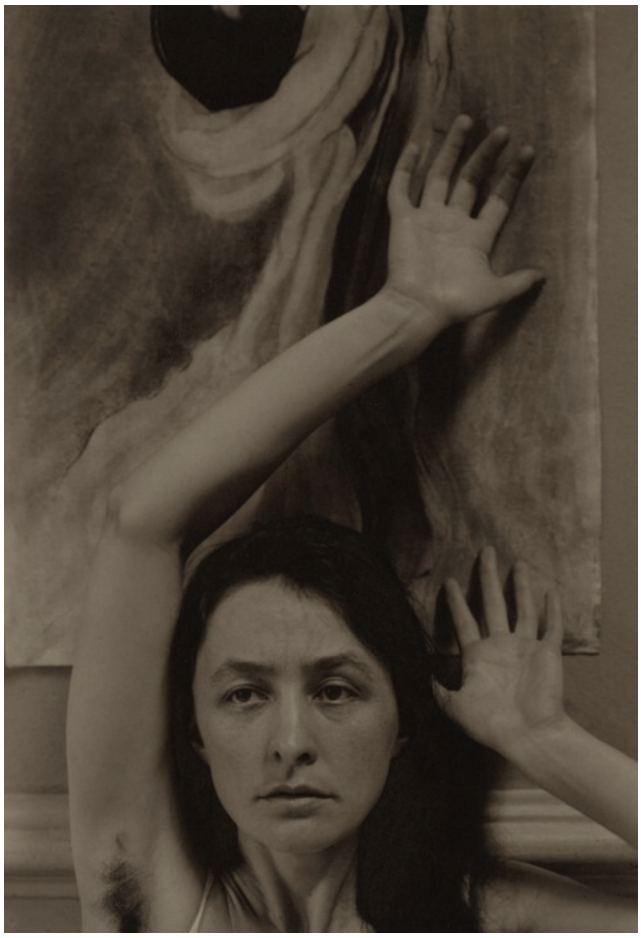


Figure 3. Alfred Stieglitz. *Georgia O'Keeffe*, 1918. Palladium print, 9 3/8 x 6 3/8 in. National Gallery of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Collection. View on the NGA website.

and in the South was used to explain her aesthetic sensibilities, particularly in New York City where her works were first shown.

An additional factor that lent O'Keeffe the appearance of American originality was her lack of experience with and interest in European art. O'Keeffe first visited Europe well into her 60s, having expressed little prior desire for transatlantic travel. Further, unlike most of her male counterparts, she had not seen the Armory Show of 1913, one of the first major exhibitions of work by European modernists in the United States.[11] While there is some evidence of European influence in her work, particularly in its modernist flavor (figures 4–5), its smoothness, color palette, and subject matter—much of it features elements of nature unique to the United States—stand in contrast to the work of influential Europeans such as Pablo Picasso or Georges Braque. Stieglitz selected O'Keeffe as exemplary of the evolution of an American style of modernism, referential of—yet distinct from—European trends. This positioning was successful. O'Brien's profile of the artist argued that O'Keeffe was "an iconoclast to the old European traditions of art and artists," that she was America's "own exclusive product."[12]

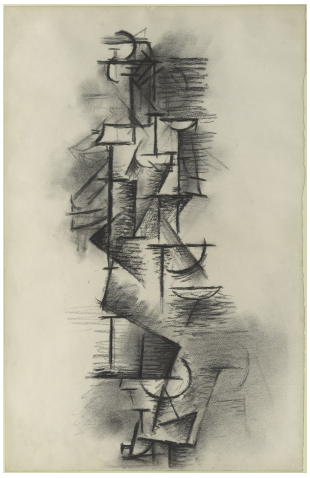


Figure 4. Pablo Picasso. *Standing Female Nude*, 1910. Charcoal on paper, 19 x 12 3/8 in. Collection The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Collection. © 2022 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. View on the Met Museum website.

Figure 5. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Drawing XIII*, 1915 / *No. 13, Special*, 1916. Charcoal on paper, 24 3/8 × 18 1/2 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Collection. View on the Met Museum website.

While O'Keeffe did not approve of some of Stieglitz's tactics for promoting her work, his approach was undeniably effective. By presenting O'Keeffe's work as distinctly Freudian in nature and representative of the attitudes of a sexually liberated woman, Stieglitz situated the artist within the zeitgeist of the 1910s and 1920s. He also attracted visitors to her exhibitions—500 people per day viewed her 1923 show at Anderson Galleries, and it won her fame in the New York art scene.[13] Furthermore, O'Keeffe did little to counteract the eroticized and gendered interpretations of her work at the time, possibly because the tactic was so successful or due to the complication that disagreeing with Stieglitz publicly would precipitate. The other prong in Stieglitz's marketing approach—promoting O'Keeffe as a thoroughly American painter—also helped to advance her new version of modernism. This view of the artist lasted for decades and was complemented by her later life and artistic choices made in New Mexico. Both elements of Stieglitz's approach contributed to the formation of O'Keeffe's cult of personality, which emerged with these first Stieglitz-sponsored exhibitions.

O'Keeffe's cult of personality, while influenced by Stieglitz's work, also emerged from her capacity for self-determination and individuality. O'Keeffe's personal and artistic choices attracted attention from her earliest moments on the New York art scene, enhanced by her refusal to align herself with many of the popular political and cultural movements of the day. Though the artist was in close proximity to the bohemian cultural environment of Greenwich Village in the 1910s and 1920s, she stood out from other artists of her generation through her refusal to entirely embrace the aesthetic trappings of this lifestyle. She never bobbed her hair, and her clothing, though influenced by Village styles, was distinctly simpler than the items worn by her peers.[14] Her lifestyle also reflected her distinct individualism and her ambivalence towards bohemian culture. While O'Keeffe practiced its "free love" approach by living with Stieglitz out of wedlock, her friend Frances O'Brien was quick to note that she had no interest in smoking, drinking, or other forms of "Bohemianism."[15] O'Keeffe also chose not to live in the Village, but instead had an apartment farther north, in Midtown—a sign of further alienation from elements of this society. These choices set O'Keeffe apart from other aspiring female artists of her social milieu. Yet, her early professional success produced a contingent of admirers from this very group. In his review of O'Keeffe's 1923 exhibition, critic Henry McBride mockingly addressed O'Keeffe's popularity with young, artistic women in New York, joking that O'Keeffe should "get herself to a nunnery" to avoid the female admirers she would gain from the successful exhibition.[16]

O'Keeffe's attitude toward the feminist movement also reflected her sense of self-determination. While she identified with feminism early in her career, O'Keeffe wished to be viewed as an artist first and foremost, rather than as an avatar for the movement. Due to this, she had a somewhat ambivalent relationship to their cause. While her relationship with Stieglitz reflected her modern attitude toward marriage and monogamy, O'Keeffe never used the word "feminist" to describe herself.[17] Later in life, she even rejected the movement outright as she did not recognize herself in the feminism of the 1970s.[18] Once, when asked by artist Judy Chicago to participate in an anthology of women artists, she replied that one is either "a good painter or one is not, and that sex is not the basic [*sic*] of this difference."[19] In her emphasis on parity and freedom of choice, rather than on strict adherence to a code of values, O'Keeffe was ahead of her time—she pioneered a relationship to feminism similar to contemporary attitudes. Nevertheless, in the popular imagination, both her early association with feminism and her determination to become successful in an historically male-dominated sphere led to her identification as a feminist icon in later years.

Figure 6. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Alligator Pear - No. 2*, 1920–21. Oil on canvas, 23 1/4 x 18 in. Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation. View on the O'Keeffe Museum website.

Certainly the most important opportunity for O'Keeffe to express her individuality was through her art. While she aligned herself with the American modernists, her work was distinct from the paintings of Dove, Hartley, Marin, and others. Her simplified abstractions of nature—including large-scale representations of plant life (figure 6)—contrasted with the visually complex, impressionistic watercolors of John Marin (figure 7) due to their smooth surfaces and bright colors. Critics struggled to find the proper terminology for her art; some called her a "Futurist," while others claimed she was a "Cubist."[20] The uncategorizable nature of her work allowed her to shake off such labels to conceive a new sort of modernism. Through her refusal to fully identify with bohemianism, feminism, or any other movement of her day, O'Keeffe pioneered new forms of them all.

Figure 7. John Marin. *From Deer Isle, Maine*, 1922. Watercolor, gouache, charcoal, and graphite on wove paper, 16 7/8 x 20 1/16 in. National Gallery of Art, Gift of John Marin Jr. View on the NGA website.

O'Keeffe's and Stieglitz's efforts to promote her work plainly influenced critical and public perception of the painter's life and work, but the pair could not altogether control O'Keeffe's "image." Due to her position as an artist who refused artistic and social categorization as well as her explosive popularity, early response to O'Keeffe's exhibitions also constituted a response to O'Keeffe's personhood. Profiles of the artist demonstrated the public's fascination with her identity, particularly regarding her womanhood. As a fashionable and well-connected woman, she came to be seen as a symbol of cultural movements that she alternately rejected and embraced—early feminism, bohemianism, and American Modernism. Public fascination with O'Keeffe has carried through to this day, with the Brooklyn Museum exhibition *Living Modern* being perhaps the clearest manifestation of this phenomenon. This thoughtful examination of O'Keeffe's deliberateness in all elements of her life fed the public's fascination with the artist's persona and argued that an artist's work cannot necessarily be separated from their life.[21]

Whether a close reading of an artist's personal identity clarifies or muddies our understanding of their work, the critical conflation of O'Keeffe's own life and work enshrined her as (perhaps) the first modern American celebrity artist. Like her contemporary Frida Kahlo, however, this status as a national icon came at some cost. She gained fame, but not entirely on her own terms. Her images have been coopted to represent any number of identities as well as used to sell products. Nevertheless, during her lifetime O'Keeffe maintained a degree of personal independence, including in matters of personal style and identity that reflected her unwavering individuality—throughout the maelstrom of press she received into old age, she remained true to herself. In an era in which art and life have become integrated as never before, when self-creation and -curation have become mainstays of popular culture, perhaps this is, as much as anything, the great lesson gained from her early critics.

NOTES

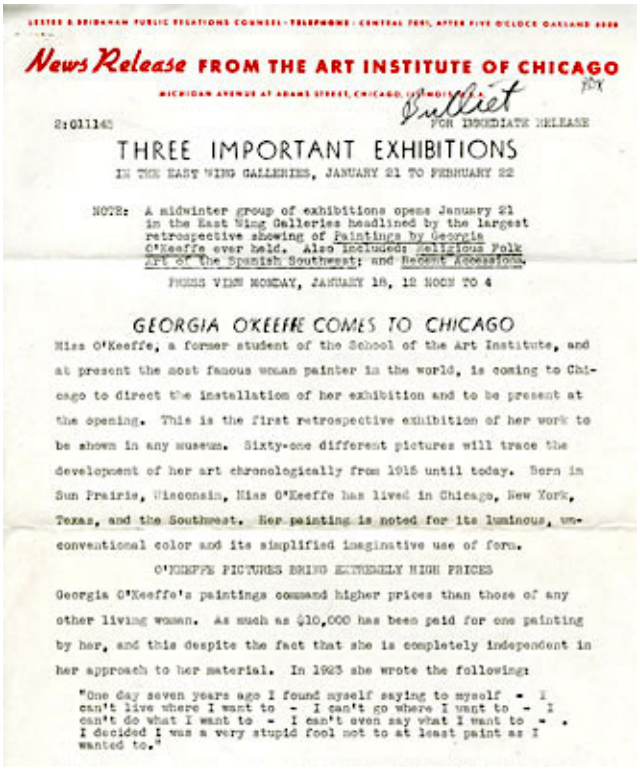
Note on titles of works: Institutional titles and dates for O'Keeffe's works sometimes vary from first titles and dates established by *Georgia O'Keeffe: Catalogue Raisonné* (1999), whose entries explain changes. Here institutional titles and dates are listed first followed by those in the Catalogue Raisonné.

1. Frances O'Brien's profile "Americans We Like: Georgia O'Keeffe" for the October 1927 edition of *The Nation* was one of a series of brief profiles of Americans for the magazine. O'Brien was a friend of both O'Keeffe and Stieglitz, and her portrayal of the artist reflects a deep knowledge of their ambitions for O'Keeffe's public image. The profile acknowledges O'Keeffe's status as an iconic, distinctly American painter, in line with Stieglitz's wishes, without trading in the Freudian, sexualized interpretations of O'Keeffe's works that the artist so resented. Frances O'Brien. "Americans We Like: Georgia O'Keeffe. The Fourth in a Series of Personality Portraits." *The Nation*, October 12, 1927, 351.
2. See Christopher Knight, "Beyond the O'Keeffe Mystique," *Los Angeles Times*, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2000-mar-12-ca-7871-story.html.
3. See Wanda M. Corn, *Georgia O'Keeffe: Living Modern* (New York: Prestel Publishing, 2017), 61.
4. See Anita Pollitzer, *A Woman on Paper: Georgia O'Keeffe* (New York: Simon & Schuster Books, 1988), 48. This publication misdates the letter Pollitzer wrote O'Keeffe the night of December 31, 1915 to January 1, 1916, which is the postmark on the letter's envelope rather than the day it was written.
5. See Barbara Buhler Lynes's essay, *Georgia O'Keeffe's 1946 Museum of Modern Art Exhibition: A Validation of Myth*, in this catalogue.
6. See Linda Grasso, *Equal Under the Sky: Georgia O'Keeffe and Twentieth Century Feminism* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2017), 55. Grasso examines O'Keeffe's complex relationship to feminism as well as her outsized role as a contemporary feminist icon.
7. Pollitzer, 164.
8. See Barbara Buhler Lynes, *O'Keeffe, Stieglitz, and the Critics, 1916-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 25. This collection of critical materials analyzes public response to O'Keeffe's early exhibitions, arguing that Stieglitz encouraged interpretations of the artist's work that focused on her gender identity and an eroticized, Freudian interpretation of her work.
9. See Roxana Robinson, *Georgia O'Keeffe: A Life* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 1999), 257. In this section of her book, Robinson explains the possible origins of eroticized interpretations of the painter's work.
10. Alfred Stieglitz, "Foreword," *Alfred Stieglitz Presents Seven Americans: 159 Paintings, Photographs, & Things, Recent & Never Before Publicly Shown, by Arthur G. Dove, Mardsen Hartley, John Marin, Charles Demuth, Paul Strand, Georgia O'Keeffe, Alfred Stieglitz* (New York: Anderson Galleries, 1925), 2. The essay was one of several in the catalogue that positioned these artists as Americans working in a new style, having rejected the influences of European modernism. A piece by Arnold Rönnebeck, titled "Through the Eyes of a European Sculptor" (pp. 5–7), argued that the exhibition represented "nothing less than the discovery of America's independent role in the History of Art." Critical response to the exhibition was mixed and colored by what many saw as a pompous collection of essays in the exhibition catalogue. O'Keeffe's work, however, was almost universally praised.
11. See Pollitzer, XXIV.
12. See O'Brien.
13. See Robinson, 254
14. See Corn, 61. In this section, the curator offers an extensive analysis of O'Keeffe's early style and propensity for standing out through her dress.
15. See O'Brien.
16. Henry McBride's February 4, 1923, review of O'Keeffe's show for the *New York Herald* poked fun at eroticized interpretations offered by other critics and emphasized her growing popularity with young women in New York. His tongue-in-cheek, hyperbolic description of the masses of O'Keeffe's "sisters," who were hounding her for artistic advice, underscores the emergence of O'Keeffe's first cult of personality, a microcosm of educated, wealthy, young, female artists in the city.
17. See Grasso, 11.
18. See Barbara Buhler Lynes, "Georgia O'Keeffe and Feminism: A Problem of Position," in The Expanding Discourse: Art History and Feminism, eds. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 436–49.
19. See Haley Mlotek, "Georgia O'Keeffe's Powerful Personal Style," *The New Yorker*, April 6, 2017, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/georgia-okeeffes-powerful-personal-style.
20. For the quotes, see "Another 'Futurist at the Photo-Secession'," *American Art News* 15, no. 26 (April 7, 1917); and McBride.

21. See Corn, 283.

Art Institute of Chicago, 1943

Sarah Kelly Oehler, Art Institute of Chicago



News Release FROM THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

MICHIGAN AVENUE AT ADAMS STREET, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Juliet

2:G11143 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THREE IMPORTANT EXHIBITIONS

IN THE EAST WING GALLERIES, JANUARY 21 TO FEBRUARY 22

NOTE: A midwinter group of exhibitions opens January 21 in the East Wing Galleries headlined by the largest retrospective showing of Paintings by Georgia O'Keeffe ever held. Also included: Religious Folk Art of the Spanish Southwest; and Recent Accessions.

PRESS VIEW MONDAY, JANUARY 18, 12 NOON TO 4

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE COMES TO CHICAGO

Miss O'Keeffe, a former student of the School of the Art Institute, and at present the most famous woman painter in the world, is coming to Chicago to direct the installation of her exhibition and to be present at the opening. This is the first retrospective exhibition of her work to be shown in any museum. Sixty-one different pictures will trace the development of her art chronologically from 1915 until today. Born in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, Miss O'Keeffe has lived in Chicago, New York, Texas, and the Southwest. Her painting is noted for its luminous, unconventional color and its simplified imaginative use of form.

O'KEEFFE PICTURES BRING EXTREMELY HIGH PRICES

Georgia O'Keeffe's paintings command higher prices than those of any other living woman. As much as $10,000 has been paid for one painting by her, and this despite the fact that she is completely independent in her approach to her material. In 1923 she wrote the following:

"One day seven years ago I found myself saying to myself - I can't live where I want to - I can't go where I want to - I can't do what I want to - I can't even say what I want to - I decided I was a very stupid fool not to at least paint as I wanted to."

Figure 1. Art Institute of Chicago press release, January 11, 1943.

In January 1943, Georgia O'Keeffe returned to Chicago. She had lived in the city in her early adulthood: first in 1905–6 when she studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and again, two years later, when she worked unhappily as a commercial illustrator before contracting measles, forcing her to quit the city. Her return to Chicago more than 30 years later, however, was far more triumphant.

The occasion was a momentous one. The Art Institute of Chicago was mounting *Georgia O'Keeffe, Paintings, 1915-1941*, a large-scale display of her artwork that marked several "firsts" for O'Keeffe in what was already a significant career: her first museum retrospective, far more comprehensive in breadth than her 1927 exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Art; her first solo exhibition to be held outside of New York City; and the largest gathering of her works since 1923 (figure 1).[1] That it was held in the Midwestern metropolis she had once called home, not far from her birthplace in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, further enhanced its cachet. Although little noted in the scholarship on O'Keeffe—generally overshadowed by her 1946 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art—the Chicago exhibition established the canon of her work up until 1943, produced a catalogue that would become the defining statement of O'Keeffe's early career, and reinvigorated her connections to Chicago. The exhibition would also influence O'Keeffe's decisions regarding the estate of Alfred Stieglitz, the renowned photographer and art dealer, and also her husband, who died three years later, in 1946. Required to determine which institutions would receive his sizable collection of European and American art, O'Keeffe seized the opportunity to designate her own paintings—many of which were in the Art Institute show—as part of these donations.

The Chicago exhibition originated thanks to the discerning eye of Daniel Catton Rich, director of the Art Institute (figure 2).[2] Rich and O'Keeffe met in 1929, when both were guests of Mabel Dodge Luhan, the famed patron of the arts, at her home in Taos, New Mexico. At the time, Rich was the assistant curator of painting and sculptures at the Art Institute and was already familiar with O'Keeffe's art thanks to Stieglitz's exhibitions in the 1920s. He continued to follow her career from afar, and, in the spring of 1941, broached the possibility of an exhibition.[3]

From the beginning, Rich conceived of the show as a career-spanning exhibition that would demonstrate the beauty and range of her art to eager Chicago audiences. As he explained to O'Keeffe in a letter: "I have long admired your work and feel that a selection of it showing your changes and developments would be greatly appreciated by our public, already keenly aware of your place in American art."[4] O'Keeffe must have encouraged Stieglitz (in his role as her art dealer) to agree, as he wrote to her while she stayed at Ghost Ranch that summer: "I'm returning Mr. Rich's letter. Thanks. Yes a show of yours properly selected will be an eye opener."[5] During trips to New York that fall and winter, O'Keeffe, Rich, and Stieglitz discussed the exhibition further, and agreed to two stipulations: that Rich would allow O'Keeffe to install the exhibition herself, and that the Art Institute would acquire a major work from the show.[6]

O'Keeffe arrived in Chicago on Monday, January 11, 1943, and checked into the Blackstone Hotel, located on Michigan Avenue several blocks south of the Art Institute. The next few days were a whirlwind of press interviews and gallery installations as O'Keeffe and Rich prepared for the exhibition's scheduled opening on Thursday, January 21. O'Keeffe threw herself into hanging the exhibition, an activity that fascinated reporters unused to a woman so rigorously attending to such matters:

> *With Miss O'Keeffe . . . the hanging of a picture is as important as its painting. She is a slight, wiry little woman with a face of exquisite, coinlike beauty, done almost in pale sepia, and brown hair wound in a coronet, but she lugged her heavy paintings, in their frames of copper and stainless steel,*

Figure 2. Daniel Catton Rich, 1939.

> *like an automaton. Before she was thru, of course, she had Daniel Catton Rich, Institute director, discarding his jacket and racing around in a yellow sweater and maroon tie to help; and before she was really thru, she was in bed with the flu.*[7]

Indeed, O'Keeffe retreated to the Blackstone Hotel to recuperate after three days of installation, but not before insisting that the Art Institute repaint the largest of the three galleries—reportedly a violet color—which resulted in two white rooms and one in a greenish-gray hue.[8]

The exhibition included 61 works, all lent through Stieglitz's An American Place gallery.[9] As the chronologically arranged catalogue demonstrates, they ranged from early career works to her most recent canvases, starting with two drawings of around 1915–17: the watercolor *Blue Lines X | Blue Lines* and an untitled charcoal drawing (*Drawing XIII | No. 13. Special*) (figures 4–5). These were also the only two works on paper selected for inclusion.[10] The latest paintings shown were *Red Hills and Bones* and *Turkey Feathers and Indian Pot*, two oils of 1941 (figures 6–7).[11] In its scope, the display differed from all her past exhibitions, whether at Stieglitz's galleries or the Brooklyn Museum, in that it featured more than 25 years of work. The retrospective revealed an expanded view of O'Keeffe's work in other ways too: It demonstrated her varied subject matter, from abstract motifs to flowers and other natural forms to the stunning Southwestern landscape. It showcased the many locations she had visited or called home that inspired her creativity, including Lake George, Manhattan, New Mexico, and Canada. And it revealed her deployment of a dramatic range of canvas sizes as well as her penchant for working through certain motifs in multiple compositions.

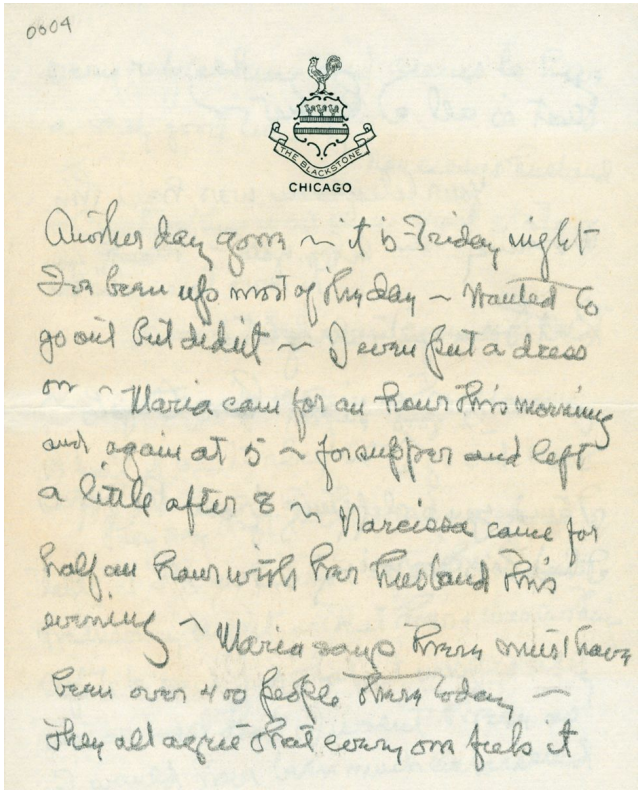


Figure 3. Georgia O'Keeffe to Alfred Stieglitz, January 23, 1943. Letters to Alfred Stieglitz, MS.9. Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. View on the O'Keeffe Museum website.

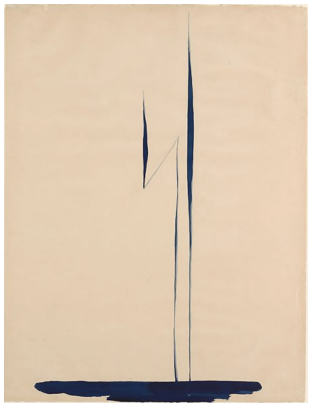


Figure 4. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Blue Lines X | Blue Lines*, 1916. Watercolor and graphite on paper, 25 x 19 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Collection. View on the Met Museum website.

Figure 5. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Drawing XIII*, 1915 / *No. 13, Special*, 1916. Charcoal on paper, 24 3/8 x 18 1/2 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Collection. View on the Met Museum website.

Figure 6. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Red Hills and Bones*, 1941. Oil on canvas, 29 3/4 x 40 in. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Collection. View on the PMA website.

Figure 7. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Turkey Feathers and Indian Pot*, 1941. Oil on canvas. Private Collection.

This diversity was highlighted in the way O'Keeffe chose to display her art; as three archival photographs of the galleries (figures 8–10) demonstrate, O'Keeffe hung the works based on her own logic and aesthetic preferences. Rather than segregating her painting into discrete categories, she deliberately juxtaposed works of different subjects, decades, and locations. For example, in the small white room, she placed *Black Iris* (1926), an enlarged flower painting, on a wall adjacent to *Dark Mesa with Pink Sky* (1930) and *Black Cross, New Mexico / Black Cross* (1929), allowing their formal structures and color schemes to resonate.[12] She also embraced the scale differences between her paintings: on the other side of the gallery she positioned *East River from the 30th Story of Shelton Hotel* (1928)—one of the largest formats used by O'Keeffe at the time, at 30 inches high by 48 inches wide—next to the relatively diminutive *Red Poppy* (1928), measuring seven by nine inches.[13] Two large abstract works, *Abstraction* (1926) and *From the Lake No. 3* (1924), can be seen adjacent to *Red Poppy*, further underscoring the variations among theme and size in her oeuvre.[14] O'Keeffe did, however, opt to display all six of the *Jack-in-the-Pulpit* canvases (1930) on one wall of the large white gallery, encouraging visitors to discern for themselves how she used a single motif to experiment with color, form, and scale.[15]

Figure 8. Exhibition installation photo, Art Institute of Chicago, 1943.

Figure 9. Exhibition installation photo, Art Institute of Chicago, 1943.

Figure 10. Exhibition installation photo, Art Institute of Chicago, 1943.

The exhibition was an opportunity for O'Keeffe, in collaboration with Rich, to establish the visual parameters of her career up until that point, and it revealed her preferences in exhibition display. But equally important was the essay Rich wrote for the catalogue, which would become the defining statement of O'Keeffe's early career. Rich opened with an assertion that continues to resonate today: "The art of Georgia O'Keeffe is a record of intense emotional states resolved into crystalline form. Her ability to charge abstract elements of line, color, and mass with passionate meanings is as notable as her fastidious and immaculate craftsmanship."[16] The essay explored her life and career, touching on familiar milestones. These included her early schooling, her studies with Arthur Wesley Dow, and her teaching in Texas. It described her groundbreaking work with charcoals, and recounted the story of her friend Anita Pollitzer sharing them with Stieglitz. Finally, it detailed her partnership with Stieglitz and her 1929 trip to the Southwest. Indeed, as biographer Roxana Robinson has noted, Rich's essay "contained the biographical structure of the O'Keeffe myth as it would be retold again and again." Rich did not, however, only convey biographical facts; he also interwove a sensitive analysis of many of the paintings in the exhibition that undoubtedly developed from his conversations with the artist. Acknowledging that in her fifth decade O'Keeffe was "still at work with intense energy and what the next years will bring forth no one (not even herself) can foresee," Rich ultimately concluded that "the place of Georgia O'Keeffe is secure" and that "American painting of our day is infinitely richer for her triumphant vision."[17]

Extensive newspaper coverage of the exhibition helped reinforce O'Keeffe's reputation as one of the preeminent artists of the era. No doubt, the press' fascination with the show related significantly to her status as a famed woman artist. Reporters eagerly detailed the social events planned for O'Keeffe (which were truncated due to her illness) and commented on her outfits and appearance. But reviews of her paintings were positive, especially notable given that seemingly only four paintings by O'Keeffe had

Figure 11. Clipping from a Dayton Ohio, newspaper. Sunday, February 21, 1943.

previously been seen in the city (figure 11).[18] "The three galleries glow with the clear, clean, luminous color of her [work]," said one critic, further noting the "combination of intense emotion, penetrative imagination, and great delicacy of feeling in her art."[19] Another author concluded, "If you like her work, you love it; if you don't, you can't forget it."[20] And significantly, the Associated Press released a lengthy piece on O'Keeffe and the exhibition by correspondent W. W. Hercher, who interviewed her on her first day in Chicago.[21] His article, in which he described the show as "the artistic event of the first magnitude," was syndicated widely and undoubtedly heightened her visibility throughout the nation.[22]

The O'Keeffe retrospective thus had several important outcomes: it codified a desirable narrative of her art and work through Rich's essay; it established a core group of important works; and it helped broaden her reputation. It also impacted the Art Institute's collection as, true to their agreement, Rich purchased *Black Cross, New Mexico* from the show (figure 12). Heralded by the Chicago press, it was the first O'Keeffe painting to enter the permanent collection of the museum, and is a key example of the work she produced during her first summer in the Southwest.

The 1943 exhibition also directly influenced O'Keeffe's subsequent decisions in placing the Alfred Stieglitz Collection in a variety of institutions. When her husband died in 1946, O'Keeffe had the overwhelming task of distributing his vast collection of American and European modernist paintings, drawings, and photographs, with major gifts going to the Art Institute of Chicago, Fisk University, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Gallery of Art, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1949. O'Keeffe's friendship with Daniel Catton Rich, as established through the 1943 show, played a significant role in this; he became one of her closest advisors regarding the Stieglitz Collection.[23] Numerous letters between the two demonstrate the complexity of their work. In the process of organizing the dispersal of the Stieglitz Collection with Rich, O'Keeffe also made numerous gifts of her own paintings (often placing them on long-term loan to the institutions first), designating them as future acquisitions to the Stieglitz Collection. Of the 61 works chosen for the 1943 exhibition, 24 of them—or well over one-third—would later be donated to museums, including an additional six paintings given to the Art Institute between 1947 and 1987.

Figure 12. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Black Cross, New Mexico* / *Black Cross*, 1929. Oil on canvas, 39 x 30 in. Art Institute of Chicago. View on the AIC website.

The 1943 retrospective at the Art Institute of Chicago was thus a major milestone for the artist. It presented key works from across her career, offering visitors a chance to understand and assess the development of her art. Rich's essay enhanced this understanding with its sensitive analysis. The exhibition also introduced her work to audiences outside of New York City and brought her widespread visibility through local and syndicated press coverage. O'Keeffe and Rich's fruitful collaboration would, however, have an even greater impact through her subsequent donation of works from the Stieglitz Collection. The added allocation of her own paintings amplified her consistent prominence on the walls of museums across the country, reinforcing the growth of her reputation as one of the central figures of American Modernism. The 1943 retrospective thus played a pivotal role as the artist began considering which paintings would become part of her enduring legacy.

NOTES

Note on titles of works: Institutional titles and dates for O'Keeffe's works sometimes vary from first titles and dates established by *Georgia O'Keeffe: Catalogue Raisonné* (1999), whose entries explain changes. Here institutional titles and dates are listed first followed by those in the Catalogue Raisonné.

1. In 1923, Alfred Stieglitz organized *Alfred Stieglitz Presents One Hundred Pictures: Oils, Water-colors, Pastels, Drawings, by Georgia O'Keeffe, American* at Anderson Galleries in New York.

2. For information regarding Rich, see John W. Smith, "The Nervous Profession: Daniel Catton Rich and the Art Institute of Chicago, 1927-1958," *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 19, no. 1 (1993): 58–79, 105–7.

3. Rich recalled the circumstances of their 1929 meeting in Daniel Catton Rich, "I Met Her in Taos," *Worcester Sunday Telegram*, October 30, 1960, 6–8. In this recollection he speculated that they met again in New York in 1942, but a letter from Rich to O'Keeffe in May 1941 demonstrates that they must have reconnected during the

winter of 1940–41. Daniel Catton Rich to Georgia O'Keeffe, May 26, 1941, Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O'Keeffe Archive, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library (hereafter cited as YCAL), MSS 85, Box 179, folder 2973. Lisle cited the erroneous 1942 date in her biography; see Laurie Lisle, *Portrait of an Artist: A Biography of Georgia O'Keeffe* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press), 251.

4. Daniel Catton Rich to Georgia O'Keeffe, May 26, 1941, YCAL, MSS 85, Box 179, folder 2973.
5. Alfred Stieglitz to Georgia O'Keeffe, June 2, 1941, YCAL, MSS 85, Box 76, folder 1602.
6. Lisle, *Portrait of an Artist*, 252.
7. Marcia Winn, "Front Views and Profiles: It's a Personal Matter," *Chicago Tribune*, January 22, 1943, 15.
8. Lisle, *Portrait of an Artist*, 252. Lisle indicates that the repainted gallery was originally violet; her source is not cited. O'Keeffe herself described the final colors in a letter to Stieglitz; see Georgia O'Keeffe to Alfred Stieglitz, January 19, 1943, YCAL, MSS 85, Box 93, folder 1838.
9. Daniel Catton Rich, *Georgia O'Keeffe, Paintings 1915-1941*, exh. cat. (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1943); see https://www.artic.edu/exhibitions/7588/retrospective-exhibition-of-paintings-by-georgia-o-keeffe. It must be noted that as a result of being supplied by An American Place in its entirety, the show, although representative, did not include any paintings previously sold by O'Keeffe.
10. Barbara Buhler Lynes, *Georgia O'Keeffe: Catalogue Raisonné*, 2 vols. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 1:64, 1:157. Although dated 1915 in the Art Institute's catalogue, *Blue Lines X* is now dated to 1916.
11. Lynes, *Georgia O'Keeffe*, 2:1025, 2:1014.
12. Lynes, *Georgia O'Keeffe*, 1:557, 1:739, 1:667.
13. Lynes, *Georgia O'Keeffe*, 1:620, 1:594.
14. Lynes, *Georgia O'Keeffe*, 1:522, 1:471.
15. Lynes, *Georgia O'Keeffe*, 1:715–20.
16. Rich, *Georgia O'Keeffe*, 9.
17. Rich, *Georgia O'Keeffe*, 36, 40.
18. This was reported in Judith Cass, "Miss O'Keeffe's Paintings to be on Exhibit Here," *Chicago Tribune*, January 14, 1943, 11.
19. Edith Weigle, "Miss O'Keeffe's Paintings Filled with Integrity," *Chicago Tribune*, January 20, 1943, 9.
20. Marcia Winn, "Georgia O'Keeffe—Outstanding Artist," *Chicago Tribune*, February 28, 1943, C4.
21. Georgia O'Keeffe to Alfred Stieglitz, January 14, 1943, YCAL, MSS 85, Box 93, folder 1838.
22. The Art Institute collected many of the syndicated stories from around the country, including as far away as Orlando, Florida; see Art Institute of Chicago Scrapbook, vol. 78, 1943, microfilm 1969 25, reel 13. For just one instance of the phrase "artistic event of the first magnitude," see W. W. Hercher, "'Greatest' Woman Artist Opens Chicago Exhibition," *Telegraph Herald* (Dubuque, Iowa), January 24, 1943, clipping, Art Institute of Chicago Scrapbook.
23. In 1943, likely to thank Rich personally, O'Keeffe gave him *Red Poppy*, one of the works in the exhibition; see Lynes, *Georgia O'Keeffe*, 1:594.

Museum of Modern Art, 1946

Barbara Buhler Lynes, Independent Researcher & Consultant

Aspects of the significance of the well-received Georgia O'Keeffe retrospective exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1946 have long been recognized in the O'Keeffe literature (figure 1).[1] It was the artist's first retrospective in the epicenter of the American art community and the museum's second exhibition devoted to the art of a woman.[2] What follows identifies another equally important component of the exhibition's significance. The press release and its subtitle, "Finally, a Woman on Paper," codified as fact and effectively set into motion arguably the most popular and pervasive myth in the O'Keeffe literature.

That is, the internationally known photographer, gallerist, and leading advocate of modern art in America, Alfred Stieglitz, supposedly exclaimed, "Finally, a Woman on Paper," upon seeing O'Keeffe's work for the first time on December 31, 1915. Indeed, from 1946 on, the phrase has been repeated nearly annually in reviews of O'Keeffe's exhibitions, and in articles, books, and biographies about her. Yet, as will become clear, Stieglitz did not say "Finally, a Woman on Paper" that day despite the 1946 exhibition press release assertion that he did.

Figure 1. Installation view of the 1946 exhibition *Georgia O'Keeffe* at the Museum of Modern Art. Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. IN319.1. Photograph by Soichi Sunami. View on the MoMA website.

PAINTINGS OF GEORGIA O'KEEFFE SHOWN IN RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

"Finally a woman on paper."

These words, spoken by Alfred Stieglitz in 1915, were the actual launching of Georgia O'Keeffe on a career that has led to her recognition as a major American artist. On Wednesday, May 15, a retrospective exhibition of her works will open at the Museum of Modern Art and continue through August 25. The exhibition has been selected and installed by James Johnson Sweeney, Director of the Museum's Department of Painting and Sculpture. Mr. Sweeney has also written the book on O'Keeffe which the Museum will publish concurrently with the exhibition.

Figure 2. Museum of Modern Art press release (detail), 1946. Full version available for download from the MoMA website.

Exhibition curator James Johnson Sweeney was instrumental in preparing the 12-page press release (figure 2; pdf)—nine pages longer than those typical from the museum then. It included the exhibition checklist, lists of earlier O'Keeffe exhibitions and her paintings in public collections, her curriculum vitae, and information on her background and education. It also explained that her work had been influenced by artist and teacher Arthur Wesley Dow, and included O'Keeffe's descriptions of important moments in the development of her art. There were also excerpts from the essay Sweeney was preparing for the exhibition catalogue, which was never published.[3]

The press release also featured a 1916 O'Keeffe letter to Stieglitz, who became her dealer that year and her husband in 1924. Its third page drew attention to this letter and to how Sweeney had obtained it: "In the catalog Mr. Sweeney quotes from a considerable group of unpublished early correspondence—generously put at his disposal by Miss O'Keeffe—between the artist and her discoverer, Alfred Stieglitz." The "unpublished early correspondence," however, also included letters O'Keeffe had written in June, August, and October 1915 and January 1916 to her New York friend and former classmate there, Anita Pollitzer.[4]

O'Keeffe was then teaching in South Carolina and had mailed her friend a series of recently completed drawings. Despite her directive to show them to no one, Pollitzer took them to Stieglitz at his famous avant-garde gallery, 291, on December 31, 1915. When he saw them, he supposedly proclaimed, "Finally a Woman on Paper."

To be sure, the exhibition subtitle recalls Stieglitz's description of O'Keeffe's innovative abstractions when he first exhibited them in 1916. He wrote: "'291' had never before seen woman express herself so frankly on paper."[5] And the phrase is also reminiscent of how Stieglitz described O'Keeffe's work in a late 1917 or early 1918 letter to his friend, photographer Anne Brigman, sent after the one-person O'Keeffe exhibition Stieglitz organized in 1917. He stated: "The room [291] was never more glorious than during its last exhibition—the work of Miss O'Keeffe—A woman on paper—Fearless. Pure Self-Expression."[6] And Stieglitz used similar words when writing O'Keeffe in 1918, when she was teaching in Texas: "Of course, I am wondering what you have been painting—what it looks like—what you have been full of—The Great Child pouring out some more of her Woman self on paper—purely—truly—unspoiled."[7] Yet none of Stieglitz's words conveys the drama and promotional impact of "Finally, a Woman on Paper."

Had Stieglitz uttered the phrase in 1915, would Pollitzer not have remembered it when she wrote to O'Keeffe that evening, after she had taken O'Keeffe's work to Stieglitz? Yet, her ink-written letter, penned in cursive, did not include it. Rather, it only stated: "Why they're genuinely fine things—you say a woman did these—She's an unusual woman—She's broad minded, she's bigger than most women, but she's got the sensitive emotion—I'd know that she was a woman—Look at that line . . . they're the purest, finest, sincerest things that have entered 291 in a long while . . . I wouldn't mind showing them in one of these rooms one bit."[8]

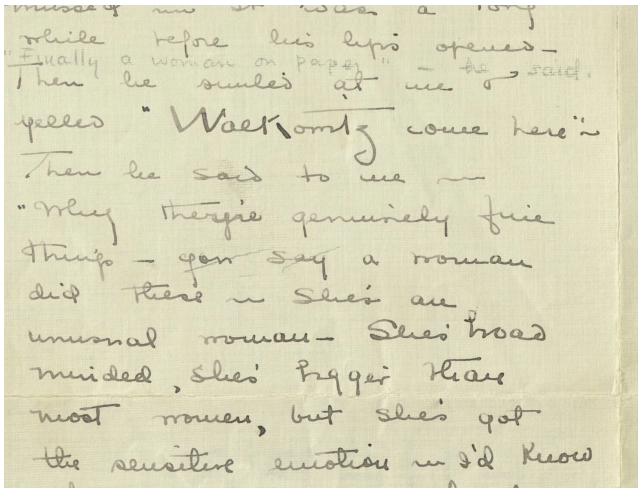


Figure 3. Anita Pollitzer to Georgia O'Keeffe, December 31, 1915 (detail). Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O'Keeffe Archive. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Moreover, would O'Keeffe not have repeated "Finally, a Woman on Paper" when writing her close friend Arthur Macmahon on January 6, 1916, when quoting from Pollitzer's letter?[9] Yet she wrote: "Stieglitz liked them [her drawings]. Said they were the purest finest sincerest things that had entered 291 in a long time—that he might want to show them later."[10] The absence of the phrase in O'Keeffe's letter suggests it was not in Pollitzer's. Yet, it is there now, mostly printed in pencil, in Pollitzer's hand, and inserted between the cursive lines of Pollitzer's ink-written letter (figure 3). It thus differs in medium, style, and tone from the more reasoned Stieglitz reaction Pollitzer recorded in ink. How, when, and why then did Pollitzer insert it into a letter that had been in O'Keeffe's possession since receiving it in 1916?

Its different mediums were first noted in the literature in 1983 and the penciled phrase was then seen as something Pollitzer perhaps added as an afterthought before mailing the letter on January 1, 1916.[11] Yet, this difference was soon obscured by the 1990 publication of the O'Keeffe/Pollitzer correspondence.[12] It misdated Pollitzer's December 31, 1915, letter as January 1, 1916, did not mention that the phrase was inserted between the lines of the letter, and made no distinction between its pencil and pen components. Those consulting the book rather than the original letter would not know that the phrase "Finally, a Woman on Paper" was inserted in pencil and might not be original to it. Considering O'Keeffe did not include the phrase in her letter to Macmahon as well as its history in the O'Keeffe literature, as will be reviewed here, it is more probable, as will become clear, that Pollitzer inserted the phrase in 1946 or shortly thereafter, when the phrase and its origin story were validated as fact in the 1946 O'Keeffe exhibition press release.

Although supposedly uttered in 1915, "Finally, a Woman on Paper" did not appear in the literature until 13 years later, which seems odd, given that a great deal had been written about O'Keeffe since 1916 and that the phrase was later considered "eminently quotable."[13] It was in reviewing O'Keeffe's 1928 exhibition that Stieglitz's friend Louis Kalonyne first recorded the phrase and its origin story: "'Finally, a Woman on Paper!'—or words to that general effect—Stieglitz is reported to have said quite moved, to the New York girl friend of O'Keeffe's who had brought the drawings to him."[14] Yet, it did not then take hold in the O'Keeffe literature.

Both the phrase and its origin story surfaced again 13 years later, in a 1941, anonymously written entry on O'Keeffe in *Current Biography*.[15] "Without her permission, the friend showed the drawings to Alfred Stieglitz, who is said to have ejaculated: 'Finally, a Woman on Paper.'" Ejaculated rarely describes something said. Rather, it refers to the pleasure of male sexual climax. Its use here suggests that Stieglitz wrote or provided input for the entry as he greatly enjoyed provoking controversy. Moreover, the word alludes to how O'Keeffe and her art aroused and satisfied him, as well as to how he had perceived and promoted her art since 1916: as a manifestation of female sexuality.[16]

Two years passed before the phrase and its origin story were next cited. O'Keeffe's and Stieglitz's friend, curator Daniel Catton Rich, referred to both in his essay for the catalogue of O'Keeffe's first retrospective exhibition that he organized at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1943. Rich pointed out: "To Anita Pollitzer in New York [O'Keeffe] sent in 1916 [*sic*] a roll of sketches with the express condition that they were not to be shown to anyone. . . . Disobeying O'Keeffe's request she promptly tucked the roll under her arm and took them to one of the few men in America capable of appreciating them—Alfred Stieglitz. . . . He was instantly impressed by O'Keeffe's drawings. 'Finally, a Woman on Paper,' he remarked."[17] One wonders if Rich cited the phrase and its origin story at Stieglitz's suggestion as it had not yet gained much traction in the O'Keeffe literature, even after the 1941 provocative entry in *Current Biography*.

That Rich was unaware of the sexist implications of the phrase and its origin story are clear from his catalogue essay. It was the first in the literature to disassociate O'Keeffe's art from the sexualized interpretations that had dominated its reception since 1916.[18] Rich stated:

> *In the first review of the exhibit in Stieglitz's own magaz*ine, Camera Work*, there occurs the suggestion that these drawings may be of psychoanalytic interest. Exciting as this observation was to a period fascinated by Freud, it has been, in the long run, harmful to O'Keeffe's case as an artist. It set off a whole train of mystic and sexual explanations of her art which have sometimes stood in the way of understanding.*[19]

"Finally, a Woman on Paper" was quoted once in reviews of the 1943 Chicago exhibition as "At Last, a Woman on Paper," and again in 1945 in both forms.[20] Janet Hollis reviewed O'Keeffe's exhibition at Stieglitz's gallery that year, stating "At Last, a Woman on Paper"; and "Finally, a Woman on Paper" was used in the title and cited in the text of an article on O'Keeffe in *U.S.A. An American Review*.[21] But neither the phrase nor its origin story caught on in the O'Keeffe literature until 1946, when both were authenticated as fact in the O'Keeffe exhibition press release and subsequently repeated regularly in the literature. As seemingly unaware of the phrase's sexist implications as Rich, Sweeney wrote: "These words ["Finally, a Woman on Paper"], spoken by Alfred Stieglitz in 1915 were the actual launching of Georgia O'Keeffe."[22]

Curiously, given her later refusal to condone associating her art with her gender, O'Keeffe voiced no known objection to the phrase or its origin story.[23] She most probably held the same opinion then that she had expressed in an interview with Michael Gold in 1930, stating: "I am trying with all my skill to do a painting that is all of woman, as well as all of me."[24] She had first articulated her feelings about this issue when writing Pollitzer on January 4, 1916, about her 1915 charcoal abstractions: "The thing [her work] seems to express in a way what I want it to but—it also seems rather effeminate—it is essentially a womans [*sic*] feeling—satisfies me in a way."[25] And, by 1946, like the men, O'Keeffe may have believed Stieglitz had uttered "Finally, a Woman on Paper" when first seeing her work.

And she may have realized that the phrase, while referring to her own accomplishment, also indirectly called Stieglitz's to mind. Long before the 1946 exhibition, Stieglitz had realized arguably his most outstanding achievement, an extensive photographic portrait of O'Keeffe. He completed it between 1917 and 1937, when he retired from photography, and it was clearly his own "Woman on Paper." Stieglitz's early photographs of O'Keeffe often presented his subject in the nude, partially dressed, and occasionally posed in front of her abstract works, gesturing toward them with her hands. He had exhibited 45 of them in 1921, when he was still married to his first wife and living with the unmarried O'Keeffe—the exhibition created a sensation.

Clearly, Sweeney had Stieglitz's "Woman on Paper" in mind. In excerpts from his catalogue essay, which the press release included, he subtly referred to the 1921 exhibition. He stated: "An expression of intense emotion, stark but always constrained, is the essence of O'Keeffe's art. And the way she came to this was by the severest critical self-stripping." The anonymous critic for *Time* riffed on Sweeney's words, making "Austere Stripper" the title of the review. Art critic Henry McBride's review referred to the event directly:

> *There came to notice almost at once something about some photographs showing every conceivable aspect of O'Keeffe that was a new effort in photography and something new in the way of introducing a budding artist. It made a stir. Mona Lisa got but one portrait of herself worth talking about. O'Keeffe got a hundred. It put her at once on the map. Everybody knew the name. She became what is known as a newspaper personality.*[26]

That Sweeney was thinking about Stieglitz's "Woman on Paper" is also evident from his suggestion that Stieglitz exhibit examples of it in a gallery adjacent to those of O'Keeffe's exhibition.[27] Stieglitz rejected the idea because it would not represent the breadth of his achievement. Yet this was perhaps an excuse, knowing full well how the 1921 exhibition had upset and outraged O'Keeffe. It provided visual equivalents for how Stieglitz was promoting O'Keeffe's art and prompted critics to associate her art with her body and her sexuality. Indeed, and perhaps at O'Keeffe's insistence, he only occasionally exhibited one or several of these photographs during his lifetime after 1921.[28]

Whatever the case, O'Keeffe was in support of most of Sweeney's efforts. She had allowed him to publish one of her letters to Stieglitz in the press release and had asked Pollitzer to provide him with letters she had sent her friend. The women had remained friends and were both living in New York in 1946, until June, when O'Keeffe left to spend the summer in New Mexico. Pollitzer had made her O'Keeffe letters available to Sweeney, and because she was preparing a review of O'Keeffe's 1946 exhibition must have asked in turn for access to her letters to O'Keeffe.[29] In reviewing her December 31, 1915, letter, she must have realized "Finally, a Woman on Paper" was not there.

Pollitzer was unaware of the degree to which the phrase's promotional ring differed from the more cautious Stieglitz response she had described in the original letter, its history and origin story in the literature, or that inserting it then in pencil would later call its originality into question. Yet, she knew that "Finally, a Woman on Paper" had become the mantra of the 1946 press release and may have thought she had not remembered exactly how Stieglitz had responded when she showed him O'Keeffe's work some 30 years earlier. She thus amended her letter to correspond with the premise and subtitle of the 1946 press release. She either added it then or shortly thereafter, when she was preparing the article "That's Georgia," published in *Saturday Review* (1950). In it, she cited the phrase and its origin story, as was the case in her posthumously published book about O'Keeffe, *A Woman on Paper*.[30]

Stieglitz died on July 13 at 86 during the run of O'Keeffe's exhibition, but not before enjoying the adulation heaped on him in Sweeney's press release and the critical response it and the exhibition generated. While these materials celebrated O'Keeffe and her astonishing achievements, they also drew inordinate attention to Stieglitz. For example, the press release stated: "For more than a decade [Stieglitz has] been introducing to the American public the most modern painting and sculpture from abroad as well as the most advanced American art." Additionally, it highlighted the role he had played in discovering, promoting, and championing O'Keeffe's art, the annual exhibitions he had organized of it, as well as the avant-garde publications he had founded, *291* and *Camera Work*, calling them "the most radical publications of their kind in America."

Indeed, adulation for Stieglitz so dominated the press release that the critic for *Art News* called attention to it:

> *Georgia O'Keeffe's full-length retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art is a very useful affair. If you walk through it before you read the catalogue [press release] you will be able to form your own picture of what she represents in American art without interruptions on the part of Mr. Stieglitz. The '291' publicity technique need not bewilder you in all its wonderful simplicity until you feel ready to take it.*[31]

Whether Stieglitz suggested the exhibition subtitle to Sweeney or played a part in developing the press release will never be known, but the 1946 exhibition served both artists well. Its press release highlighted the significance of O'Keeffe's breakthrough charcoal drawings while alluding to Stieglitz's "Woman on Paper," and validated as truth the myth of his prescience in immediately realizing her potential as early as 1915.[32] It and the press release inexorably linked the two, hitching the aging Stieglitz to the star the much younger O'Keeffe had become, providing Stieglitz a permanent place in the O'Keeffe literature. Indeed, it is not possible to discuss O'Keeffe's life, art, or career without mentioning Stieglitz.

While this may continue to be the case, it is now clear for the first time that Stieglitz was not as perceptive in 1915 as the myth of his then saying "Finally, a Woman on Paper" implied. He did not come up with the phrase and its origin story until over a decade later, when he developed it as a promotional tool. Stieglitz had no way of knowing that the phrase was not part of the Pollitzer letter that described his reaction to first seeing O'Keeffe's work but was instead added decades later. Nor could he have imagined that the letter would ultimately reveal as myth the 1946 release and its subtitle's assertion that Stieglitz had uttered "Finally, a Woman on Paper" as early as 1915.

NOTES

1. For an assessment of the criticism the exhibition received in 1946, see Barbara Buhler Lynes, "Georgia O'Keeffe and Henry Moore: Icons, Innovators, Voices of Authority," *Moore and O'Keeffe: Bones and Stones to Oil and Bronze*, exh. cat. (San Diego: San Diego Museum of Art, 2023), forthcoming.
2. The first was the 1942 Josephine Joy exhibition.
3. The exhibition press release and installation photographs are available on the Museum of Modern Art website: https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2851. Letters exchanged between O'Keeffe and Sweeney after 1946 indicate that he continued to work on the catalogue essay, but never completed it.
4. The press release misdates the January letter to November 4, 1915.
5. See Alfred Stieglitz, "Georgia O'Keeffe—C. Duncan—Réné [*sic*] Lafferty," *Camera Work*, no. 48 (October 1916): 13.
6. Alfred Stieglitz to Anne Brigman, late 1917 or early 1918, Box 8, folders 169–73, Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O'Keeffe Archive, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University (hereafter cited as AS/OK).
7. Alfred Stieglitz to Georgia O'Keeffe, March 31, 1918, AS/OK.
8. Anita Pollitzer to Georgia O'Keeffe, December 31, 1915, Box 208, folder 3649, AS/OK. https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/32191697?child_oid=32192109
9. O'Keeffe had known Macmahon since 1914, when both were teaching summer courses at the University of Virginia, and by 1916 they had become very fond of one another.
10. Georgia O'Keeffe to Arthur W. Macmahon, January 8, 1916, in Roxana Robinson, *Georgia O'Keeffe: A Life* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2021), 654.
11. The letter's envelope is postmarked January 1, 1916.
12. See Nancy Scott, "The Pollitzer-O'Keeffe Correspondence," *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 3, no. 17 (Fall 1985): 34–41; and Clive Giboire, ed., *Lovingly Georgia*: *The Complete Correspondence of Georgia O'Keeffe & Anita Pollitzer*, introduction by Benita Eisler (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 115.
13. See Anne Middleton Wagner, *Three Artists, Three Women: Modernism and the Art of Hesse, Krasner, and O'Keeffe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 35 and n. 12.
14. See Louis Kalonyme, "Georgia O'Keeffe: A Woman in Painting," *Creative Art* 2 (January 1928): xxxiv–xl. In his book, Herbert Seligmann, another Stieglitz friend, recorded Stieglitz uttering the phrase and its origin story in 1926, but used the words *At Last* rather than *Finally*: "Stieglitz told today [January 6, 1926] of how he met O'Keeffe . . . a young girl, Anita Pollitzer . . . walked in with a roll of drawings under arm. 'I've been asked by letter not to show anyone these . . . but they belong here' . . . When Stieglitz saw the first one he said: 'At Last a Woman on Paper.'" But Seligmann's book was not published until 1966. See Herbert J. Seligmann, *Alfred Stieglitz Talking: Notes of Some of His Conversations, 1925-1931* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Library, 1966), 23. Because capitalization and punctuation of the phrases vary in the literature, they are referred to here to avoid confusion as "Finally, a Woman on Paper," and "At Last, A Woman on Paper."
15. See *Current Biography*, June 1941, 62–63.
16. See Barbara Buhler Lynes, *O'Keeffe, Stieglitz and the Critics, 1916-1929* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1989; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Kathleen Pyne, *Modernism and the Feminine Voice: O'Keeffe and the Women of the Stieglitz Circle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); and Marcia Brennan, *Painting Gender, Constructing Theory: The Alfred Stieglitz Circle and American Formalist Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).
17. See Daniel Catton Rich, *Georgia O'Keeffe* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1943), 17.
18. See Barbara Buhler Lynes, "The Language of Criticism: Its Effect on the Art of Georgia O'Keeffe in the 1920s," in *Georgia O'Keeffe: From the Faraway, Nearby*, eds. Ellen Bradbury and Christopher Merrill (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Press, 1992), 43–55. Reprinted in *Women's Art Magazine*, no. 51 (March/April 1993): 4–9; and "Georgia O'Keeffe, An American Phenomenon: Issues of Identity," in *Georgia O'Keeffe*, ed. Barbara Buhler Lynes (Milan: Skira Editore, 2011), 13–20. In the 1920s, O'Keeffe waged a silent campaign to separate her art from sexualized readings of it, and in the statement for her 1939 exhibition she first openly voiced her concern: "Well—I made you take time to look at what I saw and when you took time to really notice my flower you hung all your own associations with flowers on my flower and you write about my flower as if I think and see what you think and see of the flower —and I don't." Statement in *Georgia O'Keeffe: Exhibition of Oils and Pastels* (New York: An American Place, 1939), n.p.
19. See Rich, *Georgia O'Keeffe*, 21.
20. Stieglitz also exhibited O'Keeffe's work in New York that year.
21. See Janet Hollis, "Two American Women in Art—O'Keeffe and Cassatt," *Delphian Quarterly* 28 (April 1945): 10; and "Georgia O'Keeffe: 'Finally, A Woman on Paper,'" *U.S.A. An American Review* 2, no. 8 (1945): 95–96.
22. Museum of Modern Art Press Release.
23. See Barbara Buhler Lynes, "Georgia O'Keeffe and Feminism: A Problem of Position," in *The Expanding Discourse: Art History and Feminism*, eds. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 436–49.
24. See Gladys Oaks, "Radical Writer and Woman Artist Clash Uses—This is an Industrial Age, Michael Gold Tells Georgia O'Keefe [*sic*], Who Thinks He's All Mixed Up," *The World*, March 16, 1930, Women's Section 3. See also Lynes, "Georgia O'Keeffe and Feminism: A Problem of Position"; Brennan, *Painting Gender, Constructing Theory*; and Linda M. Grasso, *Equal under the Sky: Georgia O'Keeffe & Twentieth-Century Feminism* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2017).
25. See Giboire, *Lovingly Georgia*, 117.
26. See Henry McBride, "O'Keeffe at the Museum: An Exhibition that Confirms the Opinion Long Held by the Public," *The Sun* (New York), May 18, 1946, 9.
27. See James Johnson Sweeney to Mr. [Monroe] Wheeler, May 11, 1946; and Mr. [Monroe] Wheeler to Photography Department, May 13, 1946, Museum of Modern Art Exhibitions, 319.3, Museum of Modern Art Archives.
28. More than 40 years after Stieglitz's death, O'Keeffe helped organize an extensive exhibition of his "Woman on Paper" at the Museum of Modern Art in 1978, the first project she worked on before her death that brought Stieglitz's work and his reputation back into the spotlight. Another was the 1983 Stieglitz exhibition at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

29. See Anita Pollitzer, *Harper's Bazaar* 80, no. 2816 (August 1946): 169.

30. See Anita Pollitzer, "That's Georgia," *Saturday Review of Literature* 33, no. 44 (November 4, 1950): 41–43; and *A Woman on Paper* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), 48. Pollitzer had to have inserted the phrase before O'Keeffe gave the letters she had received from her to the Beinecke Library, because the pencil phrase is in the 1915 letter housed there. O'Keeffe gave a great deal of correspondence and other materials to the library in 1949, but detailed lists of what they included have not been discovered, thus making it impossible to establish a firm date for O'Keeffe's gift.

31. See *Art News* 45, no. 4 (June 1946): 51.

32. Ironically, none of the charcoal abstractions O'Keeffe completed in 1915 were in the exhibition, and it included only three works on paper. See Barbara Buhler Lynes, *Georgia O'Keeffe: Catalogue Raisonné* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), entries 64, 99, and 157.

Texas, 1946–1955

Amy Von Lintel, PhD, West Texas A&M University

Figure 1. Unknown photographer. *Georgia O'Keeffe in Texas* (detail), between 1912 and 1918. Georgia O'Keeffe Photographs, MS.37. Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. View on the O'Keeffe Museum website.

Georgia O'Keeffe proved to be the perfect artist for up-and-coming Texas art museums to stake their claims as both regional and national institutions. Though not a native Texan, O'Keeffe was considered "western" and "Texan" enough for these museums to celebrate her regional importance; she had lived and worked in New Mexico from 1929, and she taught art in Texas in the 1910s (figure 1) while producing a vast body of innovative work.[1] But O'Keeffe was more than just a "regional" artist. She was nationally renowned and the highest-earning woman artist in the United States for decades (and still is today[2]). By showing her art, the Texas museums could attest that they, too, were competing on a national stage. For example, while O'Keeffe's first major retrospectives occurred at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1943 and at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York in 1946, her third retrospective was held in 1953 at the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts (now the Dallas Museum of Art, or DMA)—a show that secured the DMA the acquisition of *Bare Tree Trunks with Snow* (1946, figure 2).[3]

Figure 2. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Bare Tree Trunks with Snow*, 1946. Oil on canvas, 29 1/2 x 39 1/2 in. Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas Art Association Purchase. View on the DMA website.

This Dallas institution, founded in 1903, began showing O'Keeffe's work by 1936, launching its grand reopening after renovations of its Fair Park location with a show of O'Keeffe's work in conjunction with the Texas Centennial.[4] And the DMA since then has held no less than 10 exhibitions dedicated to O'Keeffe.[5] But the DMA is just one of many Texas museums that have embraced and supported O'Keeffe's art.[6] To be sure, a distinctly reciprocal relationship developed between O'Keeffe and Texas museums in the mid-twentieth century. O'Keeffe received significant attention for her work in Texas, from collectors, museums, and museum visitors, all of whom helped to establish her as a blue-chip American artist. But these museums

also drew upon O'Keeffe's strong reputation to gain their own national recognition as major art institutions.

With the DMA, another Texas museum whose foundational moments became quickly intertwined with O'Keeffe's was the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth. Originally founded in 1961 as the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, the museum always declared a commitment to defining "western art" in terms beyond the typical cowboy images.[7] Though the work of Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell—arguably the quintessential cowboy artists—were at the heart of the private collecting practices of Amon G. Carter Sr., Ruth Carter Stevenson, Board of Trustees president and daughter of Carter, soon began lobbying for the museum to include modern and contemporary art with diverse connections to the West.[8] And in that vein, the museum wasted little time preparing an exhibition of 95 of O'Keeffe's works that opened in 1966. This exhibition illuminated the widest variety of O'Keeffe's subjects and styles, including flower pictures, Southwest landscapes, iconic Penitente crosses, animal bones, and nearly pure abstractions.[9] O'Keeffe also worked directly with the museum staff for years in preparation for this retrospective, and she attended the opening in person.[10]

The curator of this O'Keeffe retrospective and the first director of the Amon Carter, Mitchell A. Wilder, was not an O'Keeffe expert, but had a rich understanding of the wide scope of art produced and consumed in the American West.[11] Before being hired by the Fort Worth museum, Wilder had become a leading expert on Hispanic colonial art, especially religious folk art of the Southwest, and had served for years as director at the Colorado Springs Fine Art Center, which housed a large collection of Native American art. Wilder was therefore a bold but ideal choice to organize the Amon Carter's show of O'Keeffe's work in a way that was declaratively Texan, Western, and "American" at the same time.[12] His team of board members at the Amon Carter included other leading art collectors in Texas, such as John de Menil (later a founder of the Menil Collection in Houston; but also Rene d'Harnoncourt, director of MoMA; Richard F. Brown, the first director of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA); and Philip Johnson, the world-renowned architect who designed the Amon Carter building. Wilder also brought on James Johnson Sweeney to install O'Keeffe's works at the Amon Carter; a longtime friend of the artist, Sweeney had helped curate her retrospective at MoMA and had by then taken the position of director at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.[13] Clearly the new art museum in Fort Worth was thinking beyond Texas and beyond any limited "regional" scope.

The cover of the exhibition catalogue of O'Keeffe's Amon Carter retrospective was also an interesting choice—one that reveals the museum's desire to highlight the artist's latest forays into extreme abstraction, rather than feature her more recognizable subjects. The cover shows the stark design of *Winter Road I* (1963, figure 3), painted just three years before the opening of the exhibition, where a warm brown, calligraphic line dances in a curve across the space against an open and empty white ground. This minimalist image fits well within the art trends of the 1960s, when abstraction in the United States had shifted from abstract expressionist, rather busy "allover" compositions to more subdued geometric styles.[14] Featuring this painting on the catalogue cover—an abstract design based directly on the artist's view of a road curving around a mesa as seen out of her bedroom window in Abiquiú, New Mexico, which would not have been obvious to many viewers[15]—demonstrates the curators' wishes to declare O'Keeffe's continued modernity and contemporary relevance in a changing art world. And by 1967, the year after the O'Keeffe retrospective, Stevenson publicly declared the Amon Carter's new mission to expand their purview to focus on "American art" broadly conceived.[16] Though it took until 2010 for the museum to officially change its name to the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, this expanded mission was arguably catalyzed by the O'Keeffe show in 1966.[17]

Figure 3. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Winter Road I*, 1963. Oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches. National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation. View on the NGA website.

Figure 4. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Dark Mesa with Pink Sky*, 1930. Oil on canvas, 16 x 29 7/8 inches. Amon Carter Museum of American Art. View on the Amon Carter website.

Another intriguing fact about O'Keeffe's *Winter Road I* is that the Amon Carter described the painting in 1966 as newly part of its permanent collection, listing it as such in the exhibition catalogue, for instance.[18] Along with the major works that the museum acquired by the artist—*Dark Mesa with Pink Sky* (1930, figure 4), acquired in 1965; and *Black Patio Door* (1955, figure 5) and the three-part watercolor series *Light Coming on the Plains* (No. I, No. II, and No. III) (1917, figures 6–8), all acquired in 1966—*Winter Road I* would have been a major coup for the museum to have in its collection. However, the painting did not stay at the Amon Carter, and since 1995 has been in the National Gallery of Art's collection in Washington, DC.[19]

Figure 5. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Black Patio Door*, 1955. Oil on Canvas, 40 1/8 x 30 in. Amon Carter Museum of American Art. View on the Amon Carter website.

Figure 6. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Light Coming on the Plains No. I*, 1917. Watercolor on thin, beige, smooth wove paper and newsprint, 11 7/8 x 8 7/8 in. Amon Carter Museum of American Art. View on the Amon Carter website.

Figure 7. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Light Coming on the Plains No. II / No. II Light Coming on the Plains*, 1917. Watercolor on thin, beige, smooth wove paper and newsprint, 11 7/8 x 8 7/8 in. Amon Carter Museum of American Art. View on the Amon Carter website.

Figure 8. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Light Coming on the Plains No. III / No. III Light Coming on the Plains*, 1917. Watercolor on thin, beige, smooth wove paper and newsprint, 11 7/8 x 8 7/8 in. Amon Carter Museum of American Art. View on the Amon Carter website.

But even without the retention of this boldly abstract piece, the Amon Carter still solidified a premier collection of O'Keeffe works in the context of her 1966 retrospective. In particular, the Amon Carter was among the first institutions to recognize the artist's Texas period as both unique and significant. Acquiring the *Light Coming on the Plains* series brought some of the first major Texas works out from the artist's personal collection and into a public museum. The majority of O'Keeffe's Texas watercolors remained with the artist until her death, and are now in the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum in Santa Fe.[20] And the few Texas pieces by O'Keeffe that have now made their way back to the state—such as an *Evening Star* at the McNay, acquired in 1985 (figure 9), and the four pieces at the Amarillo Museum of Art, including a beautiful image of a train in the distance (figure 10), acquired in 1982—arrived decades after the Amon Carter acquired their Texas watercolor gems, around the death of O'Keeffe, who passed in 1986.[21]

Figure 9. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Evening Star No. V*, 1917. Watercolor on paper, 8 5/8 x 11 5/8 in. McNay Art Museum, Bequest of Helen Miller Jones. View on the McNay website.

Figure 10. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Train Coming in - Canyon, Texas / Train at Night in the Desert*, 1916. Watercolor on paper, 9 3/4 x 8 1/4 in. Amarillo Museum of Art, Purchased with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, Amarillo Area Foundation, AMoA Alliance, Fannie Weymouth, Santa Fe Industries Foundation and Mary Fain.

The McNay Museum in San Antonio has also long committed to showing and supporting O'Keeffe's work. The McNay opened its doors in 1954, and by 1958 was featuring several major works by the artist in a show titled *American Art in San Antonio*.[22] Two of these pieces, *From the Plains I / From the Plains* (1953, figure 11) and *Goat's Head* (1957, figure 12), were part of the private collection owned by San Antonio millionaire Tom Slick, an inventor who was the son of one of the most successful Texas oilman "wildcatters," whose tagline became "slick ideas."[23] According to his niece, who penned his biography, "whether [Tom] was pursuing the Yeti, or a cure for cancer, or a new oil recovery technology, or the best food in town, [he] was passionately awake and present, never numb."[24] That passion for discovery led Slick to invest in innovative modern art, including works by O'Keeffe. Both *From the Plains I* and *Goat's Head* were later donated to the McNay from the Slick Estate in 1973, and today remain in the museum's permanent collection.[25]

Figure 11. Georgia O'Keeffe. *From the Plains I / From the Plains*, 1953. Oil on canvas, 47 11/16 x 83 5/8 in. McNay Art Museum, Gift of the Estate of Tom Slick. View on the McNay website.

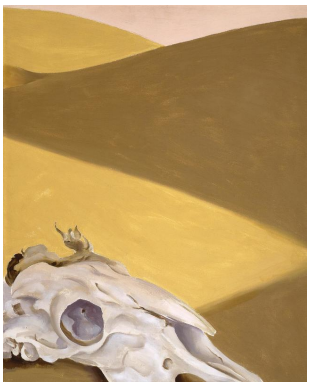


Figure 12. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Goat's Head*, 1957. Oil on canvas, 20 x 16 in. McNay Art Museum, Gift of the Estate of Tom Slick. View on the McNay website.

After its initial decade, the McNay continued to dedicate exhibitions to O'Keeffe's work, including one in 1960; a solo show of the artist's work in 1975, which resulted in the museum's acquisition of the stunning abstraction *Leaf Motif, no. 2* (1924, figure 13); and the important *O'Keeffe and*

Figure 13. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Leaf Motif, No. 2,* 1924. Oil on canvas, 35 x 18 in. McNay Art Museum, Mary and Sylvan Lang Collection. View on the McNay website.

Texas in 1998, for which leading O'Keeffe scholar Sharyn Udall conducted significant research on the artist's Texas years and authored an extensive catalogue.[26] Unfortunately, this show included more than two dozen of the "Canyon Suite" watercolor series, now shown to be fakes.[27] The series had been "discovered" in the town of Canyon just after the death of O'Keeffe, had been bought and sold on the market, and wound up in the collection of Crosby Kemper of Kansas City, who loaned it to the McNay for the 1998 show. Only after the 1999 catalogue raisonné of O'Keeffe's work was published did the inauthenticity of the watercolors become public, and Kemper demanded a refund from his dealer on his multimillion-dollar purchase of the works.[28] This scandal, however, did not stop the McNay from continuing to feature exhibitions of the artist's work, and in 2022 the museum hosted *Georgia O'Keeffe and American Modernism*.[29]

Perhaps one of the collectors most critical to O'Keeffe's connection to Texas is Anne Marion, the Fort Worth–born heiress of an oil and ranching fortune. Marion became a major benefactor of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth in the early 1980s, and then founded the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum in Santa Fe in 1997—the first U.S. museum dedicated to a single woman artist.[30] But even as early as the 1966 retrospective at the Amon Carter, Marion was loaning O'Keeffe's art from her private collection to be seen by a Texas public. For instance, she loaned *Pelvis Series, Red with Yellow* (1945, figure 14) to the Fort Worth museum before later donating it to the O'Keeffe Museum. In other words, Marion was utterly instigative in supporting the Texan legacy of O'Keeffe.

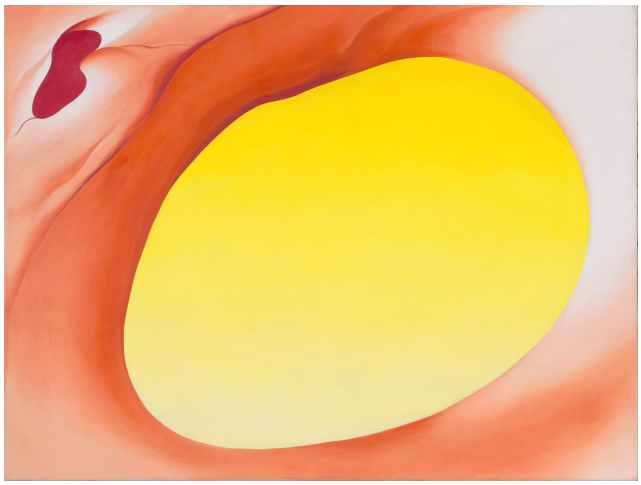


Figure 14. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Pelvis Series, Red with Yellow*, 1945. Oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in. Extended Loan, Private Collection.

According to the Dallas Museum of Art website, "Georgia O'Keeffe was truly an artist of this region, but moreover she was a true American icon and a sure favorite with the public." This binary of regional and national, Texan and American, was at the heart of O'Keeffe's Texas exhibitions. Not only was the artist's reputation significantly enhanced by the attention she received in Texas, but the museums and collectors of Texas have gained national clout in their choice to put O'Keeffe's art on display again and again.

NOTES

Note on titles of works: Institutional titles and dates for O'Keeffe's works sometimes vary from first titles and dates established by *Georgia O'Keeffe: Catalogue Raisonné* (1999), whose entries explain changes. Here institutional titles and dates are listed first followed by those in the Catalogue Raisonné.

1. Her life and work in New Mexico has been extensively documented. A good place to start is Barbara Buhler Lynes and Agapita Judy Lopez, *Georgia O'Keeffe and Her Houses: Ghost Ranch and Abiquiu* (New York: Abrams; Santa Fe, NM: The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, 2012). On her time in Texas, see especially Amy Von Lintel, *Georgia O'Keeffe's Wartime Texas Letters* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2020); and Georgia O'Keeffe and Amy Von Lintel (text author), *Georgia O'Keeffe Watercolors, 1916-1918* (Santa Fe, NM: Radius Books and the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, 2016).

2. See Eileen Kinsella, "O'Keeffe Painting Sells for $44 Million at Sotheby's, Sets Record for Work by Female Artist," *Artnet,* November 20, 2014, https://news.artnet.com/market/okeeffe-painting-sells-for-44-million-at-sothebys-sets-record-for-work-by-female-artist-176413.

3. The name changed to the Dallas Museum of Art in 1984. The majority of the 29 paintings in this 1953 exhibition were lent to the Dallas museum by Edith Halpert's Downtown Gallery in New York City, and only included works from 1924 to 1950. In other words, there were no works from her Texas years. Moreover, the biographical summary given in the exhibition catalogue mentioned O'Keeffe's work as a "high school teacher" in Amarillo but said nothing about her time teaching at West Texas State Normal College (now West Texas A&M University) in Canyon from 1916 to 1918, when she produced dozens of paintings and drawings. Instead, it says she "came to New York in 1915 and lived there until 1949," misrepresenting how

nomadic she actually was in these years. See *An Exhibition of Paintings by Georgia O'Keeffe,* online at the "The Portal to Texas History" as part of the DMA exhibition records: https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth183370/m1/3/.

4. On the Art Institute of Chicago exhibition, see the digitized version of the catalogue by Daniel Catton Rich: https://www.artic.edu/exhibitions/7588/retrospective-exhibition-of-paintings-by-georgia-o-keeffe. Though no works from Texas were included in the Chicago exhibition, the catalogue includes a section on O'Keeffe's time in and inspiration from Texas. The MoMA retrospective did not include a catalogue publication, and likewise no Texas works were included. See https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2851.

   On the history of the DMA, see the museum website: https://dma.org/about/museum-history. According to the museum, the Centennial Exposition Art Exhibition drew more than 154,000 visitors to the new building from June 6 to November 26, 1936—visitors who would have viewed O'Keeffe's works on display there.

5. The exhibitions at the DMA that featured O'Keeffe included, in addition to the 1936 and 1953 shows, a group show on religious art in 1958; *Southwestern Art: A Sampling of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture,* 1960; *Dallas Collects,* 1963; *Georgia O'Keeffe, 1887-1986*, 1988, which traveled to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, the Art Institute of Chicago, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; and *Georgia O'Keeffe: The Poetry of Things,* organized by the DMA and the Phillips Collection in Washington, DC, in 1999. The 1988 retrospective had a record 205,904 visitors, with 24,000 attending the first week alone.

6. Texas museums not discussed in this essay that also have works by O'Keeffe include the Museum of Texas Tech University, which has *Red Hills, Series II-35* (1938); the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in Canyon, which has *Red Landscape* (1917); and the Stark Museum of Orange, which has *Gerald's Tree II* (1937). The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, has three of O'Keeffe's paintings, all acquired after 1970.

7. The Amon Carter's early mission statement is worth quoting in full: "The Amon Carter Museum of Western Art was established under the will of the late Amon G. Carter for the study and documentation of westering North America. The program of the Museum is expressed in publications, exhibitions, and permanent collections related to the many aspects of American culture, both historic and contemporary, which find their identification as Western." See Mitchell A. Wilder, ed., *Georgia O'Keeffe: An Exhibition of the Work of the Artist from 1915 to 1966* (Fort Worth, TX: Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, 1966), copyright page.

8. See the Amon Carter Museum website: https://www.cartermuseum.org/about/our-story.

9. The catalogue presented a unique but highly effective method of showing this range of production. The text drew from exhibition reviews and writeups across the career of O'Keeffe, beginning with Marsden Hartley's catalogue foreword in 1935 and ending with Sam Hunter's catalogue foreword for a show at Brandeis University in 1963. These previously published statements about O'Keeffe's work highlight everything from her earliest abstractions, to her New York City pictures, to her bone and cross series, to her nature paintings. Though many of them are very stereotypical in their gendered assessment of O'Keeffe and her work, they are also highly illuminating for the ongoing reception of her abstract style, including the 1963 essay by Hunter that argues for O'Keeffe's unique "experiential" mode of abstraction that places her squarely in minimalist and post-modern trends.

10. Wilder, *Georgia O'Keeffe,* foreword.

11. Wilder was the director of the Amon Carter Museum in 1966, but he was largely responsible for the organization of the exhibition. Sweeney "installed the exhibition" at the request of O'Keeffe. See Wilder, *Georgia O'Keeffe,* foreword. The exhibition also traveled to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

12. On Wilder's awareness of the particularly layered and complicated role of a curator in a western U.S. museum like the Amon Carter, see Mitchell A. Wilder, "Art in the Southwest," *The Atlantic,* March 1951, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1951/03/art-in-the-southwest/639730/. He particularly highlighted the importance and growth of Texas museums.

13. On O'Keeffe's friendship with Sweeney, see, for instance, Georgia O'Keeffe to Ted Reid, postmarked May 10, 1946, Ted Reid-Georgia O'Keeffe Archive, Cornette Library, West Texas A&M University. The letter describes a party that Sweeney was throwing O'Keeffe at his home following the opening of her retrospective at MoMA. She refers to "my friends the Sweeneys."

14. For a good definition of abstract expressionism, see the MoMA website: https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/abstract-expressionism/.

15. On this view and its relationship to the painting, see the polaroid taken by O'Keeffe (https://collections.okeeffemuseum.org/object/6015/) as well as Lynes and Lopez, *O'Keeffe and Her Houses,* 242–47. O'Keeffe wrote: "Two walls of my room in the Abiquiu house are glass and from one window I see the road toward Española, Santa Fe, and the world. The road fascinates me with its ups and downs and finally its wide sweep as it speeds toward the wall of my hilltop to go past me."

16. See the Amon Carter Museum website: https://www.cartermuseum.org/about/our-story.

17. The museum dropped the "of Western Art" designation in its title in 1977 and added "of American Art" in 2010. See https://www.cartermuseum.org/about/our-story.

18. Wilder, *Georgia O'Keeffe,* copyright page, 30.

19. See https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.91449.html. The reasons why the painting did not remain at the Amon Carter Museum are still unclear, per email correspondence between the author and Jonathan Frembling on August 30, 2022.

20. See Barbara Buhler Lynes and Russell Bowman, *O'Keeffe's O'Keeffes: The Artist's Collection* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2001).

21. Amarillo as a city has long had its eye on O'Keeffe as part of their artistic claims to fame, given that the artist lived and taught school there between 1912 and 1914. In 1968, the Junior League of Amarillo organized an exhibition of the artist's work held at the Amarillo Civic Center, and then the Amarillo Art Center (now Amarillo Museum of Art, a name change that occurred in 1994) organized a group show in 1985. See Al Kochka et al., *Georgia O'Keeffe and Her Contemporaries* (Amarillo, TX: Amarillo Art Center, 1985). This show included 24 of O'Keeffe's works, including early abstractions, Texas watercolors, as well as flower, shell, landscape, and bone paintings. Later acquisitions of O'Keeffe's work at the Amon Carter include *Red Cannas* (1927) in 1986; *Series I, No. 1* (1918) in 1995; and *White Birch* (1925) in 1997. See https://www.cartermuseum.org/collection/red-cannas-198611, https://www.cartermuseum.org/collection/series-i-no-i-19958, and https://www.cartermuseum.org/collection/white-birch-19977a. *White Birch* was featured in the 1966 retrospective at the Amon Carter, on loan from the private collection of Mr. and Mrs. J. Lee Johnson III of Fort Worth. See Wilder, *Georgia O'Keeffe,* 28.

22. On the history of the McNay, see the museum website: https://www.mcnayart.org/our-mission/.

23. In Texas, a "wildcatter" is someone who drills for oil in places not known to have deposits, in other words, high-risk, exploratory drilling.

24. Elaine Wolff, "In Search of Tom Slick, Art Collector," *San Antonio Current,* June 17, 2009, https://www.sacurrent.com/arts/in-search-of-tom-slick-art-collector-2286290. This article was published in the context of an exhibition on the Slick art collection at the McNay. See also Catherine Nixon Cooke, *Tom Slick: Mystery Hunter* (n.p.: Paraview, 2005); *In Search of Tom Slick: Explorer and Visionary,* rev. ed. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2020); and Loren Coleman, *Tom Slick: True Life Encounters in Cryptozoology* (Fresno, CA: Craven, 2002); as well as the biographical statement on Slick featured on the Christie's auction house webpage on O'Keeffe's *Sun Water Maine* pastel from 1922, which was in Slick's collection: https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5631570.

25. *From the Plains I* was also included in the 1966 retrospective at the Amon Carter.

26. Sharyn Udall, *O'Keeffe and Texas* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998). This show also led to the McNay's acquisition of O'Keeffe's *Pink and Yellow Hollyhawks* (1952). See https://collection.mcnayart.org/objects/6199/pink-and-yellow-hollyhocks.

27. The scandal of the "Canyon Suite" fakes was extensively covered in the press in the late 1990s and early 2000s. See, for instance, Jo Ann Lewis, "The Curious Case of the Spurious O'Keeffes," *Washington Post,* August 6, 2000; Jo Ann Lewis, "The Art that Went from Boon to Bust," *Washington Post,* December 3, 1999, C1; and Gretchen Reynolds, "If It's Not an O'Keeffe, Exactly What Is It?," *New York Times,* March 7, 2000. For more of an assessment of the crime and its context in Canyon, Texas, see Amy Von Lintel, "A Famous Art Fraud Demystified," *Panhandle Art Stories* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, forthcoming).

28. Barbara Buhler Lynes, *Georgia O'Keeffe: Catalogue Raisonné* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1999). Lynes and National Gallery Paper Conservator, Judy Walsh discovered that some of the "Canyon Suite" works were produced after O'Keeffe was teaching at West Texas State Normal College, and none was on the type of paper O'Keeffe used for more than 95% of the watercolor paintings she produced during her tenure there.

29. See https://www.mcnayart.org/exhibition/okeeffe-and-american-modernism/.

30. Anne Burnett Windfohr Marion was born in 1938. Her father Samuel Burk Burnett was the founder of 6666 Ranch in King County and became one of the wealthiest men in Texas. On Marion, see Tessa Solomon, "Anne Marion, Founder of the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum in New Mexico, Has Died at 81," *ArtNews,* February 13, 2020, https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/anne-marion-died-at-81-1202677880/; and Katharine Q. Seelye, "Anne Marion, Texas Rancher, Heiress and Arts Patron, Dies at 81," *New York Times,* February 25, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/25/us/anne-marion-dead.html.

About This Publication

Exhibiting O'Keeffe: The Making of an American Modernist accompanies the launch of a searchable database of Georgia O'Keeffe's Historic Exhibitions available at https://collections.okeeffemuseum.org/exhibition/. This is the Museum's first digital publication where references are integrated with published collection information.

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The theme and content of this publication were conceived and organized by Liz Neely, curator of digital experience, and Ariel Plotek, curator of fine art, with input from other members of the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum's Collections and Interpretation division, including Jennifer Foley, deputy director for collections and engagement, and Liz Ehrnst, head of research collections and services. Essay authors determined the themes for their articles. Liz O'Brien, digital experience and rights manager, secured the images and rights licensing. Shauna Skalitzky served as the freelance editor. Barbara Buhler Lynes provided her expertise throughout the project. Design for Context provided technical and back-end work while Liz Neely produced and designed the publication.

Exhibiting O'Keeffe: The Making of an American Modernist is available in English and Spanish online and in multiple formats for download including PDF and EPUB.

Note on titles of works: Institutional titles and dates for O'Keeffe's works sometimes vary from first titles and dates established by *Georgia O'Keeffe: Catalogue Raisonné* (1999), whose entries explain changes. Here institutional titles and dates are listed first followed by those in the Catalogue Raisonné.

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