

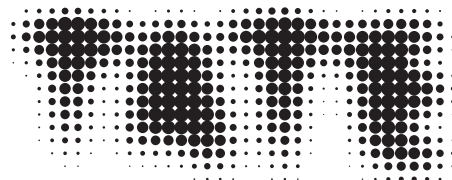
GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

6 July – 30 October 2016

Large Print Guide



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Room 1

INTRODUCTION

Georgia O'Keeffe (1887–1986) is widely recognised as a foundational figure within the history of modernism in the United States, and during her lifetime became an American icon. Her career spanned more than seven decades and this exhibition encompasses her most productive years, from the 1910s to the 1960s. It aims to dispel the clichés that persist about O'Keeffe's painting, emphasising instead the pioneering nature and breadth of her career.

O'Keeffe was born in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, the daughter of Irish and Dutch-Hungarian immigrants, and died in Santa Fe, New Mexico, at the age of 98. She decided to be an artist before she was 12 years old. She was the most prominent female artist in the avant-garde circle around the photographer and gallerist Alfred Stieglitz (1864–1946), later O'Keeffe's husband. The first showing of her work was at Stieglitz's New York gallery '291' in 1916, now 100 years ago. Tate Modern's exhibition therefore marks a century of O'Keeffe.

THE EARLY YEARS AND '291'

'I have things in my head that are not like what anyone has taught me – shapes and ideas so near to me ... I decided to start anew – to strip away what I had been taught... I began with charcoal and paper and decided not to use any other colour until it was impossible to do what I wanted to do in black and white.'

O'Keeffe's earliest mature works were abstractions in charcoal, made while she was working as an art teacher in Virginia and Texas. These drawings, made on a comparatively large scale, were exhibited by Alfred Stieglitz at '291' (evoked by this room) in O'Keeffe's debut in 1916 and in her first solo exhibition in 1917. O'Keeffe had sent her drawings to Anita Pollitzer, a friend from her student days, who first showed them to Stieglitz. He exclaimed: 'finally a woman on paper'.

This early period also reveals O'Keeffe to be a gifted colourist, skilled in watercolour. Strikingly vivid paintings of the mountain landscapes of Virginia and plains of Texas demonstrate her skilful handling of colour. Her early oil paintings also took their inspiration from the landscape and show an interest in synaesthesia, the stimulation of one sense by another, for example translating sounds such as cattle lowing into abstract forms.

WORK LABELS

Clockwise from right of 'Introduction' wall text

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Georgia O'Keeffe with watercolor paint box

1918

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

George Eastman Museum, purchase and gift of Georgia O'Keeffe.

X60723

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

O'Keeffe Exhibition at 291, Interior Gallery View

1917

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe

Foundation (2006.06.1129) X61768, X61767, X61766

Paul Strand 1890–1976

Abstraction, Porch Shadows, Twin Lakes, Connecticut

Abstraction, Bowls, Twin Lakes, Connecticut

1916, printed 1917

Photograph, heliogravure print on paper

Paul Strand's photography was an early inspiration for O'Keeffe after she saw it at '291' and in Stieglitz's journal *Camera Work*, and these photographs were published in the June 1917 edition. Strand's photographic approach – which flattened still life compositions of everyday objects into abstract shapes – had an enduring impact on her way of seeing, acknowledged in a letter to the photographer following their first meeting in New York in 1917: 'I believe I've been looking at things and seeing them as I thought you might photograph them ... making Strand photographs for myself in my head.'

Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Gift of Minda de Gunzburg, 1981.

X62204, X62206

Untitled (Figure)

c.1916/7

Graphite on paper

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe

Foundation (2006.05.066). X60697

Untitled (Still-Life)

c.1916/7

Ink on paper

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation (2006.05.063) X60696

Blue Hill No. II

1916

Watercolour on paper

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. John B. Chewning (2002.01.001). X57765

Pink and Blue Mountain

1916

Watercolour on paper

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Burnett Foundation and The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation (1997.04.015). X57764

No. 15 Special

1916–17

Charcoal on paper

O'Keeffe made this drawing in Texas. She recalled: 'Saturdays, right after breakfast, we would drive the twenty miles to the Palo Duro Canyon. It was colourful – like a small Grand Canyon, but most of it only a mile wide. It was a place few people went unless they had cattle they hoped had found shelter there in bad weather... The only paths were narrow, winding cow paths... It was usually very dry, and it was a lone place. Often as we were leaving we would see a long line of cattle like black lace against the sunset sky.'

Philadelphia Museum of Art: 125th Anniversary Acquisition. Purchased with the gift (by exchange) of Dr. and Mrs. Paul Todd Makler, with funds contributed by Mr and Mrs John J. F. Sherrerd, the Alice Newton Osborn Fund, the Lola Downin Peck Fund, and gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation, 1997 (1997-39-1). X57449

Sunrise

1916

Watercolour on paper

Collection of Barney A. Ebsworth. X59057

Black Lines

1919

Charcoal on paper

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, museum purchase, 1959.22. X57760

Red and Orange Streak

1919

Oil paint on canvas

Painted from memory following her move to New York City, Red and Orange Streak demonstrates the lingering effect of the Texan plains, which O'Keeffe described as 'land like the ocean'. Furthering her interest in synaesthesia and chromesthesia – a type of synaesthesia where sounds invoke specific colours – it conveys an aural experience of the landscape. O'Keeffe later said, 'The cattle in the pens lowing for their calves day and night was a sound that has always haunted me... It was loud and raw under the stars in that wide empty country'.

Philadelphia Museum of Art: Bequest of Georgia O'Keeffe for the Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1987 (1987-70-3). X57453



No. 17 – Special

1919

Charcoal on paper

Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Burnett Foundation and
The Georgia O’Keeffe Foundation (1997.05.015). X57762

Special No. 9

1915

Charcoal on paper

The Menil Collection, Houston. X57755



No. 14 Special

1916

Charcoal on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection,
Gift of The Georgia O’Keeffe Foundation, 1992.89.9. X57759

Abstraction

1916

Charcoal and wash on paper

Greenville County Museum of Art, Museum purchase with funds donated by The Museum Association, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Howard Suitt, Jr., Rich's Department Store; and Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Abbe. X59663

Abstraction

1916, cast 1979–80

Lacquered bronze, Number 6 in an edition of 10

This bronze is a cast from a plaster that was one of very few sculptures that O'Keeffe made and the only one that dates from her early years. Made following the death of her mother in 1916, it depicts a shrouded figure.

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation (2006.05.021) X57785

No. 12 Special

1916

Charcoal on paper

This charcoal drawing is from O'Keeffe's first notable group of works and is one of her earliest abstractions. Though abstract, these early works often relate to experiences, and to her interest in representing emotions visually. But O'Keeffe explained, 'sometimes these drawings were made long after the situations they come from'. In later years, she described this particular drawing as representing, 'Maybe a kiss...'. It was displayed in her 1917 solo exhibition at '291' alongside the original plaster version of the sculpture nearby, as shown in Stieglitz's photograph also in this room.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation, 1995. X57756

Early No. 2

1915

Charcoal on paper

The Menil Collection, Houston, Gift of the Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation, 1995

X57754

Room 2

ABSTRACTION AND THE SENSES

'I paint because colour is a significant language to me.'

After moving from Texas to New York in 1918, O'Keeffe turned with greater assurance to abstraction and to oil paint as a medium. Focusing on paintings from 1918 until 1930, this room shows the importance of abstraction in O'Keeffe's work and how she took inspiration from sensory stimulation. Here, her paintings investigate the relationship of form to music, colour and composition, showing her understanding of synaesthesia and chromesthesia, or as she said 'the idea that music could be translated into something for the eye'. We also see her early flower-abstractions.

The critical response emphasised O'Keeffe's identity as a woman artist and attributed essential feminine qualities to her work, often hinting heavily at erotic content. Stieglitz was a major source for such attitudes and supported them by introducing psychoanalytic interpretations of her paintings. Frustrated with this limited view, O'Keeffe began to transform her style and this room includes several less widely-known hard-edged or cubist-inspired abstractions.

'When people read erotic symbols into my paintings, they're really talking about their own affairs.'

WORK LABELS

Clockwise from right of wall text

Blue and Green Music

1919/21

Oil paint on canvas

The Art Institute of Chicago; Alfred Stieglitz Collection, gift of Georgia O'Keeffe, 1969.835. X57427



Wassily Kandinsky 1866–1944

The Art of Spiritual Harmony

1914

Book, Translated by Michael Sadler,

Publisher: Constable and Company Limited London

O’Keeffe was introduced to the writing of Russian artist Kandinsky by her teacher Alon Bement (1876–1954). The text discusses synaesthesia and the relation between music and painting. Bement also acquainted O’Keeffe with the then-revolutionary thinking of Arthur Wesley Dow (1857–1922), the Head of the Art Department at Teachers College, New York City, where Bement also taught and O’Keeffe enrolled in 1914. Dow’s book *Composition* (1899), widely used in art schools in the early 20th century, was another decisive influence on O’Keeffe – she often repeated his phrase that the essence of composition was to ‘fill a space in a beautiful way’.

Tate Library and Archive. Z06138

Music – Pink and Blue No. I

1918

Oil paint on canvas

This painting conveys O'Keeffe's enthusiasm for music and its potential for the creation of images. The abstract composition reflects sound waves, the undulating forms evoking the notes of a musical composition. The link between music and painting reveals the influence of artist Wassily Kandinsky's writing on O'Keeffe's art. O'Keeffe was an accomplished musician but gave it up to pursue a career as an artist.

In 1919, Stieglitz photographed O'Keeffe's sculpture of a shrouded woman, made following the death of her mother (and displayed in Room 1) in front of this painting. His series, titled Interpretation, emphasised Stieglitz's Freudian reading, attributing bodily and sexual qualities to O'Keeffe's work.

Collection of Barney A. Ebsworth. Partial and Promised gift to Seattle Art Museum. X57784

Abstraction – Alexius

1928

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection, Switzerland. X57777

Abstraction White Rose

1927

Oil paint on canvas

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Burnett Foundation and The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation (1997.04.002). X57778



Abstraction Blue

1927

Oil paint on canvas

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the Helen Acheson Bequest, 1979. X57414

Grey Lines with Black, Blue and Yellow

c.1923

Oil paint on canvas

The abstract forms and colour of this painting are probably inspired by music. As a student O'Keeffe observed art teacher Alon Bement playing music to his class, which impressed her as a source of visual inspiration. This work has also become a focus of bodily or sexualised readings that O'Keeffe denied. In 1973, feminist artists Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro likened it to female genitalia, with the feminist critic Linda Nochlin making similar comparisons. This seems to relate more to their project to establish a 'feminine iconography' than O'Keeffe's intentions.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Museum purchase with funds provided by the Agnes Cullen Arnold Endowment Fund.

X57471



Abstraction

1926

Oil paint on canvas

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Purchase, with funds from Georgia O'Keeffe and by exchange, 58.43. X57424

New York – Night (Madison Avenue)

1926

Oil paint on canvas

Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, Florida. Gift of Charles C. and Margaret Stevenson Henderson in memory of Hunt Henderson, 1971.31. X57780

Black, White and Blue

1930

Oil paint on canvas

Collection of Barney A. Ebsworth. Partial and Promised gift to National Gallery of Art, Washington. X60141

Line and Curve

1927

Oil paint on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection, Bequest of Georgia O'Keeffe, 1987.58.6. X57441

Room 3

O'KEEFFE, STIEGLITZ AND THEIR CIRCLE

'I have been much photographed... I am at present prejudiced in favour of photography.'

This room takes a closer look at O'Keeffe's creative and personal partnership with Alfred Stieglitz and the circle of artists, writers and cultural figures that congregated around him and the couple. Many of their personal acquaintances are pictured in Stieglitz's photographs, figures who impacted on their professional and private lives. This was the generation of the 'Progressive Era', men and women who came of age in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and who embodied an optimistic cultural nationalism, wanting to create a modern America.

Two major series of Stieglitz's work are displayed here: his extended portrait of O'Keeffe, in which we can see her as both muse and collaborator, and his sky photographs titled *Equivalents*, several of which were also made as portraits of Georgia, linking the two series. Their personal and aesthetic exchange is continued in the painting **A Celebration** 1924, an image of clouds made by O'Keeffe the year they married. Other works by O'Keeffe can also be considered indirect portraits of Stieglitz.

WORK LABELS

Clockwise from right of wall text

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Portrait of Georgia, No. 1

1923

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

George Eastman Museum, purchase and gift of Georgia O'Keeffe. X60726

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Portrait of Georgia, No. 3, Songs of the Sky

1923

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Ackland Fund, 80.32.1. X60742

A Celebration

1924

Oil paint on canvas

Stieglitz is perhaps most celebrated for the extended series of cloud photographs he produced between the early 1920s and the late 1930s. Known as **Equivalents**, they made use of everyday subjects to demonstrate the technical and aesthetic value of photography, as well as showing Stieglitz's own skill as a photographer. In **A Celebration**, O'Keeffe adopts the same motif in the year of their marriage, revealing the interconnectedness of the couple's lives and work. Undoubtedly a celebration of their relationship, it also demonstrates her keen interest in exploring the dynamic arrangement and colours of cloud formations.

Seattle Art Museum. Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation
94.89. X59448



Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Equivalent

1925–34

Equivalent

1925

Equivalent

1926

Equivalent

1927

Equivalent

1927

Equivalent

1929

Equivalent

1930

7 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum. X61005

Victoria and Albert Museum. Gift of the Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation. X61006

Victoria and Albert Museum. X61007

Victoria and Albert Museum. Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation. X61010, X61011

Victoria and Albert Museum. X61013

Victoria and Albert Museum. Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation. X61014

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Equivalent

1925

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

George Eastman Museum, purchase and gift of Georgia O'Keeffe. X60733, X60727

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Lake George

1922/3

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1949.3.916. X60313

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Ida and Georgia O’Keeffe

1924

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection,
1980.70.198. X60316

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Claudia O’Keeffe

1922

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection,
1949.3.518. X60311

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Rebecca Salsbury Strand

1922

Photograph, palladium print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection,
1949.3.543. X60312

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

John Marin

1921/2

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection,
1949.3.510. X60310

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Paul Rosenfeld

1920

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection,
1949.3.446. X60748

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Portrait of Marsden Hartley

1913–5

Photograph, platinum print on paper

The Collection of the Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum at the
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Gift of Ione and Hudson
D. Walker, 1975. X60722

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Dorothy Norman

1932

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

George Eastman Museum, purchase and gift of Georgia O'Keeffe. X60734

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Georgia O'Keeffe – Breasts

1919

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1980.70.109. X60303

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Georgia O'Keeffe – Torso

1918/19

Photograph, platinum print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1980.70.33. X60299

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Georgia O'Keeffe – Torso

1918–9

Photograph, platinum print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum. Gift of the Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation. X12683

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Georgia O'Keeffe – Torso

1918

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1980.70.36. X60297

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Georgia O'Keeffe – Hands

1919, printed 1920s/30s

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. X60741

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Georgia O'Keeffe

1920

Photograph, platinum print on paper

George Eastman Museum, purchase and gift of Georgia O'Keeffe. X60724

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Georgia O'Keeffe

1918, printed 1924/37

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1980.70.19. X60291

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Georgia O'Keeffe

1918

Photograph, palladium print on paper

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. X60740

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Georgia O’Keeffe

1918, printed 1930s

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection,
1980.70.52. X60300

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Georgia O’Keeffe

1918, printed 1920s

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection,
1980.70.76. X60302

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Georgia O’Keeffe

1918

Photograph, platinum print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection,
1980.70.12. X60290



Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Georgia O'Keeffe at 291

1917

Photograph, platinum print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection,
1980.70.1. X60289

Lake George, Coat and Red

1919

Oil paint on canvas

In 1912, Stieglitz published two 'word portraits' by the writer Gertrude Stein in **Camera Work**, shown nearby, while photographers and artists also made 'object-portraits'. The two works by O'Keeffe shown here could be viewed as indirect or object-portraits of Stieglitz. The abstracted coat with a vivid lining is evocative of Stieglitz's trademark red-lined black cloak. Similarly, the still life brings together two objects associated with modern art shown by Stieglitz at his gallery '291': African art and apples, the latter linked to the French painter Paul Cézanne as well as to American identity.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation, 1995. X57413

Mask with Golden Apple

1923

Oil paint on canvas

Courtesy Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville,
Arkansas. X59085

VITRINE LABELS

Waldo Frank 1889–1967

Salvos: an Informal Book about Books and Plays

1924

Book, New York: Boni and Liveright

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. X63626

Marsden Hartley 1877–1943

**Adventures in the Arts: Informal Chapters on Painters,
Vaudeville and Poets**

1921

Book, New York: Boni and Liveright

Inscribed: 'My Dear O'Keefe [sic] -- / That you have ridden way beyond the references in these pages is your own perfect discovery. I hope I may be able to copy certain of your characteristics in my own work, or at least produce a similar precision of sensation [?]. You know you have in me one of your rarest admirers. I know nothing like you in modern fields of expression. It is no small thing to stand for oneself. You do it. / Cordially / Marsden Hartley.'

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. X63630

Search-Light (pseudonym of Waldo Frank) 1889–1967

Time Exposures by Search-Light

1926

Book, New York: Boni & Liveright

Z06457

E.M. Benson (life dates not known)

John Marin: the Man and His Work

1935

Book, Washington: American Federation of Arts

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. X63632

Search-Light (pseudonym of Waldo Frank) 1889–1967

Time Exposures by Search-Light

1926

Book, New York: Boni & Liveright

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. X63629

Paul Rosenfeld 1890–1946

Port of New York: Essays on Fourteen American Moderns

1924

Book, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co.

Z06456

Paul Rosenfeld 1890–1946

Port of New York: Essays on Fourteen American Moderns

1924

Book, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co.

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. X63631

Waldo Frank 1895–1990

Lewis Mumford 1889–1967

Dorothy Norman 1905–1997

Paul Rosenfeld 1890–1946

Harold Rugg (life dates not known)

America and Alfred Stieglitz: a Collective Portrait

1934

Book, New York: Literary Guild

Z06464

Lewis Mumford 1889–1967

Waldo Frank 1895–1990

Dorothy Norman 1905–1997

Paul Rosenfeld 1890–1946

Harold Rugg (life dates not known)

America and Alfred Stieglitz: a Collective Portrait

1934

Book, New York: Literary Guild

O'Keeffe associated with some of America's most important modernist figures. She was one of few woman artists who came to prominence in the largely masculine art world of the time. The circle around O'Keeffe and Stieglitz included the painters Marsden Hartley, John Marin, Charles Demuth and Arthur Dove, the photographer Paul Strand, and the critic Paul Rosenfeld. Strand's wife, Rebecca, was also a travel companion. O'Keeffe had three sisters – in one photograph she smiles broadly with Ida, also an artist – but was closest to the youngest, Claudia, whom she cared for after the death of their mother in 1916.

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. X63633

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Camera Work, Special Issue, MDCCCCXII

Aug–12

Periodical, photogravure on paper

Wilson Centre for Photography. X63451

D.H. Lawrence 1885–1930

Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays

1925

Book, Philadelphia: The Centaur Press

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. X63634

Paul Rosenfeld 1890–1946

Port of New York: Essays on Fourteen American Moderns

1924

Book, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co.

Z06456

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Camera Work, No. 48

Oct–16

Periodical, photogravure on paper

Wilson Centre for Photography. X63452

O'Keeffe's debut at '291', in a show with two other artists, is recorded in the October 1916 issue of **Camera Work** through a short unsigned text by Stieglitz. Here, he notes the 'psycho-analytical' of her drawings, a short critique commenting on the 'feminine forms' of her work and a letter from a visitor to the gallery commenting on their startling 'frankness'. Following O'Keeffe's solo exhibition the following year, another review was published in **Camera Work** which commented on her work as 'mystic and musical' and 'beyond the grasp of reason'. The views summarise the early reactions to O'Keeffe's work and how they may have been influenced by Stieglitz.

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Camera Work, No. 49/50

Jun–17

Periodical, photogravure on paper

Wilson Centre for Photography. X63453

Room 4

NEW YORK CITYSCAPES

When O'Keeffe first expressed an intention to paint New York, she said, 'Of course, I was told it was an impossible idea – even the men hadn't done too well with it'. She made her first painting of the city in 1925, continuing with the same subject for the rest of the decade. O'Keeffe's paintings show views from street level, the tall buildings providing an urban parallel to her early depictions of canyons in Texas and later in New Mexico. O'Keeffe and Stieglitz lived on the 30th floor of a skyscraper, and she delighted in the vantage point it afforded of the city beneath.

'I know it is unusual for an artist to want to work way up near the roof of a big hotel, in the heart of a roaring city, but I think that's just what the artist of today needs for stimulus... Today the city is something bigger, grander, more complex than ever before in history.'

O'Keeffe stopped painting New York not long after the Wall Street Crash of 1929, the year she made her first prolonged visit to New Mexico. With the onset of the Great Depression, the city's utopian spirit vanished, and it no longer held her attention.

WORK LABELS

Clockwise from right of wall text

John Marin 1870–1953

Downtown, New York

1923

Watercolour on paper

Marin was a key member of the Stieglitz circle, known for his watercolours. O'Keeffe particularly admired his paintings of New York skyscrapers, yet they both shared a love of the more rural New England coastline. Intersecting forms give this watercolour a sense of the hectic interconnectedness of New York. Lines sweep up beyond the edge of the painting, echoing the rapid construction of the skyscrapers they depict. The zig-zag form of a fire escape on the lower right is another detail of Manhattan's urban environment that still seems emblematic of the city.

Tate. Purchased out of a sum of money made available from the Bruern Foundation 1956. T00080

Untitled (New York)

c.1925–30

Charcoal on paper

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Gift of Mrs Charlotte
S. Mack 1961.48.1. X60631

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

From the Back-Window – 291

1915

Photograph, platinum print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection,
1949.3.401. X60288

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

New York from An American Place

1931

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection,
1949.3.1243. X60321

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

From the Shelton Looking North

1927

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. X60743

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

From the Shelton, New York (Room 3003) Looking Southeast

1927

From the Shelton, New York, Looking East

1926/7

2 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection,

1949.3.1267. X60319, X60318

East River No. 3

1926

Oil paint on canvas

Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College,

Poughkeepsie, NY,

bequest of Mrs Arthur Schwab (Edna Bryner, Class of 1907),

1967.31.1. X61463

East River from the 30th Story of the Shelton Hotel

1928

Oil paint on canvas

Courtesy of the New Britain Museum of American Art, Stephen B. Lawrence Fund, 1958.09. X57801



New York, Night

1928–9

Oil paint on canvas

In 1925, O’Keeffe and Stieglitz moved into a studio and apartment in the towering 34-storey Shelton Hotel on Lexington Avenue. This work depicts the view looking down onto neighbouring buildings and busy night-time streets. Displayed opposite the painting is a photograph of the same view taken by Stieglitz, demonstrating both their mutual artistic exchange and the wider influence of modernist photography on O’Keeffe’s work, but also revealing the differences in their work. The city had been an important source of inspiration for Stieglitz since the 1890s and remained so after O’Keeffe moved on to other subject matter.

Sheldon Museum of Art, Sheldon Art Association, Thomas C. Woods Memorial, N-107.1958. X57799

Ritz Tower, Night

1928

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection. X57802

New York Street with Moon

1925

Oil paint on canvas

This scene of 47th Street is O'Keeffe's first painting of New York, changing her subject matter to evade sexualised readings of her work. It was made the year she and Stieglitz moved into a skyscraper. In her city paintings, O'Keeffe contrasted the buildings and electric lights of the modern metropolis with skies full of incident, evoking the natural world. By doing this, she acknowledged the influence of Stieglitz, whose cloud photographs and cityscapes these works echo. They also anticipate the sense of space in O'Keeffe's later works: 'Park Avenue ... seemed to stretch way beyond 59th Street and on to infinity.'

Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, on loan at the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum. X57794



Room 5

LAKE GEORGE

'I wish you could see the place here – there is something so perfect about the mountains and the lake and the trees – Sometimes I want to tear it all to pieces – it seems so perfect – but it is really lovely.'

The rural Northeast, through Lake George in upstate New York, as well as coastal Maine and Canada, contrasts both with New York City and, later, O'Keeffe's travels to the Southwest. Lake George in particular, where the Stieglitz family had a summer home, enabled O'Keeffe to continue her investigation of abstraction from nature. O'Keeffe first visited Lake George as a student in 1908, but during her three-decade relationship with Stieglitz, she spent summer and autumn there. 'Here I feel smothered with green', she remarked, revealing her ambivalence towards the location. Nevertheless, the years she spent summering there were some of the most prolific of her career.

Lake George and the Northeast suggested a different palette to O'Keeffe. Her works made there range from soft blue and green to the red and purple of maple trees and the warm red of apples and autumn leaves. Like the images of New York, there are correlations between her works and Stieglitz's photography – key motifs include the lake itself, trees, turbulent clouds, barns and still lifes of apples or leaves.

WORK LABELS

Clockwise from right of wall text

Nature Forms – Gaspé

1932

Oil paint on canvas

O'Keeffe left the United States for the first time in June 1932, travelling to the Gaspé Peninsula in Canada; a territory of sea, islands and mountains in the heart of the Québec maritime, characterised by its wild natural beauty. **Nature Forms – Gaspé** was painted during this visit. For an artist born and bred in inland America, the ocean had a mesmerising presence, and this painting conveys O'Keeffe's experience of a storm. Focusing on the turbulent water and rolling clouds, it blurs the boundaries between representation and abstraction, and between land, sea and sky.

Juan and Anna Marie Hamilton Family Trust. X59652

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Apples and Gable, Lake George

1922

House and Grape Leaves

1934

2 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

George Eastman Museum, purchase and gift of Georgia O'Keeffe. X60725

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Cary Ross, Knoxville, Tennessee 1935.54. X60719

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Lake George

1926

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1949.3.667. X60317

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Barn & Snow

1923

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection,
1949.3.617. X60314

Autumn Trees – The Maple

1924

Oil paint on canvas

This work reveals both O’Keeffe’s naturalist sensibility and her early European avant-garde influences, such as the French painter Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), an artist shown by Stieglitz. O’Keeffe painted the same maple tree repeatedly over many summers at Lake George. The writer Waldo Frank wrote in 1926: ‘O’Keeffe is very like a tree... If a tree moves, you don’t notice it. And when you find this woman moving through the wordy whirlwind that ever rages round the rooms of Alfred Stieglitz, you have the effect of silence.’

Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Burnett Foundation and Gerald and Kathleen Peters (1996.03.001). X57810

Grey Tree, Lake George

1925

Oil paint on canvas

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Collection,
Bequest of Georgia O'Keeffe, 1986 (1987.377.2). X57372

Oak Leaves, Pink and Grey

1929

Oil paint on canvas

The Collection of the Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum at
the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Museum Purchase,
1936.85. X57809

Lake George Barns

1926

Oil paint on canvas

Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Gift of the
T.B. Walker Foundation, 1954 X57812

Apple Family – 2

c.1920

Oil paint on canvas

For both O’Keeffe and Stieglitz, apples were a symbol of America, associated with the soil and with rural health. Stieglitz’s photograph of the subject is displayed opposite. Likewise rural barns were a shared subject matter. O’Keeffe linked them specifically with her upbringing on the farm in Sun Prairie, stating: ‘The barn is a very healthy part of me ... it is my childhood.’ Her exploration of these symbols led to O’Keeffe’s association with an authentic American cultural identity; in 1923 Stieglitz organised an exhibition of her work describing her as ‘Georgia O’Keeffe, American’.

Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Burnett Foundation and The Georgia O’Keeffe Foundation (1997.04.003). X57814

Autumn Leaves – Lake George, N.Y.

1924

Oil paint on canvas

Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio, Museum Purchase, Howald Fund II. X57807

Farmhouse Window and Door

1929

Oil paint on canvas

Farmhouse Window and Door depicts the exterior of the Stieglitz family residence at Lake George with its wooden shutters and decorative pediment, visible in photographs by Stieglitz elsewhere in this room. A stark contrast to her fluid depictions of the lake, trees and weather, this work demonstrates O'Keeffe's interest in architectural form and shows her experimenting with an entirely different approach to painting. The window and door are shown from straight on, with hard-edged clarity. The painting also prefigures O'Keeffe's later architectural subjects, including the door in the patio of her house at Abiquiú, New Mexico.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Acquired through the Richard D. Brixey Bequest, 1945. X57415



From the Lake, No. 3

1924

Oil paint on canvas

Philadelphia Museum of Art: Bequest of Georgia O'Keeffe for the Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1987 (1987-70-2). X57452



From the Lake No. 1

1924

Oil paint on canvas

Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 1984.3. X57804

Shell No. 2

1928

Oil paint on board

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Burnett Foundation (1997.06.037). X57827

Lake George

1922

Oil paint on canvas

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Charlotte Mack.

X57803

Pool in the Woods, Lake George

1922

Pastel on paper

Courtesy of Reynolda House Museum of American Art,
Winston-Salem, NC, an Affiliate of Wake Forest University.

Gift of Barbara B. Milhouse in memory of E. Carter,

Nancy Susan Reynolds, and Winifred Babcock. X57805

Room 6

FLOWERS AND STILL LIFES

'Nobody sees a flower – really – it is so small – we haven't time – and to see takes time... So I said to myself – I'll paint what I see – what the flower is to me, but I'll paint it big and they will be surprised into taking time to look at it – I will make even busy New Yorkers take time to see what I see of flowers... Well – I made you take time to look ... and when you took time ... 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.'

O'Keeffe is renowned for her flower paintings, which she made from the 1920s until the 1950s. At first her work tended towards imaginative, semi-abstract compositions inspired by flowers, or showing the entire form of the flower, as in her delicate calla lilies of the 1920s. They progressed to works with a greater photographic realism, focusing in close-up on the blooms themselves. This move to realism was partly motivated by her aim to dispel the sexual or bodily interpretations of her work made by critics, and O'Keeffe lamented that this view continued.

WORK LABELS

Clockwise from right of wall text

Alligator Pear

1923

Pastel on paper

Private collection. X61436

Two Figs

1923

Oil paint on board

Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College,
Poughkeepsie, NY, bequest of Mrs Arthur Schwab
(Edna Bryner, Class of 1907), 1967.31.12. X61461

The Eggplant

1924

Oil paint on canvas

Still life subjects occupy an important place within O'Keeffe's practice. With a photographic clarity, they demonstrate the influence of photographers such as Paul Strand. While the figs and aubergine are depicted faithfully, they are contrasted with an almost cubist treatment of the fabric background, reiterating O'Keeffe's ongoing interest in abstraction. O'Keeffe considered one of the most pared-down examples, *Alligator Pear*, to be the most successful: 'The best of the alligator pears was a pastel of my first lone dry pear on a white cloth. I have always considered that it was one of the times when I did what I really intended to do. One isn't always able to do that.'

Collection Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Donated in memory of Doris Huestis Mills Speirs by her husband Dr J. Murray Speirs, 1990. 90/36. X61435

Oriental Poppies

1927

Oil paint on canvas

The Collection of the Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Museum Purchase, 1937. X57829

White Iris

1930

Oil paint on canvas

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Mr and Mrs Bruce

C. Gottwald. X61537

Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1

1932

Oil paint on canvas

O'Keeffe recalled, 'the first Jimson weed I saw was blooming between the first two steps of a ladder at Puye Pueblo. I have had it growing near my house in Abiquiú for many years and I have painted it many times... It is a beautiful white trumpet flower with strong veins that hold the flower open and grow longer than the round part of the flower – twisting as they grow off beyond it... The Jimson weed blooms in the cool of the evening – one moonlight night at the Ranch I counted one hundred and twenty-five flowers ... when I think of the delicate fragrance of the flowers, I almost feel the coolness and sweetness of the evening'.

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville,
Arkansas, 2014.35. X57832



Margaret Armstrong 1867–1944

J. J. Thornber 1872–1962

Field Book of Western Wild Flowers

1915

Book, New York: C.P. Putnam's Sons

This book is one of many on natural history, botany and gardening from O'Keeffe's library at her home in Abiquiú. Armstrong evocatively describes the plant-family commonly known as Jimson Weed as 'a handsome and exceedingly conspicuous plant, forming a large clump of rather coarse, dark foliage, adorned with many magnificent flowers ... sometimes ten inches long, white ... drooping like wet tissue in the heat of the afternoon... I remember seeing a grave in the desert, marked by a wooden cross and separated from a vast waste of sand by clumps of these great white flowers... The flowers are very fragrant at night'.

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. X63635

Dark Iris No. 1

1927

Oil paint on canvas

Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Anonymous gift, FA1954.4.

X62197

Petunia and Glass Bottle

1924

Oil paint on canvas

Lent by Denver Art Museum, Gift of the Charles Francis
Hendrie Memorial Collection, 1966.44. X62257

Calla Lilies on Red

1928

Oil paint on canvas

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of Anne Windfohr Marion
(1996.05.01). X57820

Calla Lily in Tall Glass – No. 2

1923

Oil paint on board

Georgia O'Keeffe is renowned for her flower paintings, which she made from the 1920s until the 1950s. These works show how O'Keeffe became ever more interested in modernist photography, highlighting effects such as magnification, cropping and the intense study of form, or, as in this painting, the distortion of the flower stem through the glass of a vase or bottle. O'Keeffe's flowers, we find, were about looking intensely, and in this they were a response to the speed of the modern world.

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Burnett Foundation (1997.06.010). X57823



Room 7

NEW MEXICO: TAOS AND ALCALDE

‘When I got to New Mexico that was mine. As soon as I saw it that was my country. I’d never seen anything like it before, but it fitted to me exactly. It’s something that’s in the air – it’s different. The sky is different, the wind is different. I shouldn’t say too much about it because other people may be interested and I don’t want them interested.’

In 1929 O’Keeffe made her first prolonged visit to New Mexico in the Southwestern United States, a dry and arid high altitude desert region. Initially she was invited to stay with the socialite, art patron and writer Mabel Dodge Luhan in her house in Taos, a town already home to an established artistic community.

Over the next few years, O’Keeffe made repeated visits to New Mexico. Here she had found a landscape that was a contrast to the East coast but whose rural and expansive qualities felt familiar. O’Keeffe explored the specifics of the region, the adobe or earth-built architecture, the crosses, as well as views of the wide mesas or flat mountain plateaus, revealing its cultural complexity – the layering of Native American and Spanish colonial influences on the landscape.

WORK LABELS

Clockwise from right of wall text

Black Mesa Landscape, New Mexico / Out Back of Marie's II
1930

Oil paint on canvas

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Burnett Foundation
(1997.06.015). X57909

Black Cross with Stars and Blue

1929

Oil paint on canvas

This painting depicts a cross of the Penitente sect of Catholicism, frequently sited within the New Mexico landscape, but viewed here against the outline of Taos Mountain, a sacred site for the local Native American community. The composition thus emphasises O'Keeffe's understanding of the layering of cultural identity on the American landscape. As she described: 'It was in the late light and the cross stood out – dark against the evening sky. If I turned a little to the left, away from the cross, I saw the Taos Mountain – a beautiful shape. I painted the cross against the mountain although I never saw it that way.'

Private collection. X57907



The Mountain, New Mexico

1931

Oil paint on canvas

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Purchase 32.14.

X57421

Taos Pueblo

1929/34

Oil paint on canvas

Taos Pueblo is a community of Tiwa-speaking Native Americans. Begun during O'Keeffe's first prolonged visit to New Mexico in 1929, this painting depicts the north house or 'Hlauuma' of Taos Pueblo. Here, O'Keeffe focuses on the distinctive adobe or mud-built architecture that is typical of the Southwest. This structure, built between 1000 and 1450 AD, is one of the oldest continuously inhabited buildings in the United States. It is also one of the subjects of Ansel Adams' book published the following year, also displayed in this room.

Courtesy of the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, Indianapolis X57903

Ranchos Church, New Mexico

1930-1

Oil paint on canvas

Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas.

X57912



Another Church, Hernandez, New Mexico

1931

Oil paint on canvas

America Museum of Western Art – The Anschutz Collection,
Denver Colorado, purchase, 1973. X61930

Rust Red Hills

1930

Oil paint on canvas

Sloan Fund Purchase, Brauer Museum of Art, 62.02, Valparaiso
University. X57897

Soft Gray, Alcalde Hill

1929–30

Oil paint on canvas

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian
Institution, Washington, D.C. X57460

Marsden Hartley 1877–1943

New Mexico Recollection #14

c.1923

Oil paint on canvas

Hartley was the first of the Stieglitz circle to travel to New Mexico, invited there also by Mabel Dodge (later Luhan). Arriving in June 1918, he was an important precedent for O'Keeffe. They shared a tendency to paint the landscape from memory, as shown in this work. Hartley's painting focuses on the distinctive colour of the hills, but the style of composition and the application of paint is markedly different to works by O'Keeffe. They also shared an aim to create a distinctively American modernism, independent from modern art in Europe, which drew them both to New Mexico.

Collection of Jan T. and Marica Vilcek, Promised Gift to
The Vilcek Foundation X62259

Ansel Adams 1902–1984

A Man of Taos, Tony Lujan

c.1930

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Collection Center for Creative Photography, University of
Arizona. X61035

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Georgia O'Keeffe – After Return from New Mexico

Equivalent O₁

1929

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. X60744

Paul Strand 1890–1976

Church Buttress, Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico

1932

Ranchos de Taos Church, New Mexico

1931/2

Ranchos de Taos Church, New Mexico

1931

Ranchos de Taos Church, New Mexico

1930–2

Church, Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico

1931

5 photographs, platinum print on paper

Private collection, USA. X63172, X63168, X63171, X63170,

X63173

Ansel Adams 1902–1984

Ranchos de Taos Church, Front

1929

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Gift of Ansel Adams, University of New Mexico Art Museum,
Albuquerque, 68.129 X63099

VITRINE LABELS

Mabel Dodge Luhan 1879–1962

Winter in Taos

Book, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935

Inscribed: 'For Georgia -- / Alfred / April 19 / 35'

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. X63637

Mabel Ganson Evans Dodge Sterne Luhan (1879–962) was an art patron and writer who had lived in Italy and New York, hosting avant-garde salons. She arrived in New Mexico in January 1918 with her third husband, painter Lawrence Sterne, but within weeks had fallen for her fourth and final husband the Pueblo Indian Tony Luhan; they married in 1923. Mabel gathered a remarkable roster of visitors to her house in Taos, from D.H. Lawrence and Ansel Adams to Carl Jung, and including many from Stieglitz's circle including Paul and 'Beck' Strand, Marsden Hartley, John Marin and, of course, O'Keeffe.

Mabel Dodge Luhan 1879–1962

Edge of Taos Desert

Book, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. X63636

Georgia O'Keeffe

Schneider sketchbook 1929/30s

Graphite on paper

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe
Foundation (2006.05.633–2006.05.674). X60710

Schneider sketchbook 1929/30s

Graphite on paper

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe
Foundation (2006.5.633–2006.05.717). X60708

VITRINE LABELS

Ansel Adams 1902–1984

Mary Austin 1868–1934

Taos Pueblo, Photographed by Ansel Easton Adams and described by Mary Austin

Book, lithograph on paper

Publisher: San Francisco: Grabhorn Press, no.61 of 100 plus 8 artist's copies, 1930

University of New Mexico University Libraries, Center for Southwest Research. X61031

Ansel Adams 1902–1984

Mary Austin 1868–1934

Taos Pueblo, Photographed by Ansel Easton Adams and described by Mary Austin

Book, Grabhorn Press, San Francisco, 1930

Number 69 in an edition of 100 plus 8 artist's copies

The Richard and Ronay Menschel Library, George Eastman Museum. X63035

Room 8

FROM THE FARAWAY, NEARBY: SKULL PAINTINGS

‘When I found the beautiful white bones on the desert I picked them up and took them home... I have used these things to say what is to me the wideness and wonder of the world as I live in it.’

O’Keeffe began painting animal bones, principally skulls, around 1931, but had collected them since 1929. As she explained, ‘that first summer I spent in New Mexico I was a little surprised that there were so few flowers. There was no rain so the flowers didn’t come. Bones were easy to find so I began collecting bones’. Wanting to take something back with her she decided ‘the best thing I could do was to take with me a barrel of bones’.

Writers and painters at this time were searching for a specifically American iconography, or in O’Keeffe’s words ‘the Great American Thing’. In O’Keeffe’s paintings the bones, particularly when juxtaposed with the desert landscape of the Southwest, summarise the essence of America which she felt was not in New York but was the country west of the Hudson River, which symbolised what she called ‘the Faraway’.

WORK LABELS

Clockwise from right of wall text

Ram's Horns I

c.1949

Charcoal on paper

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation (2006.05.207) X58511

Horn and Feathers

1937

Oil paint on canvas

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation (2006.05.152)X57973

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Georgia O'Keeffe – Hands and Horse Skull

1931

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. X60746

Horse's Skull on Blue

1931

Oil paint on canvas

O'Keeffe began collecting bones in 1929–30 when severe drought in the Southwest caused the starvation of many animals, whose sun-bleached skeletons littered the landscape. She shipped a container of bones back to Lake George – Stieglitz photographed her with them before she could begin painting them – and admired them as formal objects, 'as beautiful as anything I know' and 'strangely more living than the animals walking around'. One of the earliest of O'Keeffe's skull paintings, this work emphasises the elongated nature of the bone by picturing it from the front and isolating it against a blue fabric background.

Collection of Arizona State University Art Museum, Tempe;
Gift of Oliver B. James X57845

From the Faraway, Nearby

1937

Oil paint on canvas

O'Keeffe explained: 'the bones do not symbolize death to me. They are shapes that I enjoy. It never occurs to me that they're about death. They are very lively.' She was also concerned when the skull and bone paintings were interpreted as a form of surrealism, commenting that in contrast they were 'a new way of trying to define my feeling about that country ... they seem to think that painting bones is news... It makes me feel like crawling far far into a dark hole and staying there a long long time.'

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1959 (59.204.2). X57377



Mule's Skull with Pink Poinsettia

1936

Oil paint on canvas

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Burnett Foundation
(1997.06.014). X57857

Deer Horns

1938

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection. X63234

Room 9

GHOST RANCH

'I wish you could see what I see out the windows – the earth pink and yellow cliffs to the north – the full pale moon about to go down in an early morning lavender sky behind a very long beautiful tree-covered mesa to the west – pink and purple hills in front and the scrubby fine dull green cedars – and a feeling of much space – It is a very beautiful world.'

O'Keeffe first discovered Ghost Ranch in 1934 – a 'dude ranch' for wealthy tourists to gain an experience of the 'wild west'. Though O'Keeffe wanted nothing to do with the ranch's patrons she stayed in an adobe house on the property from 1937, purchasing the house in 1940, her first home in New Mexico.

During the later 1930s and 1940s O'Keeffe deepened her exploration of the distinctive landscape of the Southwest – the intense reds and pinks of the earth and cliffs, the desiccated trees, the Chama River and the Cerro Pedernal ('flint hill'), which is the Spanish name for the flat-topped mesa viewed in the distance from Ghost Ranch. 'It's my private mountain. It belongs to me', she said, half-jokingly. 'God told me if I painted it enough, I could have it.'

WORK LABELS

Clockwise from right of wall text

Red Hills and Bones

1941

Oil paint on canvas

Philadelphia Museum of Art: The Alfred Stieglitz Collection,
1949 (1949-18-109) X57450



Dead Piñon Tree

1943

Oil paint on canvas

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe
Foundation (2006.05.180) X57968

Purple Hills

1935

Oil paint on canvas

The San Diego Museum of Art, Gift of Mr and Mrs Norton
S. Walbridge, 1976
X57925

Pedernal with Red Hills

1936

Oil paint on canvas

Collection of the New Mexico Museum of Art. Bequest of Helen Miller Jones, 1986 (1986.137.18). X57938

Chama River, Ghost Ranch, New Mexico

1937

Oil paint on canvas

Collection of the New Mexico Museum of Art. Gift of the Georgia O'Keeffe Estate, 1987 (1987.312.1). X57975

Red and Yellow Cliffs

1940

Oil paint on canvas

The cliffs rise up at the back of O’Keeffe’s home at Ghost Ranch. In contrast to her earlier paintings of skulls above desert landscapes, the later paintings at Ghost Ranch such as this forego a horizon, emphasising the sense of flatness and abstraction. O’Keeffe was particularly struck by the colours: ‘All the earth colours of the painter’s palette are out there in the many miles of bad lands. The light Naples yellow through the ochres – orange and red and purple earth – even the soft earth greens... I think our most beautiful country.’

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Collection, Bequest of Georgia O’Keeffe, 1986 (1987.377.4). X57375



My Front Yard, Summer

1941

Oil paint on canvas

In 1940, O'Keeffe purchased Rancho de los Burros, an adobe house on Ghost Ranch that became her first home in New Mexico. Its patio boasted expansive views of the Cerro Pedernal, or 'flint hill'. The flat-topped mountain and surrounding landscape – referred to by O'Keeffe as her 'front yard' – became a recurring motif in her work. The painting captures a period of green summer growth, depicting the mountain bathed with pinkish sunlight and the terrain dotted with piñon trees in bloom. Where other works focus on the monumentality of towering cliffs, this work conveys distance, light and space.

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation (2006.05.173) X57934

My Backyard

1937

Oil paint on canvas

New Orleans Museum of Art: Museum purchase, City of New Orleans Capital Funds, 73.8. X57987

Room 10

THE BLACK PLACE AND THE WHITE PLACE

'I must have seen the Black Place first driving past on a trip into the Navajo country and, having seen it, I had to go back to paint – even in the heat of mid-summer. It became one of my favourite places to work ... as you come to it over a hill, it looks like a mile of elephants – grey hills all about the same size.'

Two very specific locations recur frequently in O'Keeffe's work. Their repetition allowed her to explore the various conditions of landscape through changing light and seasons, and its representation through degrees of abstraction.

In one location, the 'White Place' – a site of grey-white cliffs in the Chama River valley – she explored the differing variations of light on the white limestone cliffs and contrasted this with vivid blue sky. In the more distant 'Black Place' – which is 150 miles west of Ghost Ranch – she progressively abstracted from observed, perceptual reality towards more intensely-coloured, non-naturalistic compositions, painted from memory.

In the 'White Place' and 'Black Place' paintings O'Keeffe also became more clearly engaged with seriality, obsessively returning to the same motif and working through it in its different permutations.

WORK LABELS

Clockwise from right of wall text

Blue Sky

1941

Oil paint on canvas

Visible in the middle distance from O'Keeffe's house in Abiquiú, the Plaza Blanca or 'White Place' is a limestone rock formation that held a special significance for the artist. She made frequent painting trips to the site and explored the strange terrain time and again through changing light and seasons. While other works in the series concentrate on the texture of the rocky cliff face itself, this painting places bright blue sky, seen through a jagged ravine, at the centre of the composition.

Worcester Art Museum, Gift of Mr and Mrs Robert W. Stoddard. X59064



Untitled (Black Place)

c.1944/5

Graphite on paper

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation (2006.05.184) X60714

Untitled (Black Place)

c.1944/5

Graphite on paper

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation (2006.05.185) X60715

Grey Hill Forms

1936

Oil paint on canvas

Gift of the Estate of Georgia O'Keeffe, University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque, P87.1. X57990

Black Hills with Cedar

1941–2

Oil paint on canvas

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

X57458

Black Place II

1945

Oil paint on canvas

The Vilcek Foundation. X61632

Black Place III

1944

Oil paint on canvas

Far from either of her houses, O'Keeffe camped at the 'Black Place' in order to paint it, often in challenging weather conditions. She valued the location both for its particularly strange landscape formation, and for its sense of distance: 'such a beautiful, untouched lonely-feeling place – part of what I call the Far Away.' Here a gully through hills is dramatically stylised, almost into a lightning bolt. O'Keeffe's paintings were often an emotional response to immersion in landscape, and this work encapsulates the harsh conditions, but also perhaps her awareness of the Second World War.

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Burnett Foundation (2007.01.026). X57993

Black Place No. IV

1944

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection. X57996



Black Place Green

1949

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection. X57998

The Black Place III

1945

Pastel on paper

Private collection, courtesy The Owings Gallery, Santa Fe,
New Mexico. X57999

Room 11

THE SERIES: ABIQUIÚ PATIOS, PELVIS BONES AND COTTONWOOD TREES

‘When I started painting the pelvis bones I was most interested in the holes in the bones – what I saw through them – particularly the blue from holding them up in the sun against the sky... They were most beautiful against the Blue – that Blue that will always be there as it is now after all man’s destruction is finished.’

Working in series became an increasingly evident approach for O’Keeffe in the 1940s and 1950s. She developed three series simultaneously during this period, each one exploring a path towards abstraction, in parallel to developments in abstract painting in New York. They were also made against the backdrop of the Second World War (referred to in the quotation above), and of Stieglitz’s death in 1946. At the same time O’Keeffe’s work was becoming increasingly prominent, with major solo exhibitions at The Art Institute of Chicago and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

O’Keeffe continued her investigation of bones, using pelvis bones rather than skulls, held up against the sky, or viewing a distant landscape through an aperture in the bone. Another motif was the patio of O’Keeffe’s house at Abiquiú, her second New Mexico home, with its distinctive door presented in varying degrees of naturalism and abstraction. Lastly the series of cottonwood trees reveals a more painterly approach to the serialised motif.

WORK LABELS

Clockwise from right of wall text

Pelvis I

1944

Oil paint on canvas

Following her earlier skull paintings, O'Keeffe returned to bones as subject matter in the 1940s, depicting animal pelvis bones held up against vivid blue skies or with distant landscapes. The first of an important series of radically pared-down paintings, **Pelvis I** contrasts the white bone against the intense azure of a New Mexico desert sky. Using the bone as a lens or aperture through which to see the world, the painting's composition explores a complex relationship between solid and void, and reinforces O'Keeffe's understanding – and ongoing use of – cropping and the techniques of photography.

Milwaukee Art Museum. Gift of Mrs Harry Lynde Bradley, 1973. X59334

Pelvis Series

1947

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection, courtesy Eykyn Maclean. X61927

Spring Tree No. 1

1945

Oil paint on canvas

Collection of the New Mexico Museum of Art. Gift of the Georgia O'Keeffe Estate, 1987 (1987.312.3). X59321

Winter Trees, Abiquiú, III

1950

Oil paint on canvas

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation (2006.05.229) X58011

Winter Cottonwoods East V

1954

Oil paint on canvas

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Burnett Foundation (1997.06.024). X58013

Cottonwoods

c.1952

Oil paint on canvas

From the windows of her house in Abiquiú, O'Keeffe had a panoramic view onto the Chama River valley. Groves of cottonwood trees – a deciduous variety native to North America, characterised by its fluffy, cotton-like seeds – flank the water as it snakes through the landscape. She returned to paint these trees many times, contrasting their bareness in winter with their blossoming in spring – the seasons she spent at Abiquiú. The trees represent the distinctive nature of the Southwest, as well as being suitable subjects for O'Keeffe to explore painterly brushstrokes that suggests a familiarity with then current gestural abstraction.

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation (2006.05.244) X58012

Wall with Green Door

1953

Oil paint on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Corcoran Collection (Gift of the Woodward Foundation) 2015.19.155. X58020

In the Patio No. IV

1948

Oil paint on canvas

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of the William H. Lane Foundation, 1990. X58015

My Last Door

1952–4

Oil paint on canvas

O'Keeffe said, 'when I first saw the Abiquiú house it was a ruin... As I climbed and walked about in the ruin I found a patio... It was a good-sized patio with a long wall with a door on one side. That ... was something I had to have. It took me ten years to get it – three more to fix the house so I could live in it – and after that the wall with a door was painted many times'. Here she painted the door with such a degree of economy that it is almost an abstraction.

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Burnett Foundation (1997.06.029). X58018



Pedernal

1945

Pastel on paper

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Burnett Foundation
(1997.06.008). X58003



Untitled (Abstraction)

1943

Charcoal and chalk on paper

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe
Foundation (2006.05.177) X58514

Room 12

THE SOUTHWEST

‘Where I was born and where and how I have lived is unimportant. It is what I have done with where I have been that should be of interest.’

O’Keeffe’s engagement with the Southwest was deep and enduring. This room includes drawings and sketches that reveal aspects of her working method as she immersed herself within the landscape or worked back in one of her two houses and their respective studios. It also includes photographs of O’Keeffe taken by Stieglitz in New York State, but with attributes that place her in the Southwest such as Native American blankets and her car – a sign of her independence. Other photographs are by her close friend Ansel Adams who shared her fascination with the Southwest, its landscape and cultures.

From her arrival in New Mexico and spanning the 1930s and 1940s, O’Keeffe also made a number of paintings of Native American ‘kachinas’ – figures of spirit beings carved in wood or modelled in clay and painted. These works make clear O’Keeffe’s awareness of the indigenous Native American cultures of the region and show her fascination with their ritual life. Painting the objects was for her a way of painting the country.

WORK LABELS

Clockwise from right of wall text

Untitled (Skull)

c.1934

Charcoal on paper

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation (2006.05.144) X58512

Eagle Claw and Bean Necklace

1934

Charcoal on paper

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Given anonymously (by exchange), 1936. X57416



Ansel Adams 1902–1984

Georgia O’Keeffe and Orville Cox, Canyon de Chelly

National Monument

1937

Georgia O’Keeffe in the Southwest

1937

2 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Collection Center for Creative Photography, University of
Arizona: Ansel Adams Archive/Purchase. 76.83.12. X61040

Collection Center for Creative Photography, University of
Arizona: Ansel Adams Archive. 84.89.205. X61039

A Man from the Desert

1941

Oil paint on canvas

Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O’Keeffe
Foundation (2006.05.167) X57931

Kachina

1938

Oil paint on canvas

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Gift of the
Hamilton-Wells Collection. X57456

Kachina

1934

Charcoal on paper

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation (1997.12.001) X58506

Kachina

1934

Charcoal on paper

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation (1997.12.002) X58507

Kachina

1934

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection. X57932



Paul's Kachina

1931

Oil paint on board

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation (2006.05.134) X57928

Kachina

1931

Oil paint on wood panel

Among O'Keeffe's least known works are her depictions of 'kachinas' – carved or modelled and painted figures of spirit beings that have long played an important role in the ceremonies and rituals of Native American communities. This work is one of her first on the subject, and depicts a wooden devotional or votive figure against a semi-abstract background of folded cloth. The composition is flanked vertically by two red stripes, similar to those on the Native American blanket wrapped around her in the portrait by Stieglitz nearby.

Collection of Jan T. and Marica Vilcek, Promised Gift to
The Vilcek Foundation X62258

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Georgia O'Keeffe

1933

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Private collection, Switzerland. X62188

Ansel Adams 1902–1984

Road and the Pedernal, Chama Valley, New Mexico

c.1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Collection Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona: Ansel Adams Archive/Purchase. 76.89.8. X61041

Ansel Adams 1902–1984

Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico

1941

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Adams, a close friend to O'Keeffe, was one of the few people that stayed with her frequently and with whom she travelled. This image shows the New Mexican village, Hernandez, which is a short distance away from Abiquiú, along the Chama River valley. Hernandez is on the road from Ghost Ranch and Abiquiú to Española and then either Taos or Santa Fe. The village church is common to O'Keeffe's painting **Another Church, Hernandez, New Mexico** in Room 7, another instance of shared subject matter, though the photograph was taken a decade later.

Victoria and Albert Museum. X61003

Ansel Adams 1902–1984

Thunderstorm, Ghost Ranch, Chama Valley, Northern
New Mexico

1937

Ghost Ranch Hills, Chama Valley, Northern New Mexico

1937

2 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Collection Center for Creative Photography, University of
Arizona: Ansel Adams Archive/Purchase. 76.89.96. X61037

Collection Center for Creative Photography, University of
Arizona: Ansel Adams Archive. 84.92.55. X61036

Untitled (Ghost Ranch Cliff)

c.1943

Graphite and charcoal on paper

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Burnett Foundation
(1997.06.006)

X60713

Untitled (Dry Waterfall, Ghost Ranch)

c.1943

Graphite and charcoal on paper

Throughout her career, drawing remained a central aspect of O'Keeffe's working process. With exacting detail and a clarity of vision, she condensed the world around her into a few succinct lines, synthesising the landscape to its essential elements and forms. This drawing, which depicts a dry waterfall on Ghost Ranch, is characteristic of her technique. O'Keeffe uses graphite to sketch out the jagged form of the cliff, and charcoal to add texture and shadow to its rocky face.

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Burnett Foundation (1997.06.005). X60712

VITRINE LABELS

Georgia O'Keeffe 1887–1986

Georgia O'Keeffe

1976

Book, New York: Viking Press

Tate. Z06460

Lloyd Goodrich 1897–1987

Doris Bry 1920–2014

Georgia O'Keeffe

1970

Exhibition catalogue, Whitney Museum of American Art,
New York

Tate. Z06461

Life: Volume 64, Number 9, 1 March 1968

Magazine, printed ink on paper

Tate. Z06466

In 1968 *Life* magazine published a cover story about O’Keeffe, framing her as a pioneer and confirming her image as a desert loner and American icon. In 1970, her retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art had had a dramatic impact, introducing her to a new generation of feminist artists. At the same time that O’Keeffe was lauded by feminist artists, she also became a cultural icon of wider significance. The singer Patti Smith included a verse in homage to O’Keeffe in her 1978 collection of poems **Babel**, which draws together O’Keeffe’s signature iconography, emphasising the myth that had been built around her persona.

Patti Smith born 1946

Babel

1978

Book, New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons

Tate. Z06459

Barbara Buhler Lynes born 1942

Carolyn Kastner (life dates not known)

Georgia O’Keeffe in New Mexico: Architecture, Katsinam and the Land

2013

Exhibition catalogue, Georgia O’Keeffe Museum,

New Mexico, 2013

Tate. Z06463

This catalogue examining the relationship between O'Keeffe's work and the landscape and cultures of New Mexico illustrates two nineteenth century kachinas or katsinam – dolls figures with ceremonial significance to the Native American peoples of New Mexico, similar to the kinds painted by O'Keeffe.

VITRINE LABELS

Georgia O'Keeffe 1887–1986

Georgia O'Keeffe

1976

Book, New York: Viking Press,

Inscribed: 'For myself / Georgia O'Keeffe / 1977'

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. X63638

Liliane de Cock Morgan 1939–2013

Ansel Adams

1972

Book, New York: Hastings-on-Hudson,

Morgan & Morgan

Inscribed: 'For Georgia O'Keeffe! / recalling the past, present --
and Future! / Affectionately / Ansel Adams'

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. X63628

O'Keeffe's early shows were all staged in the succession of galleries run by Alfred Stieglitz: '291', 'The Intimate Gallery' and 'An American Place'. In later years she started to be given shows in larger institutions. In 1943, O'Keeffe's first major retrospective exhibition was staged at The Art Institute of Chicago. Three years later she became the first woman to be given a solo show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, curated by James Johnson Sweeney. In 1970, she had perhaps her most influential institutional exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, marked by the cover of *Artforum*.

Daniel Catton Rich 1904–1976

Georgia O'Keeffe

1943

Exhibition catalogue, The Art Institute of Chicago

Inscribed: 'For Alfred Stieglitz with / admiration and

appreciation / Daniel Catton Rich / Chicago January 21 1943

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. X63639

Room 13

LATE ABSTRACTIONS AND SKYSCAPES

‘One day when I was flying back to New Mexico, the sky below was a most beautiful solid white. It looked so secure that I thought I could walk right out on it to the horizon if the door opened. It was so wonderful I couldn’t wait to be home to paint it.’

This final room shows O’Keeffe’s late paintings of the 1950s and 1960s, focusing on two series that are inspired by aeroplane journeys she took in her later years.

One series of the late 1950s takes its cue primarily from aerial views of rivers, which O’Keeffe transformed to create lyrical abstractions that hark back to her earliest works in oil, watercolour and charcoal from the 1910s. A second series of stylised near-abstractions represents the view from a plane over the clouds. Both reveal her awareness of contemporary abstract painting, particularly colour field painting, then dominating American art. O’Keeffe’s works were always rooted in a direct experience of the landscape and her emotional connection to it, and continued to be so until the end of her career.

‘It is breathtaking as one rises up over the world one has been living in... It is very handsome way off into the level distance ... like some marvellous rug patterns of maybe “Abstract Paintings”.’

WORK LABELS

Clockwise from right of wall text

Blue I

1958

Oil paint on canvas

Permenant Collection, Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame, Gift of Mr Walter R. Beardsley, 1978.073.001. X58021

Blue II

1958

Oil paint on canvas

Gift of The Burnett Foundation and The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation (1997.05.005) X58022

Blue B

1959

Oil paint on canvas

Milwaukee Art Museum. Gift of Mrs Harry Lynde Bradley, 1973. X58023

From the River – Pale

1959

Oil paint on canvas

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe
Foundation (2006.05.280) X58027

It Was Blue and Green

1960

Oil paint on canvas

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York;
Lawrence H. Bloedel Bequest 77.1.37. X57425



Sky Above the Clouds III / Above the Clouds III

1963

Oil paint on canvas

In the series of large-scale paintings she made in the early 1960s, O'Keeffe returned to the investigation of distant horizons she had begun when inspired by the Texan plains in the 1910s and New Mexico in the 1930s. With a newfound ambition reflected in their scale, the works she made in her 70s are larger than almost all her previous paintings. Perhaps responding to contemporary developments in abstract painting, they also influenced a younger generation of artists. They encapsulate O'Keeffe's concept of the 'Far Away' or 'the feeling of infinity on the horizon line'.

Private collection, Texas. X59741



Winter Road I

1963

Oil paint on canvas

'Two walls of my room in the Abiquiú house are glass and from one window I see the road towards Española, Santa Fe and the world. The road fascinates me.... I had made two or three snaps of it with a camera. For one of them I turned the camera at a sharp angle to get all the road. It was accidental that I made the road seem to stand up in the air, but it amused me and I began drawing and painting it as a new shape. The trees and mesa beside it were unimportant for that painting – it was just the road.'

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation, 1995.4.1. X57447

Drawing III

1959

Charcoal on paper

Philadelphia Museum of Art: 125th Anniversary Acquisition.

Purchased with funds contributed by the Arcadia Foundation, and gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation, 1997 (1997-42-1).

X57451

Sky with Flat White Cloud

1962

Oil paint on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection,
Bequest of Georgia O'Keeffe, 1987.58.8. X58028

Find out more

Multimedia guide and app

A multimedia guide to accompany the exhibition is available to hire at the exhibition entrance. Listen to Tate curators talk about works in the show and hear archival recordings of Georgia O'Keeffe.

£4.25 (£3.75 concession)

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An exhibition catalogue is available from Tate shops or at tate.org.uk/shop

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Visit tate.org.uk or call 020 7887 8888 for more information and to book

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With Hannah Johnston

In the exhibition

Monday 11 July,

Monday 19 September

18.30–20.30

£20, £15 concessions

Curator's tour

With Tanya Barson

In the exhibition

Monday 25 July, 18.30–20.30

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Every Monday 11 July – 1 August 18.45–20.45

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Starr Cinema

Tuesday 20 September

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18.30–20.00

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O'Keeffe on Camera

Sunday 31 July, 18.00–19.30

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Starr Cinema

Free, booking required

Georgia O'Keeffe

6 Jul–30 Oct 2016

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THE SUNDAY TIME

The exhibition is organised by Tate Modern in collaboration with Bank Austria Kunstforum, Vienna and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

Curated by Tanya Barson, Curator, International Art, Tate Modern, with Hannah Johnston, Assistant Curator, Tate Modern

Leaflet text by Tanya Barson

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