

Georgia O'Keeffe



Georgia O'Keeffe,
Music, Pink and Blue No. 2, 1918
Oil on canvas 35x29 15/16"

Georgia O'Keeffe,
Series I—No. 4, 1918
Oil on canvas 20x16"

"I said to myself 'I have things in my head that are not like what anyone has taught me- shadows and ideas so near to me - so natural to my way of being and thinking that it hasn't occurred to me to put them down.' I decided to start anew, to strip away what I had been taught."

-Georgia O'Keeffe



1918 photograph of O'Keeffe with a sketchpad and watercolors

References

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- C-SPAN. (2013, January 9). Life and Artwork of Georgia O'Keeffe. Retrieved September 17, 2016, from <https://www.c-span.org/video/?310650-1/life-artwork-georgia-okeeffe>
- Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. (2016). Georgia O'Keeffe Museum located in Santa Fe, NM. Retrieved September 17, 2016, from <https://www.okeeffemuseum.org/>
- Levine, B. E. (2012, November 30). How 7 Historic Figures Overcame Depression Without Doctors. Retrieved September 17, 2016, from <http://www.counterpunch.org/2012/11/30/how-7-historic-figures-overcame-depression-without-doctors/>

Timeline

- 1887– Born at family dairy farm in Wisconsin
- 1892– Begins art lessons at home with sisters
- 1917– First solo exhibition
- 1933– Hospitalized for Psychosis and symptoms of Depression and Anxiety
- 1949– Leaves New York to permanently live in New Mexico
- 1971– Begins to lose central vision due to Macular Degeneration
- 1972– Finishes last unassisted oil painting (unassisted with watercolor and charcoal until 1978 and graphite until 1984)
- 1986– Passes away at 98 years old

(O'Keeffe Museum, 2016)

Georgia O'Keeffe is a famous American painter, whom is considered the "Mother of American Modernism" and the "first well known woman artist" (C-SPAN, 2013). She is most famous for her paintings of flowers, yet she primarily painted abstract works and landscapes (C-SPAN, 2013).

Georgia O'Keeffe struggled with depression and anxiety throughout her life, according to biographers (Levine, 2012). O'Keeffe "suffered significant periods of depression during her life" and at 46 years old, "O'Keeffe was admitted to Doctors Hospital in New York City" due to depression and anxiety (Levine, 2012). Levine (2012) states that O'Keeffe had weeping spells and problems eating and sleeping. Some sources state her breakdown in 1933 was caused by stress from being unable to complete her mural for Radio City Music Hall, but Levine admits O'Keeffe held fear of being a "public failure" and struggled with a "control-freak husband" who was having an affair with "a woman almost two decades younger than O'Keeffe." O'Keeffe did not paint during her hospitalization, and as Levine states, O'Keeffe's "antidote" was by travelling. According to the O'Keeffe Museum (2016), she returned to New Mexico to continue painting; she would make yearly trips until her husband's death.

In 1971, O'Keeffe began to lose her eyesight due to macular degeneration, yet she continued to create art for many years. As the O'Keeffe Museum (2016) states, O'Keeffe had assistance with painting in oil after 1972. She continued to make artwork in watercolor, clay, charcoal, and graphite. Even with her eyesight failing her, she never stopped being an artist.

"It is easier for me to paint it than to write about it and I would so much rather people would look at it than read about it. I see no reason for painting anything that can be put into any other form as well."

-Georgia O'Keeffe



Background: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Ram's Head, Blue Morning Glory, 1938*. Oil on canvas; 20 x 30 "