

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION OF GEORGIA O'KEEFFE TO OPEN IN 1987 AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

Washington - The centennial exhibition of works by Georgia O'Keeffe will open at the National Gallery of Art in Washington on Nov. 1, 1987 to celebrate the artistic achievement of this major American artist. This exhibition, made possible by a generous grant from the Southwestern Bell Foundation, will later travel to The Art Institute of Chicago, the Dallas Museum of Art and The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The selection of more than 100 works will focus on the most influential aspects of O'Keeffe's career and present the best of her abstractions, flower paintings, figure studies, cityscapes, still lifes and landscapes. Rarely seen oil paintings, watercolors, pastels and drawings from the artist's estate provide the core of the exhibition. Also included will be major works from public and private collections in the U.S. and abroad.

J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery, said: "We are attempting to illuminate Miss O'Keeffe's innovative vision as an artist in the development of this exhibition. By presenting some highlights of her career, which spanned nearly 70 years, we can demonstrate the tremendous influence she has had on 20th-century American art. We were extremely grateful for the support of Miss O'Keeffe before her death and now for the assistance of her estate in bringing together these pictures."

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Born Nov. 15, 1887, Georgia O'Keeffe attracted the attention of Alfred Stieglitz in 1916 when her abstract drawings were presented to him without her knowledge by a mutual friend. Stieglitz' initial support and her participation in his renowned Gallery 291 and its circle of artists encouraged O'Keeffe to devote her life to art.

After a long history of visits to New Mexico and the Southwest, O'Keeffe moved permanently in 1949 to Abiquiu, New Mexico where she continued experimenting with both abstraction and realism, as well as a combination of both, perfecting her unique style. Paintings completed during her earlier years in New York and her later years in New Mexico show maturity, confidence and a visionary quality.

A fully illustrated catalogue will accompany the exhibition with essays by co-curators Jack Cowart, the National Gallery's curator of 20th-century art, and Juan Hamilton. A selection of previously unpublished letters by the artist to her many artist-friends, researched and edited by art historian Sarah Greenough, will establish the core text.

After its Washington showing (Nov. 1, 1987-Feb. 21, 1988), the exhibition will travel to The Art Institute of Chicago (March 12-June 26, 1988), the Dallas Museum of Art (July 31-Oct. 16, 1988) and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Nov. 9, 1988-Jan. 29, 1989).

Gerald D. Blatherwick, president of the Southwestern Bell Foundation and vice chairman of Southwestern Bell Corporation, said the exhibition "would introduce Miss O'Keeffe's works to a new generation of Americans.

Almost two decades have passed since there was a major O'Keeffe exhibition. This is an exciting opportunity for people to experience the highest quality work of a remarkably gifted artist," he said.