

National Gallery of Art News Release



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NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART AND GEORGIA O'KEEFFE FOUNDATION
IN JOINT PROJECT

Washington, D.C., October 30, 1991 -- The National Gallery of Art and the Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation announced today their partnership to produce a catalogue raisonné of the works of Georgia O'Keeffe. The fully illustrated catalogue will be the first publication to completely document O'Keeffe's art. One of America's foremost artists, O'Keeffe died in 1986 at the age of 98.

"This promises to be an enormously exciting and important project," said J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery of Art. "It will reveal for the first time the extraordinary range of the artist's imagination as well as the extent and beauty of her work."

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O'Keeffe was immediately recognized as an artist of significant talent after a group of her spare charcoal abstractions was shown by Alfred Stieglitz in 1916. She quickly became a central figure in the dynamic circle of artists associated with Stieglitz. "Whatever of life and vital impulse came to America, or out of America, was fatally and inevitably attracted to the small exhibition rooms and the burning spirit that centered there," wrote Herbert Seligman of her first exhibition.

O'Keeffe's subjects included flower paintings, abstractions, cityscapes, figure studies, and landscapes, especially of the American southwest, a region of particular significance in her life and career. Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz married in 1924 and she continued to divide her time between New York and the country home of the Stieglitz family at Lake George throughout the 1920's. In 1929 she spent, for the first time, a portion of the summer in New Mexico, a habit she maintained until she moved there permanently in 1949 following the death of Alfred Stieglitz three years earlier.

Georgia O'Keeffe's association with the National Gallery began in 1949. At that time, she donated more than 1200 of the finest photographs by Alfred Stieglitz. This formed the master set of his work. This same year she gave the Gallery a selection of works from the important collection Stieglitz formed of work by American modernists, including paintings by Arthur Dove and Marsden Hartley and watercolors by John Marin. In 1980 Miss O'Keeffe enriched the Stieglitz key set with her gift of 330 of his portraits of her that had previously been on deposit. Upon her death the Gallery was bequeathed eight of her paintings including the important series Jack in the Pulpit.

O'Keeffe played an important role in the organization of the National Gallery's 1983 Stieglitz exhibition. A centennial exhibition of her own paintings and watercolors opened here in Washington in 1987, the year following the artist's death.

The challenging task of compiling information on over 1200 works in painting, watercolor, pastel, charcoal and other drawing materials will continue over the next four years. The research will begin immediately and a four volume publication is planned. This monographic study will be an important contribution to scholarship in the field of American art in general and, in particular, American modernism.

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The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation was formed in 1989. Its principal mission is to perpetuate the artistic legacy of Georgia O'Keeffe. The members of the Foundation's Board of Directors are: Richard R. Brettell, Charles C. Eldredge, Juan Hamilton, Raymond R. Krueger and June O'Keeffe Sebring.

"Since its inception, the establishment of a catalogue raisonné project has been the major priority for the Foundation," said Elizabeth Glassman, President of the Foundation. "We are gratified to have the partnership of our associates at the National Gallery of Art in this undertaking."

The project will be directed by Ruth Fine, the National Gallery of Art's curator of modern prints and drawings, and Ms. Glassman. Research will be carried out partly at the National Gallery of Art, and partly in New Mexico at the headquarters of the O'Keeffe Foundation.