

## ELOQUENT OBJECTS:



Organized by Joseph S. Czeszochowski. Produced by International Arts\*. Curated by Charles C. Eldredge.

Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986), *Yellow Cactus*, 1929. Oil on canvas, 30 x 42 inches. Dallas Museum of Art, Texas. Patsy Lacy Griffith Collection, Bequest of Patsy Lacy Griffith. 1998.217. (O'Keeffe 675). © 2014 Georgia O'Keeffe Museum / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy International Arts\*.

## Georgia O'Keeffe and Still-Life Art in New Mexico

March 1 - June 7, 2015

# Exhibition Overview

## ***Eloquent Objects: Georgia O'Keeffe and Still-Life Art in New Mexico***

The exhibition features more than 60 paintings by Georgia O'Keeffe and her contemporaries. The art records the changing impressions of the harsh landscape of the Southwest and the region's evocative objects at a time when these artists were seeking to refine their individual versions of modern art through this uniquely American place. In addition to O'Keeffe and the iconic modernists Stuart Davis and Marsden Hartley, artists from each of the major art centers in the Southwest — Taos, Santa Fe, Albuquerque and Roswell — will be highlighted. These artists include, among others, Gustave Baumann, Catherine Critcher, and Eliseo Rodriguez.

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*Eloquent Objects: Georgia O'Keeffe and Still-Life Art in New Mexico* is presented by Propel Insurance. Generous support provided by Nordstrom, ArtsFund, and Tacoma Arts Commission.

### **Georgia O'Keeffe**

Georgia O'Keeffe is one of the most recognizable names in American art. Just the mention of her paintings brings immediately to mind her innovative style of presenting her world in large magnified images. O'Keeffe's still life paintings of flowers are her most famous images. Living in New York brought her fame, but living in the Southwest gave her freedom and happiness.

O'Keeffe first discovered New Mexico on her way to Texas in 1916. When she returned in 1929, she became convinced it was a place she wanted to explore and paint. She began spending part of the year discovering the area and painting its vistas. In 1934, O'Keeffe made her first visit to Ghost Ranch, a dude ranch north of Abiquiu, New Mexico, where she found a new inspiration for her work. She purchased this property in 1940 and began spending her summers there.

In 1945, O'Keeffe purchased another home in New Mexico, a property belonging to the Catholic Church in Abiquiu. She moved permanently to the area in 1949, spending the winter and spring in Abiquiu and the summer and fall at Ghost Ranch. O'Keeffe painted the landscape that had captured her imagination, but it was her still life paintings of flowers, bones, rocks, trees, churches, and her adobe home that provide the most vivid picture of the essence of the Southwest.

### **Still Life**

The traditional definition of a still life painting is an arrangement of everyday objects, such as flowers, food, china, bottles, books, etc. Many still life paintings contain symbols like flowers with falling or decaying leaves, and fruit that has spoiled, which are symbols of mortality. Early American still lifes containing an abundance of fruits and flowers often refer to fertility or a land of plentiful, harvests. Those with opulent accoutrements can signify wealth. There does not have to be a hidden meaning in a still life painting. It can be a combination of objects painted for their beauty, color, or shape.

Rarely do we think of still life painting as depictions of a specific area, which is this is such a unique and important exhibition. It takes a completely different perspective on still life painting than the traditional view. The still life paintings in this exhibition contain objects that represent various aspects of the American Southwest. Georgia O'Keeffe's desert composition *Deer Horns* and Alexandre Hogue's Native American imagery in *Studio Corner – Taos* are images of the Southwest. Many artists who lived and worked in the Southwest used Native American textiles and pottery in their still life paintings of native fruits and flowers.

Source: [Indianapolis Museum of Art](#)

## Online Resources

The Art Institute of Chicago – <http://www.artic.edu/aic/resources/resource-artist/17857>

Georgia O’Keeffe Museum – <http://www.okeeffemuseum.org/>

The Metropolitan Museum of Art – [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/geok/hd\\_geok.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/geok/hd_geok.htm)

Museum of New Mexico – <http://www.museumofnewmexico.org/index.php>

National Gallery of Art – <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/education/kids/kids-still.html>

New Mexico Museum of Art – <http://www.nmartmuseum.org/>

## Mission

Tacoma Art Museum serves the diverse communities of the Northwest through its collections, exhibitions and learning programs, emphasizing art and artists of the Northwest and broader western region.

## Location

1701 Pacific Avenue  
Tacoma, WA 98402

## Hours

Tuesday – Sunday 10 am – 5 pm  
Free Third Thursday 5 pm – 8 pm

## Contact

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