

[Poppy](#) by [Georgia O'Keeffe](#) (On Sale!)

Fine Art Print - Main Subject: Modern



Item Number

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Dimensions (As Shown)

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25.4W x 20.32H cm

Medium

Fine Art Print

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About Georgia O'Keeffe

Georgia O'Keeffe was an American artist born on November 15, 1887 in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. O'Keeffe is chiefly known for her landscapes and paintings of desert flowers, which are often interpreted as yonic symbols. Her mature style stressed contours and subtle tonal transitions, which often transformed the subject into a powerful abstract image. O'Keeffe studied painting at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Art Students' League in New York City. She began teaching in the public schools in Amarillo, Texas in 1914. In 1916 started teaching at Columbia College in Columbia, South Carolina. While in South Carolina, a friend showed some of O'Keeffe's drawings to photographer and art gallery owner Alfred Stieglitz. Impressed by the drawings, Stieglitz began negotiations to display her work and she allowed him to exhibit some of them. Stieglitz was especially impressed with O'Keeffe's interpretations of landscapes in the American West. In 1916, Stieglitz arranged for O'Keeffe to move to New York City and secured a place for her to live. Over the next few years O'Keeffe and Stieglitz fell in love, and Stieglitz and his wife divorced. In

1924, O'Keeffe and Stieglitz married, beginning one of history's great creative partnerships. Some of Stieglitz' best work was of O'Keeffe, his muse, and in turn he promoted and encouraged her art throughout his life. Georgia O'Keeffe was an American original, living as she chose, painting what she wanted. It is said that her art is uniquely American, shining with a bright modernism and energy. The lyrical flowers, the New Mexico-inspired vistas of light and shape, the hard-edged, energetic urban landscapes all somehow could only have been painted by an American woman. O'Keeffe painted all her days, committed as always to what she loved: "Art is a wicked thing. It is what we are."

During her years in New York City, O'Keeffe produced many paintings, including urban and architectural images. With Stieglitz's connections in the arts community of New York, O'Keeffe's work received a great deal of attention and commanded high prices. Yet O'Keeffe tired of the scene in New York and spent increasing amounts of time in the west. Stieglitz, many years older than O'Keeffe and often in ill health, was uncomfortable with travel. Her trips west gave her the solitude she required to pursue her art.

Though O'Keeffe insisted that there was no symbolism behind her work, art critics continue to speculate about the sexual imagery in such paintings as *Black Iris* (1926) and *Jack in the Pulpit No. 6* (1930). Indeed, this generative tension underlying her botanical paintings accounts for much of their force and mystery, and these images exalting life and energy were among her most optimistic and successful. Between 1926 and 1929 O'Keeffe painted a group of views of New York City. *New York Night* (1929) transformed skyscrapers into patterned, glittering structures that deny their volume. More architecturally characteristic were such paintings as *Lake George Barns* (1926) and *Ranchos Church, Taos* (1929). These simple buildings, further simplified in her painting, were America's anonymous folk architecture; in these forms O'Keeffe found a permanence and tranquility that contrasted with the frenetic urban environment.

In 1929 O'Keeffe began spending time in New Mexico; that region's dramatic mesas, ancient Spanish architecture, vegetation, and desiccated terrain became her constant themes. Total clarity characterizes her elemental vistas, and her subjects existed in self-contained worlds. Even her allegories of death in the desert—a sunbleached skull lying in the sand or affixed to a post (as in *Cow's Skull with Red*, 1936)—were eternalized. She regarded these whitened relics as symbols of the desert, nothing more. "To me, they are strangely more living than the animals walking around—hair, eyes and all, with their tails switching." The dried animal bones and wooden crucifixes of the region which loom in her desert (*Black Cross, New Mexico*, 1929) were disquieting apparitions.

In 1945 O'Keeffe bought an old adobe house in New Mexico; she moved there after her husband's death in 1946. The house served as a frequent subject. In paintings such as *Black Patio Door* (1955) and *Patio with Cloud* (1956) details of doors, windows, and walls were radically reduced to virtually unmodified planes of color. Many of O'Keeffe's paintings of the 1960s, large-scale patterns of clouds and landscapes seen from the air, reflected a romanticized view of nature evocative of her early themes. *It Was Blue and Green* (1960) used more impressionistic color, and the painting technique was looser, with less reliance on sharp contours. These large paintings culminated in a 24-foot mural on canvas, *Sky above Clouds IV* (1965). Her paintings of the 1970s were intense, powerful renditions of a black cock. A portrayal of O'Keeffe, *In Cahoots with Coyote*, from Terry Tempest Williams' 1994 book *An Unspoken Hunger*, painted a vivid narrative of the artist's entrancement with her beloved New Mexico she first visited in 1917.

"I simply paint what I see," O'Keeffe is quoted as saying, from O'Keeffe's own essays published in *Georgia O'Keeffe* in 1987. But, narrated Williams, her search for the ideal color, light, stones, parched bones that contained more life in them than living animals, transformed her forays into desert country into a communion with the perfection around her. Once, in a canyon bottom, she was so enthralled by the sight that she laid her head back Coyote-fashion and howled at the sky, terrifying her companions nearby who feared she was injured. "I can't help it—it's all so beautiful," was her response. Another, well-known story related by Williams was of O'Keeffe purloining a perfectly shaped, totally black stone she coveted from the coffee table of friends. They had found it at a canyon riverbed during a search for stones moments before O'Keeffe arrived at the spot, but kept it tantalizingly out of her reach. Obsessed with the stone and seeing it on the table for her to steal if she wanted, she had no doubt she was the rightful possessor of such beauty.

O'Keeffe's boldly original American works encompassed a wide vision from taut city towers to deserts in such vivid hues and form "as to startle the senses," according to the narrative. O'Keeffe painted until a few weeks before her death. O'Keeffe spent much of her time in Taos, New Mexico, and when Stieglitz died in 1946, she took up permanent residence there, living in Taos or Santa Fe until her death in March 6, 1986. Her home was in Abiqui, New Mexico. Many of her works found a permanent home among the adobe buildings of Santa Fe, New Mexico. The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, designed by New York architect Richard Gluckman, opened in 1997 to hold more of her pastels, drawings, paintings and sculpture than any other museum.

Fine Art Print

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