

The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA PRESENTS *GEORGIA O'KEEFFE: TO SEE TAKES TIME*, THE FIRST EXHIBITION TO FOCUS ON THE ARTIST'S PRACTICE OF DRAWING IN SERIES

Exhibition Includes Over 120 Works Spanning More Than 40 Years, Including Rarely Seen Drawings and Watercolors

Georgia O'Keeffe: To See Takes Time

April 9–August 12, 2023

Floor Three, 3 South

New York, NY, March 8, 2023—The Museum of Modern Art presents *Georgia O'Keeffe: To See Takes Time*, the first exhibition to investigate the artist's works on paper made in series. Using charcoal, watercolor, pastel, and graphite, she explored forms and phenomena—from abstract rhythms to nature's cycles—across multiple examples. Some of these sequences also gave rise to related paintings, which will be installed alongside these works on paper. On view in MoMA's third-floor south galleries from April 9 through August 12, 2023, the exhibition reveals a lesser-known side of this artist, foregrounding O'Keeffe's persistently modern process on paper. Over 120 works created over more than four decades—including key examples from MoMA's collection—demonstrate the ways in which O'Keeffe developed, repeated, and changed motifs that blur the boundary between observation and abstraction. Seen together, these works demonstrate how drawing in series allowed O'Keeffe to revisit and rework subjects throughout her career, and reveal the thoughtful material choices behind her resplendent compositions. The exhibition is organized by Samantha Friedman, Associate Curator, Department of Drawings and Prints, with Laura Neufeld, Associate Paper Conservator, The David Booth Conservation Department, and Emily Olek, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Drawings and Prints. Realized with the participation of the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe.

Though MoMA's 1946 *Georgia O'Keeffe* exhibition was its first retrospective of a woman artist, the Museum has not had an exhibition devoted to the artist since. This exhibition is the first to reunite drawings that are most often seen individually, in order to illuminate O'Keeffe's innovative serial practice. In the formative years of 1915 to 1918, O'Keeffe made more works on paper than she would at any other time, producing her breakthrough series of charcoals and sequences in watercolor of abstract lines, organic landscapes, and nudes. While her practice turned increasingly toward canvas after this period, important series on paper reappeared—including flowers of the 1930s, portraits of the 1940s, and aerial views of the 1950s—all of which are included in this exhibition.

“O’Keeffe’s works on paper are the perfect expression of her belief that ‘to see takes time,’” says associate curator Samantha Friedman. “She recognized the necessity of slowing down for her own vision, and, in turn, her sequences of drawings invite us to take time in looking.”

Among the key works in the exhibition is the early charcoal *No. 8 – Special (Drawing No. 8)* (1916). O’Keeffe called some of her works “specials,” indicating her belief in their success; this drawing features a spiraling composition that would recur throughout the artist’s decades-long career. She once noted of this work, “I have made this drawing several times—never remembering that I had made it before—and not knowing where the idea came from,” emphasizing the seriality of her practice.

Another highlight of the exhibition will be the first reunion of all eight watercolors in the Evening Star series (1917), whose luminous palette reflects O’Keeffe’s response to a Texas sky. Together, these works express how the artist’s development of an idea across multiple sheets mirrors the shifting forms and movement of nature itself. Tracing the course of a dramatic sunset, O’Keeffe transitions from discrete bands of color separated by areas of blank paper to fully bled areas of liquid pigment.

Drawing X (1959), made the year O’Keeffe took a three-month trip around the world, was inspired by the views of the landscape she witnessed from a plane. One in a series of such charcoals that also led to subjectively colored paintings, this work offers a key example of the complex and subtle relationship between representation and abstraction within the artist’s project.

PUBLICATION:

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue edited by Samantha Friedman, with essays by Friedman and Laura Neufeld. 180 pages, 200 color illustrations. Hardcover, \$50. ISBN: 978-1-63345-147-6. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and available at MoMA stores and online at store.moma.org. Distributed to the trade through ARTBOOK|D.A.P. in the United States and Canada, and through Thames & Hudson in the rest of the world.

LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT:

[Family Art Making: Inspired by Georgia O’Keeffe](#)

April 10-15

Explore the extraordinary drawings and watercolors of Georgia O’Keeffe at this drop-in program. Participants will create a series of artworks on paper using a variety of materials inspired by the artist’s process. Recommended for ages six through 14. This drop-in program is included with Museum admission, and no registration is required. Please enter through the main lobby of the Museum and proceed to the Education Center.

Kids Guide

Families can explore the exhibition using a dedicated guide with drawing and searching activities exploring how O'Keeffe experimented with repetition and abstraction.

AUDIO GUIDE:

Discover a new vision of the modern artist with a guided exploration of O'Keeffe's works on paper. Inspired by her deliberate approach, the audio playlist will encourage listeners to look closely at works in the exhibition. The audio presents stories and gives context, ranging from the artist's biography and artistic process, to the ways O'Keeffe captures the natural world from unexpected perspectives. Featuring commentary from the exhibition's curatorial team, a MoMA conservator, and thinkers like curator Patricia Marroquin Norby, scholar Richard Powell, and artist Armando Andrade Tudela, the audio reflects on the connection between art, life, and time, embodying O'Keeffe's mission to "make even busy New-Yorkers take time to see what I see." Available free of charge on mom.org/audio and MoMA's guide on the Bloomberg Connects app.

SPONSORSHIP:

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