

MoxieBox University

Who was Georgia O'Keeffe?

Georgia O'Keeffe was a passionate artist inspired by the nature around her. She grew up on a farm in Wisconsin in 1887. She was just a bit older than you when she knew exactly what she wanted to be when she grew up – an artist! Do you know what you want to be?

What Georgia didn't realize at the young age of 12 was that it was going to be very difficult to have an art career as a woman. She was not taken seriously and became so discouraged that she stopped painting for 4 years.

Finally, a friend sent pictures of her artwork to a photographer and art gallery owner, Alfred Stieglitz. He was very interested in working with her and soon after they met, they fell in love and got married.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgia_O%27Keeffe

What's in a memory?

Everything! Georgia O'Keeffe proved memory and vivid imagination to be extremely important. Georgia suffered from macular degeneration causing blindness in later life. However, she said, "I can see what I want to paint. The thing that makes you want to create is still there."

She enlisted the help of several assistants to enable her to continue to create art from her vivid memories.

Georgia O'Keeffe died at the age of 98 in 1986. Her art continues to be used as a pathway and teaching tool all over the world from elementary schools to collegiate levels and greater. What a beautiful legacy!

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Georgia O'Keefe was born of humble roots in Wisconsin in 1887. As a child, she showed talent and interest in drawing and painting with charcoals and watercolors. She started the serious study of art in 1905, and she later became a commercial artist, college professor and professional painter.

While a college student, she met Alfred Stieglitz, an art dealer and famous photographer. O'Keefe moved with him to New York and they married in 1924. In 1929, O'Keefe began her fascination with the American southwest, especially New Mexico. She spent more and more time there and found her identity in the austere beauty of the desert land and sky. She lived and painted in New Mexico off and on for the rest of her life. Her subjects ranged from desert scenes to skyscrapers. One of her most famous paintings is a magnified view of a white flower. Later in life, even when she was losing her eyesight, she continued to create until 1984, two years before her death.

Georgia O'Keefe will be remembered as one of the most groundbreaking artists of her time. Her work is shown around the world, with the largest collection in The Georgia O'Keefe Museum in Santa Fe. She was one of the first female artists recognized for her talent. She possessed a reputation for passion and determination in the face of the continuous prejudice against women artists. Her success led to the recognition of others for their contributions to the art world. Some other female artists from history are: Artemisia Gentileschi (Italian, 1593-1656), Camille Claudel (French, 1864-1943), Mary Cassatt (American, 1844-1926), Frida Kahlo (Mexican, 1907-1954) and Joan Mitchell (American, 1925-1992). You can learn more about these artists at the library or online.

Here are some of her highly personal reactions to the New Mexico landscape, her "sense of place."



She also had a fascination with the unlooked at details of nature, especially flowers. In flowers she saw a manifestation of the mystical, magical and awesome quality of nature and the forces that created it.



CHALLENGE: Make a "Sense of Place" piece of art about your favorite place. Make it as personal as you can. Why did you choose the elements that you did? Why do you have such strong feelings and/or connection to the place?

Now make another piece of art for a place that only exists in your imagination, what does this look like and why are you attracted to it? How is the imaginary place different from the real one?