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Long recognised as a major figure in American art, Georgia O'Keeffe has had a number of retrospective exhibitions at leading American museums, each one a major event. Yet no full colour collection of her work has been available until now. This comprehensive volume consists of 108 colour plates accompanied by text written by the artist.

Georgia O'Keeffe Details

Date : Published September 29th 1977 by Penguin Books (first published 1974)

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Author : Georgia O'Keeffe

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Genre : Art, Nonfiction, Biography, Autobiography, Reference, Art History, Biography Memoir

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From Reader Review Georgia O'Keeffe for online ebook

Kristin says

The unexplainable thing in nature that makes me feel the world is big far beyond my understanding - to understand maybe by trying to put it into form. To find the feeling of infinity on the horizon line or just over the next hill. ~Georgia O'Keeffe

Sep says

An interesting collection of Georgia O'Keeffe's paintings and her comments on same.

Bonnie says

Love her work and have owned this book for over 20 years--super pictures too

Melinda says

Fascinating words and amazing art from one of the greatest artists of the 20th century. The early essay about her childhood and art training in Chicago and New York is worth the price of admission, but the large color plates of her watercolors, New York oils, and famous Southwestern canvasses make this an enlightening coffee table book. As O'Keeffe says, "I had been taught to work like others and after careful thinking I decided that I wasn't going to spend my life doing what had already been done." What a manifesto for women and creative souls everywhere.

Sirpa Grierson says

O'Keeffe on O'Keeffe. "I am often amazed at the spoken and written word telling me what I have painted. I make this effort because no one else can know how my paintings happen."

Gorgeous book in her own spare, inimitable style; with 108 selected paintings. I looked at everything differently after this book. Shapes and colors of the "wideness and wonder of the world" as she lived it.

Cristiana Pagliarusco says

... what should I say? ... she has made my dreams come true. when working meets loving.

Burd says

I've always been inspired by the work of Georgia O'Keefe. Her paintings have a spiritual feel to them. The rich, deep colours and the flowing shapes fading into and out of one another, the sharp angles cutting into a soft background, all make her paintings so fascinating to look at.

I had owned this book for many years and looked through it so many times enjoying the beautiful colour plates. After recently seeing her work at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, I picked it up again to re-read the text and gain more insight into her work. You always take your own views into account when looking at a painting that appeals to you but to know about the thoughts of the artist behind their paintings adds an extra dimension to how you look at it and enhances the enjoyment of that art.

Georgia O'Keefe had a beautiful and unique gift of being able to see things, ordinary things, in a different way than most people could. This was due in part to her synesthesia, a condition present in about 4% of the population where sensory perceptions are crossed over. In her case, she could experience colour perception with certain sounds. She expressed this perception in a number of her paintings.

Also, from reading her writings, I could see she was an introspective and sensitive woman. She was very deeply touched by the beauty in nature and carried that into her work. I enjoyed re-reading this book and I plan to some day visit her museum in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Bob Nichols says

I never thought I cared for O'Keefe's paintings. I liked her biography more. At Ghost Ranch, I heard about a single book she had published that contained just over a hundred hand-picked paintings, with commentary. I let it pass. Then at Goodwill, I saw the book, bought it and had a nice reaction to it.

In her commentary that describes her approach to painting, she says that "I found that I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say in any other way—things that I had no words for." It was about "the idea of filling space in a beautiful way." It was the idea "that music could be translated into something for the eye to see." The "Shell and Old Shingle" were for her "singing shapes."

She notes that since flowers were too small for people to appreciate, she made them big and then, as to imputed meaning, there's this quote from her: "Well—I made you take time to look at what I saw and when you took time to really notice my flower you hung all your own associations with flowers on my flower and you write about my flower as if I think and see what you think and see of the flower--and I don't." For her "Black and White," she writes that "This was a message to a friend--if he saw it he didn't know it was to him and wouldn't have known what it said. And neither did I."

She called her New Mexico landscapes "the Far Away." It, and its contents, is a world of "wideness and wonder" that she reduced to its essence. In one painting, with just shape and color, hills hold and embrace the sky.

Amy says

After reading a novel based on the first part of O'Keeffe's life I wanted to see her paintings. This was a beautiful book, with good reproductions of the paintings and quotes from O'Keeffe about them, and her life. It was interesting to read O'Keeffe's words set against the paintings. Could look at these images forever.

Leslie Goddard says

In one sense, this is a nice coffee-table book with lovely, large images of O'Keeffe's paintings and drawings, carefully chosen (by her) to cover a wide range of her work.

But in a larger sense, it is an introduction to who O'Keeffe was. By that, I don't mean it's an autobiography. It's not, and you won't get a full portrait of her life. Although you can get a sense of how important this book has been to biographers from how many passages are quoted over and over. I knew most of these stories already from having read several O'Keeffe biographies.

What you will get is a strong sense of who she was as an artist. The writing that she includes remind me of her paintings -- strong, clear snapshots of a moment in time that capture a feeling or a sense. Some of her comments are minimal -- some quite brief, others more fleshed-out, but always more concerned with conveying the emotions of a moment than telling a complete narrative. I felt that she was trying to capture for readers what art meant to her, how she approached her artistic projects and what paintings did for her that no other medium could.

Essential for an O'Keeffe lover, though I might not recommend it as a first introduction to her biography.

Barbara Rice says

This looks like a coffee table book, and it could be used as that, but it shouldn't be treated like one. The paintings, text, and layout was all selected and approved by Georgia O'Keeffe. The colors are the most faithful possible (at the time of printing) to the original works.

When reading this, I feel like I am walking through time as narrated by Georgia O'Keeffe - from the 1890's in Wisconsin, into the 1920's in New York City, to an enormous vacation home in upstate New York in the '30's, and finally to the desolate New Mexico through the remainder of the twentieth century.

Monica says

This was a groundbreaking book when it first came out. Never had so many of O'Keeffe's paintings been available. It's a tall, narrow, oversized book with large type, open spaces and full page reproductions complemented by Georgia's own commentary. You get the feeling her hand was really involved in this book.

Chrissie says

I recommend reading this book after *Portrait of an Artist: A Biography of Georgia O'Keeffe*, which I gave five stars. The first is a biography of her whole life. With that as a background you easily recognize the people and the places she speaks of. Here, the artist speaks only of her art. This is a large format book showing the paintings of the author as well as the artist's reasons for and explanations of each artwork. It explains what she was trying to do with each painting.

I find this line, on page 63, essential:

"And I long ago came to the conclusion that even if I could put down accurately the thing that I saw and enjoyed, it could not give to the observer the kind of feeling that it gave me."

She says this as an explanation of why she so often paints parts of an object, rather than the whole. Yet the same idea lays behind her other techniques and how different individuals perceive all art. She stresses the importance of shape, that a shape can hold beauty. She explains how it is the hole that pulls her rather than the object itself, for example the startling blue sky in the hole encircled by a pelvis bone. She expresses her view on objective versus abstract art. You learn how one painting led to another, and when you see the progression you more easily comprehend the message. She specifies how she made the artwork, step by step from the stretching of the canvas to the final transport to the studio. Painstaking hard work.

You see paintings of shells, of flowers, of bones, of houses, of NYC, of antlers, of stones, of skies, of clouds, of hills.

To understand O'Keeffe's painting I had to read this book. With her help I have come to understand what she wanted said. What I looked at before with unknowing eyes I now look at with a new perspective and see the beauty **she** wanted me to see.

Each of us is different. Without her accompanying lines, most of us will probably not see what she was trying to say. Yet if a form / a shape has beauty, while our interpretations may differ, we should see that beauty.

Michael McNamara says

Beautiful reproductions of her work with helpful texts to illuminate them.

Grady Ormsby says

Years ago as part of a visit with our friend in Taos, Kitty and I visited the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum in Santa Fe. We were quite impressed. So when we saw an announcement for *Georgia O'Keeffe: Modern Living* at the Reynolda House Museum of American Art in Winston-Salem, we knew we had to go. It was a terrific visit. A few days after, Kitty told a friend about our visit. She loaned us a copy of *Georgia O'Keeffe*. At first glance it seems like any typical coffee table art book. But this one is different. There is no reason to rely on the judgments and opinions of scholars, researchers and critics. This book is by Georgia O'Keeffe.

She selected the paintings. She wrote the commentary and captions. It was published in 1976 when she was 89 and covers all but the last ten years of her life. The book is as much a work of art as anything else she produced.

In the opening section of the book she defines herself and her art by saying, “I had been taught to work like others and after careful thinking I decided that I wasn’t going to spend my life doing what others had already done.” Her early painting include abstractions, her New York scenes (despite being told painting New York couldn’t be done) and, of course, flowers, large flowers which would be a regular subject throughout her career. Of flowers she said, “I’ll paint it big and they will be surprised into taking time to look at it.” Many of her analytical remarks are actually refutations of what others thought she was doing and assumptions about what they thought she meant. She has particularly strong words for those she refers to as “The men,” especially when it comes to suggestions as to what they thought she should and shouldn’t, could and couldn’t do. For the most part she ignored critics. “Flattery and criticism go down the same drain and I am quite free.” The book is arranged in chronological order and the reader/viewer is taken on a journey through the various periods of her career: the alligator pears, the landscapes from Lake George and York Beach, Maine, and the St. Lawrence River. Her best known works are from the time she lived at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico: more flowers, many bones, surreal landscapes, the “singing shapes” of the shells and shingles, and the Ranchos de Taos Church. The New Mexico landscapes were done while camping from a Model T often in stark isolation and extreme weather conditions. I particularly enjoy comparing and contrasting multiple versions of the same subject sometimes painted years apart. Check out your local or regional museum. Support the arts!
