

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

[1887–1986]

Georgia O'Keeffe was an American painter. She was best-known for her paintings of the American Southwest.

Her career began in New York City, after mailing some of her drawings to an art dealer there. The dealer loved the drawings, calling them the most sincere things he had seen in a long time, and invited her to move to New York. Her early works were often abstract drawings, sometimes based on nature. In one of her paintings, she drew the inside of an iris flower. The rest of the flower couldn't be seen so the patterns and shapes of its inside appear to be a completely abstract design.

Later on, she relocated to New Mexico. She was fond of being alone and found the desert landscape beautiful and a great place to explore on her own. Her paintings became less abstract at that time, and she began to paint many desert scenes with smooth brush strokes and gentle colors. Some of her paintings had elements of surrealism in them, such as one where a ram's skull hovers above a New Mexico landscape. When asked what she was trying to show in her paintings and what the Southwest meant to her, she said "Such a beautiful, untouched lonely-feeling place, such a fine part of what I call the 'Faraway'. It is a place I have painted before ... even now I must do it again."

O'Keeffe's work in the Southwest brought her into contact with the famous photographer Ansel Adams. Adams spent much of his career photographing the stark landscapes of the desert. There are a few scenery's that both O'Keeffe and Adams captured in similar ways; one with painting, and one with photography.

Georgia O'Keeffe had a long and successful career. She died at a very old age in Santa Fe. Her work has become an important part of American art.



Light of Iris



*Ram's Head White Hollyhock
Little Hills*



Taos Church

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EXERCISE

Georgia O'Keeffe's career was very long and she made many different kinds of paintings. Her relationship with the Southwest was always very important to her, though. Is there a place you have been that is meaningful to you? Try to draw a picture of it, and write a paragraph about where it is and what it was like.


