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# PARADISE FOR THE PIONEER: GEORGIA O'KEEFFE'S TRIP TO HAWAI'I

Georgia Totto O'Keeffe is one of the major figures in American modernism, known primarily for her paintings of the American Southwest; however, she also traveled around to and depicted other diverse areas of the United States, such as New Mexico, Lake George and New York City. Her artwork captured where she was at a given time through her unique and modernized style. O'Keeffe's interest in traveling provided her the chance to escape life's troubles and be inspired by her surroundings. One of her lesser-known, yet influential, trips was to Hawai'i for a commission awarded to her by the Hawaiian Pineapple Company, later named the Dole Food Company, in 1939. She spent nine weeks there in exchange for the promise of producing two paintings that the company would use for advertising purposes. In addition to these advertising pieces, she produced a series of 20 beautiful paintings. Although these pieces wonderfully capture Hawai'i and demonstrate the distinct style she applied to every natural environment she encountered, they are not usually mentioned in the scholarly literature

analyzing her career. Even her autobiography fails to explore this trip deeply, and the series has only appeared in a small number of exhibitions. Despite their lack of fame, this series made a positive impact on O'Keeffe, both personally and professionally. By allowing her to escape harsh critics at home and explore a new natural environment, Hawai'i reinvigorated O'Keeffe's confidence in her practice and herself.

O'Keeffe grew up in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, living on her family's dairy farm.<sup>1</sup> She had a very long career as an artist, living to be 98 years old.<sup>2</sup> As a child, she took painting and drawing lessons with her two younger sisters.<sup>3</sup> O'Keeffe then continued her artistic development, studying with Elizabeth May Willis, when her family moved to Williamsburg, Virginia. In 1907, she enrolled at the Art Institute of Chicago, and, finally, took classes at the Arts Students League in New York. In New York, she was trained by William Merritt Chase in the practice of using oil paint,<sup>4</sup> which she would come to master and for which she would be best known in her career. From 1908-1910, O'Keeffe

became frustrated and felt stunted by the imitative practice she was being taught and felt she could never produce a painting that was better than any that had been made before. She moved back to Chicago and worked on advertising and design projects<sup>5</sup> in order to make a living, until she moved back home and her sisters inspired her to look into the art classes offered at the University of Virginia (UVA).<sup>6</sup> From there, O’Keeffe began to find her own individual style at UVA under the influence of Alon Bement’s instruction, who had embraced Arthur Wesley Dow’s belief “that realism and conventionality were the ‘death of art.’”<sup>7</sup> The abstract representations of natural and manmade forms for which O’Keeffe is known would not have been possible without this introduction to self expression and distinctive style. O’Keeffe expresses that she learned that “art could be a thing of your own”<sup>8</sup> and we see her investigate this theory throughout her experience as an artist.

Bement further inspired O’Keeffe to become a teacher, due to his instructional style, and offered her a position at UVA which led her to exploring the world of art education in the Amarillo, Texas public schools. She eventually lived in New York throughout 1914-1916 to learn from Dow himself.<sup>9</sup> Throughout these years, she lived and taught at UVA and schools in South Carolina and Texas, but did not produce much in the way of painting. Following her hiatus from art production, she began to explore her individual artist’s touch through charcoal drawings. Pulling her inspiration from all the artists and styles she had studied, she created her own artistic voice. Her creative revelation can also be attributed to her exposure to the Southwestern climate and environment in Texas. It opened her eyes to new nature

experiences. O’Keeffe loved the harsh conditions of Texas, which contrasted greatly with the world she had grown up with in the Midwest. She expressed that “it is the only place I have ever felt that I really belonged—that I really felt at home.”<sup>10</sup> As O’Keeffe continued to move around the country, she was able to feel like she fit in at each place she visited.

For instance, she painted cityscapes and buildings when she lived with Stieglitz in midtown New York.<sup>11</sup> She would also paint the landscape of New Mexico when she would visit each summer, and where she would eventually move after Stieglitz passed away in 1964.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, she would visit Lake George, New York, where Stieglitz’ family owned a house, in the summers, and produce paintings, which, “compared to the Southwest subjects, were inclined to be quiet and sometimes somber, pervaded by a sober Northern mood.”<sup>13</sup> O’Keeffe captures the essence of an environment in her paintings, not just their visual attributes. Although she utilizes similar stylistic techniques at each location, each series embodies its own spirit and serves as a source of creative inspiration for her.

O’Keeffe’s long-term move to New York was a result of her friend Anita Pollitzer, sending, unbeknownst to her, some of O’Keeffe’s drawings along to famous photographer and gallery owner Alfred Stieglitz. He assisted in creating the modern art world in America through his exhibitions at the 291 gallery and he and O’Keeffe quickly bonded over their shared interest in avant-garde works and the American transcendentalist movement. He was very supportive of her work and of female artists in general; however, he thought women and men interpreted the world in divergent ways. Stieglitz was

married for twenty years before meeting O'Keeffe, who was twenty-four years younger than he. He eventually showed her work in April 1917, in what would be the first of many exhibits in his galleries.<sup>14</sup> He would not only become her husband, but he would come to have a large role in defining her career. O'Keeffe's early canon of work would range from abstract natural watercolor landscapes<sup>15</sup> to nude paintings done exclusively in red, blue-green and black.<sup>16</sup>

O'Keeffe had a lot of expectations placed on her as she came to be known as the breakthrough, female, modern artist. Unfortunately for O'Keeffe, male critics skewed the public's opinions about her art. Her identity was being defined by her sex and was starting to be seen as art made for the sake of men's enjoyment.<sup>17</sup> It got to the point where "her art was not described as the vision of someone with real, deeply felt desires, but as the vision of womanhood *tout court* or that depersonalized Woman who obligingly stands for Nature and Truth."<sup>18</sup> O'Keeffe's paintings were seen to carry the responsibility of representing female artists and women as a whole. Her painting skills were overlooked and seen merely within the limited abilities under which female artists were expected to perform.

Helen Appleton Read makes clear in her 1928 article, "The Feminine View-Point in Contemporary Art," that works by O'Keeffe and other women were much more complicated than the "traditional feminine subjects, such as flowers, babies, and delicate colour schemes."<sup>19</sup> O'Keeffe often painted flowers and landscapes, so it was easy for critics to immediately place her under the constructed category of female art. Read responds to these characterizations, writing that

O'Keeffe's works show so much more than that and that "she paints flowers and fruits and, occasionally, landscapes extremely well. Her view-point is unique and personal, and her technical equipment extraordinarily competent and individual."<sup>20</sup> Her talent was unappreciated which produced an underlying challenge for O'Keeffe to surpass what society expected of her.

Not only did her sex define who she was, but it was also used by her husband and critics alike to project an overly sexual tone onto her artwork. Her paintings were often interpreted with sexual connotations, especially by men. Stieglitz benefitted from their reputation since he could get men to come to see her art by promoting it as a kind of pornography.<sup>21</sup> Her early watercolor paintings were interpreted as so erotic that "she decided to change the direction of her work."<sup>22</sup> O'Keeffe declared that she then would paint "an array of alligator pearls...calla lilies...horrid yellow sunflowers—two red cannas—some white birches with yellow leaves..."<sup>23</sup> but this shift would not stop her critics' misinterpretations.

Stieglitz' sensualized understanding of her art influenced how male critics wrote about her, and Stieglitz perpetuated these views by using these critics' comments in catalogues promoting O'Keeffe's shows.<sup>24</sup> "The problem with these accounts of O'Keeffe's art is not that her pictures are not sexual, but [they] were crudely transposed by critics into a fulsome, clichéd prose."<sup>25</sup> The sexual theme some found in her works became a widely accepted way of interpreting them, and so their impressiveness and complexity were not fully appreciated.

Some art critics even credited this sexual

breakthrough O’Keeffe was thought to be expressing in her art to Stieglitz himself. He proudly utilized their statements in describing her work despite how upset it made her because he was getting credit for her style.<sup>26</sup> For instance, “in a review of her first major show, [Henry] McBride said flatly that O’Keeffe and her art were Stieglitz’s creations; that he had fomented the sexual liberation that enabled her (however “sub-consciously”) to paint.”<sup>27</sup> It is understandable how such readings of her work could become offensive to O’Keeffe, as her gift of painting was being ascribed to her husband. O’Keeffe had a lot of pressure on her to break out of an unsolicited identity that society, critics, and her husband had imposed upon her.

Although difficult to handle, these harsh constrictions and judgments of her work furthered O’Keeffe’s desire to maintain a sense of freedom in her art, life and practice. She had always been a very independent person and her travels, often alone, exemplified this characteristic trait. In 1938, N.W. Ayer & Son inquired of O’Keeffe to go to Hawai’i and produce two paintings which would be used by the Hawaiian Pineapple Company to promote their pineapple juice. They were one of many advertising agencies at this time that had begun using fine artists’ works in advertisements as a tactic to sell their products.<sup>28</sup> O’Keeffe’s attention to nature, in her modernist style, would provide a way to advertise Hawai’i as an exotic, unknown place. O’Keeffe also had experience with commissions; she had done other commissioned work, including mural projects for New York City’s Radio City Music Hall, a painting for a beauty salon in Manhattan (Elizabeth Arden Beauty Salon), and glass designs for Steuben Glass.<sup>29</sup>

O’Keeffe agreed to the job. When she arrived in Honolulu, she was warmly welcomed by the Atherton Richards family with an afternoon tea at their house. She had been made known by local newspapers as the “famous painter of flowers” before she got there. This would be a nine-week trip beginning on the island of O’ahu, then moving to the island of Kaua’i, where she would meet and stay with Robert Allerton and John Gregg, who showed her around the island. When she later visited Maui, she stayed with the Jennings family and was guided around the island by Patricia Jennings, their 12-year-old daughter. They explored Hāna together in the Jennings family car and drove around the coast as well as through luscious ‘Īao Valley. O’Keeffe then traveled to Hilo on the main island of Hawai’i where she experienced the black sand beach of Kalapana and stayed at the Volcano House hotel which sat on the rim of the volcano.<sup>30</sup> Thus, she was able to see much of the islands and be exposed to their iconic features by residents who knew them well.

That O’Keeffe was selected to complete such a project indicates the level of fame she had achieved at this point in her career. N.W. Ayer & Son hoped to intrigue their consumers with Hawai’i itself, not just the pineapples’ “nutritional and health benefits.”<sup>31</sup> The hope was that the unknown entity of Hawai’i and its products would become much more appealing when O’Keeffe and other artists, including Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Isamu Noguchi and Millard Sheets, presented them in their distinctive styles. For example, A.M. Cassandre [fig. 1] included images of an ukulele, white flowers and a vast, moonlit horizon visible from Hawai’i’s shores which present the consumer with all that they can experience when they drink a glass of pineapple juice.<sup>32</sup> Did N.W. Ayer & Son choose

her because they thought her sexual reputation would attract costumers' attention? The Hawaiian Pineapple Company itself played off this sense of tropical paradise and hoped the artists they hired would capture this feeling in their works in order to sell their products.<sup>33</sup> Future study would benefit from exploring whether O'Keeffe's works perpetuate the sexualized exoticism illustrated in many modern artists' depictions of seemingly primitive societies, or simply present the rare Hawaiian fauna and landscapes.

The original paintings she sent to the ad company were *Heliconia—Crab's Claw Ginger* [fig. 2] and *Papaya Tree—Īao Valley* [fig. 3].<sup>34</sup> She had felt that these two paintings best captured her experience and Hawai'i itself. Her decision to paint a papaya tree may have been a jab at the company for the trouble they had given her following her request for complete control over what she would paint, since their rival company at the time was promoting papaya juice.<sup>35</sup> Dissatisfied with no painting of a pineapple for a pineapple juice advertisement, N.W. Ayer & Son shipped a pineapple to O'Keeffe in New York after her return. She finally fulfilled the commission and painted *Pineapple Bud* [fig. 4]. She was surprisingly pleased with the plant and exclaimed that "it's a beautiful plant....It is made up of long green blades and the pineapples grow on top of it. I never knew that."<sup>36</sup> Although she was stubborn, O'Keeffe was very interested in exploring new things, and that intrigue had led her to take the commission in the first place. *Heliconia—Crab's Claw Ginger* and *Pineapple Bud* were featured in magazine advertisements [fig. 5 and fig. 6] for the Hawaiian Pineapple Company.<sup>37</sup>

*Pineapple Bud* [fig. 4] is definitely not the

idyllic vision of a pineapple that one may picture when considering buying pineapple juice. The bud of the pineapple plant sits toward the bottom left corner of the composition with spikes resembling those found on the full-grown fruit, but are painted in red, white and green hues. The long, spiky green leaves radiate out from the bud in a smooth gradation, as is typical of O'Keeffe's style. The background is the same fiery red-orange found in the bud of the plant, bringing the whole piece together harmoniously. This painting beautifully demonstrates O'Keeffe's known practice of enlarging an object and presenting it from an aerial point of view. It also repeats her characteristic trope of an intimate look into the plant that was seen as gynecological and that later influenced Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party*.

As seen in an earlier characteristic work, *Jimson Weed* of 1936 [fig. 7], her typical technique of using a cropped perspective of an object "enabled her to reveal its structure with complete clarity...Magnification was another kind of abstraction, of separating the object from ordinary reality, and endowing it with a life of its own."<sup>38</sup> From her Hawaiian series, *Hibiscus with Plumeria* [fig. 8] provides an intimate view of the hibiscus plant with a similar perspective as *Jimson Weed* [fig. 7] while embodying a more tropical feel with the bright blue background and pastel pinks and oranges. Viewers are exposed to the inner flower and their eyes follow the strokes making up the smooth petals as they extend from the stem to outside the edges of the canvas.

O'Keeffe's works from this series clearly show her in-depth exploration of Hawai'i as a whole, using similar observational and design techniques she had used in other

locations. When beginning her paintings in Hawai'i, she was "starting with something she knew, 'a flower,'" and more particularly, she honed in on the white bird of paradise and heliconia plants.<sup>39</sup> With such new flora and fauna, as compared to the deserts of the southwest, the high-rise buildings of New York, the plains of the Midwest or the mountains in Lake George, it is understandable that she began with a familiar subject and her practice of the intimate viewpoint.

For instance, *White Bird of Paradise* [fig. 9] further exhibits her characteristic framing of a main object floating in space against a flattened backdrop of color, in this case, purples, blues, and whites. Her smooth brush strokes make up the spikey, upward-reading petals of the plant and illustrate the tension that it seems to encompass. As art historian Theresa Papanikolas wrote, "she captured this flower's structural complexity in a composition consisting of three intricately intertwined blossoms."<sup>40</sup> O'Keeffe does not simply replicate the outward appearance of the flower, but infuses it with character and dynamic, giving an insight into what these islands are like, beyond the travel brochures.

Her *Heliconia—Crab's Claw Ginger* [fig. 2] similarly exemplifies the exotic plant-life of Hawai'i without it becoming a touristy trope. She presents the "plant...prized for its architectural red flowers"<sup>41</sup> in a uniquely straightforward manner, absent her typical viewpoint of looking downward and inward. The vibrant plant reaches toward the right side of the composition with fantastically red spiked blossoms and highlights of bright green and yellow on the top edges of each. Almost as if leaping into the visual field, it is set against a horizon as its background, introducing the infinite horizons O'Keeffe observed and

painted on the shores of Hawai'i. It has been said that "O'Keeffe's lifelong attachment to open landscapes grew directly from an innate response to her Midwestern birthplace,"<sup>42</sup> and she is seen painting many of these here.

Her work *Fishhook from Hawai'i* [fig. 10] also exhibits this endless horizon line between the sky and the Pacific Ocean. This piece, however, plays with illusions of space in an almost Surrealist way; the horizon line is disrupted within the boundaries of the fishhook loop, as if it has become a magnifying glass. The pastel blue and pink hues used by O'Keeffe present this Surrealist-like seascape as an otherwise much more approachable and calm scene. Nonetheless, the image is presented in a genuinely new style of painting for O'Keeffe in which she explores her ability to distort space and manipulate reality. These evocative horizons contrast with the mostly dry, taciturn skylines O'Keeffe painted of the American Southwest and are unique to these works and O'Keeffe's experience of Hawai'i.

When exploring Hāna, a very isolated part of the island of Maui, O'Keeffe enjoyed her drives through the 'Īao valleys. She completed three paintings of views from her drive through the area and in her paintings of the waterfalls and lush greenery, O'Keeffe's investigation of the new environment can be understood. Although she had painted in Lake George before, which has lots of vegetation, the climate and grandiosity of the scenery of the 'Īao valley was very different. In a letter to her friend Ettie Stettheimer, O'Keeffe describes it as "a wonderful green valley—sheer green mountains rising straight up as mountains can—waterfalls when it rains—lots of them and it rains often

but the rain doesn't feel wet as it does in N.Y.”<sup>43</sup> In *Waterfall No. 1, 'Īao Valley, Maui* [fig. 11], O'Keeffe illustrates the rushing water of the waterfalls down the center green and sky blue. She presents this new vibrancy in her work through these lush valley depictions.

The compelling aspect of O'Keeffe's works is that she can make unknown worlds accessible to outsiders through her interpretation of the landscape or object. Art historian Papanikolas speaks of how Hawai'i had taken on an idealized, mysterious identity thanks to the fascination European and American artists had with it. Since she was entering into her trip with the mindset of a neophyte, O'Keeffe made a special effort to explore Hawai'i's unique landscape, plants, and people.<sup>44</sup> “From the microcosm of a seashell or botanical specimen to the macrocosm of an endless horizon, O'Keeffe continually gave form to the deep, personal meanings she found in her numerous places, capturing the minutiae to which she was drawn and the infinite space they occupied.”<sup>45</sup> Other critics agreed. “The *New York World-Telegram* remarked, ‘Her pictures, always brilliant and exciting, admit us to a world that is alien and strange.... Her bird of paradise, her hibiscuses and her fishhooks silhouetted against the blue Hawaiian water are exciting and beautiful.’”<sup>46</sup>

Nonetheless, she also made them comprehensible places through the familiarity, repetition even, of her style. Art critic Elizabeth McCausland commented on the exhibition of O'Keeffe's Hawai'i paintings stating that:

*the greens with which  
O'Keeffe paints the water  
fall of the 'Īao Valley are  
very like the greens with*

*which she paints the  
mountains of New Mexico;  
yet the landscapes for all  
its familiar hues and forms  
is a different scene. The sense  
of expansion, of  
emancipation, produced by  
travel may explain this,  
or a simpler geographic  
truism, that the air, light  
and atmosphere of Hawai'i  
are not the same as those  
of Abiquiu and that the  
artist has been faithful to  
the new world as to the old.*<sup>47</sup>

According to Henry McBride, an art critic and friend of O'Keeffe, “the landscapes, flower pieces and marines in this collection all testify to Miss O'Keeffe's ability to make herself at home anywhere.”<sup>48</sup> As O'Keeffe herself writes in the exhibition catalogue:

*‘One sees new things rapidly  
everywhere when everything  
seems new and different. It  
has to be a part of one's world,  
a part of what one has to  
speak with—one paints it  
slowly.... Maybe the new  
place enlarges one's world a  
little. Maybe one takes one's  
world along and cannot see  
anything else.’*<sup>49</sup>

O'Keeffe clearly reveals that Hawai'i has given her the opportunity to both maintain her techniques, yet expand her understanding of the world and her paintings.

Though she utilized the same observational and painterly skills throughout her career, this series offers a new sense of fantasy. Although the space is completely filled in *'Īao Valley* [fig. 11], the piece still offers a feeling of open space and a sense of humidity and

energy in the air. In contrast to her paintings of the Southwest and New York, O'Keeffe maintains this unique vibrant energy throughout her Hawai'i series. Perhaps this change in tone is due to the rare fauna and terrain of the islands, or because of the sense of wonder Hawai'i has historically been made to represent. The Hawaiian Pineapple Company itself played off this sense of tropical paradise and hoped the artists they hired to create advertisements would capture this feeling in their works in order to sell their products.<sup>50</sup>

At the time, the commission was somewhat fraught, as O'Keeffe was unhappy with the treatment she received from the company at times. For example, O'Keeffe was displeased when she proposed to N.W. Ayers & Son that she would like to live by the fields of pineapples in order to study them more closely. They denied her request since she was not a field worker and only the field workers could live that close to the pineapple fields. They gave her a pineapple to paint, but she refused to paint the fruit during her stay in Hawai'i.<sup>51</sup> She may have resented the treatment she received from the Hawaiian Pineapple Company and N.W. Ayer & Son and wished to forget the trip altogether. It may also be possible that O'Keeffe produced this large body of work simply to have something to show for her annual exhibition in Stieglitz' gallery.<sup>52</sup>

Ultimately, the series received laudatory reviews and was a success. Stieglitz proclaimed that the show was "creating quite a stir."<sup>53</sup> She did not finish the series in Hawai'i and had become sick shortly after her return to New York,<sup>54</sup> so, according to Stieglitz, "the irony of it all is that everybody feels that her work is better and healthier."<sup>55</sup> It cannot be

distinguished where each work was created, but it is clear that O'Keeffe had been rejuvenated by her solo expedition to Hawai'i.

From an experiential point of view, O'Keeffe openly enjoyed her time in Hawai'i. She was able to gain much inspiration for the 20 paintings she produced and displayed in February 1940 at An American Place, Stieglitz' gallery.<sup>56</sup> In the catalogue for the exhibition, O'Keeffe declared that "if my painting is what I have to give back to the world for what the world gives to me, I may say that these paintings are what I have at present for what these three months in Hawai'i gave to me."<sup>57</sup> As a person looking for joy and growth, O'Keeffe found much of both in her travels, even eating raw fish and wearing thonged sandals in imitation of the locals.<sup>58</sup>

O'Keeffe wrote to many friends saying how much she enjoyed her trip. In a correspondence with friend and photographer Ansel Adams, she admits that "I always intended to return [to Hawai'i]....I often think of that trip at Yosemite [with you] as one of the best things I have done—but Hawai'i was another."<sup>59</sup> She also wrote a letter to Robert Allerton and John Gregg, whom she stayed with in Kaua'i, expressing her gratitude for having been there and said "that I liked it—and that I appreciated it even if I did not write to tell you so."<sup>60</sup> With regard to Maui, she wrote "I enjoy this drifting off into space on an Island—...I like being here and [I'm having] a very good time...I'd soon stay right here for a couple of months but I seem to have to move on."<sup>61</sup>

O'Keeffe's true motive for accepting the commission is unknown. She had taken commissioned and commercial work before,<sup>62</sup> so it seems evident that she did not believe that

taking this job would serve as a detriment to her avant-garde status. Furthermore, O'Keeffe can be seen to have gained much confidence from her excursion in confronting her critics. Although she was distressed by the earlier sexualized interpretations of her flowers, it did not deter her. She loved painting flowers, so O'Keeffe continued with this subject matter in her Hawai'i series. She attempted to break out of the mold that Stieglitz and the male gaze had created for her early on in her career by responding directly to these critics in the catalogue of the exhibition. She wrote, "...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."<sup>63</sup> She further makes the point that the places and things she decides to paint do not necessarily resonate with all of her audiences because those particular scenes do not have the same meaning for them as they do for O'Keeffe. For instance, she references a painting of the New Mexican Ghost Ranch Country Bad Lands and admits that "a red hill doesn't touch everyone's heart as it touches mine and I suppose there is no reason why it should."<sup>64</sup> She had experienced so much misinterpretation as to who she was and should be that Hawai'i became an escape to clear her head of others' opinions and reignite her confidence in her practice.

There is only a handful of exhibitions that have shown O'Keeffe's Hawaiian pieces, and the question of what this trip and the pieces it inspired really meant to O'Keeffe and her career remains open. While there is extensive scholarship and museum space dedicated to O'Keeffe's legacy, these 20 Hawaiian paintings are barely spoken about in any depth. In fact, O'Keeffe, herself, only

mentions her trip in her autobiography once when referencing wishing she had taken some red coral from a beach in Hawai'i.<sup>65</sup> She wrote her autobiography later in life in 1976, at the age of 89, so it gives readers more of an insight into her philosophy as a mature artist, looking back, and her personal beliefs and motivations in retrospect.<sup>66</sup> O'Keeffe states in her autobiography that "I write this [autobiography] because such odd things have been done about me with words. 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."<sup>67</sup> Since she was critical about what was written about her during her lifetime,<sup>68</sup> formulating a highly selective and personal account of her life and works was an ideal way to control her reputation on the eve of her death, especially when her reputation had been so strongly determined by others in the past.

Based on her remarks and analyses, there is no denying that the trip was beneficial for O'Keeffe personally and professionally. O'Keeffe returned from Hawai'i with a renewed sense of confidence and of self. She returned to her work and explicitly addressed her critics with a large and spectacular series, complete with written explanations as to their independence from the opinions of others. It is reasonable to conclude that Hawai'i positively impacted O'Keeffe's inspiration for painting and for life. She brought her adventures to life on canvases and permanently affected the trajectory of modern art and freedom of expression.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Barbara J. Bloemink, *Georgia O'Keeffe Canyon Suite* (New York: George Braziller, 1995), 9.
- <sup>2</sup> Jennifer Saville, Introduction to *Georgia O'Keeffe's Hawai'i* (Kihei, Hawai'i: Koa Books, 2011), 3.
- <sup>3</sup> Georgia O'Keeffe, *Georgia O'Keeffe* (New York: A Studio Book, Viking Press, 1976).
- <sup>4</sup> Bloemink, *Georgia O'Keeffe Canyon Suite*, 10-11.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-13.
- <sup>6</sup> Lloyd Goodrich and Doris Bry, *Georgia O'Keeffe* (New York: The Whitney Museum of American Art, 1970), 8.
- <sup>7</sup> Bloemink, *Georgia O'Keeffe Canyon Suite*, 12-13.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.
- <sup>9</sup> Goodrich and Bry, *Georgia O'Keeffe*, 8.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-10.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.
- <sup>14</sup> Bloemink, *Georgia O'Keeffe Canyon Suite*, 17-19.
- <sup>15</sup> Goodrich and Bry, *Georgia O'Keeffe*, 22.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.
- <sup>17</sup> *Reading American Art*, eds. Marianne Doezema and Elizabeth Milroy (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 362.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 361.
- <sup>19</sup> Read, "Features: The Feminine View-Point in Contemporary Art," *Vogue*, 76.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.
- <sup>21</sup> *Reading American Art*, eds. Marianne Doezema and Elizabeth Milroy, 362.
- <sup>22</sup> Bloemink, *Georgia O'Keeffe Canyon Suite*, 33.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.
- <sup>24</sup> *Reading American Art*, eds. Marianne Doezema and Elizabeth Milroy, 360-361.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 361.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 362.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> Saville, Introduction to *Georgia O'Keeffe's Hawai'i*, 3.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-18.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-20.
- <sup>35</sup> Theresa Papanikolas, Anne Hammond and Amber Ludwig, *Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams: The Hawai'i Pictures* (Honolulu Museum of Art, 2013), 15.
- <sup>36</sup> Saville, introduction to *Georgia O'Keeffe's Hawai'i*, 19-20.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.
- <sup>38</sup> Goodrich and Bry, *Georgia O'Keeffe*, 18.
- <sup>39</sup> Papanikolas, *Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams*, 14.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>42</sup> Bloemink, *Georgia O'Keeffe Canyon Suite*, 10.
- <sup>43</sup> Saville, introduction to *Georgia O'Keeffe's Hawai'i*, 12-13.
- <sup>44</sup> Joanna L. Groarke and Theresa Papanikolas, *Georgia O'Keeffe: Visions of Hawaii* (London and New York: The New York Botanical Garden and DelMonico Books Prestel, 2018), 12-13.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.
- <sup>46</sup> Saville, introduction to *Georgia O'Keeffe's Hawai'i*, 20-25.
- <sup>47</sup> Papanikolas, *Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams*, 15.
- <sup>48</sup> Saville, introduction to *Georgia O'Keeffe's Hawai'i*, 25.
- <sup>49</sup> Papanikolas, *Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams*, 15.
- <sup>50</sup> Saville, introduction to *Georgia O'Keeffe's Hawai'i*, 3.
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-25.
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>56</sup> Papanikolas, *Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams*, 15.
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.
- <sup>58</sup> Saville, introduction to *Georgia O'Keeffe's Hawai'i*, 12.
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.
- <sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.
- <sup>63</sup> Georgia O'Keeffe, *Georgia O'Keeffe: Exhibition of Oils and Pastels, January 22-March 17, 1939* (An American Place), 2-3. <https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/4212776>.
- <sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.
- <sup>65</sup> Saville, introduction to *Georgia O'Keeffe's Hawai'i*, 27.
- <sup>66</sup> Wanda Corn, "Telling Tales Georgia O'Keeffe on Georgia O'Keeffe," *American Art* 23, no.2 (2009), accessed 2018, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lfh&AN=43698988&site=ehost-live>.
- <sup>67</sup> Georgia O'Keeffe, foreword in *Georgia O'Keeffe* (New York: A Studio Book, Viking Press, 1976).
- <sup>68</sup> Corn, "Telling Tales."

## Images



Figure 1: *Dole Ad*, A.M. Cassandre



Figure 2: *Heliconia, Crab's Claw Ginger*, 1939, Oil On Canvas, 19" x 16",  
Collection of Sharon Twigg-Smith



Figure 3: *Papaya Tree, Iao Valley, Maui*, 1939, Oil On Canvas, 19" x 16", Honolulu Museum of Art, Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation

## Images



Figure 4: *Pineapple Bud*, 1939, Oil On Canvas, 19" x 16", Private Collection



Figure 5: *Dole Ad*, Georgia O'Keeffe



Figure 6: *Dole Ad*, Georgia O'Keeffe

## Images



Figure 7: *Jimson Weed*, 1936, Oil on Linen, 70" x 83.5", Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis



Figure 8: *Hibiscus with Plumeria*, 1939, Oil On Canvas, 40" x 30", Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC, Gift of Sam Rose and Julie Walters

## Images



Figure 9: *White Bird of Paradise*, 1939, Oil On Canvas, 19" x 16", Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe, Gift of Jean H. McDonald



Figure 10: *Fishhook from Hawaii, No. 1*, 1939, Oil On Canvas, 18" x 14", Brooklyn Museum, Bequest of Georgia O'Keeffe