

Kids @ CAM – At Home Family Projects

Spotlight on Art History

Georgia O'Keeffe

About the Artist:

"I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any other way - things I had no words for."

Georgia Totto O'Keeffe (1887 – 1986) was an American artist. She was known for her paintings of enlarged flowers, New York skyscrapers, and New Mexico landscapes. O'Keeffe has been recognized as the "Mother of American modernism". In 1905, O'Keeffe began her serious formal art training at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and then the Art Students League of New York, but she felt constrained by her lessons that focused on recreating or copying what was in nature. Alfred Stieglitz, an art dealer and photographer, held an exhibit of her works in 1917. They developed a professional relationship and a personal relationship that led to their marriage in 1924. O'Keeffe created many forms of abstract art, including close-ups of flowers, such as the Red Canna paintings. She made a number of Red Canna paintings of the canna lily plant, first in watercolor, but primarily abstract paintings of close-up images in oil. O'Keeffe said that she made the paintings to reflect the way that she saw flowers. O'Keeffe and Stieglitz lived together in New York until 1929, when O'Keeffe began spending part of the year in the Southwest, which served as inspiration for her paintings of New Mexico landscapes and images of animal skulls. After Stieglitz's death, she lived permanently in New Mexico at Georgia O'Keeffe Home and Studio in Abiquiú, until the last years of her life when she lived in Santa Fe.



ART AT HOME – ABSTRACT FLOWER COLLAGE

What You Will Need:

- Watercolors
- Paint brush
- Cup with water
- Coffee Filters
- Large Sheet of Light-Colored Background Paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Markers or Sharpies

Look at pictures of Georgia O'Keefe's paintings before you begin, focusing on her flowers. Be inspired by her colors and shapes, and how they seem almost abstract because they are so close-up.

- Step 1 – Begin painting several coffee filters using different watercolors.
- Step 2 – As you finish each coffee filters, place it somewhere to the side to dry on a non-stick surface.
- Step 3 – Once the filters are dry, begin to place them all on your background paper to create an abstract collection of flowers. (Georgia O'Keefe was known for how large her flowers were, so be sure to take up a lot of the paper.)
- Step 4 – Overlap some of the filters and cut them into different shapes to create a composition you are happy with.
- Step 5 – Once you have decided on your design, glue down your filters. You may want to use a small paintbrush to paint on the glue so that it is not too thick. Use a sparing amount of glue (the filters are thin so they will tear easily with too much glue).
- Step 6 – Let the collage dry.
- Step 7 – Outline different parts of the flower to highlight petals and give the flower more definition.
- Step 8 – Clean up your work area.

Tips:

- Experiment with how you paint the filters so you have a variety of styles – paint some all one color and some with lots of colors, use light and heavy applications of color, etc. Let some of the colors bleed into other colors to see what kind of effects that can create.
- Create lots of colorful coffee filters so that you have plenty of options when it is time to start collaging.
- Be sure not to oversaturate the coffee filter. This could lead them to tearing.

Questions to Ask One Another:

- What title would you give your painting?
- What was the most challenging part of this project? What was the most enjoyable part of this project?

Follow Up Project Suggestion:

- Gather real flowers and arrange them into a still life. Use them as a model to create your next collage!

