



THE ARTIST IN QUESTION
GEORGIA O'KEEFFE
TATE MODERN EXHIBITION
TUESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER

One of the 20c's most significant American painters, Georgia O'Keeffe was born in Wisconsin to Irish and Hungarian parents; her maternal grandfather was a Hungarian count who came to America in 1848. Later, studying under the brilliant impressionist teacher William Merritt Chase at the Art Students League in New York, she became a traditional realist painter until introduced to the radical ideas of Arthur Wesley Dow. She wrote, "Nothing is less real than realism. Details are confusing. It is only by selection, by elimination, by emphasis, that we get at the real meaning of things." Seeking to find a personal visual language through which she could express her feelings and ideas, she began a series of abstract charcoal drawings in 1915 that represented a radical break with tradition and made O'Keeffe one of the very first American artists to practice pure abstraction. Alfred Stieglitz, an art dealer and internationally known photographer, was the first to exhibit her work in 1916; he would eventually become her husband, and she the subject of his most sensual photographs. Their circle of New York artist friends included John Marin, Paul Strand and Edward Steichen. She spent her summers, and, after Steiglitz's death, lived, in New Mexico which her enormous paintings of magnified flowers, hearts of pineapple, cactus, New Mexico adobe churches or deeply-coloured New Mexico cliffs were inspired. Many now on show in this major exhibition at the Tate Modern reach a very different place from fashionable New York art, a place that is powerfully, particularly, organic, feminine, and forthright. Conventional readings of her work as Freudian and feminist, may be naive, even misogynist. As O'Keeffe remarked: "I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any other way - things I had no words for." She died in Santa Fe in 1986 aged 98, and her ashes were scattered to the wind at the top of Pedernal Mountain, overlooking her beloved Ghost Ranch. Today her legacy as an American art icon and a pioneer of twentieth-century art is widely recognised.

This exhibition study day starts at the Art Workers Guild, Bloomsbury. Please join us for coffee at 10.30 (optional), the lecture at 11, and a light lunch with wine served at 1pm. After lunch, the day continues at Tate Modern and ends there at 4:00 pm. £80 INSCAPE members, £89 non-members (£73 and £83 Art Fund members, £65 and £75 Tate members). First time guests are welcome at no cost.