

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum Opens New Exhibition: Modernism Made in New Mexico

Exhibition features fifteen pioneering artists and investigates how the high desert landscape and local cultures of New Mexico inspired a radical new direction in American Modernism during the first half of the twentieth century

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 20, 2015— Santa Fe, New Mexico—The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum is pleased to present “Modernism Made in New Mexico,” an exhibition organized by the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, which traces the work of fifteen pioneering artists who found inspiration in New Mexico’s stark landscape, distinct adobe architecture, and vibrant cultures. The artwork on view spans the first four decades of the twentieth century, from a scene of majestic beauty painted in 1902 by Thomas Moran to an abstract Modernist composition by Raymond Jonson from 1940.

“This exhibition explores the unique creative efforts of some of America’s most important artists, leaders in the development of an unmistakably American style of Modernism, one made in New Mexico,” says Robert A. Kret, Director of the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. “Though far from influential art centers like New York City, the sense of place found in this region dramatically changed the look of American Art.”

The earliest painting in the exhibition, Moran’s *The Road to Acoma* (1902), portrays a natural geological wonder meant to rival the man-made monuments of the old world. It is painted in a traditional style that creates an illusion of depth and distance. “Landscapes such as *The Road to Acoma* supported the formation of an American identity and fueled a sense of national pride, even though the style is entirely derived from European precedents,” said Cody Hartley, Director of Curatorial Affairs at the Georgia O'Keeffe



Museum. “In clear contrast, Modernist artists in the 1920s and 30s, sought a new, distinctly American style of art.”

Another artist, Robert Henri, who was considered in the vanguard of American painting before 1910 but seemed increasingly conservative and out-of-fashion in subsequent years, used a trip to the Southwest to reinvigorate his career. He first visited Santa Fe in 1916, in search of new artistic inspiration. Two close friends and colleagues – George Bellows and John Sloan – followed his lead. They were followed by even more radically Modern artists, including the self-described “ultra-modernist” Marsden Hartley who made his first visit in 1918, as did Andrew Dasburg. During the next decade many more Modernists arrived. Included in this exhibition are Jozef Bakos, Stuart Davis, Edward Hopper, Raymond Jonson, John Marin, Georgia O’Keeffe, and Cady Wells. They brought their Modernist style and pursued a regionalist sensibility based on New Mexico. Their purpose was to evoke a sense of place, but they avoided creating representations that imitated the visual appearance of the land, instead favoring simplified, abstracted compositions and bold colors.

Among the artists who came to New Mexico, only a few—Dasburg, Jonson, O’Keeffe, and Sloan—settled permanently. These artists experienced a personal connection to the desert landscape that transformed their lives and art. O’Keeffe brought her modernist sensibilities and techniques to a new subject matter. She created abstract compositions that hover on the surface of the canvas, yet remained true to the contours and intense colors of the land, as in *Black Mesa Landscape, New Mexico / Out Back of Marie’s II* (1930). Like O’Keeffe, Sloan built a house and acquired a familiarity with the land that inspired his work in painting such as *Storm Over the Jemez* (1923).

The exhibition, “Modernism Made in New Mexico” will be on view from January 30 through April 30, 2015.

The Museum is currently also exhibiting “Georgia O’Keeffe: Ghost Ranch Views,” open until March 22, 2015.

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ABOUT GEORGIA O’KEEFFE MUSEUM:

To inspire all current and future generations, the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum preserves, presents and advances the artistic legacy of Georgia O’Keeffe and modernism through innovative public engagement, education, and research. Opened in Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1997, the Museum counts O’Keeffe’s two New Mexico homes as part of its extended collection. The Museum’s collections, exhibitions, research center, publications and educational programs contribute to scholarly discourse and serve a diverse audience. For more information, please visit www.okeeffemuseum.org/

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Thomas Hart Benton

Train on the Desert, 1926 or 1927

Oil on canvas board, 13 ¼ x 19 ¼

Partial gift, private collection

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Georgia O'Keeffe

Black Hollyhock Blue Larkspur, 1930.

Oil on canvas, 30 1/8 x 40.

Extended loan, private collection.

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