

March 9, 2009

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**SFMOMA UNITES TWO CELEBRATED ARTISTS WITH
*Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams: Natural Affinities***

From May 30 to September 7, 2009, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) presents *Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams: Natural Affinities*, an exhibition that examines the relationship between the work of two of America's most celebrated artists, as well as the momentous period of American Modernism to which they both contributed.



Georgia O'Keeffe, *Black Mesa Landscape, New Mexico/Out Back of Marie's II*, 1930; oil on canvas; 24 1/4 x 36 1/4 in.; Collection of the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, gift of The Burnett Foundation; © 2009 Georgia O'Keeffe Museum/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Ansel Adams, *Winter Sunrise, the Sierra Nevada from Lone Pine, California*, 1944; gelatin silver print; 15 5/8 x 19 1/4 in.; Collection of the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona; © 2009 The Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust

The exhibition was organized by the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, in Santa Fe, and SFMOMA's presentation is coordinated by Senior Curator of Photography Sandra S. Phillips. *Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams: Natural Affinities* consists of some 100 works by O'Keeffe and Adams and focuses on the parallels between their work, demonstrating the considerable congruities in the two artists' approach to landscape, as well as their mutual use of natural forms such as trees, mountains, and water.

Among the O'Keeffe works on view will be *Black Mesa Landscape, New Mexico/Out Back of Marie's II* (1930) and *Ranchos Church No. 1* (1929), paintings that pair quite naturally with Adams's well-known landscape *Winter Sunrise, the Sierra Nevada from Lone Pine, California* (1944) and his *Saint Francis Church, Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico* (c. 1929), which was made the same summer as O'Keeffe's painting of the church.

About Georgia O'Keeffe

Born in 1887, Georgia O'Keeffe grew up on a farm in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. She exhibited artistic talent at an early age, and with the encouragement of her teachers, she decided to become an artist. Trained at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Art Students League in New York, O'Keeffe mastered the principles of

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realism early in her career. From 1905 to 1915, she took classes and taught at a variety of art institutions throughout the United States. While a student at Columbia University, O’Keeffe created a series of seminal abstract charcoal drawings that in 1916 found their way to Alfred Stieglitz, a gallery owner and one of America’s most renowned modernist photographers. Stieglitz began corresponding with O’Keeffe, and in May of that year, he exhibited 10 of her drawings at 291, his highly esteemed avant-garde gallery. In the following year, he gave her a one-person exhibition. In 1918, Stieglitz offered to support O’Keeffe for one year while she painted in New York. Not long after her arrival, it was clear: they had fallen in love, and in 1924, they married.

In 1929 O’Keeffe spent a summer painting in New Mexico and was inspired by the starkly beautiful landscape. Through the rest of her life, she continued to use the region’s natural beauty and unusual architecture as her subjects. Three years after Stieglitz’s death in 1946, O’Keeffe left New York and made New Mexico her permanent home. She worked in oil until the mid-1970s and in pencil and watercolors until 1982. She produced clay objects from the mid-1970s until 1984, when she retired due to failing eyesight. She died two years later at the age of 98.

About Ansel Adams

Photographer Ansel Adams is a monumental figure in American culture. As a youth he first took pictures Yosemite Valley, one of his major subjects, with a Kodak Brownie box camera. He visited the Southwest for the first time in 1929, and made a considered decision to turn from a career in music to one in photography after seeing Paul Strand’s negatives in Santa Fe in 1930. In 1932, he helped found Group f/64, an affiliation of Bay Area photographers committed to promoting photographic expression in a pure modernist vein. In 1936, he was given an exhibition at Alfred Stieglitz’s gallery in New York, a show he considered to be the highlight of his artistic career. In his later life, Adams became an important educator and proselytizer for the medium of photography, an advocate for the Sierra Club, America’s best-known environmentalist, and the author of numerous publications on photographic technique. He was widely recognized for his photography, and many of the works in the exhibition affirm his contribution to 20th-century art.

O’Keeffe and Adams: A Lifelong Friendship

Adams and O’Keeffe first became acquainted in 1929 in Taos, New Mexico. O’Keeffe was there to paint for the summer, while Adams was making photographs for *Taos Pueblo*, a collaboration with writer Mary Austin. Despite the fact that O’Keeffe was 15 years older than Adams—and significantly better known in the art world—the two became lifelong friends.

In 1933, Adams traveled from California to New York for the first time. While visiting O’Keeffe there, he met Stieglitz. They too forged a friendship, and in subsequent trips to New York, Adams often spent time with the couple. O’Keeffe and Adams shared a profound appreciation for the natural world, and in 1937, in the company of other friends, they explored sites in the Southwest. In 1938, O’Keeffe and joined

Adams and others on a pack trip in his beloved Yosemite. The two artists maintained correspondence over the course of their long lives.

Publications and Related Programs

An illustrated catalogue entitled *Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams: Natural Affinities* (Little, Brown, and Company) accompanies the exhibition. The book reproduces all of the works in the exhibition and includes essays by journalist Richard B. Woodward; Barbara Buhler Lynes, curator at the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum and the Emily Fisher Landau Director of the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum Research Center; and Sandra S. Phillips, SFMOMA's senior curator of photography.

The SFMOMA Education Department will present various public programs, lectures, and events to further enhance the visitor's experience of the exhibition, including an informative audio tour. From June 22 through August 28, the museum will be giving summer youth tours of *Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams: Natural Affinities*. The tours will take place from 10 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. On Father's Day, June 21, SFMOMA will hold a Target Family Day called Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams: Inspired by Nature. For families with children 12 and under, museum admission is free on Target Family Days, which feature hands-on art projects, performances, book readings, and other special presentations.

In addition to the regular museum admission, a \$5 special-exhibition timed ticket will be issued. For more information, visit www.sfmoma.org.

Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams: Natural Affinities is organized by the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. The exhibition is made possible in part by the Henry Luce Foundation, The Burnett Foundation, and the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum's National Council. The San Francisco presentation is made possible by generous support from Helen and Charles R. Schwab, the Evelyn D. Haas Exhibition Fund, and the George Frederick Jewett Foundation.

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Museum hours: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:45 p.m. Summer hours (Memorial Day to Labor Day): Open at 10 a.m. Closed Wednesdays and the following public holidays: New Year's Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas. The Museum is open the Wednesday between Christmas and New Year's Day.

Koret Visitor Education Center: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:30 p.m. Summer hours: Open at 10 a.m.

New admission prices starting May 30, 2009: adults: \$15; seniors and students: \$9; SFMOMA members and children 12 and under: free. Admission is free the first Tuesday of each month and half-price on Thursdays after 6 p.m.

SFMOMA is easily accessible by Muni, BART, Golden Gate Transit, SamTrans, and Caltrain. Hourly, daily, and monthly parking is available at the SFMOMA Garage at 147 Minna Street. For parking information, call 415.348.0971.

Visit our Web site at www.sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

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SFMOMA is supported by a broad array of contributors committed to helping advance its mission. Major annual support is provided by Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, the Koret Foundation, and the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund. First Tuesdays are always free, thanks to AT&T. Thursday Nights at SFMOMA are sponsored by Banana Republic. KidstART free admission for children 12 and under is made possible by Charles Schwab & Co. Inc.

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