Georgia O’Keeffe

Born 1887, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, U.S.; died Santa Fe, New Mexico, U.S., 1986
Georgia O’Keeffe was born in 1887 on a farm near Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. When she was born, it was unusual for a woman to become an artist, but she went on to study art anyway. Alfred Stieglitz, a famous photographer, had an art gallery in New York, and he showed O’Keeffe’s work at his gallery and encouraged her to make art. O’Keeffe’s paintings often depict scenes and objects from places where she spent time, such as Lake George, New York, and the New Mexico desert.

When artists paint scenery such as trees, sky, mountains, or other views of nature, their works are called landscapes. Paintings that feature the ocean or other large bodies of water are called seascapes, while depictions of buildings and streets are called cityscapes.
Before it was titled Lake George, this painting was called Reflection Seascape. Does the original title change the way you see the work? If so, how?

Notice how O’Keeffe’s painting is symmetrical—there are two sides that are the same (in this case, the top and bottom halves). What effect does this have?

Explore

Georgia O’Keeffe once said, “I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn’t say any other way—things I had no words for.”

Sometimes artists use colors in their work to create a mood, convey emotions, or make us think about certain feelings or sensations.

What words describe the way Lake George makes you feel?

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Create

Georgia O’Keeffe spent many summers at Lake George in New York, with her husband, photographer Alfred Stieglitz.

Think of a special place where you spend time in the summer; it could be a museum, park, a relative’s house, or even your favorite chair in your own house. Create a work of art that represents that place. What shapes and colors will you use? Will you select warm colors or cool colors? What mood or feelings will your work express?