



Georgia O'Keeffe (Critical Lives)

Nancy J. Scott

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Georgia O'Keeffe, the most famous woman artist of American modernism and a pioneer in abstract art, created a vision without precedent. She expressed the grandeur of her world in the Southwest, from the high desert mesas to the smallest flower, with fierce independence. And a separate world has risen up around her fame: from the photographic nudes of her by Alfred Stieglitz to the iconic images of her, years later, set in the stunning landscapes of New Mexico.

In this book, Nancy J. Scott draws on extensive sources—including many of O'Keeffe's letters—to offer a sensitive and incisive examination of her groundbreaking works, their evolution, and how their reception has been caught in conflicts between O'Keeffe's inner self and public persona. Following the young artist as her path-breaking, abstract charcoal landscapes caught the attention of gallery impresario Stieglitz, Scott tells the story of their partnership, of Stieglitz's nudes, and the development of O'Keeffe's early reputation as a sexually inspired, Freudian-minded artist. Scott explores the independent expression that O'Keeffe forged in opposition to the interpretations of her abstract work and the hybrid space that O'Keeffe's works came to inhabit. Ultimately, she blended the abstract with the real in interpretations of flowers, bones, shells, rocks, and landscapes, which would become her hallmark subjects.

Unique to this biography is the inclusion of her letters—which have only recently been made available. They show that her words can be just as revelatory as her paintings, and they offer the intimate voice of an artist alive in an era of great artistic development. The result is a succinct yet comprehensive account of one of the most prolific and important artists of the twentieth century.

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