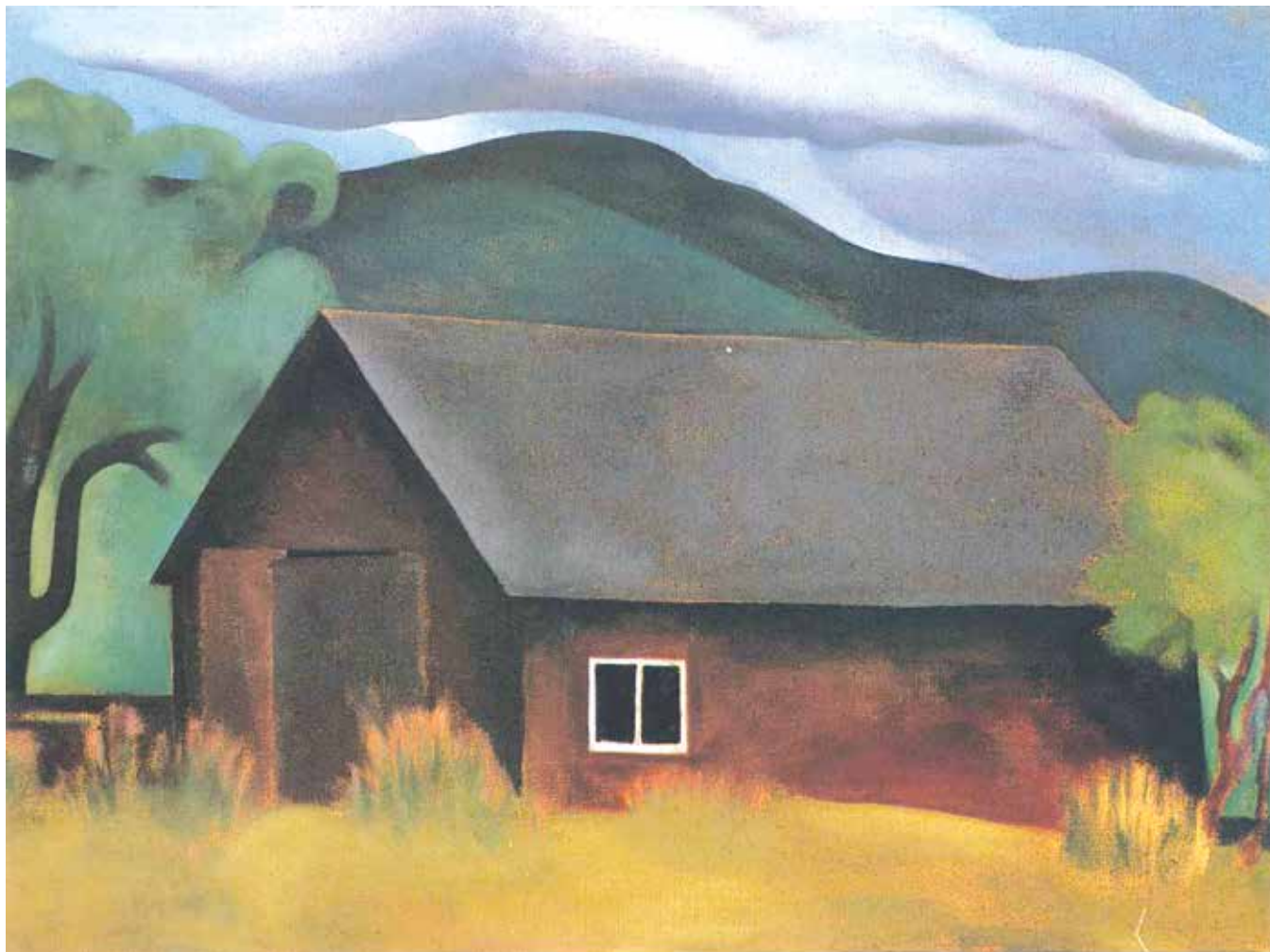


Love on the Lake



by Merna Popper

It was 1924, the heart of the Roaring Twenties with social changes showing short skirts, women smoking, rampant sexual adventures, and huge shifts away from Victorian life in America, that young artist Georgia O'Keefe in her twenties fell in love with, and married Photographer Edward Steichen (in his fifties). It all happened on scenic Lake George, New York where they married, lived and loved a life of art, sex and style that is still legendary in this fast moving time of instant tweets and short memories.

Now, almost a century later, their Bohemian lifestyle, unusual sex life, and passionate love, is still remembered, talked about and is recorded in their daily love letters (sometimes 40 a-day). Articles and books written about the famous couple continue to fascinate curious people in and out of the art world.

The electric romance of artist Georgia O'Keefe and Photographer Edward Steichen still has vitality, still sizzles in the wake of their 'hot' love stories, and still thought to be exotic by boaters and vacationers who come to explore life and love secrets on peaceful Lake George.

The great love legend survived from romantic Adirondack lake George to New Mexico where O'Keefe settled after Steichen snapped his last photograph on the lake and died.

The hot romance, love affair, marriage, letters, Steichen (the Rogue) and his Manage-a-Trois with O'Keefe and Dorothy Norman, the other young woman, is like "opening the door of your parent's bedroom" O'Keefe described being at their home on the lake.

Their love letters are reported to have bordered on pornography and O'Keefe's flower paintings were, by the artist's own in those nearly pornographic letters, her own image of the folds in her private body parts.

Remarkably, all the great Steiglitz wanted to do was to photograph those private parts--and the artist's beautiful hands he adored and admired.

Theirs was a complicated relationship and psychiatrically speaking, even in the time of Freud, Steiglitz was paternal in the boudoir, using pet names for O'Keefe's private parts,

How Deep is Your Love?

"Music may be the food of love but art also acted as a powerful afroasiac"

and outside the bedroom, she was the dominant nurturer.

Although O'Keefe had studied at The Art Student's League in Manhattan, Steiglitz launched her art career with an exhibition of her art, including Lake George paintings she made during the summers when they fled the city and took up residence on the lake.

O'Keefe took up residence in a separate lake cottage where she was able to find solitude and work. Steiglitz watched over her adoringly

And together they built their lasting Adirondack life, love and legend. The simple gentle life on Lake George still reverberates with the historic passion and artistry these great lovers left as their legacy to the lake and to Love.

PS A couple I met who vacation every summer on Lake George, said they take their small rowboat out on the lake at sunset in search of the O'Keefe-Stieglitz "love vibe" they still sense beneath the lake's tranquil surface "even after all these years".



My Shanty, Lake George is a 1922 painting by Georgia O'Keefe. From 1918 to 1934, Georgia O'Keefe spent part of the year at Alfred Stieglitz's family estate in Lake George. The depicted shanty was O'Keefe's studio, which was painted in subdued tones in response to criticism from Stieglitz' circle—Arthur Dove, John Marin, Charles Demuth, Marsden Hartley, and Paul Strand. O'Keefe said of the painting: "The clean, clear colors were in my head, but one day as I looked at the brown burned wood of the Shanty I thought, "I can paint one of those dismal-colored paintings like the men. I think just for fun I will try—all low-toned and dreary with the tree beside the door." My Shanty was the first painting by O'Keefe purchased by the Duncan Phillips.

The Hyde Collection, in association with the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, organized a first-of-its-kind exhibition that examines the extraordinary body of work created by O'Keeffe of and at Lake George.

Between 1918 and 1934, Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986) lived for part of each year at Alfred Stieglitz's (1864-1946) family estate on Lake George, the popular resort destination in the Adirondacks of New York. The 36-acre property was situated just north of Lake George Village along the western shoreline. It served as a rural retreat for the artist, providing the basic materials for her art and a distinct spirit of place that was essential to O'Keeffe's modern approach to the natural world. During this highly productive decade, O'Keeffe created more than 200 paintings on canvas and paper in addition to sketches and pastels, making her Lake George years among the most prolific and transformative of her seven-decade career. This period also coincided with her first critical success and emergence as a professional artist; yet, Lake George is often portrayed as an annoyance from which she tried to escape.

"In later years, O'Keeffe herself and various writers described the Lake George years as a period of frustration," according to Dr. Cody Hartley, director of curatorial affairs at the O'Keeffe Museum. "There is this sense that she felt constantly harassed by the overbearing Stieglitz family and found the landscape cloying, as if it was too overgrown to offer creative inspiration." The exhibition and accompanying catalogue provides an important corrective. "In looking closely at her art and correspondence from the Lake George years, it becomes clear just how richly inspiring she found the region. Her deep awareness of the natural world, be it a landscape or a botanical subject, is as much indebted to her time at Lake George as anywhere."

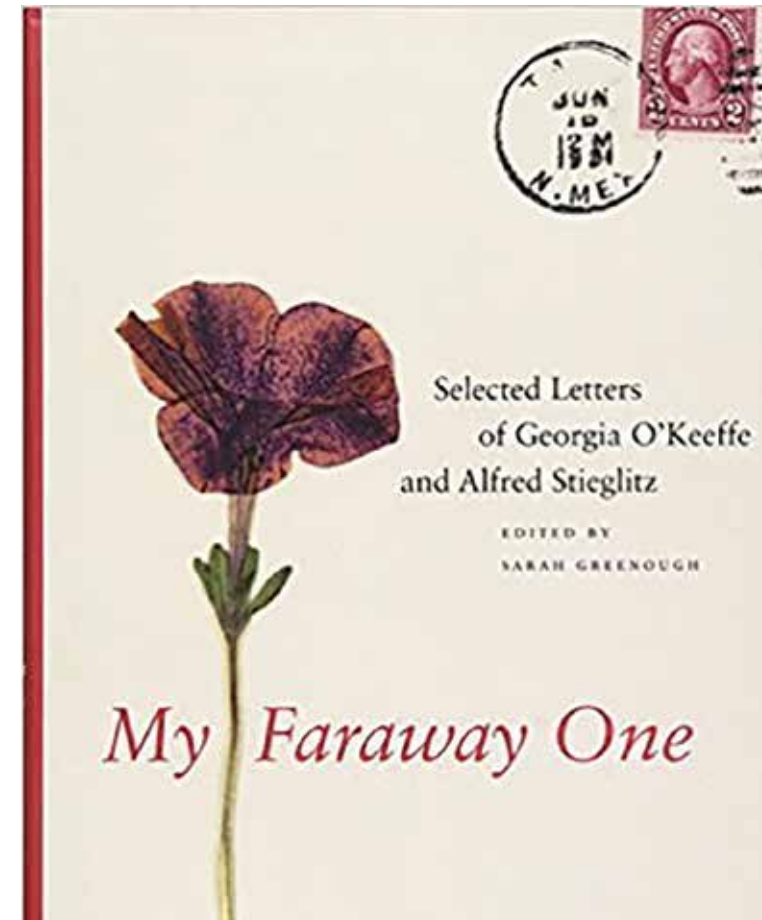
In 1923, for example, O'Keeffe enthusiastically wrote to her friend Sherwood Anderson, "I wish you could see the place here – there is something so perfect about the mountains and the lake and the trees –

lovely – and when the household is in good running order – and I feel free to work it is very nice."

The exhibition explores the full range of O'Keeffe's work inspired by Lake George, from magnified botanical compositions of the flowers and vegetables that she grew in her garden, to a group of remarkable still lifes of the apples and pears that she picked on the property. O'Keeffe became fascinated with the variety of trees—cedars, maples, poplars, and birches—that grew in abundance at Lake George, and they were the subject of at least 25 compositions. Telescopic views of a single leaf or pairs of overlapping leaves were another recurring motif during O'Keeffe's Lake George years, resulting in some 29 canvases. Architectural subjects, including paintings of the weathered barns and buildings on the Stieglitz property that blend the descriptive and the abstract, emerged as a theme, as did a number of panoramic landscape paintings and bold, color-filled abstractions that often visually related to the subjects she was working on at the time. Landscape views of the lake and surrounding hills, throughout the seasons and in a variety of conditions were also a recurring subject. All of these themes will be explored through a selection of approximately 55 works gathered from public and private collections.

O'Keeffe painted throughout the summer and fall at Lake George and transported canvases back to her New York studio for completion and exhibition in the spring. Based in Glens Falls, New York, just a short distance from Lake George and the location of the Stieglitz property, the Hyde Collection brings a rich understanding of the region and its historical context. As Erin B. Coe, chief curator of the Hyde Collection, observes, "Modern Nature offers an unprecedented opportunity to intimately connect the works to the environment that conditions that inspiration."

Modern Nature: Georgia O'Keeffe and Lake George was organized by the Hyde Collection, in association with the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum.



"I love Georgia O'Keeffe and it is great to hear her history in her own words. It is a great way to not only know more about their extraordinary lives and works but of the whole era, which from so many years later looks so more authentic and worthy than these times where people look for financial success as the ONLY reason to live and work." The cover is beautifully done and it feels like it weighs as much as an encyclopedia! My daughter asked for this book and she simply LOVES this book. She has not put it down since I gave it to her on Christmas. The other day she just informed me that evidently this book is the first of a series and that the story continues or will continue. Looks like I better do my research and find the book that comes after this one"

