

T968

NC 0020230 4



m005694/NC

NATIONAL COLLEGE

OF

ART AND DESIGN

CRAFT - GLASS

"GEORGIA O'KEEFFE"

BY

TARA SZUCH

*Submitted to the faculty of History of Art and
design and complementary studies in candidacy
for the Degree of Bachelor of Design: 1992.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

=====

For their generous assistance and their contributions of time, attention, and material, I would like to thank the following people and institutions: Archives of American Art, New York; Library of Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Jauquim Chavez, Santa Fe; the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; the metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, New York; Palace of the Governors Museum Santa Fe; Mike Lewis Santa Fe, Museum of Fine Arts, Museum of New Mexico.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... i

LIST OF PLATES..... iii

INTRODUCTION..... 2

CHAPTER ONE:

"INFLUENCES ON HER ART"..... 4

CHAPTER TWO

"OPINIONS AND FACTS"..... 14

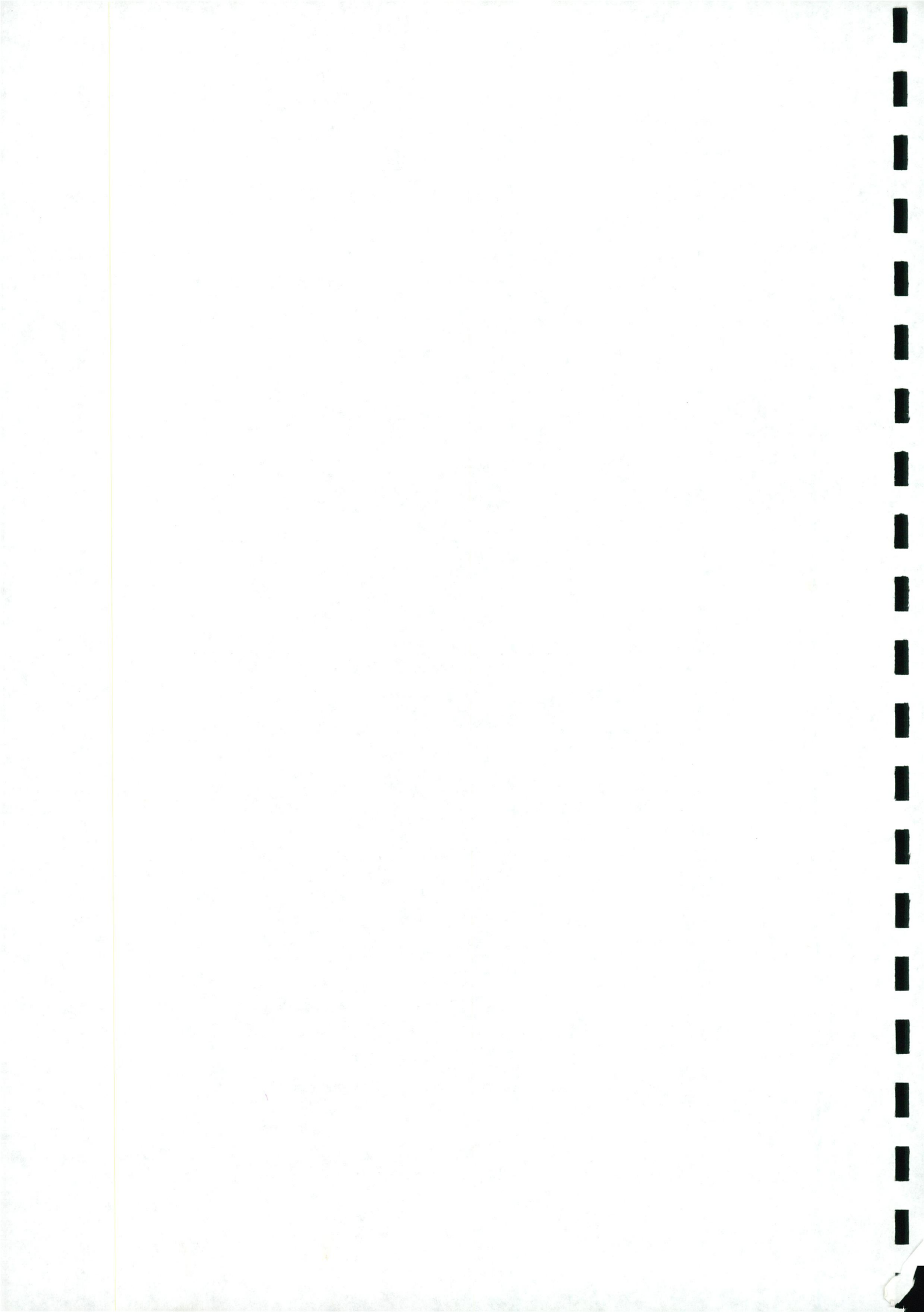
CHAPTER THREE

"STRUGGLE AND SUCCESS"..... 22

CONCLUSION..... 31

QUOTATIONS..... 33

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 35



LIST OF PLATES

=====

(Fig.1.)	<i>Drawing XIII</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.2.)	<i>Abstract</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.3.)	<i>Abstract</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.4.)	<i>Abstract</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.5.)	<i>Abstract</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.6.)	<i>Trees</i>	<i>Charles Demuth</i>
(Fig.7.)	<i>Grey Tree, Lake George</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.8.)	<i>A Storm</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.9.)	<i>Thunderstorm</i>	<i>Arthur Dove</i>
(Fig.10.)	<i>Storm, Taos Mountain, New Mexico</i>	<i>John Marin</i>
(Fig.11.)	<i>Lightning at Sea</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.12.)	<i>Red Poppy</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.13.)	<i>White Sweet Peas</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.14.)	<i>Hands IV</i>	<i>Alfred Steiglitz</i>
(Fig.15.)	<i>Street, New York No. 1.</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.16.)	<i>The Shelton with Sunspots</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.17.)	<i>Radiator Building-Night, New York</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.18.)	<i>New York Light</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.19.)	<i>Eagle Claw and Bean Necklace</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.20.)	<i>Horse's Skull with White Rose</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.21.)	<i>Drawing V</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.22.)	<i>First Drawing of Blue Lines</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.23.)	<i>Road Past the View 1</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.24.)	<i>Abstraction IX</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.25.)	<i>Pink Sweet Peas</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.26.)	<i>Cow's Skull with Calico Roses</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.27.)	<i>Music - Pink and Blue 1</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.28.)	<i>Grey Line with Lavender and Yellow</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.29.)	<i>Two Calla Lillies on Pink</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.30.)	<i>Jack - in - the- Pulpit No.111</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.31.)	<i>Jack - in - the - Pulpit IV</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.32.)	<i>Jack - in - the - Pulpit No. V</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.33.)	<i>Black Place 111</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.34.)	<i>Small Purple Hills</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.35.)	<i>Red Hills and White Flower</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>
(Fig.36.)	<i>Music - Pink and Blue 11</i>	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>

INTRODUCTION

From the early 1920's until her death in 1986 Georgia O'Keeffe produced some of the most outstanding, responsive, abstract paintings in America. She managed to capture the public's attention and received a varied response to her work as time went on.

This study examines and questions the important influences and imagery in her work and the development of O'Keeffe's art and it's success.

Chapter one refers briefly to Georgia O'Keeffe's background and history. Her venture from realism to abstraction is considered and her acute awareness of other artists work from Europe and America is explored. Whether or not she was merely copying their work or adapting their ideas and techniques into her own work to create her own individual style is questioned. O'Keeffe's work is compared to that of other artists.

The importance of form and colour throughout her work and where it originated from is defined. Nature was a source of inspiration which encouraged her to travel and experience different contrasting images which she depicted in her paintings. Her influences on other artists was apparent.

Chapter two examines the suppressed sexual eroticism in her work which caused so much controversy. To many people her art signified genitalia. Their views might have been altered by the influences of Steiglitz's sensational theories and by the novels of D. H. Lawrence as well as by Freudian theories.

Maybe her art signified eroticism, as there were particular sexual issues which influenced her work. Steiglitz's sexual relationships with young women, his fascination with the female body and O'Keeffe's sexual relationships with both men and women.

Other influences are considered such as feminism, femininity nature the occult and surrealism. All of which appeared in her work at some stage.

Chapter three examines O'Keeffe's business tactics and how she applied them to her art to make it a success. The pros and cons of working in a predominantly male society and how this might have affected her career is discussed. Her need for success and the competitiveness which surrounded her might have enabled her to develop her talent and in turn a following.

Steiglitz's business skills in promoting O'Keeffe's art and his ability to attract a crowd will be considered as this might have played a large part in O'Keeffe's success.

If she had not succeeded at first with the aid of Steiglitz would she have chosen painting as her career? Would she have developed this abstract innovative style of Art?

Lastly her success and it's influence in the development of her work will be explored.

CHAPTER ONE

INFLUENCES ON HER ART

Georgia O'Keeffe was born November 15th, 1887 Wisconsin U.S.A. one of seven children and daughter of a humble, Irish father and an aristocratic mother.

O'Keeffe's mother Ida, was a well bred intellectual woman who showed immense interest and enthusiasm in the development of her off springs, especially the daughters, as education for women was a family tradition. Ida expressed to O'Keeffe how important it was for women to be independent and successful. After noticing her daughter's talent for art, she enrolled her in schools and colleges to prepare her for teaching. With her ability to paint and her mother's guidance and strong influences it is no wonder that O'Keeffe ventured from her simple life in the country to the bustle of the art world in New York.

Throughout her youth, while attending schools and art colleges, Georgia O'Keeffe had been taught to draw and paint in a realistic manner with rigid rules, which denied her the access and freedom to explore and develop her own style. O'Keeffe soon realised this while attending the Art Students League in New York in 1908. (27, PP 57-62). There she experienced the modern, abstract, controversial paintings and drawings of such European masters as Rodin, Matisse, Picasso, Cezanne and Braque. The work of these artists were first exhibited by Alfred Steiglitz (1804-1946) (later to be O'Keeffe's husband), an excellent photographer and owner of Gallery 291, renowned for exhibiting original work.

Steiglitz not only supported European Artists, he also favoured unknowns, especially American Artists. One such artist was John Marin, an American watercolourist, who was influenced by the abstract art movement and inspired by nature. O'Keeffe thought the succinct splatters of colour in his work were strange but also quite wonderful. The question uppermost on her mind was whether Marin was able to make a living by painting such pictures. (8, P.67).

Discovering that he earned a substantial amount from his abstractions, O'Keeffe realised that with a start, one perhaps could earn a living by painting as one wished.

On experiencing these new styles of painting and realising that she could probably earn a living out of painting what she wanted in a modern style, she did not return to the Art Students League. She rejected their realistic teaching methods saying later that.

"If one could only reproduce nature and always with less beauty than the original why paint at all?" 1.

Referring to artists merely mimicking other artist's styles, she also said.

"Rather than spend my life on imitations I would not paint at all." 1.

O'Keeffe turned to Alon Bement (1876-1954) and Arthur Wesley Dow (1857-1922) two radical, inspirational, modern art teachers. Dow was influenced by the oriental masters, particularly Japanese prints, and by Gaugin, whose design and freedom of colour had had a decisive effect on him. (7,20thed).

Dow's theories allowed O'Keeffe to experiment beyond realism into abstraction. Through his theories O'Keeffe began to express herself in a personal way, a way in which she never thought possible especially while attending the Art Students League. Through encountering Dow's methods of art and design O'Keeffe realised that,

Art could be a thing of your own.

Dow's influences on O'Keeffe were longlasting and profound. (2,p.34) She was more open to his influences than others because she had not studied in Paris and had been drilled in it's European Ideas and techniques. Dow's belief was that the creation of beauty was the purpose of art.

O'Keeffe soon grew tired of Arthur Wesley Dow's teaching methods and impatient with Alon Bement's timid suggestions about painting. O'Keeffe felt that the placid patterns and balanced harmony of Dow's tidy exercises,(which so often appear in her work.) could

not contain the strong feelings that sometimes welled within her. In a letter to her close friend Anita Pollitzer she complained about Dow's pictures saying,

"His pictures seemed so disgustingly tame to me". 3.

This may have been so, but O'Keeffe managed to combine other modern artist's subject material and techniques and her own inspirational ideas with Dow's design format to produce, lively, self expressive drawings that were far beyond timid.

For example, her charcoal drawings of 1915, (fig.1,2,3,4,5,) The first abstractions she had exhibited after being exposed to Dow's influences express his design theories. They express Dow's design methods and are extremely lively at the same time. Steiglitz said they were the,

"Purest, finest, sincerest things that have entered 291 in a long while". 4

The juxtaposition of different shapes and forms compliment each other. The following forms curling around and rising upwards are very well balanced and tidy. These were part of Dow's important methods of design which O'Keeffe incorporated into her work (19 pp 73,74).

Bement, a teacher of Dow's theories and new approaches to art, (26,pp 80,81) also proved to be a benefit to the development of O'Keeffe's art. The fact that she thought of him as a hopeless teacher saying

"I had a teacher who was very good because he didn't know anything". 5

gave her the incentive to move on and search for something new, to develop her talent by creating an individual style. There is no denying that throughout her career her work was open to various influences. For example, one of her earliest works, Drawing Xlll (fig.1.) a charcoal drawing from nature is one of her first self expressive, abstract drawings. This drawing consists of three contrasting images all rising upwards, on the right there is a flowing curve suggesting a river. In the middle there are round bulbous forms suggesting trees; and on the left a fierce jagged line suggesting ridged mountains or a storm.



(Fig. 1.) Georgia O'Keeffe. Drawing X111 1915.
Charcoal on Paper, 24½ x 19 inches.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Alfred Steiglitz collection, 1950.



*(Fig. 2.) Georgia O'Keeffe. Abstract, 1915
Charcoal on Paper, 24 x 18½ inches
Estate of Georgia O'Keeffe.*



(Fig. 3.) Georgia O'Keeffe. *Abstract*, 1915.

Charcoal on Paper, 25 x 19 inches.

Meril Foundation.



(Fig.4.) Georgia O'Keeffe, *Abstract*, 1915
Charcoal on Paper, 24½ x 18½ inches.
Estate of Georgia O'Keeffe.



(Fig. 5.) Georgia O'Keeffe, *Abstract*, 1915
Charcoal on Paper, 23 3/4 x 18 1/2 inches.
Estate of Georgia O'Keeffe.

This drawing is well designed. The format of complimentary patterns are well placed within the space, suggesting the influence of Dow's theories and tidy exercises.

Comparisons may also be drawn up between Charles Demuth's watercolour titled Trees 1917 (fig.6) and O'Keeffe's Grey Tree, Lake George 1924 (fig.7.). The composition and style of painting are very similar. Although O'Keeffe's medium is oil and Demuth's watercolour, O'Keeffe has managed to use the oil so that it appears watery and smudged, creating the same texture and appearance as in Demuth's.

There is a distinct possibility that O'Keeffe, on helping Steiglitz select work for a show, saw Demuth's painting and copied his style but there is no evidence to confirm this.

Her early coloured abstractions express a possible influence by artists such as Arthur Dove, (1880-1946) a painter and illustrator who studied in Paris with Alfred Maurer; Marsden Hartley (1877-1943) a painter and poet who also studied in Europe mainly Germany; and John Marin (1870-1953) an American abstractionist.

Her close association with these painters broadened O'Keeffe's imagination. Their work encouraged her to explore different approaches. This is evident as she continued to use this style of painting throughout her career as can be seen in her paintings from New Mexico and her colour abstractions.

Arthur Dove, was one of America's early abstractionists, inspired by nature and influenced by French ideas. The theory behind his work was to produce abstract modern images free from realism (19.p 152). He was inspired by French modern artist's work such as Cezanne, Picasso and Matisse. He began to influence O'Keeffe after she experienced his work in Arthur Jerome Eddy's Cubists and post-impressionists (1914), O'Keeffe admired his work and was particularly fascinated by his abstraction of nature, and



(Fig. 6.) Charles Demuth. Trees , 1917
Watercolour on Paper, 13½ x 9½ inches.
Private Collection.

the fact that line, colour and shape had become the important visual elements in his work (21. p.24)

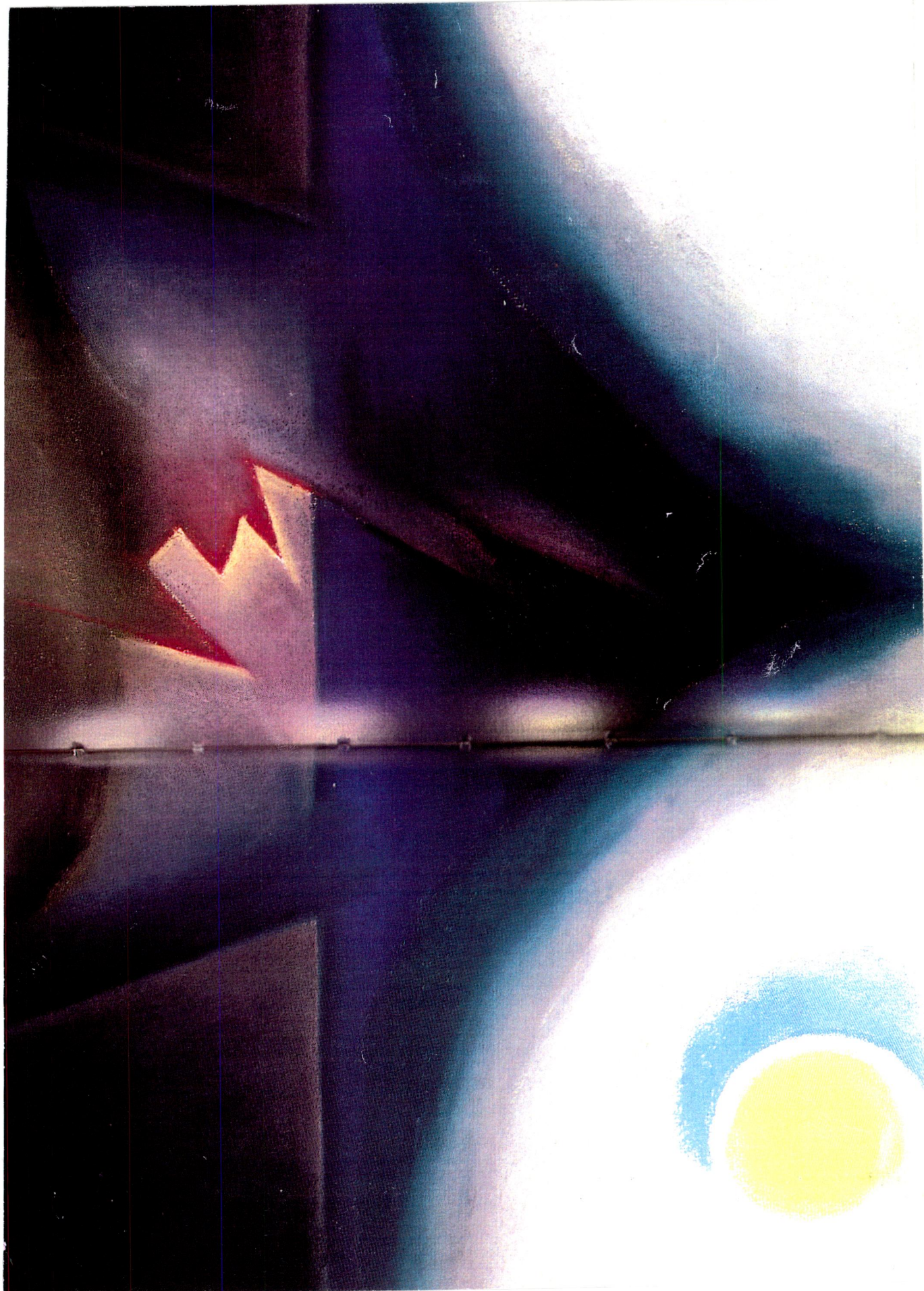
O'Keeffe adapted this method of drawing as seen in her painting titled A Storm (1922) (fig.8.) which is similar to Dove's charcoal drawing titled Thunderstorm (1917-20) (fig.9.). Both drawings represent a storm with a sharp jagged line down the centre, both are abstract yet O'Keeffe's pastel smudges produce a softer edge to her painting, whereas Dove's painting remains more rigid and sharp with no degree of softness.

Arthur Dove and other abstractionists may have influenced O'Keeffe but she influenced them also. This proves O'Keeffe's ability to develop a style that was first influenced by these artists, changing it around using her own particular ideas and techniques to in turn influence them. They in fact played off each other, rotating in a circle which helped them to develop their artistic talents. John Marin in particular shows a striking resemblance in his later storm pictures from New Mexico. His Storm 1930 (fig.10.) contains specific elements from O'Keeffe's compositions such as the harsh 'Zig Zag' lines seen in both O'Keeffe's Lightning at Sea 1922 (fig.11.) and A Storm (1922) (Fig. 8.)

After comparing O'Keeffe's work with other artists and noticing the various similarities between them, it may be argued that her art is merely copied, that she stripped other artists of their ideas and portrayed them as her own work.

It is true that O'Keeffe's art contained similarities but it also differed in many ways. There is no doubt that she was influenced by other artists but this only enticed her to explore and create her own individual style.

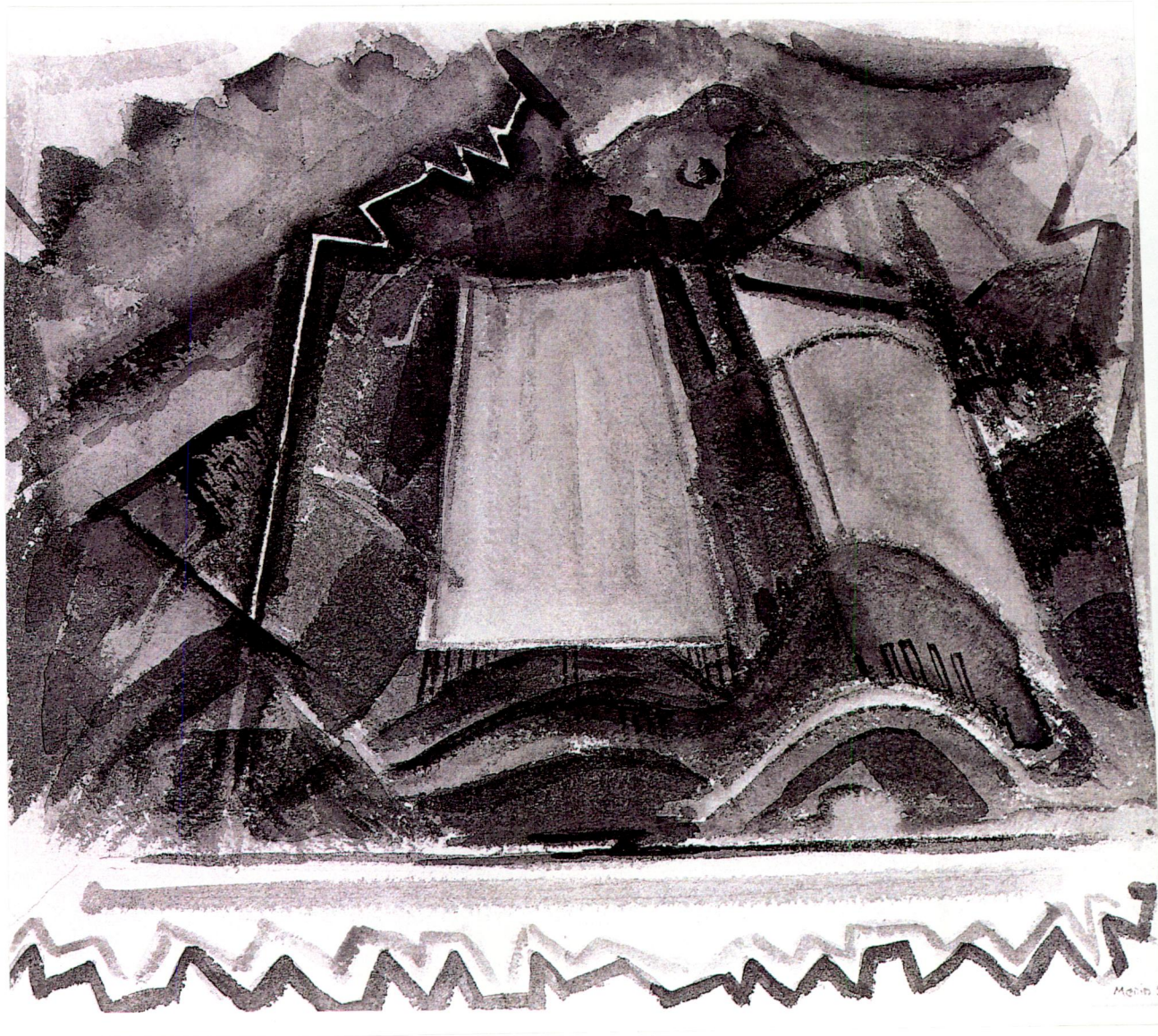
She was an innovative artist open to influences and aware of her surroundings, other abstractionists and teachers. This was part of a maturing process, a time during which she learned from other artists.



(Fig. 8.) Georgia O'Keeffe *A Storm*, 1922
Pastel on Paper, 18 1/4 x 24 3/8 inches.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1981



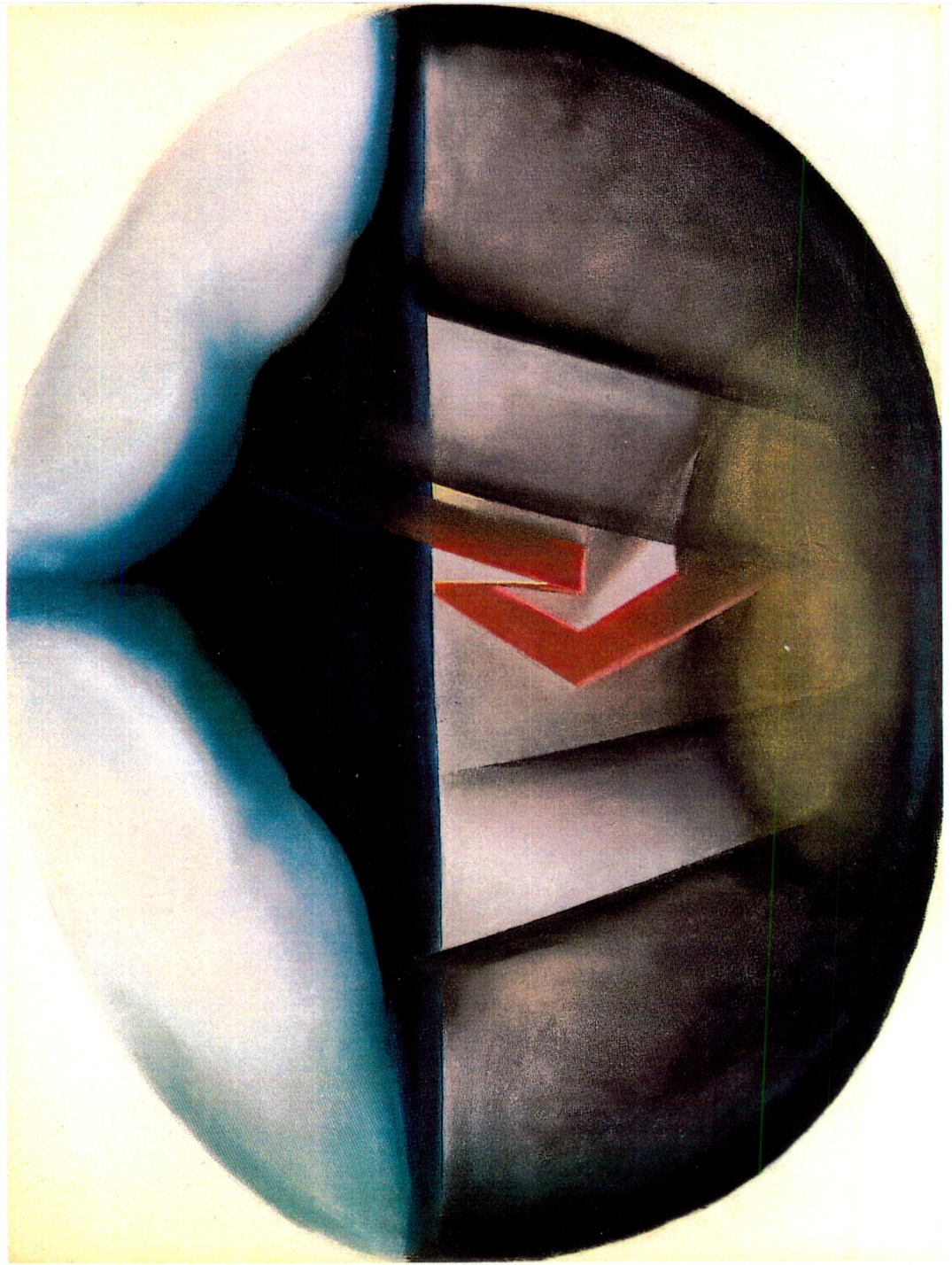
(Fig. 9.) Arthur Dove *Thunderstorm*, 1917-20
Charcoal on Paper, 21 x 17 3/4 inches.
The University of Iowa Museum of Art.



(Fig.10) John Marin Storm, Taos Mountain, New Mexico, 1930

Watercolour and pencil on paper,
16 7/8 x 21 3/4 inches.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alfred Steiglitz Collection, 1949.



(Fig.11.) Georgia O'Keeffe. Lightning at Sea, 1922
Pastel on Paper, 19 x 25 1/2 inches.
The Lane Collection

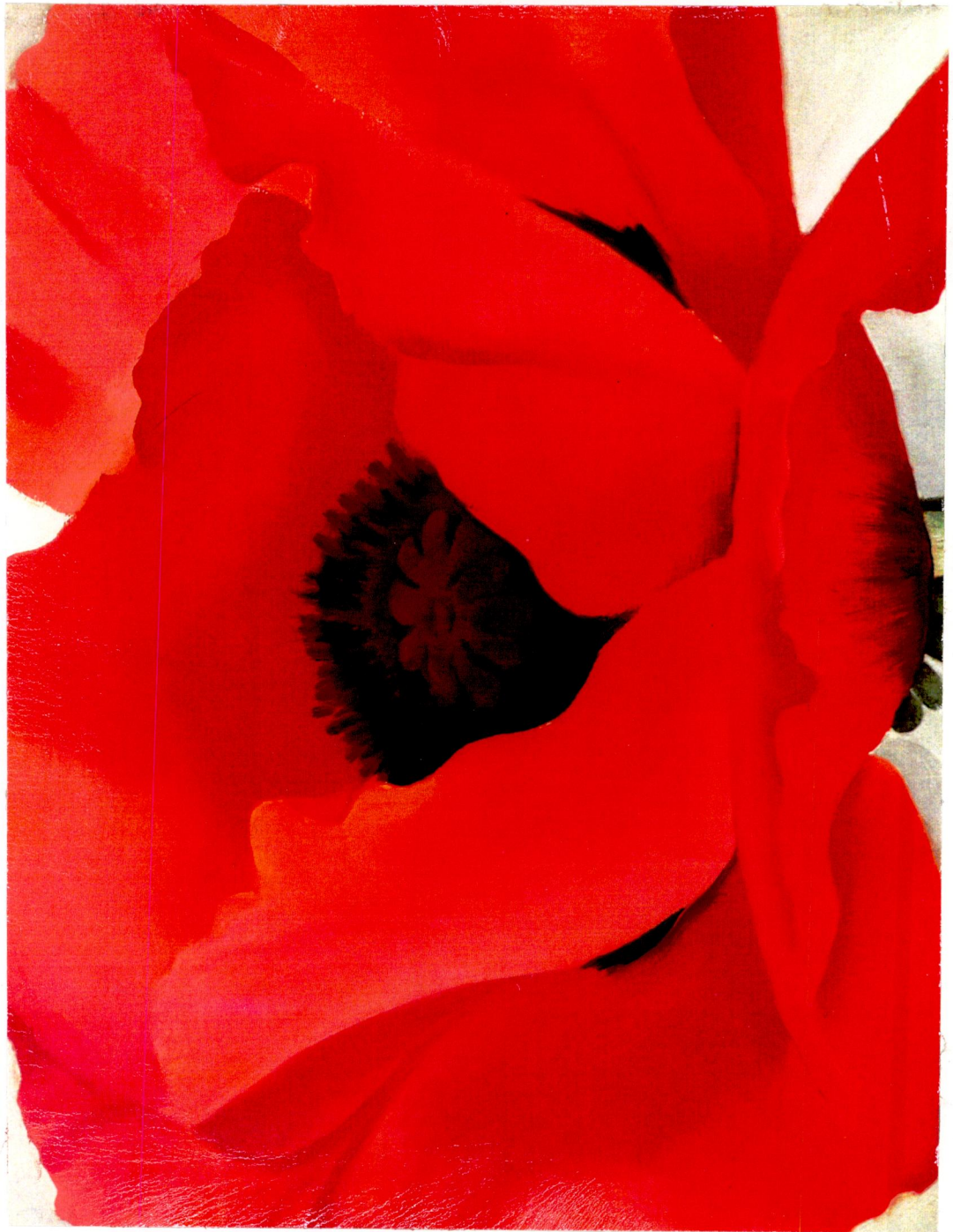
It is obvious that her work expresses something so original and self-expressive that it could in no way be copied from work done by renowned artists, especially from male artists (since the majority of her influences were male) because her work is truly feminine, portraying female curves and emotions. As Steiglitz evidently saw strong female sensitivity in the lines of her drawing. He had recognised her work as that of a female without knowing whether it was a male or female who had painted it. (19.p.84) (2.p.81.)

What one fails to see is that Georgia O'Keeffe had obtained an artists talent in the ability to absorb other artists specific images, themes and compositions and transform them into her own individual style, only through this acute observation of other artists styles could she assess her own style and develop it further.

Although O'Keeffe's affinity with the painters of the Steiglitz circle must be recognised, her work seems most related to that of photographers Imogen Cunningham, Johan Hgemeyer, Paul Haviland, Edward Weston, and above all Paul Strand (8.p.214)

Paul Strand (1890-1976) was a close friend of Steiglitz and an innovative photographer. His work particularly that of 1915 was of objects photographed up closely so as they lost all pictorial reference, becoming pure abstractions in which line, pattern, and form took precedence. His images were influenced by Steiglitz's principles of producing photographs consisting of abstract forms and exploring the cameras techniques and capabilities. His work was also influenced by the European modernists and by Picasso's cubist paintings (27,pp. 182-186)

The influence of Strands photographs may be seen in her geometric abstractions painted four years later. Strand also enticed O'Keeffe to look at her subjects more closely so that her images would lose all pictorial reference like his. Her gigantic flowers of the mid 1920's (fig.12,13) were also influenced by Strand and another photographer Edward Steichen. Strand



(Fig.12) Georgia O'Keeffe. *Red Poppy*, 1927

Oil on Canvas, 7 x 9 inches.

Private Collection.



(Fig. 13) Georgia O'Keeffe, White Sweet Peas, 1926
Pastel on Paper, 25 x 19 inches.
Collection Loretta and Robert K. Lifton.

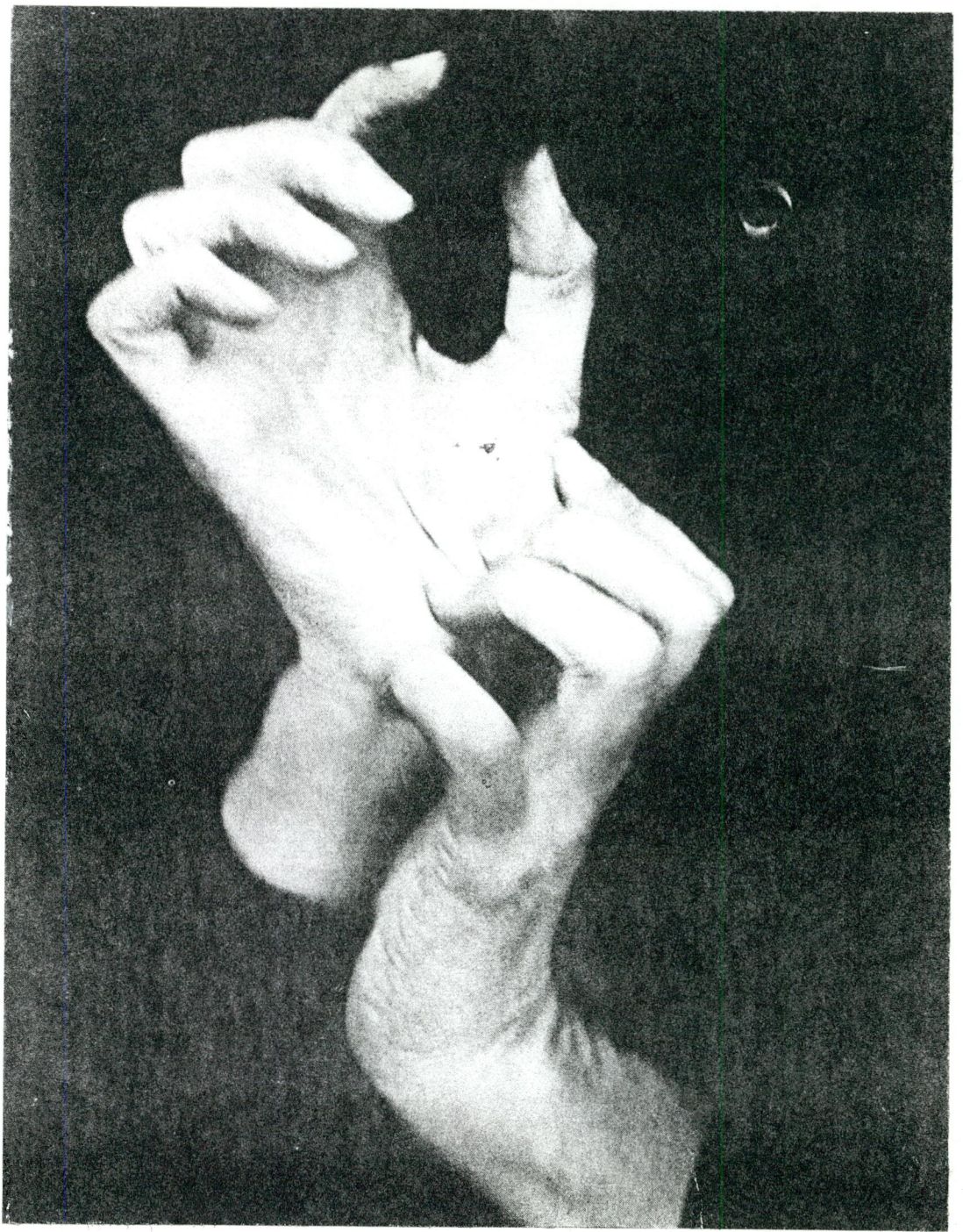
continued to influence O'Keeffe with his photographs from his travels to Canada and New Mexico. These new images of other states and countries encouraged O'Keeffe to explore new sources for her paintings.

O'Keeffe's husband Steiglitz also influenced her work although it is far more difficult to assess than her link with Strand. Their subject material is often similar but their approach quite different. His work expresses emotions with an essentially romantic viewpoint whereas O'Keeffe places emphasis on analytic observation and calculated permutations. Similarities occur in their use of abstraction, taking a certain section of an object and homing in on it. They practised with each other to create and develop creative possibilities. A perfect example of Alfred Steiglitz's abstract photographs which influenced O'Keeffe's later paintings is Georgia O'Keeffe Hands IV (1918) (fig. 14). In this photograph he focuses in on O'Keeffe's hands negating the subjects natural context.

O'Keeffe may have been influenced by these photographs and there may be distinct similarities but her work remains distinguishable from theirs through her use of painting techniques, she chooses how to paint the texture, colour and detail of an object and remains selective about these adjustments to her work whereas her fellow photographers can not.

Her paintings depicting New York and especially her skyscrapers suggest O'Keeffe's initial physical and emotional proximity to the city. Her work in New York began to take an unusual progression; instead of creating an atmospheric abstract interpretation from the scene, she created a more detailed, calculated and hard edged realism. For one to understand and interpret these paintings one must look at her private life and her discontent with the city.

During this time her marriage was being threatened by a younger woman Steiglitz was seeing. Her longing to get away from this



(Fig. 14) Alfred Steiglitz. Georgia O'Keeffe, *Hands IV*, 1918

and the enclosure of New York was apparent, even her trips to Lake George, Steiglitz's summer residence did not change her feelings (8.pp 217,218).

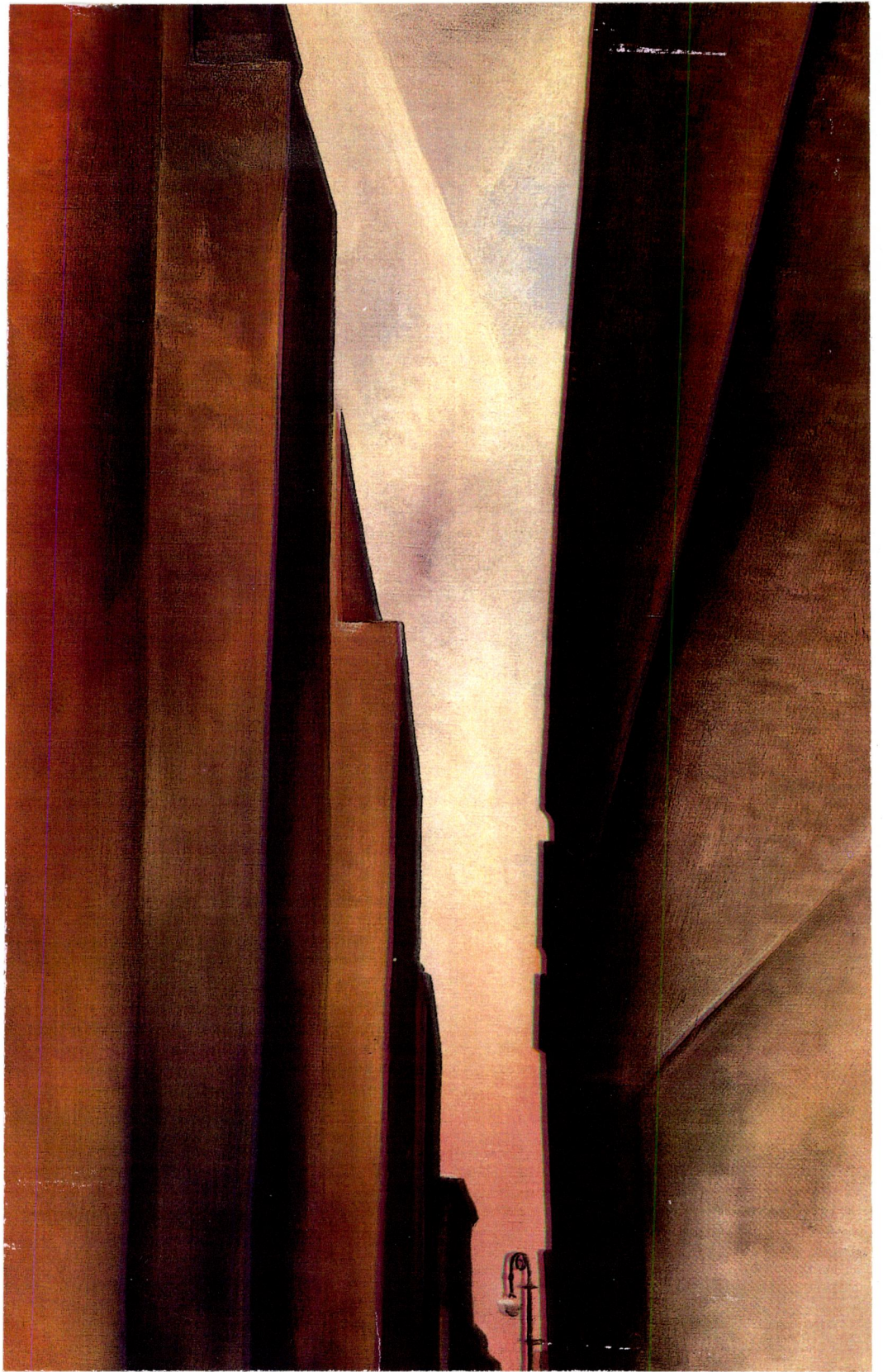
The influence of the real world began to appear in her work. A feeling of enclosure, unhappiness and airlessness came across in her skyscraper paintings, particularly Street, New York (1926) (fig.15) and The Shelton with Sunspots (1926) (fig.16). Both these paintings consist of dark sombre tones of grey and brown, depicting her boredom with the city. The walls of the buildings in Street, New York come from both left and right and produce a feeling of entrapment. The dark colours used, create the sense of depression which she felt at the time. In The Shelton with Sunspots there seems to be a ray of hope, of something wonderful and bright as the sunbeams pour out from behind the building. This feeling of brightness appearing from behind the Shelton was more than likely influenced by her longing for freedom from the city and her love for nature and the open spaces which lie beyond the city.(8.p.62).

On remarking to her friend O'Keeffe described now she paints what she feels about New York, rather than what she sees.

"One can't paint New York as it is but rather as it is felt"⁶

Whatever visual excitement she may have felt about New York her red-shrouded paintings such as Radiator Buildings - Night, New York (1927) (fig.17.) and New York, Night (1929) (fig.18) reflected her fundamentally uneasy tolerance of city life. These buildings appeared bleak and distant from her and her life-style. She captured this feeling by describing them with as little detail as possible and concentrated more on the linear shapes, coloured contrasting squares and dots of light and overall flat graphic design which was probably influenced by Dow's admiration for flattened forms seen in Japanese designs which he often collected (19,p.68)

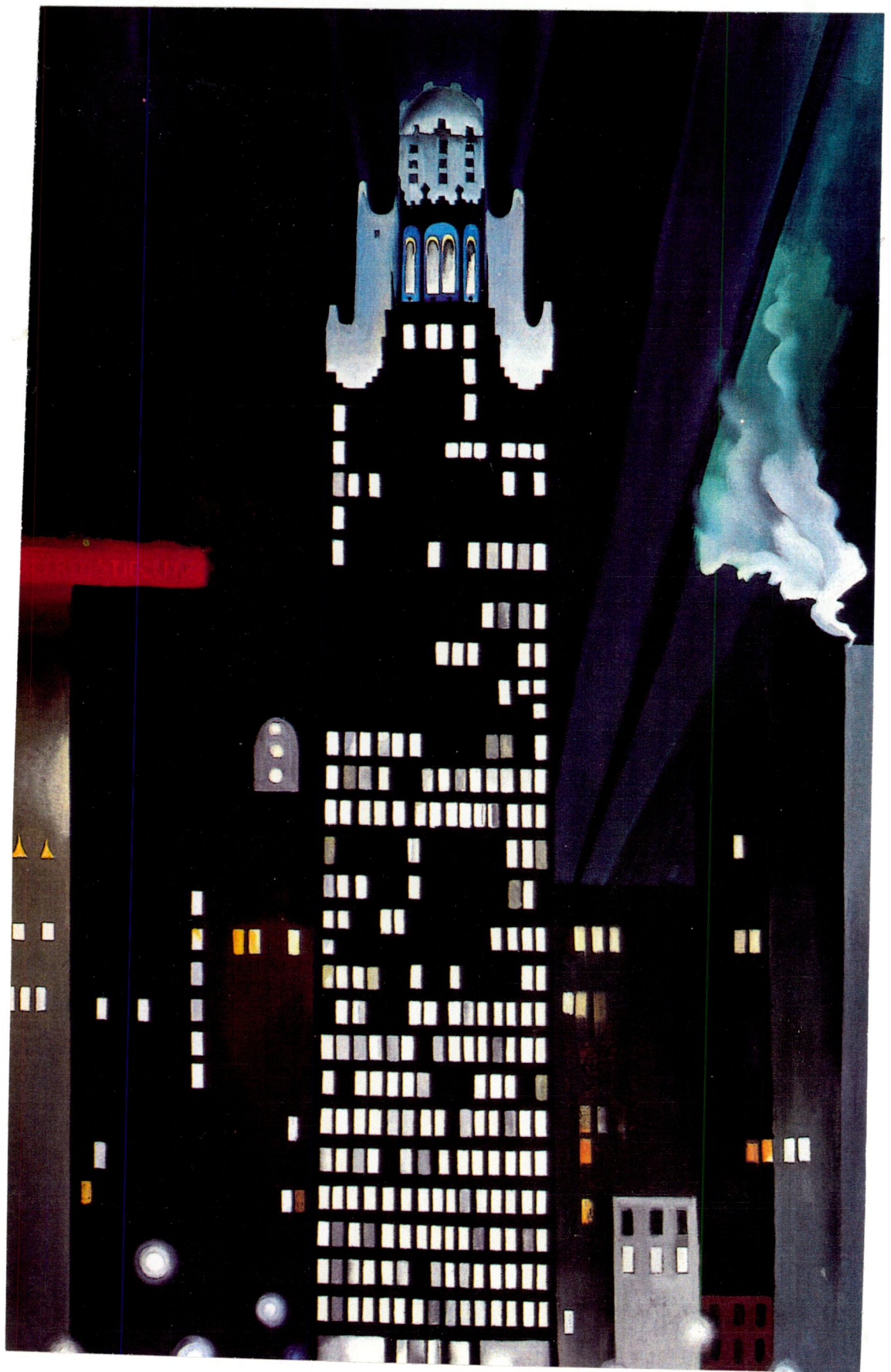
This in turn shows the influence of her personal life, feelings and painting techniques, all of which have contributed to her



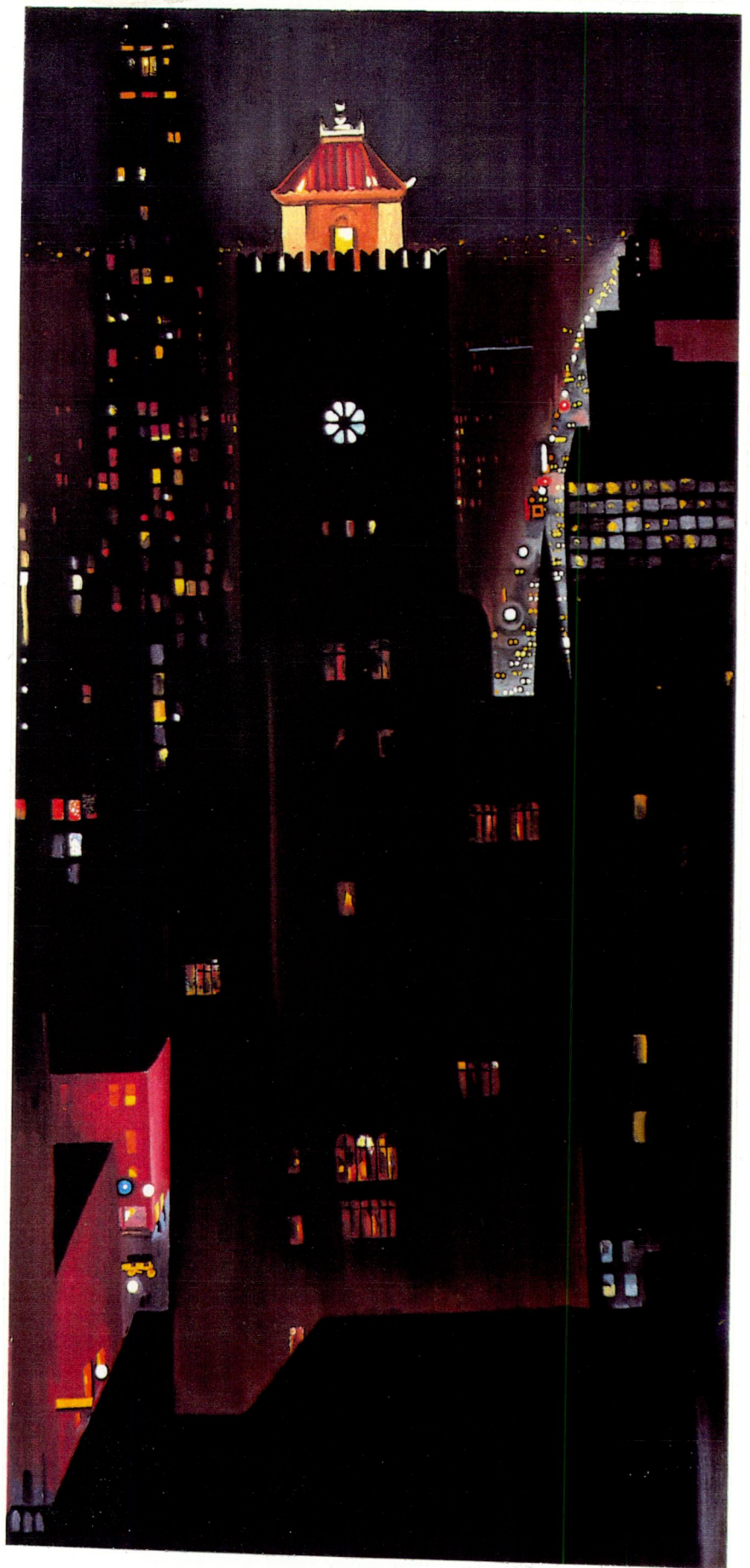
(Fig. 15.) Georgia O'Keeffe. Street, New York No. 1. 1926.
Oil on Canvas, 48 1/8 x 29 7/8 inches.
Mr. and Mrs. Harry W. Anderson.



(Fig. 16.) Georgia O'Keeffe. The Shelton with Sunspots, 1926
Oil on Canvas, 49 x 31 inches.
The Art Institute of Chicago.



(Fig. 17.) Georgia O'Keeffe, Radiator Building - Night, New York, 1927
Oil on Canvas, 48 x 30 inches.
Alfred Steiglitz collection.



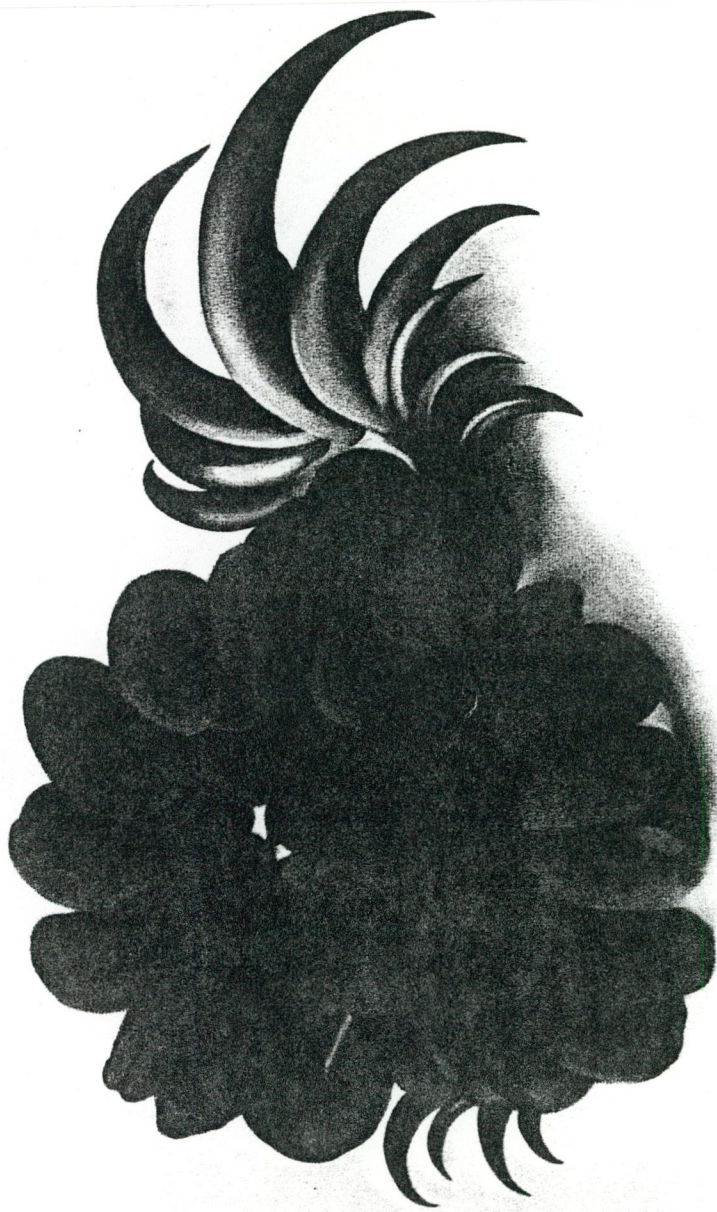
*(Fig. 18.) New York Night, 1929.
Oil on Canvas, 40 x 19 inches
Nebraska Art Association.*

choice of colours. Dark tones suggesting dull, depressing and boring lifestyle and rigid structural shapes together in harmony suggesting the masculine influence of Steiglitz, pressurizing O'Keeffe to remain in New York and to continue finding new inspiration. Steiglitz once stubbornly insisted that the true artist did not need to travel. (19 p.242)

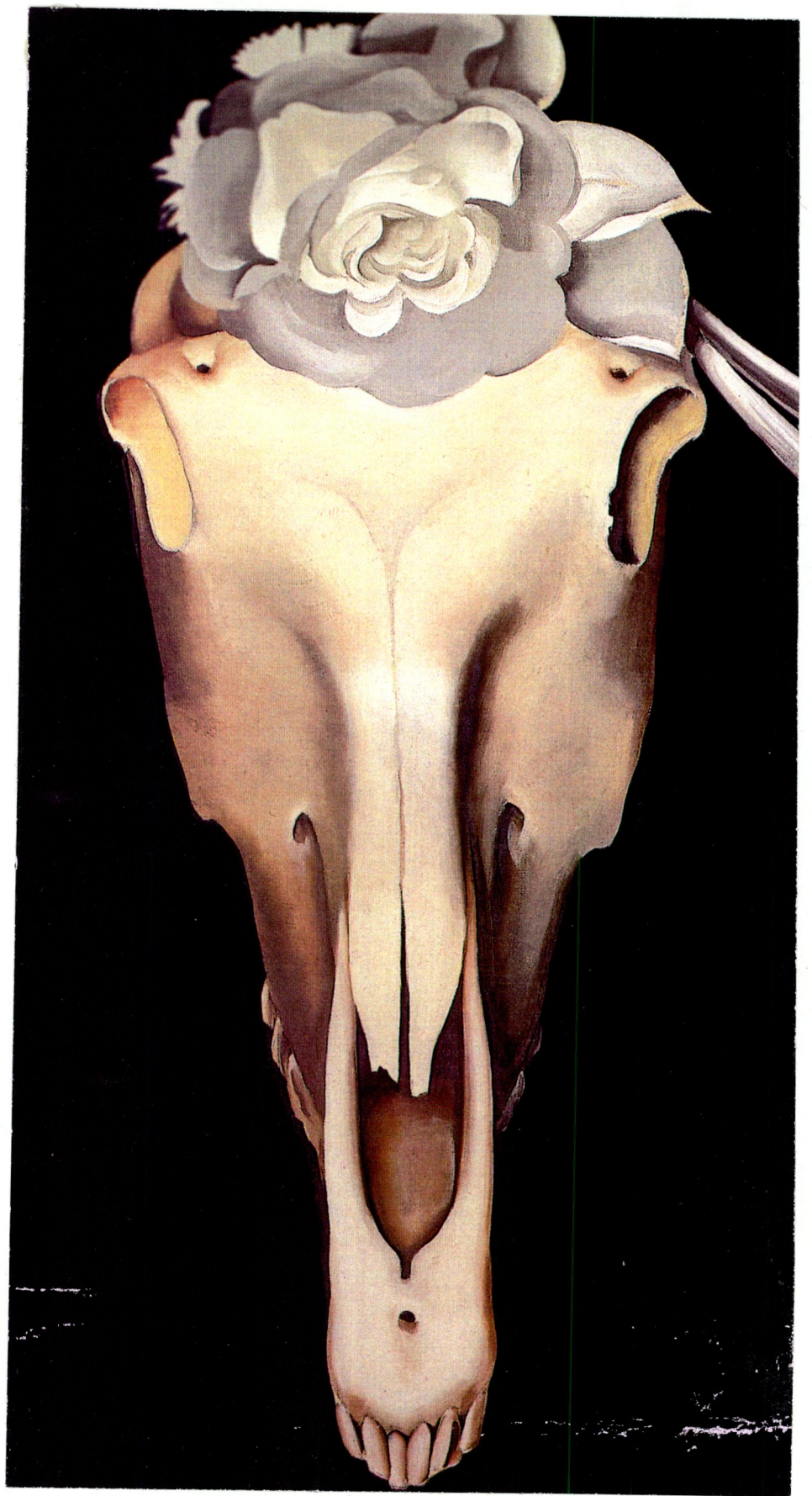
O'Keeffe was influenced by other works, by their form and colour both through the medium of photography and paintwork. It was her passion to illustrate these influences in her own diffinitive style. Because she had the opportunity to travel, O'Keeffe was fortunate. She found in New Mexico, a sparsely populated yet culturally enriched outpost of the U.S.A., an extreme inspiration from the colours and forms surrounding Santa Fe and Taos. Her discovery of the South West, as it were, is evident in her work from the 30's until her death. Her passion to paint in her own unique style began to mature and develop into something original when she put to canvas her perception of the unique culture, landscape and objects found there. She had found in New Mexico a whole new visual vocabulary. Mountains, Mesas, barns and bones created new and powerful themes that O'Keeffe adapted to her style of combined representation and abstraction. She dwelled upon the sculptural qualities so often expressed in these subjects which led her toward more 3-dimensional space and which she had begun to explore in some of her earliest abstractions Drawing XIII (fig.1.)

Her work became brighter and more spacious, her greatest maturing process was during the 30's and 40's. she paid more attention to detail of form as seen in her Eagle Claw and Bean Necklace (1934) (fig.19) and some of her bone paintings such as Horse's Skull with White Rose 1931 (fig.20). She created depth and space with her use of light and dark colours. Her paintings although abstract were very much more detailed and realistic than previous 2-dimensional totally abstract images.

As she continued painting she began concentrating more on flat images, lines and colours. She had reverted to old influences and style of painting, though her inspiration still originated from



(Fig. 19) Georgia O'Keeffe, Eagle Claw and Bean Necklace, 1934
Charcoal on Paper, 19 x 25 1/8 inches.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



(Fig. 20.) Georgia O'Keeffe. Horse's Skull with White Rose
(1931)

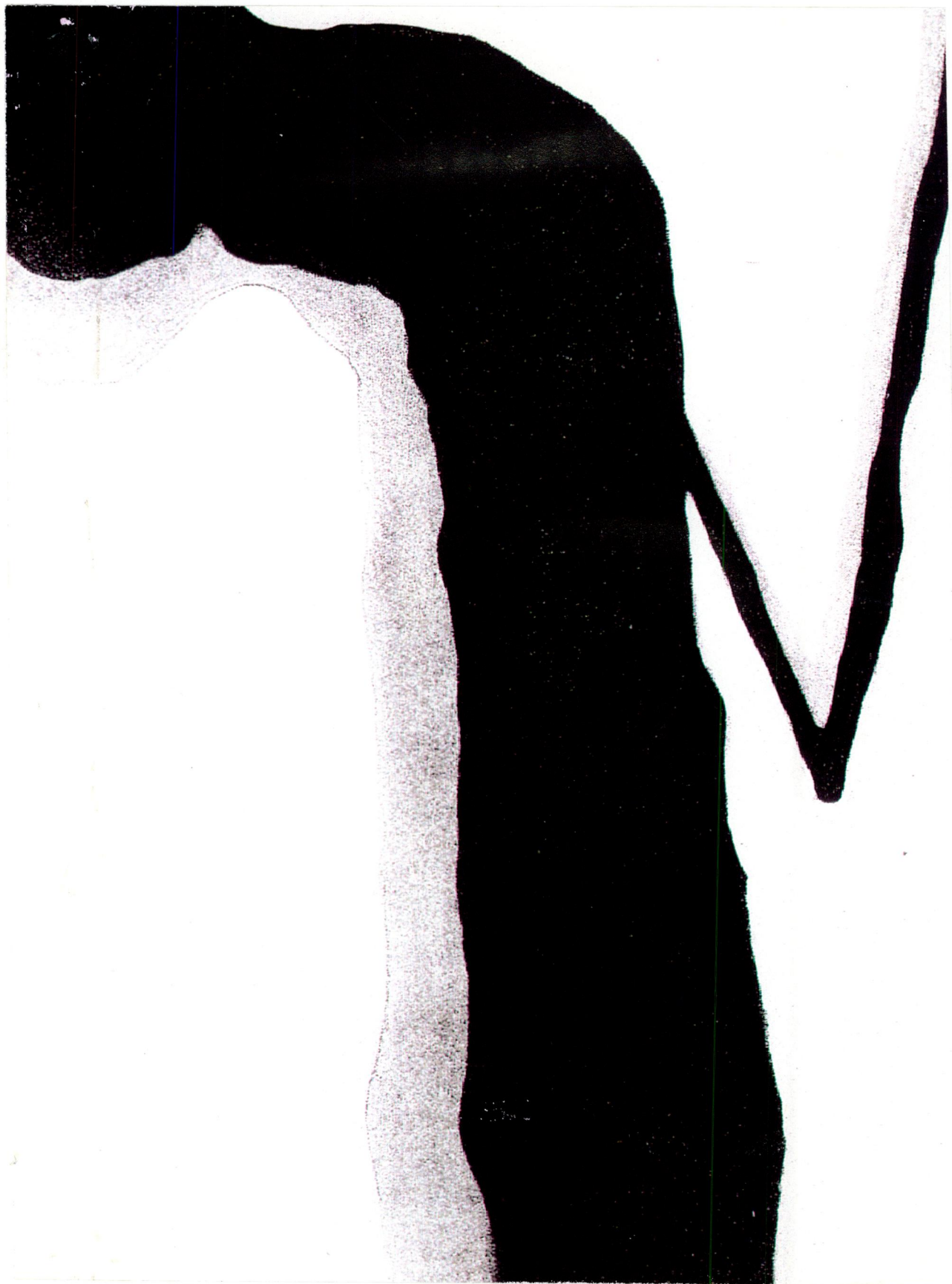
Oil on Canvas, 31 x 17 inches.
Private Collection.

New Mexico.

Comparisons may be drawn up between O'Keeffe's Blue, Black and Grey 1960 (fig.21) and that of Blue Lines (fig.22.). Both are simple images - purely abstract paintings. Her later paintings of 1960 consists of thicker and more softer lines than the original, but the Zig-Zag line is still apparent and the overall composition remains the same.

Influences on her Road Past the View 1964(fig.23) notably arise from her earlier abstraction of 1916 titled Abstraction IX 1916 (fig.24.). Winter road contains the same sweeping line rising from the left. Both shapes are flowing and feminine.

Earlier influences on her later work probably derived from her poor eyesight in her later years, in which she had to refer to memorised images and influences. Also, her wish to further develop and experiment with the design methods and artists influences of her earlier years with the visual aspects of New Mexico, is illustrated in her later work.



(Fig. 21.) Georgia O'Keeffe. *Drawing V*, 1959
Charcoal on Paper, 24 5/8 x 18 5/8 inches.
Estate of Georgia O'Keeffe.



(Fig. 22.) Georgia O'Keeffe, First Drawing of Blue Lines ,1916
Charcoal on Paper, 25 x 19 inches.
Estate of Georgia O'Keeffe.



(Fig. 23) Georgia O'Keeffe, Road Past the View I
Oil on Canvas, 24 x 30 inches.
Collection of Calvin Klein



(Fig. 24) Georgia O'Keeffe, Abstraction IX, 1916.

Charcoal on Paper, 24 1/4 x 8 3/4 inches

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alfred Steiglitz collection.

CHAPTER TWO
OPINIONS AND FACTS

How O'Keeffe's work is perceived by Steiglitz, the critics and the general public is one of the fundamental issues. One of the most controversial aspects about O'Keeffe's work is whether it expressed sexual eroticism or not.

There are very different views expressed, some say her work is erotic and sensual others say it is simplistic art - an expression of her love for nature. Some even find her work leaning more towards femininity and feminism. Whatever people may perceive her art work to be, there is no denying that she was influenced by all the above; some more than others. Many viewed her work as feminist - a personal and political view of what a woman had to say about the society in which she lived in (2p.135). The New Yorker newspaper wrote,

"O'Keeffe was being a woman and only secondary an artist." 7

Many believed she tried to express her feminist views through her early abstractions of the mid-teens and through her gigantic flower paintings of the 20's and 30's.

These feminist inclinations may be apparent in her work as she showed interest in the superiority of woman over man. Even when she was very young she argued with her brother Francis that god was a woman. Even after her mother denied the allegation, O'Keeffe stubbornly refused to change her mind. She calmly restated her conviction to both her brother and mother that god was a woman. She also was never ashamed of her womanhood and refused to accept the traditional role assigned to her gender, which was aroused by the feminist novels written by Floyd Dell in particular his book titled Women as World Builders which stated,

*"The woman who finds her work will find her love...
the woman who sets her love alone above everything
else
I would gently dismiss....
as the courtesan type." 8*

O'Keeffe became a member of the National woman's party with her close friend Anita Pollitzer in 1913 and remained so until the 40's (8.p.352). She also backed the equal right amendment through the second world war when she was in her fifties. She continuously gave talks about feminism and her views and debated with political radical Michael Gold, saying,

"Is this mine? is it influenced by some idea which I have acquired from some man?... I am trying with all my skill to do a painting that is all of women, as well as all of me" 9

It is highly likely that these feminist supports and interests in O'Keeffe's life influenced her work, as some critics believed. (2.P.269). Others on the otherhand viewed her work as feminine. Critic Wilson recognised her feminiinity in her work and wrote,

"Peculiarly feminine intensity which has galvanized all her work and seems to manifest itself, as a nile, in such a different way from the masculine".10
(2.p.100)

Her vibrant use of colour and strong flowing images signified to many a feminine quality, as many male painters of that period had not produced such outrageous colourful shapes and forms, so therefore they related her works to that of "Woman". The flowing curves and the delicate blending of colours in her flower paintings, particularly evident in her Red Poppy (1927)(fig.12) the White Sweet Peas (1926) (fig.13.) and the Pink Sweet Peas (1927)(fig25). In these magnified observations she managed to exaggerate the undulating curves and folds of the flowers creating images that may seem to coincide with her femininity and possibly her feminist beliefs.

There are good indications that she was expressing her femininity in relation to her strongly held beliefs about women making a stand for themselves and breaking away from their role models in life; she more than likely wanted to prove to men and women alike that "women" can actually become as successful and independant if not more, in a predominantly male society. As she stated,

"I know that many men here in New York think women can't be artists, but women can feel and work as they can" 11



(Fig. 25) Georgia O'Keeffe, Pink Sweet Peas 1927

Pastel on Paper, 28 x 21 inches.

Warren and Jane Shapleigh

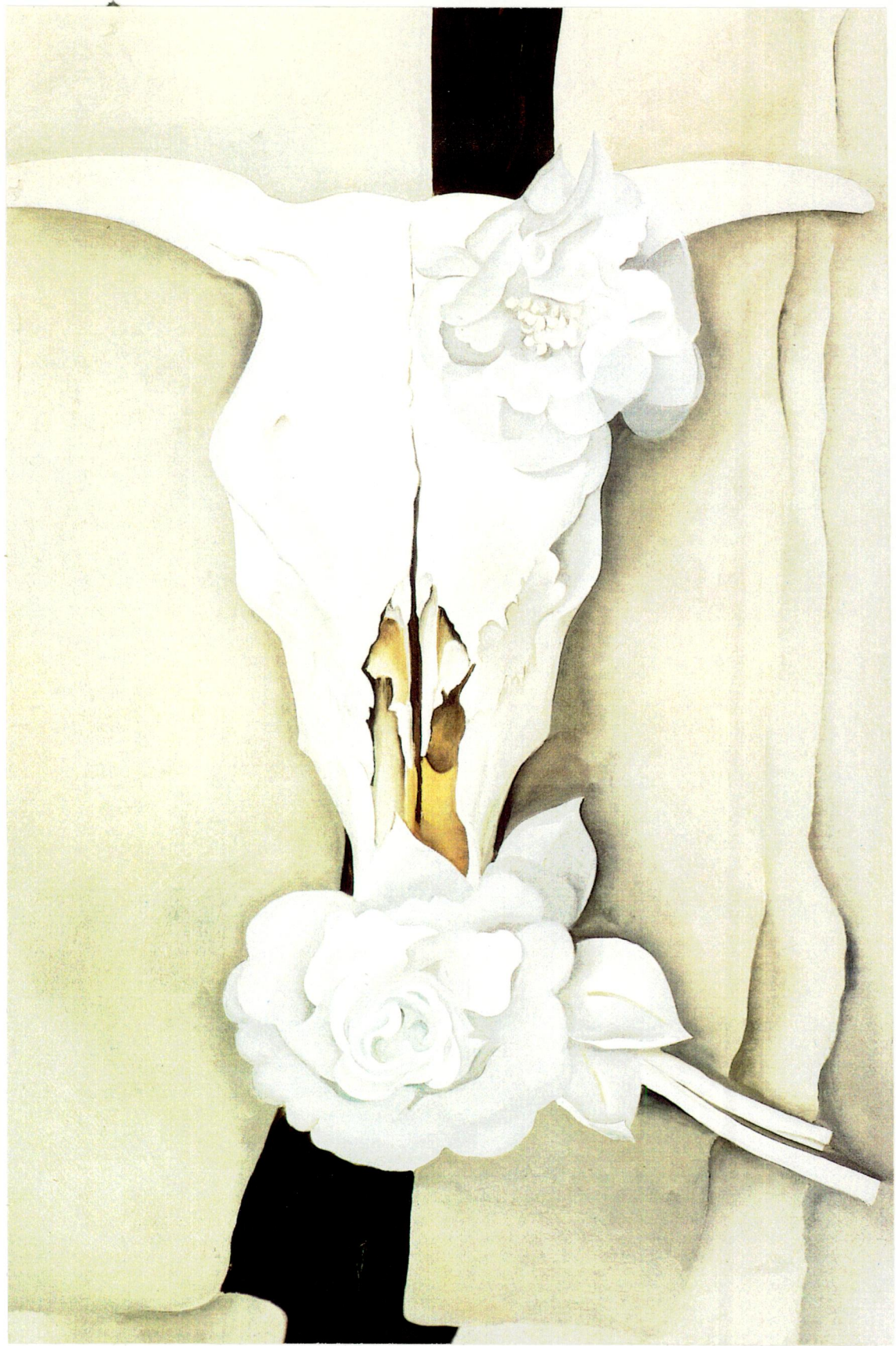
Her images and subject matter also came under fire when she began painting animals skulls with flowers such as paintings titled cow's skull with calico Roses (1931) (fig26) and Horse's skull with white rose (1931)(fig20). The critics, the public and her close friends were disturbed by the way O'Keeffe placed the artificial roses, (the kind that decorated New Mexican cemeteries) in the gaping holes of the eyes, ears and nostrils indicating morbid death fantasies or black humour even bordering on the occult which likely entered her subconscious.

Her suspension of objects in space and her elimination of detail signifies her association with surrealism. (27p 369). Some critics disagreed with all these implications by explaining that her work was over analysed. Blanche Matthias (1887 - ?) critic and poet suggested that men who practically dominated the art critic world had difficulty understanding her because she was unschooled in their intellectual theories and uninfluenced by their male traditions. They believed her art to be simple - a love for nature, as the majority of her work depicts her love and fascination for landscapes, vegetation, shells, and bones. Lewis Mumford a critic believed she was only using nature as a source through which she could express her innermost feelings, her love and sexual eroticism. As he explained,

" without painting a single nude, without showing a part of the human body, she has magnificently embodied passion, sexual life, womanhood, as physical elements and as states of mind".

Feminist, feminine, occult nature and surrealist influences are comprehensible and apparent in her work, but the most prominent and more likely influences are sexual and erotic desires which she expressed in her work (8pp. 120,133,276)

Alfred Steiglitz, O'Keeffe's lover and husband and chief promoter of her work began to sensationalise her work to create a following. He believed that her work was influenced by a suppression of female eroticism and sexual fantasy. There were many like him who believed her work to be sensual. For



(Fig. 26) Cow's Skull with Calico Roses, 1931.

Oil on Canvas, 36 5/16 x 24 1/8 inches.

The Art Institute of Chicago.

example Evelyn Sayer a prominent writer during O'Keeffe's time wrote about O'Keeffe's charcoal drawings saying,

"I was startled at their frankness, startled into admiration of the self knowledge in them. How new a field of expression such sex consciousness will open" 13

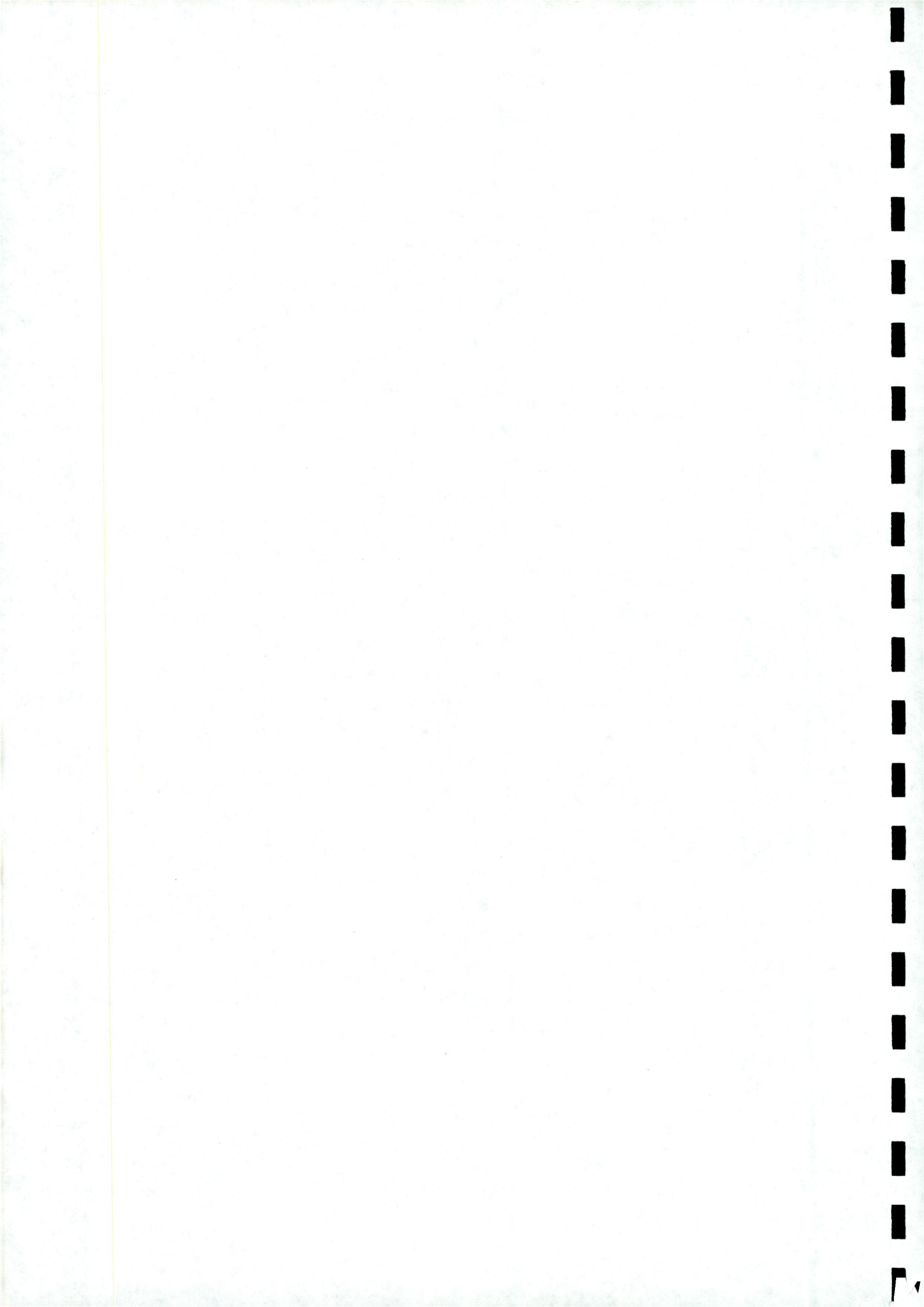
Over a decade later Lewis Mumford another writer and critic, only elaborated on Sayers idea when he wrote,

"Miss O'Keeffe's painting.. tell much about the departure of Victorian prudery and the ingrowing consciousness of sex in resistance to a hard external environment." 14

Their perceptions of her work may have been influenced by Freud's theories which were novel as well as popular during this period and because a connection between art and female sexuality was an extraordinarily provocative idea which Steiglitz adoped in an effort to promote her work. Steiglitz believed that O'Keeffe's imagery could be best understood in Freudian terms, it is no wonder that Steiglitz's approach to O'Keeffe's imagery was widely adopted by others (26,pp281,282). Also during those years, attitudes toward sex were affected by the novels of D. H. Lawerence such as Lady Chatterley's Lover. O'Keeffe's work had been called the counterpart of Lawerence's glorification of the truth of the senses (2,pp84,85). The New York Times reported in 1927 that,

"She reveals woman as an elementary being, closer to the earth than men, Suffering pain with passionate ecstasy and enjoying love with beyond good-and-evil delight".15

It is likely that people's sexual perceptions of O'Keeffe's work were influenced by Steiglitz, Freud and D. H. Lawerence, but one may also perceive her work as sexual and erotic without these influences, if one takes a look at the phallic smybolis and



shapes in her work, her erotic colours and her personal feelings and varied sexual relationships.

Her first charcoal drawings of 1915 were particularly sexual, based mainly on the male anatomy. Especially drawing No. 1V (fig. 4.) which comprises of erect oblong shapes swooping upwards, curling at the top creating round bulbous forms. The sculpture she made to compliment the drawings was ideally recognisable as phallic.

These pieces were probably influenced by her relationship with a man called Arthur Mac Mahon (27 pp 186,187). Her longing to be with him constantly and for him to give her a baby, gained importance in her life. This affected her art and she in turn had to choose between the two. Her art, was her first priority. These drawings were her first self-expressive drawings produced directly after this relationship which more than likely reflects the sexual fantasies she had for this man. Her sexual images may also be seen later in her abstract painting taken from *Music* (8, p.209) titled Music-Pink and Blue I of 1919 (fig. 27) O'Keeffe encircled a blue vaginal void with pulsating waves of rippling pink and white. An image of erotic iconography which was probably influenced by her moving in with Steiglitz, as O'Keeffe's awareness of her sexuality heightened. Steiglitz began taking endless nude photographs of O'Keeffe as if obsessed by her body and womanly attributes, in return O'Keeffe began to entrust her intimate feelings to Steiglitz. Acting as a kind of therapeutic catalyst, he helped her to release and translate more of her deepest intuitions and feelings into paint. Her feelings were probably sexual as seen in her abstractions, as she would have experienced these with Steiglitz. Her sudden move in with Steiglitz was probably enticed by his sheer understanding of her needs and her priorities in art as he too was an artist.

Her later abstractions of 1923 also contain sexual connotations. For example, one of her abstractions from a series she painted in 1923 titled Grey Line with Lavender and Yellow (fig. 28?)



(Fig.27) Georgia O'Keeffe Music-Pink and Blue 1., 1919.
Oil on Canvas, 35 x 29 inches.
The Barney Ebsworth Collection.

which was compositionally related to her first abstract oil paintings of 1919. O'Keeffe painted strips of colour fading inwardly towards a dark hole. It is not known where her source came from in Grey line with Lavender and Yellow (fig 28) but the paintings imagery has a strong connection with the female sexual anatomy.

O'Keeffe totally denied that her work contained sexual iconography and erotic fantasies (19,p. 170), maybe because it entered her work without her consciously knowing it. One may sense that at least sometimes, the images she produced between unrelated subject matter were made subconsciously. Years later she recognised this phenomenon in the remarkable similarities between a horizontal landscape and a still life.

"After painting the shell and shingle many times, I did a misty landscape of the mountain across the lake, and the mountain became the shape of the shingle on the table in my room. I did not notice that they were alike for a long time after painted" 16

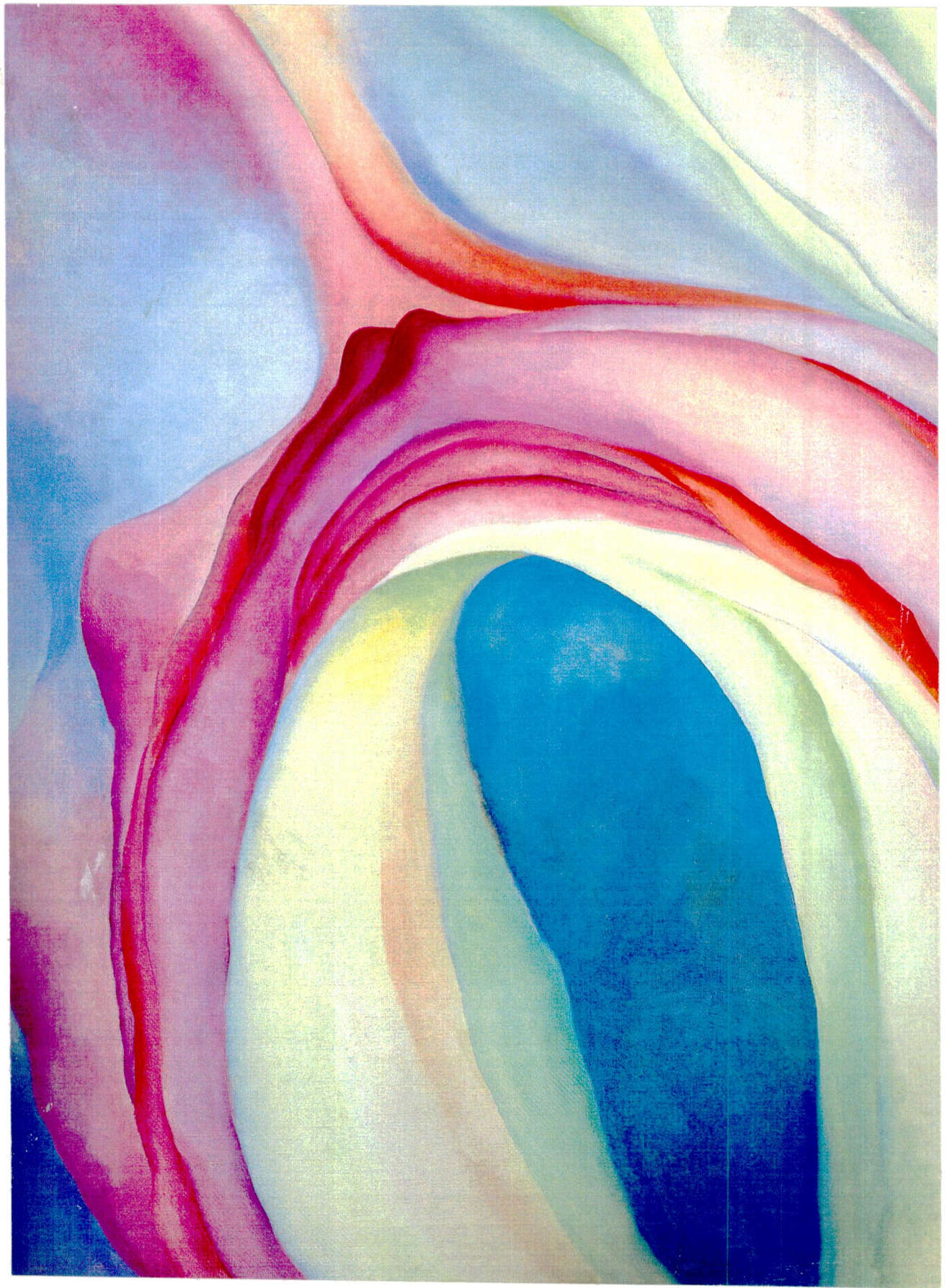
This subconsciousness in O'Keeffe's work may prove that the sexual images in her work do exist, and how her personal feelings and affairs protrude through the images she portrays without her being aware of it.

Despite O'Keeffe's best efforts to defuse the sexual talk surrounding her work, her trembling, feathery, unfurling petals reminded people of genitalia just as the abstractions had done. The similarities of this kind may be seen in O'Keeffe's abstraction titled Music-Pink and Blue 11 (1919) (fig. 36) and Two Calla Lillies on Pink (1928) (fig. 29) Large, engorged stamens and corollas suggested male genitals, while dark recesses ("soft enormous caves" said Time Magazine 1928) that invited penetration, strongly suggested female vulvas!

One woman was found teaching her children the facts of Life from an O'Keeffe painting, another remarked to a friend who had rehung her O'Keeffe in the bathroom saying (19 p.170)



(Fig. 29) Georgia O'Keeffe, Two Calla Lillies on Pink, 1928
Oil on Canvas, 40 x 30 inches.
Estate of Georgia O'Keeffe.



(Fig. 36.) Georgia O'Keeffe, Music - Pink and Blue 11, 1919.

Oil on Canvas, 35½ x 29 inches.

Emily Fisher Landau.

*"I'm so glad you moved that vagina
out of the living room." 17*

*O'Keeffe's private life helps to show how her work contains sexual
iconography.*

*Her relationship with Steiglitz was extraordinary. He
photographed her obsessively revealing the true woman in his
photographs. She too began to recognise herself and understand
her sexuality. Steiglitz's photographs of her had a deep
affect, for he had never photographed another woman in the
compulsive manner before. This was totally new to her,
something which she felt so strongly about, that she
expressed it in her work. Her erotic, colours overlapping
each other receding into the canvas, and the 'V' formations
in her flower abstractions simulated women's genitals. These
paintings depicted her female eroticism and sexual experiences
that actually happened with Steiglitz and others, as O'Keeffe
with the aid of Steiglitz was learning how to express these feelings
of eroticism into her work.*

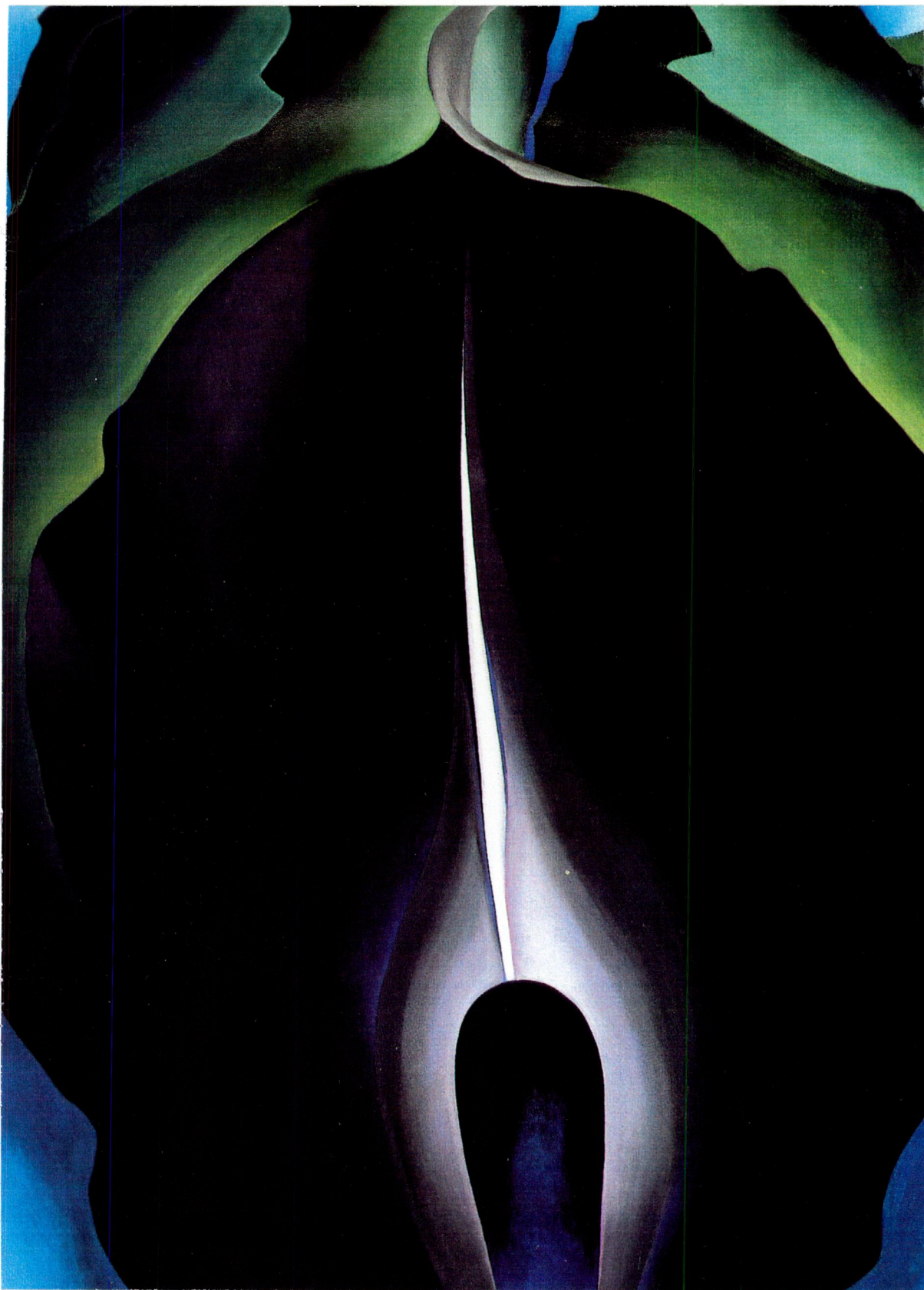
*Other images that connect with eroticism and sex seen in her
later work, may reflect Steiglitz's numerous affairs with
other women, such as Rebecca Strand who he photographed
continuously, in the same obsessive way he had photographed
O'Keeffe. He continued to have affairs throughout his life
and showed an interest in many young women (8, pp 267-272, 418-
419, 408-409.)*

*These affairs affected her feelings and her obsessiveness
with her relationships; and the pain she endured with Steiglitz
as portrayed in her series of Jack-in-the-Pulpit 1930 (fig. 30, 31, 32)
which is largely considered the artist's most sexually explicit
work. In this sense, the composition is dominated by the
thrusting central shaft of the Jack, it's shiny purple head
emerging from a pale green sheath reined in dark pink.
One writer has described this erotic emblem as a*

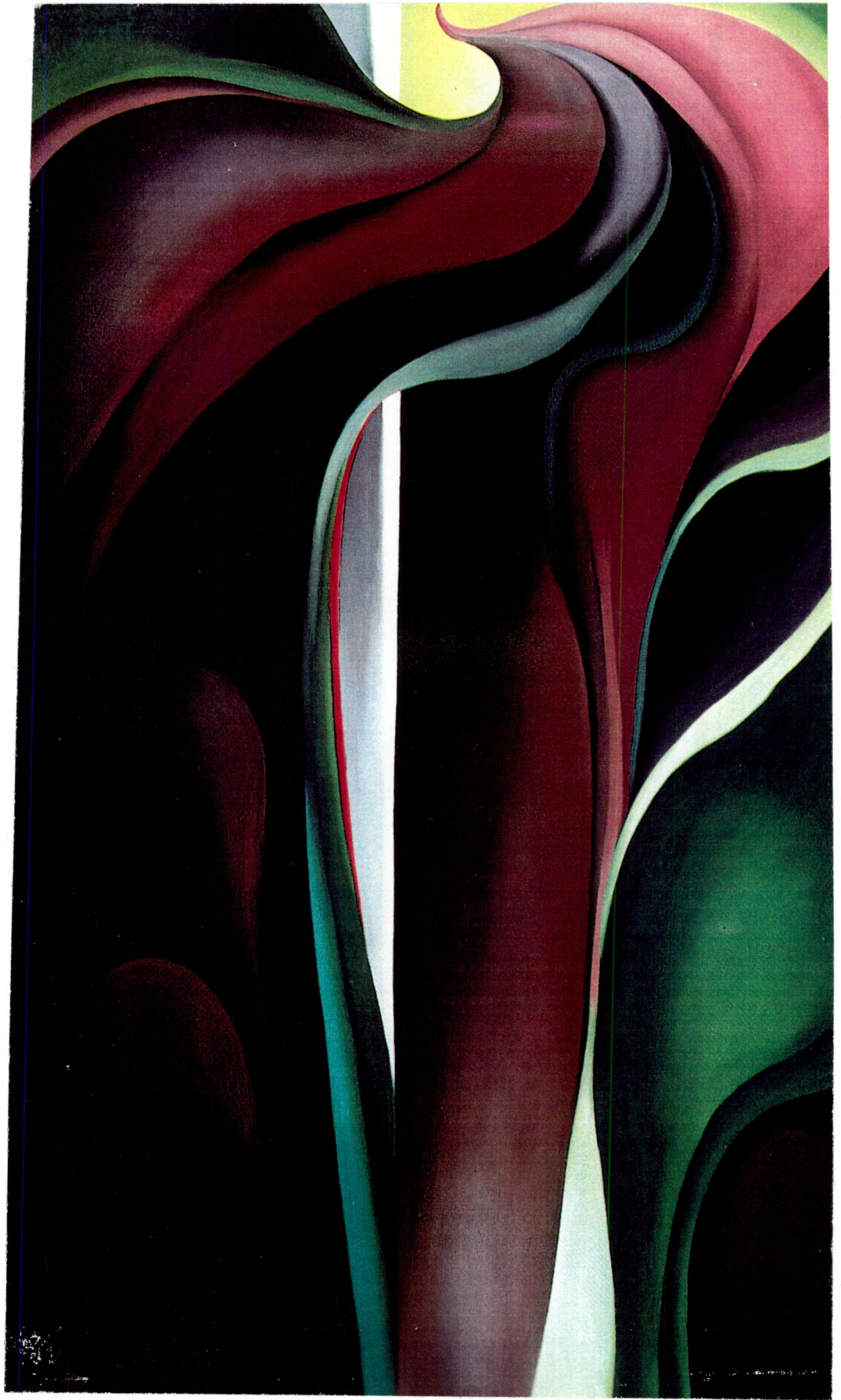
Love note painting for Alfred. 18



(Fig 30.) Georgia O'Keeffe, Jack - in - the - Pulpit No.111, 1930
Oil on Canvas, 40 x 30 inches.
Estate of Georgia O'Keeffe.



(Fig. 31) Georgia O'Keeffe, *Jack-in-the-Pulpit IV*, 1930
Oil on Canvas, 40 x 30 inches.
Estate of Georgia O'Keeffe.



(Fig. 32.) Georgia O'Keeffe. Jack-in-the-Pulpit No. V, 1930
Oil on Canvas, 48 x 30 inches.
Estate of Georgia O'Keeffe.

The 'V' formations of her flowers in the 20's and 30's depicting eroticism remained with her, and may be seen in her landscape, forms such as Black place (1944) (fig.33) and small purple Hills (1934) (fig34) scenes taken from New Mexico. Flower images also depicting sexual connotation cropped up again in her New Mexico paintings seen in her Red Hills with white flower (fig.35) and Horse's Skull with white rose (fig20)

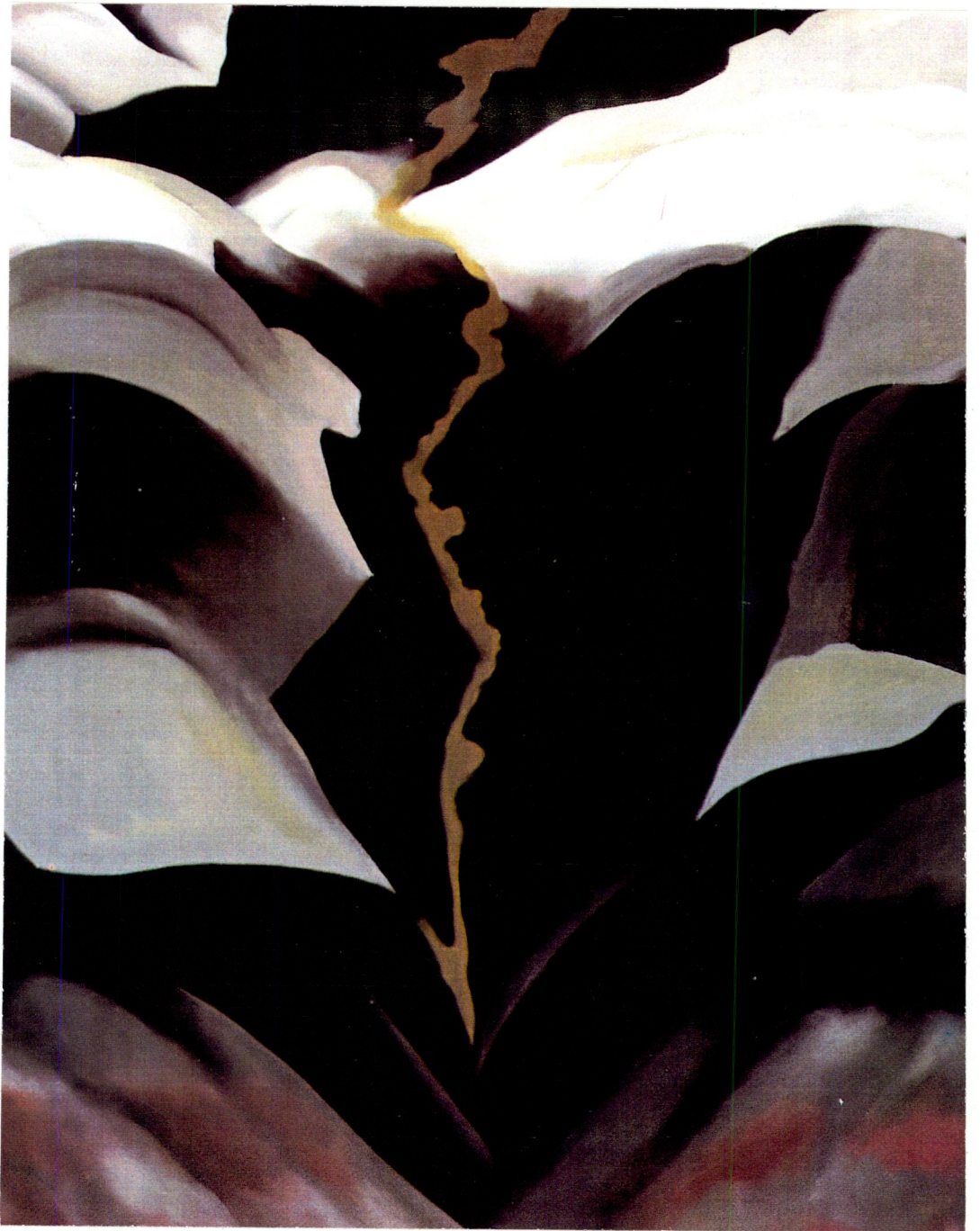
The flower and the 'V' formation symbolise above all the erotic and womanly desires O'Keeffe had experienced. Numerous affairs with both men and women reinforced flower images and 'V' formations in her work. She had related the images with her previous sexual desires and experiences with Steiglitz. Her affairs with women describes O'Keeffe's awareness of her sexuality and the uninhibited natural manner of expressing it in her work. Among the women O'Keeffe had affairs with were Beck Strand (8, pp.392-396) the wife of Paul Strand the photographer, Leah Harris a Jewess friend of O'Keeffe, Strand and Steiglitz (8 pp171-175), and Mabel Luhan (8 pp 396-398), another friend who owned accommodation in New Mexico where O'Keeffe stayed.. Paul Strand recognised O'Keeffe's sexual attachments, acknowledging that,

"He was not ready to articulate his sense that Georgia's sexual attachments embraced woman as well as men, but he tried to signal the unsayable." 19

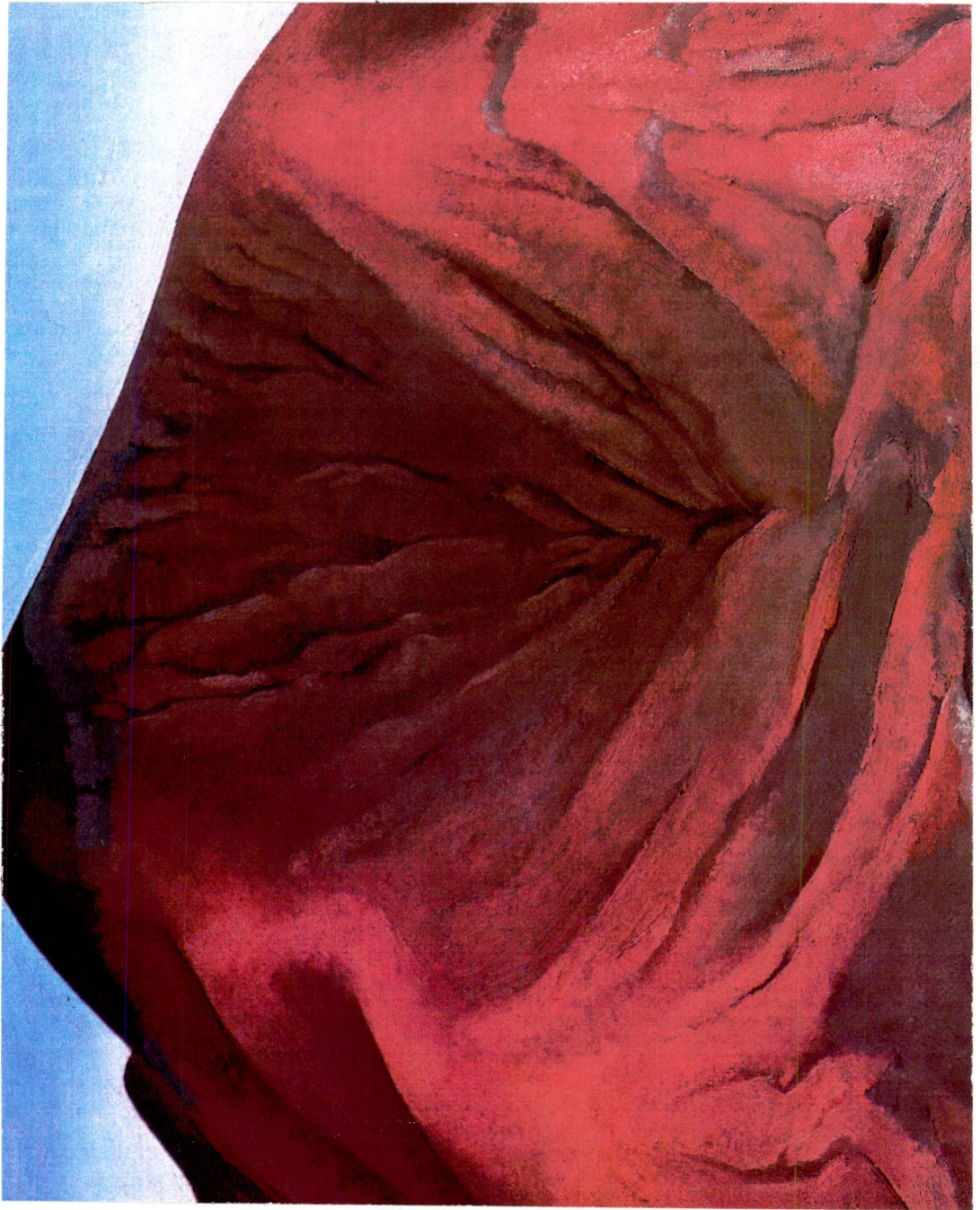
Her flowers depicted in her new Mexican sourced paintings may also signify her longing for Steiglitz to come to New Mexico and replenish their love they had for one another and his obsession for her, the longest relationship she'd ever had. As Henry McBride described her flower and bone paintings,

"Mourning becomes Georgia..... with the perversity of a Hamlet at the grave of Ophelia" 20

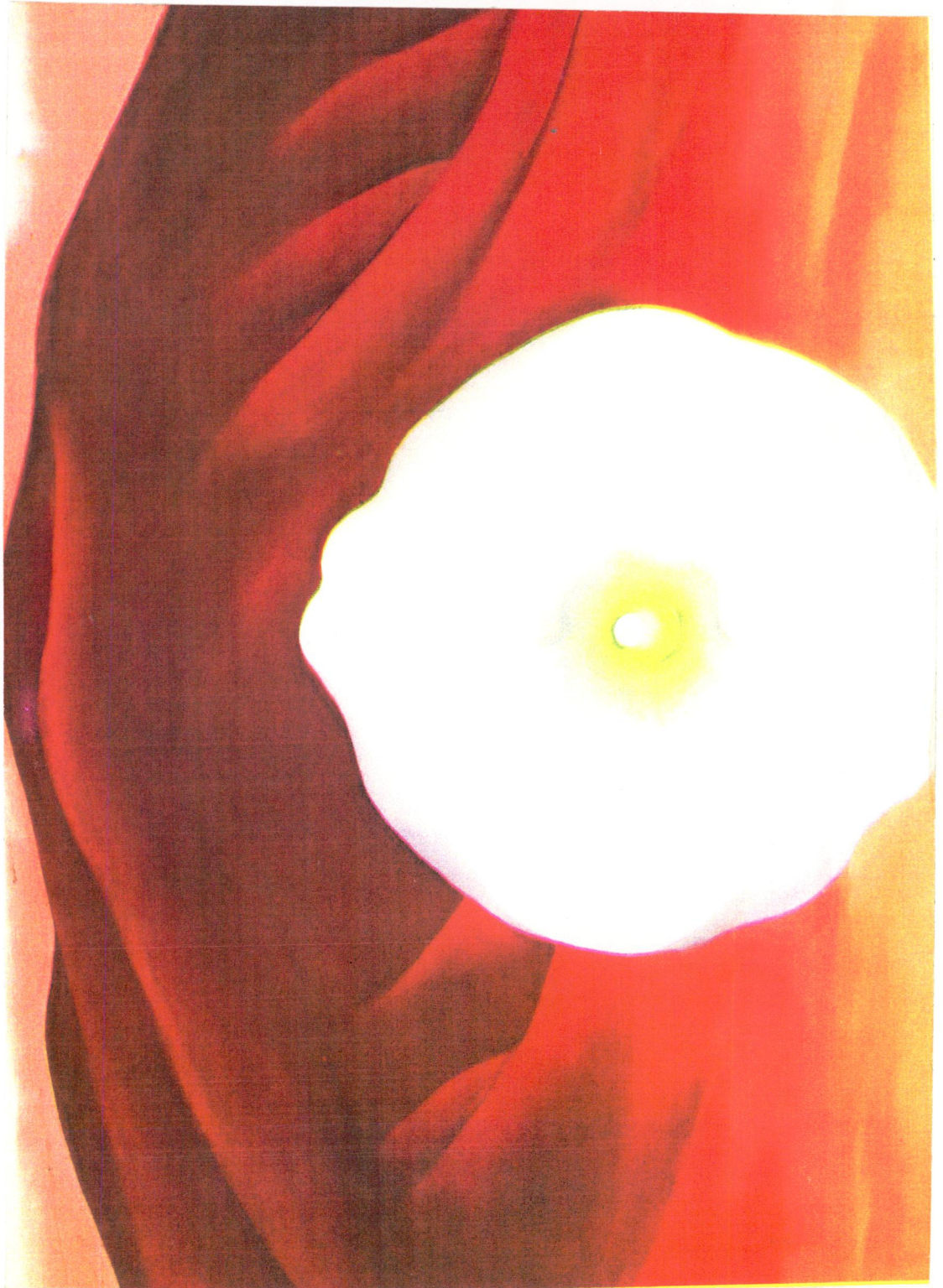
After studying O'Keeffe's private life, her relationship with Steiglitz and others, and understanding her work as a self-expression of these feelings and experiences, one may acknowledge her work as erotic and sensual. But feminism, femininity, nature the occult and surrealism also influenced her work.



(Fig.33.) Georgia O'Keeffe, Black Place 111, 1944
Oil on Canvas, 36 x 40 inches.
Estate of Georgia O'Keeffe.



(Fig. 34) Georgia O'Keeffe. Small Purple Hills, 1934
Oil on Board, 16 x 19 3/4 inches.
Estate of Georgia O'Keeffe.



(Fig. 35.) Georgia O'Keeffe, Red Hills and White Flower, 1937
Pastel on Paper, Covered Board, 19 1/4 x 25 1/2
Estate of Georgia O'Keeffe.

CHAPTER THREE

On seeing O'Keeffe's work for the first time Steiglitz believed he had found.

"America's first woman modernist" 21

He was overwhelmed by her sensitivity and pureness expressed in her original abstract images. He was amazed at the rarely expressed female viewpoint and admired her courage to dare reveal herself on paper (19,p.84). As he said to Anita Pollitzer, O'Keeffe's dearest friend who first introduced Steiglitz to her work.

*"why they're genuinely fine things -
you say a woman did these -
She's an unusual woman - she's
broad minded, she's bigger than most
women, but she's got the sensitive
emotion - I'd know she was a
woman O, look at that line " 22*

Steiglitz especially admired women artists and photographers. He believed they were less inhibited by society, that their style was 'spiritually distinct', to that of a man. He exhibited photographers such as Anne Birgman and Gertrude Kasebier and the first female artist he exhibited was Pamela Colman Smith in 1907. Steiglitz continued to support and exhibit female artists. In 1915 he exhibited artists Marion Beckett and Katherine N. Rhoades. Steiglitz was also an avid supporter of American Art. He was increasingly encouraging young unknown American artists and photographers by exhibiting their work. He exhibited John Marin an American watercolourist, Marsden Hartley a painter and poet, and Paul Strand a young abstract photographer.

"He deeply believed that American Society needed it's own artists, and he wanted the country to support these artists by buying their works. He was fighting against great odds - even the Armory show had tended to inhibit the expression of anything genuinely American because of it's overwhelming European slant," 23

Many artists ventured to Europe to study under the masters, as Europe was renowned for its artistic attributes (27.p.100). The economic disruptions and labour strikes which broke out after the war. The bombing on Wallstreet in 1920; the ban on Liquor nationwide, the forging of bootleggers links with the underworld and the rising profit of organised crime did not benefit artists, so many of them fled to Europe. O'Keeffe, though, remained in America and was therefore not as susceptible to European influences. Intellectuals in America disagreed with European influences on American Art.

" intellectuals were talking excitedly about creating a new American culture, free at last of European domination" 24

O'Keeffe's work was free of European dominance. Steiglitz recognised O'Keeffe's work as purely American when he agreed with Sculptor Brancusi's statement.

"There is no limitation of Europe in her..... It is a force - a liberating free force" 25

Steiglitz was attracted to O'Keeffe's work as she was a pure American woman and modern painter. Something which he had been searching for, for a long time. As O'Keeffe later recalls.

" He had the idea, there must be a woman somewhere who could paint. When he saw my watercolours on regular school paper, he thought I was that woman" 26

After seeing her work, Steiglitz gave O'Keeffe her first exhibition in 1916 at his prestigious gallery '291'. This was the beginning of her success. Steiglitz promoted and sensationalised O'Keeffe's work to create an interest among the public and critics by saying (2.pp.23,24, 25)

" her imagery was an expression of female eroticism, and, thus could be understood in Freudian terms." 27

Steiglitz had firm control over what was said to the critics as O'Keeffe disliked interviews (2 P.17). She left the interviews to Steiglitz as he was well established as a Gallery owner, promoter, and discoverer of unknowns, such as John Marin, Her was described,

"as a pathfinder, a discoverer, an explorer, a founder, a philosopher, a master, a preacher, and a prophet." 28

O'Keeffe had noticed his flair in promoting and giving speeches on abstractionists and unknowns; something which his contemporaries had never done. He was the first in America to show Rodin and Picasso. Critics flocked to hear his exciting and controversial speeches, it gave them a new source of material to write on. He gave impassioned speeches about his friend, Henry Steichen's drawings and paintings and about his support for the avant-garde which threatened to upset the countries staid ideas about art. His energy in his arguments and answers to questions posed by the public, critics and art students was profound. O'Keeffe later recalled,

" I very well remember the fantastic violence of Steiglitz's defense when the students with me began talking with him about the drawings" 29

Although O'Keeffe's first show horrified the public it did create an interest, as people could not comprehend how an unknown American artist could have her paintings exhibited on the walls, where the masters of Europe such as Picasso, Braque and Rodin, had exhibited previously (10.p.91). After this show she did not exhibit for another four years, but Steiglitz made sure the critics did not forget her that easily, when he exhibited photographs he had taken of her in his modern and contemporary art Gallery '291'. A good career move for O'Keeffe as Henry McBride a critic and writer for the New York Sun wrote,

" There came to notice almost at once... a new effort in photography and something new in the way of introducing a budding artist.... It made a stir, Mona Lisa got but one portrait of herself worth talking about. O'Keeffe got a hundred. It put her at once on the map. Everybody knew the name. She became what is known as a newspaper personality." 30

Steiglitz continued to promote her work and always insisted on showing her work whenever he was asked to select work for an exhibition, even if it was male only. Unlike his contemporaries Steiglitz encouraged the showing of male and female paintings together. (2, pp. 15 16) When approached by Arthur Carles a painter and instructor of modern art at the Pennsylvania Academy of the fine arts, to put a show together of male artists only Steiglitz refused outright saying

"that O'Keeffe was always included
in any show he was involved in....
....Take it or leave it.....
There'll be no show without her". 31

O'Keeffe had to struggle to win acceptance as a serious painter in a predominantly male community as she was a woman who had not been trained in Europe and who was Steiglitz's beloved. O'Keeffe sensed men were uneasy about women and the modern approaches to art which were similar to theirs. O'Keeffe later recalls,

"All the male artists I knew,
of course, made it very plain
that as a woman I couldn't make it -
I might as well stop painting." 32

This made O'Keeffe more determined than ever to succeed. Her work was scrutinised more by the critics because she was a female American Modernist. The critics created a hype about the bright, emotional colours in her work. They did not compliment her male contemporaries. The males did not agree with her as an artist competing with them, as she recalled,

" when I entered the art world, the
men weren't very happy about it...
You weren't supposed to paint
yellow pictures, and you weren't
supposed to paint Pink Pictures". 33

(Mary Daniels, Chicago Tribune, June 24th, 1973)

They also attacked her flower paintings saying they were erotic.

"Hartley and Demuth for example -
painted flowers, theirs were not
interpreted erotically." 34

The struggle she had in proving herself as an artist and believing that she could compete with men as well as women encouraged her to produce better works. It gave her the determination to succeed as a woman, as an American and as a Modernist, abstract painter. It also created hype and interest in her work. In her earliest shows five thousand people a day would come and see her work. Her early show in 1920 sold works valued at three thousand dollars. As she was one of the few American female painters her work was analysed more and talked about more, therefore she gained considerable interest and recognition from the Public and numerous Art Reviews. (8 pp.327,328)

She continued exhibiting her work with the aid of Steiglitz. In 1925 she exhibited her flower paintings, one of which sold for twelve hundred dollars. Any paintings she did were handed over to Steiglitz the 'Guardian'. He made sure they were sold to the right person at the right price.

"Steiglitz bluntly rejected buyers who didn't come up with a good enough reason for wanting an O'Keeffe".

He sold three of O'Keeffe's paintings to Duncan Phillips, a Washington D.C. millionaire, who in turn exhibited O'Keeffe's paintings himself. Steiglitz's marketing strategy was perfect, he knew that for an artist to gain recognition in America the price of their work had to be high.

"High prices were the only thing that made materialistic Americans respect art" 36

Her success increased during the 20's and 30's. She had shows every year after Christmas in New York. Time magazine covered her shows. In 1927 an unknown American who lived in France offered to buy her six small Calla Lily Panels, painted in 1923 for twenty-five thousand dollars. The New York evening

graphic wrote on the headlines,

"she painted the lily and got \$25,000 and fame for doing it!" 37

She would not have received this without the hype and marketing strategies of Steiglitz as he would only accept the money for the lillies if the buyer guaranteed to hang them in his home forever and never sell them. Steiglitz's strategy made the buyer of the O'Keeffe feel he was getting something really special.

Her new Mexican Paintings appealed to a big audience as they depicted " the American Scene". These paintings and others were being sold to museums at nearly the same high price levels that Steiglitz had established for them in the twenties. In 1930 the Cleveland Museum paid four thousand dollars for a painting done in Taos, a big white flower with what Georgia called a 'Golden Heart'. In 1931 the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York bought a tiny painting done around 1922. It was a strong vote of confidence for the artist and her work.

Her success, her fear of failure and pressure from Steiglitz, had an effect on her health (8, pp161,221). It was a common reaction for her to be sick after her shows. In 1933 she suffered from breathing problems, loss of appetite, diagnosed as psychoneurosis a nervous disease. She hated crowds and felt ill with anxiety attacks probably brought on by her fear of failure. In a letter to Anita Pollitzer she wrote

"I always have a curious sort of feeling about some of my things - I hate to show them....
I am afraid people won't understand
and I hope they won't - and am afraid they will" 38

The main source of her fear and anxiety was Steiglitz's stubbornness and moods in his old age. He controlled her art so therefore controlled her life, or so he thought.

On one particular occasion when O'Keeffe wanted to go to New Mexico to visit, Steiglitz stubbornly insisted that the true artist did not need to travel. He would definitely not go with her saying.

" I have all the world around me on the hill". 39

O'Keeffe still continued on her journey to New Mexico despite his negative reaction.

Her fear of failure and it's effect on her health is notably recognised in her refusal to finish painting the powder room in the Music Hall. Her excuse was that the plaster was not dry enough for her to paint on it. But it was fear not wet plaster that stopped her from continuing the project. This fear of failure caused her to have a nervous breakdown, and demanded much rest.

These fears earlier on in her career gave O'Keeffe the determination to succeed in a predominantly male society. This fear was supported by Steiglitz's admiration, loyalty and encouragement, something which she cherished from the beginning. O'Keeffe recalls:

" I believe I would rather have Steiglitz like something - anything I had done - than anyone else I know of - I have always thought that - if I ever make anything that satisfies me even ever so little - I am going to show it to him to find out if it's any good." 40

Later though she could not cope with these fears, her anxiety attacks and her problems with Steiglitz as she was continuously ill after working hard for a show. Steiglitz had also helped her at the beginning of her career, he had taken her under his wing. He promoted and established her as one of America's finest woman modernist's, something which every unknown Artist during the early 20th Century would have required to succeed. Without his aid at the beginning of her career O'Keeffe would not have progressed as quickly, or perhaps at all. His marketing strategies played a substantial role in the development of her art and

art and it's success. As time went on though, his success declined as O'Keeffe's rose. This drove O'Keeffe and Steiglitz apart. His mood swings, his old age and his poor health made O'Keeffe more independant. In 1946 when Steiglitz died she had become as well known as her famous husband. As New York Newspapers noted,

"Alfred Steiglitz was the husband of Georgia O'Keeffe." 41

O'Keeffe continued her success as an Artist, although it was some time after Steiglitz's death before she had her first major exhibition. Free from Steiglitz, O'Keeffe also began to travel to Asia and Europe.

Her show of 1950 was a success. Her work consisted of previous work done in 1946 and poppies executed in 1950. Half a dozen national magazines had taken note of her successful reappearance after Steiglitz's death. Some published lavish colour reproductions of her work, and the Newsweek hailed her as

The Grand Old Lady of Painting,

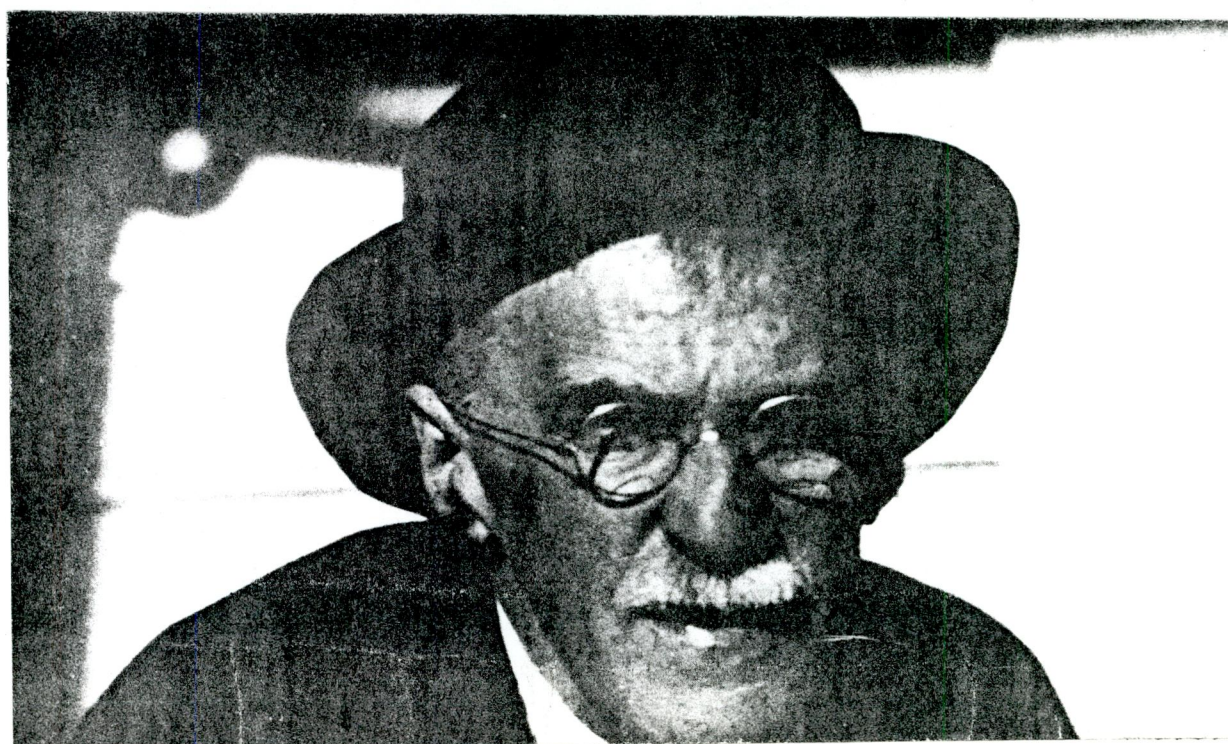
In the sixties, she was bestowed with awards which amounted to about one a year. The most prestigious was her election in 1962 to the seat vacated by the death of E.E. Cummings on the fifty member American Arts and Letters, the nations highest honour society for people in the Arts. She also joined a very exclusive group of only five women members, of which she was the only painter.

Her influence on the new, young, up and coming painters of the sixties shows O'Keeffe's distinct modern abilities. Young artists of the sixties viewed her art as modern even though it was painted decades before. Similarities may be seen in work by painters like Kenneth Noland and Ellsworth Kelly who tended to simplify forms, define edges, focus on single objects and work in a few colours all of which may be seen in O'Keeffe's work.

Her talks at universities were very popular, it was apparent that she was back in the mainstream of the modern art movement again. (19 p.p. 418,422). She had become successful with the aid of Steiglitz at the beginning of her career, struggling in a predominantly male society of artists and critics; but continued to remain so without him.



GEORGIA O'KEEFFE



ALFRED STEIGLITZ

CONCLUSION

It is apparent that O'Keeffe was subject to various influences, which she in turn transformed into her own work to create her own individual style. Although some similarities are recognisable between her work and others, her distinct style of painting prevails.

The influences included European painters like Picasso, Blique Cezanne and Matisse. They were responsible for introducing her to the controversial abstract, modern art movement, so unlike what she was being taught in earlier years. She began experimenting with these new ideas but only started taking it seriously when she realised American painters who adopted the abstract style began making a living from it. This encouraged O'Keeffe to choose painting as a career.

Dow and Bement, two radical modern art teachers influenced O'Keeffe's work through their avant-garde theories on design colour and form, something which O'Keeffe adapted into all her works. Dow's theories played a large part on moulding O'Keeffe's perception of abstract art.

O'Keeffe was also subject to peerage influence, these being American artists photographers one of whom was Alfred Steiglitz.

These American contemporaries enticed O'Keeffe to travel and experience new images and sources of inspiration for her art, while Steiglitz simply encouraged O'Keeffe to express her own feelings and experiences on paper.

O'Keeffe's relationship with Steiglitz and her affairs with both men and women influenced her work. Her feminist upbringing with her mother and her support for feminism is expressed. Her love for nature and her femininity is conveyed and later on in her work it is apparent that she was also influenced by the occult and the surrealist movement although to a smaller extent. These influences are notably recognised through the various images which she conveys. The strongest influence expressed in her work is her sexual and erotic feelings and experiences which Steiglitz adopted in the effort to promote and sensationalise her

her work to make it a success. O'Keeffe although she was a woman, an American and an unknown abstractionist free from European influences and entering a field largely dominated by well known American and European modernists, she was fortunate to find Steiglitz, a promoter of American unknown Artists, and a supporter of women.

Steiglitz a powerful, persuasive man in the eye of the critics and the public promoted O'Keeffe's work by sensationalising it to create a following. His marketing strategies and his fame played a large part in the establishment and popularity of her work.

O'Keeffe's personal determination, her mother's teaching of the importance of being independent, feminist books and the Suffragette Movement encouraged her to succeed in a predominantly male society. Although Steiglitz gave O'Keeffe the start she needed she managed to obtain her popularity and success without him even after he died. One must not forget that her art work had to be exceptional for Steiglitz to promote it in the first place.

The influences on her work helped create the images, colours, shapes, emotions, and experiences expressed in her work. Steiglitz recognised these and used them to promote her work. He recognised the public's need and interest in the sensual and erotic.

Her influences inspired the images in her work which Steiglitz recognised and promoted which resulted in her success.

QUOTATIONS

1. Ernest Watson, "Georgia O'Keeffe" *American Artist*, June, 1934
2. Jerry Tallmer, " Daily Closeup, The Silver Lining." *New York Post*, October 17, 1970
3. Letter from O'Keeffe to Anita Pollitzer August 15, *Museum of Modern Art Press release*, May, 1946.
4. Letter from Pollitzer to O'Keeffe, January 1, 1916, *Beinecke Library*.
5. Charlotte Willard, " Georgia O'Keeffe" *Art in America*, October, 1963.
6. Blanche Matthais - Laurie Lisle "Portrait of an artist" *New York* 1986.
7. *The New Yorker*, March 13, 1926
8. Lisle, "Portrait of an Artist" P.82
9. "Radical writer and woman artist clash on propaganda and it's uses" *New York*, March 16, 1930
10. Buhler Lynes, B "O'Keeffe, Steiglitz and the critics, 1916 -1929; UMI research press, Michigan 1989
11. Lisle, "Portrait of an Artist" D163
12. Mumford, *The Brown Decades*, New York, 1931.
13. Evelyn Sayer, *Camera Work*, October 1916
14. Lewis Mumford, *New Republic*, 2 March 1927.
15. *New York Times*, January 16, 1927
16. Mintz Messinger, L "Georgia O'Keeffe", *New York* 1988 P.32
17. Lisle, "Portrait of an Artist" P. 170
18. Lowe, *Steiglitz* P,310
19. Eisler, *O'Keeffe and Steiglitz* P.173
20. *Skeletons on the Plains*, "New York Sun," January 2, 1932

21. *O'Keeffe, Steiglitz and the critics, 1916-1929 P.6.*
22. *Pollitzer to O'Keeffe, I Jan, 1916.*
23. *Portrait of an Artist Laurie Lisle P.72.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Herbert Seligmann, Alfred Steiglitz talking New Haven: Yale University Library 1966.*
26. *Art News 76, Dec.1977*
27. *O'Keeffe, Steiglitz and the critics, 1916 - 1929 p. 6.*
28. *Ibid.*
29. *New York Times Magazine, December 11 1949*
30. *Henry McBride, New York Sun, May 18, 1946*
31. *Lisle " Portrait of an Artist" P.136*
32. *Grace Glueck, New York Times, October 18, 1970.*
33. *Mary Daniels, Chicago Tribune, June 24.*
34. *Lisle, Portrait of an Artist P.170*
35. *Lisle, Portrait of an Artist, P.186.*
36. *Ibid.*
37. *The New York Evening graphic, May 12, 1928.*
38. *O'Keeffe to Pollitzer, October 1915.*
39. *Georgia Engelhard, American Photography, February 1945.*
40. *Eisler, O'Keeffe and Steiglitz P.76*
41. *New York Sun, July 1946.*
42. *Newsweek, 1960*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Boyle, K; " A woman on Paper"; Touchstone, N.Y.C. New York, 1988.
2. Buhler Lynes, B; "O'Keeffe, Steiglitz and the critics, 1916 - 1929; UMI research Press, Michigan 1989.
3. Callaway, N; Georgia O'Keeffe, one-hundred flowers"; Knopf, N.Y.C. New York 1990.
4. Castro, Jan Gordon; " The Art and Life of Georgia O'Keeffe", New York, crown, 1985.
5. Coke, Van Deren;" Taos and Santa Fe"; Albuquerque University of New Mexico, press 1963.
6. Cowart, Hamilton; "Georgia O'Keeffe"; Abrams NYC, New York, 1991.
7. Dow, Arthur, Wesley, "Composition" 20th ed. New York, Doubleday, Doran and Co. 1938.
8. Eisler, B. "O'Keeffe and Steiglitz, An American Romance",Doubleday, NYC, New York 1991.
9. Eldredge, C; "Georgia O'Keeffe"; Abrams, NYC, New York,1991.
10. Ernest Watson "Georgia O'Keeffe"; American Artists, June 1934.
11. Grace, Glueck, New York Times, October 18, 1970.
12. Harris, Ann Sutherland, and linda Lochlin; "Women Artists"; 15-50-1950. New York ; Alfred A Knopf,1976.
13. Herbert Seligmann; Alfred Steiglitz talking New Haven; Yale University Library 1966.
14. Homer, William; "Alfred Steiglitz and the American Avant-Garde; Boston N.Y. Graphic Society, 1977
15. Jerry Tallmer; "Daily Closeup. The Silver lining", New York Post, October 17, 1970.
16. Kramer, Hilton, " Georgia O'Keeffe", New York Times Book review, Dec.12,1976.
17. Langren, Marchal E. " Years of Art", The Story of the Art Students League of New York. New York: Robert M. McBride and Co. 1977.
18. Lewis, Mumford, New Republic, 2 March 1927. The Brown Decades, New York, 1931.

20. *Mary Danniels, Chicago Tribune, June 24, 1973.*
21. *Mintz Messinger, L. "Georgia O'Keeffe",
Thames and Hudson N.Y.C. New York 1988.*
22. *New York Times, January 16, 1927.*
23. *New York Times Magazine, December 11, 1949.*
24. *New York Sun, July 1946.*
25. *New Yorker, March 13, 1926.*
26. *Parker, Rozsika and Pollock Griseld; "Old
Mistresses Women Art and Ideology".*
27. *Robinson, Roxana; "Georgia O'Keeffe a Life",
Harper Perennial, N.Y.C. New York 1989.*
28. *Willard, Charlotte. "Georgia O'Keeffe".
Art in America, October, 1963.*