

'O'Keeffiana: Art and Art Materials'

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum

This exhibition offered a rare glimpse of the method behind the mystique, displaying art materials used by Georgia O'Keeffe alongside a selection of her work. The approach focused on the formal strengths of her art, especially her innovative early abstractions.

The early compositions let viewers trace the origins of O'Keeffe's signature chevron, or "V," motif. Visible as strong vertical strokes in the 1916 watercolor *Black Lines*, the motif appears as a luminous blue flame in *Blue Line* (1919), at the vertical center of the bilateral petal wings in *Red Canna* (1919), and as wavy tree trunks and diagonal branches in *Autumn Trees—The Maple* (1924). By 1926, the dynamic form of the earlier, organic chevron shape had led to a tectonic stasis. In *A Street* (1926), receding rows of skyscrapers form a wedge of open sky that diminishes into a "V" shape on the distant horizon, while a more familiar variant is visible as the crevice of sky viewed from the bottom of a narrow canyon or gorge in *Black Place III* (1944). A powerful structural device in her compositions, the centrally hinged wing shape of the chevron also appears in paintings with the horned-skull and pelvis motifs, from the late 1930s onward.



Georgia O'Keeffe, *Abstraction Dark Green Lines with Red and Pink*, ca. 1970s, watercolor on paper, 29 7/8" x 21 1/2". Georgia O'Keeffe Museum.

If these iconic images of the later decades tend to calcify the sinuous energy of the early abstractions, that energy is in full evidence in the small 1970s watercolor *Abstraction Dark Green Lines with Red and Pink*, a reprise of the chromatic clarity of *Green Lines and Pink* (1919). Either work by itself was worth the visit.

—Richard Tobin

'Face to Face'

Gerald Peters

This group exhibition of paintings, photographs, drawings, sculptures, etchings, and mixed-media works was more or less



Linda K. Alpern, *Chuck Close*, 1999, gelatin silver print, 20" x 16". Gerald Peters.

evenly divided between figure study and portraiture. The show took up the topic of the artist and the model—a recurrent theme from Rembrandt and Saskia to Wyeth and Helga—focusing on how the interaction between artist and subject influences the creation of an artwork.

For some pieces on view here, the artist worked with an unidentified model, such as Kristina Gale's 2010 black-and-white photograph of a figure in a fireplace. In others, the sitter is recognizable, as in David Gamble's 2011 portrait *Damien Hirst's Tongue (green)*. While most works fit the theme, some are a stretch (Brenda Zlamany's self-portrait send-up of

Leonardo's *Lady with an Ermine*), but worth looking at all the same.

The mix of pieces on view here made "Face to Face" more interesting, calling attention to the overlaps between the genres of figure study and portraiture.

The exhibition proposes that figure studies such as William Beckman's *Classical Woman* (1989–90) draw from portraiture, while portraits such as Linda K.

Alpern's poignant photograph of Chuck Close floating in water draw from the figure study. That allusive capacity—the ability to evoke something beyond simple likeness—is what continues to affirm for these artists the viability of both genres.

—Richard Tobin

'3 Photographers'

New Concept

The three photographers in this quiet, understated exhibition share an abiding love of the natural surroundings of the Southwest.

Steven A. Jackson creates haunting landscapes that often include abandoned structures. The photographer has a background in traditional darkroom practices but for the works on view here he electronically converted his own raw digital images to black-and-white then digitally layered them with tones sampled from the original shot. The effect is similar to sepia toning, but with greater subtlety of color and remarkably crystalline clarity.

Bill Heckel portrays the hills and valleys of the female nude in outdoor environments. Recalling Weston, he sometimes



Woody Galloway, *Cranes in the Bosque del Apache*, 2009, archival giclée print, 11" x 14". New Concept.

abstracts the figure with close cropping and sometimes pulls back to picture the full figure in the open air and dispersed