



**Practically Painting
with O'Keeffe**
G221035
Anna Koster

OCTOBER 8-14, 2022

Welcome! I look forward to our adventures together under the vast New Mexico sky, among the mesas and cliffs, in the land that Georgia O'Keeffe loved and made famous with her paintings. We will walk in her footsteps, literally, along paths that she trod. Those with more energy can hike up nearby mesas and over ridges that she traversed.

Inspiration will follow us indoors as we immerse ourselves in the techniques studied and practiced by O'Keeffe. Studio sessions begin with an adaptation of an assignment she, herself, gave. Learn how the guidance of her teacher Arthur Wesley Dow liberated O'Keeffe's creativity and freed her to express herself. I will help you apply these same principles to your work and lead you through the distinct steps O'Keeffe employed before putting brush to canvas.

ALL SKILL LEVELS are welcome, from beginners to accomplished painters who want a new perspective or special "O'Keeffe experience." I encourage individuality and creativity: My goal is for you to find your own creative center and make your own unique works utilizing O'Keeffe's approach. We can anticipate a wealth of knowledge, ideas, and capabilities among workshop participants. Together we will foster a positive learning environment where all can explore.

Please send a short "Got it!" to annakosterart@gmail.com, so I know you have this info.

I am excited to be meeting you on October 8th for our week together at Ghost Ranch! After reading the information below, let me know if you have questions.

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Learning Outcomes

- Understanding the principles that guided O'Keeffe's art
- Ability to use O'Keeffe's step-by-step plan for painting
- Appreciation of O'Keeffe's groundbreaking early work and an understanding of her place in the history of modern art
- Use of color theory as illustrated with O'Keeffe's art

- Depicting mass (3-D effect) and creating the impression of distance (aerial perspective) will be provided upon request

Workshop Schedule

Studio sessions will be in the spacious Art Center. Most days we will work there in the mornings (9-noon) and evenings (7-8:30). Studio time will include presentations, exercises, lessons, and challenges that reveal O’Keeffe’s practice and open new ways to see her art, including time for you to paint.

Most afternoons will be free for you to paint on your own, relax, hike, and enjoy other Ghost Ranch attractions. Workshop registration includes a free history walking tour and an optional, reduced-cost O’Keeffe Landscape Tour (details below).

This schedule is tentative and **subject to change**:

Saturday, Oct. 8 Check-in begins at 3:00 p.m. at the Welcome Center; Dinner is 5:30-6:30; Orientation, introductions, and course overview begin at 6:45 p.m.

Sunday, Oct. 9 9 a.m.–noon in studio for an intensive "O’Keeffe exercise"; afternoon free; 7–8:30 p.m. studio follow-up to morning activities, presentation of O’Keeffe’s guiding principles

Monday, Oct. 10 9 a.m.–noon in studio for experiments with composition; 3:30 optional O’Keeffe Landscape Tour by van (details below), otherwise afternoon free; 7–8:30 follow up on morning experience, exercise exploring value (light and dark)

Tuesday, Oct. 11 9 a.m.–noon in studio learn O’Keeffe’s steps before brush touches canvas; afternoon free; 7-8:30 p.m. in studio complete morning compositions, a special O’Keeffe “challenge”

Wednesday, Oct. 12 9 a.m.–noon in studio learn about color theory through O’Keeffe’s art; afternoon free; 7-8:30 p.m. in studio share completed work and work in progress, another “challenge,” and final Q&A about instructor’s time with O’Keeffe

Thursday, Oct. 13 9 a.m.–noon complete paintings in studio or outdoors; afternoon free; evening celebration and display of art

Friday, Oct. 14 No scheduled activities. Checkout by 10 a.m.

Instructor Background

I served as Georgia O’Keeffe weekend companion in 1976, then went on to earn a Masters of Fine Art degree and enjoy a long museum career. I have studied O’Keeffe’s art and life and visited the archives at the O’Keeffe Foundation Research Center. Since 2014, I have been leading Ghost Ranch O’Keeffe-related workshops, sharing what I have learned. Insights gained through my intimate experience with O’Keeffe enrich my courses, along with formal training, my own art practice, and decades of working in museums.

I have also taught at the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum (Santa Fe), Nevada Museum of Art (Reno), Palo Alto (CA) Art Center, and San Jose (CA) Museum of Art. My museum career spanned 35 years, the last 15 at Stanford University’s Cantor Arts Center. To learn more about me, visit annakoster.com and see my resume at annakoster.com/resume.

What to Bring

- Sketching materials: graphite pencils (or sticks/blocks of graphite), sketch pad, and any other drawing or sketching materials you like to use
- Scissors and glue stick for quick multimedia studies

- Your favorite painting medium (oil, acrylic, pastel, watercolor, gouache, collage, etc.) and all related supplies: brushes, palette, thinner; canvas, board, or other surface to paint on; and anything else you will need
- If you are just beginning and do not own supplies, I suggest buying acrylics (red, blue, yellow, and white — or purchase a set offered for landscape); paint brushes in three sizes; pad of 9x12-inch, 140-pound, hot-press watercolor paper
- Bring a camera or camera-enabled phone, like a smartphone
- Those who want to use an easel for optional outdoor painting should bring one.

ALSO BRING comfortable walking shoes, a brimmed hat, sunscreen, clothes for changeable weather (warm/hot days, cool evenings, and possible rain), and a water bottle.

Instructor will supply a variety of materials for experimentation and quick studies. Participants bring their primary supplies.

Frequently Asked Questions

Questions specific to this workshop are below. For questions about Ghost Ranch food, lodging, and hospitality, visit <https://www.ghostranch.org/things-to-do/faqs/>.

Question: What's the scoop on the October 10, 3:30 p.m., Georgia O'Keeffe Landscape Tour?

Answer: This tour lasts 1 hour and 15 minutes and goes by motor bus to areas near O'Keeffe's Ghost Ranch house that are otherwise off limits. The guide will point out sites of O'Keeffe's paintings and share information about her 50-year history at Ghost Ranch. The tour is recommended but optional and requires a fee in addition to the cost of the workshop. The discounted rate for anyone registered in this course is \$24. Spouses and companions must pay the regular rate of \$39 per person. To reserve your space and pay, call 505-685-1000, then extension 4101 (tours) or 0 (operator).

Q: Can I buy art supplies at Ghost Ranch? **A:** No, the Ghost Ranch gift shop does not sell painting supplies, and there are no art supply stores in the area.

Q: What about Ghost Ranch lodging? **A:** Housing is first-come, first-booked. Here is lodging contact information: 505-685-1000 or 877-804-4678, <https://www.ghostranch.org/plan-your-visit/accommodation/lodging/>, <https://www.ghostranch.org/connect/contact-us/> For a full experience, I suggest staying at Ghost Ranch, however there are other options, especially for those who must bring their dogs, which are not permitted at Ghost Ranch. The Abiquiu Inn is 15 miles away. Other places are available though VRBO and AirBnB. Note: If you are very lucky, you can book a room in the O'Keeffe casita, the small adobe where she stayed in her early years at Ghost Ranch.

Q: How much time each day will be spent in the workshop? Will there be free time? **A:** A typical day will include 4.5 hours of organized activity (morning and evenings), with afternoons free. Participants can paint in their free time or take advantage of the many activities available at Ghost Ranch, including hiking, horse-back riding, viewing archeology and history exhibits, a variety of tours, and more. The studio will be open all hours for those who want to paint in their free time.

Q: Will we be painting the same scenes as O’Keeffe and going to places where O’Keeffe painted? **A:** Ghost Ranch is the epicenter of the New Mexico landscape that O’Keeffe depicted. The subjects of her work surround us at Ghost Ranch. In addition, there is the optional Georgia O’Keeffe Landscape Tour to see specific subjects that she painted (see details above).

Q: Did you help O’Keeffe with her painting? **A:** No, my duties were in the personal and domestic sphere. I was hired to stay with her Friday evenings to Monday mornings and was usually the only person with her. I cooked her meals, ate with her, then cleaned up after. I drew her bath, washed her back, brushed her hair, helped her into bed, and read to her. I accompanied her on her daily walks, fed her dogs, and did anything that she requested. I worked for her from the summer 1976 to winter 1977. During that time, she turned 89 years old. She had macular degeneration and limited sight, but with the help of John Poling, she began painting again (see book list below). I did not help her paint, but I did observe her studio.

Q: Where will we be meeting? **A:** The Art Center serves as our studio and classroom. There will be opportunities to work outdoors, to make studies and sketches for use in the studio, and paint in the open air. The Art Center is available all hours for those who want to use it.

Q: Will we be painting outdoors? Will we paint *en plein air*? **A:** This class is not about *plein air* style painting, which is characterized by loose brushwork, changing light, soft-focused forms, and impressionistic landscapes. My instruction, primarily in the studio, centers on O’Keeffe’s approach to painting. There will be opportunities to work outdoors.

Q: Will we tour O’Keeffe’s houses during the week? **A:** No, that is not part of our workshop. However, you can make plans on their own to visit O’Keeffe’s Abiquiu house: okeeffemuseum.org/tickets-and-tours. Both of O’Keeffe’s houses are owned by the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum. If you want to visit, most of our afternoons are open for that or other free-time activities. Note: The Ghost Ranch Education & Retreat Center does not control O’Keeffe’s house on the seven acres carved out from the former dude ranch. That house is called Rancho de los Burros. The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum does not offer public tours of Rancho de los Burros. The Georgia O’Keeffe Landscape Tour (by van) stops on the road by Rancho de los Burros. That landscape tour is offered as a discounted, optional activity during this course.

Q: Will we visit the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum as part of the workshop? **A:** No. Visiting the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum before (or after) the workshop is recommended if you have the time. It is an hour’s drive to Santa Fe from Ghost Ranch; so if you have a private vehicle with you, it is possible to make an afternoon visit during our week together. Most afternoons are open for that or other free-time activities.

Q: Will Anna Koster talk about O’Keeffe and share stories about her? **A:** Yes. In addition to illustrated talks about the O’Keeffe’s life and work, I will share personal insights and answer questions.

Q: Can I extend my stay at Ghost Ranch beyond the workshop? **A:** You may be able to arrange an additional one- or two-night stay with Ghost Ranch staff: 505-685-1000 or 877-804-4678. You can also stay extra hours on the last day, after you clear your room for the 9

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or 10 am check-out. You'd need to pay for additional meals if you want to eat lunch or dinner at Ghost Ranch on check-out day.

Q: How can I get to Ghost Ranch? **A:** Ghost Ranch provides travel information at <https://www.ghostranch.org/plan-your-visit/your-stay/travel/>.

Optional Reading

Participants have wanted a recommended (but optional!) reading list, so here it is, starting with biographies:

- For its accuracy and detail, I like Roxana Robinson's biography *Georgia O'Keeffe: A Life*, first published by Harper & Row in 1989 and released again in 2020.
 - *Portrait of an Artist: A Biography of Georgia O'Keeffe* by Laurie Lisle, from Washington Square Press, is respected and is easier to read (fewer details).
- Firsthand Accounts from others who worked for O'Keeffe:
- *Weekends with O'Keeffe* by C. S. Merrill, published by La Alameda Press (She mentions me twice in her book)
 - *Remembering Miss O'Keeffe* by Margaret Wood, published by Museum of New Mexico Press
 - *Painting with O'Keeffe*, John Poling writes about his experience helping her in the studio. His book covers much of the time I worked for her.
 - *The Genízaro and the Artist* by Napoleón Garcia and Analinda Dunn, published by Rio Grande Books in 2008

NOTE: No reading is required. This list is only for those who want to do something extra before or after their week at Ghost Ranch.

Tributes to My Courses

"My week with Anna was transformative. I took the class because of her background and credentials, however what I received was so much more. Her sincere interest in us as artists, coupled with the majesty of landscape transported me to a place of grounding, confidence and passion for the power of creativity." — Susan Thompson, high school principal

"The week at Ghost Ranch was, for me, an extraordinary experience with a truly spiritual dimension; quite unique: the setting, the company, the artistic endeavor all came together to make it very special." — Alice Godfrey, retired physician, Aptos, California

"I enjoyed Anna's class tremendously. Her artistic guidance and all of the opportunities that she provided during the class gave all of us a comprehensive experience related to the world of art." — Jenny Pursell, artist, Juneau, Alaska

"Ghost Ranch and your class were amazing. I was enjoying the entire experience. As we all agreed, the people in the class made it even better. The rocks, the sky, the silence — amazing. Even my iPhone photos are spectacular. For many years, I have been fascinated by Georgia O'Keeffe. Beyond her art, I think she led an amazing life and was a real trailblazer. The more I learn about her, the more I want to know. Thank you, Anna, for helping to fuel my obsession." — Bobbi Baumgartner, retired from Stanford University

Information is also online at www.annakoster.com/oct2022.

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