

Press release  
17 November 2016

## Georgia O'Keeffe

**Bank Austria Kunstforum**

**12 December 2016 - 26 March 2017**

Next to Frida Kahlo Georgia O'Keeffe is probably the most famous woman artist of the twentieth century, yet the opportunities of seeing her work in Europe are rare. O'Keeffe's works are distributed among the leading US museums and collections, where they enjoy iconic status. In autumn 2014 the flower painting *Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1* (1932) was sold for \$44,4 million at a Sotheby's auction as the most expensive painting by a female artist which will also be shown at the exhibition in Vienna.

During 2016/17, the Bank Austria Kunstforum, in cooperation with the Tate Modern, London and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, is planning the hitherto largest O'Keeffe exhibition tour. For the first time in Austria this show will be giving a comprehensive and insightful view into the artist's oeuvre of paintings. In addition, a selection of photographs will be on show, taken of her by her husband Alfred Stieglitz and other photographers, among them Ansel Adams and Paul Strand, which underscore the not always problem-free, virtually mythical fusion of work and person.

Influenced by Wassily Kandinsky and originating in the 1910s in the circle of the avant-garde gallery 291 founded by Stieglitz, O'Keeffe's modernist early work counts among the outstanding contributions to "spiritual" abstraction. O'Keeffe's monumental flower pictures of the 1920s evoke strongly sexualising interpretations and are among the most popular and thrilling subjects in her entire oeuvre. Her sharp focus, her adherence to detail and her close-up perspective show how O'Keeffe translates photographic characteristics into the genuine zone of painting. A further focus lies on the well-nigh abstract, large-format landscapes produced in New Mexico, which anticipate art trends of Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism. The exhibition accentuates O'Keeffe's singular position in bridging the gap between European modernism and American post-war abstraction, also her constant role as intermediary between reference to nature and abstraction, between organic and geometric elements, between feeling and de-personalisation.

The exhibition is organised by Tate Modern, London in collaboration with Bank Austria Kunstforum, Vienna and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

Curators: Heike Eipeldauer, Florian Steininger and Tanya Barson (Tate Modern, London)

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## Mission Statement

The Bank Austria Kunstforum is the top address for art lovers, especially for classical modern painting of the post-war years. Every year, 300,000 people visit the temporary exhibitions held in this private institution, shows that are unique across the globe. Leading museums present their works here as well as private collectors. Whether van Gogh or Miró, Kandinsky or Chagall, Warhol or Lichtenstein, the great names of art are united here. Since 2000, there have also been exhibitions devoted to contemporary artists.

A modern, private cultural services concern.

The most successful house of exhibitions in Austria.

- **Frequented:** around 300,000 visitors a year.
- **Attractive:** one of the Top 10 of the most popular sightseeing spots in Vienna (alongside St. Stephen's Cathedral, Riesenrad, Kunsthistorisches Museum, the Zoo and Schönbrunn Palace).
- **Established:** exhibition partner of leading institutions including the Royal Academy, London; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Russian Museum, St Petersburg.
- **In demand:** international private collectors take pride in showing their treasures in the Bank Austria Kunstforum (Bernard Picasso, Ulla and Heiner Pietzsch Collection, Wolfgang Joop,...).
- **Renowned:** the Bank Austria Kunstforum has earned itself a great international reputation for continually setting new trends in conceptual approach and making art a new, fresh experience.
- **Pacesetter in ideas:** because of its presentation of international top exhibitions of classical modern art and its forerunners, and the avant-garde of the post-war years – most of which were shown in Austria for the first time.
- **Winning:** according to the MANOVA-Benchmarking Study 2004 – also involved were the Albertina, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Belvedere – the Bank Austria came out top as a service-oriented cultural concern.
- **Successful:** streamlined structures guarantee economic efficiency and flexibility.
- **Unique:** top priority for the creative, flexible team surrounding director Dr. Ingrid Brugger is the communication of art, with quality as the number one premise.

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