

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **GEORGIA O'KEEFFE: ABSTRACT VARIATIONS OPENS AT THE SEATTLE ART MUSEUM MARCH 5, 2020**

Installation focuses on early abstract paintings and drawings from the celebrated American modern artist

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SEATTLE, WA - The Seattle Art Museum (SAM) presents *Georgia O'Keeffe: Abstract Variations* (March 5–June 28, 2020), featuring 17 early paintings and drawings by the celebrated American artist. The installation, held in a single gallery on the museum's third floor, focuses on O'Keeffe's explorations of abstraction and the development of her own style of modernism.

One of the 20th century's foremost modern artists, Georgia O'Keeffe (1887–1986) is particularly known for her high-desert panoramas and intimate paintings of flowers. *Abstract Variations* instead explores key moments in her development as an artist as she explored pure abstraction. The installation features 10 oil paintings, including the centerpiece of the show: the pairing of *Music, Pink and Blue, No. 1* (1918), a recent addition to SAM's collection gifted by the late Barney A. Ebsworth, and *Music, Pink and Blue, No. 2* (1918), on loan from the Whitney Museum of American Art. *Music, Pink and Blue, No. 1* is O'Keeffe's first major oil painting, and it is the culmination of her experimentation with abstract forms and connection to music.

Also on view are five charcoal and pastel drawings, which announce her unique visual vocabulary of spiraling, undulating forms and set the stage for *Music, Pink and Blue, No. 1* and subsequent paintings. A monitor in the gallery features images of additional early drawings, offering visitors a more complete picture of O'Keeffe's singular style. Two photographs of O'Keeffe by artist and art dealer Alfred Stieglitz—who married O'Keeffe in 1924—reveal the public persona that the artist would come to inhabit.





*Abstract Variations* was curated by Theresa Papanikolas, SAM's Ann M. Barwick Curator of American Art; this is her first installation for the museum since joining in January 2019. The show brings together two paintings from SAM's collection with loans from Whitney Museum of American Art; the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum; the National Gallery of Art; the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Dallas Museum of Art; the Phoenix Art Museum; the Allen Family Collection; and an anonymous private collection.

"*Music, Pink and Blue, No. 1* is a marvelous painting and a cornerstone of our collection of early 20th-century American modernism," says Papanikolas. "Studying it closely for this past year—my first at SAM—has been a powerful experience, as has been bringing it together with such an exquisite selection of O'Keeffe's works for the first time in Seattle. These drawings and paintings trace O'Keeffe's trajectory from practitioner of abstraction to painter of nature and place. I hope visitors will enjoy following her path as much as I have."

#### TICKETING INFO

Entrance to *Abstract Variations* is also good entrance to the museum's special exhibition, *John Akomfrah: Future History* (March 5–May 3, 2020).

#### **Museum Hours**

- Closed Monday and Tuesday
- Wednesday 10 am–5 pm
- Thursdays 10 am–9 pm
- Friday–Sunday 10 am–5 pm

#### **Daily Prices**

- \$29.99 Adult
- \$27.99 Senior (65+), Military (with ID)
- \$19.99 Student (with ID), Teen (15–18)
- FREE for children (14 and under)
- FREE for SAM Members

#### **First Thursday Reduced Ticket Prices**

- \$9.99 Adult
- \$7.99 Senior (65+), Military (with ID)
- \$4.99 Student (with ID), Teen (15–18)
- FREE for children (14 and under)
- FREE for SAM Members

Special exhibition ticket prices are reduced by more than 65% on the first Thursday of the month. Tickets to SAM Collections and Installations are free.

#### EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORT

The exhibition is organized by the Seattle Art Museum.

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## ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and rededicated as the Asian Art Museum in 1994, and it reopened on February 8, 2020 following an extensive renovation and expansion. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a “museum without walls,” free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion. The Olympic Sculpture Park and SAM's downtown expansion celebrated their tenth anniversary in 2017.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of approximately 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures, and time periods.