

Newark Community Art Club with Elaine Winter

Session 12: Georgia O’Keeffe and the cropped image

Materials needed:

Pencil, rubber, sharpener

Ruler

White paper to draw on

Colour materials – paints, coloured pencils, coloured pastels will all work

Introduction: Georgia O’Keeffe was an American artist born in 1887 who died at the age of 98 in 1986. She made large-format paintings of enlarged blossoms, presenting them close-up as if seen through a magnifying lens. Her use of line, colour and shading together with cropped composition made her flower and other works full of impact. This session will take you through a process to help understand why cropping an image and enlarging it can have a massive influence on how we read it.

Activity 1: Download the Georgia O’Keeffe handout and look at the paintings. All of those paintings were done from close up observations of flowers. She cropped the image so that sometimes all you see is the very close up and enlarged centre of the flowers. The more she cropped and enlarged the image, the more abstracted the original flowers become.

If you have time and are able to, do some more research online into the artwork of Georgia O’Keeffe and see what else she did paintings of.

Activity 2: Look for an interesting organic form to do a Georgia O’Keeffe inspired piece of art of your own. If you can find a flower that has lots of interest, great but there are other things that might be worth investigating too. Try looking at vegetables such a cabbage, the insides of a cut pepper, or look for things like bulbs of garlic. Even bits of old wood can be fascinating to study close up. Do an initial rough drawing of the whole of the item you have chosen. Don’t worry about detail of shading at this point. When you have done that initial drawing, choose a cropped area of it (like you would crop a photo on your phone or computer and draw a square or rectangle of that cropped area on top of your drawing. Now redraw only that cropped area but on a much larger scale on a fresh piece of paper so that it completely fills the new paper.

Activity 3: Now you can add colour. It is your choice whether you choose to do naturally occurring colours or use a palette of colours that are completely different to the original item you were drawing. Blend your colours well and be bold and you should end up with a really striking image inspired by Georgia O’Keeffe.

