

**UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA**

East Meets East: Georgia O’Keeffe, Asian Art and the “University of Virginia Years”

by

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## Introduction

Numerous art historians cite the educator and artist Arthur Dow as the doorway for Asian art into Georgia O’Keeffe’s works. A smaller number pinpoint the summer of 1912 when O’Keeffe learned Japanese compositional techniques in a class taught by Alon Bement at the University of Virginia. However, art historians cite only a few Asian works of art as potential sources of influence on O’Keeffe. In O’Keeffe’s own words, Asian art had a direct impact on her compositions: “It was in the fall of 1915 that I decided not to use any color... it was June before I needed blue. Along the way I had probably looked very carefully at Chinese and Japanese paintings and calligraphy before I got to *Blue Lines*,” 1916 (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup>

O’Keeffe spent the summers between 1912 and 1916 at the University of Virginia. However, O’Keeffe’s exposure to Asian art begins before this period, and the synthesis of Asian aesthetic principles occurs during and after this time while living in several locations. The first important milestone in the chronology came in the fall of 1905 when she attended the Art Institute of Chicago. In September of 1907, she studied under the artist William Merritt Chase at the Art Students League in New York City. Later, in 1908, she worked as a commercial artist in Chicago.<sup>2</sup> Her time in the “Windy City” may have exposed her to Japanese print exhibitions and the lectures of Arthur Dow, who wrote *Composition*, 1899 1st edition, an instructional text used by Bement at Virginia.<sup>3</sup> In a letter dated December 16, 1943 to her assistant Maria Chabot, in

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<sup>1</sup> Georgia O’Keeffe and Doris Bry, *Some Memories of Drawings* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), np.

<sup>2</sup> Barbara Buhler Lynes, *Georgia O’Keeffe: The Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 1142.

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Whitaker Peters, *Becoming O’Keeffe: The Early Years* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991), 83.

which she reacted to a private viewing of Japanese prints by multiple artists, O’Keeffe explained that she prefers to look at one or two Japanese artists at a time “as I did in Chicago.”<sup>4</sup>

O’Keeffe’s first class with Bement was in the summer of 1912. She continued to work with Bement in a teaching capacity for the next four summers. In the fall of 1914, she enrolled at Teachers College of Columbia University in New York City where she took classes with Dow and became acquainted with Alfred Stieglitz and his circle of artists at the 291 gallery. After spending the summer at Virginia as Bement’s assistant teaching art classes, she accepted a position to teach art in South Carolina at Columbia College in September of 1915. During this time she synthesized the teachings of Bement, Dow, and her own observations of Asian art into a group of charcoal abstractions she called “specials.”<sup>5</sup> These would be among the group of drawings brought to Stieglitz at the 291 gallery by O’Keeffe’s friend, Anita Pollitzer, on New Year’s Day of 1916. That moment was the beginning of the O’Keeffe-Stieglitz relationship that effectively launched her professional career.<sup>6</sup>

Ernest Fenollosa was a major contributor to American knowledge of Asian art and set the stage for the teachers, critics and artists that came before O’Keeffe. He spent eleven years in Japan at the University of Tokyo, and was responsible for re-introducing traditional Japanese art making methods in schools across the country<sup>7</sup>. He received multiple honors from the Japanese and held rank at the imperial court.<sup>8</sup> His personal art collection, along with donations from

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<sup>4</sup> Georgia O’Keeffe et al., *Maria Chabot--Georgia O’Keeffe: Correspondence 1941-1949*, 1st ed (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 150.

<sup>5</sup> Peters, *Becoming O’Keeffe*, 312.

<sup>6</sup> Lynes, *Georgia O’Keeffe: The Catalogue Raisonné*, 1999, 2:1142.

<sup>7</sup> Ernest Fenollosa and Raphaël Petrucci, *Epochs of Chinese & Japanese Art*, vol. 1 (New York: New York, 1913), xvi.

<sup>8</sup> Fenollosa and Petrucci, 1:xiv–xvii.

William Sturgis Bigelow and Charles Goddard Weld comprised the Asian art wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in 1890. Fenollosa became its first curator later that same year.<sup>9</sup> Through his collection and writings, he promoted a deeper knowledge of Japanese art, and emphasized the Heian period Buddhist paintings and the Muromachi period landscape paintings as the “pinnacle” of Japanese art.<sup>10</sup> Thus, he pushed beyond the *Japonisme* craze for the more accessible woodblock print to the works of the older masters.<sup>11</sup>

Fenollosa’s influence touched the collector Charles Lang Freer and the artist James McNeill Whistler, who created the masterful Peacock Room for Freer’s Detroit home. Freer donated his Asian art collection that is now in the Freer-Sackler Gallery in Washington D.C. Dow and Fenollosa found in Whistler a perfect harmony of East and West. Dow used Whistler as an example in *Composition*,<sup>12</sup> while Fenollosa praised him in his book *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, 1912.<sup>13</sup> Fenollosa, always promoting the old masters, imparted an admiration for the Japanese artist Sesshu Toyo to both Dow and Whistler. They admired Sesshu’s ink paintings for their misty, monochromatic tonalities and asymmetrical composition.<sup>14</sup> Dow used examples from Sesshu in *Composition*.<sup>15</sup> Thus, O’Keeffe and Whistler both shared this influential source, compliments of Fenollosa. Historian Sarah Peters discusses the potential influence of Whistler

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<sup>9</sup> D Scott Atkinson and Kathleen Pyne, “Landscapes of the Mind,” in *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860-1989*, by Alexandra Munroe (New York: Guggenheim Museum, D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, 2009), 28.

<sup>10</sup> Atkinson and Pyne, 28.

<sup>11</sup> *Japonisme*, a French term used to describe the popularity of Japanese imports at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially objects of art. Many French artwork reflects the influence of the Japanese print, including Paul Gaughin.

<sup>12</sup> Arthur W Dow, *Composition: A Series of Exercises in Art Structure for the Use of Students and Teachers*, 13th ed. (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc, 1929), 82.

<sup>13</sup> Ernest Fenollosa and Raphaël Petrucci, *Epochs of Chinese & Japanese Art*, vol. 2 (New York: New York, 1913), 42.

<sup>14</sup> Atkinson and Pyne, “Landscapes of the Mind,” 28.

<sup>15</sup> Dow, *Composition*, 97.

on O’Keeffe, further emphasizing the common denominator of Dow, Fenollosa, and most importantly Asian art.<sup>16</sup>

Through Whistler and Dow, Fenollosa’s ideas find their way to Stieglitz and his publication *Camera Work*. Stieglitz published one of Whistler’s lectures in 1904 aligning abstraction and music.<sup>17</sup> Fenollosa also discussed linking music and abstract composition through Asian design and harmony.<sup>18</sup> Charles Caffin and Sadakichi Hartmann both wrote essays on Whistler for *Camera Work*. During this same period, Sadakichi Hartmann came into his own as an art critic and an expert on Japanese art with personal ties to Japan.<sup>19</sup> Eventually the students of Dow occupied positions within the Stieglitz circle, strengthening the tree of influence stemming from Fenollosa.

Dow’s own exposure to Asian art began with “a book of Japanese illustrations” and the “prints of Hokusai” in a Boston library.<sup>20</sup> Within a week, he met Ernest Fenollosa, the curator of Asian art at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.<sup>21</sup> O’Keeffe’s library in Abiquiu contains both Fenollosa’s *Epochs* and Dow’s *Composition*.<sup>22</sup> Within these works, the Asian sources are from Japan and China. The primary period in Asian art history that influenced O’Keeffe ranges from 960 at the beginning of the Song Dynasty in China to 1868 at the end of the Edo period in Japan.

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<sup>16</sup> Peters, *Becoming O’Keeffe*, 103–7.

<sup>17</sup> Peters, 104.

<sup>18</sup> Dow, *Composition*, 5.

<sup>19</sup> Atkinson and Pyne, “Landscapes of the Mind,” 61.

<sup>20</sup> Hunter Drohojowska-Philp, *Full Bloom: The Art and Life of Georgia O’Keeffe*, 1st ed (New York, London: W.W. Norton, 2004), 76.

<sup>21</sup> Joseph Masheck, “Dow’s ‘Way’ to Modernity for Everybody,” in *Composition : A Series of Exercises in Art Structure for the Use of Students and Teachers*, by Arthur Dow (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1997), 13.

<sup>22</sup> Ruth Fine et al., *The Book Room: Georgia O’Keeffe’s Library in Abiquiu* (Abiquiu, N.M: The Georgia O’Keeffe Foundation, 1997), 28–29.

Fenollosa's tree of influence reached O'Keeffe in multiple ways and its branches were important players on the American art scene at the beginning of the twentieth century. Fenollosa reached O'Keeffe through his writings while Dow taught her directly. O'Keeffe's interaction with Stieglitz and 291 began in December of 1915 and continued with receipts of *Camera Work* through 1916. Therefore, she received a bit of Fenollosa-Dow and Asian influence via Stieglitz and his circle. Notable among these is Hartmann, because O'Keeffe kept one of his books in her library.<sup>23</sup> One influential branch outside of New York was Okakura Kakuzo, a student of Fenollosa's in Japan who authored several books on Japanese art and culture.<sup>24</sup> O'Keeffe owned one of these works, *The Book of Tea*, 1906.<sup>25</sup> For the Asian influence on O'Keeffe, the branches of Fenollosa, Dow are the strongest, with Okakura, Hartmann, and the Stieglitz circle artist who flowed Dow's principles completing the tree.

The visible evidence of Asian art's influence on O'Keeffe begins with her enrollment in Bement's class. Based on her own words, she continued to study Asian art during those years. Her home library at Abiquiu demonstrates this passion lasted a lifetime. It contains numerous books on Asian art and works by Japanese artists such as Hokusai and Korin.<sup>26</sup> Examining Dow's writings and other primary documents in conjunction with O'Keeffe's work during 1912-1916 reveals a number of Asian sources that resonate in her art.

## Literature Review

In the catalogue for the 1999 exhibition by the Phillips Collection, *Georgia O'Keeffe: The Poetry of Things*, curator Elizabeth Turner selects works that O'Keeffe classified as

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<sup>23</sup> Fine et al., 37.

<sup>24</sup> Fenollosa and Petrucci, *Epochs*, 1913, 2:70.

<sup>25</sup> Fine et al., *The Book Room*, 49.

<sup>26</sup> Fine et al., 38,42.

“things.”<sup>27</sup> These are paintings either rooted in objects such as flowers, fruits, and bones, or complete abstract designs. Through the examination of these paintings, Turner and art historian Marjorie P. Balge-Crozier offer sources for O’Keeffe’s selective and creative processes. The aim is to allow the works to speak beyond the narrative “of her mentor, dealer, and husband, Alfred Stieglitz” and the meanings added to them by the critics through the years.<sup>28</sup> Although Stieglitz tried to proclaim O’Keeffe’s art as pure and “naïve” expressions and deny sources of influence, later in life she began to reveal those sources.<sup>29</sup> O’Keeffe pointed to Arthur Wesley Dow, an artist and instructor at Teachers College, Columbia University as an important source. Turner explains that O’Keeffe first encountered Dow’s principles through the class taught by Alon Bement. These guiding principles informed the philosophy behind O’Keeffe’s work. In the artist’s words, “it is only by selection, by elimination, and by emphasis that we get at the real meaning of things.”<sup>30</sup>

Sarah Peters, in *Georgia O’Keeffe the Early Years*, also posits Dow as a critical influence, but ties the genesis of that influence to O’Keeffe’s time at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1905.<sup>31</sup> Peters believes this exposure came through publications such as *Brush and Pencil*. At the same time, this publication, and other sources in Chicago exposed her to the theories of Art Nouveau. Peters explains that Dow’s processes and the organic patterns from Art Nouveau formed the source for O’Keeffe’s first series of charcoal abstractions in 1915.<sup>32</sup> The exercises

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<sup>27</sup> Elsa Mezvinsky Smithgall, “Georgia O’Keeffe’s Life and Influences: An Illustrated Chronology,” in *Georgia O’Keeffe: The Poetry of Things*, by Elizabeth Hutton Turner (Washington, D.C: Phillips Collection, 1999), viii.

<sup>28</sup> Smithgall, 43.

<sup>29</sup> Peters, *Becoming O’Keeffe*, 37.

<sup>30</sup> Turner and Balge-Crozier, *Georgia O’Keeffe: The Poetry of Things*, 53.

<sup>31</sup> Peters, *Becoming O’Keeffe*, 83.

<sup>32</sup> Peters, 43.

from Dow's book *Composition* gave her a process to place the patterns in her mind on paper.<sup>33</sup> When she was ready to add color, she utilized Dow's lessons again through the Japanese brush and simplified reduction using minimal lines. The result was *Blue Lines*<sup>34</sup>, 1916.<sup>35</sup> The shapes and methods found within these works between 1915 and 1916 would repeat throughout her career.<sup>36</sup> Her work reflects a mantra from Dow that O'Keeffe stated in a 1962 interview "This man had one dominating idea: to fill a space in a beautiful way – and that interested me."<sup>37</sup>

Peters also considers the influence of photography on O'Keeffe. The main source is from Stieglitz and the group of photographers associated with the 291 gallery. Peters suggests O'Keeffe's receptivity to photography may have come from her familiarity with "certain 'photographic' characteristics, like the close-up and the fragment...of the Japanese-derived exercises in Dow's book *Composition*."<sup>38</sup> There are many examples of this effect from Hiroshige's woodblock print series *One Hundred Views of Edo*, one of several Japanese artists referenced in Dow's book. "In *Composition*, Dow redefined painting as essentially two-dimensional rather than the imitation of three dimensional modeling" based on linear perspective.<sup>39</sup> Dow was also a photographer and later added photography classes at Teacher College. Both Dow and Stieglitz shared the idea of simplification for the arts of painting and photography. Stieglitz claimed one of the main challenges for both arts was "to exclude everything that is inessential to a clear statement of the dominant underlying idea."<sup>40</sup> Dow's

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<sup>33</sup> Peters, 83.

<sup>34</sup> For consistency, this paper uses titles as listed in Barbara Buhler Lynes' *Georgia O'Keeffe: The Catalogue Raisonné*, 1999.

<sup>35</sup> Peters, *Becoming O'Keeffe*, 99.

<sup>36</sup> Peters, 60.

<sup>37</sup> Peters, 39.

<sup>38</sup> Peters, 14.

<sup>39</sup> Peters, 83.

<sup>40</sup> Peters, 90.



ideas of selection, based on Asian compositional principles, created a platform for modernism through abstraction for both the arts of painting and photography.

Peters states O’Keeffe “wanted her paintings to work like visual poems to resist the intellect entirely. Hence her forms were simplified to their essence and her colors were orchestrated for psychic resonance.”<sup>41</sup> Japanese art, like that of Hiroshige works under that same premise, simplifying scenes to focus the mind on the emotional essence of a place and the feelings triggered by memories of a specific local. In some instances, for example the works of Korin (founder of the Rimpa school) poetry and art literally merge onto the same canvas.

In his introduction to *Composition*, Joseph Masheck establishes the significance of Arthur Dow’s *Composition* to the modernist art movement towards abstraction, especially with the artists Georgia O’Keeffe and Max Weber.<sup>42</sup> Dow created his instructional book before the emergence of abstract painting.<sup>43</sup> Masheck places emphasis on Dow’s production of photographs and woodblock prints. Through the woodblocks, Dow produced images with alternate colors that focused on the patterns of color within a preset design.<sup>44</sup> Masheck, like Peters, also links Dow to Art Nouveau through the artist’s studies at the Ecole Nationale des Arts Decoratifs.<sup>45</sup> Dow’s affection for Japanese art came through finding “a book of Hokusai sketches” in the Boston library. That experience, along with the guidance of Fenollosa helped shape Dow’s vision for his book *Composition*. One of Fenollosa’s guiding principles for organizing a composition was “Relations are more real and more important than the things which they relate.”<sup>46</sup> Joseph

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<sup>41</sup> Peters, 13.

<sup>42</sup> Masheck, “Dow’s ‘Way’ to Modernity,” 1.

<sup>43</sup> Masheck, 7.

<sup>44</sup> Masheck, 5.

<sup>45</sup> Masheck, 11.

<sup>46</sup> Masheck, 16.

Masheck contends that Georgia O’Keeffe’s later work adheres more to Dow’s principles of composition than her “freer” work produced during the time she was in direct contact with him as a student.<sup>47</sup>

Whereas Masheck writes in broader terms about Dow’s influence and the lessons within *Composition*, curator Sharyn Udall makes direct links from Georgia O’Keeffe to Asian art influences via Dow and Fenollosa. The catalogue, *O’Keeffe and Texas* focuses on the works O’Keeffe produced from 1916 to 1918 in Canyon, Texas, which is the period following her exposure to Dow’s methods.<sup>48</sup> Dow’s mantra that a painting should be “a rhythmic harmony of colored spaces” is evident in his own paintings of the Grand Canyon, which O’Keeffe saw and sought to improve upon.<sup>49</sup> Udall sites the Japanese *Scrolls of Hell*, represented in Fenollosa’s *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, as an influence on O’Keeffe’s *No. 9- Special* from 1915. This work provided sources that O’Keeffe would repeat in later drawings and paintings.<sup>50</sup> In addition, Udall links Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai’s *The Wave* and *Fuji in Fine Weather from the South* to a group O’Keeffe’s paintings.<sup>51</sup> Within each of these paintings, O’Keeffe repeats forms and shapes that link a range of paintings together covering several years. Udall also makes the common connection of Japanese brush and ink methods promoted by Dow to O’Keeffe’s *Blue Lines*, but also connects this idea to O’Keeffe’s paintings of roads and rivers that incorporated calligraphic sweeping arcs.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Masheck, 48.

<sup>48</sup> Sharyn Rohlfen Udall, *O’Keeffe and Texas* (San Antonio, Texas: Marion Koogler McNay Art Museum, 1998), 17.

<sup>49</sup> Udall, 20–22.

<sup>50</sup> Udall, 25.

<sup>51</sup> Udall, 27.

<sup>52</sup> Udall, 93.

In the catalogue for the Guggenheim Museum's exhibition, *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860-1989*, Kathleen Pyne posits the influence of Asian art on Stieglitz and his circle of artists, which include the photographers Gertrude Kasebier, Alvin Langdon Coburn, Edward Steichen, and the painters Marsden Hartley and Arthur Dove.<sup>53</sup> O'Keeffe became a part of this circle in 1917. Pyne sees O'Keeffe's work as "a constant evolution toward synthesizing Asian and American forms and ideas."<sup>54</sup> Like other scholars, Pyne stresses the importance of Dow in O'Keeffe's development: "Her method throughout her career relied on Dow's composition, which she also taught to students in Texas during the years 1916-1918." In addition, Pyne notes that O'Keeffe read Vasily Kandinsky's *On the Spiritual in Art* twice during the 1910s to understand the concept of painting musically with color and form to externalize her feelings. Dow preached this idea as well.<sup>55</sup> According to Pyne, Kandinsky's writings stemmed from Theosophy, which blended "spiritualism, Hinduism, and Buddhism" and Kandinsky believed colors "vibrated with spiritual essences."<sup>56</sup> Pyne directly correlates O'Keeffe's works to Dow and Japanese artist Utagawa Hiroshige. In *Sunrise and Little Clouds No. II*, 1916, O'Keeffe utilizes Dow's landscape scheme of color blocks and Japanese calligraphy. Pyne compares another O'Keeffe work, *Abstraction*, 1917, to both Dow's "amorphous trees" from the title page of his *Composition*, and a woodblock print by Hiroshige, *Night Rain at Karasaki*.<sup>57</sup> Similar to Udall, Pyne cites the influence of Fenollosa's *Epochs*, especially informing O'Keeffe's interpretation of Chinese landscape painting, which would later manifest in her paintings of the Southwest desert. However, the author states O'Keeffe did not

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<sup>53</sup> Atkinson and Pyne, "Landscapes of the Mind," 89–92.

<sup>54</sup> Atkinson and Pyne, 93.

<sup>55</sup> Atkinson and Pyne, 93.

<sup>56</sup> Atkinson and Pyne, 91.

<sup>57</sup> Atkinson and Pyne, 93.

read the book until 1917.<sup>58</sup> Pyne states that during the 1940's, O'Keeffe studied Asian poetry and Art and actively sought to collect prints by Hokusai and Hiroshige. The impact of O'Keeffe's studies resulted in a "new philosophical dimension" which merged the near and the far. This concept comes to life in her works with close ups of bones and sky backdrops.<sup>59</sup>

Los Angeles art critic Hunter Drohojowska-Philp traces the beginnings of Japanese art influence on O'Keeffe not only to her years in Chicago, but directly to the works she produced while enrolled in William Merritt Chase's class at the Art Students League in New York City from 1907-1908. Included amongst these works is the untitled work of a "dead rabbit with copper pot, 1908."<sup>60</sup> Drohojowska-Philp notes the simplicity in composition and limited color palette as evidence of Japanese influence.<sup>61</sup> In addition, Chase himself promoted the Japanese aesthetic.<sup>62</sup> The next step in O'Keeffe's evolution and exposure to Asian art was at the University of Virginia. Drohojowska-Philp explains that O'Keeffe's sisters spoke enthusiastically about their art instructor at UVA Alon Bement due to his unconventional approach. His methods derived from the teachings of his mentor Arthur Dow at Teachers College of Columbia University.<sup>63</sup> Drohojowska-Philp agrees with Pyne that Dow influenced artists in the Stieglitz circle. In addition, Stieglitz published Dow's writings in *Camera Notes*.<sup>64</sup> According to Drohojowska-Philp, "Bement's clear understanding of Dow's teachings" allowed O'Keeffe to easily translate his ideas into her art. One example is Dow's chapter extolling

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<sup>58</sup> Atkinson and Pyne, 93.

<sup>59</sup> Atkinson and Pyne, 94.

<sup>60</sup> Barbara Buhler Lynes, *Georgia O'Keeffe: The Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 48.

<sup>61</sup> Drohojowska-Philp, *Full Bloom*, 50.

<sup>62</sup> Drohojowska-Philp, 47.

<sup>63</sup> Drohojowska-Philp, 76.

<sup>64</sup> Drohojowska-Philp, 77.

variations in composition used by Japanese artists that O’Keeffe translated into her series paintings.<sup>65</sup> Bement asked O’Keeffe to be his teaching assistant, which necessitated O’Keeffe seeking more teaching experience.<sup>66</sup> This ultimately led to O’Keeffe taking classes directly under Dow at Teacher’s College.<sup>67</sup> While in New York, O’Keeffe visited Stieglitz’s gallery 291. There she experienced the works of the Stieglitz Circle artists.<sup>68</sup> Drohojowska-Philp includes an anecdote about O’Keeffe and a love interest Arthur Whittier Macmahon. Upon her return to Charlottesville in the summer of 2015, they frequently hiked the Blue Ridge Mountains together.<sup>69</sup> Their relationship also inspired more paintings when he visited O’Keeffe in Columbia, SC in the fall of 1915. It was during this period that O’Keeffe applied the lessons of Dow and invented her first series of abstractions. According to Drohojowska-Philp, O’Keeffe “Borrow(ed) from nature – ferns, clouds, waves – she simplified forms in accordance with Dow’s theory of self-exploration through art.”<sup>70</sup> Drohojowska-Philp continues, “The sparse quality and balance obtained in her paintings was influenced in part by her affinity for Japanese prints and Dow’s exercises.”<sup>71</sup> Not only did Bement and Dow influence O’Keeffe’s move to abstraction, they encouraged Stieglitz to show her art in his gallery.<sup>72</sup> Her final summer at UVA resulted in the completion of numerous works, some directly inspired from the surrounding countryside, and others were the continuation of her experiments with abstraction.<sup>73</sup>

Drohojowska-Philp claims O’Keeffe’s depictions of a tent flap door derive from Dow’s exercises

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<sup>65</sup> Drohojowska-Philp, 78.

<sup>66</sup> Drohojowska-Philp, 79.

<sup>67</sup> Drohojowska-Philp, 91.

<sup>68</sup> Drohojowska-Philp, 95.

<sup>69</sup> Drohojowska-Philp, 97.

<sup>70</sup> Drohojowska-Philp, 103.

<sup>71</sup> Drohojowska-Philp, 104.

<sup>72</sup> Drohojowska-Philp, 107.

<sup>73</sup> Drohojowska-Philp, 116.

of “placing a door in space,” a theme that O’Keeffe would continue to repeat throughout her entire career.<sup>74</sup>

## Methodology

The guiding question of this capstone is; in what ways did Asian art inform Georgia O’Keeffe’s abstractions during the years 1912-1916 at the University of Virginia? Answering this question will require qualitative analysis of texts, documents, and artistic works. Documentary analysis will include O’Keeffe’s correspondences, original works by her instructors, and the various texts she read. In addition, there will be comparative analysis of the Asian art she encountered and her compositions. The secondary sources will give contextual biographical information and provide the baseline of scholarly research for O’Keeffe’s work and influences.

In order to understand the ways Asian art influenced O’Keeffe it is necessary to determine which works O’Keeffe might have seen between the years 1912-1916. The sources that will reveal these works are the books owned by O’Keeffe, materials used in her instruction, Asian art owned by her teachers, and art exhibitions she visited while under Dow’s instruction in New York City. In addition, sources written by her instructors that include examples of or references to Asian art include, Arthur Dow’s *Theory and Practice of Teaching Art, Composition*, Ernest Fenellosa *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, Alfred Stieglitz’s *Camera Works*, and the Arthur Wesley Dow Papers at the Smithsonian Online Virtual Archives. Correspondences that may include references to Asian art seen by O’Keeffe include *Lovingly, Georgia: The Complete Correspondence of Georgia O’Keeffe and Anita Pollitzer* edited by Clive

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<sup>74</sup> Drohojowska-Philp, 117.

Giboire, and additional correspondences in the Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O'Keeffe Archive in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the Yale Collection of American Literature. These secondary sources will provide biographical and contextual information; Sarah Peters *Becoming O'Keeffe: The Early Years*, Hunter Drohojowska-Philp's *Full Bloom*, and *Georgia O'Keeffe* by Roxanne Robinson. *The Book Room: Georgia O'Keeffe's Library in Abiquiu* will provide additional information pertaining to O'Keeffe's personal book and art collection.

In order to understand how O'Keeffe interpreted Asian art it is necessary to explore the teachings of Arthur Dow, and Ernest Fenollosa. Both Dow's *Composition* and Fenollosa's *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese* were part of O'Keeffe's instruction at the University and Teachers College. The Arthur Wesley Dow Papers at the Smithsonian Online Virtual Archives include his lecture notes, which will provide additional information on his teachings. Other relevant primary sources include correspondences between O'Keeffe, Bement, and Dow found in the Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O'Keeffe Archive at Beinecke. Both O'Keeffe and Pollitzer were students of Dow so their correspondence warrants review. Catalogs from Teachers College at Columbia University will reveal additional classroom materials and information relevant to O'Keeffe's instruction in Asian art between 1912 and 1916. Frederick Moffatt's *Arthur Wesley Dow* and Arthur Johnson's *Arthur Wesley Dow, Historian Artist, Teacher* will serve as secondary sources. They provide additional biographical information on Dow's interpretations of Asian art and his teaching methods. Secondary sources that include analysis of O'Keeffe's instruction in Asian art and its impact are Turner's *Georgia O'Keeffe's The Poetry of Things*, Udall's *O'Keeffe and Texas*, and Peters *Becoming Georgia O'Keeffe*.

Finally, a comparative analysis between the Asian artworks O'Keeffe saw and the compositions she made during the years 1912 -1916 will reveal how these works influenced her

art. The comparison will utilize O’Keeffe’s works as listed in Barbara Lynes’ *Georgia O’Keeffe: The Catalogue Raisonné*. The comparison will examine how the Asian artists and O’Keeffe employ the formal elements of line, spacing, dark and light balance (Dow’s *notan*), and color.<sup>75</sup> Dow’s *Composition* will also provide a standard to evaluate structural similarities between the pieces. Additional primary sources that reveal O’Keeffe’s own thoughts about the influence of Asian art on her work are *Some Memories of Drawings by O’Keeffe* and Doris Bry, *Georgia O’Keeffe* by O’Keeffe, and the correspondence and interviews in the Beinecke library. Secondary sources that make direct artistic correlations include *Poetry of Things* by Turner, *O’Keeffe and Texas* by Udall, *Third Mind* by Alexandra Munroe, and *Full Bloom* by Drohojowska-Philp.

### **Georgia O’Keeffe: The Beginnings**

Georgia Totto O’Keeffe was born the second of seven children to Frank O’Keeffe and Ida Totto on November 15, 1887 in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. She grew up on a large farm that stretched 640 acres.<sup>76</sup> As the eldest and tallest of five girls, she had authority over her sisters, which early on instilled her with a sense of power. Her sister Catherine recalled, “We all expected that she was the queen that was crowned and we all loved her.”<sup>77</sup> O’Keeffe’s aunts and grandmother on the Totto side of the family were strong, well-read, and independent women. These role models combined with the rigors of farm life taught O’Keeffe to value hard work and determination.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Dow, *Composition*, 7.

<sup>76</sup> Roxana Robinson, *Georgia O’Keeffe: A Life* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999), 16, 22.

<sup>77</sup> Robinson, 18.

<sup>78</sup> Robinson, 24–25.



Ida O’Keeffe strongly believed in the “enrichment of life through the arts” and placed her daughters in music and drawing classes.<sup>79</sup> Georgia, taking after her mother, excelled at violin and piano.<sup>80</sup> O’Keeffe’s intense passion for music explains why the metaphors of music used by Dow and Fenollosa to describe art’s beauty, independent of meaning, were so appealing. Though music was important, O’Keeffe’s first childhood memory was intense visual images from infancy. By age eleven, she began placing the visual world onto paper through her art lessons. These classes involved copying reproductions.<sup>81</sup> O’Keeffe was demanding of herself, and never fully satisfied with the outcomes. As she continued with art classes through high school, she persistently tried to win admiration from her teachers, at the price of her creativity.<sup>82</sup>

In the winter of 1902, the O’Keeffe family made a critical decision that would permanently alter their fortunes. While Georgia and her brother Francis were living with their aunt and attending high school in Milwaukee, Frank and Ida O’Keeffe moved to Williamsburg, Virginia, in order to escape the harsh mid-west winter and the threat of tuberculosis that ran on Frank’s side of the family. The children followed at the end of their school terms.<sup>83</sup> In the fall of 1903, Georgia attended Chatham Hall Episcopal Institute, located between Danville and Lynchburg, Virginia, about 200 miles from Williamsburg.<sup>84</sup> The principle and art teacher, Elizabeth Mae Willis, recognized O’Keeffe’s talents, and accorded her special permission to work on her art alone in the studio during the evenings. Willis, who studied at the Art Students League in New York, encouraged O’Keeffe to take her art studies to a higher level.<sup>85</sup> While she

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<sup>79</sup> Robinson, 27.

<sup>80</sup> Robinson, 21.

<sup>81</sup> Robinson, 27,30.

<sup>82</sup> Robinson, 31.

<sup>83</sup> Robinson, 32–34.

<sup>84</sup> Robinson, 40.

<sup>85</sup> Robinson, 48.

may have leaned towards attending the League, family connections in Chicago made the Art Institute of Chicago a more practical choice. O’Keeffe moved in with her aunt “Ollie” and enrolled at the Institute in October 1905.<sup>86</sup>

Although Dow and Fenollosa both lectured in Chicago, and the Art Institute featured exhibits of Japanese prints in 1906 and 1908, neither of these events began to change the instructional methods employed at the Institute during O’Keeffe’s time. It relied on Europe and the conservative methods of copying from life to train its students.<sup>87</sup> O’Keeffe had her first experience drawing from an almost nude male model. Despite the initial shock because of her conservative upbringing, she powered her way through the classes. Her instructor, John Vanderpoel, was a well-respected artist. This marked the first time in her art classes that O’Keeffe had legitimate peers with her abilities. She recognized she would have to work at her art to succeed. By the end of the year, O’Keeffe ranked first in the class. Despite her success, the experience drained her, and the following summer while at home in Williamsburg she contracted typhoid fever. The illness kept her from returning to school in the fall, and by the spring when she fully recovered, she wrote to the Institute for a teaching recommendation. It was her first attempt at making a living through teaching art. However, she put the idea away temporarily and elected to attend the Art Students League in New York.<sup>88</sup>

In September of 1907, O’Keeffe began her classes at the Art Students League, choosing William Merritt Chase as one of her instructors.<sup>89</sup> He was one of the leading American Impressionists, and excelled in portraiture. His classes relied on painting from still life, and he

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<sup>86</sup> Smithgall, “Georgia O’Keeffe’s Life and Influences: An Illustrated Chronology,” 98.

<sup>87</sup> Robinson, *Georgia O’Keeffe: A Life*, 50.

<sup>88</sup> Robinson, 52–55.

<sup>89</sup> Drohojowska-Philp, *Full Bloom*, 44–45.

forced his students to work quickly and decisively. They executed a painting per day covering the work from the previous session.<sup>90</sup> This instilled in O’Keeffe the ability to see the finished painting in her mind’s eye before she put the brush to the canvas. Chase’s own personal style greatly impressed O’Keeffe, and made her realize the artist makes impressions beyond those done in paint.<sup>91</sup> On January 2, 1908, she made her first visit to Stieglitz’s 291 gallery to view sketches in pencil by Rodin. At the time, neither Rodin nor Stieglitz impressed her. At the end of the school year, her still life *Dead Rabbit and Copper Pot*, 1908, which emulates Chase’s painterly style, earned her a scholarship to the artist’s retreat of Amitola on Lake George in upstate New York.<sup>92</sup> At first, she found Lake George uninspiring, but later she tried to combine her emotional response to the place with its visual appearance and that challenge appealed to her. She would have the opportunity to paint the scenery of Lake George many times over with Stieglitz by her side a decade later.<sup>93</sup>

Upon O’Keeffe’s return to Williamsburg, she found her family’s fortunes turning for the worse. Her father’s business ventures were unsuccessful, forcing the family to downsize their home and property. This led O’Keeffe to seek a paying job for her artistic skills. She moved back to Chicago and worked as a freelance illustrator, but once again strain led to sickness and she returned to Virginia in 1909. During the same time, her mother began to show signs of tuberculosis, the same disease they left Wisconsin to avoid. The family decided to move away from the damp of the coast to the slightly higher elevation of Charlottesville for short-term relief. Despite her diminished health, Ida served hot meals to students from the University of Virginia

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<sup>90</sup> Drohojowska-Philp, 47.

<sup>91</sup> Robinson, *Georgia O’Keeffe: A Life*, 59.

<sup>92</sup> Marjorie P. Balge-Crozier, “Still Life Redefined,” in *Georgia O’Keeffe: The Poetry of Things*, by Elizabeth Hutton Turner (Washington, D.C: Phillips Collection, 1999), 46.

<sup>93</sup> Robinson, *Georgia O’Keeffe: A Life*, 72–73.

from their home on nearby Wertland Street in order to help pay for the house. O’Keeffe’s father remained in Williamsburg trying to salvage his business.<sup>94</sup>

A combination of her own illness, her family’s difficulties, and seeing her friends move on to have success, threw O’Keeffe into a depression that made her renounce a career in painting. Underneath these feelings was the uphill battle a female artist faced during that time. In addition, she felt overwhelmed by Chase’s style and virtuosity; she did not see a way past it, partially due to his belonging to the male dominated art world.<sup>95</sup> She needed a different approach that she could claim as hers, but did not possess the path. However, in the spring of 1911 the impasse ended when her former teacher at Chatham, Mrs. Willis asked O’Keeffe to teach classes during a six-week leave of absence.<sup>96</sup> O’Keeffe now had a solution, albeit temporary, for how to combine art with earning a living.

In the summer of the following year, O’Keeffe’s sisters Ida and Anita enrolled in art classes at the University of Virginia’s summer program. The professor’s approach was so different that they encouraged Georgia to attend a class. In 1912, O’Keeffe enrolled in Alon Bement’s Drawing I class for elementary teachers.<sup>97</sup> O’Keeffe made clear the importance of Bement’s class, “I had stopped arting when I just happened to meet him and get a new idea that interested me enough to start me going again.”<sup>98</sup> The “idea” was Dow’s constructive theories contained in *Composition*.

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<sup>94</sup> Robinson, 75–76.

<sup>95</sup> Robinson, 77–78.

<sup>96</sup> Robinson, 79.

<sup>97</sup> Laurie Lisle, *Portrait of an Artist: A Biography of Georgia O’Keeffe*, 1st ed (New York: Seaview Books, 1980), 48–49.

<sup>98</sup> Robinson, *Georgia O’Keeffe: A Life*, 80.

The combination of finding a path towards originality in art, and a way to support that path through teaching propelled O'Keeffe to new dimensions. Her pursuit of a teaching career would see her spend two stints in Texas, one in Columbia, South Carolina, take classes directly from Arthur Dow at Teacher's College, and spend four more summers with Bement at the University of Virginia. During these years, 1912-1916, she processed and put to paper the new ideas derived from Dow's synthetic principles of composition that he derived from his studies of Asian art with Earnest Fenollosa.

### **Ernest Fenollosa: The Legacy**

Fenollosa's life path enabled intimate contact with Japanese art, making him an authoritative source for Dow and many others. Ernest Francisco Fenollosa was born on February 18, 1853 in the town of Salem, Massachusetts. His father was a professional violinist, and his earliest childhood memories are his parents playing music together.<sup>99</sup> Music would remain important to Fenollosa and he incorporated the idea of music into his explanations of Asian art. After graduating from Harvard, Fenollosa worked at the Massachusetts Normal School and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, where he met Edward Sylvester Morse and Dr. William Sturgis Bigelow. Morse left for Japan in 1877, and later published a definitive book titled, *Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings*. He also collected ceramics, which later became part of the collections at the Peabody Institute in Salem as well as the MFA. Bigelow also became an important collector of Japanese art. The following year, Morse secured Fenollosa a position at the Imperial University in Tokyo teaching philosophy.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Lawrence W. Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East and American Culture*, Yale Publications in American Studies, 8 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 12–13.

<sup>100</sup> Clay Lancaster, "Synthesis: The Artistic Theory of Fenollosa and Dow," *Art Journal* 28, no. 3 (1969): 286, <https://doi.org/10.2307/775252>.

Fenollosa's rebuke of Louis Gonse's over-emphasis of the woodblock print in his *L'Art Japonais* appeared in the Tokyo newspaper the *Japan Weekly Mail* in July of 1884. The article and its subsequent publication in America brought Fenollosa to the forefront of scholarship in Japanese art.<sup>101</sup> During the same year, he formed the Kanga-kai art society with the help of a former student, Okakura Kakuzo. The society sought to preserve the traditional Chinese-style of painting in Japan, *kan-ga*, championed by one of Fenollosa's favorite masters, Sesshu (1420-1506), leader of the Kano school.<sup>102</sup> For Fenollosa's efforts, the Kano school allowed him to take the artist's name Yeitan Kano. Fenollosa's zeal for the "traditional" Japanese art forms led to their salvation in the educational system in Japan. According to Masheck, "as late as 1921 it was possible to maintain that the influence of Fenollosa helped rescue Japanese painting itself."<sup>103</sup> The Emperor of Japan awarded Fenollosa and Okakura for their services to the arts in Japan. Next, Fenollosa helped establish the Tokyo Fine Art School (Tokyo Bijutsu Gakko).<sup>104</sup> Lessons in the language of line, notan, and color formed the core curriculum. This triumvirate would also form the basis of exercises in Dow's *Composition*.

In 1888, Fenollosa became head of the Tokyo Fine Arts Academy and the Imperial Museum. During this time, he collected numerous Japanese paintings. Dr. Bigelow persuaded a wealthy patron, Charles G. Weld, to purchase these paintings for the MFA, which became the core part of the Asian collection. When Fenollosa returned to the United States in 1890, he became Curator of Oriental Art at the MFA. He resigned in 1896, and took up the lecture circuit. He returned to Japan in 1897 and remained until 1900. The following year he published, *An*

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<sup>101</sup> Kevin Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan: The Role of Traditional Japanese Art and Architecture in the Work of Frank Lloyd Wright* (London, New York: Routledge, 2000), 20.

<sup>102</sup> Nute, 24.

<sup>103</sup> Masheck, "Dow's 'Way' to Modernity," 14.

<sup>104</sup> Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*, 20–21.

*Outline of the History of Ukiyo-e*, which included twenty color reproductions of Japanese prints. A change in personal fortune led to a humbler position in Japan and softened his stance on the art of the commoner, *ukiyo-e* and the woodblock print.<sup>105</sup> The term *ukiyo-e*, which translates to “a floating world picture” are a “genre of woodblock prints and paintings meant to depict the hedonistic lifestyle of the rising merchant class of the Edo period” during the 17th to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>106</sup> Ukiyo-e prints cover a wide range of subjects including actors, courtesans, landscapes, historical, and mythological scenes.<sup>107</sup> Before leaving Japan in early 1900, he commissioned 600 watercolor paintings and color prints that he exhibited for sale in New York.<sup>108</sup> Fenollosa's best known work was *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, a “monumental” two-volume work published posthumously in 1911 from notes compiled by his second wife, Mary McNeil Fenollosa.<sup>109</sup> Both volumes were in O’Keeffe’s personal library at Abiquiu, New Mexico.<sup>110</sup>

When Fenollosa returned to America to become the curator of the Asian collection at MFA, Okakura became the director of the new school. The prior year, Okakura became Curator of Fine Arts at the Imperial Museum of Tokyo. He took up the mantle of reviving the traditional arts in Japan from Fenollosa, and eventually became its leading historian. He would transfer his knowledge to the West through writing influential books, such as *The Ideals of the East* (1903), and *The Book of Tea* (1906).<sup>111</sup> In 1904, he became an adviser on Chinese and Japanese Art at

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<sup>105</sup> Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East*, 147.

<sup>106</sup> Edmond de Goncourt, *Hokusai* (New York, UNITED STATES: Parkstone International, 2015), 455, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uva/detail.action?docID=1696091>.

<sup>107</sup> de Goncourt, 455.

<sup>108</sup> Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East*, 148.

<sup>109</sup> Lancaster, “Synthesis: The Artistic Theory of Fenollosa and Dow,” 286.

<sup>110</sup> Fine et al., *The Book Room*, 29.

<sup>111</sup> Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*, 122.

MFA.<sup>112</sup> The group of friends that bonded around Tokyo Imperial University and the MFA, Morse, Fenollosa, Okakura, and eventually Arthur Dow, represented “the leading edge of Japanese scholarship in America at the turn of the century.”<sup>113</sup> Okakura’s *Book of Tea* was an early influence and remained in O’Keeffe’s book collection at Abiquiu.<sup>114</sup> Dow used a lesson from Okakura’s *Book of Tea* in cautioning students not to rely on symmetry in their compositions. Okakura stated that in accordance with Zen philosophy, over simplified symmetry was uninteresting.<sup>115</sup> Many of O’Keeffe’s charcoal drawings created during the 1915-16 period immediately following her classes with Dow show the influence of Okakura.

### **Arthur W. Dow: From Artist to Instructor**

Whereas Fenollosa turned directly to Asia early in his life, Dow initially followed a more traditional path and trained in Europe. Arthur Wesley Dow was born only a few years after Fenollosa on April 6, 1857, just north of Salem, in the town of Ipswich, Massachusetts. In 1879, Dow’s first artistic endeavors began were illustrations detailing the historic buildings around Ipswich and for the publication, *Antiquarian Papers*.<sup>116</sup> He began studying for a career as an independent artist the following year and enrolled in the studio of James M. Stone in Boston. He progressed quickly and received encouragement to continue his studies in Europe. In order to supplement his savings for a trip to France, he taught art classes in several locations in the New

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<sup>112</sup> Nute, 21.

<sup>113</sup> Nute, 21.

<sup>114</sup> Smithgall, “Georgia O’Keeffe’s Life and Influences: An Illustrated Chronology,” 98.

<sup>115</sup> Dow, *Composition*, 28.

<sup>116</sup> Frederick C Moffatt, *Arthur Wesley Dow (1857-1922)* (Washington: Published in conjunction with the National Collection of Fine Arts by the Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), 18.



England area.<sup>117</sup> Dow travelled to Paris in 1884 and spent the next four years splitting time between the Académie Julian, a rival of the famous l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and Pont Aven in Brittany.<sup>118</sup>

The program at Julian required students to work in life drawing during the day and historic or religious themes using oil paint outside of class. His time at Pont Aven provided an escape from the rigors of classical training and allowed him to pursue landscape painting via *en plein air*.<sup>119</sup> While painting the seaside landscapes at Pont Aven, Dow gained his first exposure to Japanese prints.<sup>120</sup> In addition, he probably observed the works of Paul Gauguin in 1886, who later incorporated elements of Japanese prints into his works. Gauguin stayed in Pont Aven during the summers while Dow was there.<sup>121</sup> In Gauguin's works, Dow observed a challenge to the traditional training of the academies. Soon Dow came to admire the works of James Abbott McNeil Whistler, another artist strongly influenced by Japanese works. However, Dow did not realize how Japanese art influenced these artists at this time.<sup>122</sup>

Dow's eventual frustration with the French influence in his work led to a search for "principles of composition" from different sources.<sup>123</sup> Dow returned to Massachusetts in August of 1889 determined to earn a living from his paintings. However, the prices he commanded for his works paled in comparison to the more popular artists of the time, in part due to a general negative response to European art in the American market.<sup>124</sup> Dow questioned not only his own

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<sup>117</sup> Moffatt, 20.

<sup>118</sup> Moffatt, 24.

<sup>119</sup> Moffatt, 24–26.

<sup>120</sup> Moffatt, 38.

<sup>121</sup> Moffatt, 31.

<sup>122</sup> Moffatt, 37.

<sup>123</sup> Moffatt, 37, 48.

<sup>124</sup> Moffatt, 46.

skills, but also the way in which he and many others adopted “the standards” of the Paris schools, which left a void of identity for the American artists. Though he would not reject French artists all together, he started to rebel against the French traditional methods of instruction that relied on “imitative rendering of physical reality.”<sup>125</sup> He determined to find indigenous design principles that would free the artist from European tradition. In 1891 while researching Aztec history and art in the Boston library, he serendipitously discovered a book of Hokusai sketches. He quickly realized the Japanese influence over Whistler. Dow later claimed, “One evening with Hokusai gave me more light on composition and decorative effect than years of study. I surely ought to compose in an entirely different manner.”<sup>126</sup> A week later, he sought out the curator of the new Japanese collection at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston where he met Fenollosa, who showed him works by Sesshu, Korin, and Okyo.<sup>127</sup> Fenollosa shared with Dow the vision of an “imminent synthesis of Eastern and Western art” that would forge a new American style.<sup>128</sup>

The following summer he announced a change in curriculum for his art classes in Ipswich, Mass. They would focus on “line, dark and light, and color, as synthetic principles; with reference to the works of Japanese masters” A year later he encouraged the use of the Japanese brush as the primary instrument to learn the “relationships of line and notan (dark and light).”<sup>129</sup> He promoted his teaching principles through lectures. In these lectures, he explained how

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<sup>125</sup> Moffatt, 48.

<sup>126</sup> Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East*, 181.

<sup>127</sup> Chisolm, 181.

<sup>128</sup> Moffatt, *Arthur Wesley Dow (1857-1922)*, 49.

<sup>129</sup> Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East*, 182.

understanding the compositional principles behind Japanese art freed the student from strict realism.

By 1893, Dow was Fenollosa's assistant at the MFA.<sup>130</sup> During the summers, he taught small groups of students in Ipswich. However, he wanted his system to have a broader reach. He saw this as an opportunity to not only change studio art practices, but also the public understanding of good art. Both Dow and Fenollosa believed their ideas could improve the public perception of beauty and harmony, and create a society that demanded these things be present in their everyday lives.<sup>131</sup> Dow was so committed to the cause that he was willing to set aside his own career as an artist. In 1895, Pratt Institute in Brooklyn offered Dow position teaching composition. Dow's new approach fit Pratt's goals of making practical training in the arts available to a broader public. Fenollosa was a visiting lecturer during Dow's first year.

An eyewitness account of Dow's class proceedings provides insight into the instruction O'Keeffe received while under Dow, and likewise Bement, who carried the ideas of teaching art appreciation alongside compositional theory. Max Weber, a student of Dow's at Pratt, described how the class proceeded. Dow would have his students copy a drawing, allowing them to crop it in any way they wished, horizontally or vertically. Next, the students adjusted line and mass to balance the new compositions. The purpose of the exercise was to instruct the students on the importance of "organization and distribution of dark and light masses (notan)." Then Dow would have his students study "Japanese prints, decorative, and paintings in local museums" in order to understand the universal applications of his design principles.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Chisolm, 183.

<sup>131</sup> Chisolm, 186.

<sup>132</sup> Moffatt, *Arthur Wesley Dow (1857-1922)*, 82.

Dow pursued spreading his method of art instruction through a variety of channels. In addition to teaching at Pratt, Dow lectured at the Art Students League. In 1898, he also became curator of Japanese prints at the MFA. During this time, he completed the first edition of *Composition*, using many examples from the museum in the book.<sup>133</sup> First published in 1899, the book quickly gained popularity and was in the third printing by the following year.<sup>134</sup> The growing popularity of his teaching methods and book led to his appointment as the director of the Department of Fine Arts at Teacher's College. He accepted the offer on October 17, 1903, while travelling through Japan.<sup>135</sup> The new position would him to reach artists, teachers, and administrators across a broad spectrum of arts.<sup>136</sup> For thirty years, Dow helped spread Fenollosa's principles across America, starting in Boston, then at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, and for the final eighteen years at Teacher's College in Columbia, an influential school on educational practices across the country.<sup>137</sup> An associate professor under Dow, Alon Bement, helped spread Dow's ideas while teaching summer courses at the University of Virginia. O'Keeffe would then carry the ideas to Texas and South Carolina.

Bement was born in 1876 in Ashfield, Massachusetts. He trained as a painter under Léon Bonnat and Benjamin Constant in Paris. Dow hired Bement as an instructor of painting by in 1907.<sup>138</sup> He received a promotion to Assistant Professor in 1911 and remained at Teachers College until October 1920, when he became the director of the Maryland Institute College of

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<sup>133</sup> Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East*, 187.

<sup>134</sup> Moffatt, *Arthur Wesley Dow (1857-1922)*, 84.

<sup>135</sup> "Arthur Wesley Dow to James E Russell," October 17, 1903, Teachers College PocketKnowledge Beta, <http://pocketknowledge.tc.columbia.edu/home.php/viewfile/78708>.

<sup>136</sup> Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East*, 192.

<sup>137</sup> Chisolm, 179.

<sup>138</sup> "Bement, Alon | Benezit Dictionary of Artists," accessed March 4, 2018, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/view/10.1093/benz/9780199773787.001.0001/acref-9780199773787-e-00016071>.

Art in Baltimore.<sup>139</sup> In a letter to Anita Pollitzer dated August 25, 1915, O’Keeffe confirms her respect for Bement and the critical role he played in her development. She encourages Pollitzer to stay at Teacher’s College because with Bement there is “a better chance of keeping your own way of doing things... I wouldn’t be ‘arting’ now if it wasn’t for him.”<sup>140</sup>

### **The Dow Influence in the Stieglitz Circle**

According to art historian Sarah Peters, Dow’s influence, and thus Asian compositional principles, was already in place at Stieglitz’s 291 gallery in the early 1900’s. The concepts behind Asian art, fleshed out by Dow, guided the first circle of artists at 291, and continued with O’Keeffe. Before O’Keeffe’s arrival were the painters Pamela Coleman Smith and Weber. He unabashedly credited his art to Dow’s teachings.<sup>141</sup> In a photography critique titled “The Filling of Space,” Weber explains how Dow’s methods work equally well for photography. The photographer Alvin Langdon Coburn, who received praise from Stieglitz, took classes from Dow, using his camera to perform some of the exercises. Coburn claimed he received from Dow “an appreciation of what the Orient has to offer us in terms of simplicity and directness of composition.”<sup>142</sup> Peters suggests that Dow influenced the notable photographer Paul Strand, one of the leading artists at 291.<sup>143</sup> O’Keeffe became good friends with Strand and made an abstract portrait of him.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Foster. Wygant, “A History of the Department of Fine and Industrial Arts of Teachers College, Columbia University.” (Teachers College, Columbia University, 1959), 278.

<sup>140</sup> Georgia O’Keeffe and Anita Pollitzer, *Lovingly, Georgia: The Complete Correspondence of Georgia O’Keeffe and Anita Pollitzer*, ed. Clive Giboire (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 15.

<sup>141</sup> Peters, *Becoming O’Keeffe*, 90–91.

<sup>142</sup> Peters, 91.

<sup>143</sup> Peters, 91.

<sup>144</sup> Peters, 184–87.

Peters cites two important critics in the 291 circle that subscribed to Dow's teachings. Charles H. Caffin, who may have been the source of the Dow influence on Strand, used the lessons in *Composition* in a 1906 essay for *Camera Work*, published by Stieglitz. In the essay, he pointed to using the "abstract expression" within Japanese as a solution for art to remain relevant instead of relying upon the "appearances of the world."<sup>145</sup> Another contributor in the Stieglitz circle who subscribed to Dow's teachings was Sadakichi Hartmann. Hartmann, who was part German and Japanese, was a scholar of in the arts of Japan and familiar with the work of Fenollosa. His statements clearly show the applicability of Dow's Asian based principles to photography: "The two most helpful works on composition at the disposal of the American landscape photographer are at the present, 'Pictorial Composition' by Henry A. Poore and 'Composition' by A.W. Dow."<sup>146</sup> That Hartmann was an important figure to O'Keeffe is evident in the fact that she kept a copy of his *Confucius: A Drama in Two Acts* in her library at Abiquiu.<sup>147</sup> Not only was O'Keeffe primed by Dow for an appreciation of the power of photography, Stieglitz was prepared for the arrival of O'Keeffe, and the power of her compositions.

### **The Fenollosa-Dow System of Synthesis**

Fenollosa viewed Asian art as the bridge to free the West from the restraints of representational art. Instead of taking an antiquarian approach, he sought to analyze Asian compositional principles in a way they could translate to the production of a new art in the West.<sup>148</sup> He looked at art from Sung Dynasty in China as a way to "Remedy the then-current

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<sup>145</sup> Peters, 91–92.

<sup>146</sup> Peters, 92.

<sup>147</sup> Fine et al., *The Book Room*, 37.

<sup>148</sup> Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*, 76.

failures of western art, which was too analytical, disjointed and separated in the two elements of subject matter and form.”<sup>149</sup> According to Fenollosa, Sung paintings were a “perfect marriage on equal terms between the beauty in the subject and the beauty in the pictorial form.” He called this “synthesis, because every part and relation has been absorbed in the new organic product without a remainder.”<sup>150</sup> For Fenollosa, a truly synthesized composition relates its parts in such a way that they lose their individuality, enhancing each other to the point they become dependent on one another for survival. The composition becomes more than the sum of its parts and consequently, losing a single component destroys the whole.<sup>151</sup> Dow’s first lessons in *Composition* applied this concept to line relationships.

Fenollosa advocated for changing the rigid art instruction methods in America.<sup>152</sup> In a speech to the Ryuchi-kai art association in 1892, he warned the Japanese about throwing out their traditions and adopting Western art: “Painting is an art that expresses Idea by means of lines, colours, and shading done in perfect harmony. Japanese art excels in the expression of Idea. Western art describes any objects at hand mechanically, forgetting the most important point, of how to express idea.”<sup>153</sup> In his manuscript for “The Lessons of Japanese Art,” he states this visual idea is “absolute as the sound of music” a concept that would have appealed to O’Keeffe. He continues, “The fact that such a line organism *may* represent natural fact does not interfere with its purely aesthetic relation as line.”<sup>154</sup> His concern was that the Japanese were

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<sup>149</sup> Lancaster, “Synthesis: The Artistic Theory of Fenollosa and Dow,” 287.

<sup>150</sup> Ernest Francisco Fenollosa, “The Significance of Oriental Art,” *The Knight Errant* 1, no. 3 (1892): 66, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25515890>.

<sup>151</sup> Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*, 76.

<sup>152</sup> Lancaster, “Synthesis: The Artistic Theory of Fenollosa and Dow,” 267.

<sup>153</sup> Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*, 23.

<sup>154</sup> Ernest Fenollosa, “The Lessons of Japanese Art,” Nov. 1891. Quoted in Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*, 76.

becoming too concerned with Western realism and modelling. In fact, both Dow and Fenollosa would argue those relations must take precedent over representing natural facts. The liberties taken by O'Keeffe in her most representational works shows she never lost sight of this concept.

In *Epochs*, Fenollosa promoted a Zen-like “method of self-discovery”<sup>155</sup> Fenollosa discussed the symbiotic relationship between poetry and image in Asian art, explaining, “Poetry and painting are only varying forms of each other.”<sup>156</sup> He looked at poetry as a benchmark for art. According to historian Clay Lancaster, Fenollosa believed when painting relies on visual representation it “is limited to the level of a scientific text, whereas it ought to rise to the heights of poetry and thereby nourish the soul.”<sup>157</sup> The practice of writing poetry directly onto the painted image became common in the Southern Sung period in China and the Ashigawa period in Japan. Applied with calligraphic strokes, the poetry imparted an aesthetic compliment to the painted image.<sup>158</sup> The merging of the word and art occurs on a more elemental level in Asian art through written characters. Asian artists place specific characters in organic arrangements to denote images in nature such as a plum tree and its blossoms. Observations of nature also guided the spatial arrangement of smaller calligraphic brushstrokes. For example, radiating lines form fan shapes, by interlocking them, they represent a fish scale patten, while in clusters along a thick line they represent pine needles. The ability to use abstract building blocks to convey an idea formed the visual language of the artist.<sup>159</sup> Fenollosa believed at the heart of this ability was allowing the student to “build up (their) own view of the subtle affinities between things; to

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<sup>155</sup> Smithgall, “Georgia O’Keeffe’s Life and Influences: An Illustrated Chronology,” 100.

<sup>156</sup> Fenollosa and Petrucci, *Epochs*, 1913, 2:38.

<sup>157</sup> Lancaster, “Synthesis: The Artistic Theory of Fenollosa and Dow,” 286.

<sup>158</sup> Fenollosa and Petrucci, *Epochs*, 1913, 2:38.

<sup>159</sup> Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East*, 217.



construct an organic web of new categories.”<sup>160</sup> O’Keeffe built her charcoal abstractions with her own visual language, composed of shape characters in a manner similar to the Asian masters. By her own accord in *Some Memories of Drawings*, one can view O’Keeffe’s watercolor *Blue Lines* interpreted as calligraphic strokes, enlarged to create her own unique characters and language (Fig. 1).

Within the texts of *Epochs*, Fenollosa drew a correlation between successful art and the encouragement of artistic individual freedom. He pointed to various periods in Chinese history, T’ang (618-907) and Sung (960-1280), where Daoist and Buddhist practices prevailed over Confucian ideals that supported obedience. In Fenollosa’s view, these periods produced superior art.<sup>161</sup> The idea of artistic freedom remained central in the Fenollosa-Dow system. Both railed against the emphasis of representational copying in art education. This emphasis appealed to O’Keeffe, who did not want to continue following in the footsteps of those who came before her.<sup>162</sup> For Dow, accurately rendering the natural world onto the picture plane was only an “assemblage of object,” whereas a true pictorial composition placed objects in relation to each other such that they formed a harmonious whole. This was the way to express and idea, the true goal of a painting. He emphasized the creative process using the elements of line, notan and color to create this harmonious whole.<sup>163</sup> These three elements formed “the trinity of power.”<sup>164</sup>

Dow based his new theory of art education on Fenollosa’s “synthetic” theory and illustrated the concepts as exercises in his instructional book *Composition*.<sup>165</sup> The title page

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<sup>160</sup> Fenollosa and Petrucci, *Epochs*, 1913, 2:5.

<sup>161</sup> Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East*, 207.

<sup>162</sup> Peters, *Becoming O’Keeffe*, 31.

<sup>163</sup> Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East*, 184.

<sup>164</sup> Moffatt, *Arthur Wesley Dow (1857-1922)*, 59.

<sup>165</sup> Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*, 21.

contains the word “SYNTHESIS” spelled out in Greek letters, ΣΥΝΘΕΣΙΣ, which shows his dedication to Fenollosa’s concepts.<sup>166</sup> The Fenollosa-Dow system allowed “tremendous flexibility” from a step below realism to “the extreme of abstraction.”<sup>167</sup> Though some of the diagrams and exercises contained in *Composition* resemble the works of Piet Mondrian, at the time of its first publishing, abstract or nonrepresentational painting did not exist.<sup>168</sup> O’Keeffe took the system to new heights in her truly non-objective works.

Throughout *Composition*, Dow uses the word, *notan*, which makes up a critical component of his “trinity of power.” Dow uses this Japanese term to describe his method of achieving beauty and harmony in a picture by the “arrangement of the dark and light masses.”<sup>169</sup> He contrasts this idea with *chiaroscuro*, the rendering of shading for illusionistic modeling of the natural world. In later editions, he expands this idea to the “massing of tones of different values” and adds “Notan-beauty means the harmony resulting from the combination of dark and light spaces – whether colored or not – whether in buildings, in pictures, or in nature.”<sup>170</sup> Dow believes that Asian art offers the best examples for *notan*, “The Orientals rarely represent shadows; they seem to regard them as of slight interest – mere fleeting effects or accidents. They prefer to model by line rather than by shading. They recognize *notan* as a vital and distinct element of the art of painting.”<sup>171</sup> The emphasis on line stems from ancient Chinese canons on art. China’s first art critic and historian, Xie He in the *Guhua pinlu* from about 525 CE, listed the

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<sup>166</sup> Lancaster, “Synthesis: The Artistic Theory of Fenollosa and Dow,” 287.

<sup>167</sup> Lancaster, 267.

<sup>168</sup> Masheck, “Dow’s ‘Way’ to Modernity,” 7.

<sup>169</sup> Arthur W Dow, *Composition: A Series of Exercises Selected From a New System of Art Education. Part I*, 6th ed (New York: Baker and Taylor, 1905), 36.

<sup>170</sup> Dow, *Composition*, 7. There were two versions of *Composition*. The first one (*Part I*) issued in 1899, then expanded in 1912 to 128 pages primarily through the inclusion of color plates. See Masheck, “Dow’s ‘Way’ To Modernity,” 19-20.

<sup>171</sup> Dow, 53.

six principles used to judge art. The second principle, *Gufa yonghi* states “structural method in the use of the brush (bone method or outline of shapes with line).” Dow also derives his emphasis on proper spacing from the fifth principle, *Jinying weizhi*, which states, “proper planning in placing of elements.”<sup>172</sup>

Dow lays out the path to abstraction through the discussion of notan, “Synthetically related masses of dark and light convey an impression of beauty entirely independent of meaning.”<sup>173</sup> Dow points to “accidental” examples in nature that exemplify notan harmony such as a “grove of dark trees on a light hillside, or a pile of buildings against the morning sky,” which produce universally recognized feelings of “charm” and “picturesque.”<sup>174</sup> The Japanese masters capture these qualities in their “rough ink paintings... where there is but a hint of facts.”<sup>175</sup> Dow recommends the *Book of Tea* to reinforce this concept. Okakura explains the power of monochrome painting: “The followers of Zen aimed at direct communion with the inner nature of things, regarding their outward accessories only as impediments to a clear perception of Truth. It was this love of the Abstract that led the Zen to prefer black and white sketches to the elaborately colored paintings of the classic Buddhist School.”<sup>176</sup> Okakura praises the “great masters” of the past who painted with the power of suggestion versus the nineteenth century artists who rely on technique and produce a scientific realism steeped in accurate representation.<sup>177</sup> O’Keeffe’s charcoal abstractions pull from these lessons.

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<sup>172</sup> Michael Sullivan, *The Arts of China*, 5th ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 102.

<sup>173</sup> Dow, *Composition*, 53.

<sup>174</sup> Dow, 54.

<sup>175</sup> Dow, 54.

<sup>176</sup> Kakuzō Okakura, *The Book of Tea* (New York: Duffield, 1906), 67.

<sup>177</sup> Okakura, 110.

Dow's use of the word "impression" could be an intentional attempt to circumvent Impressionism's lineage to modern art and reroute it to his own Asian synthesis. In his own work, Dow generally avoided the brilliant colors associated with Impressionism, and regarded the movement as "signifying shoddy workmanship and insincere motivations"<sup>178</sup> In *Composition*, Dow repeatedly emphasized line and spacing over color as the means to achieve harmony in art. Unfortunately, Dow did not witness Gauguin's transformation from Impressionism in 1888 via the Japanese print while at Pont Aven.<sup>179</sup> Though both Dow and the Impressionists painted from nature, they differed on their observations. Where the Impressionists focused on color and the surface play of light, Dow believed Japanese artists strove for the structure of things.<sup>180</sup>

### ***Composition: Constructing Vision***

A thorough understanding of Dow's book *Composition* is necessary to understand the principles that guided O'Keeffe's forays into abstraction and her visual interpretation of Asian art. In the introduction to *Composition*, Dow states that his purpose is to "set forth a way of thinking about art."<sup>181</sup> He chooses the term "composition" as a way express how his method will instruct the "'putting together' of lines, masses, and colors to make a harmony."<sup>182</sup> The lessons begin with simplified line to create a recognition of harmony. They progress through pattern building, landscape configuration, black ink massing to build notan harmony, and finally adding

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<sup>178</sup> Moffatt, *Arthur Wesley Dow (1857-1922)*, 28.

<sup>179</sup> Moffatt, 36.

<sup>180</sup> Margaret Samu, "Impressionism: Art and Modernity," in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/imml/hd\\_imml.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/imml/hd_imml.htm).

<sup>181</sup> Dow, *Composition*.

<sup>182</sup> Dow, 3.

values in greys and color. In each chapter that introduces a new element of harmony building, Dow provides examples from Asian art, relying mostly on Japanese works.

The first chapter introduces three elements that “build up” harmonies in the “space arts” of “architecture, sculpture, and painting.” These are line, notan, and color, and they depend on each other to produce a successful composition. Within the element of line, spacing is of utmost importance. The bulk of *Composition* focuses on the first two elements, and Dow states “there must be a thorough grounding in the elementary relations of space cutting and simple massings of dark-and-light.”<sup>183</sup> Following this dictum, when O’Keeffe begins her first abstractions, she works only in black and white, and eventually adds blue. In this chapter is the first example of Asian art, a black and white reproduction of a Japanese print by Okumura Masanobu depicting a courtesan. It displays variety of line intersections and repetitions, as well as providing an example of notan. It serves as a prelude to the discussion of line harmony in the third chapter.

Before the lessons begin in *Composition*, Dow stresses the need to develop a sense of art appreciation in order to understand the “fine relations of line, mass, and color.”<sup>184</sup> His admonishment implies that in class lessons lean heavily on fine examples, on top of the ones provided in his book. In conjunction with this development is practice, beginning with exercises in line spacing. Through continued study and progressive exercises, the artist is capable of “finer relations.” This process develops the artists “power.”<sup>185</sup> However, the first steps are arranging lines in on the picture plane, creating the spacing that is fundamental to design. Dow divides the ways of arrangement into “five principles of composition” which must be governed by

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<sup>183</sup> Dow, 9.

<sup>184</sup> Dow, 21.

<sup>185</sup> Dow, 21.

“PROPORTION or GOOD SPACING” (Dow’s emphasis). These principles help explain why certain arrangements create harmonies in the natural world and the picture plane. They help both artist and viewer understand what makes a harmonious picture when looking at abstract art without a representational frame of reference.

The first two principles, opposition and transition, deal with how lines meet each other. Opposition refers to lines that create “simple and severe harmonies” as in perpendiculars or a grove of trees along the horizon. On the other hand, transition is an arc or curve added to the corner of a perpendicular, as in the capital of a column or a vignette design in a corner of a page. The next three principles provide methods for creating relations between multiple lines or shapes on the picture plane. Subordination relates parts, whether line, dark and light masses, or hues of color, to a dominant whole. Dow considers this a powerful way of achieving harmony, calling it a “great constructive ideal.”<sup>186</sup> Subordination operates through three methods, either by attachment to an axis like branches of a tree, radiation from a point as petals on a flower, or by size. Subordination by size entails a shape or pattern followed by smaller ones that relate to the larger one. The opposite of subordination is repetition, perhaps the oldest and simplest method of creating harmony. Dow cautions that although repetition is necessary to create rhythmic harmonies on the picture plane, it alone cannot produce great art.<sup>187</sup> As with all the lessons in *Composition*, the artist or instructor must use them as a group, and one single part does not hold the key to producing a harmonious picture. Dow stresses this idea in the final principle of harmony building, symmetry. Although a common and effective means of establishing order, Dow explains, “Japanese art, when influenced by Zen philosophy... avoids symmetry as

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<sup>186</sup> Dow, 23.

<sup>187</sup> Dow, 26.

uninteresting.”<sup>188</sup> Dow uses Okakura’s *Book of Tea* to support of this idea. The lesson comes from principles of construction for the tearoom, it “is an Abode of Unsymmetrical inasmuch as it is consecrated to the worship of the Imperfect, purposely leaving something unfinished for the play of imagination to complete.”<sup>189</sup>

Integral to the development of aptitude in applying these principles is an appreciation of previous masters. This shows that Dow repeatedly relied on examples for students to build their sense of proportion and good spacing. He encourages using museum collections “for a series of progressive studies based upon composition; taking up one principle at a time” while consulting a wide range of mediums including the Japanese print.<sup>190</sup> With appreciation shaping the vision of the artist, they could proceed to develop their own “powers” through practice. Throughout the exercises developing the senses of proportion, he points the student to study the “art-structure” of a painting to understand why it is beautiful and to see the way artists use line, notan, and color to guide the composition.

Dow does not intend for the artist to copy the works they study, but as a means to see “what a master has done with the very problem you are trying to work out.”<sup>191</sup> In his exercise on dividing a rectangle, he places importance on variation and choice without prescribed formulas. For O’Keeffe, who felt hampered by her previous instructors’ reliance on life copying, the following statement by Dow must have felt liberating: “The beauty of proportion in your rectangle is measured by your feeling for fine relations, not by any formula whatever. No work has art-value unless it reflects the personality of its author. What everybody can do easily, or by

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<sup>188</sup> Dow, 28.

<sup>189</sup> Okakura, *The Book of Tea*, 74–75.

<sup>190</sup> Dow, *Composition*, 39.

<sup>191</sup> Dow, 39.

rule, cannot be art.”<sup>192</sup> Dow favors the rectangle shape for the picture plane because of the infinite possibilities of dimensional choice and orientation. These exercises pave the way, not only for placing objects in relation to one another on the picture plane, but in choosing how the plane crops the group as a whole. For examples, Dow provides drawings of a landscape cropped in different manners to show how the proportions change through variations of the rectangular picture plane.

On the surface, Dow did not advocate for a complete abandonment of representational drawing, but questioned drawing for the sake of representation. However, a deeper reading of his systematic approach to understanding the structure of drawings opens the pathway to abstraction. Dow places emphasis on the placement of objects within the painting as means to express emotion over the inclusion of detail. He wants his students “to value power of expression above success in drawing.”<sup>193</sup> An artist’s power stems from mastering aspects of relations though size, proportion, and placement in space. These instructions would not only provide O’Keeffe guidance for placing her abstract shapes onto the picture plane in a harmonious path, but the courage to do so. Dow believed his methods for observing and understanding proportions closely could enhance representation when an artist needed it.<sup>194</sup> This skill would prove beneficial for O’Keeffe’s up close enlargements of flowers.

With the lessons for building and placing shapes mastered, Dow illustrates the vast array of possibilities using only two values. He lists numerous artistic traditions that utilize this method, from Japanese fabrics to the frieze of Chinese temples. The majority of O’Keeffe’s first

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<sup>192</sup> Dow, 38.

<sup>193</sup> Dow, 50.

<sup>194</sup> Dow, 50.



forays into abstraction adhere to this two-value principle. Dow recommends for the mastery of notan the students start by “blotting ink or charcoal onto paper... Experience has shown that the straight-line design and the flat black ink wash are most satisfactory for earlier exercises in two values... one might use two values of one color (say light blues and dark blue).”<sup>195</sup> O’Keeffe’s abstractions of 1915-1916 start with charcoal, then use watercolor with black only, and finally switch to blue. Compared with her studies of still life in oil at the Art Students League under Chase, this must have been a markedly simplified pallet.

Not only do O’Keeffe’s early works seem to take their color cues from Dow, her use of materials and techniques borrow from the lessons. In the first version of *Composition*, the very first lesson describes proper use of the Japanese brush. The pressure determines the width of the line while the whole hand and arm move as one. Dow explains that the motion must be deliberate, “in slow drawing, the line can be watched and guided as it grows underneath the brush point. Slight waverings, when not resulting from weakness or nervousness, are not objectionable; in fact, may add to the individuality and expressiveness of the line.”<sup>196</sup> In *Blue Lines* (Fig. 1), O’Keeffe expands from the small examples provided by Dow to a full brushstroke in watercolor across twenty-five inches of paper. Each line starts towards the top of the page, opening as she applies more pressure, and in a very controlled manner lightens her touch to close the line to a fine width as she draws downward towards the bottom.

The first group of abstractions, which O’Keeffe referred to as “specials”, use charcoal, and thus follow two of Dow’s recommendations.<sup>197</sup> Although black and white can produce a

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<sup>195</sup> Dow, 59.

<sup>196</sup> Dow, *Composition. Part I*, 13.

<sup>197</sup> Peters, *Becoming O’Keeffe*, 37.

beautiful arrangement, Dow acknowledges that the extreme contrast “has some harshness.”<sup>198</sup> To rectify this, Dow suggests adding a third value of “middle gray.”<sup>199</sup> In essence, adding this gray tone acts like the line principle of transition. One method of adding grays is the “clustering” of lines in a given area, which occurs in O’Keeffe’s *No 9 - Special*, 1915 (Fig. 2).<sup>200</sup> Dow suggests the use of charcoal as an effective means to achieve this third tone. However, he cautions that it requires proper handling and much practice to work with the material. O’Keeffe followed his advice and produced numerous charcoal abstractions. Dow gives very specific instructions on how to achieve a gray tone across the paper with charcoal. Once achieved, the artist can add dark areas or create light areas by erasing. One clear example of these methods in action is O’Keeffe’s *No. 2 - Special*, 1915 (Fig. 3). She made the mass of curling wide lines along with the supporting cradle form beneath the black oval through removing charcoal. There is a transition gray tone between the black oval and black arch towards the top of the picture, with gray tone in both top corners. These drawings, created within a year of Dow’s direct instructions, clearly resonate the lessons in technique from *Composition*.

Dow taught his students that even when drawing from nature, they still had the power of choice to guide their compositions: “Sketching from nature with brush and ink is a means of interpreting subjects in a very broad way, obliging one to select and reject, to keep only the essentials. (It) brings out the power of doing much with little, - of making a few vigorous strokes convey impressions of form and complexity.”<sup>201</sup> O’Keeffe’s watercolors of *The Lawn* and *Rotunda*, which represent some of her first works after taking Bement’s class at UVA, convey

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<sup>198</sup> Dow, *Composition*, 82.

<sup>199</sup> Dow, 82.

<sup>200</sup> Dow, 59.

<sup>201</sup> Dow, 72.

this idea. She renders the foliage in *Untitled*, (Rotunda – University of Virginia), 1912-1914 *Catalogue Raisonné* # 1790 (Fig. 4) as blocks of color without leaf detail. Her simplification and selectiveness exemplifies Dow's belief that studying the ancient arts of Asia could lead to a modern art form without reliance on Europe. In *Composition*, he clearly states the case for his methods, "Impressionism is by no means a modern art for suggestiveness was highly prized in China a thousand years ago. The painter expected the beholder to create with him... therefore he put upon paper the fewest possible lines and tones; just enough to cause form, texture and effect to be felt."<sup>202</sup> His words are a shot across the Atlantic and reflect the frustration he experienced with his training in France. O'Keeffe would later echo the same sentiment, "Cézanne was so much in the air that I think the Great American Painting didn't even seem a possible."<sup>203</sup> Dow's concepts enabled O'Keeffe's power of selection, and she eventually focused on the cow skulls and other bones, icons of the American West.

O'Keeffe's early works clearly show the lessons of notan, spacing, selectiveness, and line harmony. With her receptiveness to these ideas, it follows that she took Dow's advice to study "the masters" of Asian art in order to develop appreciation for beautiful design. Dow sums up his advocacy of looking at other artists to gain appreciation: "The artist is not teaching successfully unless he points the way to appreciation, however hard or long it may be."<sup>204</sup> The artist as teacher refers to Dow, but also guides O'Keeffe's endeavors as an artist and a teacher. In a manner emulating Dow, O'Keeffe arranged her classroom at West Texas State Normal College in Canyon, Texas, with Japanese prints along with examples of Persian textiles and Greek

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<sup>202</sup> Dow, 96.

<sup>203</sup> Georgia O'Keeffe, *Georgia O'Keeffe*, A Studio Book (New York: Viking Press, 1976), fig. 58.

<sup>204</sup> Dow, *Composition*, 100.

vases.<sup>205</sup> Throughout *Composition* are numerous examples and references to Asian artists. Dow included plates by Japanese artists: Sesshu (p97), Hiroshige print “Taki no gawa at Oji” (p13), Kenzan (kakemono of a flower p17), Kano Tanyu (p18), Kano Gyokuraku (p51), and Hokusai landscapes perhaps from a *manga* book (p57). Dow used illustrations from Okumura Masanobu (courtesan p8), examples of Japanese *manga* sketches (p19), and a Hiroshige tracing of a print (p46).<sup>206</sup>

Dow heavily promotes looking at Japanese prints especially as a study in color. Although most of O’Keeffe’s early works are only in shades of one hue, she certainly had interest in color. Her restriction of palette was a means of relying on spacing and mass to create a quality composition. With Dow’s high praise of Hiroshige and use of examples, plus the availability of prints, O’Keeffe surely would have seen them. Dow specifically named *the Fifty-Three Stations of the Tokaido*, 1833-34, and the *Sixty-nine Stations of the Kisokaido*, 1835-38, as good examples of Hiroshige’s works. In addition he names Hokusai as another artist to study, whose “color is strange and imaginative... sometimes startling and daring.”<sup>207</sup> O’Keeffe later collected a rare book of Hokusai’s works, *Fugaku hyakkei* (One Hundred Views of Fuji), 1834-1835.<sup>208</sup> In addition to these major ukiyo-e artists, he also praises Kunisada, Kuniyoshi, and Keisai Yeisen, who primarily produced “figure prints” of either Kabuki actors or courtesans. He instructs students to pay particular attention to the “skillful combinations of patterns upon costumes.”<sup>209</sup> A Japanese kimono example serves as an important reminder to look at the garment patterns in

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<sup>205</sup> Elizabeth Hutton Turner, “The Real Meaning of Things,” in *Georgia O’Keeffe: The Poetry of Things*, by Elizabeth Hutton Turner (Washington, D.C: Phillips Collection, 1999), 7.

<sup>206</sup> Pages numbers from Dow, *Composition*.

<sup>207</sup> Dow, 118.

<sup>208</sup> Fine et al., *The Book Room*, 38.

<sup>209</sup> Dow, *Composition*, 118.

figure prints.<sup>210</sup> Dow also encourages students to seek out 18<sup>th</sup> century Japanese prints in museum collections, which follows Fenollosa's preference for older works. Among his recommendations are Okumura Masanobu, Harunobu, Koriusai, Kiyonaga, and Shunsho. He particularly praises Shunsho's combination of colors with blacks and gray. O'Keeffe owned an exhibition catalogue entitled *Harunobu, Koriusai, Shunsho: Estampes Japonaises*, 1910, acquired after she moved to Abiquiu, New Mexico.<sup>211</sup> Dow also mentions Utamaro, whose figure prints dominated ukiyo-e art in the 1790s.<sup>212</sup> In a memorandum for his art appreciation courses in 1913-14, Dow included *Epochs* in a list of reference sources.<sup>213</sup> Fenollosa included a full color plate of Utamaro's *Girls Under Cherry Trees*, 1798, in *Epochs*, setting up the case for the influence of the figure print on O'Keeffe.

### **The Asian Artworks and Their Influence**

O'Keeffe's first works after coming into contact with Dow's teachings through Bement's Advanced Drawing IV class are a series of untitled watercolors depicting the buildings and grounds of UVA.<sup>214</sup> Executed sometime between 1912 and 1914, these remained in a scrapbook at the artist's estate until her passing in 1986. The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum exhibited the watercolors for the first time in fall of 2016. Curator Carolyn Kastner believes they represent

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<sup>210</sup> Dow, 77.

<sup>211</sup> Fine et al., *The Book Room*, 38.

<sup>212</sup> Richard Lane, *Images From the Floating World: The Japanese Print : Including an Illustrated Dictionary of Ukiyo-E* (New York: Putnam, 1978), 135.

<sup>213</sup> "Arthur Wesley Dow Papers, 1879-1922," Series 3. Box 1, Folder 24, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, accessed January 20, 2018, <https://sova.si.edu/details/AAA.dowarth?s=90&n=10&t=C&q=photographs--China+painting--United+States&i=95#ref46>.

<sup>214</sup> Drohojowska-Philp, *Full Bloom*, 79.

O’Keeffe first implementation of Dow’s lessons from *Composition*.<sup>215</sup> They also exhibit a graphic quality and simplification of features that suggests the influence of Japanese prints.

Two of the watercolors, one depicting the Rotunda (CR # 1790 Fig. 4) designed by Thomas Jefferson and the other showing the Law Building (CR # 1784 Fig. 5) , share compositional similarities with the series *Meisho Edo hyakkei (One Hundred Views of Edo)*, 1856-1858, by Hiroshige. In the footnotes of a lecture from 1921, Dow instructed his students to examine *One Hundred Views of Edo*.<sup>216</sup> Dow owned the complete set, plus several additional prints from the series.<sup>217</sup> Bement, who worked with Dow at Teacher’s College, may have borrowed prints from Dow or made lantern slides from them.<sup>218</sup> Both Dow and Fenollosa relied on examples from previous masters in their lectures. According to Lawrence Chisolm, Fenollosa had a robust collection of over 400 “high quality slides” as early as 1905.<sup>219</sup> Dow also had an extensive slide collection prepared by his brother. Moffatt explains how Dow supplemented his relatively short speech manuscripts with a “large quantity” of lantern slides.<sup>220</sup> In addition, the catalogue description for Dow’s Fine Arts class at Teachers College states, “Illustrated by lantern.”<sup>221</sup> In numerous prints throughout the series, Hiroshige places objects on top of the picture plane, often cutting off the viewer’s field of vision. This technique creates an immediacy

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<sup>215</sup> Roberts Kathleen, “Never-before-Exhibited O’Keeffe Paintings Show Shift to Abstraction,” *Albuquerque Journal*, November 20, 2016, <https://www.abqjournal.com/892656/artistic-2.html>.

<sup>216</sup> “Dow Papers Folder 24.”

<sup>217</sup> American Art Galleries, *The Important Private Collection of the Late Professor Dow* (New York : American Art Galleries, 1923), 152, <http://archive.org/details/oilpaintingsdraw00amer>.

<sup>218</sup> Most of the Japanese prints are extremely portable. The *One Hundred Views* are roughly the size of a legal sheet of paper.

<sup>219</sup> Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East*, 155.

<sup>220</sup> Moffatt, *Arthur Wesley Dow (1857-1922)*, 106.

<sup>221</sup> Teachers College, *Teachers College Bulletin. School of Practical Arts. Announcement 1912-1913*, Teachers College Bulletin (New York City: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1912), 39, [//catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100657703](http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100657703).

with the portrayed scene, which O’Keeffe replicates with the trees, shrubbery and orbs atop the stone balusters. Her watercolors also show the application of Dow’s lesson on framing the landscape to create “the best proportion” (Fig 6 Dow).<sup>222</sup>

Beyond the similarity of the general feel between *One Hundred Views* and these two watercolors by O’Keeffe, two prints share specific similarities with the Rotunda and Law Building works. In *Mama no momjii (Maple Trees at Mama)* 1857, Hiroshige frames the composition on both sides with two maple trees, which disappear out of the picture frame (Fig. 7). Both Hartmann’s *Japanese Art*, 1904, and Fenollosa’s, *An Outline of the History of Ukiyo-e*, 1901, have plates of this print. Dow recommended “the works of Fenollosa” for reading in his lectures, and was certainly familiar with this particular book, which contains twenty color plate reproductions of Japanese prints.<sup>223</sup>

O’Keeffe also frames the Rotunda with two trees and severely crops off the tops. Although in her painting, the nearest object is the bushes on either side of the foreground, their sheer size and contrast brings them forward especially towards the top of the picture, which is similar to Hiroshige’s maple branches. The use of shading in Hiroshige’s trunks gives them a more rounded feel than O’Keeffe’s, which she renders flat. However, as the eyes move from the edges inward on Hiroshige’s print, the trunks flatten and draw the frame inward, relieving the harshness of the rectilinear outer banding. The treetops and bushes in O’Keeffe’s painting perform a similar function. In Dow’s terms, both artists are cutting space in an interesting way,

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<sup>222</sup> Dow, *Composition*, 45.

<sup>223</sup> “Arthur Wesley Dow Papers, 1879-1922,” Series 3. Box 1, Folder 19, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, accessed January 20, 2018, <https://sova.si.edu/details/AAA.dowarth?s=90&n=10&t=C&q=photographs--China+painting--United+States&i=95#ref42>.

with Hiroshige using diagonals to create the element of transition, while O’Keeffe employs organic masses.<sup>224</sup> These create transition to the opposing edges of the picture plane, verticality of the trees, and the horizontal lines in the architecture of the Rotunda structure.

O’Keeffe’s choice of the Rotunda as a study object displays many of Dow’s line elements merely by rendering the image of the structure. Jefferson’s design contains opposition, transition, repetition, symmetry, and subordination to the Rotunda itself. Perhaps the strength of its design necessitated O’Keeffe’s conformance to symmetry, an element that Dow favored the least. However, she did make intriguing choice in the vertical linear rhythms of the tree trunks, which she carried through into the adjacent shrubbery and foliage. This creates an opposition harmony to the multitude of horizontal lines used to delineate the steps. The textured effect of alternating greens and browns on the tree trunks suggests bark, however the pattern continues into the leaf area and the adjacent shrubbery of the middle ground. This choice reflects the priority of design over representation advocated by Dow.

The rather unnatural effect of the vertical texture marks recalls another Hiroshige print, *Karasaki yau (Night Rain at Karasaki)*, 1834-35 (Fig. 8). Here, Hiroshige uses vertical lines across the picture plane to suggest rainfall, yet in certain places, the foliage escapes the rain bands. Both artists take liberty with these lines, at first suggesting something real, but then employing the lines as they see fit to create decorative harmony. Dow specifically recommended this print in a lecture at Teachers College on Dec 6, 1921. He seemed to favor examples that showed atmospheric effects. It is likely that O’Keeffe saw similar examples through Bement at

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<sup>224</sup> In an interview with Katharine Kuh, O’Keeffe explained Dow “had one dominating idea: to fill a space in a beautiful way.” See Kuh, *The Artist’s Voice*, 190.



UVA. In the Rotunda watercolor, it appears O’Keeffe observed Hiroshige’s rain lines and repurposed them for rhythmic effect versus accurate rendering of tree bark.

The most striking feature of O’Keeffe’s Law building watercolor is a large tree that obscures the view of the structure. It lays on top of the picture plane, in a similar fashion to the Rotunda watercolor. Another Hiroshige print from the Hundred views series, *Tonegawa Barabara-matsu (Scattered Pines, Tone River)*, 1857, brings a fishing net into the viewer’s field of vision, entering from the right side of the frame and reaching about halfway across, just like O’Keeffe’s tree (Fig. 9). Both devices serve to cut the picture plane and create new shapes on top of the background images. They also achieve notan harmony, creating contrast across their respective background images by using middle tones. Here, O’Keeffe is following Dow’s “more than three values” lesson in notan, using different values of green and red ochre.<sup>225</sup> O’Keeffe’s choice of black for the door in the center structure also exhibits dark and light contrast along with the alternating bands of black underneath the portico. Although the top band may function as shadow to show the projection of the portico, the lack of shadows anywhere else renders the image flat, showing less depth than the Hiroshige print. Both works share an asymmetric feel, yet each artist balances the composition by adding objects on the left side. O’Keeffe uses the top of a tree and trails the structure off to the left, adding the line details of the balustrade. Hiroshige places reeds in the left foreground and adds smaller boats and pine trees in the left middle ground. Both works use a simplified color scheme, although O’Keeffe’s is more earth-toned and subdued, which follows Dow’s principles of relying on tonality versus hue.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Dow, *Composition*, 89.

<sup>226</sup> Dow, 113.

Writing to her former classmate at Teachers College, Anita Pollitzer, in October 1915, O’Keeffe forecast the new direction of her art, “I am starting all over new – Have put everything I have ever done away and don’t expect to get any of it out ever again – for a long time anyway.”<sup>227</sup> The new direction included the abandonment of color and recognizable landscapes. The results were a series of charcoal abstractions that were assembled composites of the images and shapes within her mind. These were a radical departure from the watercolors of the Grounds at UVA. In an 1923 exhibition catalogue at Stieglitz’s Anderson Galleries, O’Keeffe explained how her abstractions came to be, “I have things in my head that are not like what anyone has taught me – shapes and ideas that are so near to me – so natural to my way of being and thinking that it hadn’t occurred to me to put them down. I decided to... accept as true my own thinking.”<sup>228</sup> Part of this quote is O’Keeffe asserting her independence from outside influence, but there is a degree of truth to the statement.<sup>229</sup> She selected certain shapes and motifs and placed them onto paper in a way so original that even Dow did not recognize them. He wrote to O’Keeffe in 1917, responding to her work “I was interested in the simplicity of your designs and the harmonious rhythm that you had expressed so well. It did seem to me however, that there were too many of those vague things.”<sup>230</sup> Dow still saw a design at work that utilized his principles, just not in the form of landscapes with which he was familiar. O’Keeffe’s ability to select shapes and compose with them created an original form, but the building blocks still had their sources.

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<sup>227</sup> O’Keeffe and Pollitzer, *Lovingly, Georgia*, 46.

<sup>228</sup> Peters, *Becoming O’Keeffe*, 31.

<sup>229</sup> Peters, 38.

<sup>230</sup> “Arthur Dow to Georgia O’Keeffe,” April 24, 1917, Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O’Keeffe Archive, Yale Collection of American Literature. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Selection is an integral part to how her charcoal abstractions took shape. In her biography on O’Keeffe, Laurie Lisle explains, “She ruthlessly simplified her image so that it often lost its resemblance to the reality of the initial object.”<sup>231</sup> The statement implies there were “initial” objects or sources. As for O’Keeffe choosing pieces of a whole to focus on in her compositions, she stated in 1922, “It is only by selection, by elimination, by emphasis, that we get at the real meaning of things.”<sup>232</sup> The things she selected may have come from a variety of Asian paintings and prints, which O’Keeffe borrowed from freely and blended in her charcoal works.

One of these works, *Second Out of My Head*, 1915, exemplifies a “mix and match” approach of shapes coming from different Asian genres (Fig. 10). This composition features an array of arcing lines that enter the foreground from both sides and sweep upwards, merging into a trio of vertical thick lines. These arcs create harmony according to Dow’s second principle of composition, transition. They also share a similarity with the drapery folds of the lead female figure in a diptych by Kitao Masanobu, which is the opening from the book, *Yoshiwara keisei shin bijin awase jihitsu kagami*, (*New Beauties of the Yoshiwara in the Mirror of their own Script*), 1784 (Fig. 11). Masanobu uses multiple arcing lines that form bands to indicate several layers of robing slightly parting from the motion of walking. To create different levels of shading, he creates various patterns, and thus eliminates the reliance on color alone to achieve *notan*. The multiple bands also create repetition, one of Dow’s principles of composition, and something he emphasized in his lectures, “The Japanese artist cares more for the rhythmic line than for the line that models a shape.”<sup>233</sup> The combination of these two elements gives

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<sup>231</sup> Lisle, *Portrait of an Artist*, 278.

<sup>232</sup> “I Can’t Sing So I Paint!” *New York Sun*, Dec 5, 1922, quoted in Lisle, *Portrait of an Artist*, 278.

<sup>233</sup> “Dow Papers Folder 24.”

Masanobu's print a rhythm that O'Keeffe seizes in her piece. She is able to create rhythm through varying the intensity of charcoal and width of the sweeping forms, which gives her arcs an organic quality instead of the mechanical repetition that Dow disliked.

Masanobu's drapery lines converge into a point where he adds a bundle of fabric held in the woman's arms. This gives the impression of mass balancing on a point. O'Keeffe has the same type of tension with a dark mass on top of narrow stems. O'Keeffe crowns these lines with dark jagged masses. The contrast between the weights of the dark shapes and the lines uses Dow's principle of opposition. Another opposition occurs between the intersection of the two grey rectangular bands in the middle ground and the vertical lines. Masanobu's print also contains dark thick lines separated by thinner white lines that form an opposition to the verticality of the robes and the figures themselves. O'Keeffe's incorporation of these ideas indicates she may have looked for prints that clearly expressed Dow's principles of composition and this guided her aesthetic tastes in Asian art. In an interview with curator and art historian Katharine Kuh, O'Keeffe explained the importance of interpretation, "... the way you see nature depends on whatever has influenced your way of seeing. I think it was Arthur Dow who affected my start, who helped me to find something of my own."<sup>234</sup> Dow's teachings both influenced which Asian artworks appealed to O'Keeffe and the specific parts within each one that caught her eye and became a part of the encyclopedia of shapes within her mind.

It may seem counterintuitive that either Dow or O'Keeffe would look to Japanese figure prints when both artists rarely depicted people in their own works. However, they both owned examples of the figure genre. Dow owned works by major artists he referenced in his lectures

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<sup>234</sup> Katharine Kuh, *The Artist's Voice: Talks With Seventeen Modern Artists*, 1st Da Capo Press ed (Boulder, CO: Da Capo Press, 2000), 189.

and *Composition*, Okumura Masanobu, Suzuki Harunobu, and Utamaro.<sup>235</sup> In addition, the sale catalog for his Japanese art collection states that a figure print of *Onna Komuso*, early 18th century, hung in his college studio.<sup>236</sup> O’Keeffe owned multiple catalogs containing full color reproductions of works by these same artists in the libraries of her homes at Ghost Ranch and Abiquiu.<sup>237</sup> Following Fenollosa’s mantra, “There is no education like intelligent seeing,” Dow would teach the development of the Japanese print including the works of the figure painters as a way to build appreciation for the masters, and the courtesan was an important and popular subject in the first 150 years of ukiyo-e.<sup>238</sup>

The appeal of the figure print even reached the world of photography. A 1905 issue of Alfred Stieglitz’s *Camera Work* featured a black and white reproduction of a work by Utamaro, *Seiobo Ogiya uchi Takikawa*, 1793-94, as an example of how idealizing the female figure into a taller, slender form creates a better composition through vertical line and rhythm (Fig. 12).<sup>239</sup> O’Keeffe captures this vertical harmony of line in *Second Out of My Head*, with her lines reaching up over three-quarters of the twenty-four inches of paper. The same Utamaro print appeared as a color plate reproduction in Fenollosa’s *History of Ukiyo-e* four years earlier.<sup>240</sup> O’Keeffe was “an avid reader, from 1915 on, of old *Camera Work* issues,” sent to her by Anita Pollitzer, her classmate at teacher’s College.<sup>241</sup> The figure print appeared all around O’Keeffe,

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<sup>235</sup> American Art Galleries, *Private Collection of Professor Dow*, 39,134,141,152.

<sup>236</sup> American Art Galleries, 111.

<sup>237</sup> “Ghost Ranch Library (Inventory)” (Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, 2017), 245,247; “Abiquiu Book Room Inventory” (Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, November 21, 2013), 104.

<sup>238</sup> Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East*, 177; Lane, *Images From the Floating World: The Japanese Print : Including an Illustrated Dictionary of Ukiyo-E*, 21.

<sup>239</sup> Alfred Stieglitz, “Camera Work,” no. 10 (April 1905): 29, 33.

<sup>240</sup> Ernest Fenollosa, “An Outline of the History of Ukiyo-e,” in *Ernest Francisco Fenollosa: Published Writings in English*, ed. Seiichi. Yamaguchi, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Edition Synapse, 2009), 38.

<sup>241</sup> Peters, *Becoming O’Keeffe*, 72.

and rather it was Dow using it to emphasize patterns, or O’Keeffe’s admiration for the use of line and notan, it seems plausible that this genre of ukiyo-e would leave an impression on O’Keeffe.

Although there is no concrete evidence that O’Keeffe had access to *Yoshiwara keisei*, there are sources for works by Shigemasa, who was the leader of the Kitao School where Masanobu received his training. Fenollosa included a fold out illustration of a Shigemasa painting, *Nine People Out to see Cherry Blossoms*, late 18<sup>th</sup> century, in *Epochs*.<sup>242</sup> He owned this piece until 1902 when he sold it to Charles Lang Freer.<sup>243</sup> Fenollosa writes admiringly of Shigemasa “whose drawing is more powerful and accurate, using wedge-shaped brush strokes in outline, and whose coloring tends towards soft dove greys.”<sup>244</sup> Dow owned a book and other works by Shigemasa.<sup>245</sup> According to Fenollosa, Shigemasa’s Kitao School was one of the four major schools in ukiyo-e from 1765 to 1780. He includes a plate from Kitao Masanobu book, *Shin Bijin Awase Jishitsu*, and calls it “the rarest treasure of collectors.”<sup>246</sup> This print is the left side of a diptych from the same book that includes (Fig. 11). Provenance records indicate both examples at the MFA came from William Sturgis Bigelow, who knew Fenollosa.<sup>247</sup> Fenollosa’s personal ownership of a Shigemasa work and his writings about the Kitao School indicate he may have had access to the *Shin Bijin* book either at the MFA or through Bigelow directly.

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<sup>242</sup> Fenollosa and Petrucci, *Epochs*, 1913, 2:192.

<sup>243</sup> “Open F|S: Nine People out to See Cherry Blossoms,” Freer | Sackler, accessed April 13, 2018, [http://www.asia.si.edu/collections/edan/object.php?q=fsg\\_F1902.90](http://www.asia.si.edu/collections/edan/object.php?q=fsg_F1902.90).

<sup>244</sup> Fenollosa and Petrucci, *Epochs*, 1913, 2:192.

<sup>245</sup> American Art Galleries, *Private Collection of Professor Dow*, 39.

<sup>246</sup> Fenollosa, “Fenollosa: Published Writings,” 39.

<sup>247</sup> Kitao Masanobu, *Courtesans, from the Album Yoshiwara Keisei Shin Bijin Awase Jihitsu Kagami (New Beauties of the Yoshiwara in the Mirror of Their Own Script)*, 1784, Woodblock print, Diptych. 37.3 x 50.5 cm (14 11/16 x 19 7/8 in.), 1784, <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/courtesans-from-the-album-yoshiwara-keisei-shin-bijin-awase-jihitsu-kagami-new-beauties-of-the-yoshiwara-in-the-mirror-of-their-own-script-224043>.

Likewise, it is possible Dow possessed either photographic reproductions or lantern slides from the *Shin Bijin* and used them in his lectures.

O’Keeffe shows a mastery of notan in *Second Out of My Head*, contrasting the dark masses at the top of the work with a bright light area below them. She carefully removes the grey shading to create wavy bands that appear behind the arcing forms. Another dark band entering from the bottom right creates Dow’s “notan in three values” moving from black to middle-gray to off white.<sup>248</sup> Her use of contrasting heavy application of charcoal, grey areas of rubbing and areas absent of pigment emulate the effects of washes and wet strokes in monochrome ink paintings of China. Through the works of Sesshu, who spent two years studying and painting in China, the techniques of the Song and Yuan dynasty painters disseminates into Japan, filling the picture plane with towering masses.<sup>249</sup>

Both Fenollosa and Dow repeatedly referred to the works of Japanese master, Sesshu Toyo. In a lecture from April 1922, Dow described the work of Sesshu as “pure composition for the expression of emotion.”<sup>250</sup> Fenollosa’s *Epochs* contains seven illustrations by Sesshu, the most by any single artist. One of Dow’s lectures on Japanese art lists seven different examples by Sesshu, making him the most represented of all the artists. Dow does not use titles, but descriptors of the methods and subjects from Sesshu’s works. One of these descriptors is “blotty.”<sup>251</sup> Fenollosa refers to the same method as Sesshu’s “rough style.”<sup>252</sup> For both Fenollosa

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<sup>248</sup> Dow, *Composition*, 82.

<sup>249</sup> Joan Stanley-Baker, *Japanese Art*, 3rd ed, World of Art (London: Thames & Hudson, 2014), 136–37.

<sup>250</sup> “Dow Papers Folder 24.”

<sup>251</sup> “Dow Papers Folder 19.”

<sup>252</sup> Fenollosa and Petrucci, *Epochs*, 1913, 2:88.

and Dow to emphasize this method indicates its importance as an example of Japanese composition and *notan*. It also suggests Dow used numerous Sesshu examples in his classes.

A landscape ink painting by Sesshu dated c1500 closely matches the brushwork of an example used in *Composition* and provides another potential source that O’Keeffe incorporated into *Second Out of My Head* (Fig. 13 Detail). The painting expresses this “rough” or “blotty” style, also known as “splattered ink.”<sup>253</sup> Sesshu crowns one of the mountain peaks with heavy wet brush strokes, perhaps indicating a rocky mass. Directly below these are patches of empty space, implying snow or mist. However, the lack of descriptive detail creates an illusion of a floating mass, which O’Keeffe also captures in *Second Out of My Head*. In Sesshu’s piece, the achievement of *notan* is more important than the accurate or detailed description of a mountain. The darkest areas in both pieces capture the eye using similar techniques, despite using different mediums.

Both artists create blocky shapes that contrast with other areas on the picture plane. Sesshu contrasts his shapes with finer dark line work in the boat on the water and the houses in the background. The other dark formation differs from the jagged black mass by the use of a continued stroke that creates a round form. O’Keeffe also used finer dark lines and curves that differ dramatically from her jagged charcoal masses. Secondly, Sesshu uses grey washes behind jet black to provide degrees of *notan*, which O’Keeffe replicates by rubbing the charcoal to produce a softer shade that replicates the tone of a wash. The shading effect also produces a recession of space in the middle and background areas. Furthermore, the grey tones in both pieces create an atmospheric effect.

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<sup>253</sup> Stanley-Baker, *Japanese Art*, 137.



In two lectures dated 1921 and 1922, Dow emphasized landscape works, which contained environmental “effects of snow and rain” and specifically named Hiroshige’s *Night Rain at Karasaki* among others.<sup>254</sup> Fenollosa’s wife, Mary McNeil Fenollosa, emphasizes this aspect of Hiroshige’s work in the title of her book, *Hiroshige, the Artist of Mist, Snow, and Rain*, 1901. O’Keeffe seems to share her mentors’ affinity for works that portray the weather and seasons. In a 1961 article for the *New Yorker*, Calvin Tomkins described her studio in Abiquiu, “Two of her own paintings hang here... the only other work of art in the room is a print by Hiroshige – a snow scene in three panels.”<sup>255</sup> The work is most likely *Kisoji no yamakawa* (*Mountain River on the Kiso Road*), 1857. Dow also owned a copy of this triptych, illustrated in the sale catalogue as item #875.<sup>256</sup>

Dow referenced ink paintings that portrayed different weather environments and cited “Landscape in Rain” by “Hoyen” as an example (Fig. 14). This reference matches Nishiyama Hôen, *Landscape*, 19th cent., in the William Sturgis Bigelow Collection at the MFA. In *Landscape*, Hôen captures a very gentle rain with faint diagonal washes running from top left to bottom right. The subtle effect differs dramatically from Hiroshige’s use of line for rain and appears as a solution for O’Keeffe’s work in charcoal. The subtleness of Hôen’s washes find their way into O’Keeffe’s *Second Out of My Head*, with a slight dragging of shading downward from the middle-ground just right of her vertical lines. The overall shading suggests mist from water, further emphasized through the wavy lines behind the arching forms.

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<sup>254</sup> “Dow Papers Folder 24.”

<sup>255</sup> Calvin Tomkins, “Profiles: The Rose in the Eye Looked Pretty Fine,” *New Yorker* 50, no. 2 (March 4, 1974): 61.

<sup>256</sup> American Art Galleries, *Private Collection of Professor Dow*, 159.

The reading of landscape elements in this particular abstract work comes partially from O’Keeffe’s own classification for her charcoals. Peters quotes these as “landscapes and things” and considers a work similar in composition to *Second Out of My Head* as a “landscape.”<sup>257</sup> The work, *Untitled*, 1915 came just before *Second Out of My Head*, as listed in O’Keeffe’s *Catalogue Raisonné*.<sup>258</sup> Looking at the different shapes and Asian influences, it appears *Second Out of My Head* contains elements of both “landscapes and things,” pulling shapes, techniques and compositional ideas from different genres and eras of Japanese art. O’Keeffe follows Dow’s teaching method as he showed examples of compositional harmony throughout the different periods of Japanese art history.

Another charcoal work, *No. 8 - Special*, 1916, potentially draws from Japanese art, this time isolating the natural shape of a spiral to create a “thing” (Fig. 15).<sup>259</sup> The spiral form reappears in numerous works by O’Keeffe, and Peters describes it as a “basic symbol of dynamic force.”<sup>260</sup> Udall sees the spiral shape as informing O’Keeffe’s *Evening Star* series. She explains that O’Keeffe “was inventing, step by step, a language of artistic relationships moving from the center outward.”<sup>261</sup> The relationships are the bands that emanate from the center, and depend on their spacing to display power. The spatial relationships follow Fenollosa’s description of synthesis, where the placing of parts determines the strength of the composition. In an essay written for *The Lotos* in 1896, he explains the concept through the metaphor of language and poetry, “Synthetic thinking demands a pregnant language... charged with intense meaning at the

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<sup>257</sup> Peters, *Becoming O’Keeffe*, 59.

<sup>258</sup> Lynes, *Georgia O’Keeffe: The Catalogue Raisonné*, 1999, 2:56.

<sup>259</sup> Peters, *Becoming O’Keeffe*, 60.

<sup>260</sup> Peters, 56.

<sup>261</sup> Udall, *O’Keeffe and Texas*, 45.

center, like a nucleus, and then radiating out toward infinity, like a great nebula.”<sup>262</sup> Both the artist and the historian recognize the literal and figurative power contained in the spiral form. The same shape appears in numerous Japanese works referenced and owned by Dow.

Although the spiral has significance in Western culture, particularly the symbolist movement as Peters suggests, it has a very long tradition in Asia reaching back to the ancient China.<sup>263</sup> Shang Dynasty bronzes from the 15th century BCE featured swirling *leiwen* thundercloud patterns, often accompanied by *kui* dragon form.<sup>264</sup> Fenollosa’s *Epochs* contains two illustrations and a photograph of Shang bronzes.<sup>265</sup> The ancient association of clouds and dragons continues in the *Ryuko zu byobu (Tiger and Dragon)* screen, from the 16th -17th century, formerly attributed to the Japanese artist Kano Eitoku (Fig. 16). Fenollosa purchased the screens in 1886, which indicates Dow had access to them during his tenure at the MFA. In a lecture from 1921 on Chinese and Japanese painting, Dow specifically references this work by artist name and title.<sup>266</sup> The left screen features the head of a dragon just off center with a swirling mass of cloud encircling a dark background. Although the eye moves to the center spiral, the entire screen captures the circular motion, from the slight downward curve of the waterfall on the upper right to the soft sweeping arcs of brush strokes in the other corners. O’Keeffe captures the essence of this all-encompassing motion by expanding her spiral in *No 8 - Special* to fill the picture plane. O’Keeffe focuses on a single element, magnifies it as a means of

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<sup>262</sup> Ernest Fenollosa, “The Nature of Fine Art II,” in *Ernest Francisco Fenollosa: Published Writings in English*, ed. Seiichi Yamaguchi, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Edition Synapse, 2009), 756.

<sup>263</sup> Peters, *Becoming O’Keeffe*, 53–54.

<sup>264</sup> Sullivan, *The Arts of China*, 29–30.

<sup>265</sup> Fenollosa and Petrucci, *Epochs*, 1913, 1:14.

<sup>266</sup> “Dow Papers Folder 24.”

simplification, and utilizes Dow's principle of notan composition.<sup>267</sup> The spiral gains power by expanding beyond the picture plane and allowing the viewer to imagine where the form ends.

Whereas Eitoku forms his spiral clouds with gentle brushwork and shading, O'Keeffe delineates the bands in her form with heavy charcoal. The reliance on line also has precedents in several Japanese artworks that O'Keeffe most likely viewed. Of these, a six-panel screen by the influential artist Ogata Kôrin, *Waves at Matsushima*, 18th century, ranks highest on the probability scale (Fig. 17). Fenollosa purchased the screen for the MFA in 1880, and featured an illustration of it *Epochs*.<sup>268</sup> Dow makes specific reference to the work in a lecture between 1905 and 1917.<sup>269</sup> Korin's art evidently left an impression on O'Keeffe. She later purchased a limited edition album featuring woodblock and photographic reproductions of his work.<sup>270</sup> A *Wave at Matsushima* features a turbulent scene of waves crashing upon rocky islands. These gold waves feature fine black lines of ink that go beyond giving form, they create rhythmic sensation across the screen (Fig. 18 Detail). There are multiple eddies throughout the entire piece. The heavy delineation at times makes them expand, and in other areas seem to act like a coil springing upwards (Fig. 19. Detail). O'Keeffe seizes upon this particular feature, using her lines to create a complicated rhythm that expands and moves the entire shape as a mass upward across the picture plane. Both artists use more line than necessary, creating a rhythmic harmony in their work. Similar to her selectivity in creating *Second Out of My Head*, O'Keeffe finds a particular element and expands its possibilities.

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<sup>267</sup> Peters, *Becoming O'Keeffe*, 270.

<sup>268</sup> "Waves at Matsushima," Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, March 24, 2017, <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/waves-at-matsushima-25005>.

<sup>269</sup> "Dow Papers Folder 19."

<sup>270</sup> Fine et al., *The Book Room*, 42.

O’Keeffe continued seeing the swirling motif in Japanese art, including two works by Hiroshige. The triptych *Awa Naruto no fûkei* (*View of the Whirlpools at Awa*), 1857, shows another scene of rocky islands and eddies, though the scene is more serene than Korin’s tempest like lines (Fig. 20). Hiroshige’s concentration is on the spiral form, emphasized through repetition and larger compared to Korin’s. Here, the wave crests are secondary to the whirlpools. Hiroshige only uses one shade of blue for the water, relying on white and black to create the form. Dow may have owned this triptych or at least part of it. The catalogue from the sale of his prints states “two landscape from two famous Triptych Sets (#868),” and he owned the complete version of the third triptych from the same set, *Mountain River on the Kiso Road*, referenced earlier.<sup>271</sup>

Hiroshige created another version depicting the same area, *Awa, Naruto no fûha* (*Awa Province: Naruto Whirlpools*), 1855 for the series *Rokujûyoshû meisho zue* (*Famous Places in Sixty-odd Provinces*) (Fig. 21). Dow recommends this series in his lecture notes dated Dec 6, 1921, and it is one of Hiroshige’s major publications along with *The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tokaido* and *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*.<sup>272</sup> It is quite possible that O’Keeffe saw this work as well. *Awa Province* contains more agitation, with the waves overcoming the rocky promontories. There is one central whirlpool, shown in the foreground ready to engulf the viewer. Hiroshige dedicates one-third of the picture plane to its form, using only two shades of blue, plus white and black lines to create its form.

O’Keeffe’s charcoal spiral, utilizing grey shades and light areas resembles the limited color palette of Hiroshige’s whirlpools. Hiroshige connects the center to the outer bands of the

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<sup>271</sup> American Art Galleries, *Private Collection of Professor Dow*, 158–59.

<sup>272</sup> “Dow Papers Folder 24.”

spiral by allowing white to show through, which O’Keeffe also accomplishes, leaving the small central area free of charcoal, and using less pigment in sections until finally reaching a large swath in the outer top band. Both works place heavy emphasis on line to complete the form. This harkens back to the ancient Chinese principle of “bone method” drawing. The choice reflects O’Keeffe’s preference at this time for the use of line over shading or color to create shape. Reviewing O’Keeffe’s watercolors of UVA shows the same preference. Finally, both Hiroshige’s *Awa Province: Naruto Whirlpools* and O’Keeffe’s work share a similar notan balance in the spiral shape, with dark color dominating over two lighter shades. Hiroshige’s work serves an example of Dow’s notan in three shades harmony, which O’Keeffe skillfully replicates in charcoal.

In 1974, O’Keeffe commented on *No. 8 - Special* in *Some Memories of Drawings*, “I have made this drawing several times – never remembering that I had made it before – and not knowing where it came from.”<sup>273</sup> Perhaps the predominance of this form in Asian art could explain how it infused into O’Keeffe’s unconscious. The examples cited here are just a few of the many possibilities O’Keeffe could have seen. The spiral shape, in either clouds or water, was always present in the works of art discussed by Fenollosa and Dow. The constant repetition could account for their reoccurrence in O’Keeffe’s works in the years after 1916.

At first glance, O’Keeffe’s *Blue Lines* appear as an exercise in calligraphic line (Fig. 1). Indeed, O’Keeffe’s commentary on the painting seems to confirm this notion of an exercise, “I had practiced a good deal with the watercolor brush, but I considered it would be impossible for me to have the fluency developed by the Orientals who always wrote with the brush.”<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> O’Keeffe and Bry, *Some Memories of Drawings*, np.

<sup>274</sup> O’Keeffe and Bry, np.

O'Keeffe clearly shows an understanding of the Asian brushwork tradition taught by Dow. She continues with her explanation, "There were probably five or six paintings of it with black watercolor before I got to this painting with blue watercolor that seemed right."<sup>275</sup> However, there is more to the painting than just brushwork. First, in simplest of terms it expresses the Dow ideal of opposition, followed by subordinating the two lines to the base blue mass in the foreground. The arrangement does not achieve harmony merely because the lines connect at right angles; there is a spacing necessary to achieve the right balance. The arrangement and spacing have a precedent in Asian art that takes its cue from nature.

The grandson of Kano Eitoku, Kano Tan'yū, was another Japanese master who excelled in traditional Chinese painting like Sesshu.<sup>276</sup> Dow included an illustration by Tan'yū in *Composition* and wrote "the culmination" by Tan'yū's name in his lecture notes.<sup>277</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art owns a screen of birds and flowers by Tanyu, which it acquired by 1914, during the period O'Keeffe studied under Dow at Teachers College (Fig. 22). According to Moffatt, Dow's classes regularly made field trips to the Met, making it likely O'Keeffe saw this screen.<sup>278</sup> On one of the panels, Tanyu depicts a tree, perhaps a plum, at the beginning of spring at first blossom, before the leaves set (Fig. 23 Detail). From one of the branches are two thin canes rising vertically, one higher than the other. They appear as two lines, with just two hints of buds on the sides. Like her other works, O'Keeffe focuses on this feature alone, enlarging them and kinks one of her lines, placing her own twist on the composition. Even the kinking of the line has its sources.

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<sup>275</sup> O'Keeffe and Bry, np.

<sup>276</sup> Stanley-Baker, *Japanese Art*, 143–45.

<sup>277</sup> "Dow Papers Folder 24."

<sup>278</sup> Moffatt, *Arthur Wesley Dow (1857-1922)*, 108.

A second bird and flower composition, another work by Hôen, *Plum Branch and Nightingales*, 19th century, shows a more complicated arrangement of branches and flowers (Fig. 24). Fenollosa illustrates the work in *Epochs*, and lists it as part of the Fenollosa-Weld Collection.<sup>279</sup> Hôen's branches and twigs zigzag across each other, kinking in different directions. O'Keeffe, never the copyist, takes this idea a step further by isolating her kinked line and making the heaviest part rest on the thinnest part. Like *Second Out of My Head*, O'Keeffe is able to internalize different images and alter the forms based on the essence of their structure. She then amalgamates these images into an original composition with Dow's principles as a guide.

## Conclusion

In response to Katharine Kuh's question about the influence of Asian art, O'Keeffe responded, "Can you find anything in my work that shows an Oriental influence?"<sup>280</sup> At that time in 1962, O'Keeffe appears to support what Peters calls "the spontaneous eruption theory of her abstractions."<sup>281</sup> Partially from Alfred Stieglitz's influence, critics described her early abstractions as "without discernible derivations; growing out of nature... the concepts were completely original."<sup>282</sup> The statement added to the O'Keeffe mystique. It was her sense of selection and composition that was completely original. The things she selected had their sources, but no one quite isolated them like O'Keeffe did in her compositions. Dow's principles and countless Asian examples gave her the pieces and the tools, but her own creativity guided their assembly. Beginning with her watercolors of the University, O'Keeffe divided the picture

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<sup>279</sup> Fenollosa and Petrucci, *Epochs*, 1913, 2:178.

<sup>280</sup> Kuh, *The Artist's Voice: Talks With Seventeen Modern Artists*, 191.

<sup>281</sup> Peters, *Becoming O'Keeffe*, 38.

<sup>282</sup> Lloyd Goodrich, *The Decade of the Armory Show, 1910-1920*, quoted in Sarah Whitaker Peters, *Becoming O'Keeffe*, 38.



plane congruent with Dow's Asian examples and principles given to her by Bement in 1912. By the time she began her charcoals between 1915 and 1916, her selections honed in on specific forms around her including details within Asian art.

The evidence shows there were numerous opportunities to observe a vast range of Japanese art. The influence is there, but it is not always obvious. Because of O'Keeffe's ability to focus on a particular section within an artwork based on Dow's principles, her compositions are almost unrecognizable from the source. What Dow applied to entire compositions, she looked for in fragments, then exploded these upon the picture plane. Perhaps it is this focus and simplification, evident in her early charcoal work that opened the way to the monumental flower paintings. Her careful observation, inspired by Dow and a hallmark of Asian painting, created original arrangements.

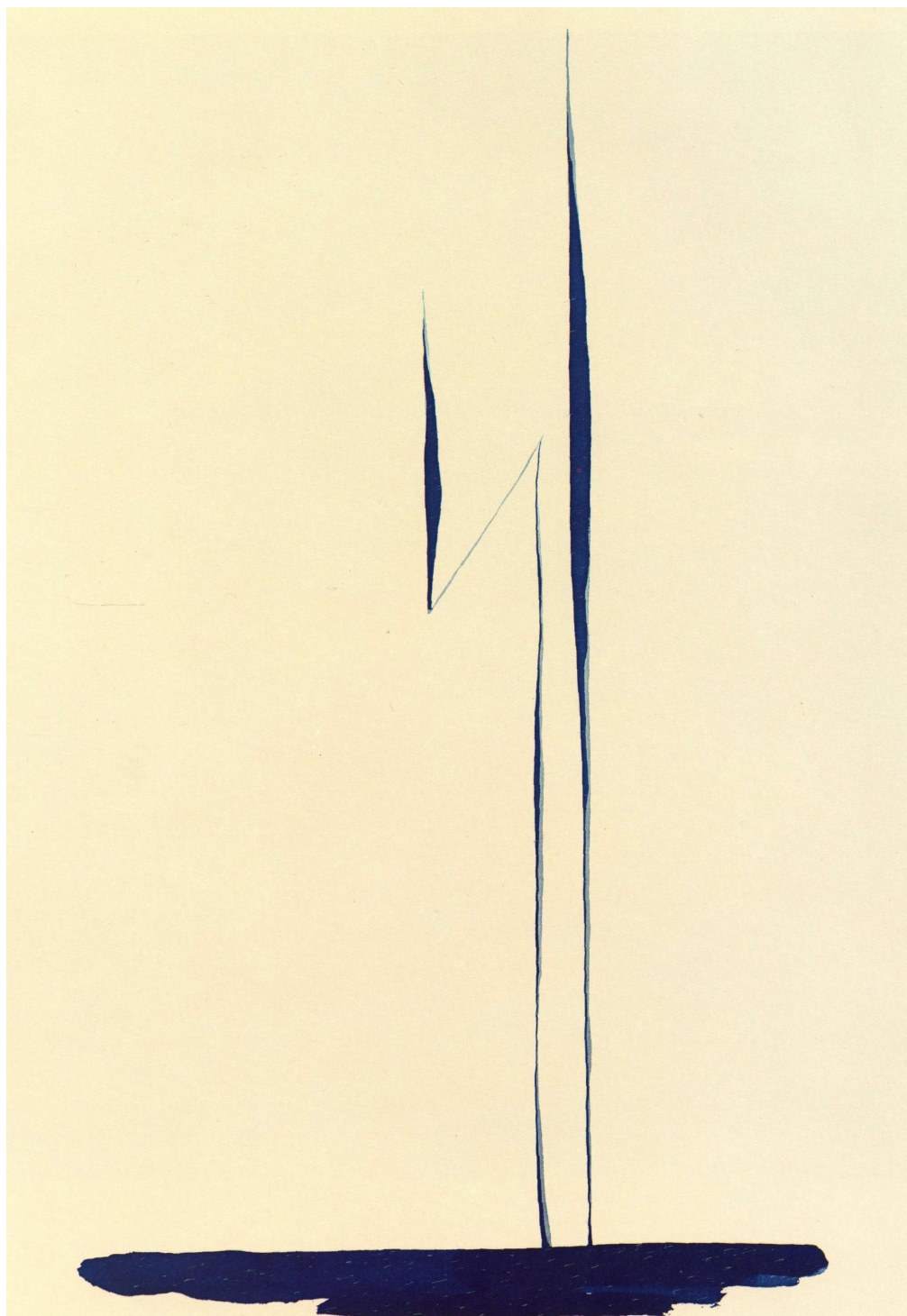
**Figures:**

Fig. 1. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Blue Lines*. 1916. Watercolor and graphite on paper, 25 x 19 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/489815>.

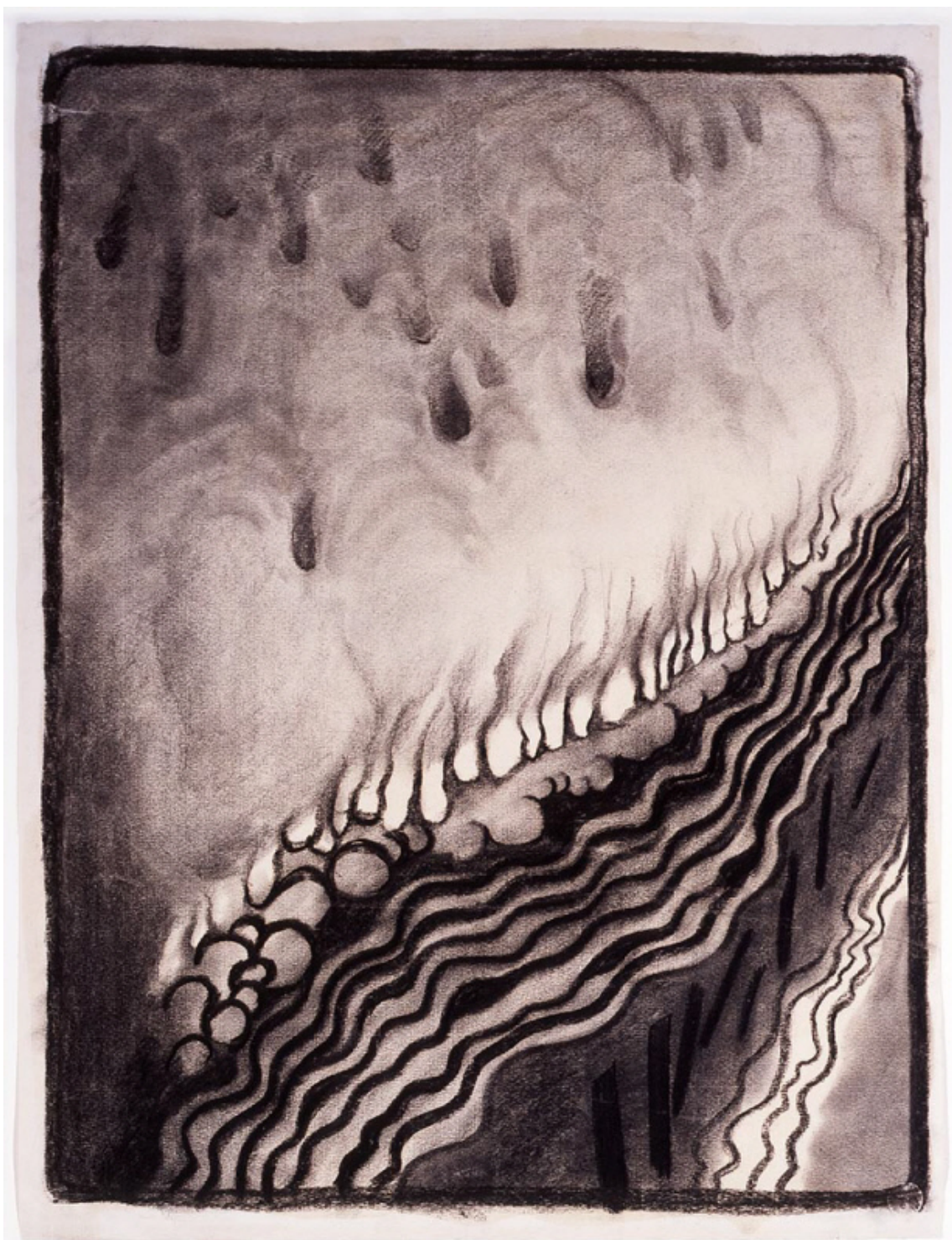


Fig. 2. Georgia O'Keeffe. *No. 9 - Special*. 1915. Charcoal on paper, 63.5 x 48.3 cm (25 x 19 in). The Menil Collection, Houston. <https://www.menil.org/collection/objects/3100-special-no-9>.





Fig. 3. Georgia O'Keeffe. *No. 2 - Special*. 1915. Charcoal on paper, 60 x 46.3 cm (23-5/8 x 18-1/4 in). National Gallery of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Connection.  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Drawing\\_No.\\_2\\_by\\_Georgia\\_O%27Keeffe\\_1915\\_NGA.tif](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Drawing_No._2_by_Georgia_O%27Keeffe_1915_NGA.tif).



Fig. 4. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Untitled (Rotunda - University of Virginia)*. 1912-14. Watercolor on paper, 22.9 x 30.2 cm (9 x 11-7/8 in). CR# 1790. Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. <http://cdm16622.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/gokfa>.





Fig. 5. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Untitled (Law Building - University of Virginia)*. 1912-14. Watercolor on paper, 22.9 x 30.2 cm (9 x 11-7/8 in). CR# 1784. Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. <http://cdm16622.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/gokfa>.

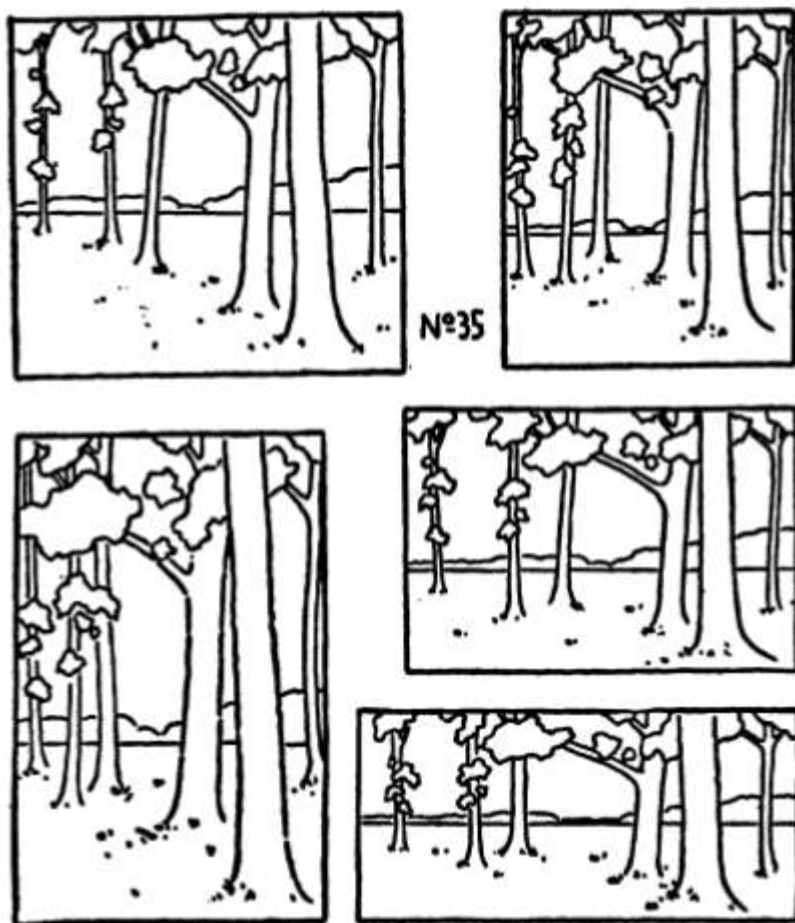


Fig. 6 Illustration from Arthur W Dow. *Composition: A Series of Exercises in Art Structure for the Use of Students and Teachers*. 13th ed. Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc, 1929, p45.





Fig. 7 Utagawa Hiroshige I. *Mama No Momjii* (Maple Trees at Mama, Tekona Shrine and Linked Bridge) from the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* (Meisho Edo Hyakkei). 1857. Woodblock print, 36.2 x 24.8 cm (14 1/4 x 9 3/4 in). Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. [http://archive.asia.si.edu/collections/edan/object.php?q=fsg\\_S2004.3.236](http://archive.asia.si.edu/collections/edan/object.php?q=fsg_S2004.3.236).





Fig. 8. Utagawa Hiroshige I. *Karasaki Yau* (*Night Rain at Karasaki*), from the series *Eight Views of Ômi* (*Ômi Hakkei No Uchi*. 35). 1834. Woodblock print, 23.9 x 37 cm (9 7/16 x 14 9/16 in.). Museum of Fine Arts Boston. <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/night-rain-at-karasaki-karasaki-yau-from-the-series-eight-views-of-%C3%B4mi-%C3%B4mi-hakkei-no-uchi-234472>.



Fig. 9. Utagawa Hiroshige I. *Scattered Pines, Tone River (Tonegawa Barabara-Matsu)*, from the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo (Meisho Edo Hyakkei)*. 1857. Woodblock print, 37.6 x 25.3 cm (14 13/16 x 9 15/16 in.). Museum of Fine Arts Boston. <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/scattered-pines-tone-river-tonegawa-barabara-matsu-from-the-series-one-hundred-famous-views-of-edo-meisho-edo-hyakkei-217906>.





Fig. 10. Georgia O'Keeffe. *Second Out of My Head*. 1915. Charcoal on paper, 61 x 47 cm (24 x 18-1/2 in). National Gallery of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Connection.  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Second,\\_Out\\_of\\_My\\_Head,\\_Georgia\\_O%27Keeffe,\\_1915,\\_NGA.tif](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Second,_Out_of_My_Head,_Georgia_O%27Keeffe,_1915,_NGA.tif).



Fig. 11. Right half of diptych. Kitao Masanobu. *Courtesans*, from the *Album Yoshiwara Keisei Shin Bijin Awase Jihitsu Kagami* (*New Beauties of the Yoshiwara in the Mirror of Their Own Script*). 1784. Woodblock print, Diptych. 37.3 x 50.5 cm (14 11/16 x 19 7/8 in.). Museum of Fine Arts Boston. <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/courtesans-from-the-album-yoshiwara-keisei-shin-bijin-awase-jihitsu-kagami-new-beauties-of-the-yoshiwara-in-the-mirror-of-their-own-script-224043>.





Fig. 12. Kitagawa Utamaro. *Seiobo Ogiya Uchi Takikawa, Onami, Menami* (*Seiobo: Takikawa of the Ogiya, [Kamuro:] Onami, Menami*) / *Enchu Hassen* (*Eight Immortals in the Art of Love*). 1793-1794. Woodblock print, 36.3 x 23.7cm (14-1/4 x 9-3/8in). The British Museum.

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=785638&partId=1&searchText=utamaro+eight+immortals&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=785638&partId=1&searchText=utamaro+eight+immortals&page=1).





Fig. 13. Detail from bottom half of hanging scroll. Sesshu Toyo. Landscape. c 1500. Ink on paper, 77.2 x 27 cm. Seattle Art Museum.  
[http://library.artstor.org.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/asset/AAPDIG\\_10311728116](http://library.artstor.org.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/asset/AAPDIG_10311728116).



Fig. 14 Nishiyama Hôen (Hoyen). Landscape (Rain). 19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and light color on paper, 126.9 x 45.8 cm (49 15/16 x 18 1/16 in.). Museum of Fine Arts Boston. <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/landscapes-26857>.





Fig. 15. Georgia O'Keeffe. *No. 8 - Special*. 1916. Charcoal on paper, 61.6 x 47.9 cm (24-1/4 x 18-7/8in). Whitney Museum of Art.  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Georgia\\_O%27Keefe,\\_No.\\_8\\_Special,\\_1916.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Georgia_O%27Keefe,_No._8_Special,_1916.jpg)





Fig. 16. Kano Eitoku (formerly). *Ryuko Zu Byobu (Tiger and Dragon)*. 16-17th cent. One of pair of six-panel folding screen; ink on paper, 149.8 x 373.2 cm (59 x 146 15/16 in.). Museum of Fine Arts Boston. <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/tiger-and-dragon-24903>.



Fig. 17. Ogata Kōrin. *Waves at Matsushima*. 18th century. Six-panel folding screen; ink, color, and gold on paper, Overall (Including mount): 170.2 x 384.8 cm (67 x 151 1/2 in.). Museum of Fine Arts Boston. <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/waves-atmatsushima-25005>.



Fig. 18. Detail from center. Ogata Kōrin. *Waves at Matsushima*, 18th century.



Fig. 19. Detail from upper right. Ogata Kôrin. *Waves at Matsushima*, 18th century.





Fig. 20. Center view from triptych. Utagawa Hiroshige I. *View of the Whirlpools at Awa (Awa Naruto No Fûkei)*, from an Untitled Set of Three Triptychs. 1857. Woodblock print, Triptych; 36.3 x 74.7 cm (14 5/16 x 29 7/16 in.). Museum of Fine Arts Boston. <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/view-of-the-whirlpools-at-awa-awa-naruto-no-f%C3%BBkei-from-an-untitled-set-of-three-triptychs-497835>.





Fig. 21. Utagawa Hiroshige I. *Awa Province: Naruto Whirlpools (Awa, Naruto No Fûha)*, from the series *Famous Places in the Sixty-Odd Provinces [of Japan] ([Dai Nihon] Rokujûyoshû Meisho Zue)*. 1855. Museum of Fine Arts Boston.  
<http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/awa-province-naruto-whirlpools-awa-naruto-no-f%C3%BBha-from-the-series-famous-places-in-the-sixty-odd-provinces-of-japan-dai-nihon-rokuj%C3%BByosh%C3%BB-meisho-zue-217555>.



Fig. 22 Kano Tan'yū. Birds and Flowers. 17th cent. Ink and color on silk, folding screen, 70 in. x 12 ft. 11 1/2 in. (177.8 x 395 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art.  
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/45701>.



Fig. 23. Detail from center screen. Kano Tan'yū. Birds and Flowers. 17th cent.





Fig. 24. Nishiyama Hôen (Hoyen). *Plum Blossoms and Bird*. 19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and light color on paper, 127.2 x 60.3 cm (50 1/16 x 23 3/4 in.). Museum of Fine Arts Boston. <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/plum-blossoms-and-bird-26861>.

### Appendix - Timeline<sup>283</sup>

Nov 15, 1887 - Born Georgia Totto O'Keeffe in Sun Prairie, WI

June 1903 - Moves to Williamsburg, VA

Fall 1903- Attends Chatham Episcopal Institute in Virginia

Fall 1905 - Spring 1906 attends School of the Art Institute, Chicago

Fall 1907 - Spring 1908 attends Art Students League, New York, studies under William Merritt Chase

Summer 1908 - Attends Art Students League's Outdoor School at Lake George, NY

Fall 1908 - Moves to Chicago and works as a freelance artist

1910 - Rejoins family now in Charlottesville, VA

Fall 1911 - Substitutes for Miss Willis at Chatham Episcopal Institute

Summer 1912 - Takes a class from Alon Bement at UVA. Learns Dow's principles from *Composition*

Fall 1912 - Spring 1913 - Teaches art at S.M Byrd High School Amarillo, TX

Summer 1913 - Assistant to Bement at UVA, teaches her own class

Fall 1913- Spring 1914 - Teaches in Amarillo, TX

February 17, 1913 - Armory Show, NY

Summer 1914 - Returns to UVA and teaches w/ Alon Bement.

Fall 1914 - Enrolls in Teacher's College, Columbia University, NY, studies with Dow, see the writings of Fenollosa, including *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*

Summer 1915 - Teaches w/ Alon Bement at UVA

Fall 1915 - Teaches at Columbia College, SC

October 1915 - Stops using color

Late 1915 - Charcoal special series

January 1st 2016 - Pollitzer delivers a roll of charcoal drawings by O'Keeffe to Alfred Stieglitz

March 1916 - Returns to Teacher's College to take a course under Dow

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<sup>283</sup> Lynes, *Georgia O'Keeffe: The Catalogue Raisonné*, 1999, 2:1142–43.



Spring 1916 - Columbia Teacher's College - class with Dow "Methods of Teaching," visits 291

May 1st - O'Keeffe's mother dies, O'Keeffe returns to Charlottesville

Summer 1916 - Last summer at UVA – "Blue Lines" series and "plumes"

Fall 1916 - Teaches at West Texas State Normal College, Canyon, TX

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