

Dearest watercolourists,

I hope you are having a lovely week and that you enjoyed this Monday's session!

Zoom details for next week's Monday session are:

Topic: Watercolour Session with Ioana
Time: Sep 28, 2020 10:30 AM London
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5426874953>

It is quite extraordinary to witness this change of season! I don't know about where you are, but in this part of England, it looks like Summer hasn't made up its mind about whether to continue fighting the Autumn's cold or just surrender and allow Autumn take over! What is the weather like where you are? Are you excited for the change in season?

In my case, this excitement for change (nurtured by the change in season) inspired my choice of subject for this week's feature!

Much like last week's focus,

She is a female artist

She paints flowers (but not only)

She is recognised as 'The Mother of American Modernism'!

This week, much like the season is changing, our focus is now shifting from traditional figurative painting to Modern art.

I am very excited to introduce the American artist Georgia Totto O'Keeffe (November 15, 1887 – March 6, 1986).

O'Keeffe is famous for her enlarged flower paintings, which are inspired by nature, however, they do not merely reproduce it. Her paintings are heavy with emotion. She detaches the

shapes and figures from how they would look in nature, abstracts them in order to best represent her message and emotional state of being. Her most famous work is in oils:



Jimson Weed - White Flower No. 1, 1932



Red Canna, 1924



Calla Lilies, 1924

I find these paintings absolutely beautiful! What do you think? Are you familiar with her work?

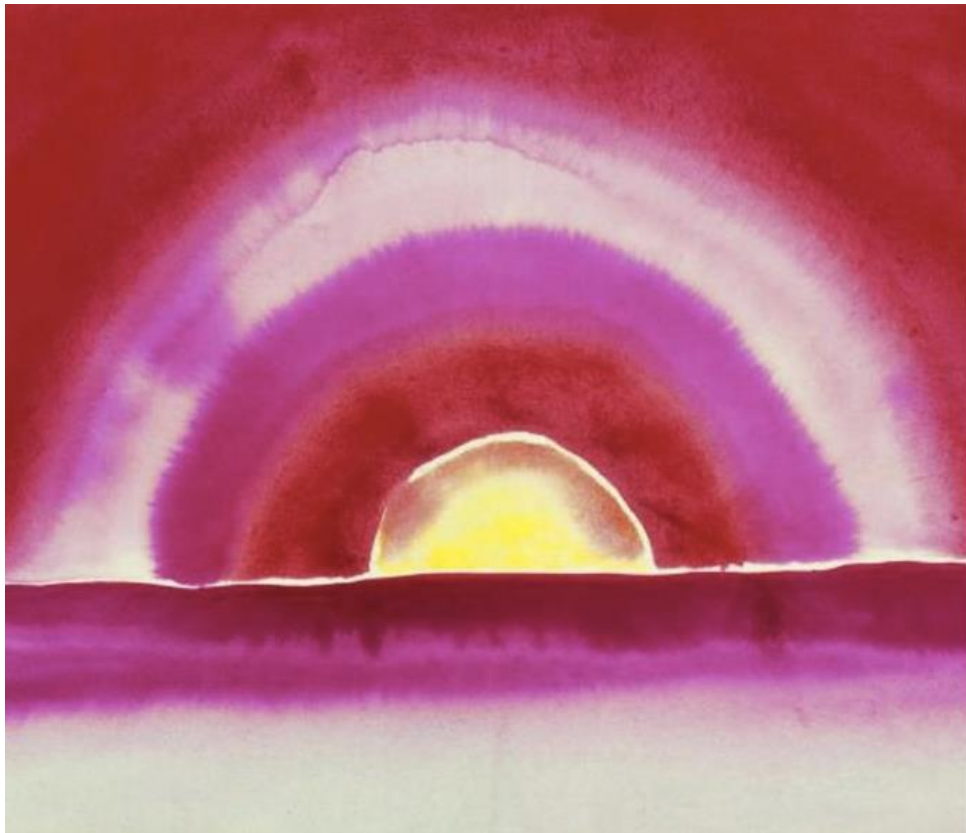
What I think is most inspiring and reassuring is how subjective these images are! They do not seek to render a real image, they stem from an emotion rather than an image, which allows a more playful and experimental application of colour!

I would really encourage you to experiment creating an image playing with colours and shapes. Allow yourself to be inspired by nature but create your own unique reflection of it! If you do so, please share it with all of us! We would love to see!

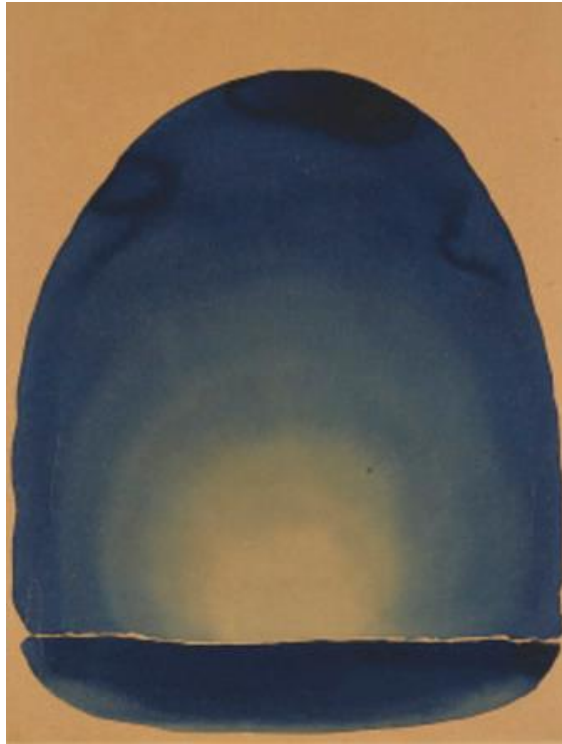
O'Keeffe worked in a variety of mediums, and the images above are all oils. Let me now show you her some of her watercolours!



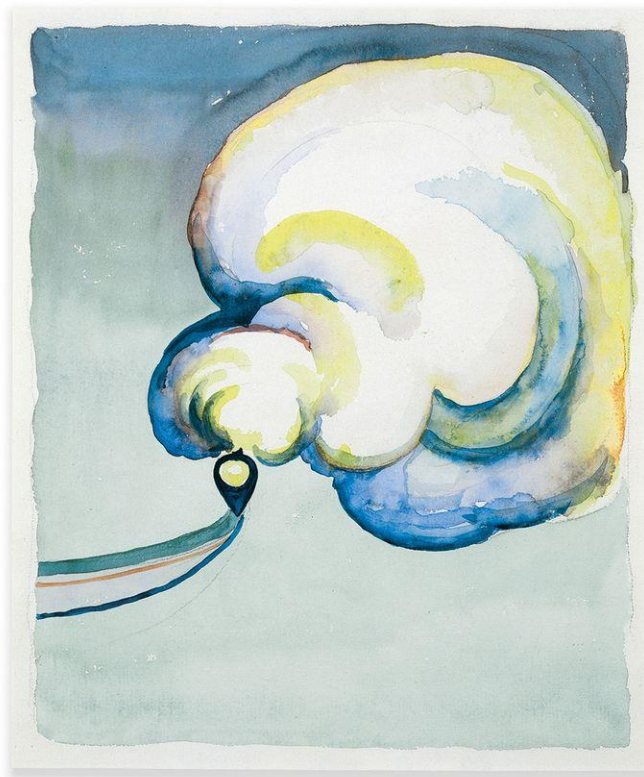
O'Keeffe, Red Canna, 1915, watercolour on paper,



O'Keeffe, Sunrise', 1916, watercolour on paper



Georgia O'Keeffe, Light Coming on the Plains No. II, 1917,



Georgia O'Keeffe, Train at Night in the Desert 1916

As you can see, O’Keeffe really enjoyed her wet on wet colour mixing. She also is by no means afraid of bold colours and large brush strokes. O’Keeffe is in control of the image, but also allows the spontaneity of the medium to take over.

Consciously aiming to distance herself from traditional painting, she employs watercolours in a very fluid way. She allows for ‘happy’ accidents to happen, for colours to mix on the paper and bleed into each other. Her outlines are negative spaces (areas left unpainted) which further emphasises the bold colours and shapes, which are abstracted from nature!

What do you think about this technique? Is it bold? Is it playful? Do you like it? Should we try outlining an image with negative space?

I wanted to talk about this artist to boost your confidence! In art there really is no right way of expressing yourself. It is all about experimenting, learning by doing and by seeing and asking yourself what it is that you like and what you do not! And maybe why that is! It is a very subjective journey and that is the beauty of it. And we are all on this journey together.

Last but not least, O’Keeffe’s *Jimson Weed* was sold for \$44,405,000, in 2014. That is more than three times the previous world auction record for any female artist!



Jimson Weed - White Flower No. 1, 1932

So, my dearest watercolourists,

Be bold, be curious, play with colours and shapes and most importantly have fun and be confident being yourselves!

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If you missed this Monday's session, worry not! Here is a step by step of what we did. Join in and share your work. I am always so excited to see your paintings on Facebook!!!!

As promised, we painted a vase of flowers. We started by exercising on a scrap piece of paper the elements we will incorporate in the main painting,

- 1) We painted a vase, a sunflower, a rose and some lavender (see last week's newsletter for a step by step how to paint lavender)



We used a combination of wet on wet and wet on dry techniques.

We used plenty of water on the brush at this stage, because this gives us most flexibility (if something doesn't look good, tap with a tissue and erase it)

For the vase, using plenty of water and a tiny pinch of colour we made an oval shape, we then added details, the upper lip and the handle. For the sunflower, we used layers and layers of thin watercolours to suggest the row of petals. The first layers do not need to be very precise, as they will be at the bottom and will dry translucent.

2) We graduated from the test paper and moved to our composition, where we put together the elements we played with before:



With a very watery brush and tiny amounts of colour we decided where each element will be in the painting. I went for balance but not perfect symmetry.

I wanted my left and right side to have more or less the same elements but avoid creating a mirror effect. I also decided to make the sunflowers the star of my painting.

That was the first layer of watercolour. Wet on wet for the flower heads, wet on dry for the vase. We let it dry.

- 3) As the first layer dried, we began to add more details, using a wet on dry technique. We worked on another layer of petals for our flowers and a stronger colour application



- 4) The next layers progressively added details and colour. The sunflowers had 2 or 3 rows of petals. I used watery yellow for the first layer, a less watery beige for the second and an orange for the third. For the centre of the sunflowers, we used a dotted technique to suggest the seeds- wet on dry-brown. I also added a second layer of dots here.

Whenever we thought there were too many white gaps, we added either more lavender for a pop of colour or green leaves.

I also added some shades to the lip of my blue vase.



What do you think? Do you like the result?

Share a picture of your work if you gave this a try! I am very much looking forward to our next Zoom session on Monday!!!

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Best wishes

Ioana