

August 19,
1960

Miss Elizabeth Gordon,
House Beautiful Magazine,
572 Madison Ave,
New York, 22, N.Y.

Dear Miss Gordon:-

First I want to congratulate you on your two most recent issues of the magazine. They are most beautiful and full of interest. They should have a great influence on American homes, and will I hope, help break the frightful standardization that seems to possess us.

Much in New Mexico can be and, in some places, is "shibui". I am of course wondering if my work on O'Keeffe's place has interested you. There is much more that could be done, but I tried to pick the most significant spots. I hope you like the corner fireplace in her bedroom and the one showing the treatment of the walls over her bed. If you wish me to try for any further transparencies, on black and whites, showing other aspects of the place, I shall be glad to do them.

I was also much interested to see the page in the current issue of House Beautiful with Margaret Wentworth's lovely painting. A most talented person. I have yet to see anything published of the Owings' place that does it justice. The interior is so beautiful. I shall look forward to seeing what you have done with it. My time there was so short, and part of it in heavy fog, so that I hit only some high spots. What a situation for a house!

Again my congratulations on your two beautiful SHIBUI issues and hoping that there will be more to come,

Very sincerely yours,

THE HOME OF GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

Like two major qualities of her painting, beauty of spacing and simplicity of design dominate the home of Georgia O'Keeffe.

Some ten years ago, following years of negotiation, Miss O'Keeffe purchased an old "hacienda" at the edge of the little Spanish village of ABIQUIU, New Mexico. The village tops a small mesa protruding into the valley of the Chama River with Miss O'Keeffe's place at the very rim, overlooking the entire lower valley. This old hacienda, like most building in New Mexico, is constructed of adobe bricks. Adobe is like clay in the hands of a sculptor; it can be remodeled, added to, subtracted from, changed in many ways. All of the original walls of this old house, are still in tact. Some roofs needed repair or replacement, some doors and windows have been changed, and, of-course, the surfaces both indoors and out have been re-coated.

The entrance is through a wide gate into a large patio. On the right is one building containing a very large studio and Miss O'Keeffe's bedroom. Through large windows, these rooms overlook the cottonwood-studded valley and the river flowing to the Rio Grande whose distant valley can be seen at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, - a view which has inspired many a painting.

To the left of the entrance gate is a guest room and a "zaguan", a covered passage way between adobe walls, leading to a smaller

wall surrounded completely ~~entirely~~ patio. Through an old original door there is another entrance from the outside. Other doors open into the dining room and the working parts of the house, while another zaguan leads to a spacious adobe walled garden. Simplicity of arrangement as well as the simplicity of her life dominate the house of Georgia O'Keeffe. She lives alone and has no telephone. Two faithful native Spanish Americans minister to her needs, a man for the garden and a woman in the house though in reality she is utterly independent. An avid gardener, she raises much of her own food supply. Fruit of all sorts, vegetables- herbs. A large deep freeze (there is electricity in the village- keeps her well supplied throughout the year.

The long, cool, white walled livingroom, is partially lighted by three overhead skylights. White unbleached muslin curtains cover book cases and the patio door. Furniture is upholstered in black, with white covers for summer. Two long tables are in reality wide shelves set into the walls. Aside from one or two of her own paintings and an African mask her decorative objects are chiefly nature's own:- bits of weathered wood, beautiful stones, shells, bones, the simple elements of life. The impression of the house is one of quiet contemplation, not that conversation cannot be extremely lively when guests arrive. Wonderful books, ^{the finest of} ~~magnificent~~ recordings, two superb blue Chyw dogs are Miss O'Keeffe's daily companions at home while outdoors is all the magnificent landscape of New Mexico.

Most of life's petty frustrations are eliminated from

her existence. She has reduced her life to fundamental essentials and those things that mean the most to her. The very objects with which she surrounds herself take on an added beauty by the way she arranges and places them. Such is the the home-the life- the work of Georgia O'Keeffe, one of America's great painters.

* The walls of the small diningroom are a warm adobe color and the floors of both living and dining rooms are adobe, soft to walk on and as easily responsive to the vacuum cleaner as anyother floor material. Opposite the patio door of the dining room is a large window looking into the "roofless" room. ^{This was} Once a storeroom with a caved in roof, ~~Miss O'Keeffe's diningroom~~ During the remodeling Miss O'Keeffe ~~diningroom~~ noticed the changing shadows from the few remaining "vigas" or roof beams. With gravel in place of a floor, white walls, two small evergreens and an old stump, she produced an everchanging still life in depth to watch from the dining table.

LOOKING TOWARD OLD DOOR AT ENTRANCE
TO INNER PATIO.
Transparency by Laura Gilpin.

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THE SIMPLE FORMS OF ADOBE ARCHITECTURE.
ALL ABOUT THE HOUSE MISS O'KEEFFE HAS
PLANTED NATIVE PLANTS AND SHRUBS.
Transparency by Laura Gilpin.

O'KEEFFES STUDIO OVERLOOKS THE CHAMA VALLEY
Transparency by Laura Gilpin.

O'KEEFFE'S STUDIO OVERLOOKS THE CHAMA VALLEY
Transparency by Laura Gilpin.

THE WINDOW SILL OF O'KEEFFE STUDIO
Transparency by Laura Gilpin

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FIREPLACE CORNER ON BEDROOM. O'KEEFE.
Transparency by Laura Gilpin

FIREPLACE CORNER IN BEDROOM. O'KEEFFE
Transparency by Laura Gilpin.

A CORNER OF O'KEEFFE'S BEDROOM.
Transparency by Laura Gilpin.

ENTRANCE TO GEORGIA O'KEEFFE HOME
ABIQUIU, NEW MEXICO
Transparency by Laura Gilpin.

MOUNTAIN SHEEP SKULL AT ENTRANCE GATE
GEORGIA O'KEEFFE HOME.
Transparency by Laura Gilpin.

MISS GEORGIA O'KEEFFE IN INNER PATIO
Transparency by Laura Gilpin

MISS GEORGIA O'KEEFFE IN INNER PATIO
Transparency by Laura Gilpin.

A CORNER OF THE DINING ROOM. O'KEEFFE RESIDENCE
Transparency by Laura Gilpin

THE LIVING ROOM. O'KEEFFE RESIDENCE
Transparency by Laura Gilpin

OPENING FROM THE KITCHEN IS A SMALL ROOM WHICH
MISS O'KEEFFE CALLS "THE INDIAN ROOM". IT
CONTAINS AN UNUSUAL FIREPLACE WITH A VERY WIDE
SHELF ACROSS THE WIDTH OF THE ROOM.

Transparency by Laura Gilpin.