

Sacramento Book Review



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**Georgia O'Keefe and Ansel Adams:
Natural Affinities**

By Barbara Buhler Lynes, Richard B. Woodward, Sandra S. Phillips
Little, Brown, \$40.00, 176 pages

The images contained within *Georgia O'Keefe and Ansel Adams: Natural Affinities* are stunningly radiant – and in the literal sense, you will be physically stunned and unable to move, paralyzed by their beauty and will end up staring, fixated upon them as if the images were icons of something divine and simply looking at them would reveal to you all of the secrets of the universe.

Simply gorgeous reproductions of two of the most important artists of the twentieth century are shown, along with essays explaining them, and the dynamic between the two artists. Ansel Adams and Georgia O'Keefe's work is compared, and parallels are drawn between the two in the commentary, which is actually quite insightful.

The words, however astute and perceptive they may be (and they are), are most definitely not the highlight of the book; It, of course, is quite obvious that the resplendent paintings and photographs steal the show. O'Keefe's paintings are, somehow, simultaneously loud and soft-spoken. They jump out of the book and become people in flamboyant dress that act in such a way that they give off an aura of quiet-confidence. The universally appealing curves she employs combine with her seemingly everlasting color-palette to create deeply

emotional and moving work, and her effortless and natural use of symbolism is so highly refined and subtle that it may not ever be matched.

Adams' photography is equally riveting, showing exactly why he is considered one of the most influential artists in the history of the medium. His body of work ranges from extremely intimate and personal looks into his own life, to awe-inspiring larger-than-life landscapes. His work that captures jagged, sharp, and rough forms found within nature is particularly compelling, seeing as these shapes and the emotions that they induce are not usually associated with nature.

The ironically earth-shattering work of both artists is simply fascinating. The prose included is almost as significant as the visual art, and both combine to make a non-pretentious yet supremely fantastic book – a task not easily done. An absolute necessity for any person that has functioning eyeballs, *Georgia O'Keefe and Ansel Adams: Natural Affinities* is one of the most significant books of a quite an expansive amount of time.

Reviewed by Jordan Dacayanan

