



MAY 2014

Making It BIG

Georgia O'Keeffe | *Pink Tulip*



VISIT THE BMA
and see *Pink Tulip*
in the BMA's Cone
Wing.

Georgia O'Keeffe (American, 1887–1986).
Pink Tulip. 1926. Oil on canvas. 36 x 30 inches.
The Baltimore Museum of Art: Bequest of
Mabel Garrison Siemonn, in Memory of her
Husband, George Siemonn, BMA 1964.11.13.
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**BALTIMORE
MUSEUM OF
ART BMA**

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Sponsored in memory of dedicated BMA
docent Ruth H. Singer by her family.

One day, while visiting an art museum, Georgia O'Keeffe chanced upon a small painting of a little teacup with a tiny flower painted inside it. She thought the blossom was beautiful but suspected that nobody else would ever notice it. Soon afterwards, she decided to paint flowers so big that people would have to pay attention. *Pink Tulip* is enormous compared to the tulips that bloom in our springtime gardens. Its rippling green leaves and softly curving pink petals draw us into the center of the blossom as if we were bees in search of nectar.

"Most people in the city rush around so," O'Keeffe said. "They have no time to look at a flower. I want them to see it whether they want to or not." In *Pink Tulip*, the artist lets one petal fall forward to reveal four bright yellow stamens covered with pollen. A visiting bee would probably collect some of that pollen on its legs and body, deposit it on the sticky light-green stigma that sits atop the dark green pistil like a frilly hat, then fly off to pollinate another flower.

O'Keeffe created more than 200 paintings of flowers, and took her time "getting acquainted" with each one. Sometimes she began by depicting her flower in realistic detail. Then she reworked the same flower again and again, emphasizing, altering, rearranging, or eliminating some of its colors, shapes, and lines, pulling it up close and cropping its the edges until it "filled the space in a beautiful way."

CHALLENGE FOR STUDENTS

Learn about the extraordinary variety of tulips, the essential activity of bees, the historical craze for tulips in Turkey and Holland, and the economics of the modern flower industry in an engaging PBS documentary, *Dutch Tulip Mania*:

Part I: bit.ly/1fQ6dJQ

Part II: bit.ly/1jfhY67

Compare the inside of O'Keeffe's *Pink Tulip* to:

A close-up photograph: bit.ly/QfsBjG

An assortment of botanical diagrams: bit.ly/1qfj4Kh

Divide a paper into four equal sections and draw four versions of the same flower. Make the first as detailed and realistic as possible. Make the next three drawings increasingly abstract. Make your flowers fill the space or even go off the edge.

PRINT THE IMAGE ON PAGE 2 FOR YOUR STUDENTS.



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Georgia O'Keeffe. *Pink Tulip*.

1926. Oil on canvas. 36 x 30 inches. The Baltimore Museum of Art: Bequest of Mabel Garrison Siemonn, in Memory of her Husband, George Siemonn, BMA 1964.11.13. ©2014 Georgia O'Keeffe Museum/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York