

WASHTENAW COUNTY'S
ENTERTAINMENT MONTHLY

Monthly Listings:

October

Guides
Contact Us

**October/November
2004**

DAILY LISTINGS

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20

MONTHLY LISTINGS

Concerts

Musical events

Ongoing Concerts

Cinema

Films and movies

On Stage

Comedy, Dance, Theater,
Outlying Areas and Auditions

Alternatives

Readings, Poetry, Lectures,
Stories & Miscellaneous events
Ongoing Alternatives

On Display

Gallery displays

BOOKS



MEDIA

Buy • Sell • Trade

www.davidsbooksandmedia.com

215 W. Michigan Ave. • YPSI

Click here for more information about David's Books and Media, including a map.

Off the Wall



Kyle Norris

Loving the Light of O'Keeffe's Oeuvre

At the recent University of Michigan Museum of Art exhibit, *Georgia O'Keeffe and the Sublime Landscape*, the mood evoked was one of great spaciousness. This fact was especially impressive considering the rooms hummed with human activity.

Clusters of children hopped from one bright painting to the next. At first, their voices maintained the solemn volume of a whisper, but then excitement took hold. Soon their voices broke into shouts. "Look at the river," some little person shrieked with delight. Another pointed to a photograph of O'Keeffe, and cried, "I see her shadow!"

One little boy tugged on the sleeve of his mother, with his arm wrapped in a red cast. "Mom, hey mom," he said, while pointing to a large beige and cream painting with a green rectangle in its center. "Is this abstract?" he offered as more statement than question. "Yes darling, very good," she beamed.

Despite the dozens of people mingling amongst the collection, the place *felt* spacious. Viewers took their time examining the artwork and soaking it all in. They strolled around at leisurely paces. The vibe was airy, expansive, and light.

Clearly, this effect links to the "sublime" aspect of O'Keeffe's work. The

GUIDES

Venues

Places to hear music

2003-04 Local Music

Directory

Band descriptions and contact info : watch for it in November

2004-05 Restaurant Guide

Local dining experiences : check the new version out in October

Best of Washtenaw 2004

This is what you like : check the new champs every April

2004 Annual Fiction and Poetry Contest

Winners and honorable mentions online for reading : look for them in June

*Designed by
Right This Minute Publications*

*Content provided by
SGI Publications*

*Content copyright 1996-2004
by SGI Publications*

*Hosted by
Whirligig Studio*

term '*sublime* means noble and majestic. It means, "To inspire awe through grandeur and beauty." It is an effective and under-used word.

The body of O'Keeffe's work presented in the exhibit did not represent the usual images found on her postcards, calendars, and posters -- although rest assured these *could* be obtained in the museum's gift shop. On the contrary, I had never seen any of these images until now. They were presented "by placing her in the context of the American landscape tradition" -- alongside additional works by other landscape-based artists.

The museum's website explains, "O'Keeffe devoted the major portion of her artistic output to paintings of landscapes, focusing on a sense of the sublime and a feeling for infinity that she found in the deserts of New Mexico and the plains of west Texas."

Her bold colors and unhurried gestures bespoke mighty proclamations. There is simply so much room to breathe in these depictions, that the viewer walks away with a mirrored sense of that spaciousness. Adjectives such as solid, stunning, and wise, could apply to both artwork and artist -- who was especially noteworthy considering how far she strayed from the confined role of women, during her lifetime from 1887-1986.

Art of the Lega

In line with their mission to present innovative exhibits from a cross section of cultures, the UMMA will present *Art of the Lega: Meaning and Metaphor in Central Africa*. It will feature masks, spoons, baskets, and abstracted figures constructed from wood and ivory, made by the Lega Peoples of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In their press release, the museum says this: "In addition to the impressive grace and sophistication of the abstracted sculptural forms, there is something inexplicably understandable in the smooth, buttery surfaces of an ivory spoon or the expressive features of a carved wood face. To the Western viewer, the gesture or posture of a figure may communicate notions that seem familiar yet hard to put into words."

"However, a member of the Lega association known as *Bwami* would have no trouble putting those ideas into words. For the Lega peoples of the Democratic Republic of Congo, every work of art is associated with proverbs that, when part of a ritual combination of poetry, dance, art, and song, impart wisdom to the society member. Lega sculpture

conveys the ethical, social, and political values of Lega culture."

Bwami is a voluntary association open to all Lega. It is a life long path, which teaches that moral goodness begets beauty and that knowledge is power.

The exhibit's format will mirror the initiation process of the Bwami Society. Thus, the artwork is at first presented alongside proverbs, music, and photos. As the exhibit continues through its nine sections, the didactic elements lessen. It is in this same manner that a Bwami member progresses through the society's ranks. They begin with an intense study of music, dance, gestures, proverbs, and visual arts. The higher they move up, the fewer verbal lessons they are given.

"Art of the Lega: Meaning and Metaphor in Central Africa" runs from October 16-January 16.

Kyle Norris lives in Ann Arbor. E-mail her at galleries@sgipub.com.

Back to [top](#).