



Drawing Energy with Alma Thomas

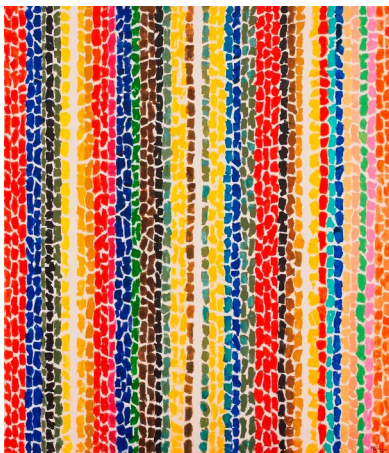
EPISODE LENGTH: 10:51 (CLICK FOR DIRECT LINK)

“Through color, I have sought to concentrate on beauty and happiness, rather than on man’s inhumanity to man.”
—Alma Thomas (1891–1978)

SUMMARY: In this podcast we learn about the painter Alma Thomas and we draw energy. A constant creator, Alma Thomas taught art to kids in Washington, D.C., for thirty-five years. Only after retiring at age sixty did she start seriously painting. Her large, colorful, abstract paintings were inspired by nature, and she was **OBSESSED WITH SPACE**. At seventy-five, she became the first African American woman to have a solo show at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City, and she was the first African American woman to have her work acquired by the White House.



Portrait of Alma Thomas
© Michael Fischer, 1976. Courtesy of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.



Alma Thomas, *Breeze Rustling Through Fall Flowers*, 1968. Acrylic on Canvas.

Alma’s creative influence and impact on the world is tremendous. While other American artists around her at the time were hung up on tight, perfect lines, she embraced nature and process. She let her pencil lines show! You can see and feel her hands in her work. She reveled in the experience of beauty, and considered the creation of beauty to be a profound and even political act.

SUPPLIES: paper, pen/pencil, colors!

OTHER DRAWTOGETHER RESOURCES: Watch Episode 9, “Butterfly with a Hairstyle” featuring Loveis Wise, the author of **“ABLAZE WITH COLOR.”**

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING: connecting to the outside world, embracing difference and uniqueness

CREATIVE SKILLS: gross motor skills, fine motor skills, shapes and color relationships

Guiding Questions:

- What are some things that people may be surprised to learn that you find beautiful? Have you ever drawn them?
- What shapes do you see repeated in nature?
- What did you learn about negative and positive space in the podcast? Can you find an example of negative space elsewhere?