

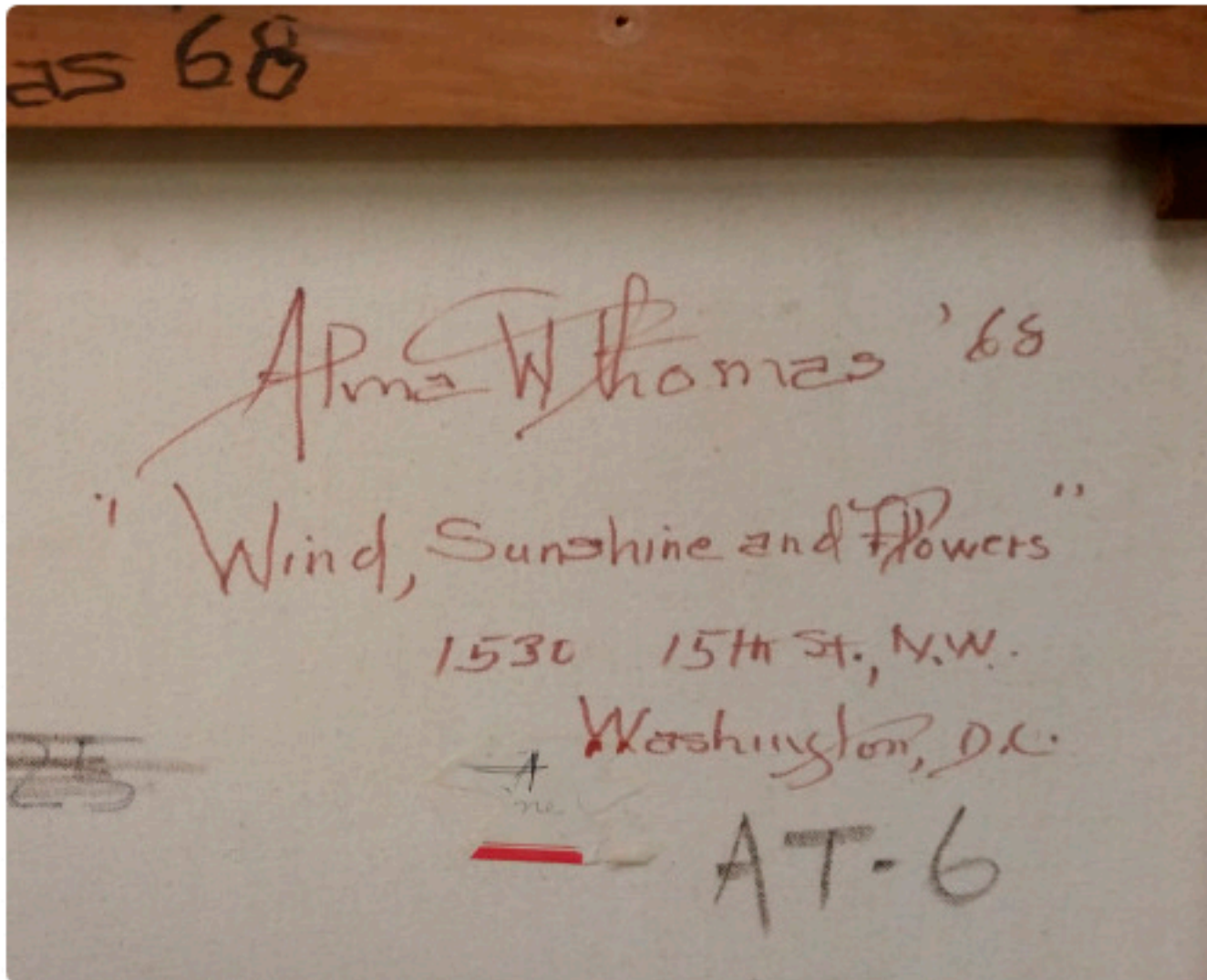


Alma Thomas painted her vibrant composition *Wind, Sunshine, and Flowers* on a piece of commercially prepared canvas. The bright white ground layer allows the luminous colors to project visually off the canvas. Thomas was fascinated by the colors and natural light in her garden. In the mid-1960s, she created a series of abstract Earth Paintings, which she named after the sources of her inspiration.



Wind, Sunshine, and Flowers was carefully crafted over the course of several studio sessions. To begin, Thomas made a series of parallel guide lines across the canvas with a pencil and a straightedge. Some of these lines remain visible in areas where they have not been covered by paint or in areas where the paint is translucent. These lines are especially apparent with the aid of infrared reflectography, which is an imaging technique that is particularly useful for detecting carbon-based media hidden beneath the surface such as graphite or charcoal. Infrared revealed a variety of lines ranging from those that were precisely drawn in one continuous mark to those that were reinforced freehand with a series of wavering, energetic marks.

Thomas worked the painting up in phases, layering strokes of similar color atop one another to create depth and dimension or to increase opacity. At a distance, the bricks of color appear to be comprised of a single tone, however, upon closer inspection, a variety of tones are visible. Towards the end of the painting process, Thomas refined the picture by reestablishing the negative space around the bricks using white paint.



She signed and dated the painting using a marker in the lower right corner. Using the same marker, she wrote on the back of the canvas, including the address of her home studio in Washington D.C. The painting has been preserved in excellent condition. Because it remains unvarnished as she intended, it is a prime example of how Alma Thomas wanted her paintings to look. The painting came to the conservation studio in preparation for loan to another museum. Look for it here next fall when it returns to Brooklyn!

Posted by [Lauren Bradley](#)