

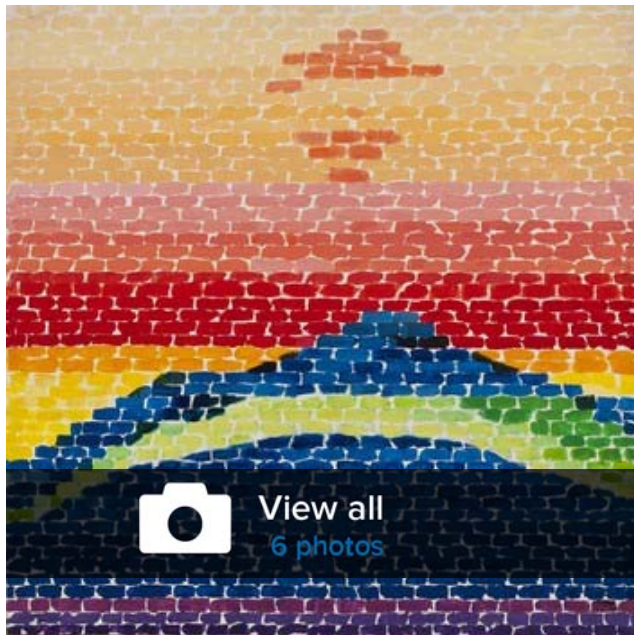
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Alma Thomas' Earthly drawings and paintings on view at Chelsea gallery

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"Apollo 12 'Splash Down'" by Alma Thomas (1970, acrylic and graphite on canvas)

Courtesy of Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York, NY

“Man’s highest inspirations come from [nature](#). A world without color would seem dead. Color is life. Light is the mother of color. Light reveals to us the spirit and the living soul of the world through colors.”

That was the philosophy of Alma Thomas, the late Abstract Expressionist painter whose works will be on view at the Michael Rosenfeld Gallery in Chelsea in an exhibit titled Alma Thomas: Moving Heaven and [Earth, Paintings](#) and Works on Paper, 1958—1978. Alma W. Thomas was born in Columbus, Georgia in 1891. When Thomas was a teenager, her family moved to Washington D.C. to escape the racial violence that was prevalent in their hometown.

Thomas began studying at Howard University in 1921 where she earned her BS in Fine Arts three years later. She then became an [art](#) teacher at Shaw Junior High School where she founded a community art program to introduce her students to the world of fine



art. In 1958, two years before she retired from teaching, Thomas began her career as an artist and had her first exhibition in 1966 at Howard University's Gallery of Art, followed a few years later with exhibitions at the Whitney Museum and Corcoran Gallery of Art.

Thomas passed away in 1978 at age 86 and this exhibit at the Michael Rosenfeld Gallery includes more than 40 drawings and paintings she did during the last 20 years of her life when she decided to become a full-time artist.

Thomas' works consist of rhythmic patterns that are bursting with energy with their vibrant colors. She had an appreciation for nature and her keen observations come through in all of her works. For instance End of Autumn depicts the Earth with a blue center representing the winter that will soon be approaching as the typical red, yellow, and orange colors are pushed to the side. Contrarily, Spring No. 1 features a group of bright colors on the right side starting to dominate and push to the side cooler colors to mark the emergence of springtime.

Thomas also recognizes the importance of yin and yang elements in two similar paintings that both feature swift black paint strokes dancing across the canvas. One of them titled Fire Flies has hot colors like red to represent yang, while the other titled Tales of the Vienna Woods has cooler colors like blue to represent yin. Thomas has also done many paintings of several different shapes clustered together on the canvas giving them the appearance of a stained glass window. Such paintings include Jonquils, Oriental Sunset, Red Scarlet Sage, Scarlet Sage, and Dancing a Whirling Dervish.

At the [Michael Rosenfeld Gallery](#), 100 Eleventh Ave., through May 16. The gallery is open Tues.—Sat. from 10 a.m.—6 p.m.

SUGGESTED LINKS

- › [Dena Schutzer illustrates 'Local Encounters' at Chelsea gallery show](#)
- › [Aaron Johnson's sock paintings on view in East Harlem](#)
- › [Subodh Gupta illustrates 'Seven Billion Light Years' at Chelsea gallery](#)
- › [Albert Hadjiganev captures nature's beauty at Soho gallery show](#)
- › [Pierre Gonnord presents moving photographs at Chelsea gallery show](#)



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