



Artist & Composer Study

This session's featured artist is Alma Thomas. We've included six art selections for your kids and teens to use for picture study. They are:

- *Apollo 12 Splash Down*
- *Blast Off*
- *The Eclipse*
- *Starry Night and the Astronauts*
- *Snoopy Sees a Sunrise*
- *Earth Sermon- Beauty, Love and Peace*

This session's featured composer is Leonard Bernstein. We have included six of his pieces for music study. They are:

- Peter Pan (Musical, 1950)
- Serenade after Plato's Symposium (Orchestral, 1954)
- Symphonic Suite from On the Waterfront (Film Score/Orchestral, 1954)
- Candide Overture (Opera, 1956)
- Symphonic Dances from West Side Story (Musical, 1957; Orchestral 1960)
- Chichester Psalms (Choral, 1967)

"Color is life, or a world without color appears to us as dead."

~ Alma Thomas

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Alma Thomas

September 22, 1891 - February 24, 1978

Alma Thomas was born in Columbus, Georgia, on September 22, 1891. When she was a young girl, her family made the move to Washington D.C., where she spent most of her life. Thomas grew up surrounded by the influences of the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art movements.

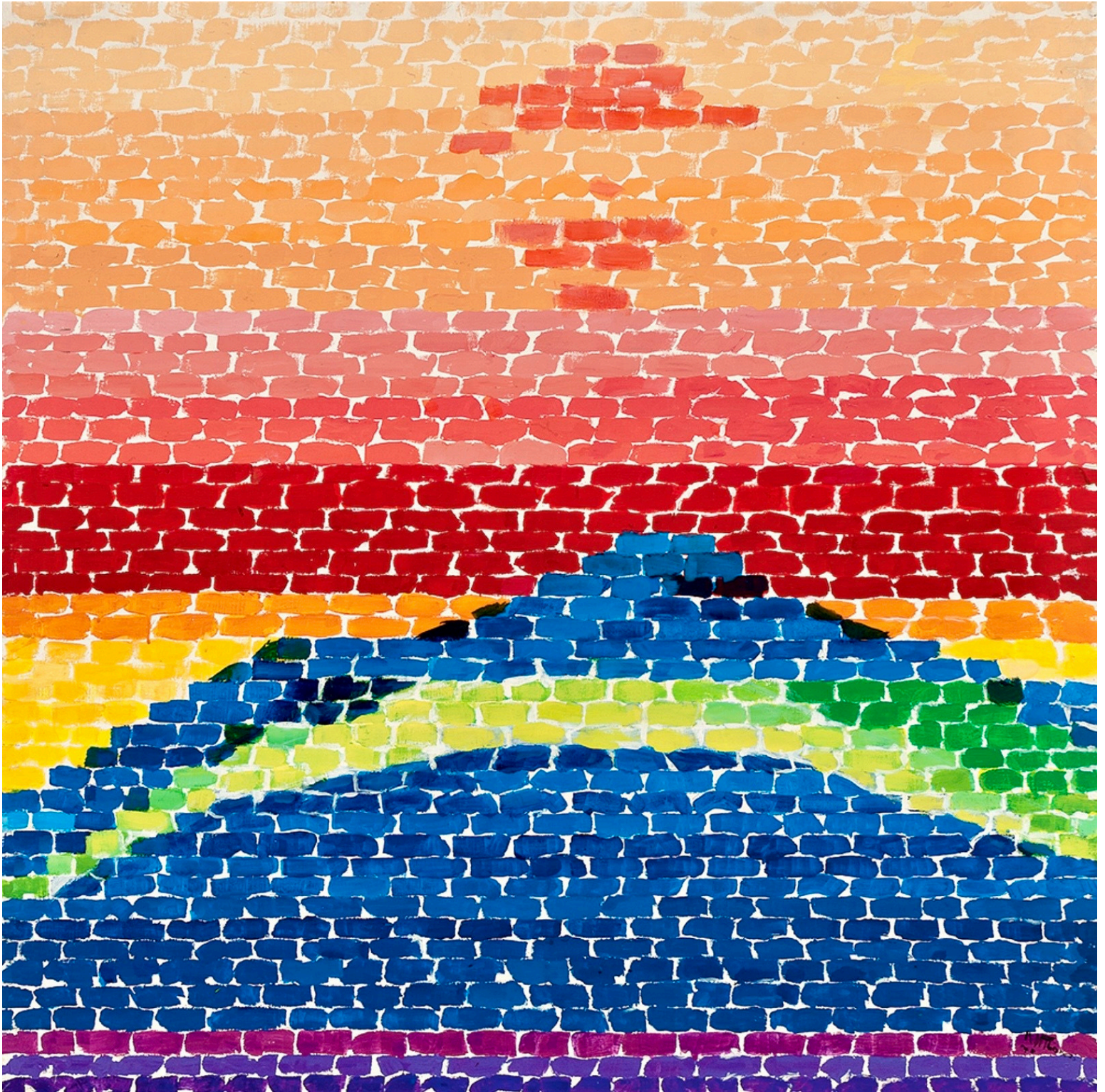
She adored the vibrant colors of Paul Cézanne, the textured brushstrokes of Vincent van Gogh, and the bold patterns of Matisse's later works, and their influence helped her find her own unique artistic style. After being accepted at the prestigious Howard University, Alma Thomas initially studied home economics before switching to fine arts, becoming the first graduate of that program.

Although Thomas was younger than many of the leading figures of the Harlem Renaissance, she was deeply influenced by its spirit and its community. Through her education at Howard University and her life in Washington, D.C., she encountered artists, writers, and thinkers who were part of this cultural movement. The Harlem Renaissance encouraged black artists to celebrate their identity and express their experiences through art, and this message stayed with Thomas throughout her life. While her work was abstract rather than narrative, her success helped continue the legacy that the movement had begun.

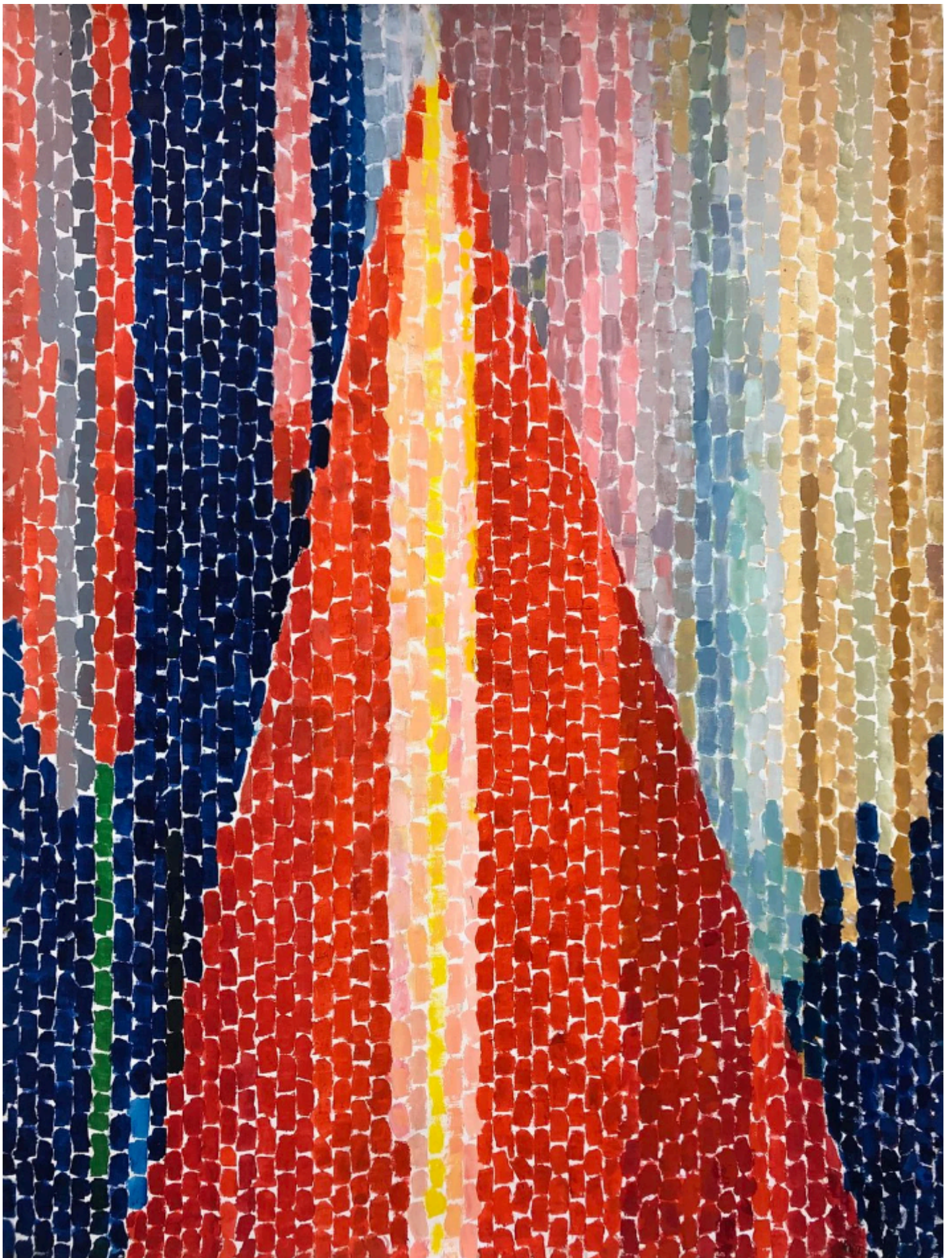
In 1924, she began teaching art classes at Shaw Junior High School, where she continued teaching until 1960. At that point, she retired to focus on her painting full-time. During this time, she developed an innovative abstract style that combined intense colors with geometric forms. She was also heavily involved in the Washington Color School art movement and exhibited her artwork around the United States. She became a pioneer in the use of color, inspired by her love for nature, which she emulated in her paintings.

Later in her career, Thomas's great love of nature combined with a growing fascination with space exploration, especially during the excitement of the Apollo 11 Moon Landing. She found inspiration in images of the Earth from space, distant planets, and the vastness of the universe, depicting many space events in her distinctive, mosaic-like art style. Her work captured not only the beauty of nature on Earth but also the mystery and grandeur of the cosmos beyond it.

Alma Thomas died on February 24, 1978, at the age of 86. Throughout her career, Thomas exhibited both nationally and internationally. She met critical acclaim in 1972, when she was the first African-American woman to have a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City. Her works began receiving international attention and she gained worldwide recognition for her abstract art, influencing a new generation of artists and carrying her legacy forward.



Apollo 12 Splash Down



Blast Off



The Eclipse



Starry Night and the Astronauts



Snoopy Sees a Sunrise



Earth Sermon- Beauty, Love, and Peace

Picture Study

Title: _____

Date Created: _____

Art Mediums Used: _____

Further Study: _____

Use the box to draw a picture inspired by this artwork.

