

**Lesson Title: All About Alma: Alma Thomas and the Meaning of Color!**

**Your name: Rachel Vredenburg**

**Number of Students: 20**

**Grade Level: 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Length of each class period: 40 minutes, 2 days, maybe 3**

## **LESSON Rationale**

The lesson overviews are a brief description of what you are covering for each lesson. Please list the title of each lesson (which could span over several days). Identify specific art processes and what the students learn from engaging with these processes. Include specific artists/exhibitions and the importance of introducing these specific artists to students and how these artists relate to your big ideas and processes. (min-250 words per rationale)

This lesson focuses on black history month by incorporating Alma Thomas, a famous art educator and artist, into the lesson. Students will use colorful tempera paints to experiment with using primary, secondary and tertiary colors. They will use short brushstrokes to create a radial design around a shape of their choosing. By choosing their own shape and planning their own color scheme, students will create personalized works of art that celebrate Alma Thomas's style and legacy. Another objective of this lesson is to show the diverse careers that can be achieved in the field of art. By sharing works by a supporting artist, Romero Britto, students will compare and contrast stylistic highlights and understand that Britto uses popular imagery to create prints and other reproductions of his works. By connecting to these artists, students will have a better understanding of how art may function outside the classroom.

The big idea of this lesson is abstraction. Specifically, students will understand that abstraction is a means by which artists may focus on the mood or feeling of their works. By focusing on the color and pattern of a work, students will observe how changes in these patterns affect the viewer alternatively. For instance, the sample uses the shape of a heart and yellow, orange, and green brushstrokes that present a feeling of both warmth and calm in love. By changing the initial shape and colors, students might have different reactions. Students will be excited to customize and present their own mood through their own specific choices of shape and color when completing this project.

## **PROCESS**

Tempera on paint paper

## **ARTISTS:**

### **Alma Thomas**

She was born in Columbus, GA 1891. "Alma Thomas was a teacher and artist who developed a powerful form of abstract painting late in life" (Markoski, 2024). Reflecting on segregation she notes that "One of the things we couldn't do was go into museums, let alone think of hanging our pictures there. My, times have changed. Just look at me now" (Markoski, 2024). In regard to the Civil Rights movement, she sought to bring the beauty that surrounded her to light, in pursuit of a better future.

### **Romero Britto**

Britto was born in Brazil and is currently based in Miami “and is considered one of the most famous and celebrated living visual artists in the globe (Britto Central, Inc, 2024). His artwork features essentials of pop culture that are constructed using bold pattern, color, and borders. He also founded the Happy Love Movement and has created his own visual language to promote love of art (Britto Central, Inc, 2024).

## **BIG IDEA(s): Abstraction**

**LEARNER OBJECTIVES:** (What will the students be able to do by the end of the unit?) This should be a list- student will be able to conceive...? Develop...? Understand...? Create...? Imagine...? Evaluate...? Etc. Here you should include a brief sentence about what they are making, what they will learn about their big idea and what they will understand about the artists/art history, - such as students should be able to create a structure using what processes? These should be specific and measurable (ie. tied to your assessments and the SOLs).

Students will be able to identify stylistic markers of Alma Thomas’s works such as color, pattern, repetition, and balance.

Students will follow directions to draw their own version of Thomsas’s work.

Students will observe patterns differentiate between radial and linear balance

Students will experiment with tempera cakes to create a background

Students will understand the difference between abstraction and realism.

Students will compare the styles of two artists.

### **3 National Standards for Visual Arts (VAS) (list numbers and full description for each standard) [National Visual Arts Standards At-A-Glance • National Art Education Association \(arteducators.org\)](#)**

VA:Cr2.1.3a: Create personally satisfying artwork using a variety of artistic processes and materials.

VA:Cr2.2.3a: Demonstrate an understanding of the safe and proficient use of materials, tools, and equipment for a variety of artistic processes.

VA:Re.7.1.3a:Speculate about processes an artist uses to create a work of art.

### **3 VA State Standards of Learning (SOL) in the arts: [Visual Arts | Virginia Department of Education](#)**

3.6 The student will explore and examine cultural and historical influences of art.  
a) Identify how history, culture, and the visual arts influence each other. b) Compare and contrast works of art created by artists of diverse cultures. K.17 The student will create artworks inspired by a variety of sources and subjects b) Use nature as inspiration.

3.7 The student will determine reasons why art has value to people and communities.

3.9 The student will identify a variety of artists and art careers

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**MATERIALS NEEDED FOR UNIT (be specific: how many of each item, what size paper, what color markers/paper, what kind of recycled materials, what size brushes, what kind of markers finpoint/broad tip, name tags, permission slips, etc.)**

**A. Art Supplies:** 20 sheets of watercolor paper per class 9x12", 20 medium flat or round brushes, 6 cups for water (1 per table) Tempera paint in 8 colors (Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue Violet, Pink, and Black), 20 messy mats to minimize cleanup.

**Additional Materials:** (What books, images, websites, handouts, and other reference materials did you consult in planning this lesson and/or use in presenting it to your students? Include any links to museums or other resources you used. *Include a link to your presentation for introducing artists and the unit/lessons to your students.*)

[Alma Thomas Bio](#)

[The Eclipse, Alma Thomas \(1970\)](#)

**PowerPoint Presentation linked [here](#).**

**VOCABULARY/DEFINITIONS:** (list 7-10 vocabulary words you will introduce and discuss during your unit, and definitions)

**Color: Bright hues in a range of the rainbow!**

**Abstract: Painting the IDEA of something**

**Realistic: Painting a recognizable object**

**Mood: The feeling you get from a painting**

**Primary colors: Those you cannot mix: Blue Yellow and Red**

**Secondary Colors: Those you get from adding 2 primaries together**

**Tertiary Colors: Those you get from adding 1 primary and one secondary**

**MOTIVATING STUDENTS: PERSONAL and SOCIAL RELEVANCE** (How does this unit of instruction motivate students to want to participate or be interested in the content? How will you present the information so that it is personally and socially relevant to your age group? How will you relate or explain any historical references in relation to current/contemporary culture?)

Students can relate to Alma Thomas as she loved color, spent years teaching and years learning. Just like Alma, students will enjoy practicing with her style, while adding their own personalization's. They will be able to choose what shape and what colors resonate with them, and build their own personalized works from there.

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**UNIT PROCEDURES (Remember do not write in first person)** As part of the planning process create teaching samples for your own learning purposes, and a series of process samples and visuals to use in teaching each lesson. Include 4-6 process images at the end of each lesson plan.

**A. Teacher/Classroom Prep:** (*List tasks that the teacher needs to accomplish before each lesson begins such as: prepare PPT, print*

Teacher will prepare a PowerPoint presentation, prepare cups of tempera, prepare cups of water and brushes for each table, as well as a word search and about Alma Thomas as an extension.

**B. Pre-assessment:**

Students will understand that color has different relationships and that mixing different combinations results in a different feelings/mood. Students will realize that abstract art often relies on mood but can still remind us of the original objects such as flowers, an eclipse, etc.

**C. Behavioral Expectations:** (*What are the students expected to do as they function in the classroom*)

Students are expected to sit in their seats, listen while the teacher is talking, and participate in any class discussion.

**D. Organizer:** (*How will students be informed of the learning objectives and major activities of each lesson? Will you have handouts? Visuals? Will you put the objectives in a PowerPoint?*)

The teacher will create a PowerPoint to share important ideas and vocabulary with students. The teacher will conduct different demonstrations at each stage of the projects so that student may follow along and build certain skills such as sketching and painting.

**E. Extension Activity:** (*students who finish task early should have another activity or station to continue to be engaged during class time. Explain that activity/work station*)

Students may complete the Alma Thomas wordsearch or free draw.

## UNIT SEQUENCE (scripting and timing).

### 3 days/classes:

#### Teacher Actions

#### DAY 1 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (10:15-10:55)

10:15 Teacher will greet students and invite them to take their art seats

10:17-10:25 Teacher will begin introducing the PowerPoint talking specifically about Alma Thomas and her

10:26-10:28: The teacher will pass out the color theory worksheet and ask students to write their names on it. Teacher will help students color this guide. Teacher might color along with students under the document camera.

10:30-10:50 Teacher will walk around and answer any questions students have about their color theory worksheets. Students who finish this early may free draw or work on sketching potential starting shapes on the back. Teacher will note that they may not make paper airplanes.

#### Expected Learner Actions

#### DAY 1 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (10:15-10:55)

10:15 Students will say hello to Mrs. V and Mrs. T as they enter the classroom and find their art seats.

10:17-10:25 Students will listen to the PowerPoint presentation and participate in the discussion of Alma's works and bio.

10:26-10:28: Students will write their names on the color theory worksheets as they receive them. Students will keep their listening ears open while Mrs. V colors along with students.

10:30-10:50 Students will ask questions like "what does this word say?" "Remember from the sideshow, tertiary color are the in between colors" "Like yellow green and blue-violet?" "Yes! That is exactly right."

10:50- Students will clean up their spaces including putting all crayons back at the front of the room and returning all pencils and erasers to the table baskets.

10:50- Teacher will announce cleanup and call each table to use walking feet and put away their crayons.

10:52- Teacher will make sure that all worksheets have been collected for next time.

10:55: Homeroom teacher will pick students up and teacher will say goodbye to them as they leave.

## **DAY 2**

10:15: Teacher will greet students as they arrive and ask them to please find their art chairs.

10:17-10:22: Teacher will recap the previous day by asking students who we talked about last class? What was she known for? Teacher will introduce Romero Britto as a segway into furthering art career discussions and comparing and contrasting different artists via the PowerPoint presentation.

10:22-10:24 Teacher will walk around and pass out Color Tester worksheets and explain to students that they must fill out the color groups to using crayons. Teacher will remind students to put their name on their paper. Once they have made 6 color groups, they will circle their two favorites.

10:25-10:50: teacher will walk around an encourage students as they spend time coloring in their color scheme ideas. Teacher will ask reinforcing questions like “why did you pick these colors?” “They make me fell happy and remind me of sunny days” Early finishers may free draw or sketch a few shape ideas on the shape worksheet in preparation for the final piece. This will be on the back of the color tester worksheet. Heart, square, organic shape, etc.

10:50 Teacher will announce cleanup and remind students to turn in their worksheets to Ms. V and use walking feet to put their crayons away.

10:54: Teacher will call students by table to line up.

10:55: The homeroom teacher picks up students and the teacher says goodbye as they leave.

## **DAY 3**

10:15: Teacher will greet students as they arrive and ask them to please find their art chairs.

10:17-10:22: Teacher will recap the previous day by asking students what two artists we had talked about last class? What were they known for? Teacher will review some key points like the brushstrokes and vibrant colors.

10:22-10:23 Teacher will walk around and pass out Color Tester worksheets back to students and remind them that this is their guide to painting. Teacher will pass out 9x12”

10:52- Students will turn in all worksheets to the teacher and line up.

10:55: Homeroom teacher will pick students up and they will say goodbye to Mrs. T and Ms. V as they leave.

## **DAY 2**

10:15: Students will say good morning as they come in and find their art chairs.

10:17-10:22: Teacher will recap the previous day by asking students who we talked about last class? What was she known for? Teacher will introduce Romero Britto as a segway into furthering art career discussions and comparing and contrasting different artists via the PowerPoint presentation.

10:22-10:24 Teacher will walk around and pass out Color Tester worksheets and explain to students that they must fill out the color groups to using crayons. Teacher will remind students to put their name on their paper. Once they have made 6 color groups, they will circle their two favorites.

10:25-10:50: Students will enthusiastically color their color scheme options. Next, they will sketch shapes on the shape brainstorming sheet.

10:50 Students will turn in their worksheets to Ms. V and use walking feet to put their crayons away. They will also put all pencils and erasers into the table baskets.

10:54: Students will use walking feet to line up by the door.

10:55: The homeroom teacher picks up students and they say says goodbye to Mrs. T and Ms. V as they leave.

## **DAY 3**

10:15: Students will great the art teachers as they arrive and find their seats.

10:17-10:22: Students will respond to questions like who they learned about was “Romeo and Alma!” “Close! Alma Thomas and ROMERO Britto! “They used lots of COLOR and I love the WHOLE RAINBOW!!” “I am so excited that you love color! Ms. V loves color too.”

10:22-10:23 Students will write their names on the 9x12” painting paper and put it on their messy mat. They will then pay attention to Ms. V.

10:23-10:28: Students will listen to the painting demo and tell ms. V why they have sponges? “To clean up!” “Good thought process, but there’s another reason...” “To dry off our brushes!” “Yes! Remember to dry off your brushes in between EVERY color switch”

painting paper and a messy mat to each student, and tell them to write their names on the paint paper, but hold off on distributing the paint.

10:23-10:28: Teacher will conduct a painting demo in which she shows how to treat the brush and reminding students to rinse between colors, and dab water off on the sponge before continuing etc. This will be conducted under the document camera. Students may sketch their shapes at this stage with a pencil.

10:28-10:50: Teacher will walk around and observe students using their color schemes to help them decide where to start. Teacher will encourage students and congratulate them on their creative choices.

10:50 Teacher will announce cleanup and that students please put all caps back on the tempera jars and that all brushes go back in the water.

10:52: Teacher will release students by table to line up. Based on good behavior.

10:55: The homeroom teacher picks up students and the teacher says goodbye as they leave.

10:28-10:50: Students will use their color tester groups as a guide when filling in their paintings.

10:50 "Hocus Pocus.." students respond "Everybody focus!" Teacher will announce cleanup, then students will put all caps back on the tempera containers and all brushes back in the water.

10:52: Teacher will release students by table to line up. Based on good behavior. Students will use walking feet to line up.

10:55: The homeroom teacher picks up students and students say goodbye as they leave.

**ADAPTATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** (*Note accommodations for Students with Special Needs as well as any classroom management strategies. Provide examples in your descriptions. This is not optional.*)

*Students having trouble making dashed lines may use one of the smaller round brushes for more control. Students who need extra time may be allowed to come back as their homeroom teacher permits. Teacher will ask for "all eyes to me" on her during the presentation so that there is no temptation to talk or not pay attention to the materials. Asking fun questions on the presentation day is another way to engage learners: ie. "what do you see in this painting?"*

**DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES:** (These should also be reflected in the unit sequence. When will you integrate these strategies into your planning? Be specific in your scripting/sequencing.)

- Flexible grouping
- Open-ended activities
- Exploration by interests
- Negotiated criteria
- Anchoring/Extension activities
- Independent studies
- Tiered activities/products
- Journal prompts
- Multiple levels of questions
- Scaffolding
- Choice: Learner profile, Readiness, Interest

**ASSESSMENT & DOCUMENTATION OF TEACHER/STUDENT LEARNING**

- A. Assessment: (How will you collect information on what students gained from your unit? How will you evaluate that information? (**Refer back to Learner Outcomes** to decide how you will know if students learned what you hoped they would learn. Assessment strategies can include exit tickets, a list of questions you will ask students at the closure of the lesson, the critique, etc.

The scaffolding in this lesson will start immediately with the class discussion of the videos and a preliminary worksheet in which students will test their knowledge of different color families. Next, they will expand their ideas and test their own color schemes at the beginning of the next day. The final assessment will be in the form of the student's works that are turned in for display on the Main foyer bulletin board.

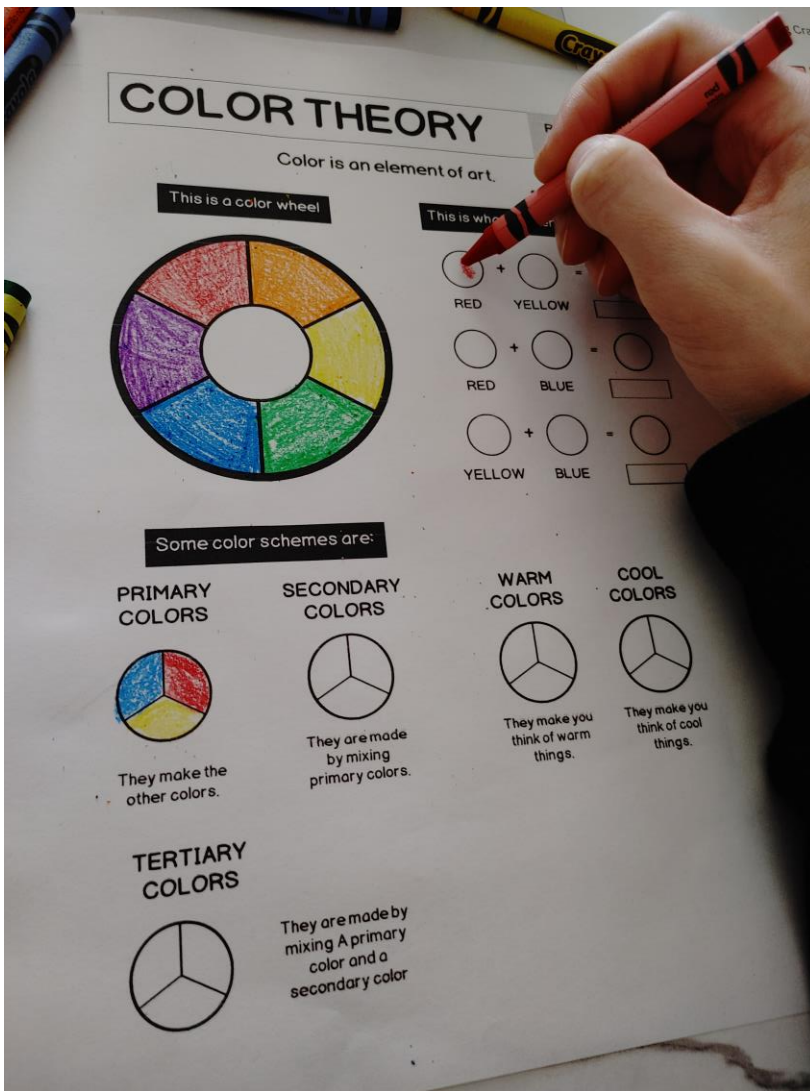
- B. Documentation:

Student's color handout and color tester worksheet will show that they understand how to intentionally pick different colors to inspire their projects. While walking around the class the teacher will take in-progress photos of student's works to show that they are using dashed lines and really exploring Alma Thomas's stylistic characteristics.

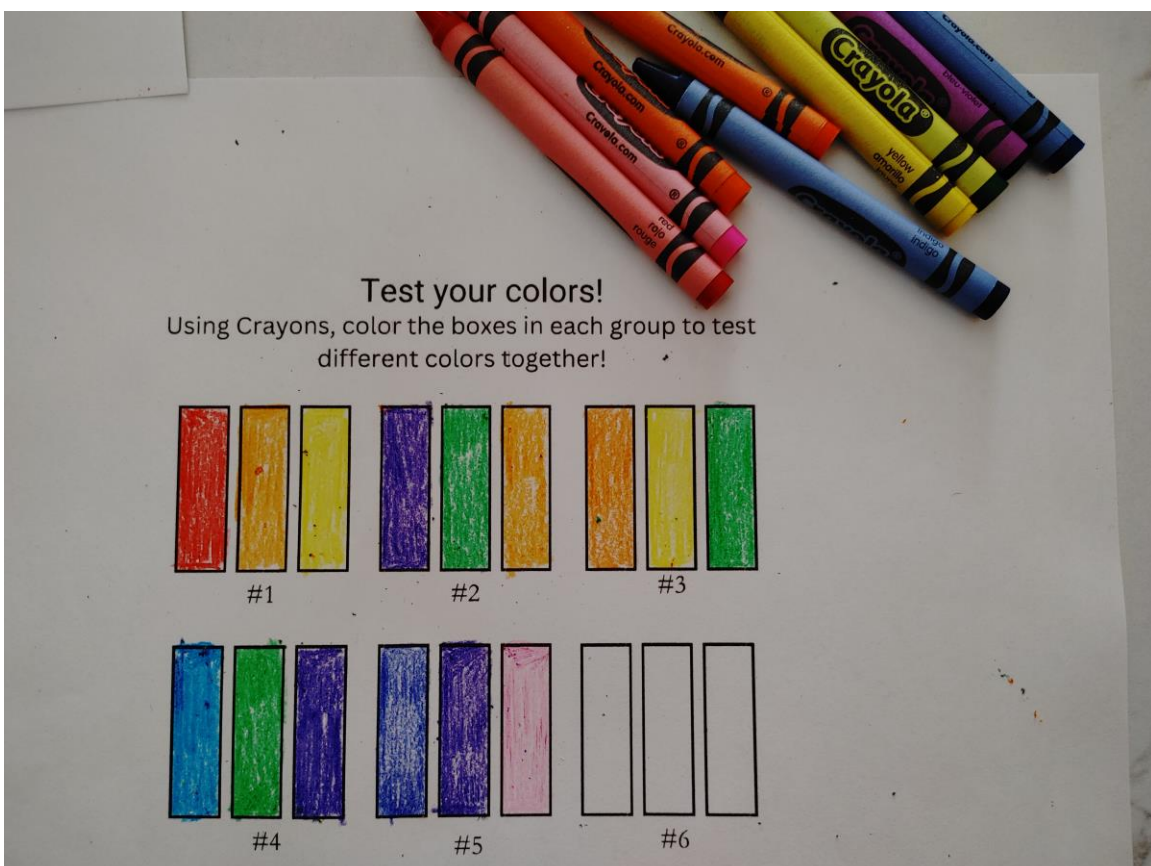
## PROCESS IMAGES



**Step1: Gather materials including worksheets, pencils, Crayons, tempera cups, brushes, sponges, water cups, and paint paper.**



**Step 2: Fill out the color theory knowledge worksheet to use what you know!**



**Step 3: The next day, test your favorite colors together by coloring different groups.**



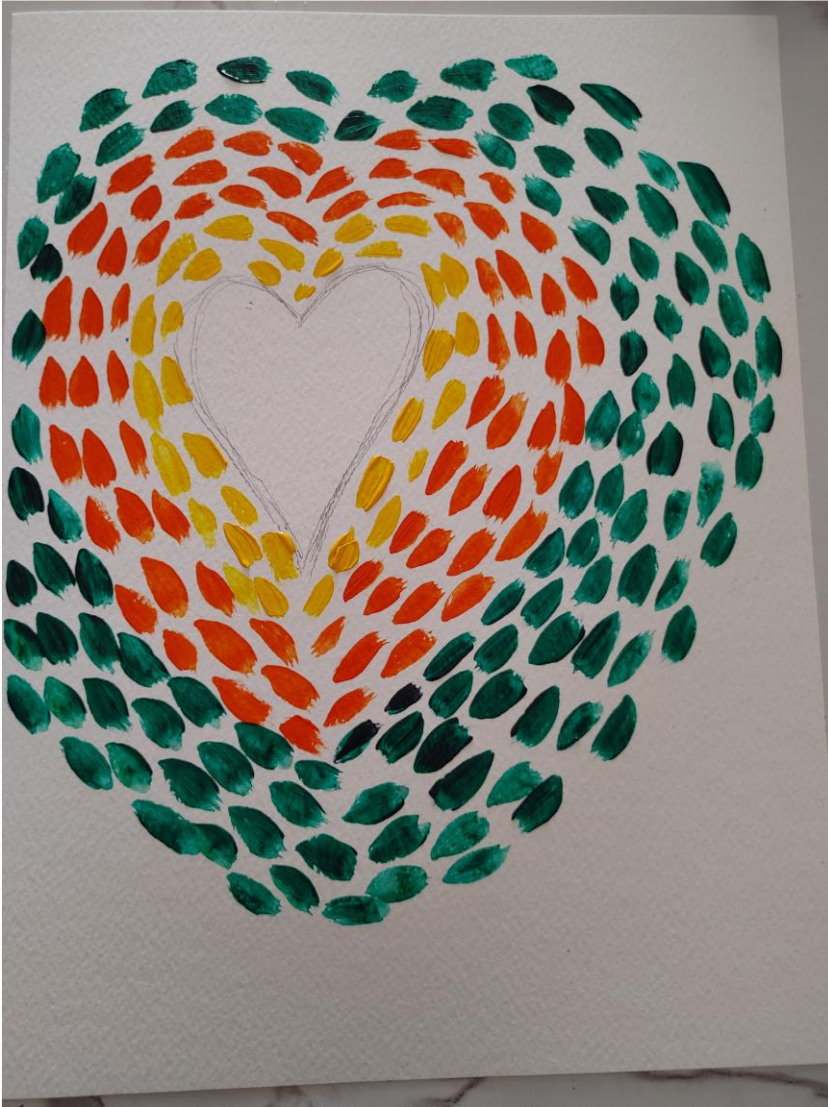
**Step 4: Choose a shape, it can be any shape, anywhere on the paper!**



**Step 5: Use your first color to trace around the pencil sketched shape**



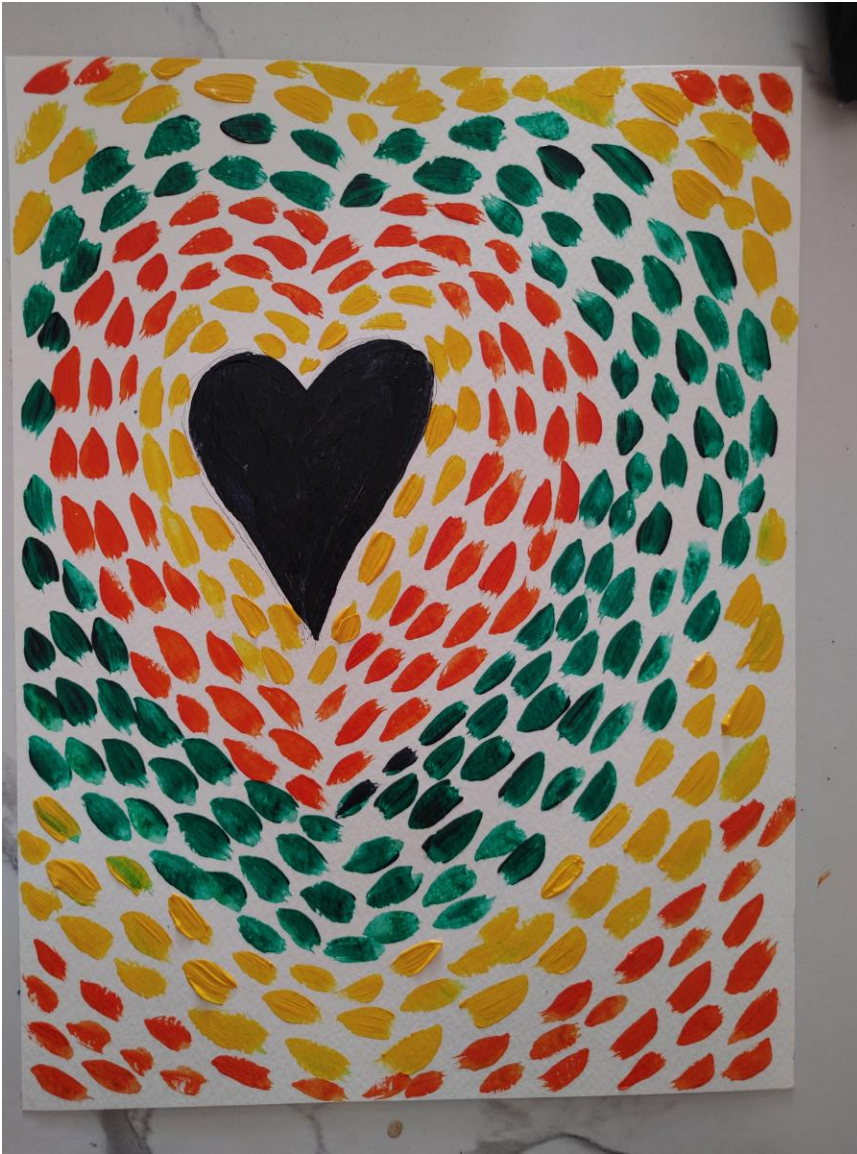
**Step 6: Add your second color after a couple rounds of the first color**



**Step 7: Add your third color around the second color**



**Step 8: repeat steps until you fill the page!**



**Paint your shape any color and admire your final piece!**

#### References

Britto Central, Inc. (2024). *The Artist*. Shop Britto. <https://www.shopbritto.com/pages/the-artist>.

Markoski, K. (2024). *Alma Thomas | Smithsonian American Art Museum*.

Americanart.si.edu. <https://americanart.si.edu/artist/alma-thomas-4778>.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HItRQTMqSmo>.