

# ARTIST OF THE MONTH OCTOBER 2023

Artist of the month is a competition that runs in school. Each month we look at a different artist and their work, children can then respond to this artist by either creating a picture, taking a photograph, writing a story, doing some research or a different response that inspires them. Mrs Britten our Art and Design subject lead shares the artist of the month via the school art notice board. The artist of the month winner will be announced in an assembly at the end of each month.

To enter you need to respond to the artist however you choose. Put your entry into the basket next to the art cabinet next to the staff room or email it to [enquiries@williamgilbertend.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@williamgilbertend.derbyshire.sch.uk) with the title 'Artist of the Month'.

This month's artist is: **Alma Thomas** – An American abstract artist which supports pupils awareness of Black History Month 1<sup>st</sup> October – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023.



**"Snoopy Sees a Sunrise" (1970)**



**Apollo 12 Splash Down (1970)**

Alma Thomas was a famous American artist who was best known for making abstract art. Her paintings were bright and colourful and were influenced by the natural world. Thomas was a teacher as well as a painter. Her artwork and her influence as a teacher helped her to become one of the most inspiring artists of the 20th century. When she was young, Alma enjoyed the colours and light of nature and the way the wind made leaves move.

Although Alma loved art from an early age, she wasn't allowed to visit art galleries. This was because Alma was black. At this time in America, black people were often treated unfairly. They weren't allowed to sit in certain areas in parks and on buses and there were many places, such as restaurants, cinemas and museums where black people weren't allowed to go at all. This is now known as racism and is not acceptable.

In 1960, when Alma was 68, she retired from teaching and made being an artist her main job. In 1972, Thomas became the first Black woman to have a solo exhibition of work at the Whitney Museum in New York. She was 80 years old. The exhibition featured artwork from her 'Earth Paintings' and 'Space Paintings' collections. The 'Earth Paintings' show flower beds and gardens from an aerial view. According to Thomas, the 'Space Paintings' were inspired by "the heavens and stars and my ideas of what it's like to be an astronaut exploring space." In that same year, the mayor of Washington DC stated that the 9th of September would be 'Alma Thomas Day'.

**This month why not create your own piece of art inspired by Alma Thomas. You could create a piece of art using pastels, paints, collage, use an iPad to create a digital piece of art or create a sculpture using Lego. I look forward to seeing your creations.**

Follow the links to take you to an Alma Thomas inspired collage activity. This is a YouTube video so please ask an adult to access it with you.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=He8kVx87MkA>

