

## Iris, Tulips, Jonquils, and Crocuses



### Late Bloomer

After more than 35 years as a D.C. public school teacher, Alma Woodsey Thomas retired and focused on painting. She developed her signature style in her mid-70s. At 80, she became the first African American woman to have a solo exhibition at New York's Whitney Museum of American Art.



## Iris, Tulips, Jonquils, and Crocuses, 1969

### Take a closer look

**Alma Woodsey Thomas (1891–1978)** created paintings that appear quite structured, but individual brushstrokes reveal her spontaneity. Find evidence of her working process, including faint vertical pencil lines and overlapping colors. Step back to observe the overall effect of the color, pattern, and structure.

### Something to talk about

Thomas believed in the expressive quality of color. What mood or idea does her use of color convey? How would we experience the work differently if it were painted in a monochromatic palette?

### In her own words

“My paintings reflect my communion with nature, man’s highest source of inspiration.”

Alma Thomas, *Iris, Tulips, Jonquils, and Crocuses*, 1969; Acrylic on canvas; 60 x 50 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay

