



Carry Your Own Joy: The Abstract Paintings and Life of Hari E. Thomas, a San Francisco Artist

Asha Carolyn Young

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This book is about art, friendship, and an exceptional person who inspired joy in others and who was a great abstract painter.

Beloved for his free spirit, humor and incredible counseling skills, Hari E. Thomas (1938-2011) was a gifted and prolific abstract painter who left a legacy of colorful, mixed media works, mostly on paper. Born in Des Moines, Iowa, Thomas moved to San Francisco in 1969, the Summer of Love, and he remained there for over 40 years. Always wary of egotism and intent on subduing his own ego, Thomas rarely showed his paintings in the later half of his life; hence he is unknown as a painter except with close friends and family. Presented here are 108 reproductions of his paintings, together with his life story based on interviews with his son and closest friends, and on the author's memories of him.

Thomas was a spiritualist and freethinker who read copiously, meditated regularly, and shared what he learned. He believed in a holistic approach to life, was a staunch vegetarian, and advised others on a myriad of subjects, including nutrition and healing, relationships, meditation and career issues. Above all, Thomas steadily encouraged others to find joy through their own creative expression. In his vibrant paintings, viewers can see evidence of Thomas' dynamism, discipline, energy, and connectedness to the more invisible, spiritual aspects of life. His mixed media paintings, many of which have three-dimensional and relief formation, exude joy.

Thomas' paintings add abundantly to the global art heritage of abstract art and to the legacy of American artists, especially African Americans and Native Americans, since Thomas was a blend of these ethnicities. crossing all lines of race, culture, and creed, Thomas' life teemed with love, brotherhood and friendships. His story therefore contributes mightily to a world yearning for peace.

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