

DOWNLOAD PDF STEFFEN THOMAS, GEORGIAN GERMAN EXPRESSIONIST

Chapter 1 : Best 16 Art in Madison, GA with Reviews - theinnatdunvilla.com

Steffen Wolfgang George Thomas (January 7, - January 27,) was an artist and poet. He was born in FÃ¼rth, Germany, but lived most of his adult life in Atlanta, Georgia.

His father, a paintbrush manufacturer, apprenticed him to a stonecutter at the age of 14 after realizing his son wanted to be a sculptor. Steffen applied himself and became an excellent stone carver, spending part of his time working on WWI monuments. He was so gifted that at the age of 17 he was accepted to the School of Applied Arts in Nuremberg and at the age of 19 entered the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. Thomas was infatuated with the American Dream, and at the age of 22 paid his own way to America, finding a job in Palm Beach, Florida. There, he made copies of classical sculptures for the E. As a result, he was fired on the spot. After a brief trip to Germany, he returned to America. He lived for a short time in Alabama but settled in Atlanta by George Denny, President of the University of Alabama. By he converted an outbuilding into a studio behind the Studio Arts Assembly at the corner of Peachtree and 14 St. As an attractive, eligible Atlanta bachelor in , Thomas courted the very southern belle Sara Douglass for six short weeks before he asked her to marry him. He became an American citizen in and continued his work as a sculptor, supporting his new family by creating busts of famous Americans, including the noted scientist George Washington Carver and Dr. In Thomas bought 50 acres in Stone Mountain, Georgia, where he and his wife raised their four children in a home he built himselfâ€”stone by stone. Here, he worked in his studio equipped with a bronze-casting foundry he again built himself. Thomas created some of his greatest public sculptures in the Stone Mountain studio, including the colossal size statue of Governor Eugene Talmadge, on the grounds of the Georgia State Capitol in Atlanta, and the Alabama Memorial, located in the Vicksburg National Military Park in Mississippi. Thomas continued to accept commissions until when he was finally able to follow his muse and create the type of Expressionist art that is represented in the Steffen Thomas Museum of Art. Like a child with a new toy, Thomas was fascinated by every medium, and always wanted to show visitors his latest creation. His energy was unbounded; he let his creativity take him anywhere it wanted to go. At the same time he was a loyal and loving husband and father. Thomas moved with his wife back to midtown Atlanta in , where he worked at his studio home until his death in Of course, it has a playful side. Moreover, he was a keen observer of people, witness his portraits, which capture the character of each sitter remarkably well, and of the world, as the watercolors from his European trip demonstrate. But for the most part it was guided by his inner vision, so that he had little need for the live model. Nevertheless, tradition played an important part in his work, and as an artist born and trained in Europe in the early twentieth century, many different styles were natural to him. His allegiance was to its underlying approach, which provided a suitable arena for his ample personality. Style was secondary to him. Like technique, it was a means of expression, not an end in itself. It shows an endless fascination with the possibilities to be explored in different media, a counterpart to his innate curiosity. Given his personality, in fact, he could not have been anything but an Expressionist. It was the perfect vehicle for his impulsive creativity. As with all Expressionists, his work rested on a high level of inspiration, and Thomas believed unequivocally in the rightness of his path.

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Chapter 2 : Steffen Thomas | Revolv

Steffen Thomas's wiki: Steffen Wolfgang George Thomas (January 7, - January 27,) was an artist and poet. He was born in FÃ¼rth, Germany, but lived most of his adult life in Atlanta, Georgia.

When Steffen Thomas passed away in , he left his wife, Sara Douglass Thomas, and their four children the summation of a prolific artistic career. Thomas wanted to turn the Thomas home in Midtown Atlanta into a studio museum. After this was found to be impossible because of zoning and infrastructure issues, the Thomas family decided to build on land owned by the oldest son in rural Morgan County. STMA in , which maintains the facility as a museum and offers educational programs to the community. The corporation owns a Permanent Collection of sculptures, mosaics, paintings, and works on paper by Steffen Thomas. The Museum has presented unique, in-depth and hands-on art programming in the Lake Oconee tri-county area every year since . In the museum began a collaboration with regional universities, offering college students the unique opportunity of showing their work in a museum setting. His father, a paintbrush manufacturer, apprenticed him to a stonecutter at the age of 14 after realizing his son wanted to be a sculptor. Steffen applied himself and became an excellent stone carver, spending part of his time working on WWI monuments. He was so gifted that at the age of 17 he was accepted to the School of Applied Arts in Nuremberg and at the age of 19 entered the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. Thomas was infatuated with the American Dream, and at the age of 22 paid his own way to America, finding a job in Palm Beach, Florida. There, he made copies of classical sculptures for the E. As a result, he was fired on the spot. After a brief trip to Germany, he returned to America. He lived for a short time in Alabama but settled in Atlanta by George Denny, President of the University of Alabama. By he converted an outbuilding into a studio behind the Studio Arts Assembly at the corner of Peachtree and 14 St. As an attractive, eligible Atlanta bachelor in , Thomas courted the very southern belle Sara Douglass for six short weeks before he asked her to marry him. He became an American citizen in and continued his work as a sculptor, supporting his new family by creating busts of famous Americans, including the noted scientist George Washington Carver and Dr. In Thomas bought 50 acres in Stone Mountain, Georgia, where he and his wife raised their four children in a home he built himselfâ€”stone by stone. Here, he worked in his studio equipped with a bronze-casting foundry he again built himself. Thomas created some of his greatest public sculptures in the Stone Mountain studio, including the colossal size statue of Governor Eugene Talmadge, on the grounds of the Georgia State Capitol in Atlanta, and the Alabama Memorial, located in the Vicksburg National Military Park in Mississippi. Thomas continued to accept commissions until when he was finally able to follow his muse and create the type of Expressionist art that is represented in the Steffen Thomas Museum of Art. Sara and Steffen Thomas are pictured on their wedding day. This headline originally ran in the Atlanta Journal and Constitution. Alabama Memorial â€” Vicksburg National Military Park Like a child with a new toy, Thomas was fascinated by every medium, and always wanted to show visitors his latest creation. His energy was unbounded; he let his creativity take him anywhere it wanted to go. At the same time he was a loyal and loving husband and father. Thomas moved with his wife back to midtown Atlanta in , where he worked at his studio home until his death in . Of course, it has a playful side. Moreover, he was a keen observer of people, witness his portraits, which capture the character of each sitter remarkably well, and of the world, as the watercolors from his European trip demonstrate. But for the most part it was guided by his inner vision, so that he had little need for the live model. Nevertheless, tradition played an important part in his work, and as an artist born and trained in Europe in the early twentieth century, many different styles were natural to him. His allegiance was to its underlying approach, which provided a suitable arena for his ample personality. Style was secondary to him. Like technique, it was a means of expression, not an end in itself. It shows an endless fascination with the possibilities to be explored in different media, a counterpart to his innate curiosity. Given his personality, in fact, he could not have been anything but an Expressionist. It was the perfect vehicle for his impulsive creativity. As with all Expressionists, his work

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rested on a high level of inspiration, and Thomas believed unequivocally in the rightness of his path. [Click here](#) to explore an interactive map of Steffen Thomas public artworks. Follow us on Facebook:

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Chapter 3 : Steffen Thomas Museum of Art, Buckhead Georgia

Buy Steffen Thomas, Georgia's German expressionist by Steffen Thomas (ISBN:) from Amazon's Book Store. Everyday low prices and free delivery on eligible orders.

Region East Georgia Miles In the midth century, regional stagecoach routes and rail lines turned the towns of central Georgia into thriving cultural centers, with colleges for men and women, an early state capital, swanky hotels, and porticoed mansions. Good luck battling wheelers through the construction along I south of Atlanta. By comparison, the roughly parallel path of U. Route 23 rolls by quiet pastures and railway towns. Just east of Jackson, pull over for some tangy Brunswick stew at Fresh Air Bar-B-Que – a roadside joint surrounded by picnic tables and shaded grounds carpeted with wood shavings. Or head 15 miles farther south to the Whistle Stop Cafe in Juliette, a circa general store that was converted into a set for the Oscar-nominated movie Fried Green Tomatoes. Now a real cafe, the restaurant is an authentic meat-and-two with crisp, zesty variations on its famous dish. Built between and by Mr. William Butler Johnston, it was modeled after the Italian Renaissance palaces the couple visited during their three-year honeymoon. With indoor plumbing, central heat, and a sort of primitive intercom system, the house was a high-tech marvel of its day. Cozy gardens, four-poster beds, and respectful service embody Southern hospitality. Dovetail Photograph courtesy of Dovetail 6: Or stroll nearby streets to gaze at the stately historic homes, many of which are illuminated nightly. Head 40 miles north up U. Watch for easy-to-miss signs to the Steffen Thomas Museum of Art , located in a bunker-like building in the middle of a field. Call the posted phone number if no one answers the door. Built next to 99 holes of championship golf, the lodge gives off a Grove Park – meets – Cloister vibe, even if it lacks the patina of those older, more majestic resorts in Sea Island and Asheville. Souvenir Photograph by Caroline C. DAY 3 Historic often antebellum homes decorate Madison. Or, better yet, hire Melissa Piche of North Georgia Tours , whose walks include nuggets like the locations of a rumored Underground Railroad tunnel and meeting places for post-war Freedmen and their secret societies. For lunch, walk over to Clover House Market , a cafe and shop in a cheerful, industrial- chic space, and order a decadent slice of quiche. On your way back to Atlanta via I, stop by the Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Conyers, 15 minutes off the interstate.

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Chapter 4 : Steffen Wolfgang Thomas - Artist, Fine Art Prices, Auction Records for Steffen Wolfgang Thom

Steffen Thomas - German-American Expressionist () Steffen Thomas was born in in FÄ¼rth, Germany. His father, a paintbrush manufacturer, apprenticed him to a stonemason at the age of 14 after realizing his son wanted to be a sculptor.

He expressed a strong passion for art from an early age. His focus was drawing and sculpture based on the classical model. In 1888, Thomas realized his dream of moving to America. He spent brief periods in Florida, Illinois, and Alabama, but eventually settled in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1892. Thomas was introduced to Douglass through her mother over a conversation about gardening, and after a two-month courtship they were married at Fulton County Courthouse. Thomas briefly returned to Germany after his move to America, but did not visit again until 1900. While his family remained in Germany, Thomas found his artistic life belonged in his adoptive country and he became an American citizen in 1901. The couple raised four children, Steffen, Robin, Douglass, and Lisa. Thomas continually worked on the complex by hand, and it became a popular destination, visited by friends, family, and tourists. Chief Justice Richard Russell Jr. Thomas found acclaimed success with public works; however, with the refusal of his proposal for the Stone Mountain Civil War Memorial a twenty year plan in the making, he became disenchanted with seeking public commissions, and naturally turned his focus toward creating works to express his personal artistic ideals. Essentially, he was free to create art without the restraints often associated with commissioned projects. He lost a Palm Beach commission when he substituted his own imagery in place of the Gothic specifications of the patron. He was notoriously hypersensitive to gallery owners, collectors, and patrons that did not appreciate his art. Thomas had a distinct artistic vision that was difficult to change once he set his mind to creating. He continued his work until his death with the same passion and intensity from his student days. While in Germany, his art wholly reflected the classical tradition; however, by the time he settled in Atlanta, his aesthetic made a change toward the abstract. From his student days he was largely influenced by other artistic movements, but especially by Expressionism and post-Cubism. He also experimented with materials and worked with every available medium, a technique he continued throughout his career. Creativity was first and foremost the driving factor for Thomas. Once he arrived, he took advantage of every opportunity available. They tend to resemble his wife, Sara, although the muses appear in works prior to their introduction. The feminine figures are likened to the classical tradition but are not specifically based on classical notions. They are classically inspired, but stylistically modern. For Thomas, the muses represent femininity, but also humanity. While he was largely influenced by his early training and the Expressionist movement, his work was often dictated by subjects he found intriguing. He believed that art must transcend time and culture; therefore, he simplified and abstracted his own works to universally translate to the viewer. While his work is sometimes difficult to interpret literally, he often includes symbols or imagery portraying universally understood emotions. However, he was influenced by art from many periods dating back to antiquity. He was not characteristically German Expressionist, although, the genre greatly influenced his creations. The carvings incorporated mosaics and mixed media, and often were recycled from discarded objects. He also added natural elements such as sand to his works to create dimension and depth. It shows an endless fascination with the possibilities to be explored in different media, whose techniques he set out to master with real virtuosity. This was, by all accounts, a counterpart to his innate curiosity. More generally, it was tied to the unfolding of his imagination, which took place in the peace of self-imposed isolation. However, in his final years, Thomas returned to central themes found throughout his oeuvre indicating his lifelong fervor for the creative. The Steffen Thomas Museum of Art is one of the few organizations in the country dedicated to one artist. As the years passed, his style evolved, becoming looser and more interpretive, moving from realistic to expressionist exuberance. His mosaics and watercolors convey his passion for light and color, and his sculptures provide excellent examples of captured and arrested motion. His interest in politics, philosophy, and religion are evidenced by themes and motifs that are

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represented and repeated in a multiplicity of genres and mediums. The Museum of Arts and Sciences, , p.

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Chapter 5 : Steffen Thomas - Wikipedia

Stefan Thomas' Trilon stands on a busy street corner in Midtown Atlanta. An under-the-radar museum near Madison, Georgia, is devoted to showing the wide range of work by the Atlanta artist.

His most notable pieces are public monuments; however, he also worked in other media including, but not limited to painting, sculpture, mosaic, printmaking, encaustic, and watercolor. His art is greatly influenced by Expressionism. He expressed a strong passion for art from an early age. His focus was drawing and sculpture based on the classical model. In 1911, Thomas realized his dream of moving to America. He spent brief periods in Florida, Illinois, and Alabama, but eventually settled in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1912. Thomas was introduced to Douglass through her mother over a conversation about gardening, and after a two-month courtship they were married at Fulton County Courthouse. Thomas briefly returned to Germany after his move to America, but did not visit again until 1914. While his family remained in Germany, Thomas found his artistic life belonged in his adoptive country and he became an American citizen in 1915. The couple raised four children, Steffen, Robin, Douglass, and Lisa. Thomas continually worked on the complex by hand, and it became a popular destination, visited by friends, family, and tourists. Chief Justice Richard Russell Jr. Thomas found acclaimed success with public works; however, with the refusal of his proposal for the Stone Mountain Civil War Memorial a twenty year plan in the making, he became disenchanted with seeking public commissions, and naturally turned his focus toward creating works to express his personal artistic ideals. Essentially, he was free to create art without the restraints often associated with commissioned projects. He lost a Palm Beach commission when he substituted his own imagery in place of the Gothic specifications of the patron. He was notoriously hypersensitive to gallery owners, collectors, and patrons that did not appreciate his art. Thomas had a distinct artistic vision that was difficult to change once he set his mind to creating. He continued his work until his death with the same passion and intensity from his student days. While in Germany, his art wholly reflected the classical tradition; however, by the time he settled in Atlanta, his aesthetic made a change toward the abstract. From his student days he was largely influenced by other artistic movements, but especially by Expressionism and post-Cubism. He also experimented with materials and worked with every available medium, a technique he continued throughout his career. Creativity was first and foremost the driving factor for Thomas. Once he arrived, he took advantage of every opportunity available. They tend to resemble his wife, Sara, although the muses appear in works prior to their introduction. The feminine figures are likened to the classical tradition but are not specifically based on classical notions. They are classically inspired, but stylistically modern. For Thomas, the muses represent femininity, but also humanity. While he was largely influenced by his early training and the Expressionist movement, his work was often dictated by subjects he found intriguing. He believed that art must transcend time and culture; therefore, he simplified and abstracted his own works to universally translate to the viewer. While his work is sometimes difficult to interpret literally, he often includes symbols or imagery portraying universally understood emotions. However, he was influenced by art from many periods dating back to antiquity. He was not characteristically German Expressionist, although, the genre greatly influenced his creations. The carvings incorporated mosaics and mixed media, and often were recycled from discarded objects. He also added natural elements such as sand to his works to create dimension and depth. It shows an endless fascination with the possibilities to be explored in different media, whose techniques he set out to master with real virtuosity. This was, by all accounts, a counterpart to his innate curiosity. More generally, it was tied to the unfolding of his imagination, which took place in the peace of self-imposed isolation. However, in his final years, Thomas returned to central themes found throughout his oeuvre indicating his lifelong fervor for the creative. The Steffen Thomas Museum of Art is one of the few organizations in the country dedicated to one artist. As the years passed, his style evolved, becoming looser and more interpretive, moving from realistic to expressionist exuberance. His mosaics and watercolors convey his passion for light and color, and his sculptures provide excellent examples

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of captured and arrested motionâ€”His interest in politics, philosophy, and religion are evidenced by themes and motifs that are represented and repeated in a multiplicity of genres and mediums.

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Chapter 6 : Steffen Wolfgang Thomas, Atlanta Artist

Steffen Thomas: The "Last Damn Expressionist" In the miniscule hamlet of Buckhead, Georgia, barely an hour's drive east of Atlanta, stands the Steffen Thomas Museum of Art.

His mentor at the monument company where he had apprenticed as a young man arranged for him to have a sponsor in Florida. The sponsor was a sculptor and was able to find him a job in Palm Beach making copies of classical sculptures for the E. He worked on the Estate until he started to add his own embellishments that caused him to be fired on the spot. After a brief trip to Germany he returned to America where he lived, for a short time, in Alabama but settled in Atlanta by George Denny, President of the University of Alabama. By he renovated an outbuilding for a studio behind the Studio Arts Assembly at the corner of Peachtree and 14 St. In Thomas made a large sculpture called Rhythm that was placed in the Lobby of the Fox Theater when it was new. Rhythm was a portrait of Yvonne Georgi, a German dancer who was touring America in the s with Harald Kreutzberg, another German dancer. When the tour came to Atlanta, Thomas asked Georgi to pose for the sculpture. The Steffen Thomas Museum has a small bronze version of this piece, but no one seems to know what happened to the large one, that was last seen in at the Fox in a storage room. She even served as a hostess for some of his studio parties. She also told him she was writing a book about the South. Being somewhat secretive about her writing she eventually had to be convinced to turn it over to a publisher. As a handsome, eligible Atlanta bachelor in , Thomas courted the very southern belle Sara Douglass for six short weeks before he asked her to marry him. He became an American citizen in and continued his work as a sculptor, sup-orting his new family by creating busts of famous Americans, like noted scientist George Washington Carver and Dr. How to resolve AdBlock issue? X In Thomas bought 50 acres in Stone Mountain, Georgia, where he and his wife raised their four children in a home he built himself, stone by stone, and where he worked in his studio that included a bronze-casting foundry that he also built himself. At Stone Mountain the family included a lion cub that had been rescued and lived with them until it became too big to have as a house pet. Thomas wanted to portray Eugene Talmadge in shirt sleeves with his thumbs hooked in his suspenders a typical pose for Talmadge but the Talmadge family thought it was too un-dignified looking. When pointed out to him, he said people should not try to tell artists how to make their art. Eugene Talmadge sculpture on the Georgia state capitol grounds. By the mids Thomas had begun creating primarily Expressionist art, though he had wanted for years to secure the commission for a monument on Stone Mountain. Thomas had submitted a traditional idea of Lee with his soldiers but had another idea he liked better. He knew the Committee would not go for his favorite, The New South also called The Man Child , which depicted a mother holding a child with the head of an adult. Thomas said the mother represented the Union who was nurturing her child, the New South. After he failed to receive the commission for the Stone Mountain monument, Thomas made his own Monument to the Brotherhood of Man. His ashes are in this urn that is on display in the Steffen Thomas Museum. Thomas moved with his wife back to midtown Atlanta in , where he worked at his studio home until his death in Visiting his home in midtown was very much like visiting a museum with art objects occupying walls and floors.

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Chapter 7 : Steffen Thomas, Artist – Biography & Facts

“Buckhead, Georgia, not Buckhead in Atlanta,” a museum volunteer emphasizes as she describes the Steffen Thomas Museum and Archives. A little more than a stone's throw from Athens, this museum.

Within its walls, the low-lying building offers the visitor an extraordinary exhibition of contemporary art: It is a collection of some of the best works by Steffen Thomas, the late German-American sculptor and painter who considered himself "the last damn expressionist. But I soon realized that these tranquil environs are the most appropriate setting for the creations of a man who was as colorful, ebullient, eccentric, and contradictory as is his art. It is a promise that goes back half a century, to the day I first met the artist. The year was and Atlanta was in bloom. Spring had arrived with an explosion of colors. Dogwoods spread white umbrellas above pink cushions of azaleas; yellow jonquils edged emerald lawns, and from every yard tulips and hyacinths celebrated in red and blue the return of a singing sun. Lily white, of course. Colored were only those who waited on them. Sweating in candy-striped seersucker suits, the gentlemen sipped bourbon with Coke while the ladies clutched glasses with pink punch in white-gloved hands, smiling sweetly from beneath hats that resembled eighteenth century floral still-lives. It was at this kind of party that I met the artist. The New World was quite new to me then. I had arrived only a few months earlier from Munich via a ten-hour flight on a propeller plane with a fuel stop in Newfoundland and was still suffering from the aftermath of culture shock. Growing up in Germany, I had been exposed to art at an early age. My mother was a gifted amateur painter and my brother a frustrated artist, who, when he did not earn his living constructing homes and buildings, painted and sculpted. As soon as post-war conditions allowed, our teachers supplemented lectures on history, art and science with excursions to the Bayerische Staatsgalerie and the Deutsche Museum. During my teenage years, I spent countless hours admiring the wealth of gothic, Renaissance, and baroque paintings in the Alte Pinakothek and the wide-ranging pallet of 19th and 20th century masters in the Neue Pinakothek. I routinely assessed the worthiness of a male companion by his willingness to view an exhibition in the Haus der Kunst or visit a recently restored castle. Years later, my studies of history, classics and art, and my four-year tenure at the Staatliche Kunsthalle federal art gallery in Karlsruhe only deepened my love for art. The center of Atlanta had grown around the 19th century railroad crossings and in the early sixties consisted of an assortment of stores and office buildings anchored by two large department stores: Even Saturday nights, downtown was deserted. There was the High Museum of Art, then a couple of rooms in an old mansion displaying a handful of notable paintings and sculptors; the Cyclorama, a circular canvas depicting the Civil War Battle of Atlanta badly in need of restoration ; Stone Mountain, an enormous granite mountain whose exposed face showed the unfinished portraits of the "Three Heroes of the Confederacy. African-Americans had to scramble an outside staircase to be allowed to watch a movie from the "rogue" gallery on the third tier. Jim Crow still reigned supreme. Yet, without being quite aware of it, the city moved slowly but inevitably toward political and social change. As the civil rights struggle geared up in earnest and Martin Luther King, Jr. Next to new six-lane highways and glass-lined office towers economic growth spread the seeds for acceptance and tolerance. Nevertheless, the elite remained entrenched in tradition. Contemporary art was regarded with suspicion, if not contempt. Steffen Thomas, the German-born sculptor and painter, a social maverick and stout individualist, never quite managed to fit into the circle of white-gloved Daughters of the Confederacy and string tie-wearing politicians. Bible thumping fundamentalists had as much use for his work as did snuff dipping Gold Old Boys. When I first met Steffen Thomas, he lived in his Stone Mountain home some twenty miles northeast of the city. A narrow road cut through cornfields and pine woods, bypassing dilapidated farms, rustic villages, and the quarry at Stone Mountain. At the foot of the granite mount an unpaved lane opened onto a landscaped clearance that Thomas called his "Sculpture Garden. A moat-like trench, resplendent with mosaics, displayed a gigantic reclining figure, "The Monument to the Brotherhood of Man. Thomas had built the rambling home with his own hands and the help of his family. When I lived on the Italian Riviera years later, I read a

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newspaper clipping from The Atlanta Constitution that announced the sad news: Everywhere the eye turned reigned color and form. From the bay windows to the ceiling lights, and from the gigantic fireplace to the round balcony overlooking a grassy clearance, the walls were covered with paintings, drawings, and prints. Hand-decorated furniture stood between stone figures, marble busts, and metal sculptures. Tables, sideboards, and shelves were enhanced with paintings and mosaics. All contemporary, and all unique. Faces changed to linear abstractions; flowers exploded into rays; nudes twisted into sensuous lines. Each piece exuded an energy that often bordered on bombast, but, paradoxically, exhibited harmony and gentleness. How could he live and toil amid bigoted politics, restrictive conventions, and stifling middle-class conformity? How could he survive without compromising his individuality and integrity? At the time I was too young and inexperienced to look beyond the obvious. I did not know enough about the human soul, its drive toward the divine, and its yearning for eternity. I did not yet realize that the desire to create is stronger in the artist than in the engineer, or even the museum director. I later would learn that he was influenced by all of these movements, but would remain at heart an expressionist with all its derivations. As if he had read my thoughts, Thomas walked up to me. Middle-aged, slim, and of medium height, he sported a shock of brown hair that was barely tinged with gray. As his sky blue eyes examined me judiciously, he extended his hand and gave me a polite smile: At that, a wide grin spread over his face and his eyes lost that skeptical sharpness. Sadly, I could afford none. Already then Thomas demanded a respectable price for his work that he based on his own evaluation of its importance. What I did take with me that day was the feeling of having met a remarkable artist and a magnetic personality whose life and work so intrigued me that I promised myself to write the story of his life some day. Since the late thirties, Thomas had dreamed of finishing the gigantic carving on the face of Stone Mountain, originally begun in by Gutzon Borglum, the sculptor of Mount Rushmore. His carvings and castings were as varied in style as in subject. Toiling for two years over the colossal bonze of the Alabama Civil War Memorial for the National Military Park in Vicksburg, Mississippi, he succeeded in giving it the elegance and romantic drama reminiscent of Eugene Delacroix. At the same time, he was equally successful in pouring and hammering ultramodern silver and brass utensils for communion ceremonies for a large Episcopal church. Yet, the selection committee for the Stone Mountain Memorial Park excluded Thomas from the competition to complete the carving on the mountain and dismissed his plans and models as "too controversial. But Steffen Thomas was no politician. With his unapologetic honesty he had ruffled too many feathers and rubbed too many influential people the wrong way. Even some of his former enemies conceded in private that it was his blunt flamboyance and his sensitivity to critical evaluation, rather than his artistic ability that impeded his rise to greater prominence. As one put it, "Steffen was his own worst PR man. By then, he had disposed of most of his large sculptures, selling some and donating others. During these years, my life had turned from a nomadic student existence switching continents repeatedly to that of an American suburban housewife. While my husband threw himself into the demands of his career, I fulfilled the traditional role of a wife and mother, rearing three young children and managing a busy household. After an extended sabbatical in Italy had exposed us to "la dolce vita," I decided to parlay a hobby into a business and opened a small wine import firm. At a time the South awakened to the joys of "red wine, white wine and pink wine" available in oversized jugs with screw-on tops European quality wines had not yet found recognition, let alone popularity. The cases of samples in my cellar gathered dust. Those who did not, left feeling put off, if not angry. Diplomacy was not part of his vocabulary. Direct and open to the point of insult, he only dealt with two categories of people: However, once a friend, the friend was one for life. Thomas made frequently news with his work, was occasionally at the center of a controversy, or sometimes simply offer fodder for gossip. There exist numerous articles about his artistic exploits, his political views, his controversial pronouncements, and his philanthropic acts. He was known for taking in stray dogs and rescuing mistreated farm animals. But adopting an ailing lion cub from the local zoo was one of his more dramatic feats. He nursed the fragile cub into a stately young lion that trailed him through the house and studio like a puppy. When the youngest Thomas daughter visited with a friend from college, she found the full-grown wildcat spread out on her bed. That incident served as the

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catalyst to return the beast to the zoo. Sadly, an unexpected cold spell caused the young lion to fall ill and die shortly later. Although the diagnosis was pneumonia, Thomas was convinced that his four-footed friend had died of a broken heart, and he mourned his loss on the pages of his diary with moving ruminations on life and death. As I later discovered reading his journals and correspondence, when it came to emotional issues involving his family or close friends, the flamboyant and extroverted artist was shy, if not secretive. He wrote loving letters to his wife, but rarely discussed his feelings for her with others. While his early journals reflect romantic dreams, he remained discrete about the object of his affection. His loyal wife was equally reserved about divulging details about their relationship and only reluctantly released his love letter seven decades after they were written. The Thomas children knew him as a strict, hardworking, and fair father, but they also had reasons to fear his rages that sometimes followed professional rejections and financial stress. While Thomas shared his frustrations with his wife, to the world he presented the proverbial stiff upper lip. As a man, he was not immune to feminine charms, and as an artist, he reveled in the limelight of admiration, especially during social gatherings. Ten years after my last encounter with Steffen Thomas, my life took a fundamental gyration. Interviewing him for one of my first articles on art, I was struck not only by the enormous productivity of Steffen Thomas the artist, but the wide range of interest of Steffen Thomas the man. His intellectual curiosity and his philosophical pondering were startling. He was well-informed on local, national, and international events; knew of the latest cultural trends; opined on art, music, and education, and freely peppered his conversation with quotes from the Bible, Shakespeare and Goethe. While he talked, his record player churned out tunes by Mozart. At one point, the final chorus of "The Abduction from the Seraglio" drifted through the room bright with the light that flooded through curtain-free bay windows. Suddenly he raised his hand in mid-sentence and began to recite the words:

Chapter 8 : Steffen Thomas - Articles

Thomas continued to accept commissions until when he was finally able to follow his muse and create the type of Expressionist art that is represented in the Steffen Thomas Museum of Art. Sara and Steffen Thomas are pictured on their wedding day.

Chapter 9 : About | Steffen Thomas Museum of Art

Thomas is known for his large body of public works sculptures but the museum also contains exquisite examples of his drawings, paintings, ceramics more Contact Bethany Rd, Buckhead, GA