

Jonathan Green
1955-Present

Photograph/Title Slide

Jonathan Green was born in 1955 in the Gardens Corner, located in the “Low Country” of South Carolina. He is famous for sharing his Gullah culture through his art; Gullah culture comes from African American, or Black communities who live near the coast and on islands in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. He did not always plan to be an artist, but discovered his love of art later in life and kept practicing until it became his full time passion.

Dressing Up, 1988. Oil on Masonite, 23x23’

In “Dressing Up,” Green embraced pop art optical illusions as seen in the geometric design of the wallpaper in the painting. We can see his bold use of colors and patterns, common in many of his pieces.

What shapes do you see? We can’t see their faces, but how do you think the people in the painting feel? How can you tell?

Pride, 1990. Oil on Canvas, 72x55”

This painting shows people feeling confident and happy. Green said it is not just about people looking good, it’s about people feeling proud of who you are and where you come from. Again, we see his use of bright, bold colors and patterns.

Daughters of the South, 1993. Oil on Canvas, 72x72”

This painting is a tribute to Eloise, Green’s grandmother. He wanted to capture a way of life he felt was starting to disappear as he saw condos, highways, and fast food chains being built on some of the islands near his home.

White Breeze, 1995. Oil on Canvas, 48x60”

Here we see the contrasts between clouds and a white sheet, land and sky, women and birds. Green is telling the story he remembers as a child as the competition in the countryside – to have the whitest and brightest laundry on the line. He remembers that everyone washed their clothes and hung them out to dry and “as you drove down the road you would see all of these wonderful fabrics blowing in the breeze.”

Sea Swing, 2001. Oil on Canvas

This painting became the inspiration for a modern ballet called “Off the Wall and onto the Stage”. The ballet brings to life the artwork of Jonathan Green with dancers dressed as characters from his artwork. Notice that in this painting, as with so many others of his, you do not see the figure’s face, yet we can make some guesses as to how they might be feeling based on the rest of the painting.

Yellow Slippers

In this painting, a woman wears a blue dress and a wide hat, and is placed in a bold, colorful Lowcountry setting, with water, grasses, and sky - a typical style of Green’s work. Notice the detail in her dress, the water, and grasses.

Sharing Time

Using watercolors, Green creates a soft, flowing image while still keeping true to his signature bright colors.

What are the people doing in this picture? How do you think they are feeling?