

Jonathan Green

1955-

1. Introduction Slide

Things we will learn about today:

Theme: an idea or image that shows up over and over in an artist's work

Culture: the customs, history, and art of a nation or specific group of people

Vibrant: strong or bright, referring to the colors in a painting

2. Photograph

Jonathan Green was born in 1955 near the tidal marshlands of South Carolina, as a member of the Gullah community. Ancestors of the Gullah families were slaves brought to North America from West Africa whose cultural traditions can still be seen there today. Green is famous for his use of vibrant colors and for portraying everyday life of the Gullah people including family, celebrations, and storytelling. He often paints scenes from his childhood depicting the landscape, community, and people he remembers. His paintings are important for the preservation of the Gullah culture.

3. Escorting Ruth, 1988

This painting emphasizes the theme of family and communal support in the traditional Gullah life as two companions escort their pregnant friend across the water. The presence of water and its importance is a recurring theme in Green's work. Sweetgrass baskets made of coiled straw are another recurring image.

4. Daughters of the South, 1993. Oil on Canvas

Women wearing large hats is one of the most notable themes in Green's work, and is an homage to his grandmother, Eloise. What other themes that we've mentioned do you see in this painting? (water, friendship/community/family)

5. Yellow Slippers, Oil on Canvas

Notice the use of color and texture in this painting. Green uses vibrant colors and strong textures to mirror the colors and textures of the inland marshes where he grew up. What colors and textures are important in your life?

6. Sea Swing, 2001. Oil on Canvas

Green often shows people having fun, as well as doing everyday activities like chores. Do you think he had fun as a child growing up?

7. The White Ribbon, Oil on Canvas

Color, texture, and place are all important details in this painting. Now it's YOUR turn to paint like Jonathan Green!