

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Jonathan Green

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Green, Jonathan, 1955-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Jonathan Green,
Dates:	April 16, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:03:47).
Abstract:	Painter and printmaker Jonathan Green (1955 -) is a renowned painter of black Southern life. The artwork of Green is heavily influenced by his Gullah heritage with vividly colored paintings and prints documenting everyday chores, in addition to celebrating Gullah life's rites of passage. His work is in the permanent collections of numerous museums, including The Morris Museum, The Afro-American Museum of Philadelphia, and The Naples Museum of Art. Green was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 16, 2002, in Miami, Florida. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_055
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Painter and printmaker Jonathan Green is considered one of the most important contemporary painters of the Southern experience. Born on August 9, 1955, in Gardens Corner, South Carolina, Green was the second of seven children. He was raised in the home of his maternal grandmother, Eloise Stewart Johnson, where he learned the Gullah dialect and culture of the coastal Southeast.

Green's interest in the arts was first nurtured as a student at Beaufort High School. After graduation, Green joined the U.S. Air Force in order to travel and obtain an education. He then attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, receiving a B.F.A. degree in 1982, making him the first known artist of Gullah heritage to receive formal artistic training at a professional art school.

The artwork of Green is heavily influenced by his Gullah heritage with vividly colored paintings and prints documenting everyday chores, in addition to celebrating Gullah life's rites of passage. By returning his art to his childhood upbringing, Green has created an autobiographical body of work in addition to documenting a vanishing way of life.

Since 1982, Green has participated in four traveling exhibitions throughout the United States and forty-eight solo exhibitions. His work is in the permanent collections of numerous museums, including The Morris Museum (Augusta, Georgia), The Afro-American Museum of Philadelphia, The Naples Museum of Art (Naples, Florida) and The IFCC Cultural Center (Portland, Oregon). Green has received awards recognizing both his work and his civic contributions. In 1996, Green received an honorary doctorate from the University of South Carolina, the same year a book, *Gullah Images: The Art of Jonathan Green*, reproducing a large number of his pieces was published.

In 2009, Green received the Key of Life Award for his contributions and achievements in the visual fine arts from the NAACP at the organization's fortieth Image Awards.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Jonathan Green was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on April 16, 2002, in Miami, Florida, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Painter and printmaker Jonathan Green (1955 -) is a renowned painter of black Southern life. The artwork of Green is heavily influenced by his Gullah heritage with vividly colored paintings and prints documenting everyday chores, in addition to celebrating Gullah life's rites of passage. His work is in the permanent collections of numerous museums, including The Morris Museum, The Afro-American Museum of Philadelphia, and The Naples Museum of Art.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Green, Jonathan, 1955-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Green, Jonathan, 1955---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Painter

Printmaker

HistoryMakers® Category:

ArtMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Jonathan Green, April 16, 2002. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Jonathan Green, Section A2002_055_001_001, TRT: 0:31:17 ?

Painter and printmaker Jonathan Green begins by describing his family background. He details his difficult childhood in Gardens Corner, South Carolina. Born to an unwed mother who was excommunicated from her church because of her marital status, Green was raised by his maternal grandmother. He shares his earliest memories from living with his grandmother and explains how his living situation gave him a unique perspective on adulthood.

Video Oral History Interview with Jonathan Green, Section A2002_055_001_002, TRT: 0:28:26 ?

Painter and printmaker Jonathan Green details his life in the small town of Gardens Corners, South Carolina. He explains how race and sexual identity pervaded his childhood and recalls a sense of alienation due to his homosexuality. Green explains how he began to use those feelings to fuel his art. Green also richly details Gullah life and language and some history of South Carolina, talking about his Gullah ancestors, and connecting Gullah and African culture.

Video Oral History Interview with Jonathan Green, Section A2002_055_001_003, TRT: 0:21:19 ?

Painter and printmaker Jonathan Green talks about his brief move to New York City and then describes his high school years in Beaufort, South Carolina. He also describes his demoralizing stint in the Air Force. Green then details his arts education at the Art Institute of Chicago and his steady rise in Chicago's arts world. He talks about developing his unique style and recalls friendships with influential figures who supported his art.

Video Oral History Interview with Jonathan Green, Section A2002_055_001_004, TRT: 0:29:22 ?

Painter and printmaker Jonathan Green discusses the Gullah and Cubist influences behind his art, citing a number of his works as examples, including his 'Three Sisters' painting. He also discusses patron Richard Weedman and his influence on Green's career. Green also details the business side of being an artist and explains his strategies for managing his business.

Video Oral History Interview with Jonathan Green, Section A2002_055_001_005, TRT: 0:13:23 ?

Painter and printmaker Jonathan Green discusses the beauty African Americans and explains how they are the source of his art. He hopes his legacy will live on in his artwork.