

# RENA BRANSTEN GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Jonathan Calm**

***Hands on the Wheel: African American (Auto)mobility in Space, Time and Mind***

**February 19 – April 16, 2022 | Opening reception February 19, 3-5pm**



Rena Bransten Gallery is pleased to present our first solo exhibition with Bay Area-based artist Jonathan Calm. The images in this exhibit represent Calm's ongoing project of exploring African American (Auto)mobility based on his documentation of sites listed in *The Negro Motorist Green Book* (1936-1966), the guidebook that referred travelers of color to safe and dignified accommodations during the final decades of the Jim Crow era. Calm's perspective is both archival and imaginative, as he combines location and landscape photographs from across the country with carefully staged self-portraits, contextualized through historical reimagining.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020 enhanced the risk factor around Calm's cross-country travel, which led his approach to take a more introspective and personal turn. Inspired by stories from audience members of different age groups who attended presentations of his Green Book work, Calm has extended his spatial journey to an odyssey of time and mind. Rather than invoke a connotation of fear, *Hands on the Wheel* creates an empowering visual narrative that highlights continuity across generations of African American individuals and communities on the move.

Jonathan Calm is a visual artist in the media of photography and video, and assistant professor at Stanford University.

His earlier work focuses on the relationship between technologies of representation and urban architecture, and the powerful role of images in the way architectural constructs shape the lives of individuals and communities. His exploration of the socio-cultural, historical and geopolitical imprint of public housing on both sides of the Atlantic puts into perspective, questions and implodes the white utopian legacy of European Modernism to reveal hidden narratives and forgotten participants.

More recently, Calm has pointed his critical eye toward the representation of Black (auto)mobility, exposing how the mythical promise of a boundless journey across the land often masks a more compromised reality for African Americans. Through a varied array of media, he creates complex images of the Black American experience on the road as a precarious privilege rather than an inalienable right.

Calm's art practice is international in scope and has been exhibited at prestigious venues around the world, including the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Tate Britain, the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid and the ICA in Boston. His work has been reviewed in numerous publications, among which *The New York Times*, *Art in America*, *The New Yorker*, *The Village Voice*, *Artforum*, *The Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*. Calm was the 2019 recipient of the prestigious Larry Sultan Photography Award. The KQED Arts profile *Jonathan Calm Revisits 'Green Book' Locations in Search of America's Past and Present* was nominated for a 2020 Northern California Area Emmy Award for Best Historic/Cultural-Feature/Segment.

Above image: Jonathan Calm, *Double Vision (Locomotive I)*, 2021, archival pigment print, 40 x 50 inches

# RENA BRANSTEN GALLERY

## Jonathan Calm

Hands on the Wheel: African American (Auto)mobility in Space, Time and Mind  
February 19 – April 16, 2022

### SOUTH ROOM:



#### Jonathan Calm

*Double Vision (Three Generations)*, 2020  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
40 x 50 in.



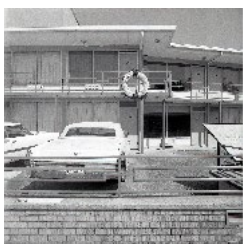
#### Jonathan Calm

*Double Vision (Safe Space I)*, 2016  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
18 x 24 in.



#### Jonathan Calm

*Double Vision (Underground)*, 2020  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
40 x 50 in.



#### Jonathan Calm

*Green Book (Lorraine Motel I)*, 2016  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
20 x 20 in.



#### Jonathan Calm

*Green Book (Jackson I)*, 2016  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
20 x 29 in.

# RENA BRANSTEN GALLERY

## MIDDLE HALLWAY:



**Jonathan Calm**

*Double Vision (Safe Space II)*, 2016  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
20 x 20 in.



**Jonathan Calm**

*Blue History (Edmund Pettus Bridge)*, 2022  
Cyanotype print, edition of 6  
18 x 24 in.



**Jonathan Calm**

*Blue History (Tuskegee Army Airfield)*, 2020  
Cyanotype print, edition of 6  
18 x 24 in.



**Jonathan Calm**

*Blue History (Martin Luther King Jr. Home)*, 2022  
Cyanotype print, edition of 6  
18 x 24 in.



**Jonathan Calm**

*Blue History (Dexter Avenue Baptist Church)*, 2022  
Cyanotype print, edition of 6  
18 x 24 in.



**Jonathan Calm**

*Blue History (The National Memorial for Peace and Justice)*, 2022  
Cyanotype print, edition of 6  
18 x 24 in.

# RENA BRANSTEN GALLERY



**Jonathan Calm**

*Green Book (El Camino Motel)*, 2019  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
24 x 18 in.

**NORTH ROOM:**



**Jonathan Calm**

*Green Book (Mar Hotel)*, 2019  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
18 x 24 in.



**Jonathan Calm**

*Blue History (A Moment in the New China Club, NV)*,  
2022  
Cyanotype print, edition of 6  
18 x 24 in.



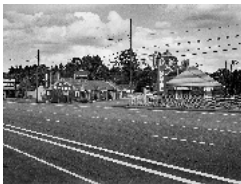
**Jonathan Calm**

*Green Book (Doric New Washington)*, 2019  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
24 x 18 in.



**Jonathan Calm**

*Double Vision (Crossing McKenzie Pass)*, 2021  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
40 x 50 in.



**Jonathan Calm**

*Green Book (Capitol Hill Motel)*, 2019  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
18 x 24 in.

# RENA BRANSTEN GALLERY



**Jonathan Calm**

*Green Book (Hotel Roosevelt), 2019*  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
24 x 18 in.



**Jonathan Calm**

*Double Vision (Locomotive I), 2021*  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
40 x 50 in.



**Jonathan Calm**

*Green Book (Monte Carlo Hotel), 2019*  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
18 x 24 in.



**Jonathan Calm**

*Green Book (Dunlop's Restaurant), 2019*  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
24 x 18 in.



**Jonathan Calm**

*Green Book (Crater Lake Lodge 1), 2020*  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
18 x 24 in.



**Jonathan Calm**

*Double Vision (Remains of Vanport OR), 2021*  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
40 x 50 in.



**Jonathan Calm**

*Green Book (Crater Cottages), 2019*  
archival pigment print, edition of 6  
20 x 44 in.