

# BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

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## **BLANTON MUSEUM BRINGS *THE OPEN ROAD: PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE AMERICAN ROAD TRIP* TO AUSTIN THIS FALL**



**Compelling images take viewers on a journey across America from the 1950s to present day.  
November 25, 2017–January 7, 2018**

AUSTIN, Texas—September 21, 2017—The first exhibition to present photography of the iconic American road trip will be on display at the Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin from November 25, 2017–January 7, 2018. *The Open Road: Photography and the American Road Trip* considers this subject matter as a genre in and of itself, and tells the stories of several photographers for whom the American road was muse. The exhibition presents more than 100 images by photographers such as Robert Frank, William Eggleston, Lee Friedlander, Alec Soth, and Justine Kurland, who explored America as a subject by capturing images of the people, activities, and views found along its highways.

“The love for the American road trip—exploring our diverse landscape and discovering everything from national parks to local diners along the way—has been deeply imbedded in our culture for generations. *The Open Road* highlights how renowned photographers have captured that quintessential American experience,” notes Blanton Director Simone Wicha. “Photography is an important medium for many artists, and the Blanton is committed to the presentation of this art form. We’re delighted to be collaborating with Aperture to share this captivating work with the Austin community.”

The American photographer Stephen Shore once declared, “Our country is made for long trips.” While the myth of the Western frontier had long engaged artists, and photographers including Walker Evans and Edward Weston immortalized their travels through the United States in the 1930s and 1940s, the American road trip gained new prominence in literature, music, movies, and photography after World War II.



As the growth of the Interstate Highway System and the wider availability of automobiles made it easier to cross the country’s expanse, more photographers embarked on trips to create work about America itself or better understand their place in it. The road trip remains an enduring symbol in American culture, suggesting possibility, discovery, and escape—a place to get lost and find yourself in the process. The featured artists and trips in *The Open Road* represent the evolution of American car culture and the idea of the open road, and how both U.S.- and foreign-born photographers discovered in the specific details of America’s vastness a means to reflect on place, time, and self.

Exhibition photographers include: Robert Frank, Ed Ruscha, Garry Winogrand, Inge Morath, William Eggleston, Lee Friedlander, Joel Meyerowitz, Jacob Holdt, Stephen Shore, Bernard Plossu, Victor Burgin, Joel Sternfeld, Alec Soth, Todd Hido, Shinya Fujiwara, Ryan McGinley, Justine Kurland, and Taiyo Onorato and Nico Krebs. Presented chronologically, *The Open Road* departs from the themes and style established by Frank's iconic images from *The Americans*, taken on his 1955–56 road trip, and sees the rise of color photography through Eggleston's pioneering *Los Alamos* portfolio (1965–74), and a shift to larger-format prints that disclose surreal details in Sternfeld's series *American Prospects* (1978–83) and Soth's *Sleeping by the Mississippi* (1999–2002).



The Blanton's presentation of *The Open Road* will be complemented by photographs and historical materials on loan from the University's Harry Ransom Center and Briscoe Center for American History. Selections from Magnum photographer and The University of Texas at Austin School of Journalism professor Eli Reed's *Black in America* (1997), drawn from the Harry Ransom Center's Magnum Photos, Inc., Collection, will represent Reed's twenty-year study of African American life across the country. Jack Kerouac's handwritten *On the Road* notebook (1948–49), from the Jack Kerouac Collection at the Harry Ransom Center, shows the author experimenting with themes and locations that would make *On the Road* (1957) a defining text in road trip culture. The exhibition will also present the 1953 edition of *The Negro Travelers' Green Book* from the ExxonMobil

Historical Collection at the Briscoe Center; this guide identifies black-friendly hotels, restaurants, and other businesses across the country during the Jim Crow era, suggesting that indeed the African American experience differed profoundly when it came to freedom of movement throughout the United States.

Claire Howard, the Blanton's Assistant Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art and the exhibition's managing curator, notes, "We are very fortunate to be situated on a campus with a wealth of archival resources, engaged colleagues, and faculty expertise that enables us to deepen and expand the narrative of *The Open Road* in its presentation at the Blanton."

The Blanton will celebrate the exhibition opening with a B scene party on December 1, open to the public and featuring a rock-n-roll, road culture theme. For an up-to-date listing of public programs and events, please visit the [online calendar](#).

This exhibition is organized by Aperture Foundation, New York. David Company and Denise Wolff, curators.

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Support for this exhibition at the Blanton is provided by J.P. Morgan Chase.

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### **About the Blanton Museum of Art**

Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art holds the largest public collection in Central Texas with nearly 18,000 objects. Recognized for its modern and contemporary American and Latin American art, Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings, and encyclopedic collection of prints and drawings, the Blanton offers thought provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving encounters with art.

The museum is located at the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Congress Avenue and is open Tuesday through Friday from 10–5, Saturday from 11–5, and Sunday from 1–5. Thursdays are free admission days and every third Thursday the museum is open until 9. Admission Prices: Adults \$9, Kids 12 and under FREE, Seniors (65+) \$7, Youth/College Students (13–21) \$5. Admission is free to members, all current UT ID-holders. For additional information call (512) 471–7324 or visit [blantonmuseum.org](http://blantonmuseum.org)

## About Aperture

Aperture, a not-for-profit foundation, connects the photo community and its audiences with the most inspiring work, the sharpest ideas, and with each other—in print, in person, and online. Created in 1952 by photographers and writers as “common ground for the advancement of photography,” Aperture today is a multi-platform publisher and center for the photo community. From its base in New York, Aperture Foundation produces, publishes, and presents a program of photography projects and programs—locally, across the United States, and around the world. For more information visit [aperture.org](http://aperture.org)

### Image Captions:

Joel Meyerowitz

*Los Angeles River, California, 1967*

Archival pigment print

©Joel Meyerowitz, courtesy of the artist and Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York

Stephen Shore

*U.S. 97, South of Klamath Falls, Oregon, July 21, 1973*

Chromogenic color print

©Stephen Shore, 303 Gallery New York

William Eggleston

Untitled, from the portfolio *Los Alamos, 1965-74*

Dye-transfer print

©Eggleston Artist Trust, courtesy Cheim & Read, New York, and David Zwirner Gallery, New York