ROOT WORK JOURNAL

SUMMONING FLIGHT: NAVIGATING BLACK MYTHOLOGY, FLIGHT, AND ACTS OF REFUSAL, VOL 2, ISS 1

EXODUS HOME

Jay Simple

Jay@Jaysimple.com

Through this project, Exodus Home, Jay Simple uses self-portraiture, archival images, sculptural installations and collage to explore the issues of migration and home. Photographs of domestic and agricultural spaces in Virginia, specifically Prince Edward County, display spaces which were occupied and or abandoned during the period of the Great Migration, which occurred between 1916-1970, when six million people escaped violent persecution in the south and arrived in northern, midwestern, and western cities across the United States.

An exodus of Black people poured out of the south and into the metropolitans which are now marred by brutality upon these migrant's descendants. Moving has become a cycle, a frontier for the possibility of home, and the boundaries of that imagination are as endless as its oppositions. These hopeful ideas rest in the hallowed wood of old barns, in the memory ingrained into a body, in the things we create to mark our existence, and the late nights spent pondering, staring into the ocean of stars on a muggy night, somewhere not good, and imagining if only for a second you could leave it all behind.

This project was inspired by W.E.B Dubois who, during his research for The Philadelphia Negro, heard of Farmville, Virginia and created a ethnographic and sociological study of a place gripping with the social, economic, and political moment at the end of the 19th century, the precursor to the Great Migration. He titled this work, "The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia: a social study". This body of work is a testament to these ancestors who fled the South for hopes of a safe haven, and it is for their descendants who continue that struggle today.

Jay Simple is a visual artist from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He is currently a AICAD Fellow at Parsons School of Design. Working through photography, video, sculpture, performance and large-scale installations, Simple examines historical and contemporary identity politics within the culture of (neo)colonial North America. He is also the founder of The Photographer's Green Book, a resource for equity, diversity, and inclusion within the photographic community. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography from Columbia College Chicago, a Master of Liberal Art from the University of Pennsylvania, and a Master of Fine Arts in Photography from the Rhode Island School of Design. He has had recent solo exhibitions at Hampden Sydney College(2019) and Longwood University(2019), and group exhibitions at Silver Eye Center for Photography(2021) Tilt Institute of the Contemporary Image(2021), Candela Books Gallery(2020), Jamestown Art Center(2018), and Clampart(2018).

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Red Summer: Chicago, 1919



Packing the Necessities



Arrival at Departure



Bedroom



Group of Florida migrants o their way to Cranberry, New Jersey, to pick potatoes. Near Shawboro, North Carolina 1940 July.



Under Construction



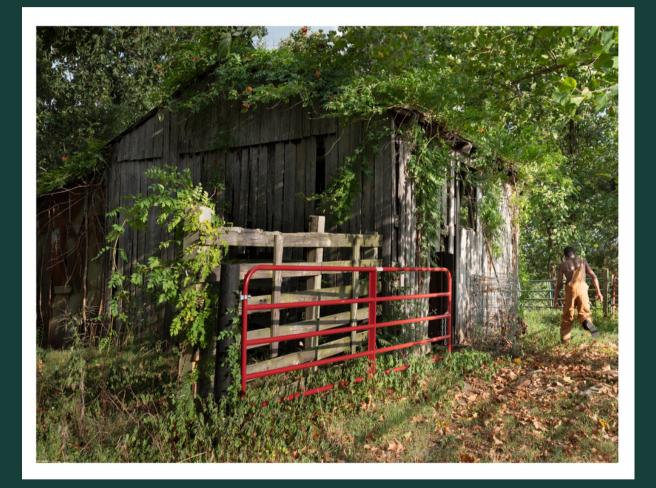
8 Tracks and None of Them Good #2



The Longest Ride



A Greyhound Bus from Lousville to Kentucky to Memphis, Tennessee, and the terminals



Move, Daniel



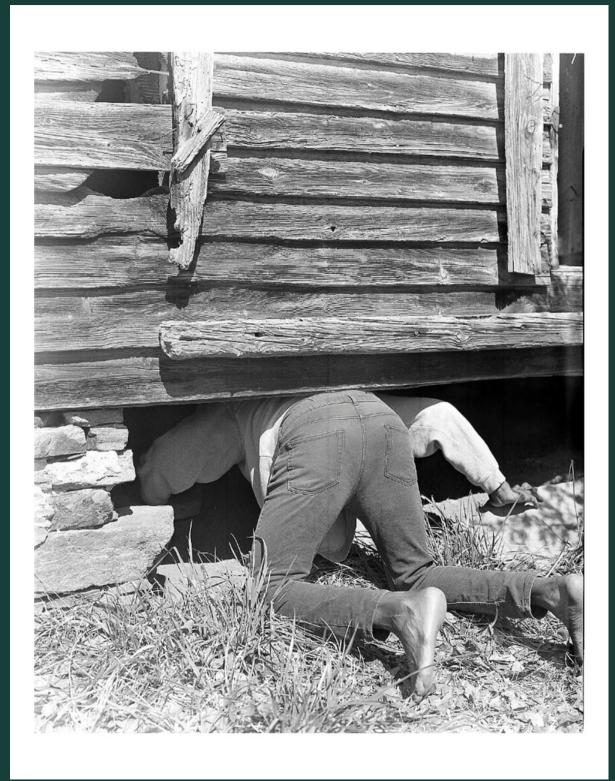
Loving v Virginia



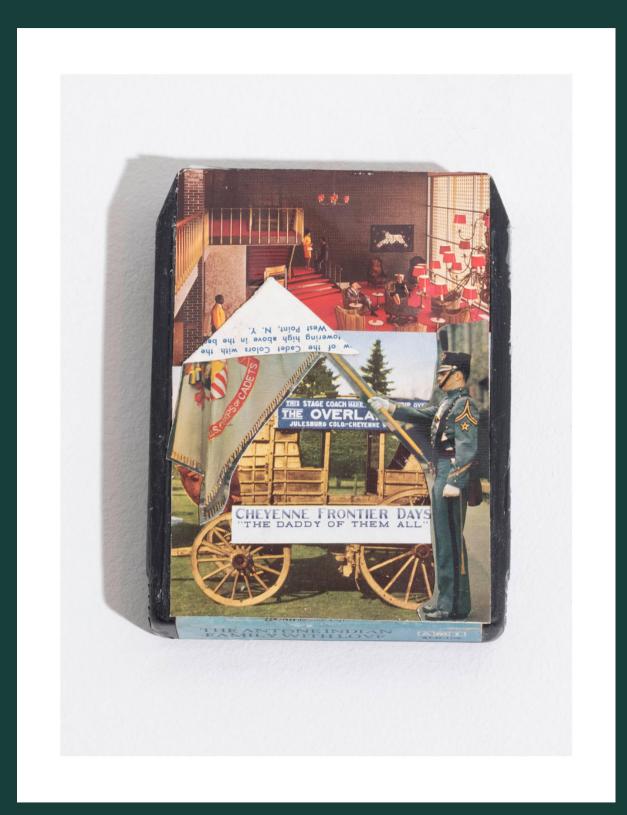
Ascension



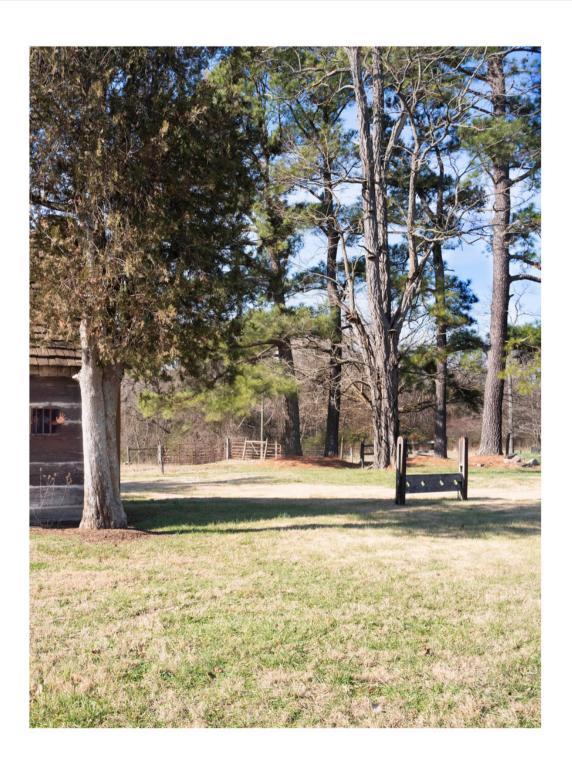
Red Summer, Birmingham 1963



What Lies Beneath



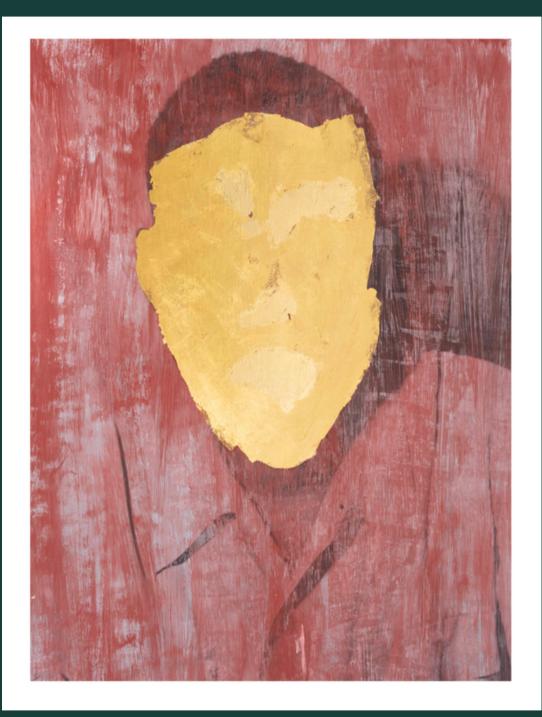
8 Tracks and None of Them Good #4



Untititled



Just MOVE



Red Summer: Isaac Woodard Jr, 1946



8 Tracks and None of Them Good #1



Stewing



Red Summer: Chicago, 1919 Archival pigment print, acrylic medium, 24k gold leaf, 2020



Bedroom Archival Pigment Print, 2019





Move, Danial Archival Pigment Print, 2019



Packing the Necessities Archival Pigment Print, 2020



Group of Florida migrants on their way to Cranberry, New Jersey, to pick potatoes. Near Shawboro, North Carolina 1940 July. Archival image from the Library of Congress, 2020





Loving v Virginia Faux feathers, aluminum, plastic, rope, tar, photo-transfer, archival photograph, ribbon, acrylic, wood, 2019



Arrival at Departure Archival Pigment Print, 2019



Under Construction Archival Pigment Print, 2020



The Longest Ride (Farmville Virginia Closes Public Schools for 5 Years) Vintage school bus seat, pencils, barbwire, 24k gold leaf, archival pigment prints, Track, archival prints, postcards, 24k gold leaf Prince Edward County, 2020



Ascension Archival Pigment Print, 2019



Red Summer: Birmingham, 1963 Archival pigment



Untitled Archival Pigment Print, 2019



8 Tracks and None of Them Good #1 8-track, archival





Just MOVE (May 13, 1985) Suitcase, archival pigment



Red Summer: Isaac Woodard Jr, 1946 Archival



What Lies Beneath Archival Pigment Print, 2019 8 Tracks and None of Them Good #4 8-track, archival



Stewing Archival Pigment Print, 2019