

APPALACHIAN
MOUNTAIN
PHOTOGRAPHY
COMPETITION
CALL FOR ENTRY

23rd Appalachian Mountain Photography Competition, "I Know Why the Mockingbird Sings," at the Turchin Center for the Visual Arts, on view February 6 - May 2, 2026

The Turchin Center for the Visual Arts (TCVA) is excited to announce the call for entry to this year's upcoming 23rd Appalachian Mountain Photography Competition exhibition. This year's exhibition will be juried by Ty Murray, activist and Director of Art & Communications at The Bottom, a nonprofit cultural organization in Knoxville, TN, who chose, "I Know Why the Mockingbird Sings" as this year's exhibition theme. Murray says:

"Joy is at the heart of my creative practice. My gears were turning for a theme that could convey the freedom that joy embodies, like the feeling of an uncaged bird taking flight... A title with a twist on Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969) came shortly after.

In Appalachia, where memories move through mountains and stories echo through hollers, joy can be an act of devotion or defiance. This year's theme invites photographers to tune into the moments that heal, harmonize, uplift and unburden.

What lightens your spirit, sends you soaring, or sways softly in the background of your day-to-day? From a kitchen table to a dance floor, to an open field and beyond, show us where your joy takes root. Whether carved in solitude, shaped by community, inspired by nature, or nurtured through craft, let your lens sing."

The AMPC is continuing its updated submission process for single-image and series submissions. The single-image submission application will be the most familiar to previous AMPC artists. In lieu of submitting images to themed categories, artists will be able to submit 1-5 standalone images aligned with the theme of "I Know Why the Mockingbird Sings for \$15 dollars. The series submission option allows artists to submit 6-12 images from a singular body of work for \$20 dollars. Selected artists from this category will show six images chosen by the

jurors from their submitted series, highlighting the AMPC's vision to support the expansion of Appalachian narratives

The deadline for submissions is November 20, 2025. Artists will be notified of their acceptance on December 12, 2025 and will be expected to deliver their artwork to TCVA in Boone, NC, by January 16, 2026. Artists are responsible for transporting artwork to TCVA. TCVA will provide complimentary return shipping via FedEx to exhibiting artists.

Single-image submissions: <https://tvca.slideroom.com/#/permalink/program/86480>

Series submissions: <https://tvca.slideroom.com/#/permalink/program/86481>

The 23rd AMPC exhibition will open Friday, February 6, 2026 with a public reception that evening featuring an ARTtalk and DJ session with the Juror, Ty Murray/DJ Soularia.

People's Choice voting will take place in-person in the gallery, and the winner will be announced at the Awards Reception (date TBD) along with the Juror's awards. The exhibition will be on view through May 2, 2026. In addition to the awards reception, there will be public programming which will include an ARTtalk with the juror, an ongoing collaborative playlist available throughout the duration of the exhibition, as well as a virtual call and response writing group through The Bottom in Knoxville, TN.

The Appalachian Mountain Photography Competition is made possible through the generous sponsorship of the Mast General Store with additional support from Appalachian Voices, Virtual Blue Ridge, Bistro Roca, Footsloggers Outfitters, Peabody's, Stickboy Bread.

2025-2026 CALENDAR

Online Submission System Opens	September 26, 2025
Deadline for Entries	November 20, 2025 @ 5 PM EST
Notifications Emailed	December 12, 2025
Artwork Delivery Dates	January 12-16, 2026
Exhibition Dates	February 6 – May 2, 2026
ARTtalk, Call & Response Group & Awards Reception	TBD

JUROR INFORMATION

A Renaissance woman rooted in the Appalachian South, **Ty Murray** views herself first and foremost as a storyteller. Whether behind the lens, spinning vinyl, shaping clay, or simply bearing witness to the world around her, her practice dances at the intersections of creativity and critical thought. Grounded in activism, her work invites you to feel, think, and move, sometimes all at once.

Photography, for Ty, is an act of presence and praise. With a deep reverence for both scenery and identity, she crafts visual narratives that celebrate the beauty of land, body, and culture. Led by innate curiosity, she seeks to explore, interact, document, and uncover “the overlooked”. Inspired by the spirit of Expressionism, she photographs in living color, producing images that convey movement, vibrance and soul.

Beyond the lens, Ty serves as a community worker, tradition bearer and art director for The Bottom in Knoxville, TN. She curates sensory experiences that honor the past and envision liberated futures. Across all her creative practices, Ty honors art as a force for connection, empowerment, and communal healing.

EXHIBITION GUIDELINES

1. The **23rd Appalachian Mountain Photography Competition** is open to artists currently residing in the USA who are 18 years of age or older. **Works entered must have been completed within the last four years and not previously exhibited at Appalachian State University.** All artists, professional and amateur, are invited to participate!
2. **There is a \$15 (single-image) or \$20 (series) submission fee to be considered for the 23rd AMPC.** The juror will select artworks from each submission category for exhibition. Artworks must be completed and ready for installation when submitted.

SINGLE-IMAGE SUBMISSION: The entrance fee of \$15 allows artists to submit 1-5 stand alone images with descriptions.

SERIES SUBMISSION: The entrance fee of \$20 allows for 6-12 images from a single body of work with a series statement. Artists chosen from this category will be expected to frame and deliver six images of the juror's choosing for exhibition.

3. The selected works are to be exhibited at the Turchin Center for the Visual Arts on the campus of Appalachian State University from February 6 – May 2, 2026. Artworks are loaned for the time specified above and will not be returned until the exhibition period is completed.

4. Artists and accepted artwork must meet the following guidelines:

a) Photographic prints, mats, frames, and other presentation material must be of museum-quality and professional finish to be accepted for exhibition. If you are shipping your work to us, please frame your piece with acrylic to avoid damage to your work caused by glass breaking during the shipping process. We cannot exhibit frames made from old barn wood or other recycled natural materials as they are not archival or museum-quality. *The TCVA has the right to eliminate works from the exhibition if they arrive in poor condition, are of poor quality, or are not framed according to exhibition guidelines. If you have questions about where and how to frame your work, please reach out.*

b) Artwork must be delivered to the Turchin Center for the Visual Arts (Attn: shauna caldwell, Associate Curator for Academic Engagement) no later than January 16, 2026 at 5:45 PM. *No late work can be accepted as the installation begins the following Monday in the gallery.*

c) The TCVA reserves the right to photograph any submitted artwork for publicity, promotion, and archive purposes. Artwork may be utilized in a digital format for promotional materials, website content, and reproduced in printed materials connected with the Turchin Center.

d) If artwork is for sale, the TCVA will add a 25% commission to the artist's sale price.

e) Notice of Liability: All reasonable care and precaution will be taken in the handling and storing of materials submitted for this competition. Appalachian State University and TCVA will provide insurance for the borrowed object(s) for the duration of the object's stay on Appalachian's campus, provided that the artwork meets all

requirements stated above and that the artist has completed all appropriate paperwork supplied by competition staff. Insurance will not cover damage to the artwork due to poor construction or craftsmanship while installing work or during shipping. A certificate of insurance will be provided upon request only.

f) Participation in the entry process constitutes a full understanding and acceptance of the conditions set forth above.

Works not meeting the criteria listed above will not be considered for installation at the TCVA.

If there are questions or concerns, the AMPC staff will be happy to answer questions and assist with the entry process as needed. For more information and to submit:

CONTACT INFORMATION

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To access the online support system for your submission please contact:
support@slideroom.com