

23<sup>rd</sup>  
ANNUAL  
APPALACHIAN  
MOUNTAIN  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
COMPETITION

# i KNOW WHY THE MOCKINGBIRD SINGS

BICKERS GALLERY

FEB. 6 - MAY 2, 2026





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front:  
Juliana Maurer  
*Held Divine*

left:  
Kaye Savage  
*Uprooted*

This year's exhibition is juried by Ty Murray, artivist and Director of Art & Communications at The Bottom, a nonprofit cultural organization in Knoxville, TN, and Waymakers Collective 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."

## EXHIBITION STATEMENT

In Appalachia, where memories move through mountains and stories echo through hollers, joy speaks volumes. It can be an act of devotion, a gesture of defiance, a quiet promise we make to ourselves. For this call photographers were asked to lean into moments that heal, harmonize, uplift, and unburden. They were asked to let their lenses sing and what arrived was a chorus.

Whether carved in solitude, shaped by community, inspired by nature, or nurtured through craft, joy takes root. I saw it rolling like clouds across a mountain ridge, shimmering in cool creek water, and glowing in the fiery colors of fall. It appeared in foraged treasures collected tenderly by hand, in the breathtaking stillness of hills, in the magic of season shifts, and the sweetness of a butterfly drifting towards nectar. Joy shows up in people, too. It's there in a warm embrace, in a familiar face, in queer Appalachian togetherness, and in the simple freedom of a hand waving through the wind. As a native Tennessean, I know these mountains as both mirror and prism. They hold space for us, just as we hold space for each other.

It has been an honor to witness such cherished moments. May this collection remind us that joy, in all its forms, continues to hum a tune in Appalachia. I Know Why The Mockingbird Sings...to remind us that little moments can hold big feelings, and that joy often reveals itself to anyone who will listen.

- Ty Murray, Juror

# ABOUT AMPC

The 23rd AMPC exhibition opens Friday, February 6, 2026 with a public reception on March 6 featuring an ARTtalk, awards announcements, and DJ session with the juror Ty Murray/DJ Soularia. A recording of the DJ set is available as an exhibition soundtrack and can be found on page 31 of this document.

People's Choice voting will take place in-person in the gallery, and the winner will be announced virtually on March 23, 2026. In addition to the awards reception and ARTtalk with the juror, an ongoing collaborative playlist will be available throughout the duration of the exhibition (on page 32). The Bottom will host a virtual call and response writing group on March 25, 2026. The exhibition will be on view through May 2, 2026.

*The Appalachian Mountain Photography Competition is made possible through the generous sponsorship of the Mast General Store, Stick Boy Bread Company, Appalachian Voices, Footsloggers Outdoor and Travel Outfitters, Ball Photo Supply and App State URec. Special thanks to this year's exhibition partners The Bottom and Waymakers Collective.*

## The Bottom

The Bottom is a nonprofit cultural organization serving the community through a Black-affirming bookshop and arts space. Rooted in place justice, The Bottom stands to build community, celebrate culture, and engage the creativity of East Knoxville.

Named after Knoxville's first Black neighborhood demolished through urban renewal, The Bottom exists as a site of remembrance, placekeeping, and creative possibility.



## waymakers collective

We are the Waymakers Collective, a dynamic network of grantmakers rooted in the heart of Appalachia. We champion artists, visionaries, and cultural leaders who build bridges, preserve traditions, and drive new creative movements.

Our approach challenges conventional philanthropy, ensuring that resources reach those long overlooked and undervalued.

Waymakers  
Collective

# ARTISTS IN THE EXHIBITION

## SINGLE-IMAGE ARTISTS

### SERIES ARTISTS

AMANDO CHAVEZ  
LOU MURREY  
KAYE SAVAGE

KEN BARRETT	CARL NAJDEK
GREGORY BERG	MADDIE PARKER
JESS BILLINGS	AMIE JO PLATT
EVA BUCKNER	SCOTT RAWLS
SARAH CAMPBELL	KATIE RICHARD
JODIE CASTELLANI	KELSEY RISO
RONALD KEVIN COMBS	SKIP SICKLER
CANDACE DAY	SUSAN STAMEY
MATTHEW GRAHOVAC	EMILY SUIT
ALICIA GREEN	MEG ELIZABETH WARD
ALEX KEITH	EDWARD WILLIAMS
JULIANA MAURER	JENNIFER WOODY

# AMANDO CHAVEZ

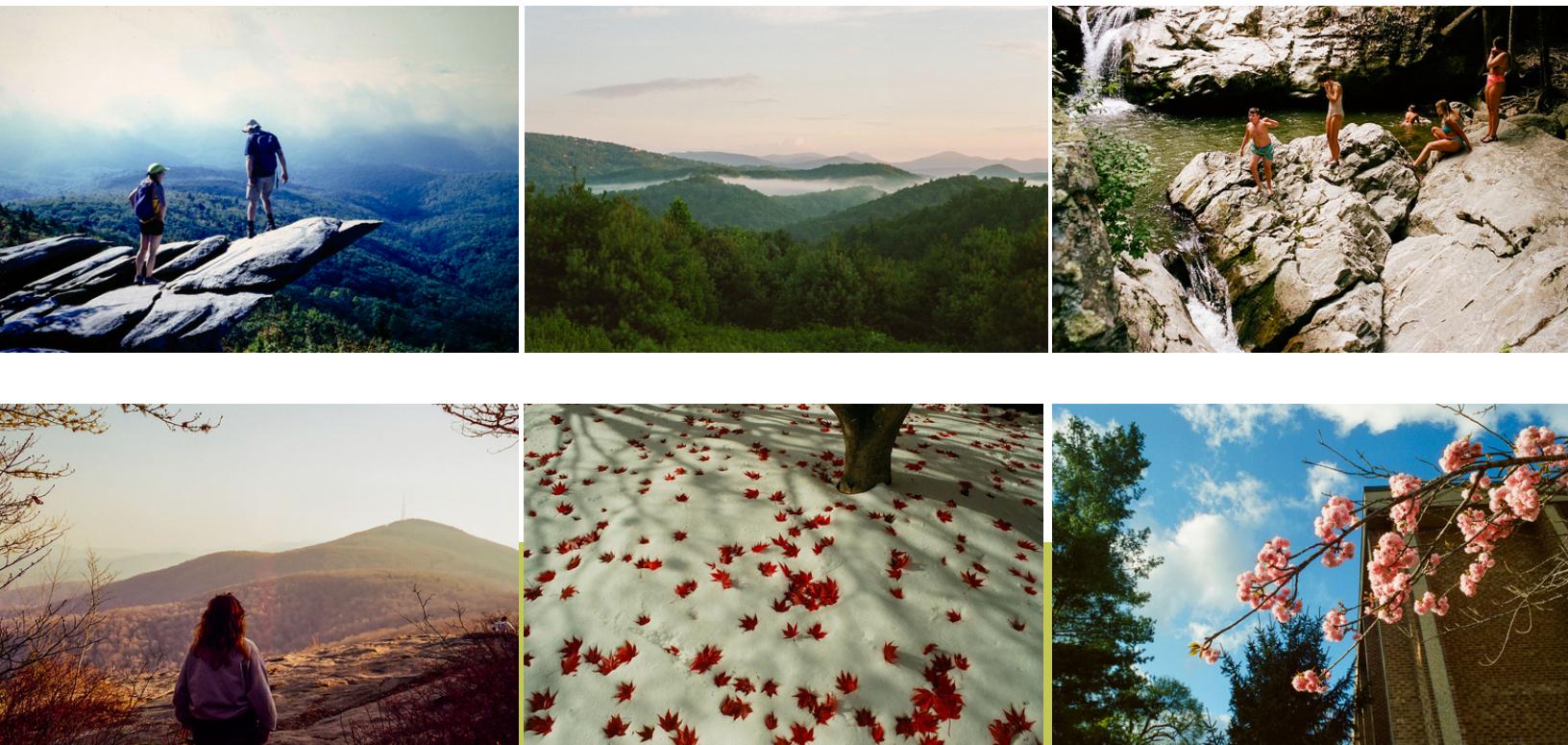
Amando Chavez is a film photographer based in North Carolina. His passion for photography came from films and YouTube. During his time in Boone, he picked up a film camera where he learned how to be present with each image he takes. After moving back to Charlotte, he released a photo book, *Home Away from Home*, with film photos taken in Boone over the course of three years. Chavez is also a recipient of a grant awarded to him by the Arts and Science Council in Charlotte. With the help of this grant, he aims to focus on supporting his community, helping out small businesses and non-profits and turning photography into a full-time career. A documentarian of life, he captures living at its rawest and most natural moments.

## ***Artist Statement***

My photos encapsulate the joy I have found in the world around me, especially in the seemingly mundane or overlooked parts. Viewing the world through my camera lens allows me to feel more tuned in with my surroundings giving me a feeling of peace and calm. Whether its leaves on a snowy hill, fog traveling through the valleys, or kids playing in rivers, I aim to capture the world's real and natural moments.

<https://www.amandochavez.com/>

@amando35mm



# LOU MURREY

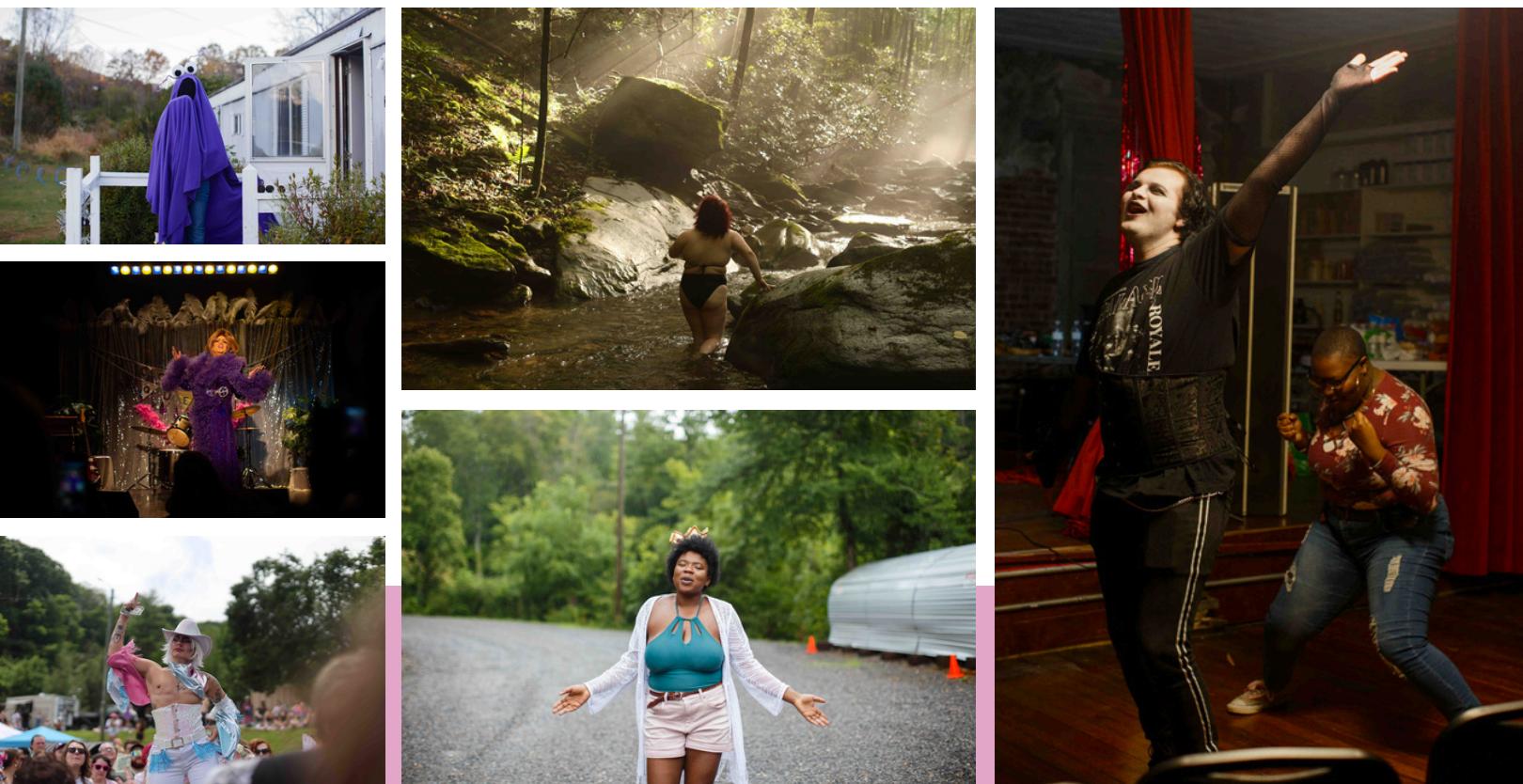
Lou is an Appalachian organizer, photographer, hearth keeper, land tender, and a steadfast (if not beleaguered) believer that a better world is possible. They have spent the last 10 years organizing with people across the South and Appalachia around kitchen tables and on front porches—practicing democratic governance and strategizing, locally and regionally, to build people power and resist unjust systems. Lou's photographs are documentation of the relational and joyful nature of cultural organizing in Appalachia. When they are not dreaming and scheming, Lou loves to share a meal with friends, read romance novels, work in the garden, and walk the land with their dog, Knick Knack.

## ***Appalachian Glimmers***

This series is a documentation of radical, queer joy in Appalachia. These photos are a love letter to the queer organizers who create hope in their hollers, build electric networks of care, find joy, and fight like hell—all for the love of a place that doesn't always love us back. Staying here ain't always easy, so I wanted to share the moments of “glimmers” of liberation that we create for ourselves and each other.

<https://www.loumurrey.com/>

@loumurrey



# KAYE SAVAGE

Kaye Savage teaches Environmental Studies at Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Her artwork spans photography and mixed media/handmade paper, with place-based themes centered on terrain patterns, natural materials, and, sometimes, representations of scientific data. Her past research in environmental geochemistry, and her current art practice, are explorations of chemical, physical, and biological interactions across multiple scales of time and space. She is a co-founding member of the Kinship Photography Collective.

## ***In My Neck of the Woods...***

35 years ago, a group of friends sat on a front porch with a bucket of plaster, a jar of vaseline, and a pair of soda straws each. After casting my face I pressed into it with hemp pulp; for the decades since, my 23-year-old face has made each move with me, but stayed fixed for years at a time in the corner of one room or another. Last autumn, I began taking it/me for walks in some of the natural spaces that I love most, capturing moods and a feeling of home. My wanderings have been explorations of aging, youth, liberation, and the power of nature to change our perspective and hold us close.

<https://ksavage.myportfolio.com/>

@savage.kaye



# KEN BARRETT

Ken is a hobbyist photographer who enjoys all types of photography.

“I’ve fed this horse apples for years. On the Blue Ridge Parkway.”

<https://fineartamerica.com/profiles/kenbarrett/art/photographs>

Facebook: Ken Barrett, Instagram: Ken Barrett Bear



*Galloping Apple Horse*, date unknown

# GREGORY BERG

I am a retired technical writer who got serious about photography as a post-retirement project. I have been making pictures for over 50 years. Growing up, we had a black-and-white darkroom in our basement that I used to develop pictures for my junior high yearbook. I now work mostly with a digital camera, though I do have a few antique cameras for special film-based projects. My current images are a mix of architecture and portraits (both people and dolls), but I am always on the lookout for anything beautiful in my world.



*Rainbow House: Finding Beauty Amid Decay, 2024*

# JESS BILLINGS

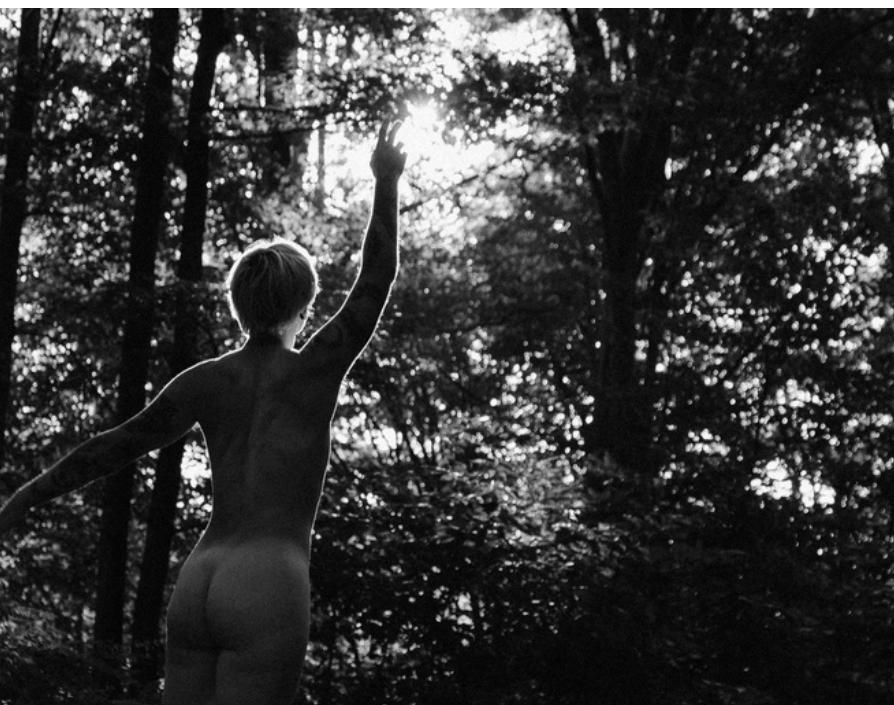
When we pause to consider the world around us, what is termed the "natural world," we see astounding beauty and life that is full of complexity. Our society teaches of nature as if it is a place you can go to, an activity, if privileged, to experience. This viewpoint creates a distinction, one of the human world, and the rest, of the natural world. But this mentality disregards the truth, that we ARE nature and nature is us.

Through photography, I have found a means of storytelling that reminds us that we are not separate from the intricate and complex life that is around us. Documenting the small and mighty, the grand expanses of ecosystems, the intricacies of the mundane or inconspicuous, the joy of existence, and the sadness and beauty of death. All of these things have a place in the world and should be seen, acknowledged, and appreciated.

I humbly recognize the deep history and complex relationships of humans and the living world told by the Indigenous wisdom keepers and story tellers of this land "Turtle Island." My art strives to remove the colonial lens of exploitation, ownership, and entertainment with which we view nature. Instead, I observe with humility and honor with reciprocity, I am a mirror that reflects ourselves as part of nature, as more than "us" and "them."

"A self-portrait reflecting the feeling of soaking in the last rays of the summer sun as the seasons change and the days grow shorter."

@jessibillings12



*Reaching for the Sun, 2025*

# EVA BUCKNER

My multimedia work often acts as an antiquated map, shaped by the intimate unveiling of my past. Carried by these memories, both vivid and winding, I confront the weight they hold and how they permeate my present self. I hope to capture the delicacy of the human experience through gentle dissection. Lying myself bare to the soft and raw manifestations of life through art.

@evablythe\_



*Growing into Her, 2025*

# SARAH CAMPBELL

A resident of Abingdon, Virginia, Sarah Campbell's passion for photography began with a Kodak 110 camera over 40 years ago. The cameras have evolved since then but the basic concept of photography remains the same—finding beauty in everything. Several of her photographs have been published in *Virginia Wildlife Magazine*, have won awards at the Virginia Highlands Festival, and have been on display at The Arts Depot in Abingdon, Virginia.

“Also known as Shivelight or Komorebi, beautiful rays of light stretch through the trees on the Appalachian Trail in North Carolina.”

<https://trailgal.smugmug.com/>



*Slices of Light*, 2023

# JODIE CASTELLANI

Dr. Jodie Castellani is a photographer and writer based in Charleston, South Carolina. An East Tennessee native, she was raised in Saudi Arabia where her father was employed with Aramco for nearly 20 years. She graduated high school from Chatham Hall in Virginia and earned both a B.A. in Psychology and a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. She completed advanced certifications and training at The Light Factory, the Charlotte Photography Group, Rocky Mountain School of Photography, Boston University, Excelsior College, Creative Nonfiction, and the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University. Dr. Castellani has maintained a private practice in forensic and clinical psychology since 2000 while also managing Castle Light Images.

Dr. Castellani's work has been featured in publications including *N-Photo*, *CNN*, *Huffington Post*, *Sportsfreak*, *Taste of the South*, *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah*, *Creative Loafing*, *Yours* (UK) and the *Social Documentary Network*. A cameo film starring Dan Truhitte, best known for portraying "Rolf" in the Academy Award-winning film *The Sound of Music*, was shown at the Filmmakers Gallery in Palm Springs, California. In addition to documentary work, Dr. Castellani covers the Charlotte area and the Charleston low country region as a contributing news photographer for *Alamy Live News* based in the UK. She has also served as a contributing photographer for the *Carolina Public Press*, a statewide non-partisan newspaper in Asheville.

Her image, *The Graphite Reactor*, won the "Our Ecological Footprint" award at the 18th AMPC in 2021. The prior year, her work was featured in a juried exhibit at the Southeast Center for Photography in Greenville, South Carolina. In 2022, another environmental image, *Radioactive: Fenced In*, won Best in Show at the 19th AMPC. Her work has been exhibited at the Southeast Center for Photography and the Praxis Gallery, among others.

"Vibrant, joyful hay bale art creates beautiful hippie vibes at a Sunflower Festival in upstate South Carolina. I know why the mockingbird sings... for the freedom of the daily grind on this perfect, carefree summer day."

[castlelightimages.com](http://castlelightimages.com)

@castlelightimages



Peace, Love, & Sunflowers, 2021

# CANDACE DAY

Candace Day was born and raised in upstate South Carolina. Her work centers around her interest in multiple mediums that often soothe the soul. Day has shown in many exhibitions including Spartanburg Public Library's 13th Annual Collegiate Show and was a Volunteer Arts and Photography Juror for The Piedmont Interstate Fair. Day is pursuing her Bachelor's in Fine Arts at Converse University in Spartanburg where she is a recipient of the Converse Department of Art and Design Visual Arts Scholarship. Currently, Day spends mornings elbow deep in dirt as Dr. Mary Carlisle's clay assistant for the Converse Ceramics Department.

@candacedayart

*London's Retreat, 2025*



# MATTHEW GRAHOVAC

My name is Matthew Grahovac. I am a 34-year-old hiker and amateur landscape photographer. I currently live in Northern Virginia but am originally from the Midwest. My adventures take me to remote landscapes that evoke a sense of adventure and awe. Through my lens, I hope to capture these wild places and inspire others to explore, reconnect, and, most importantly, protect nature.

When I moved to Virginia, I was not much of an outdoorsy person, exploring the Appalachian Trail, however, awoke a hunger in me; since doing so, I have hiked over 1,000 miles including two National Scenic Trails.

“This photo was taken in the Dolly Sods Wilderness during the October 2024 solar storm, where the Northern Lights were visible all across the United States. It was my first time seeing them.”

<https://mlghikes.com/>

Instagram: @mlghikes



# ALICIA GREEN

A lover of people and their unique stories, Alicia found her way to photography to become a storyteller. Photography is a powerful tool in telling meaningful stories. Stopping time through the snap of a camera so we can find our place in it—her joy is alive in bringing life to the stories of the people around her and sharing them with others.

Alicia Green, Founder + Creator of EddyLine Creative, Navy veteran, wife and mother of two, knows how to see you and capture what matters. "It's my hope that the work I do lifts people up. Together we can see each other more clearly, and become the change we want to see in the world." - Alicia Green

<https://www.eddylinecreative.com/>

@\_eddylinecreative\_



*Road Trips through the Blue Ridge, 2025*

# ALEX KEITH

Alex Keith is an emerging textile artist working in Knoxville, Tennessee. Her practice reflects a background in garment sewing and maintains a dedication to slow, handmade textiles. By incorporating elements of nature into wearable art, her aim is to spark conversation about our relationship and connection to the natural world that is all around us. The Appalachian Mountains and nature of East Tennessee are her primary sources of inspiration. She incorporates hand-designed elements to garments to further emphasize the handmade nature of her works. She is currently experimenting in multidisciplinary techniques to create designs on fabric yardage, including cyanotype, relief block carving/printing, natural dyeing, and found object printing. She has received scholarships from Penland School of Craft and Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts.

@sweetbee\_studio

*Flower Beams, 2025*



# JULIANA MAURER

Juliana Maurer (she/they) is a Brooklyn-based artist, graphic designer, and community organizer. Raised in Asheville, North Carolina, their practice is deeply informed by the people and landscapes of Southern Appalachia, where much of their community organizing and creative work remains rooted. They focus on social engagement, collaborative and participatory art, artists' books, and experimental printed matter, drawing influence from DIY and protest movements. Maurer earned a BFA in Graphic Design from Appalachian State University in 2025 and is a co-founder of Mossy Press, a collaborative studio dedicated to small press publishing and social practice.

@juliana.q.m



*Held Divine, 2024*

# CARL NAJDEK

Carl Najdek is an emerging photographer based in western North Carolina. After earning a Ph.D. in political theory and pursuing a career in secondary education, he turned to photography as a way to think in conversation with places in addition to texts. His work explores moments of transition in landscape: rivers sliding past the old intake valves of mills, railroad tracks slowly reclaimed by vines and rust, hillsides and hollows engulfed in dense fog until they verge on the otherworldly.

Working mostly with a simple 50mm lens, Carl walks familiar back roads at first light, looking for small, joyful ruptures in ordinary scenes—light on water, a tree holding its ground, a forgotten structure becoming habitat. His ongoing project *Belly of the Blue Ridge*—which looks at the intersection of food, tradition, and place—is an attempt to honor Appalachia as a living home rather than a backdrop or stereotype.

“Two dahlias in my backyard turning toward the first light after a night of rain. Tending and photographing these flowers is an everyday kind of joy for me—quiet, repetitive, rooted in one small piece of Appalachian ground.”

<https://www.bellyoftheblueridge.com/photography>

@bellyoftheblueridge

*What Follows the Sun*, 2025



# MADDIE PARKER

Maddie Parker is an Appalachian artist born and raised in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. She works primarily in photography, ceramics, and textile. Creating art that portrays her connection to her family origin and heritage. Documenting the feeling of deep ties to the Appalachian region that she has always called home. Maddie Parker is currently enrolled at Caldwell Community College and will graduate with her Associate in Fine Arts in spring 2026.

“Taken up on a mountain, serving as a reminder to slow down and observe.”

@mads\_rae\_



# AMIE JO PLATT

A mom, a wife, a social worker, and a dabbler in photography, I love capturing the essence of the moment, my family and the world around me. I live in a holler of western Watauga. I truly enjoy my community here in the mountains—where I work, play, and do the day to day living thing.

@yourmtngirl



*Summer in the Holler, 2025*

# SCOTT RAWLS

Scott Rawls is an amateur photographer from North Carolina. He began developing skills as a photographer when his dad gave him his old Canon AE-1 Program 35mm SLR camera with a 50mm lens. Photographing with film forces him to take a mindful pause; he gets a special satisfaction from successfully capturing his vision. Rawls uses photography to remember the people and places that bring him happiness and a sense of belonging. His photography focuses on candid moments of joy, as well as the beauty of both the natural world and human-made environment.

“Two people fishing on Price Lake during autumn.”



*Autumn Anglers, 2025*

# KATIE RICHARD



Blue Ridge Botanica, 2024

Katie Richard is a photographer based in Asheville, North Carolina; her work is rooted in a lifelong fascination with the natural world. She earned her degree in photojournalism from UNC-Asheville and has spent many years photographing people, places, landscapes, and the quiet stories that live within everyday moments.

Richard's love of photography began at a young age, when she received her grandfather's old Polaroid camera. That early spark of curiosity has continued to guide her artistic journey. Today, her images are shaped by the same sense of wonder and reverence for nature. She draws inspiration from the Blue Ridge Mountains she calls home—making time to hike, garden, forage, and immerse herself in the landscapes that fuel her creativity.

Her work centers on the connections that bind us—to each other, to the land, and to the magic that exists in the spaces between. With an emphasis on authenticity and natural beauty, Katie seeks to create images that remind viewers of what is sacred, fleeting, and profoundly human.

“An Appalachian collection of plants and fungi gathered from my own backyard—each piece a small treasure. Foraging reminds me to slow down and appreciate the beauty that surrounds us.”

<https://www.katierichardphotography.com/>

@katierichardphotography

# KELSEY RISO

Kelsey Riso is a freelance fine art photographer based in Boone, North Carolina, where she is obtaining her BFA in photography at Appalachian State University. Her work explores identity, childhood, intimacy, and queerness through portraiture and landscapes. Riso collaborates and assists the artist Joshua White, making tin type portraits in his mobile dark room. Her work is held in multiple private collections throughout the country. Riso has exhibited her work at the Turchin Center for the Visual Arts, the Smith Gallery, and the Katherine Harper Gallery at Appalachian State University.

@kelsey.riso / @corporatetoothpaste.

*Untitled, 2024*



# SKIP SICKLER

Since graduating from Penn State University with a degree in Biology and an emphasis in Wildlife Ecology and Environmental Education, I have committed my life's work to the preservation of the natural world. Initially, I worked as an Interpretive Ranger with the National Park Service. After five years, I switched directions and began leading people on extended experiences through some of the most pristine wilderness areas of the United States, Canada, and Mexico as an Outward Bound Instructor.

Photography has been a constant throughout my life. Though primarily self-taught, I have attended numerous workshops and learning opportunities to hone my technical skills and to develop the "art of seeing." I have been published in a host of magazines and newspapers. My work, displayed in homes and businesses throughout the High Country and beyond, is available at a number of local galleries.

Since my earliest memories, I have sought solace in the outdoors. I have a particular fondness for witnessing the dawning of a new day. The sunrise, signaling unlimited possibilities, grabs me most strongly. It is with humble appreciation of the gifts I have been given that I present my photography for your enjoyment and inspiration. Please join me in the protection and preservation of wild areas. Such areas provide the spiritual and emotional release so needed in today's world.

"My breath was taken back when I spied this white egret sitting in the soft morning light on a branch overlooking a lake in Linville, NC. What a treat! What a gift! Yes, life is good! I am not sure it gets any better."

Facebook: [@skip.sickler1](https://www.facebook.com/@skip.sickler1)

*Great White Egret, 2025*



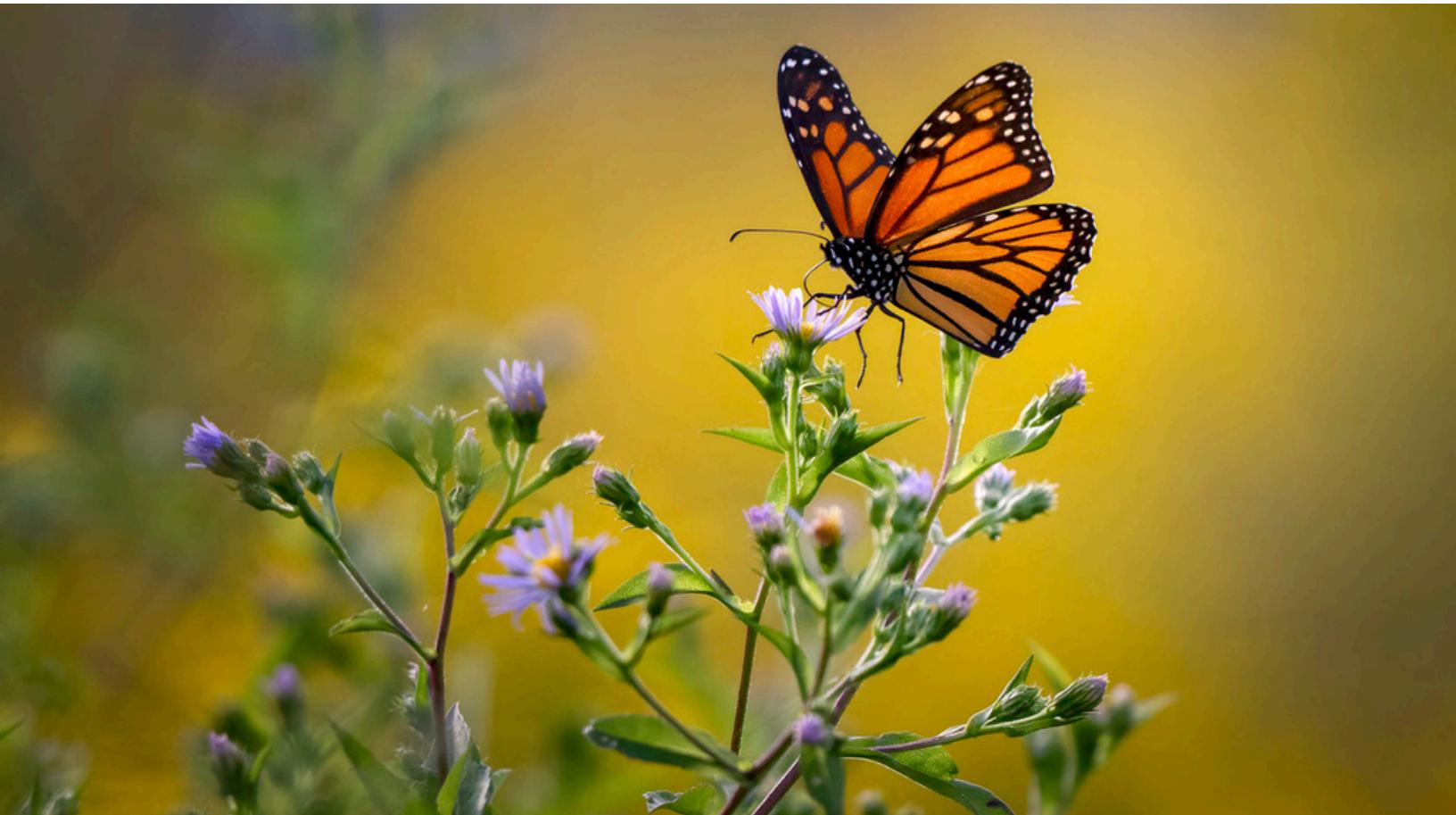
# SUSAN STAMEY

I am a nature photographer living in Seneca, South Carolina. This area gives me close access to the Blue Wall Preserve, the Blue Ridge Mountains, and unlimited photo opportunities. I enjoy landscape photography but also have interests in macro and wildlife photography, with most of my emphasis on birds. As a child, my grandmother taught all her grandchildren the basic birds and that interest has continued over the years.

“I have a favorite spot in Brevard for photographing butterflies and found this monarch flitting through the goldenrod at the golden hour. I wanted to photograph the butterfly in flight and had many opportunities in purely magical light.”

<https://beancountessphoto.com/>

@beancountessphoto



*Fall Monarch in Goldenrod, 2025*

# EMILY SUIT

Emily Suit, an artist from the coast of North Carolina, works primarily with film photography. Suit's recent work showcases their love for double exposures while capturing something that feels like a memory slowly fading away. Suit's love for both nature and the people they surround themselves with is evident in their work.

"The sun was hot on my skin, playing in the river was the only priority."

<https://emilysuit.mmm.page/>

@emily.suit



*Rachel, 2024*

# MEG ELIZABETH WARD

I am a self-taught multidisciplinary visual artist born in the Appalachian mountains. Utilizing 35mm and medium format film, I aim my lens at my native roots, capturing the heartbeat and pulse of human connection while treating each frame with sincerity and reverence.

<https://megward.darkroom.com/>

@appalachiaonfilm



*Nature Boy, 2021*

# EDWARD WILLIAMS

Edward Williams is a visual arts student at Caldwell Community College whose work centers on human connection, resilience, and the quiet emotional atmospheres found in everyday life. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, Williams approaches photography with a deep awareness of identity, belonging, and the ways people grow through relationships and change.

Rooted in the landscapes and lived textures of the Appalachian region, Williams blends candid observation with thoughtful staging, choosing whichever approach best reveals the heart of a scene. Their images often explore themes of tenderness, transformation, and the balance between intimacy and independence.

Williams turns their lens toward the small, unguarded moments that emerge from the landscapes and communities around them. Their work reflects the tender shifts within families, the presence of grief, the unexpected openings of joy, and the ongoing evolution of everyday places. Each image is an invitation to pause, feel, and recognize something deeply human.

<https://kastielphotography.com/>

@kastiel999

*Zephyra, 2024*

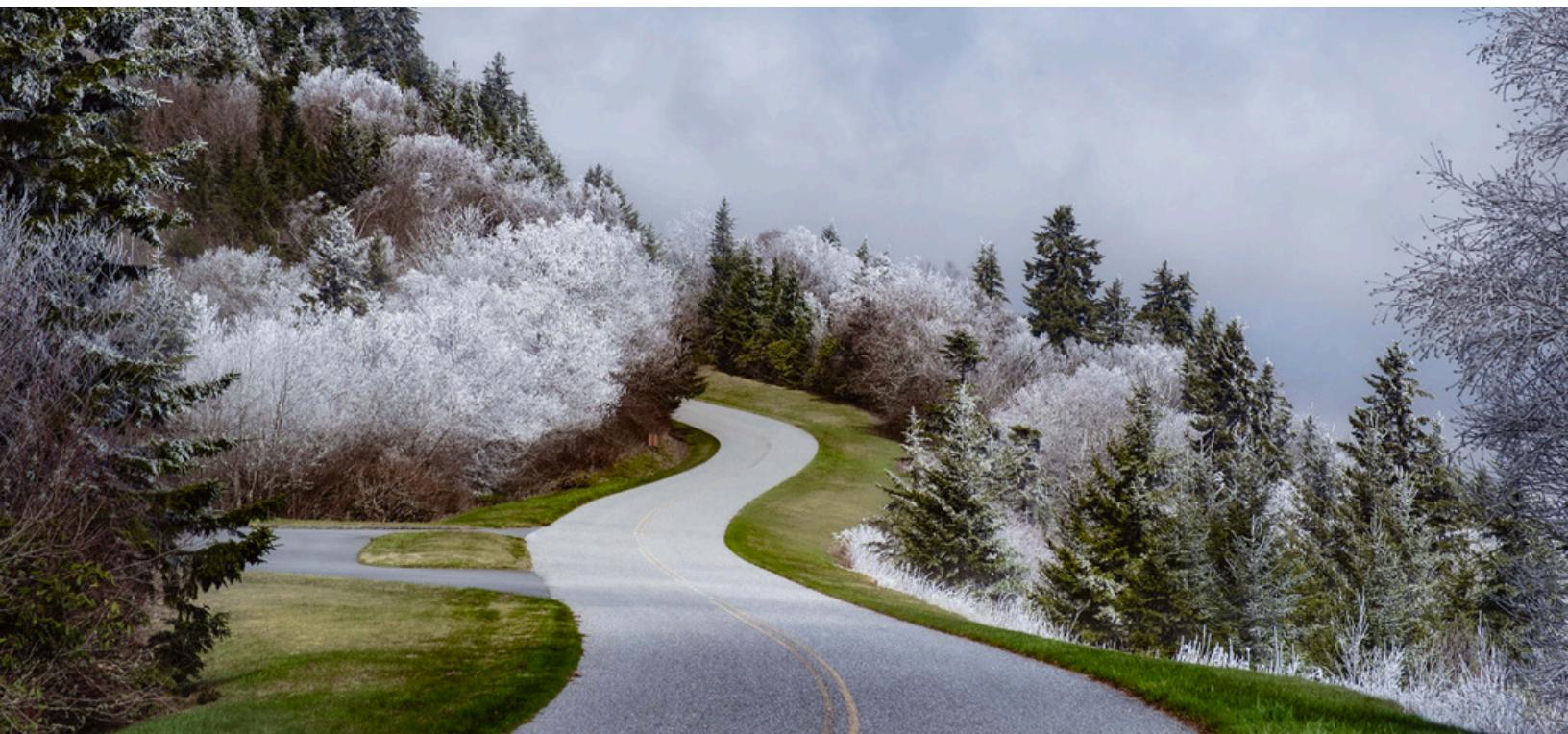


# JENNIFER WOODDY

I am a landscape and nature photographer deeply rooted in Western North Carolina. Growing up among these mountains, I've found endless inspiration in their quiet resilience and changing moods. My work is an intimate exploration of the region's serene landscapes and natural beauty. My artistic practice is centered in gratitude and anchored in patience and consistency.

I savor the element of atmospheric surprise that comes with landscape photography. I love the solitude of waking up before sunrise, navigating to a remote location, and harmoniously adapting to the conditions showcased as the light begins to kiss the landscape. Above all, I strive to capture my reverence for this land and honor nature's power and impermanence in every frame.

“As I snaked up the Blue Ridge Parkway in the dark early one morning, I noticed what I thought to be a light dusting of snow. The sun illuminated a rare and delightful scene: the prior night’s hoar frost coated every branch of every tree, but left the ground bare. I absolutely love the incongruity of the frigid trees and vibrant, freshly-mowed grass in the image.”



*Hoar Frost Harmony, 2025*

# ABOUT THE JUROR

## TY MURRAY



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 artivism, 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.

@tys\_eye

[www.tyseye.com](http://www.tyseye.com)

*A Joyful Noise* serves as a listening companion to the photographs in this exhibition, introducing a rhythmic response to the lands, hands, and hearts that embody Appalachia.

Curated by juror Ty Murray (DJ Soularia), the soundtrack weaves together songs and stories from vinyl records steeped in joy and full of soul. As viewers move through the gallery, the music offers an additional sensory dimension to the exhibition experience.



*Access the recording by clicking the album cover or scanning the QR code!*

**THE SUNROOM  
WITH DJ SOULARIA**



**"A JOYFUL NOISE"**

# INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE

## COMMUNITY PLAYLIST WITH DJ SOULARIA "LET YOUR JOY SING"

Music has a way of holding memory, mood, and meaning. A song can feel like home, like release, like a moment you return to again and again. As you move through this exhibition, notice what moments resonate with your own sense of **Appalachian joy**.

*Is there a photograph that feels like a rhythm?*

*A color that reminds you of a song?*

*An image that makes you want to hum, sway, or simply listen?*

Drawing from those moments, we invite you to **add songs to our shared community playlist** using the QR code below. Choose a tune that brings you joy: something that lightens your spirit, grounds you, or sends you soaring. Your selection doesn't need to fit any genre or era, it only needs to feel true to you.



This playlist is a collective offering, built one song at a time. Like a shared recipe card or a song passed across generations, each contribution adds to a growing archive of connection. Add your song and let it sing alongside the others!



# ARTTALK & AWARDS

with Juror Ty Murray

FRIDAY, MARCH 6 | 5 PM  
TCVA LECTURE HALL 1102

*image credit: Ty Murray*

# SOUND PERFORMANCE

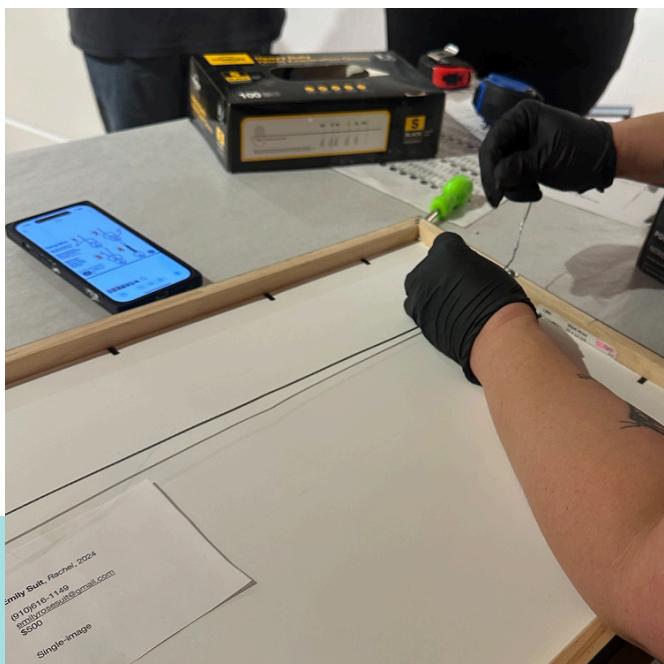
with Juror Ty Murray / DJ Soularia

FRIDAY, MARCH 6 | 7 PM  
BICKERS GALLERY

# BEHIND THE SCENES

A huge thanks to Jody Servon's Art Management Exhibitions class for their help with the installation!







# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**THE BOTTOM** / [HTTPS://WWW.THEBOTTOMKNOX.COM/](https://www.thebottomknox.com/)

**WAYMAKERS COLLECTIVE** / [HTTPS://WWW.WAYMAKERSCOLLECTIVE.ORG/](https://www.waymakerscollective.org/)

**TY MURRAY** / [HTTPS://WWW.TYSEYE.COM/](https://www.tyseye.com/)

**APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN  
PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION**

**ARCHIVE** / [HTTPS://WWW.APPMTNPHOTOCOMP.ORG/](https://www.appmtnphotocomp.org/)

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# THANK YOU

FROM THE TURCHIN CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

The Turchin Center for the Visual Arts at Appalachian State University engages visitors from the university, community, nation and beyond in creating unique experiences through dynamic and accessible exhibition, education, outreach and collection programs. These programs inspire and support a lifelong engagement with the visual arts and create opportunities for participants to learn more about themselves and the world around them.

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