ROOTS. GROUND. WATER. SEEDS.

21ST APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

FEBRUARY 2 - JUNE 1, 2024

BICKERS FAMILY GALLERY

Robert Parker, Future of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians
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Juror’s Statement


Appalachia. A region. An idea. An imaginative and geopolitical landscape with real land(s) and real people(s)—those living, those who have passed on, and those to come. These mountains, valleys and streams, hollers and cities, dirt roads and railroad tracks texture our lives and craft our many histories. They build a felt sense of place.

My story (a snippet): I grew up not in the mountains, but always going to them—a ritual homecoming as we gathered each month with my Daddy’s family in the Swannanoa Valley. As Daddy and all but one of his siblings have transitioned to the ancestral realm, I often lay my eyes on these hills and valleys (IRL and in my dreamworld) to center myself and to return home to them...to me.

The stories reflected in these photographs reveal the specificity of you/me/him/her/they as well as the common and collective (the we/us). Whether embodied by grandma’s hands, animals grazing, raindrops resting on leaves, banjos fixin’ to be played, painted church windows, rebel flags or carrots pulled fresh from earth, they call us to question. To dream. To remember. To muse. Who’s at the center of these lands? Who’s at the center of this story? What is the story, here? What is this place? And what if there’s not one story—there isn’t y’all—but a multiplicity of narratives that bob and weave, overlap, criss-cross and diverge?
“Roots, Ground, Water, Seeds” is an effort to amplify visual artists whose photography considers our many and intertwining ancestral roots; our connection and relationship to the land, the ground we walk on, the lives these lands have supported and the way Appalachian earth demands and yearns for our conscious care. Here, you dip into the waterways and communities that sustain and repair us and witness the seeds that birth new life/futures, rejuvenate our soil and spirits, and spark necessary political change. Here in this place, you/we/I bear witness to a personal and collective archive. Come in. Listen. See.

— E. Gale Greenlee
E. Gale Greenlee, Ph.D. (she/her/hers) is a writer-educator, an independent children’s literature and Black Girlhood Studies scholar, and a recent teacher-scholar in residence at the bell hooks center at Berea College. Born in Greensboro, NC, she is the granddaughter of farmers from rural South Carolina and a descendent of five generations of Affrilachians who called Western North Carolina home. Broadly interested in pop culture, Black Appalachian literature, memory work and Black feminist legacy keeping, Gale is a longtime arts advocate whose childhood dream was to travel across the U.S. in an RV selling her art.

Her public humanities work focuses on curating literary and cultural programs for community spaces, and she is committed to creating ethical collaborations and weaving art in her world. From teaching courses such as “Women of Color: Art, Justice and Joy” at The Ohio State University, organizing artist talks, co-curating a permanent installation at the bell hooks center, to writing about Black craft as a Center for Craft Archival Research Fellow, Gale works to amplify the artistic traditions of historically marginalized communities.
About AMPC

Following last year’s 20th Anniversary Celebration for the Appalachian Mountain Photography Competition (AMPC), the Turchin Center for the Visual Arts, in partnership with University Recreation, is pleased to host this year’s 21st Appalachian Mountain Photography Competition exhibition.

Inspired by the Banff Centre’s Mountain Photo Competition (https://www.banffcentre.ca/mountain-photo-essay-competition), this year’s AMPC features three series finalists alongside 23 single-image finalists. Highlighting the AMPC’s vision to support the expansion of Appalachian narratives, artists submitted work aligned with this year’s theme of “Roots, Ground, Water, Seeds” chosen by juror Dr. E. Gale Greenlee.

The Appalachian Mountain Photography Competition is made possible through the generous sponsorship of the Mast General Store. Additional support comes from Virtual Blue Ridge, Appalachian Voices, Bistro Roca, the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, Footsloggers Outfitters, Peabody’s, Stickboy Bread.
Invitation to Create

For this year’s exhibition, Dr. E. Gale Greenlee, chose “Roots, Ground, Water, Seeds” as the theme for submissions. She encouraged artwork that relates to:

+ connection with the land
+ familial ancestral roots
+ groundedness
+ life-giving ways of being
+ activism as seeds of change

Choose one of these topics and write/draw about how you connect to it. Use the artmaking materials available to you to create a piece that represents how this theme shows up in your own life.
Series Finalists
Frederica Georgia

Bio

Born in upstate NY, Freddie became a ‘mountain gal’ when she attended App State in the 70’s. With her first photo course she was hooked on taking the beauty of the mountains and translating it to film. With a BS in Photojournalism from Syracuse University in 1980, Freddie became a Southern Living staff photographer, shooting travel stories. She went on to travel worldwide shooting stock and editorial photos from California, then blissfully returned to the NC mountains in ’91 to begin a freelance career of editorial, portraiture, and fine art. For 10 years she owned an art gallery with her ex-husband. In 2008 Freddie moved to Ashe County where she’s focused on mountain farm life and in particular a body of work capturing animal and vegetable subjects called Animal Garden Shop.
Frederica Georgia

Series Statement

I met Ann Rose in ’08 when I photographed her for a story on organic growers. Her wit and farm chick grit captured my heart. 15 years later I knew she embodied the theme “Roots, Ground, Water, Seeds”. Ann’s been off-the-grid for 17 years as a single farmer on top of 28 steep acres called Rose Mountain Farm. Now 56, she chose this lifestyle after 20 years as a nurse and single mother raising 3 girls.

Ann has survived two close calls with death but preservers, making her living at veggie markets, teaching old time food prep classes, CSA, and grant writing. She is a progressive activist in Lansing, NC and running for county commissioner. Next summer Ann plans to kayak the New River to Kanawha, OH then Mississippi to the Gulf to raise awareness over our critical water shortages, including her own.
Frederica Georgia

Ann Rose at the Lansing Farmer’s Market, 2023
Dye-sublimation print on aluminum

Self-described as a free-range, barefoot, pony riding, tomgirl, Ann has been a local presence for 27 years in the tiny town of Lansing in Ashe County, NC. She helped obtain grant money for a park in Lansing where the farmers market is now held and is starting a food co-op in the spring of 2024. Ann’s commitment, grit and determination to living a healthy and simple, but rich, mountain lifestyle is beyond admirable and has rubbed off on many.
Frederica Georgia
Ann with field-helper friends working the soil for a garlic crop, 2023
Dye-sublimation print on aluminum

Plans for 2024 include building primitive shelters for traveling campers to experience life on Rose Mountain Farm.
Ann has four greenhouse tunnels and, even in such enclosed spaces, predators (especially groundhogs) are a nuisance. Her market specialty crops include tomatoes, potatoes, greens, sunflowers, herbs and ginger.
Frederica Georgia
Ann’s root cellar is her lifeblood, 2023
Dye-sublimation print on aluminum

She cans veggies week after week during growing season so her shelves will be stocked for winter. From her hand on the shelf on down to her feet, Ann dug by hand in the hard, rocky earth to create her root cellar.
Frederica Georgia  
Naps are sweet, 2023  
Dye-sublimation print on aluminum

Naps are sweet in Ann’s cozy 400-square-foot home, especially with a 20-year-old little pal named Katie. When I approached Ann about this project, she had been sleeping in a tent to guard her animals from coyote attacks at night. She has since acquired 2 Great Pyrenees puppies who will take over guarding the flock. Surely Ann is the only person in the county who would volunteer at a fancy political fundraiser pouring wine for the wealthy, then go home to sleep in a tent so the predators won’t kill her goats.
Frederica Georgia
Ann with her herd of sheep, goats, a horse and a donkey, 2023
Dye-sublimation print on aluminum

They are pasture-fed and self-sufficient on her 28 acres through the growing season. During the winter months, Ann will get big, round bales loaded on her truck, then break them open and drive ahead to unroll and off-load them. She has thought up many clever ways of handling farm chores solo. Often in the summer, she’ll have interns helping with her crops but more often than not, she works alone.
I am originally from Memphis, Tennessee though I have lived coast to coast in the United States. I have had a long career as a Registered Nurse, but have always held time for studying various arts. I moved to Northeast Tennessee in 2006 and attempted to have a farm while continuing my health care career. It was here that I became interested in photography, inspired by nature and wildlife around me. I started studying independently until I had the opportunity to study photography at East Tennessee State University. I am currently continuing my studies independently and with a mentor.
These photos are from a work in progress. While at ETSU I made a series called "Redefining Landscapes" which was an exploration of human impact on landscapes in Unicoi County, Tennessee. I wanted to expand on that idea, so I started this project to explore this region of Appalachia and expand to Western North Carolina, Southwest, Virginia, and Southeast Kentucky. Rather than just looking at human impact on the landscape, I intend to include landscapes and historical and current reflections of life in this region. I started this project in the summer of 2023 and intend to work on it long term. These photos are early efforts in the project. A motivating factor is the current influx of people from other regions of the country and subsequent changes. I hope to preserve some history.
David O'Daniel
*Intense. Highway 107, Washington County, Tennessee, 2023*
Silver halide print
David O’Daniel
House of Prayer. Old State Road 34, Limestone, Tennessee, 2023
Silver halide print
David O'Daniel
A Rail Runs Through It. Highway 197, Mitchell County, North Carolina, 2023
Silver halide print
David O’Daniel

Devil’s Looking Glass. Highway 81, Unicoi County, Tennessee, 2023

Silver halide print
David O'Daniel
*Old Industrial Site, Elizabethton, Tennessee, 2023*
Silver halide print
David O'Daniel
Affection. Limestone Cove, Unicoi County, Tennessee, 2023
Silver halide print
Kelsey Riso

Bio

I am a Fine Art Photography student at Appalachian State University. I inherited my love for photography from my mother who always had a camera in my face since I was born. Since being in school for photography, I have learned the difference between looking and seeing and I hope that my work allows viewers to do the same.
Through this series of images I am hoping to show the different ways in which people move on and leave things behind, and although the thing itself has stayed put, life has continued to happen around it and to it.
Kelsey Riso
Wear 1, 2023
Archival inkjet print
Kelsey Riso
Wear 2, 2023
Archival inkjet print
Kelsey Riso
Wear 3, 2023
Archival inkjet print
Kelsey Riso
Wear 4, 2023
Archival inkjet print
Kelsey Riso
Wear 5, 2023
Archival inkjet print
Kelsey Riso
Wear 6, 2023
Archival inkjet print
Single-Image Finalists
Matt Ballain
Waterside Chat, 2021
Archival inkjet print
Ken Barrett
Ancient Roots, 2016
Archival inkjet print

kenbarrettphotos.com
Evan Bates
*sunday's afternoon, 2023*
Archival inkjet print

evanbatesphoto.com
Instagram: @ catkiller___
Christopher Burton
Yellow Tomatoes, 2021
Archival inkjet print

cavallettomagazine.com
Heather Cormons
Sisters With Dolly Aspirations, 2022
Archival inkjet print

https://www.heathercormons.com/
Jax Gaglianese-Woody
*Not A Sea Anemone*, 2023
Archival inkjet print

Instagram: jax_g_woody; iNaturalist: jaxsonii
Carrie Hanrahan
Female Farmer in Polk County, NC, 2022
Archival inkjet print

https://www.carriehanrahanphotography.com/
Instagram- @carriehanrahanphotography
Caleb Hayes
*Childhood Relic*, 2021
Archival inkjet print

https://calebhayesphoto.com/
Instagram: _calebhayes_
Tucker Hibbitts

Blue Ridge Beauty, 2023
Archival inkjet print

Instagram: soulshinestudio62
Ben Hill

Honey Cures Everything, 2022
Dye-sublimation print on aluminum

Instagram @bennial8966
Cary Hitchcock
Old Church, 2023
Archival inkjet print

Instagram @cary.hitchcock
Cinda Holscombach-Ebner

*Slugs in Love*, 2023
Archival inkjet print

[https://www.cindaleigh.com/](https://www.cindaleigh.com/)
Instagram: @cindaleighart
Lauren Kern
*Full send on a gray day, 2023*
Archival inkjet print

Hollowayalchemy.Etsy.com
Instagram: Hollowayalchemy
Ann Kunz
*The Quilter’s Hands*, 2022
Archival inkjet print

[akunz.myportfolio.com](akunz.myportfolio.com)
Instagram: @annmorgan_kunz
Mark Mahoney
Appalachian Farm – Gray, Tennessee, 2021
Archival inkjet print
Tyler McRae
Unconditional Love, 2023
Archival inkjet print

https://tylermcrae.net/
Instagram: @tyleramcrae
Sophie Mead
On Old Watauga River Road, 2023
Archival inkjet print

https://sophiemead54.wixsite.com/sophiemeadmedia
Instagram: @sopherjoee
Robert Parker
*Future of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians, 2023*
Archival inkjet print
Becky Price
Appalachian Roots, 2023
Archival inkjet print

Instagram & Facebook: @On_The_Mountain_Photography
Katie Richard
Oil & water, 2023
Archival inkjet print

https://www.katierichardphotography.com/
IG: @katie_mtn_mermaid, @katierichardphotography
Robert Seevers
Love at First Flight, 2023
Silver gelatin print

Instagram: @robertseevers2000
Mitzi Simmons
As Above, So Below: A New Year Dawns, 2023
Archival inkjet print
Michael Snyder
Maxine Young Near the Train Tracks, 2022
Archival inkjet print

https://www.michaelosnyder.com/thequeensofqueencity
https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/queens-queen-city
Instagram: michaelosnyder
Behind the Scenes
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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