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and has a warm nostalgic and atmospheric feel, bringing a humanity to the subject that is hard to describe.

As she considers the future, Sarah is hopeful for the region’s recovery. She is looking forward to a solo show of her Marshall tintypes at the Weizenblatt Gallery, on the Mars Hill University campus, in September. She is in her second year working on her next book cataloguing the 100 best hikes in North Carolina. “Getting paid to hike, write, and photograph is really a trifecta of things I love,” she tells us. “It has been a great experience to see so much of what this beautiful state has to offer, from the mountains to the coast.”

Reflecting on the experience of the past year, she says, “I’ve always made art, and I don’t see that changing. I had a lot of uncertainty for this project, but I went for it anyway. I think this experience reminds me to just keep doing the darn things - make the work and challenge yourself to get uncomfortable again.”

1 Tintypes are an early form of photography introduced in Paris in 1853 by Adolphe Alexandre Martin. Through a chemical process that creates a direct positive on a thin



Luke, photo by Sarah Jones Decker. Photo credit: courtesy of Sarah Jones Decker.

sheet of metal, a tintype creates an image that is a camera original. Unless otherwise fitted with a specific type of mirror, tintypes create a mirror image, reversed left to right from reality.

Art Matters is the North Carolina Arts Council’s monthly multi-media newsletter that features profiles on artists, arts industry news, must-see North Carolina arts events, and information about our grants and programs. For further information visit (ncarts.org).

Appalachian State University in Boone, NC, Offers New Exhibitions

Appalachian State University in Boone, NC, will present several new exhibitions on view at the Turchin Center for the Visual Art including: *Image and Music: John Cohen*, on view in the Bickers Gallery, from June 6 through Dec. 13, 2025 and *I Remember: Elizabeth Stone*, on view in the Mayer Gallery, fro June 6 through Nov. 1, 2025.

The following is a curatorial statement, “Photographer, filmmaker, musician, and folklorist, John Cohen visited Appalachian State University to play his guitar with The Dust Busters during the Black Banjo Gathering in March 2010. Eli Smith of the Down Home Radio Show captured the performance in photographs. Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies and Co-Director of the University Documentary Film Services, Tom Hansell, has video recordings of the performance and interviews with Cohen from his visit to campus.”

“The Turchin Center for the Visual Arts is pleased to partner with John Cohen’s extended family and L. Parker Stephenson who represents Cohen’s musical estate, to bring an exhibition of Cohen’s Appalachian photographs to the Appalachian State University campus. The installation will be accompanied by extended programming showcasing films made by and about John Cohen as well as performances of traditional Appalachian music. Many of John Cohen’s books will be available for browsing in the Turchin Center’s Moskowitz Gallery during open hours.”

The following artist’s biography is courtesy of L. Parker Stephenson Photographs and the John Cohen family:

Born in Queens, New York, John Cohen (1932-2019) was a true polymath. Among his many talents were photography, filmmaking, writing, music, folklore, and ethnomusicology.

Cohen studied painting at Yale University under Josef Albers and photography with Herbert Matter, receiving an MFA in the 1950s. Cohen also researched indigenous Andean weaving in Peru. His photographs of Peru would be the first photographic exhibition held at the Yale University Art Gallery, shown alongside textiles by Anni Albers. Parallel with his research in Peru, Cohen’s interests in old-time music led him to make numerous field recordings in Appalachia. These recordings are an important document of rural culture, contemporaneous with those collected by Alan Lomax and Harry Smith, now held by the Library of Congress.

Cohen was a founding member of the famed New Lost City Ramblers in 1958, which began a long career as a performer. His photographs of Roscoe Holcomb, Woody Guthrie, Muddy Waters, Elizabeth Cotten, a young Bob Dylan, and many other notable musicians, provide a visual window



“Doc Watson at Deep Gap, NC”, 1962 by John Cohen

into this rich aural world. His 1962 film, *High Lonesome Sound*, became synonymous with that music. Cohen performed regularly with the Downhill Strugglers and was often called upon as a resource for ethnomusicologist scholars and researchers alike.

Herbert and Mercedes Matter would provide introductions for Cohen to the nascent artistic communities in downtown Manhattan when he moved to East Ninth Street and Third Avenue in 1957. The location would be fortuitous: dirt-cheap rents adjacent to the bars and artists’ clubs in Greenwich Village, and the scene of numerous artist-run galleries and performance spaces. Cohen lived next door to Mary and Robert Frank, who would ask Cohen to photograph Frank’s first film, *Pull My Daisy* (1959), co-directed with painter Alfred Leslie and narrated by Jack Kerouac. Cohen emphasized the ambience and mood among the cast and crew, which included Larry Rivers, Delphine Seyrig, Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, David Amran, Richard Bellamy, and Alice Neel.

John Cohen began making photographs in 1954 when the only work for a photographer was in photojournalism or advertising, neither of which he wanted to do. Rather, he made personal photographs, documenting things which were important to him: mostly artists and musicians. His photographic inquiries lead him to the Andes and to Appalachia, where he photographed traditional musicians in their homes. In addition to gaining fine art notoriety, his images were used on record covers, in television and movie productions, and later informed his film projects. With his long-time publisher, Steidl, Cohen published several photography books.

Cohen was featured in over forty solo exhibitions across the US; his work was central to group exhibitions presented at the Pompidou Centre in Paris, the Grey Art Gallery at New York University, the Museum of the City of New York, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, among others. His photographs are in the permanent collections of twenty institutions and his ninth monograph, *Speed Bumps on a Dirt Road*, was released in September 2019. Invested

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This Is How It Happened
Margaret Curtis
May 18 – June 27, 2025

upstairs
[artspace]

49 S. Trade St., Tryon, NC
Reception: May 18, 2-4 pm
UpstairsArtspace.org

in the future of the field, Cohen started the photography program at SUNY Purchase in 1972 where he taught for 25 years. His photographic estate is represented by L. Parker Stephenson in New York.

The curatorial statement for the exhibit, *I Remember: Elizabeth Stone* follows, “Photographer Elizabeth Sone thinks deeply about community connections. Sharing in the participatory multi-generational stories of *I Remember* is an opportunity for Turchin Center visitors to connect with extended communities across North Carolina. The negatives and faded 35mm slides that Stone gathers through donations and then weaves into ethereal sculptural forms create a shared vision which is both specific and anonymous. Her installations include identifiable individuals; at the same time, we see ourselves as part of a collective whole. Memories recede and reemerge. They are bright and fade with time. The precious instances we capture on film are often the only traces of people and places no longer with us. Reminiscing keeps memories vividly alive. Stone will work with photography students from the Department of Art at Appalachian State University to create additional pieces for the installation, bringing Boone into her extended North Carolina reverie.”

“Elizabeth Stone is a Montana-based visual artist exploring potent themes of memory and time deeply rooted within the ambiguity of photography. Stone’s work has been exhibited and is held in collections including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; Center for Creative Photography, Tucson, Arizona; Cassilhaus, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Yellowstone Art Museum, Billings, Montana; Candela Collection, Richmond, Virginia; Archive 192, New York, New York; and the Nevada Museum of Art Special Collections Library, Reno, Nevada. Fellowships include Cassilhaus, Ucross Foundation, Jentel Arts, Willapa Bay AIR, the National Park Service, and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts through the Montana Fellowship award from the LEAW Foundation (2019). Process drives Stone’s work as she continues to push and pull at the edge of what defines



Elizabeth Stone, “The Stars Know Your Name” (left) & “Steal the Elixir and Run” (right)

and how we see the photograph.

Stone offered the following artist statement, “Babies, funerals, graduations, school holiday programs, birthday cakes, cats lying on owners, wilderness adventures, vacations, weddings, friends, laughing, family gatherings, first day of school...the images in these artworks, captured on small frames of photographic film, reveal moments in our lives, slices of time that stir memories and encourage reflection.”

“The *I Remember* Project is a participatory multi-generational community engagement project inspired by Joe Brainard’s book, *I Remember*. It was conceived during the imposed isolation of the pandemic in 2020 and created during an artist-in-residency at Cassilhaus in Chapel Hill, NC, in October 2021.”

“These artworks incorporate thousands of photographic negatives and slides that were collected from generous community members in Central North Carolina communities,” adds Stone.

“Negatives were found gathering dust in old wooden crates in a garage, in old notebooks filled with personal history, in boxes under beds, tucked away in basement storage, and piled up in envelopes in a desk drawer. Negatives and prints were also donated by present day students working in the wet darkroom, embracing the tactile process of traditional photography as an alternative means of expression.”

“While binding these materials together into the final artworks, I thought a lot about what defines a community and how we gather in meaningful ways. The sharing

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