

WONDERLANDS

TEMA STAUFFER

Reece Museum — January 12 – May 22, 2026

Wonderlands explores the intersection of tourism, religion, and folklore with natural beauty, preservation, and decay in southern Appalachia. The title of the series draws inspiration from novelist Charles Baxter's collection of essays about fiction writing, *Wonderlands: Essays on the Life of Literature*, in which he describes settings that reflect a heightened psychological atmosphere in specific literary works. "Wonderlands are caused by, or are expressive of, emotional instability, estrangement, fantasy, and solitude," Baxter writes.

The exhibition series focuses on settings that evoke characteristics of wonderlands in counties of western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee, and southeastern Virginia. Roadside attractions, religious iconography, relics, and verdant landscapes create a psychic experience that is at once eerily still and emotionally charged. The most recent photographs in the series capture tragic destruction against the backdrop of natural beauty after Hurricane Helene devastated parts of the region in 2024. In conversation with the photographs are a selection of Appalachian artifacts from the Reece Museum's collection, creating a unique dialogue that connects visual art and material culture.

Tema Stauffer is a photographer whose work examines the social, economic, and cultural landscape of American spaces. She is an associate professor of photography at East Tennessee State University. Her work has been exhibited throughout the United States and internationally. In 2018, Daylight Books published a monograph of her *Upstate* series portraying the lingering legacy of American industrial and agricultural history in and around Hudson, New York. The book was nominated for the Unveil'd Photobook Award 2018 and the prints were exhibited at ETSU's Reece Museum, Tracey Morgan Gallery, ilon Art Gallery, and Hudson Hall. Her second monograph, *Southern Fiction*, was published by Daylight Books in 2022. *Southern Fiction* has been exhibited by Auburn University's Biggin Gallery, Tracey Morgan Gallery, ETSU's Reece Museum, MTSU's Baldwin Photographic Gallery, Winthrop University's Rutledge Gallery, Upstairs Artspace, and Chattanooga State Community College's Denise Heinly Art Center. Her work is represented by Tracey Morgan Gallery in Asheville, North Carolina. Production of the *Wonderlands* exhibition was made possible by a Research Funding Program Award (2024) and a Summer Research Award (2024) from the College of Arts and Sciences at East Tennessee State University.

Image list on reverse.



Buried House, Mill Creek Road, Marshall, NC
2022
39.5x50in archival pigment print



Warrior Motel, Whittier, NC
2022
38x30in archival pigment print



Pink Motel, Cherokee, NC
2022
30x38in archival pigment print



The Cherokee Trader Motel, Cherokee, NC
2022
38x30in archival pigment print



Wigwam Motel, Cherokee, NC
2022
30x38in archival pigment print



Arrowhead Motel, Cherokee, NC
2022
30x38in archival pigment print



Trump Store, Pigeon Forge, TN
2023
30x38in archival pigment print



Cherokee Chief Muffler Man, Cherokee, NC
2022
38x30in archival pigment print



Boiled PNuts & Pork Rinds Stand, US 74, NC
2022
39.5x50in archival pigment print



House with Red Tin Roof, Hot Springs, NC
2022
30x38in archival pigment print



Red Barn, Madison County, NC
2023
39.5x50in archival pigment print



Nina Simone Childhood Home, Tryon, NC
2023
30x38in archival pigment print



Flxible Bus, Mars Hill, NC
2023
30x38in archival pigment print



Shed with Tin Roof, Marshall, NC
2023
30x38in archival pigment print



Lloyd Chandler's Barn, Sodom, NC
2023
30x38in archival pigment print



Remnants, Lloyd Chandler's Barn, Sodom, NC
2023
30x38in archival pigment print



Log House, Marshall, NC
2022
30x38in archival pigment print



Wriggle Room, Murphy, NC
2024
30x38in archival pigment print



Emmaus Addiction Treatment, Weber City, VA
2023
30x38in archival pigment print



Bee Tree Christian Church, Swannanoa, NC
2025
30x38in archival pigment print



Black Truck, Nolichucky River, Erwin, TN
2024
30x38in archival pigment print



Riverview Baptist Church, Erwin, TN
2024
30x38in archival pigment print

Prices

19 x 24in prints — \$2000 (edition of 8)
30 x 38in prints — \$3600 (edition of 8), \$3950 framed
39.5 x 50in prints — \$5000 (edition of 3), \$5500 framed

All sales are handled through Tracey Morgan Gallery, Asheville, NC. Please contact info@traceymorgangallery.com for details on purchasing work.