

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*Barry Stone: Lost Pines*

September 17 – November 12, 2022

Lora Reynolds is pleased to announce *Lost Pines*, an exhibition of new photographs by Barry Stone—the artist’s first presentation at the gallery.

Recently, on his regular evening walk, Barry Stone saw a wisp of smoke and a flicker of orange where it shouldn’t be. No one was around. He called 911, climbed a fence, banged on a door, beckoned a woman out of her home. She was taking a nap after having a chicken biscuit, she said without much concern, unaware of the growing blaze at the back of her house. Stone battled the Gordian Knot of a tangled garden hose. They waited for the fire department to arrive. Everyone was fine.

This exhibition revolves around two *other* fires, but the anecdote above reaches toward an introduction of who Stone is—a big-hearted, sensitive observer—and to how his constitution informs his work.

Stone makes photographs—many of them diaristic, capturing mundane moments (that seem sprinkled with fairy dust) shared with his family in central Texas or coastal Maine or somewhere in between. He makes books and exhibitions of these pictures. He is a musician, a devoted husband, an adoring father of two daughters, a generous professor with a gift for being exceedingly present with his students (or anyone, really). Conversation with Stone is always a delight, albeit a vigorous one, and involves scrambling to keep up as he forges surprising connections between images and ideas and history and feelings. How does he know so much about so much? When does he have time to do all of what he does? Does he sleep?

Every week, like clockwork, Stone sends out an email announcing an updated installment of Porch Swing Orchestra—a spartan website that features only *one* of his photographs paired with a lone audio recording, in which he strums his guitar from his front porch (or “other surprising places”) for a couple of minutes, with ambiance provided by the birds in his yard, a thunderstorm rolling in, or the splashing swimmers and giggling sunbathers at Barton Springs. Each new image and track replaces the previous week’s—visitors have to put in some effort to find any material from the past—which lends the project a gently defiant ephemerality at odds with the bottomless feeds ubiquitous across the internet today. Each PSO announcement comes with two or three casual sentences of context—it feels like a private text message, like Stone is saying a quick hello to deliver a gift he made just for you.

Another regular practice of Stone’s, databending, involves altering the code of a photograph in a text-editing program, which affects the appearance of the image in unpredictable ways. These pictures look glitchy—semi-scrambled, selectively technicolored—almost as if the source file were corrupted, but beautifully. (Each picture shot with a digital camera is made

up of hundreds of thousands of alphanumeric characters that tell a computer how to render the scene in front of the camera's lens. This code is comparable to a film negative in analog photography.) For Stone to consider one of his databent pictures a success, the aberrations he induced (mostly blindly) will have contributed to the photograph in some meaningful way.

"Chance has always been a part of photography, from the beginning," Stone says. "We never really know what we've got until we've developed it in the darkroom or see it in the back of our cameras or on our computer screens. There's always something surprising about the world talking back to you." The databent pictures reinforce the centrality of luck both in photography and in life—ultimately serving as a reminder of how little control we have over our own trajectories. But if we can accept the disquietude of this implication, great beauty is to be found in not knowing what will come—in resigning to being present with and attentive to those we love most.

Stone wrote this epilogue for *Lost Pines*:

There had been an accident.

On September 12, 2002, my granddad died alone in a fire that engulfed his trailer. The blaze burned so hot, windowpanes in the kitchen cabinets melted into ribbons. Cleaning up, we found several charred boxes of photographs and memorabilia. Among newspaper clippings, graduation announcements, and postcards, there was a small group of Polaroids taken by my grandparents on the property.

Nearly 20 years later, I found a few undeveloped rolls of film in the back of my dresser drawer. Among pictures of the births of our two children, there were ten pictures I took inside my granddad's distorted trailer. I don't remember making those pictures.

My granddad was a kind of wise-cracking trailer park dandy with a deep baritone voice, whose mellifluous speech evoked Bing Crosby and Mel Tormé. He ate his apple pie topped with sharp cheddar cheese and would only touch fruit that was heavily dusted with powdered sugar. He was a war pilot and a keeper of roses. I also remember hushed whispers about his drinking and his sharp tongue, a string of lost jobs, and his stubborn arrogance. The trailer always smelled of cherry tobacco, and there was a room packed so tightly with stuff that you couldn't open the door.

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I began photographing the aftermath of another tragedy closer to home in Bastrop, Texas, in 2012. The year prior, an immense fire sparked by lightning and exacerbated by extreme drought had spread over 32,000 acres and engulfed a rare outcrop of loblolly pines. Locals call this island of tall trees surrounded by the scrubby cedars that dominate the Hill Country landscape the "Lost Pines."

My granddad's trailer in Magnolia, Texas was situated in an Eastern strand of these same

loblollies in what is known as the “Big Thicket.” In Spring, Texas, just south of Magnolia, these same trees loom over the one-story house where I grew up. Their tall trunks and dense arrangements provided a magical playground for many a childhood adventure.

These landscapes are intertwined by tall trees, loss, and recovery.

Ten years on, the loblollies are slowly coming back.

Barry Stone, born in Lubbock in 1971, lives and works in Austin. His work has been exhibited at many institutions including the Center for Photography at Woodstock (New York), Harry Ransom Center (Austin), Lianzhou Foto Festival (China), and ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe (Germany). Three books of Stone’s photographs have been published: *Daily, in a Nimble Sea*, 2017 (a finalist for the Lucie Photo Book Prize (New York City) and shortlisted for the Cornish Family Prize of Art and Design Publishing (Australia)), *Drift*, 2020 (reviewed by *Collector Daily*), and *Lost Pines*, 2022 (to be officially released at Printed Matter’s NY Art Book Fair this year). His work is included in the collections of the Athenaeum at the University of Georgia (Athens); Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University (New Haven); Henry Art Gallery (Seattle); Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; University of Texas at Austin; and ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe (Germany).