



Stephen Cohen

Art addresses the sources of creation and the sources of humanness; it is the graceful act that can make the ordinary beautiful and enlightening and the unordinary known. Art is a way of seeing and a way of being, an open engagement with the world that allows one to get into the soul of things. Art is genius made visible, a pathway for ambition and intelligence, intuition and imagination, and perhaps, most of all, compassion.

Stephen Cohen is an artist by trade and in how he chooses to live his life. Born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky, Stephen learned responsibility early when, at the age of 20, he became a father to his beautiful daughter, Sarah Anne. Stephen, like many parents, took thousands of photographs of his daughter in an effort to capture every moment, in an effort to cast her image of the world in the light of his own affections. Unlike most, however, Stephen's ability with a camera became a passion and he began to develop his own unique style, a style based on transfiguring the ordinary while pinpointing the heart of his subjects.

Stephen continued to work odd jobs while creating new ways to make his photographs unique. He also continued to experiment with different subjects, becoming skilled in portrait, promotional, and nature photography. Not satisfied, he wished to join his passion for photography with his enthusiasm for the performing arts. His opportunity came when he attended a Sheryl Crow concert, made his way to the front of the stage, and took some photographs that would soon change his life.

His photos were not stock concert photos but those which captured the energy and vitality of their subjects; they exhibited an intimacy uncommon in most photographs. Soon he received his first official photography try out through Sunshine Concerts and then Pollstar Magazine, which led to him becoming the house photographer for Louisville's Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts and The Music Mill in Indianapolis. In 2003 Stephen moved permanently to Central Indiana and in 2004 he created his own company, Simohen Art, and his own website, Simohen-Art.com. He has photographed legendary artists as diverse as Willie Nelson, Bonnie Raitt, B.B. King, Tony Bennett, Tom Waits, the Rolling Stones, and many many more.

Stephen is not only generous with his camera but with his time and energies. While an employee at FedEx Kinko's, a job he took to help learn graphics, he was invited to attend a benefit event for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Stephen volunteered his services as a photographer and donated concert tickets and autographed photographs that helped the event raise over \$32,000. This was also when Stephen was introduced to Kelsey Tatum, a young woman who, on her first day of high school, had been diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. Stephen, struck by her courage and her humor and her will to live, invited Kelsey to Jazz Fest to meet one of

her favorite artists, Bonnie Raitt. The joy the experience inspired led Stephen to immerse himself in helping St. Jude reach new heights with their annual World of Hope Dinner and Auction. Tragically, during her junior year of college and at the young age of 21, Kelsey succumbed to her cancer. The heroic way she lived her short life continues to inspire hope in him and the many people she touched.



Stephen stands with Ted Nugent

Stephen began spending more and more time establishing relationships with artists and their management companies and became one of the most trusted photographers in the business. As an artist he made it his goal to capture the essence of every subject, as a man he made it his goal to make artists aware of how they could make a difference in the lives of so many children. In 2006, he developed a relationship with Guitar Center Castleton obtaining guitars and other music related memorabilia for signatures. Stephen also marketed his photo work for St. Jude as one-of-a-kind autographed photos which brought St. Jude over \$20,000, money that went directly into the research and care of childhood cancers and other catastrophic diseases, money that assisted St. Jude with their mission of accepting patients without regard to a family's ability to pay.

His philanthropical success continues to this day. Every year he sets up special experiences for St. Jude children where they get to meet and spend time with their favorite artists. He works diligently to procure rare signed memorabilia, devoting himself to helping others. He is also currently working on an additional website after deeming himself a charity soldier, fighting in the trenches for children against catastrophic diseases, dedicated to children in need of help, hope, and motivation.

All of his endeavors originate from his compassionate heart, from his ability and his willingness to engage with the world as an artist. Whether as a photographer, where he is skilled at translating perception into description and description into beauty, or as a father and friend, where he is skilled at devoting the attention of his heart towards those around him, or as a crusader for those unable to fight for themselves, Stephen empties himself into the people and things around him, allowing them to shine with a new and astonishing life.

This year's St. Jude World of Hope Dinner and Auction will be held November 15 at the Bridgewater Club in Carmel. The items obtained by Stephen Cohen will be showcased at Guitar Center, Castleton on October 10-12 where discounted tickets to the event will be offered. Information can be found at Simohen-Art.com or StJude.org.