



## FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN BLACKSMITH FESTIVAL 2023 Event Summary

Join blacksmiths and blacksmithing enthusiasts in Spruce Pine, NC on Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup> for this annual festival celebrating the art of the blacksmith. Coordinated by Spruce Pine Main Street, Penland School of Craft, Toe River Arts, Haywood Community College, Mayland Community College, Arthur Morgan School, and local smiths, the festival gets bigger and better every year! Coming for the day is great, but coming for the weekend is even better! Festival events on Friday and Saturday, food, hiking and exploring make a great long weekend. There are a variety of small motels in the area, beautiful campgrounds, and many local listings on Airbnb and VRBO.

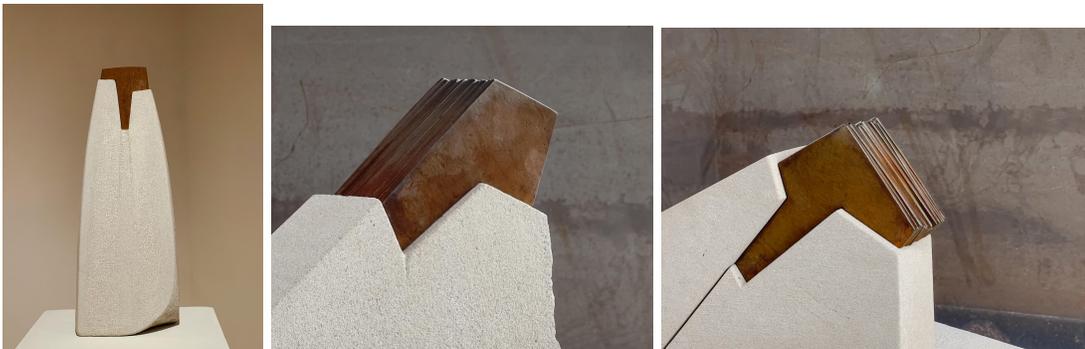
**Questions about the festival? Call 828-765-3008 or email [spms@downtownsprucepine.com](mailto:spms@downtownsprucepine.com)**

### 2023 FEATURED ARTIST BLACKSMITH

#### Rick Smith

Rick Smith began exploring blacksmithing when he was thirteen in his family's garage. By 1992 he had completed his MFA and was selected for the Penland School of Craft residency. He went on to work as an independent artist for eighteen years, earning accolades in *American Craft* magazine and other publications. In 1997 Rick was hired at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) to succeed Professor Brent Kington who was retiring.

Rick Smith is known for his research in laminated and forge-welded steel, patterned surface treatments, and large scale repoussé in both functional and sculptural applications. In 2005 he was awarded an endowment that would aid in his research and also help to ensure the future of formal instruction in blacksmithing as an art form at SIUC. Smith has taught workshops at craft schools, institutions, and universities all over the world. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. Smith's work is in the permanent collection of The Mint Museum (Charlotte, NC), Metal Museum (Memphis, TN), Arkansas Art Institute (Little Rock, AR), The Minneapolis Institute of Art (Minneapolis, MN), among many others.



## 2023 Featured Demonstrators

### Adam Atkinson

Adam Atkinson is a metalsmith, curator, and educator. He received an MFA in Metal Design at East Carolina University in 2019, and a BFA in Interdisciplinary Studio Practices at Boise State University in 2013. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally including the Wayne Art Center, Boone Art and History Museum, and Nagoya Zokei University, Nagoya, Japan, among others. He has been awarded numerous residencies including the Emerging Artist Residency at the Baltimore Jewelry Center and the three-year residency at Penland School of Craft. He has taught at many craft schools including, Penland School of Craft, Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, the Baltimore Jewelry Center, and Pocosin School of Fine Craft.



***Adam will demonstrate Chasing and Repoussé for Jewelry and Fine Metal Objects. Chasing and repoussé is the act of forming flat metal sheet into low or high relief forms using a variety of hand tools and punches. Repoussé, a French term meaning to push outward from the back, and chasing, meaning to work from the front, will be demonstrated to show how volume and form can be achieved for small scale metal objects. In addition, finishing techniques, metal alloys, and tool varieties will be discussed.***

**Frankie Flood** is Professor and area head of the Metalsmithing and Jewelry Design area at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. Flood is a graduate of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where he received his Master of Fine Art degree in Metalsmithing. Frankie's interest in machines and tools and the influence of his working class upbringing is a source of inspiration for the functional objects that he creates. The potential that Craft has to serve local and global communities through design and fabrication has been the focus of Flood's recent research as he continues to combine traditional craft practice with digital and industrial technology.



***Frankie's demonstration will be Color on Aluminum: Anodizing and Etching Aluminum***

***This demonstration will be an introduction to working with aluminum, a lightweight affordable metal that is perfect for creating colorful jewelry and objects. Anodizing is a process that produces a porous surface allowing aluminum to accept dye easily. The spectrum of color that is possible to create on the surface of aluminum is almost endless. Demonstrations will cover an introduction to aluminum, etching with vinyl resists, anodizing and dying techniques to create unique colorful patterns.***

**Glen Gardner** - "My early interests in jewelry making led me to attend classes at Penland School. While there on scholarship in 1971 I was first introduced to blacksmithing. I then spent the next 5 years as resident blacksmith at Peters Valley. From there I relocated and built a studio near Penland. Since 1993 I have been living/working in Pittsburgh, PA.

My interests and methods of working with metal have always been eclectic, with one skill leading to another. But, the immediate results from using a hammer has always been at the core of my work as a metalsmith. My work now is focused on raising holloware. The relatively simple tools and techniques of this art are alluring but also quite challenging. And so, my exploration continues".



***Glen will demonstrate Japanese Raising Techniques.***

***The basic principles behind transforming flat sheets of metal into raised vessel forms is somewhat universal; however, the tools and techniques employed by Japanese metalsmiths are quite different from those employed by Western smiths.***

***My demo will consist of the forging of a basic Japanese style raising stake followed by demonstration of the raising process and methods for developing surface textures that make this style of working somewhat unique.***

**Lisa Geertsen** is an artist blacksmith from Seattle, WA currently pursuing her MFA in Metalsmithing/Blacksmithing at SIUC. Previously she managed the sculpture studios at Pratt Fine Arts Center in Seattle as well as owner of Firelight Forge. Geertsen's process is about making a connection, telling a story and pushing oneself to make the ordinary into something beautiful. She aims to engage others to experience these moments and trigger something within them that sparks a connection inspired by the metamorphic process of working with metal.

Lisa has been a guest instructor at WVU, University of Washington, Blue Hell Studios and Penland School of Craft. She taught at Pratt Fine Arts Center for over ten years and currently teaches the Intermediate Blacksmithing class at SIUC. Geertsen has demonstrated for various groups nationally in person and virtually for the NWBA and the Metals Museum in Memphis. She was honored to give a presentation for SNAG about the Society of Inclusive Blacksmiths of which she is a founding and active member.



*Lisa will be demonstrating freeform organic shapes using well known techniques such as mass isolation, drawing out and spreading applied to aluminum. If time allows, I will rivet multiple parts together to create a freestanding sculpture. I will also go over the details of hot forging aluminum as well as it's boundaries and benefits as a material to the artist blacksmith.*

**Jason Knight** relocated to East Tennessee from his native state of South Carolina. Knight is known among custom makers and collectors as an innovator and master of blade geometry. His influence is widespread in the knife industry. It is reflected in the work of many he has mentored as bladesmiths. . He teaches in his studio and through his online courses and YouTube channel.



*Jason will demonstrate how to do a "forge to finish" culinary knife.*

## 2023 FESTIVAL EVENTS

### Annual Blacksmith Exhibition

**March 25 - April 29th**

Toe River Arts will host their Annual Blacksmith Exhibition in the Spruce Pine Gallery. The exhibit will feature work by local blacksmiths and blacksmiths from around the country. Cash Prizes will be awarded. Please fill out the online application at [Toe River Arts.org/artist resources/artists opportunities](https://toeriverarts.org/artist-resources/artists-opportunities) regardless if you know what you will submit by March 11. Work must be delivered to the Spruce Pine Gallery between March 14-18, 10:30am-4:00pm. There is no fee to participate and no jury process. For more information contact Kathryn Andree at 828-765-0520 or [kathryn@toeriverarts.org](mailto:kathryn@toeriverarts.org). Work should be picked up between 4 and 6pm on Saturday, April 29th.

### Friday, April 28th

#### **Featured Artist Blacksmith Demonstration Workshop**

**9:30 to 4pm, James Cooper's studio in Bakersville, NC**

Registration information will be added as soon as possible. If you would like to receive registration information when available, please email [commcollaboration@penland.org](mailto:commcollaboration@penland.org) and we will send when ready.

**Pre-registration is required. Registration for this workshop is limited.**

#### **Annual Blacksmithing Exhibition Gallery Reception and Lecture**

- 5:30 to 7pm - Toe River Arts Annual Blacksmith Exhibit Closing Reception. Join blacksmiths and guests for camaraderie, food and drink in celebration of the 2023 festival! Awards ceremony at 6:30pm.
- 7pm – Artist Talk by Rick Smith in the Owens Gallery upstairs at Toe River Arts.

### Saturday, April 29th *(Admission is free)*

**Festival Downtown from 10am to 4pm**

**Forging Demonstrations** *(Lower Street, sponsored by Spruce Pine Main Street, Penland School of Craft and Haywood Community College)*

- 10am - Rick Smith
- 11:30am - Lisa Geertsen
- 1pm - Rick Smith
- 2:30pm - Jason Knight

**Close Up Demonstrations** *(Lower Street Pocket Park Visitor's Center)*

*This demonstration area focuses on the fine handwork and bench techniques that blacksmiths use to create surface decoration, mechanisms, and finishing details.*

- 10:30 am - Frankie Flood
- 12:15pm - Adam Atkinson
- 2pm - Glen Gardner

**Vendor Booths** *(Lower Street)*

A great variety of smiths and tool vendors display and sell their work, with many booths featuring live demonstrations. Interested in having your own booth? Contact Libby Phillips at 828-765-3008 or email [spms@downtownsprucepine.com](mailto:spms@downtownsprucepine.com). A Vendor Excellence Award will be awarded at the festival,

### **Youth and Adult Forge-Off Competitions** (above Main Street Central Park)

Participants are provided with iron stock, minimal tools, and a limited timeframe to complete their best work.

- **The Adult Challenge** (18 and older) will be creating bottle openers, and is hosted by Penland School of Craft. Each participant will have access to a small gas forge, anvil, forging hammer and leg vise. They will be provided with a choice of 10 inch long 1/4" x 1" flat, 1/2" square, or 1/2" round iron stock, and slots are one hour long. Participants are able to bring any other hand tools they want to use during their time slot.
- **The Youth Challenge** (12 to 17 years old) will be "Make a Hammer", and will be hosted by Arthur Morgan School. A guardian must be present for youth to participate, and they must sign a waiver. Youth must have adequate experience to work independently without coaching. Slots are 45 minutes long. Each participant will be provided with a 3 inch long, 1x1 piece of square mild steel, hammer, punch, center punch, and anvil to make their hammer head. We'll bring some oak blanks and a draw horse for those who are determined to handle their hammer that day outside of the time constraints.
- The public is invited to watch as participants forge. At the end of the day a jury of blacksmiths chooses the winners.
- To sign up in advance, e-mail [commcollaboration@penland.org](mailto:commcollaboration@penland.org). We will hold a few spaces for same day signup, too.
- Awards for each category will be announced at 3:30pm next to the forge off area.

### **Hands On Tent (Lower Street)**

An annual festival favorite, sponsored by Penland School of Craft. Blacksmith volunteers assist the public in learning to forge barbecue skewers. Participants must be 6 years or older, and a guardian must be present if under 18. Signups at the tent on the day of the festival beginning at 10am. If you would like to volunteer, contact Stacey Lane at [commcollaboration@penland.org](mailto:commcollaboration@penland.org)

## **Special Guests at the 2023 Festival**

**Forging for Peace** was started in 2015 by the German blacksmith, Alfred Bullerman. It began as a response to the bombing and destruction of a Ukrainian blacksmith shop in Donezk. Nails are a symbol of connection between all peoples of the world. The Peace Nails are forged by volunteers to raise money for worthy charities serving people affected by conflicts. Doctors Without Borders, Save the Children, World Central Kitchen, Rotary Disaster Response Fund and other organizations receive the funds. The Blacksmiths donate their time, materials and fuel. Donations are made directly to the charities via the internet. They ask for a minimum donation of \$100 per nail.

**The Society of Inclusive Blacksmiths (SIBS)** is committed to building equity and diversity in the field of blacksmithing. They offer mentorship opportunities, connections to educational and other resources, and special events that empower and support our community while reducing social and economic barriers. Come find out more about their work at their booth at the festival! [www.inclusiveblacksmiths.com](http://www.inclusiveblacksmiths.com)