



## FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN BLACKSMITH FESTIVAL 2024 Event Summary

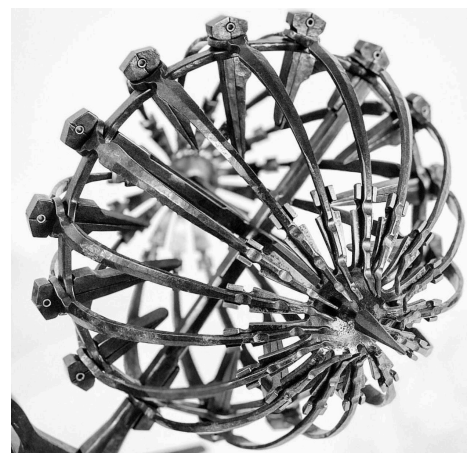
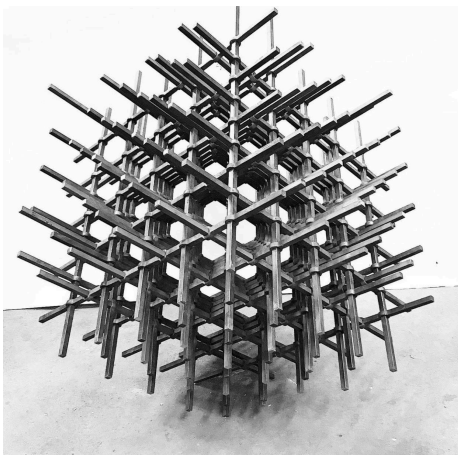
Join blacksmiths and blacksmithing enthusiasts in Spruce Pine, NC on Saturday, April 27th for this annual festival celebrating the art of the blacksmith. Coordinated by Spruce Pine Main Street, Penland School of Craft, Toe River Arts, Arthur Morgan School, and local smiths, the festival gets bigger and 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)*

### 2024 FEATURED ARTIST BLACKSMITH

#### Pete Braspenninx

Pete Braspenninx, owner of Phyre Forge, is a graduate of the University of Michigan School of Art and Design(2004). He is an artist, blacksmith and educator based in Casnovia, Michigan. His work has been shown, published and collected nationally and internationally. His work focuses on building shape and line, using visual connections and traditional joinery to make modern forms. [Phyreforge.com](http://Phyreforge.com)



*Pete will demonstrate forms and forgewelds during two demonstrations on Saturday.*

## 2024 FEATURED DEMONSTRATORS

### Claire Ashby

Claire Ashby is a metalsmith living and working in Raleigh, NC. During a tool making class at the Penland School of Craft with Seth Gould, she was introduced to the practice of sand casting by Cat Bates, which led to a turning point in her metalsmithing practice. The low-tech nature of sand casting appealed to her rustic sensibilities while the low-to-no waste involved appealed to her desire to reuse and recycle. Additionally, it seemed an obvious way to transform the natural objects such as bark, stones, and shells that she had been collecting for years, into sturdier metal objects that could better withstand processes for use as jewelry or other small items. In addition to casting objects from the natural world, she explores creating abstract shapes in the sand to cast pieces she calls “personal bark” to be worn on the body, and is investigating applications of these abstract forms for other practical uses. Along with her studio practice, she teaches sand casting and jewelry classes monthly in workshops at ShopSpace, a nonprofit maker space in downtown Raleigh that offers classes and work space for welding, blacksmithing, jewelry, knife making, woodworking and more. [Claireashby.com](http://Claireashby.com)

***Claire will demonstrate small-scale sandcasting in bronze and shibuichi for jewelry and hardware applications.***



### Cole Aurichio

Cole Aurichio has been living and working as a blacksmith in the Blue Ridge area for over a decade. Initially taught as a traditional blacksmith, Cole’s journeyman work brought him across the country working in a variety of metalworking shops. Currently residing in Bakersville NC, Cole owns and operates his blacksmith studio in a production and artistic fashion. Focusing mainly on tool making, Cole enjoys discovering new ways and methods to redesign tools both for the home and the workshop. [colearichio.com](http://colearichio.com)

***Cole will demonstrate his sculptural style of forging and fire welding anatomical forms and figures.***



## Seth Gould

Seth Gould is a metalsmith and tool maker who creates and ornaments utilitarian objects that range from simple tools to highly embellished locks. His work, which is strongly influenced by historic metalsmithing design and technique, typically begins in a coal forge and is finished at the bench with a file in hand. For the more elaborate pieces, ornamentation is added with hammer and chisel through the process of overlay, inlay, and engraving. Seth has exhibited work in Germany, Japan, and across the United States. He has taught, demonstrated, and lectured at institutions including Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, the Center for Metal Arts, Southern Illinois Metalsmithing Society, and the Society of North American Goldsmiths. His work can be seen in the collections of the Renwick Gallery, the National Ornamental Metal Museum, and the Mint Museum. Seth completed the Penland School of Craft long-term residency in 2018 and now lives with his wife and son in Bakersville, NC.

***Seth will demonstrate nunome zogan, a decorative overlay technique used to add ornamentation to a metal object. In this technique, very small teeth are raised on the base metal into which foil or wire can then be applied to create designs, surfaces, and patterns.***



## Anna Koplík

Anna graduated from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY with a BFA in Jewelry and has worked as a blacksmith at Peters Valley School of Craft, Atlas Forge, Touchstone Center for Crafts, Spirit Ironworks, Center for Metal Arts, Davis Metalsmiths, Caleb Kullman Studio, Michael Bondi Metal Design, and MDO Welding and Fabrication. She travels often, working as a journeyman architectural smith, teaching blacksmithing workshops, and going on adventures whenever possible. Her personal work focuses mainly on tool and utensil making, and combining functionality with a refined, delicate aesthetic.

[Annarkoplik.com](http://Annarkoplik.com)

***Anna will make a spoon to demonstrate forging on a small scale.***



## Will Manning

Will Manning of Heartwood Forge. A passion for foodways and forging steel led Will to knife making over a decade ago. He has been recycling steel and wood, crafting culinary cutlery full time for 10 years. His wife's cooking (and finding uses for and sharing the stories of lost & forgotten materials) keeps him going [heartwoodforge.com](http://heartwoodforge.com)

*Will will demonstrate processing and laminating rusted pitted old metal to create beautiful new materials.*



## 2024 FESTIVAL EVENTS

### Annual Blacksmith Exhibition

**March 30 - April 27**

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. Please fill out the online application at <https://toeriverarts.org/artists/artist-opportunities/> regardless if you know what you will submit by March 9. Work must be delivered to the Spruce Pine Gallery between March 19-23, 10:30am-4:00pm. There is no fee to participate and no jury process, but the work must be for sale and you must fill out the online application. For exceptions and 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 27th.

### Friday, April 26

*Featured Artist Blacksmith Demonstration Workshop*

**Intentional Connections - Mindfulness in Joinery with Pete Braspenninx**

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

*Pre-registration is required, workshop fee \$100. Registration for this workshop is limited. To register, send an email with your name, postal address, email address and phone number to Spruce Pine Main Street at [spms@downtownsprucepine.com](mailto:spms@downtownsprucepine.com). They will contact you to let you know if there is space available, and how to issue payment.*

*(this is the only event in Fire on the Mountain that requires paid registration)*

**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 2024 festival!
- 7pm – Artist Talk by Pete Braspenninx in the Owens Gallery upstairs at Toe River Arts.

## **Saturday, April 27**

**Festival Downtown from 10am to 4pm** (Admission is free)

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

- 10am - Pete Braspenninx
- 11:30am - Anna Koplik
- 1pm - Pete Braspenninx
- 2:30pm - Cole Aurichio

**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 - Will Manning
- 12:15pm - Seth Gould
- 2pm - Claire Ashby

**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 Spencer Bost 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 shoe horns, 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  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 1 inch, 8 inch piece of iron stock, and slots are 55 minutes 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 forging a railroad spike into the form of your choice, 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 55 minutes long. Each participant will be provided with a railroad spike, hammer, and anvil. Participants are able to bring any other hand tools they want to use during their time slot.
- 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 iron bracelets. 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 2024 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 Donetsk. 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)