

FORGE





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Nils Hint
Cutlery, 2017
Forged iron from readymade
components & gilding

Introduction

Forge was inspired by a series of conversations between myself, Gregory Parsons, Pete Goodridge and Delyth Done – mainly bemoaning the lack of visibility of innovative contemporary forged metal in the UK, given a past history of glorious innovation in metalwork. Especially with the birth of the Industrial Revolution along the borders of Wales and England in places such as Bersham and Ironbridge. Whilst also noting the amazing commissioned works of this past history, such as the great choir screen made for Hereford Cathedral. One of the monuments of High Victorian art and a masterpiece in the Gothic Revival style, it was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott, a leading Victorian architect, and made by the Coventry metalworking firm of Francis Skidmore in 1862; it is now in the V&A Museum. And in the eighteenth century the Davies Brothers' series of wrought iron gates, of which a superb 1727 example is still extant at St Peter's Collegiate Church here in Ruthin.

Hereford Cathedral has continued commissioning innovative work including the incredible floating metal Nimbus for the Tomb of St Thomas of Cantilupe, made in 1981 by David Watkins, then Professor of Metalwork and Jewellery at the Royal College of Art. Whilst Ruthin recently commissioned street furniture as part of its

town Art Trail, and the restoration of St Peter's Church Gates was a significant part of this project. Given this innovative history we thought it would be interesting to investigate where the Davies Brothers' magnificent 18th century legacy is in the 21st century?

This exhibition of international contemporary forged metalwork is curated by Delyth Done, who is course leader of the Artist Blacksmithing BA at Hereford College of Art – the only undergraduate programme of its type in the UK. As Delyth's selection demonstrates, contemporary forged metal is an emerging innovative international discipline. She notes that it '*represents a paradigm shift from the traditional discourse of the blacksmith and breaks new ground by synthesising and articulating the practice of creative and conceptual working with forged metal.*' Forge presents fifteen metal artists from across the globe, whose work has been identified as having a significant impact and represents a new wave of making.

Philip Hughes MBE
Ruthin, March 2017

Exhibitors: Egor Bavykin (Russia), Claudio Bottero (Italy), Ambrose Burne (Wales), Francisco Gazitua (Chile), Nils Hint (Estonia), Christian Vaughan Jones (Wales), Takayoshi Komine (Japan), Daniel Neville (USA), Patrick Quinn (USA), Daniel Randall (USA), Leszek Sikoń (Poland), Professor Richard Smith (USA), Fred Truus (Estonia), Stephen Yusko (USA), and Professor Heiner Zimmermann (Germany).



Stephen Yusko
Blue Box: Resist, 2017
Forged, machined
and fabricated steel

DELYTH DONE
THE CURATOR'S OVERVIEW

Multiple Perspectives: forged metal claims its place in contemporary culture

In recent years, the practice of artist blacksmiths has transformed. Contemporary artist blacksmiths are creating original and cohesive bodies of work, works which engage not only with the practices and forms of traditional blacksmithing, with its focus on material, process and function; but also with many broader cultural, environmental and socio-political conversations. These works bring a fresh perspective to the discipline and demand new critical consideration, giving focus to an international community of artist blacksmithing driven by ideas and concept as much as by process and material.

The title 'Forge' embodies something of the tension and complexity we see both in the contemporary profession of artist blacksmithing and in the works. Forge points to an exhibition characterised by a process and a material; the forging of hot metal is at the heart of all this work. Forge as a noun also evokes centuries old ideas and practices of blacksmith, hearth and anvil, which have a place in literature and myth as well as social and economic narratives past and present. For individuals, the relationship with this multi-dimensional history varies. In the work of Ambrose Burne we see a maker who works in much the same way as the smiths of the

past when they arrived at what is now considered a traditional vernacular, he looks directly and freshly to the natural world to define his own expressive forms, drawing upon growth and movement from the structures of plants and shells. Analysing shapes, rhythms, patterns, to find forms and lines that can be the starting point for a design, he explores how a material as hard and heavy as steel can express the velocity and vitality of the organic; resulting in works which are rich, both in historic references and contemporary design values. When it is used as a verb, forge is often used in the context of driven change and innovation: 'to forge ahead' or forge something new, the objects here all represent the work of artists concerned with originality and the context of the contemporary world in which they live.

Christian Vaughan Jones's work speaks of architecture, of tactility, and process. The structures of heavy, cracked stone and pinned, forged steel both repel and support one another. There is both balance and tension, and each piece, regardless of its actual size, has a monumental impact. The purposeful cracking of the stone and the natural self-framing of each piece through its metal

structures shows how boundaries can work for and against each other. The relationships between the compressive but brittle stone and the binding strong steel are communicated as dynamic statements of opposing force.

In his extraordinarily finely crafted objects Stephen Yusko explores ideas of 'home' by using salvaged material with its own layers of meaning. He extrapolates and redefines details providing a counterpoint between what the object was and what it has become. The lids on Yusko's exquisite boxes capture the inherent plasticity of hot forged steel and convey a surprising tenderness in the gentle fit of lid to body and convey a feeling of warmth and caress.

Richard Smith's works evoke both the uncompromising geometry of architectural shapes allied to the plastic forms and colour of geological strata. Light plays off the surface textures of metal that has been moved through hours of painstaking repoussè, a time honoured process applied to produce an innovative and personal outcome. These complex compositions offer a solemnity and presence as the viewer explores the reflective quality of the meticulously textured facets, contours and forms.

The range of pieces in the exhibition might suggest these international artist blacksmiths work mainly on smaller scale objects, but Francisco Gazitua is far from alone in bringing an individual voice to very large scale pieces of architectural metal work and public art works, as exemplified by Rosa Nautica, which stands over twenty metres high and is installed in Toronto, Canada, or Huechuraba which stands at eleven metres and is installed in Santiago, Chile; maquettes of both these works are exhibited in 'Forge' alongside photographs of the completed installed works and demonstrate the artist's ability to translate a monumental concept in all scales.

The artist blacksmiths featured are all members of the different local, national and international associations that are a feature of the discipline. Perhaps because of its strength and structural qualities the medium lends itself not only to collaborative working, but to the creation of large scale public structures. Such pieces are embodiments of this coherent and cohesive "Community of Practice" within Artist Blacksmithing. As part of this process the greater community of blacksmiths will often come together to collaborate and work together to design and

construct permanent pieces with explicit meanings and intentions, such as the Peace Monument (Ypres, 2016). They are testament also to a generosity of spirit within the craft that enables skills and knowledge to be exchanged with a new generation.

Whilst there have been a growing number of international exhibitions giving blacksmithing visibility and stimulating new work, this exhibition breaks new ground in the UK. Here the very strength of traditional blacksmithing practice, and a persistent cultural tradition of rural nostalgia, may arguably have hindered artist blacksmithing from gaining wider recognition as a contemporary art form. We hope these fifteen international artists will have a significant impact on current thinking about forged metal art and demonstrate creative and conceptual working with forged metal to be a meaningful and innovative international discipline.

Some of the exhibitors combine teaching, academic research and scholarship with their forged metal practice – Daniel Randall (USA / Appalachian Center for Craft, Tennessee Tech University), Fred Truus (Estonia / Estonia

Academy of Arts), Nils Hint (Estonia / Estonian Academy of Arts), Ambrose Burne (Wales / Hereford College of Arts), Takayoshi Komine (Japan / University of Tokyo). Two exhibitors are Professors within their institutions; Professor Heiner Zimmermann (Germany / University of Gothenburg, HDK Steneby) and Professor Richard Smith (USA / University of Illinois). Most produce works for exhibition, as well as private and public commissions and public artworks – Francisco Gazitua (Chile), Stephen Yusko (USA), Claudio Bottero (Italy), Egor Bavykin (Russia), Patrick Quinn (USA), Leszek Sikoń (Poland) and Christian Vaughan Jones (Wales) and many are represented internationally in a number of museum collections.

The aim of this exhibition is not to undervalue the skills and traditions that underpin contemporary artist blacksmithing but to capture this new contemporary and forward-facing perspective. It is also something of a call to arms for more recognition and critical consideration of the creative work of artist blacksmithing beyond the discipline, as well as a strengthening within it of our own reflection and critical conversation.

Together the selected makers and their work present us with a series of conversations that speak to both tradition and the contemporary crafts landscape; each forged metal object is unique, reflecting the individual practice of each maker. However, all share an emphasis on material, process and concept that represents the power, quality and contemporary relevance of artists who work at the forge.

Delyth Done has become a leading international scholar in the discipline of Artist Blacksmithing. Done moved from teaching ceramics in Cardiff a decade ago to work with degree students studying Artist Blacksmithing. This marked the beginning of a fascination with forged metal; the students studying it, the objects and architectural ironwork they make and the wider community of practice. Leading the BA (Hons) course in Artist Blacksmithing at Hereford College of Arts, she has curated national and international exhibitions and is a council member of the British Artist Blacksmiths Association. As part of her research and teaching practice, she has co-designed an innovative MA course in Contemporary Crafts. Thanks to Abigail Appleton for her collaboration in writing this piece.

FORGE
EXHIBITORS

"Small elements create an energy from which mature pieces can grow. I gather ideas on how to progress as I work; in the process of making, everything can change; part of a process of realisation as ideas are created."



Brick, 2017
Forged steel

EGOR BAVYKIN

I play with iron. Experiments with the material are very necessary. It is important to know the material, its ultimate strength, how it stretches, deforms; its internal force. Very often the possibilities of the material set the tone for the work.

Creating an art object involves a lot of processes and each stage is very important. There are no unimportant aspects to making and this can make it difficult to deviate from accepted rules; our heritage dominates us. 'Knowledge' can often block the free flight of thought, but any artist needs, whenever necessary, to free themselves from 'rules' and then something new and interesting can be created.



Insider, 2015
Forged steel



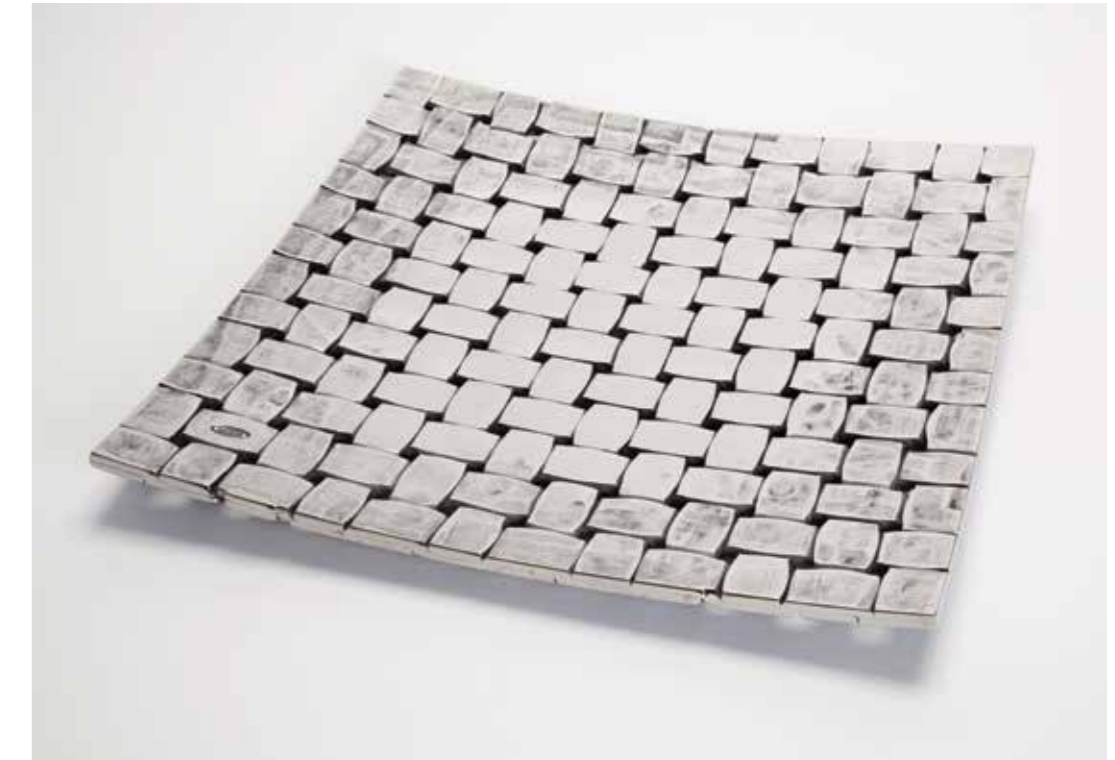
"Good craft and technical skills is one important aspect of blacksmithing; so is experience. But the truly important thing is to understand the originality and authenticity of every idea."

Simmetrico, 2017
Forged Stainless Steel

CLAUDIO BOTTERO

I process ideas from my experiences and memories. For example, the other day I was inspired by a toy I had when I was a child, to make an object. I aim for my work to be accessible; for everyone to find something meaningful within my work, be that a figurative piece, an architectural object or something I've developed through the use of iron as a material.

I draw and sketch before I start to make – imagining the tools I will need while I am drawing and defining all the visual elements. I always have clear ideas but I am also spontaneous when forging iron. To forge is a very important process for me. It is an expression of iron as lively and animated.



Cusco, 2017
Forged Stainless Steel



"Rather than creating a replica of the original form in metal, I aim to borrow and decipher its energy. I am excited by the way such a hard and heavy material as steel can express the velocity and vitality of the organic."

*French Garden Gates, 2013
Forged Steel
Provence, France*

AMBROSE BURNE

The idea that underpins my designs relates to growth and movement in natural form; the way it is visually expressed invokes the structure of plants, shells and organic forms in particular. I gather information that conveys this using drawing to analyse structures; observing shapes, rhythms, patterns, forms, principles of construction, in order to find forms and lines that can be the starting point for a design. To translate these drawings into steel, I seek out methods of manipulating the metal: drawing out, spreading, bending, punching, that will emphasise the essential qualities of the original form.

Sculpture allows me to explore forged metal as medium, in pure, abstract forms.



*Ferro Seed #1, 2016
Forged Steel*



"I make my sculpture in a way that begins from the inside out, that shows on the surface the activity of the internal forces that generate its form. Said in another way – form and material have to interpret the same melody, duplicating the forces of the sculptural message. My life as a sculptor has been a cohabitation with material."

Maquette of Rosa Nautica, 2007
Forged and Fabricated Steel

FRANCISCO GAZITUA

With the tools of this trade in my hands, I've wandered the labyrinths of matter and have discovered in it a deep intelligence similar to our own. Wisdom that has one advantage over ours, that of the human race: steel lives in peace in its own tranquillity, in the silent coherence of its crystals and mathematic formulae.

Iron lives without explanations, without justification or defence, without trajectory. It has taken many years to understand the silence of matter, its strict laws of functionality.

Rosa Nautica, 2007
Forged and Fabricated Steel
Sculpture 20 meters high
Toronto, Canada



Cutlery, 2017
Forged iron from readymade
components & gilding

"Although it's classed as 'junk', I find it valuable. It provides a commentary on our material culture today. The things we throw away also talk about ideas of value; what do we keep and what is important for us? I have been gathering all my material from this place, from the piles of stuff laying around – things considered useless."



NILS HINT

I collect old objects and materials, bring them to my studio and, often, these things stay there untouched for years. What is important is the fact that they are there, I am observing them and they are working with me.

I react to materials when it's the right time, when they have been around long enough to revive their nature and tell me what should I do with them.

Shadow Brooches, 2014
Forged Iron from readymade
components





Monumentally Attained #2, 2017
Forged Steel & Welsh Limestone

"I am driven to explore the possibilities of composition, proportion and ideas of monumentality, regardless of size and scale."

Monumentally Attained #3, 2017
Forged Steel & Portland Limestone



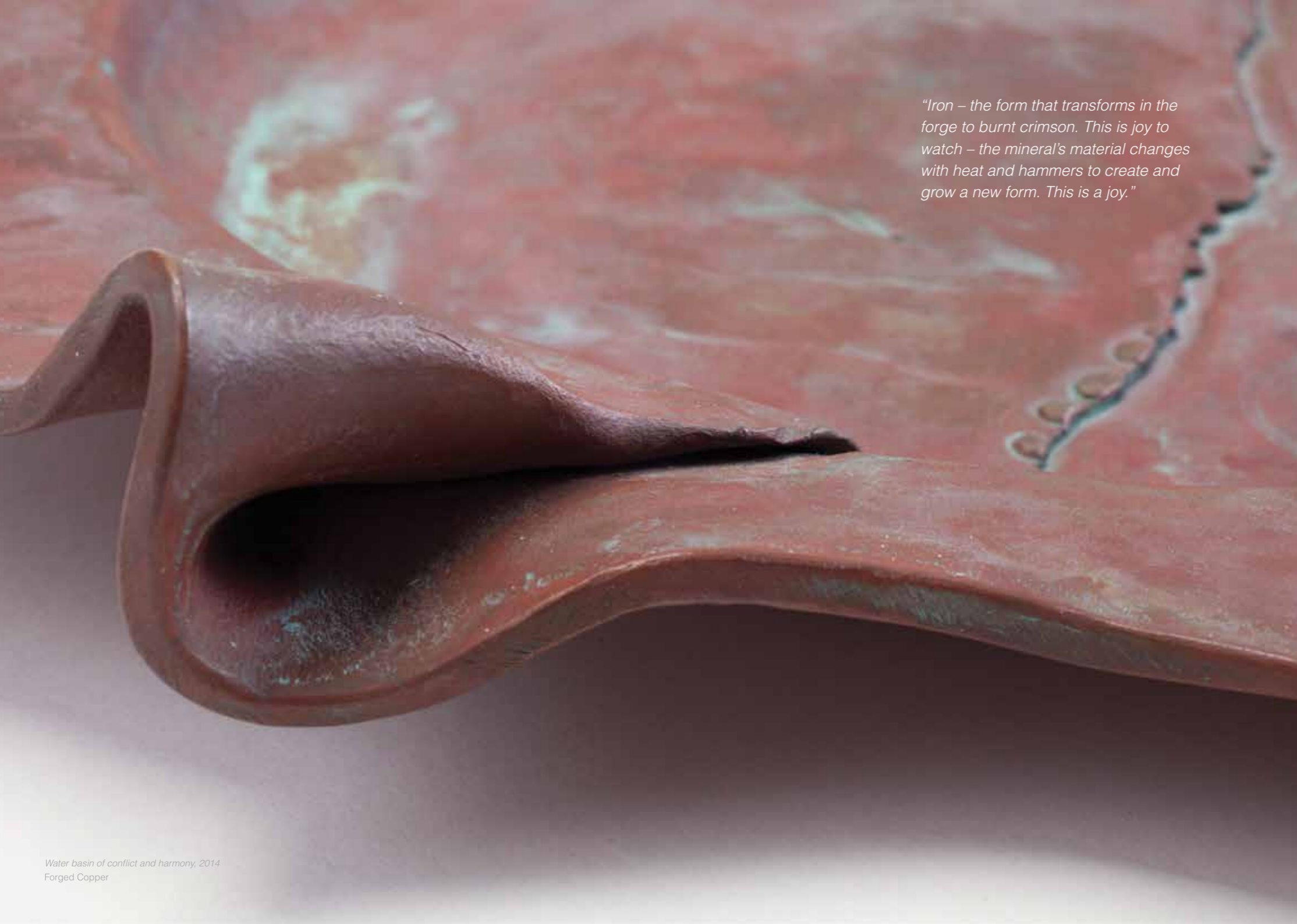
CHRISTIAN VAUGHAN JONES

Working with two different materials which react to force in completely opposite ways, presents a challenge; it challenges my mind, my body and my spirit.

My mind deals with the how and the why, my body adapts to the unique requirements of each material and my spirit connects with both through respect and understanding for how each responds to manipulation.

It is the resistance between metal and stone that I want to capture, the moment of impact when the stone is cleaved in two.

I am excited by the immediacy of hot metal forging coupled with the simplicity of steel wedges driven into stone, both require percussive force, both result in material manipulation.



"Iron – the form that transforms in the forge to burnt crimson. This is joy to watch – the mineral's material changes with heat and hammers to create and grow a new form. This is a joy."

Water basin of conflict and harmony, 2014
Forged Copper

TAKAYOSHI KOMINE

This pattern reflects a crystal structure within meteorites that is naturally made as the rock is cooled very slowly in the weightlessness of space.

It is said that repeating this process artificially is impossible.

It is impossible to plan perfectly from the start – it would be stifling and risk the work appearing artificial. Instead, I work intuitively, using my knowledge, technology and senses to reflect in the forge something usually formed through natural power. This invocation of natural laws adds an extra dimension to my work.



Paper Knife, 2014
Forged Iron Meteorite of Gibeon

Trunnion Vessels, 2016
Forged and Fabricated Steel



"The relationships of the elements in my work connects the viewer with my overall meaning and intent by depicting elements found at steel mills and beginning conversations around function. The division of zones and form bring different meanings to structures. They are objects detached from their original contexts."

DANIEL NEVILLE

In my work I investigate ideas of the 'steelworks' or 'steel mill', both as a structure as a whole and by highlighting the small details that are often overlooked. I use the vessel form to build a visual essay over the surface of the object. Each piece illustrates facets of assembly and decay.

Fillet Box, 2016
Forged and Fabricated Steel





Balance study I, 2016
Forged Steel & Brass

"Forging is emerging as a very expressive way for artists to create sculpture. In this context, it's both a traditional and innovative way to manipulate the material. Artists are using time honoured tools and techniques to move steel in an expressive, non-traditional manner."

PATRICK QUINN

I am intrigued with how two elements might be juxtaposed with each other and how this challenges the viewer's perception of balance and weight.

This piece is a study directly related to my work about birds and flight. Like my other sculptural works, it represents everything about the metalworking process that inspires me. I am driven to combine forged elements with hollow volumetric shapes through hand made hardware.



Balance Study II, 2017
Forged Steel & Brass

"The future of forged ironwork has little in terms of obstacles except the perceptions derived from its historical formats. The material itself poses no limitations in its ability to be applied creatively to our built environment. The limitation is only in our perception of the possibilities of iron."



DANIEL RANDALL

The forms are altered by external forces. They are distorted into absurd contortions by the pressure of change. They challenge cultural norms. They are awkward and intriguing, finding balance in their new form.

The process of manipulating steel at an elevated temperature produces a unique range of effects. The details revealed through the making process are primers for future exploration.

The relationship between design and technique should be balanced, with each serving the intention of the maker.





"This is all informed by traditional blacksmithing techniques. Only forging steel with a hammer will allow you to learn about how it would move and act under different circumstances and bring out the best results. There is still much that forging can offer to the contemporary art world."

LESZEK SIKOŃ

The idea of forging old ammunition from the First and Second World Wars came to me after researching WW1. I heard a story about church bells that were confiscated by the army and smelted to make weapons. When I further investigated the subject, I found out that it was common practice to confiscate any available steel, from tools to steel gates and bells, to use in weapon production. In my project, I wanted to reverse the process; use the weapons that were made to destroy and remake them into tools of creation.

Shell Tools, 2016
Forged, ammunition from First and Second World War, Hickory Wood





Broken Topography, 2017
Repoussé Steel & Rust Patina

"For this body of work, I am using forging in a less traditional way. For instance, scale is forged into the surface of the material at high temperatures to create a rich surface texture, or using cold forging and repoussé, working the metal from both the front and back to create lines and dimension in the piece."

Stonington Visit, 2011
Repoussé Steel & Gun Blue Patina



PROFESSOR RICHARD SMITH

Sedimentary strata in cliff faces, metamorphic rock formations, the jagged lines cut in the earth in rock quarries, the formidable lines of steel in bridges, and even the silhouette of a city skyline; in all my travels I survey pattern and organic design. Intentionally and inadvertently these shapes and structures are reflected in my work.

This body of work is a continuation of a concept I have been working with since 2010 that deals with transcending two-dimensional space. First by creating a two-dimensional drawing using crosshatching and marks to add depth and visual interest and then reinterpreting those marks, dimensions, and texture in steel, in a 3-D format.

Detail Broken, 2015
Forged Steel



"Forging starts out as a meditation when making the fire, about planning the idea and letting it go while hammering hot steel to make it move."

FRED TRUUS

I converse with the hot material to unclasp it from its hard shape. Iron is an archangel and companion in my life and on the roads, connecting the heightened moments of my life. Bridge constructions fascinate me, as I see them being one of the biggest sculptures mankind has made. They provide emotional support, strength and trust as we walk over their backs.

My work interprets nature and human creations in architecture and design. I am interested in the rhythmic balance seen in the fluidly and movement of water and waves. The same way I express my artwork, steel becomes elastic and gets captured as it cools. One work leads to another, connecting two points like bridges.

Broken, 2015
Forged Steel





Reliquary: Solitude, 2017
Forged, machined and
fabricated steel, glass, wood

"I am intrigued by the structure of things, the underside. The bones of buildings, piers, arches and trusses of bridges and roadways, and the tools and equipment used to build them tell a story. The shapes, textures and connections of the materials I use are part of that story. My work expands on this visual vocabulary by exploring themes of balance and motion, distance and perspective and the concept of 'home'."

STEPHEN YUSKO

The vessels become 'safe houses', where observations, ideas and experiences are kept. The house forms are metaphors for us, on a journey or staying put, questioning where is 'here' and what is 'home'.

In my most recent work, I am building structures that incorporate salvaged, factory-window glass with the forged, machined and fabricated steel that I've worked with for the majority of my art-making career. The fine-lined texture of this glass obstructs the view of the content of the structure just enough to call into question what is inside.



Blue Box: Resist, 2017
Forged, machined and
fabricated steel



Liquide Collection:
Square White, 2016
Forged Steel & Milk Paint

"In my approach, losing control has a central part. While craft rather feels like control towards the desired result, I feel my approach is more as a negotiation with the material.

Without having a clear idea of the result, I let the material move within its natural behaviour. If a satisfying moment appears, I take over and try to set it into a visual appearance for the viewer to experience it."

PROFESSOR HEINER ZIMMERMANN

A big drive in my work is to reveal visual moments in the process of working with metal that are usually exclusive to the maker. Part of my process is an investigation of my material beyond destruction, to a point where I can reward myself by creating a new aesthetic.

While I understand craft as the contained knowledge of generation, this brings with it a responsibility to develop and share. I experience material knowledge as a result of time and curiosity.

Both material and craft are inseparable and dependent on each other in my approach.

Liquide Collection:
Round White, 2016
Forged Steel & Milk Paint





EGOR BAVYKIN

Born: Russia, 1975

Workshop: Sankt-Petersburg, Russia

Training: Caron Schtiglitz St Petersburg Academy of Art & Design, Russia (1993-2000)

Sculptures, metal design, art object, architectural metal, work with private clients : Work included in collections – Italy, Germany, Belgium, France, Russia, Ukraine.

Selected Exhibitions:

“Transition”, International Juried Touring Exhibition, Kazematten Gallery, Ypres, Belgium (2016)

Three Banks (2015)

Stia Biennale (2011, 2015)

Participant of the annual exhibitions at the Union of Artists of Russia.



CLAUDIO BOTTERO

Born: Torreselle, Italy, 1957

Studio: Torreselle, Italy

Training: Trained with Toni Benetton, Mogliano Venteo, Treviso, Italy (1981-1987)

Selected Exhibitions:

Naval Museum, Barcelona, Spain (2010)

Helfstyn, Czech Republic (2009)

Feltre, Belluno, Italy (2007)

Russian Ethnographic Museum, St Petersburg, Russia (2006-2007)

Acireale, Catania, Italy (2003)

Southofen, Germany (2003)

Galleria Lazzari, Treviso, Italy (2003)

Helfstyn, Czech Republic (2001)

Flagstaff, Arizona, USA (2000)

Sovinec, Czech Republic (1997)

Piombino Dese, Padua Italy (1995)

Helfstyn, Czech Republic (1994)

San Martino di Lupari, Padua, Italy (1986)

Besides the great importance of the exhibitions in Claudio's profession, he has also executed several works at the request of various cities across Europe.



AMBROSE BURNE

Born: Wales, 1978

Studio: Kington, England

Training: BA (Hons) Artist Blacksmithing Hereford College of Arts (2004-2007) Working on private commissions of architectural garden ironwork.

Selected Exhibitions:

“Transition”, International Juried Touring Exhibition, Kazematten Gallery, Ypres, Belgium (2016)

‘Forged’ 20 years of Artist Blacksmithing, Hereford College of Arts (2013)

Material Worlds, Sudeley Castle, Glos. (Curator: Janice Blackburn) (2011)

Represented by Mid-Wales Art Centre (2009-present)

One Year On, New Designers. Islington, London (2008)

H-Art open exhibition, Hereford City Art Gallery (2007)

Bevere Gallery, Worcester (2007-2009)

New Designers, Islington, London (2007)



FRANCISCO GAZITUA

Born: Chile, 1944

Workshop: Chile Pirque, South America

Training: Studied Philosophy & Sculpture at the University of Chile, Sculpture at St Martins School of Arts in London

Large-scale works for public space, steel, wood and stone, installed in Chile, England, Holland, Sweden, Canada, Lebanon, Mexico, Netherlands.

Selected Exhibitions:

Sculptural Bridge “Puente de Luz” Toronto, Ontario, Canada (2012)

Perpetual Motion, CanAlfa Development Liberty Village Toronto, Canada (2011)

Absolute Development, “Buen Amigo” 3 sculptural horses, Mississauga, Canada (2010)

Monarch Liberty Village – Group of Sculptures in steel & stone, Toronto, Canada

Steel Sculpture “Art Canopy” The Esplanade, Toronto, Canada (2009)

Two Steel Sculptures “Lengas de Acero” Apoquindo Avenue, Santiago, Chile

Steel Sculpture, “Barca Volante”, City Place, Toronto Canada (2005)



NILS HINT

Born: Estonia, 1986

Workshop: Tallinn,

Training: Estonia Academy of Arts, Blacksmithing MA (1990-1994)

Work included in Collections at: Estonian Museum of Applied Art & Design, Tallinn Estonia

Art St. Urban Art Centre, St Urban, Switzerland

Gallery of Art in Legnica

International Collection of Contemporary Jewellery

Selected Exhibitions:

Nils Hint, Kaspar Aus “SULA”, Tallinn Vaike Train Depot, Tallinn Estonia (2017)

Nils Hint “Gatherer is King”, Galerie RA, Amsterdam Netherlands (2017)

Nils Hint “BEAT”, Gallery Four, Gothenburg Sweden (2016)

Nils Hint “KUTE/HEAT”, Hop Gallery, Tallin Estonia (2015)

Nils Hint, Sophie Hangarth, Rebekah Frank, Galerie RA, Amsterdam Netherlands (2014)



CHRISTIAN VAUGHAN JONES

Born: Wales, 1971

Studio: Llandyfan, Ammanford, Wales

Education: BA (Hons) Artist Blacksmithing Hereford College of Arts (2013-2015)

Selected Exhibitions:

“Transition”, International Juried Touring Exhibition, Kazematten Gallery, Ypres, Belgium (2016)

Commissioned to design and make nine trophies for the AOC in London, presented in the House of Commons London (2015)

New Designers, Islington, London (2014)

Publications:

Hephaistos Germany (May / June 2016)

ABANA The Anvils Ring, The Artist Blacksmiths Association of North America (2016)

BABA Artist Blacksmith, The British Artist Blacksmith Association (2016)

Select Journal “New Talent” (2015)



TAKAYOSHI KOMINE

Born: Tokyo, Japan, 1950

Workshop: Atelier Yukazan, Saitama, Japan

Selected Exhibitions:

‘One Man Show’ “Man a Man of Work” Saitama Craft Centre (2015)

‘One Man Show’ “My Iron My Japan” Saitama Craft Centre (2014)

Tokyo Midtown Design Hub 43rd Exhibition “Life and From Now” (2013)

‘One Man Show’ “Lamp of Soul” Tokyo – Artist Blacksmiths Association of Ireland (2011)

Present – A part time lecturer of Musashino Art University Craft Arts Course (1986)

Held ‘One Man Exhibition’ at the Museum of Modern Art, Saitama Japan. Give a lecture series at the Department of Arts & Crafts of Musashino Art University (1984)

American Craft Museum – New York (1983)

Atelier Matten (1980)



DANIEL NEVILLE

Born: Detroit, Michigan, USA, 1990

Workshop: Florida, New York

Training: BFA in Metalsmithing from Wayne State University, Detroit (2012, MI & MFA in Metalsmithing from southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois (2016)

Taught at numerous schools and universities including:

University of Gothenburg in Sweden (2016)

University Carbondale, Illinois, USA (2016)

Austin Community College, Texas, USA (2016)

Selected Exhibitions:

Metal Museum, Tennessee (2016)

Evansville Museum, Indiana (2016)

Tsubame Industrial Materials Museum, Japan (2016)

Awards:

Awarded several research grants through the Windgate Foundation and is a 2016 Niche Award Finalist (2016)

Selected biographies



PATRICK J. QUINN

Born: Hartford, CT, USA, 1981

Studio: Center For Metal Arts & Ice Forge, Florida NY

Training: BFA, sculpture, Alfred University 2000-2004, MFA, Blacksmithing, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale (2011-2014)

Selected Exhibitions:

Metal In Motion, Invitational exhibition, National ornamental Metal Museum, Memphis, TN (2017)

"Transition", International Juried Touring Exhibition, Kazematten Gallery, Ypres, Belgium. (2016)

The Table Adorned, Lori Gipson, National Ornamental Metal Museum, Memphis, TN (2015)

Juried Exhibition, Craft Forms, Wayne Art Center, Wayne PA (2014)

Juried Exhibition. Open Field Running, SNAG Student Show Minneapolis, MN (2014)

Juried Exhibition, 43rd Mid States Craft Exhibition, Evansville Museum of Art, History And Science, Evansville IN (2013)

Juried Exhibition, Lena Vigna, Craft Forms, Wayne Art Center, Wayne PA (2013)

Juried Exhibition, Ivy Cooper, Critical Forum, Surplus Gallery, Carbondale IL (2012)



DANIEL RANDALL

Born: USA, 1980

Workshop: Smithville, Tennessee, USA

Training: Master of Fine Arts, Metalsmithing, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Carbondale IL. (2007)
Bachelor of Fine Arts, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester NY. (2003)

Selected Exhibitions:

"Transition", International Juried Touring Exhibition, Kazematten Gallery, Ypres, Belgium. (2016)

"Sobaek: Speaking of the material", International Invitational Exhibition, 2013 Craft Trend Fair, COEX, Seoul, Korea. (2013)

"Contemporary Goldsmithing: Tradition & Excellence", International Online Juried Exhibition, Society of American Goldsmiths. (2013)

"Silver Triennial 2013", International Juried Exhibition, German Goldsmiths House, Hanau, Germany. National Museum of Decorative Arts, Trondheim, Norway. Museum und Galerie im Prediger, Schwabisch Gmund, Germany. Deutsches Klängenmuseum Solingen, Germany. Fair Ambiente, Frankfurt, Germany. Fair Inhorgenta, Munich, Germany (2013)



LESZEK SIKOŃ

Born: Przyszoza, Poland, 1984

Training: BA (Hons) Artist Blacksmithing, Hereford College of Arts

Experience: Pray for Syria, Aleppo Cross – re forging an IED from Syria
Dar – Design, Carmarthen
Hereford Make, Hereford

Selected Exhibitions:

"Transition", International Juried Touring Exhibition, Kazematten Gallery, Ypres, Belgium (2016)

<https://youtu.be/kvROsYg015Y>

Hereford College of Arts Summer Show (2016)

New Designers, London (2016)



RICHARD SMITH

Born: Boston, Massachusetts, 1960

Training: MFA, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale Illinois, USA (1992), West Surrey College of Art & Design Exchange, Surrey, England (1992), BFA Southern Missouri State University, Springfield, Missouri, USA (1985), Landsdown College (semester abroad), London, England (1984)

Private and Public Collections:

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas

Racine art Museum, Wisconsin

Asheville Art Museum, North Carolina

Metal Museum, Tennessee

The Mint Museum, North Carolina

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minnesota

Arkansa Arts Centre, Decorative Arts Museum, Arkansas

Penland School of Crafts, North Carolina

John and Robyn Horn Collection



FRED TRUUS

Born: Põlva, Estonia, 1885

Workshop: Tallinn, Estonia

Training: MA Southern Illinois University Carbondale (metalsmithing) (2012-2015), BA Estonian Academy of Arts (jewellery and blacksmithing) (2007-2012)

Selected Exhibitions:

Work included in the collections – Estonian academy of Arts

Exhibitions – "Transition", Ypres Conference, Belgium, (2016)

'XXI Biennale Europea d'Arte Fabbriale', Stia, Italy, (2015)

"Looking Back, Forging forward" SNAG conference Boston, Massachusetts

'Fe Falls' Murphyboro, Illinois, (2015),

"Form Forge and Fabricate", Carbondale, Illinois, (2014)

"Ferromenaalne", Tallinn City Gallery, Estonia, (2014)



STEPHEN YUSKO

Born: Dover, DE, USA, 1965

Workshop: Cleveland, OH, USA

Training: MFA in Metalsmithing, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL, USA (1999)

Selected Exhibitions:

Tributaries. Metal Museum, Memphis, TN (2016)

A Way Home. Solo Exhibition. William Busta Gallery, Cleveland, OH (2015)

Stephen Yusko: Transformations. Solo Exhibition. Maass Gallery, SUNY Purchase, Purchase, NY

Haystack Components: Metals and Jewelry. Invitational. Fuller Craft Museum. Brockton, MA (2015)

The Modern Table: Ohio Furniture Designers. Invitational. Riffe Gallery, Columbus, OH (2013-2014)

Transformation 8: Contemporary Works in Small Metals. Traveling Exhibition. Society for Contemporary Craft, Pittsburgh, PA. University of Little Rock, Arkansas August (2013)



PROFESSOR HEINER ZIMMERMANN

Born: Reutlingen, Germany, 1969

Studio: Pliezhausen, Germany

Publications:

Publication "Ironwork Today 4: Inside and Out" Schiffer Books ISBN13: 9780764346736 (2014)

Publication Albert Paley Catalog ISBN 978-91-87039-01-0 (2012)

Publication Yearbook Hephaistos ISBN 978-3-931951-58-0 (2011)

Publication State book Reutlingen "Einfach gerne hier" ISBN 978-3-9813648-3-5 (2011)

Publication "Die Kleine" p.24 ISSN 0948-0021 (2006)

Competitions/Awards:

Official recognition of a free working artist through the Department of Culture of the Federal Republic of Germany (2002)

First Place of the Federal Republic of Germany in Metalwork and Design (1991)

First Place of the State Baden-Württemberg in Metalwork and Design (1991)



Daniel Randall
Stilt House 1, 2017
Forged Steel & Wood



Atelier Zimmermann, 2017
Germany

PROFESSOR HEINER ZIMMERMANN

Social perceptions of the Blacksmith; from horseshoes to hot metal designers

'Oh, a blacksmith. You do horseshoes.'

This might be the most important thing you need to remember when you next come across a blacksmith: no, blacksmiths do not do horseshoes, unless they are also practising the occupation of farrier. Yet this is a reaction most blacksmiths have experienced, at least once in their career. It raises an important question: what do blacksmiths do today?

Early in the nineteenth century, this would not have been a question. Back then, the blacksmith had an obvious role in every community, and society clearly knew what a blacksmith's work was. They made a great diversity of products, including tools, household items, locks and chains; they undertook repair work; they even did horseshoes. There was a need for these products and therefore the blacksmiths had their market.

With the Industrial Revolution, many of these products and activities were taken over by new technologies and machines. Trying to compete against industrially produced goods, in the realm of price, was a let down from the beginning. So the blacksmith ended up

concentrating on what wasn't lucrative for industry. There were niches for blacksmiths to make a living, but every time a niche became too successful industry smelled profit. A new way of thinking was needed, capable of identifying the qualities of craft versus industry. At the end of the nineteenth century, the answers came from the Arts and Crafts movement: craft is more than producing work; it is a way of thinking through hands.

Before and during the two World Wars, industry was busy with militarization and left space in the commercial market for the blacksmith to fill. After the wars, the role of the blacksmith was re-established in society, when creative minds had to find ways to recycle leftover military items into usable products for daily life.

From the 1950s, blacksmiths even developed recognisable artistic identities around their work. The sculptural and architectural forge market flourished. Blacksmithing extended into many fields of society, even making it into the Louvre in Paris (Fritz Kühn) and reaching into the fine art market (Eduardo Chillida).

This started to change when the first economic crisis appeared in the 1990s. Many blacksmiths had to rethink and develop new survival strategies. Some blacksmiths have established a co-existence as entertainers. Because of the spectacular process of hot metal forging, the blacksmith was, and still is, a desired protagonist at medieval or Christmas markets. However, there is a risk that the process of forging becomes more interesting than the result of forging. Still, nowadays this is one of the strongest growing markets for blacksmiths, even making it into TV battle shows.

Others began a co-existence as fabricators, which empowered the blacksmith to have access to new metal technologies. And with that comes the ability to accelerate production time and be competitive in the market again. Even more importantly, this brings broader design choices, so the results fit better with modern architecture. The risk of losing the traditional aesthetics of blacksmithing is evident. Nevertheless, in some countries, this mix of occupations created a new profession: the metal designer.

Nowadays, blacksmithing is not a clearly established occupation, with its own products and markets. Even the technique of forging is not exclusive to the blacksmith anymore: new subcultures have appeared that celebrate the nostalgic contexts of a blacksmith, in museum settings, medieval markets or re-enactment shows. You can find forging in educational, or even in therapeutic, contexts.

Artists use the qualities of hot metal forging in their artworks, and you see more forged work than ever in art fairs.

So are there still blacksmiths today? Not in a traditional sense, and that is surely a good thing. It is proof that the blacksmith has been able to confront these different challenges over time: it shows that blacksmiths are able to develop and adapt.

As long as blacksmiths remember their initial qualities, like being open minded, risk taking and problem solving, the blacksmith will continue to be part of our society.

Professor Heiner Zimmermann is in third generation a blacksmith and teaches as a professor in metal art at the Gothenburg University.



Professor Heiner Zimmermann
Liquide Collection:
Square Red, 2016
Forged Steel & Milk Paint



SARAH-JANE CROWSON

Moving beyond Myth: the Blacksmith as critical commentator

The contemporary forged metal artist works at the interface of various discourses. The figure of the blacksmith carries multiple meanings across cultural traditions, many of which place the blacksmith as a problem-solver at the heart of local socio-economic prosperity, a powerful figure upon whose technical skills and critical abilities the community depends.

Contemporary narratives suggest that the blacksmith remains a powerful cultural myth. The role has been variously appropriated by fantasy-fiction, role-play and popular fiction; an appropriation of myth that reinforces the continuing cultural power and importance of the 'blacksmith' as a vital cultural reference point.

This historic importance crosses cultural, social and religious boundaries. Power-relationships around the craftsman are reflected in Greek mythologies, where the ambiguous figure of Hephaestus represents a complex relationship between physical, socio economic and physical power structures. The Smith God, in some representations, carries meanings that explore an ancient dichotomy between ideas of scientific power and aesthetics.

In contemporary culture, for those seeking to revivify the 'arts' within a dominant discourse of 'science, technology and engineering' the work of contemporary forged metal workers might, therefore, be read as a powerful metaphor for the necessity of creative imagination as a central element for cultural growth. This is encapsulated in the work on display in 'Forge', which communicates a synthesis of technical capability, experimentation, collaboration and concept, realised in sculptural, evocative outcomes.

This speaks to ideas of the 'craftsman'. The contemporary philosopher Richard Sennett writes of the importance of 'quality-driven work'; collaboration and craft acting as a counter-point to mass production. With an emphasis on ideas of skills, practice and practice-as-research, it might be argued that the contemporary hot forged metalworker acts as a contemporary myth. He becomes a personification of the contemporary craftsman; collaboration as the antithesis of the 'Fordist factories' Sennett invokes in his narrative. As a community, Artist Blacksmiths meet to share tacit knowledge of process and practices, transferring

¹ Crossick, G. & Kaszynska, P. (2016) *Understanding the value of arts & culture: The AHRC Cultural Value Project*, Swindon, Arts and Humanities Research Council

² Nicolosi, G. (2014) *On the traces of Hephaestus - Skills, technology and social participation*, Wageningen, Wageningen University

³ Sennett, R. (2008) *The Craftsman*. London, Penguin

the essential skills of the craft in the particular 'maker-space' of the forge rather than the seminar space.

Interestingly, Blacksmithing retains a traditional form of 'apprenticeship' where the learning process begun in an academic institution is relocated through studying as a journeyman apprentice with various masters. Knowledge is created through collaborative action, exchanged across continents; meanings are constantly being made through the particular tacit and explicit needs of the design process inherent in this craft, where specific tools must be crafted to create each piece of work in the forge.

Sennett suggests we think through, or with, the tools we use. This must be true for the contemporary worker in forged metal, who has to think and craft the tools they use as an inherent mediator in their creative processes. As an integral part of the making process, the worker in hot metal is potentially in a constant state of what Sennett calls 'dynamic repair'; reformatting in a form that cannot be replicated through technologies but has to become part of a collaborative physical making process. Hence, the

working process itself carries various meanings, those of artisanship and of collaboration. These are part of a very contemporary discourse around mediated meaning-making as well as a traditional discourse around ideas of authenticity.

And in this exhibition, the figure of the blacksmith also becomes a reflective creator of their new identity as critical craftsmen. Here, tradition is used as leverage; supporting the creation of new myths that dismantle traditional power structures and speak to ideas of collaboration and social commentary. We can read the work; process, content and material, as providing some kind of ideological antidote in this age of post-truth; the era of the Anthropocene where we look for an alternative means of understanding our worlds beyond that of technological duplications. Just as the cultural myth of the 'blacksmith' evokes ideas of 'tradition', 'skill' and critical intelligence, in contemporary culture these ideas travel hand in hand with a growing need to seek 'authentic', 'individual' experiences. This exhibition presents us with experiences that are not mediated by the electronic device or experienced second-hand,

but that are embodied in unique objects. Such objects are mediators. Through them we construct personal narratives that can link us with our cultural pasts and enable us to self-reflect as individuals; it is through such objects that we are able to 'place' ourselves in the wider social context.

Within 'Forge' the work moves beyond material culture, inviting powerful readings and critical commentary on contemporary society. Such readings are embodied in the work of Leszek Sikon, painstakingly collecting ammunitions from WW2 and transforming them into traditional agrarian tools, and Nils Hint's conversations with lost objects. These objects speak to contemporary ideas of cultural value¹, of place and identity. They act as mediators between past and present, reflective pieces with social significance.

Does such work appropriate and invoke the cultural myth of the blacksmith as a deliberate self-reflexive position or is this simply unavoidable for the artist who chooses to work with hot metal? I would argue that the role of the 'blacksmith', as well as the unique qualities of the artworks on

Professor Richard Smith
Off Set, 2011
Repoussé Steel & Rust Patina

display, references a fracture between traditional power structures and creates instead, works which uniquely invoke a dialogue that involves place, object, material, concept and audience. These bodies of contemporary work communicate complex meanings, using the myth of the blacksmith to add different dimensions to our readings of the work.

Here, we move from the dichotomies of Hephaestus towards a more complex practice working in a negotiated space and producing work that is contemporary, reflective and distinctive. A practice that absolutely confirms the continuing relevance of choosing to work with hot metal.

Sarah-Jane Crowson is Scholarship Development Manager at Hereford College of Arts. Her background is English Literature and Critical Studies, and her recent publications include articles exploring ideas of theory and practice and digital less-formal learning environments.



15 Ways of Thinking About a Blacksmith

Tobias: Is an idea or concept or intention important as a starting point when working with arts and crafts, or when mining their material and tradition? I think not.

Damian: What is your intention? Everyone should be forced to ask themselves this question, especially people who are going to make giant metal objects that the rest of us have to deal with.

Tobias: Art and craft start with tradition and material. They can be mined by the contemporary maker to answer why, what, how and for whom.

Damian: Public art of the kind made by many craftspeople is not a genre in itself. It is actually part of contemporary art, so what it really needs is a great artist.

Tobias: A lot of truly great things have been made by truly oblivious makers. Does that make them less great? And many horrible failures have come from very aware and smart makers. Does that make them less bad?

Damian: Where does process begin and end? What if we expand it beyond the actions of the studio to include what you read, or watch on Netflix, or the ways in which you choose to live in the world?

Tobias: How makers deal with process is up to them, as long as they do it. If all of the experimentation goes on in the realm of ideas, it is very probable that when the concept finally enters the material world it will be seriously flawed.

Damian: Techniques emerge at specific times and in specific cultural contexts, to answer or address specific cultural, political and social questions. In that sense they have urgency and purpose. But once that moment ends, you are left with empty technique.

Tobias: How can there be anything without the experimental part of the creative process?

Damian: The stereotyped image of the blacksmith: muscles, leather, tools; sweat glistening in the fiery

glow of the forge. It is both absolutely brilliant and totally hilarious, an opportunity and a trap.

Tobias: How to deal with the pure joy of making? Is it ever possible or okay that this might be enough for the maker, and the viewer is left to fill the object with content and context? Or would this just end up being a case of pareidolia, the mind perceiving a pattern where it doesn't exist?

Damian: Craft mastery is neither good art nor good contemporary craft. It's just craft mastery. It will appeal to a subculture, to other craft geeks, but that's the extent of its power.

Tobias: Material and craft used to be so important to me and to my identity. Now I tend to see the material and level of craft mastery as different colours in my box of crayons. It is both completely unimportant and so important at the same time.

Damian: Art doesn't start with the material but finds the material it needs for the idea. Craft, including

blacksmithing, is too much in love with materials and tradition.

Tobias: Art, and probably especially craft, have a narcissistic core, but loving what you do can be a powerful driving force. On the other hand, if you lack the ability to take a step back and reflect on what you have done, then you are in trouble.

Tobias Birgersson is a maker and lecturer at HDK – Academy of Design and Crafts. Damian Skinner is an art historian from Aotearoa, New Zealand. They talk frequently about craft.

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