

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Summer school forges ahead in Launceston

While the temperature soars outside the air is even hotter in the metalwork studio at Inveresk with Michigan (US)-born blacksmith Pete Mattila cranking up the heat for UTAS Summer School students.

The glow of the kiln, the distinctive sound of metal on metal as red-hot steel is shaped on an anvil plus the skills and precision involved in making the seemingly immovable into a fluid work of art has attracted 14 participants from around Tasmania and Victoria to the Tasmania College of the Arts this week and next.

Pete has lived in Tasmania for the past 13 years and it was an apprenticeship as an industrial blacksmith with Launceston business Tasmanian Blacksmith and Engineering that started his relationship with metal – one that has evolved into much more than typical tool-making.

By the time he was completing his trade certificate at TAFE in Sydney, Pete was already enrolling at UTAS to explore his new-found passion, and last year he completed his Masters of Fine Art with first-class Honours.

During the past two years he has travelled back and forth to the US, undertaking residencies and internships, collaborating with other blacksmith workshops and taking up artist-in-resident positions.

He said he was as surprised as anyone that he developed a passion for sculpture while at university and was able to successfully mesh industrial processes with creative outcomes as his artistic side came to the fore.

“Now I have the opportunity to pass on my skills and at the same time learn more myself as students ask questions and share their ideas,” he said.

“You can really see the excitement in the people who have come to the Summer School to practice the craft, and it’s satisfying to know that they will make art and explore it for their own reasons.”

The Art Practice Extension A – Direct Metal Sculpture blacksmith workshop is providing intermediate-level students with the opportunity to engage with contemporary visual arts practices.

They will use blacksmithing and fabrication techniques to create contemporary objects and the workshop is being run as a laboratory of investigation into form, derived specifically from steel working processes.

Two amazing bench seating sculptures flank the entrance to the workshop, both the result of Pete's Masters year project, and there could be no better inspiration for the students.

One of the sculptures has been purchased by UTAS for permanent exhibition.

Pete will soon embark on an artist-in-residency with the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery blacksmith shop in the Inveresk precinct.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

The media is invited to see Pete and his students in action during the blacksmith workshop which takes place today and tomorrow (January 15 and 16) and every day next week (January 20-24) at Inveresk, Launceston in the Tasmanian College of the Arts building.

Captions for attached photos:

Photo of Pete Mattila - UTAS alumnus and Launceston blacksmith Pete Mattila will teach Art Practice Extension A – Direct Metal Sculpture to 14 local and interstate students during the Tasmanian College of the Arts Summer School.

Photo of sculpture – A sculpture by Pete Mattila on display at TCotA, Inveresk, *The Surface Study IV* (2013, steel brown and black patina).

Please contact UTAS media officer Lana Best on 6324 5019 or 0417 978 025 or TCotA marketing officer Ali Ward on 6324 4423 or 0417 391 349 for more information on this or any other Tasmanian Creative Arts Summer School sessions.

An extensive range of artistic disciplines are being taught at Inveresk this week (except for Friday) and next week, including sculpture, ceramics, painting, drawing, photomedia, printmaking, inter-disciplinary performance, textiles, jewellery and furniture design with 180 Summer School participants coming from all over the country.

More interview and photo opportunities to consider:

Wednesday, January 15, 1pm-4pm – Arts business students will walk to the Princess Theatre to take a tour and be inspired by the former director of the Burnie Arts and Function Centre and Burnie Regional Art Gallery and current Theatre North general manager Greg Leong.

Thursday, January 16, 1-3 pm - A Body Adornment workshop will take place with professional jewellery maker Marisa Molin. Students will investigate small-scale sculpture in relation to body adornment, with the emphasis on working with metals.

Monday, January 20, 9am-12.30pm – Drawing students will be at Paper Beach with tutor Helene Weeding, a Launceston-based artist currently involved in post-graduate study at TCotA and a regular exhibitor at Handmark Gallery. Helen's research is directed at discovering, through the process of painting, a pathway to analysing emotive responses to particular bodies of water.

Tuesday, January 21 – Performance Project A – Incubator will be a performance-based workshop at Inveresk with Paige Rattray, a NIDA graduate and co-founder of Arthur Theatre Co., as well as former Resident Director of Griffin Theatre Co. In 2011 Paige shared the Best Emerging Writer award at the Melbourne Fringe Festival.

Wednesday, January 22, 10am-noon – Field trip by Wilderness and Natural Environment students to City Park with Patrick Sutczak; to understand the effects on Launceston from a contemporary and historical import.

Friday, January 24, 12-2pm – The Tasmanian Creative Arts Summer School will end with a special pop-up exhibition and performance at Inveresk. The event is open to the public, and all student work will go on show in the Academy Gallery while several performances will take place in the nearby theatre. Acting TCotA Dean Noel Frankham will open the exhibition.

Please go to www.utas.edu.au/tcass for the full Summer School program.

Information released by:

**The Communications and Media Office, University of Tasmania
Phone: Lana Best (03) 6324 5019; Mob. 0417 978 025
Email: Lana.Best@utas.edu.au**