SHORT COURSE DETAILS

4D5984    DAMASCUS STEEL MAKING
Tutor:    PETER PARKINSON
Dates:    4 DAYS  SUNDAY 13 MARCH – THURSDAY 17 MARCH

ABOUT YOUR COURSE:

Damascus steel, or more properly pattern welded steel, is the material from which Viking and Samurai swords were made and exhibits an intricately patterned surface or grain, the structure of which penetrates the whole material. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century, shot gun barrels were made in 'Damascus steel' and were prized as much for the beauty of their patterning as for their engineering efficiency.

In recent years, the making of pattern welded steel has enjoyed a revival, largely for its decorative qualities. It is a material you make yourself, by fire welding together layers of iron and steel, to develop a laminated structure exhibiting particular surface patterns. This piece of material may then be used to make a small decorative object.

The course provides an opportunity to understand, explore and develop ideas using this ancient technique. Some previous experience of blacksmithing may be helpful, but is not essential. You are introduced to the decorative possibilities of making Damascus steel enabling you to investigate its creative applications.

Having gained some confidence in the process, you should be able to produce pieces of pattern welded steel, which will provide the material from which a piece of jewellery, paperknife or other decorative object might be made. The course divides into two phases; the first to make the patterned material, the second to use this in the design and making of a finished item.

The course will cover forging, forge welding, pattern development and finishing. Students will forge and forge weld wrought iron and various steels, using blacksmithing techniques and processes, both to create the material and shape it to its final form before finishing it in the Print Studio (eg. polishing and acid etching).

Techniques will be demonstrated and students will be encouraged to follow their own creative approach in the production of individual pieces of work.

The first full day will be an intensive session dealing with the techniques of forge welding and pattern development. Following this, students will produce their own pattern welded blank and develop this into an individual finished piece.

LEVEL: SUITABLE FOR ALL
A subject focused course that is delivered to suit any level of experience from beginner to advanced practitioner. A structured start is followed by guided independent practise.

ABOUT YOUR TUTOR:
Peter Parkinson is an artist-blacksmith with extensive teaching experience. He studied at the Royal College of Art and has published several books including Forged Architectural Metalwork.

TIMETABLE:

Arrival day: Sunday 13 March
From 4.00pm    Arrival for residential students
6.45pm    Non-residential students please arrive by 6.45pm for welcome chat and dinner
Arrival day continued: Sunday 13 March
7.00pm Dinner
8.00pm – 9.00pm First teaching session – attendance is an essential part of the course. The course begins with a practical introductory session in the Forge on the first evening, which also covers essential health and safety concerns. Students should therefore be suitably dressed for the workshop.

Other days: Monday 14 March – Wednesday 16 March
9.15am Morning classes start
10.30am Coffee
11.00am Morning classes continue
12.45pm Lunch
2.00pm Afternoon classes
3.30pm Tea
4.00pm Afternoon classes continue
5.00pm Classes finish
7.00pm Dinner
8.15pm Evening working – the workshop will be open for supervised evening sessions during the course.

Departure day: Thursday 17 March
(Residential students to vacate rooms by 10am)
9.15am Morning classes start
10.30am Coffee
11.00am Morning classes continue
12.45pm Lunch
2.00pm Afternoon classes
3.00pm Classes finish
3.30pm Tea then departure

REQUIRED PREPARATION:
Looking at Museum examples or some reading on the subject is desirable but not essential.

MATERIALS FOR YOUR COURSE:
We have a generously stocked craft shop, which opens daily from 8.30am–2pm.
For any materials you need to purchase from the shop, we suggest you do so during the first morning of your course, after having discussed with your tutor.

Materials included in the course fee:
Fuel and steel.

Available from the Shop:
Items of drawing equipment will be available for purchase from the College Craft Shop. Other materials will be provided in the Forge.

Clothing and Safety Equipment:
Students must wear suitable clothing for the course – see below.

The College provides:
Leather aprons, work gloves, safety spectacles and ear defenders in the Forge.

You may wish to bring your own, if you have them. If for example you have particularly large or small hands, your own work gloves are likely to be a better fit.

Please also note that specialised welding helmets and goggles are provided in the Forge.
Please bring any of the listed items, if you have them, and in addition:
You will need clothing suitable for workshop use, together with steel toe capped boots. Please note that cotton or wool clothing is preferable to nylon or other synthetics. A pair of cotton jeans is far more protective than a pair of nylon trousers. Shorts do not provide necessary protection.

HEALTH AND SAFETY:
The tutor will instruct students in health and safety issues relevant to this course. Please note that tutor supervision is required at all times when students work in this workshop.

For your safety it is mandatory to wear steel toe capped safety boots when undertaking a course in the Forge. Students must provide their own footwear and bring them with them to wear on the course. If you fail to bring suitable footwear, you will not be able to take part in the course.

Safety boots can be purchased from most tool hire shops and builders merchants as well as online.

www.cromwell.co.uk  www.bhinone.com

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