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NEWS RELEASE

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## Creativity, craftsmanship define Metal Art Showcase

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CALGARY – There’s a method to Doug Taylor’s madness. As an artist, his chosen medium is metal . . . partially for the mulligan.

“I can form it. I can make it the way I want. And as crazy as it sounds, if I make a mistake I can just weld it back together,” says Taylor, of Blackfalds, Alta., who’s a welder by trade for an oilfield steel fabrication business. “I’ve got a friend who does stone carvings and cedar carvings, and if he makes a mistake, it’s done.

“With metal, I can weld it back together, or stretch it out some, or change the colours with different heat. You make a wrong move with the chisel, and there’s no going back.”

Two of Taylor’s latest creations will be up for public consumption as part of the Calgary Stampede’s ninth annual Metal Art Showcase, which begins at 6 p.m. on Saturday, July 9 in the BMO Centre’s Palomino Room and concludes with the annual Metal Art Auction at 7 p.m.

An increasingly popular right-brained spinoff of the Stampede’s annual World Championship Blacksmiths’ Competition (WCBC), the Metal Art Showcase features art from around the world. Some pieces are born on the blacksmith’s forge, while others, such as Taylor’s, are conceived through other methods, such as welding, cold bending, stretching, wire artistry, and silversmithy.

“A metal art component is an important link to our past,” says Erik Swanby, who chairs the Stampede’s Blacksmiths committee. “You’d go into a blacksmith’s shop in the past, and you could get your horse shod or you could get some fire tools made.

“The blacksmith did everything in the past. By having both (horseshoeing and artistic elements), we’re demonstrating what blacksmiths are capable of.”

Of course, the Metal Art Showcase also embraces modern art, too, notes Heather Hartmann, who co-chairs the Stampede’s Metal Art subcommittee.

“What we’re seeing these days is really quite spectacular,” says Hartmann. “The Stampede, of course, is traditionally a Western cultured-event, so we see a lot of pieces along those lines. But some of the blacksmiths are from Europe and Australia, and they don’t necessarily have a strong Western tradition.

“We’re seeing everything from sculpture to work with reclaimed material. One year, we had an artist (Shane Seib of Sylvan Lake, Alta.) submit a dragon made entirely of recycled snowmobile parts.”

The Metal Art Auction includes three distinct categories — traditional forging; non-traditional forging; and potluck artistic forging, featuring creations dreamed up on the spot by WCBC competitors under the Big Top earlier Saturday. Cash prizes are awarded in each category.

Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Limited

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Competitors will also vie for the ultimate title of Artistic Forging Champion, won in 2010 by Dean Lewis of Australia.

Taylor, who's in his second year of competition at the Stampede's Metal Art Showcase, has entered both his pieces in the non-traditional forging – Runaway, a 3-D representation in steel and copper of an out-of-control chuckwagon pulled by four horses; and Mighty Chief, a steel-and-copper offering of an Indian face and full headdress.

There's no limit to the imagination for the traditional and non-traditional forging categories, with artists working in steel, iron, copper, brass, aluminum, and more. Taylor uses almost entirely recycled scrap steel for his art, and has taught himself various techniques with arc-welding and acetylene torch units over the Internet.

"When I build one piece, I'm already thinking ahead to the next piece," he says. "The people who know me, my co-workers and employees, always bug me that I'm never actually working on the piece I'm working on, because I've got another one going in my mind. Multitasking, I guess you'd say.

"This spring, I've probably done six or seven pieces of different Haida-styled native art. My friend who does stone carvings, his stuff has given me inspiration, so I've been doing some out of steel, and different temperatures and cooling-down processes turn it different colours."

The traditional and non-traditional forging submissions will be on display at the Stampede's Western Art Showcase in the BMO Centre from Wednesday, July 6 through early Saturday, before being moved to the Palomino Room in anticipation of the Metal Art Showcase and Auction.

Anyone already on park at the Stampede can attend Saturday's Metal Art Showcase and bid on the items. For those coming down expressly for the showcase and auction, complimentary tickets can be procured by e-mailing [metalartshowcase@calgarystampede.com](mailto:metalartshowcase@calgarystampede.com), or by contacting the Stampede's agricultural administration office at 403.261.9174.

The Stampede will be webcasting all events being held in the Scotiabank Saddledome and the Big Top this year. Visit <http://ag.calgarystampede.com/saddledome-ustream-2011> for live streaming of Saddledome action, and <http://ag.calgarystampede.com/big-top-ustream-2011> for events under the Big Top.

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The Calgary Stampede is a volunteer-supported, not-for-profit community organization that preserves and promotes western heritage and values. The Stampede contributes to the quality of life in Calgary and southern Alberta through its world-renowned 10-day Stampede, year-round facilities, western events and several youth and agriculture programs. All revenue is reinvested into Calgary Stampede programs and facilities. For more about the Stampede, visit [www.calgarystampede.com](http://www.calgarystampede.com).

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