



FOCUS ON FINE CRAFT

Tennessee Youth & Educators at the
Appalachian Center For Craft



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ABOUT THE CRAFT CENTER

Located in Smithville, Tennessee, the **Appalachian Center for Craft (ACC)** is a satellite campus of Tennessee Tech University's College of Fine Arts.

The ACC is dedicated to promoting excellence in **American craft** by teaching both **tradition** and **innovation** in professional studio art and fostering access to the highest-quality craft education, artists and events.

TN Tech's School of Art, Craft & Design offers degrees in:

- Art Education
- Clay
- Design
- Digital Media
- Fibers
- Fibers
- Glass
- Metals
- Painting
- Wood



INTRODUCTION TO PROGRAMMING

In addition to supporting undergraduate curricula during the school year, the ACC hosts programming to introduce kids and adults in our rural region of Tennessee **to the world of fine craft**. This includes:

- Summer Art Intensives
- Family Craft Studio
- Field Trips

This programming provides access to:

- High-quality craft education
- Professional artists
- Career pathways in craft



THE ACC AIMS TO EXPAND ACCESS TO THE ARTS FOR ALL TENNESSEANS



Learn more about the Craft Center here:

SUMMER ART INTENSIVE FOR HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

The **High School Art Intensive (HSAI)** provides high school students with an immersive learning experience at the ACC during summer break.

Each year, 8th-12th-grade students live on campus and take two workshops in craft media, including clay, metals, glass, fibers and wood, taught by professional artists.

Outside of their workshops, students enjoy catered meals and engaging activities in the evenings, including mini-workshops, hiking, movie nights and a bonfire!



SUMMER ART INTENSIVE FOR HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATORS

Educator Workshops provide Tennessee K-12 art educators with an immersive workshop experience at the ACC.

This program is designed to provide professional development, revitalize creative practices and give teachers the opportunity to become students again.

Selected art educators are invited to spend a **week** or **weekend** in residence at the ACC campus, learning from professional artists and creating in craft media, like clay, metals, glass, fibers, wood and more.

Participants receive certificates of completion that may be used towards proof of **Professional Development Points (PDP)**.



Want to participate? Learn more about the application here:

FAMILY CRAFT STUDIO

Family Craft Studio

provides free monthly art and craft projects for kids and their guardians one to two Saturdays a month.



Designed for all ages, participants make hands-on crafts together, exploring processes like basketweaving, block printing and metal stamping at ACC's campus.





Free and open to the public,
participants may drop in anytime
between 9 a.m. and noon. All Family
Craft Studio programs happen at
The Appalachian Center for Craft in
the 3D Design studio.

FOCUS ON FINE CRAFT PROGRAM

The Focus on Fine Craft Program introduces students and adults to the world of craft via **field trips** and an **annual in-person and virtual exhibition**.

HIGH-SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS

Schools from across Tennessee participate in three-hour workshops in our studios. Students are split into small groups and learn craft processes like woodworking, glass torch working, steel forging, enameling, pottery or paper making.



Participants engage with professional artists, gaining a deeper understanding and appreciation of craft, regional traditions and careers in the field.

FOCUS ON FINE CRAFT PROGRAM

ANNUAL EXHIBITION & DIGITAL SHOWCASE

In May, the ACC hosts an **exhibition** of student and teacher work selected from that year's field trip participants. Community members are invited to attend the **exhibition** and **reception**. The exhibition is accessible virtually via a **digital showcase** hosted on the ACC website.



BLACKSMITHING



In the smithy, students learn basic blacksmithing techniques to design and forge **steel hooks**.

First, they learn how to safely start and operate a **traditional coal forge** and properly use **blacksmithing tongs** and **ball-peen hammers**.

Then, the students tackle the fundamentals of **cutting**, **tapering** and **scrolling** steel rods to leave with at least one finished hook.



BLACKSMITHING



Rayan Downing creates one-of-a-kind, handmade knives using a variety of sculptural techniques and materials, both locally and responsibly sourced from around the world. His work ranges from everyday hunting and camping tools to high-end kitchen cutlery prized by discerning chefs.



ASSISTANT

INSTRUCTOR

Marcus Johnson started bladesmithing in 2013 due to his interest in medieval swordsmanship. He graduated in 2020 from the ACC with a BFA in metals. Since graduating, Johnson has set up a small shop in Tennessee where he continues to develop and refine his craft. His current work focuses on kitchen cutlery and, occasionally, hunting knives and swords.



CLAY



In the clay studio, students are guided through the process of forming and decorating a **slab-built clay mug**.

Students first learn how to roll out clay into a slab and then cut it to size.

Scratch and slip techniques are used to join the slabs and form a functional mug with a handle.

Lastly, they personalize their mugs with **clay stamps** and colorful **ceramic pigments**.



CLAY



INSTRUCTOR

Andrew Foster is a ceramic artist from Rochester, NY, with an MFA from the School for American Craft at the Rochester Institute of Technology. His functional pottery honors New York's centuries-old legacy of stoneware production, while seeking to reinvigorate and advance the tradition.



Mate Arena is currently a student at TN Tech, majoring in clay. Arena creates and teaches ceramic art to people of all ages. His ceramic work focuses on human connection and expression through functional pottery, with illustrated faces soda-fired to convey the ceramic-making process.

ASSISTANT



FIBERS



In the Fibers studio, students learn about the art of papermaking.

First, students learn how to make images using **paper pulp**, using **traditional Western techniques**.

Then, students branch out and get creative with the **pulp painting process**, a papermaking technique that uses **pigmented short fiber pulp** to make designs without the use of pens, paints or markers.



FIBERS



Abi Hixson is a textile artist from Middle Tennessee working in a variety of fiber processes, including quilting, cross-stitching and crochet. Abi's pieces draw inspiration from both traditional and contemporary textiles. She uses her work as a means of processing difficult, confusing emotions. Experimenting with vibrant color palettes and humorous subject matter, Abi seeks to connect with others through art.



ASSISTANT

INSTRUCTOR

Jasmine Best is a Southern American artist who uses her personal memories and archival research to analyze the subtext created by how black and Southern American cultures influence, clash and are transformed within mainstream American culture. She holds an MFA with Distinction from the Lamar Dodd School of Art at the University of Georgia (2025).



GLASS



The glass workshop covers **flameworking** techniques for creating colorful glass beads.

Students are first taught how to use **oxy-propane** torches to melt glass rods at **1,700 degrees**. Using their choice of colors, students work with molten glass around **bead mandrels** to create unique, vibrant beads.

After **annealing** (cooling slowly), the beads are ready for the students to take home.



GLASS



Charlotte King is a mixed-media artist from South Carolina currently pursuing a BFA with a dual focus in glass and metals at TN Tech. She has assisted instructors for glass workshops at the ACC and currently works at Glasshäus as a glass instructor. Charlotte's work is reminiscent of her childhood through material play and is often inspired by the structural elegance of folded origami forms, which she interprets across various media.



ASSISTANT

INSTRUCTOR

Kayla Sanford is a glass artist from Cleveland, OH. She earned her BFA in Glass from the Cleveland Institute of Art in 2021. Her work focuses on creating objects that foster comfort. She notes, "I'm excited by the bonds we form with handmade objects, how they become part of us and how we use them to connect with others."



METALSMITHING

In the metalsmithing studio, students dive into the world of enameling!

Vitreous enameling is the process of fusing glass powder to a metal surface to add texture, color and impact. After firing these pieces in the kiln at **1,500 degrees**, the enameled pendants are smooth and vibrant.

Then, the students learn how to add layers and detail using **painting enamels** and traditional **sgraffito** (carving) processes. Students leave with three to four pendants that they can wear on necklaces, earrings or keychains.



METALS MITHING



INSTRUCTOR

Talia Tax is a metalsmith from Arizona with a B.A. in computing and the arts from Yale University. Using heat as the mechanism of change, they create small objects that address resilience, community and safety. Talia focuses on processes such as metal casting, enameling, and soldering, and has participated in exhibitions across the country.



Kate Leonard is a metals BFA student at TN Tech. She began her journey in engineering, where she discovered welding. She promptly changed directions, seeking to further develop her artistry in metals. Scale ranges from jewelry to architectural blacksmithing. Through her work, she illustrates the harmony that can arise from opposing forces coexisting and the necessity of breaking free from constraints.



ASSISTANT



WOOD



Students gain hands-on experience with woodworking machines in the **Tampico Fiber Brush Workshop**.

Starting with rough wood, students design a small handheld brush. Then, they cut a rough design out with a **vertical bandsaw** and refine it on **disk** and **oscillating sanders**.

Lastly, they learn to use a **drill press** to make holes in which they glue tampico fibers to make a finished brush.



WOOD



Angela Van Wiltenburg was born and raised in Wauconda, IL. After taking a stagecraft class in high school and enjoying the hands-on work, she began creating things on her own. She currently attends TN Tech, majoring in fine arts with a concentration in wood. Angela is passionate about this field, and her hope after graduating is to work independently as an artist. Angela primarily enjoys woodturning and crafting fine furniture.



ASSISTANT

INSTRUCTOR

Alexandra Mavrikis is a sculptor, furniture maker, and visual arts educator from New York with an MFA in applied design from San Diego State University. Her work incorporates mixed media, with a focus on wood and ceramics and has been exhibited nationally. She addresses the body, gender and spatial relations while questioning the functionality of household furniture.



PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

- Adamsville High School
- Alcoa High School
- Algood Middle School
- Cane Ridge HS
- Christ Presbyterian
- The Curve Homeschool
- Gordonsville High School
- Hume Fogg High School
- Jackson County High School
- North Side High School
- Nolensville High School
- Pickett County

- Prescott South High School
- Providence Christian Academy
- Rockvale High School
- Springfield High
- Sale Creek HS
- Stewart's Creek
- Stone Memorial
- Sumner County
- Tullahoma High School
- Upperman Middle School
- Warren County High School
- White House Heritage



Interested in participating? Scan here:

TEACHER TESTIMONIALS

Kids who are hesitant to jump in participated and were excited to try something completely different.

I have participated for many years and love the experiences it gives my students.

The field trip program is a wonderful resource for art educators to provide students the opportunity to explore media not offered at the high school level.



Experiences like this allow youth to see firsthand the vast possibilities within the arts and envision new pathways ... It is incredibly inspiring for our educators to engage with ACC's community and witness the depth of craftsmanship and creativity on display.

The hospitality shown by everyone at the ACC was truly appreciated.

Our students were deeply inspired by the opportunity to explore the creative process in such an innovative and welcoming environment.

We were blown away by the ACC's kindness and hospitality, the knowledge and insight of the teaching resident artists and students, and the opportunities provided to our students. Plus, we all had an absolute blast!

Appalachian Center for Craft

TENNESSEE TECH

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tntech.edu/fine-arts/craftcenter/