# Spring Fling open studios in Dumfries & Galloway showcases artist Nate Robinson’s metalwork



The Spring Fling open studios event, a significant cultural highlight in Dumfries & Galloway, is set to take place this year from May 24 to 26. Over its first 21 years, the event has attracted more than 174,000 visitors who have made approximately 546,000 studio visits. This has resulted in the purchase of over £10.2 million worth of art and craft directly from studios and has contributed more than £17.5 million to the local economy.

Among the many talented artists participating this year is 29-year-old blacksmith Nate Robinson. Known for his creative metalwork that spans a range of sizes, Robinson will open the doors of his forge to visitors during the event. His work includes miniature Highland cows and cottages, alongside large, commissioned pieces such as a striking female dragon weighing 700 kilograms, complete with over 1,000 individually hand-forged scales.

Visitors to Robinson's forge may also encounter Ailsa, a black and white cat who inspired a three-metre tall metal sculpture. This feline sculpture is designed to climb a tree in the garden, a nod to the real Ailsa, who enjoys climbing trees but often requires rescuing due to difficulties in descending.

Speaking to The Herald (Glasgow), Robinson said, "Spring Fling should be lots of fun this year – I love creating things at a grand scale and will have plenty to look at with the dragon, dinosaurs, sheep and the cat. A lot of my work is specially commissioned, making just about anything people can imagine."

He shared that a couple commissioned the dragon after seeing his work on social media, describing the project as "a brilliant challenge." Reflecting on the piece, Robinson noted, "They came round to see it a little while ago, decided it’s a ‘she’ – I’m hoping she will look pretty impressive in their garden."

Robinson also enjoys demonstrating his forge-working skills to visitors. He added, "But the cat was a bit different – Ailsa loves climbing trees but isn’t very good at getting down and often has to be rescued. So, I created a cat the size of a car, with a special tunnel inside which she can easily run up and down – she loves it."

Natasha Kinsella, Events and Exhibitions Development Manager for Upland CIC, the organisation behind Spring Fling, highlighted the diverse range of art and talent visitors can expect. She said, "Nate’s work is a great example of the variety and the talent of artists and makers you can see in Spring Fling. On the Green Route alone you can discover everything from ceramics, tapestry and costume to painting and jewellery. And that’s just the start, with five other routes to choose from, all packed with fascinating people, craft and contemporary art."

Spring Fling continues to offer a rich and varied experience for art lovers and the wider community, showcasing the skills and creativity of artists and craftspeople across the region.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.spring-fling.co.uk/visit/> - This official Spring Fling website provides detailed information about the event, including dates, participating studios, and visitor guidelines, confirming the event's schedule from May 24 to 26, 2024.
2. <https://scotlandstartshere.com/event/spring-fling-open-studios-weekend/> - This source highlights the significance of the Spring Fling Open Studios Weekend, noting that it is a hugely popular opportunity to meet and see the latest work by an abundance of artists and makers, many of whom are popular regulars, others taking part for the first time.
3. <https://www.dgwgo.com/dg-arts-news/record-studios-spring-fling/> - This article reports that a record-breaking 104 studios will be welcoming the public for Dumfries and Galloway’s 22nd annual Spring Fling Open Studios Weekend, taking place from 25-27 May, providing a significant cultural highlight in the region.
4. <https://www.dgwgo.com/dg-arts-news/spring-fling-2024-programme/> - This source reveals the full programme for the 2024 open studios weekend, featuring a new Rural Mural along the seafront in Stranraer, created by Argyll-based street art specialists Recoat along with local visual artist Jennifer Buchanan, adding to the event's cultural offerings.
5. <https://www.scottishfestivalspr.com/spring-fling-in-your-area-enjoy-an-amazing-array-of-contemporary-art-and-craft/> - This article discusses the variety of contemporary art and craft at 104 studios across Dumfries and Galloway, including artists like Kirkcudbright bespoke high-quality furniture maker Ian Cameron-Smith, confirming the participation of diverse artists in the event.
6. <https://www.dgwgo.com/dg-arts-news/artists-fling-open-their-studios/> - This source mentions the participation of rug makers for the first time, such as Laura Derby in Kirkcudbright, who makes tufted rugs, and Penny Lilley in Castle Douglas whose rag rugs have bright, bold colours and use recycled fabrics, highlighting the diversity of crafts featured.
7. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25125650.meet-metal-dragon-dumfries-galloway-summer/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data