Table of Contents

Introduction 4
Exhibitions 5 - 7
Education and Outreach 9 - 12
Artist Services 14 - 16
Sales Gallery & American Pottery Festival 18 - 20
Administration and Numbers 22 - 23
Impact 25 - 26
People 27 - 32
Welcome to 2016 at Northern Clay Center

Made possible by the support from thousands of clay supporters, students, artists, and various donors in 2016, Northern Clay Center produced a spectacular year of programming. We completed the celebration of our 25th year of operations with a grand soirée for all of our members/donors/contributors/supporters, held on June 25, with a bouquet of floral-centric ceramic wares as our backdrop to the party (our spring Florilegium exhibition). We successfully raised funds from the sale of 25th Anniversary-centric vases totaling over $4,400. During 2016, we also raised funds for the purchase of a new ClayToGo van to support our expanded outreach to persons who are not able to travel to NCC to participate in education and exhibition-related programs. We dramatically increased our enrollment in adult and children’s classes at our South Minneapolis site, with a record year of participation and earned income.

Our exhibitions explored emerging ceramic talent; they took a closer look at the influences of clay makers at all stages of their careers; they paid homage to the array of possibilities in clay with floral-centric subject matter; and they shared examples of ceramic art from the new ceramic artist toolkit.

We gracefully made our way through one of the biggest years on the books for NCC (both the real financial books and the folklore books) as we produced programs and special events on a dime, with a dime size staff. What better way to cap off a 25th Anniversary Year than with the welcome of five brand new staff members, two very enviable parties, a guest presentation by a notorious and controversial ceramics critic, and our first-ever online fundraising campaign for capital equipment? If there was ever an organization to pull off such a year, it was NCC.
Through our exhibitions program, we produced 12 shows that demonstrated the range of expressions in clay, created by accomplished, emerging, and established ceramic artists. Work by 69 artists was included in the exhibitions; 23 of these artists were from Minnesota. We produced an exhibition of emerging technologies in ceramics, partnering with Tethon 3D to demonstrate 3D printing to our audience, thus drawing a wider net of interest. We also partnered with ArtAxis.org, an online community of ceramic artists, to produce an exhibition in the Emily Galusha Gallery that highlighted the changing nature of curation in the digital age.

1/15 – 2/28 Gallery M | Three Jerome Artists
Recipients of emerging artist project grants awarded in 2015. Artists included Brett Freund, Adam Gruetzmacher, and Joe Singewald.

Emily Galusha Gallery | Fogelberg, Anonymous Potter, and Red Wing Artists
Annual exhibition of work by recipients of grants to underwrite short-term studio residencies at NCC. Artists included Autumn Higgins, Brady McLearen, Anna Metcalfe, Michelle Summers, and Iren Tete.

3/11 – 4/24 Gallery M | Influenced and Evolved
Using functional pottery to explore the nature of ceramic education, Influenced & Evolved examined how an artist’s studio practice evolves over time, and how pottery reflects on the nature of influences such as ceramic history, the Internet, and the studio practice of each artist. The exhibition contrasted the practice of emerging potters with that of artists widely recognized as established leaders in the field, and asked them to respond to questions such as: Where and how do influences come to you in the contemporary world? How have early experiences continued to feed your work today? How is your artwork related to history? What’s been pivotal in your development? The artists invited to participate in the exhibition represented a diverse range of experiences. Curated by Mark Pharis, Influenced & Evolved featured the work of Mike Helke, Michael Hunt and Naomi Dalglis, Tom Jaszczak, Alix Knipe, Matthew Metz, Brooks Oliver, Liz Quackenbush, Tim Rowan, and Linda Sikora. Rowan and Sikora visited the Center for artist lectures and guest critiques.

Emily Galusha Gallery | Art Axis.org, members show
Artaxis.org explored how the Internet’s decentralized and anti-authoritarian ethos impacts the collection and dissemination of ceramic artwork. Immersed in the physical works in the gallery, visitors were encouraged to participate in curating the show by viewing and interacting with artworks created by members of the online group, Artaxis.org, which were displayed on touch screens in the gallery. Viewers could choose to leave an image on the screen to be included (virtually) in the exhibition. By making their selection, visitors challenged the traditional power balance between curator and viewer. This exhibition aimed to highlight the dynamic contrast between new forms of dissemination and established forms. Artaxis.org artists whose physical work was included in the exhibition were: Brian Benfer, Heather Nameth Bren, Chris Campbell, Erica Iman, Roberto Lugo, JJ McCracken, Sidonie Villere, and Christina West.

5/6 – 6/26 Gallery M | Florilegium
In late spring, Northern Clay Center celebrated 25 bountiful years of growth with the exhibition Florilegium. From clichéd and mundane floral decoration to images that capture moments of ephemeral beauty, flowers are laden with symbolic and cultural significance. Leaves, fruit, flowers, and vines are found on ceramic vessels on every continent across the millennia. They symbolize love, reproduction, and death—the essentials of life. Florilegium explored floral imagery in contemporary ceramics through the work of artists who use flowers both decoratively and conceptually. Curated by Ursula Hargens, the exhibition included artists: Joan Brunau, Guy Michael Davis and Katie Parker, Rain Harris, Rebecca Hutchinson, Jae Won Lee, Kate Maury, and Julie Moon. Rebecca Hutchinson joined us to install her artwork, involving students and sharing her process with the public throughout the weeklong installation. Joan Brunau gave a workshop at NCC demonstrating her techniques. We partnered with the Anderson Horticultural Library (at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum) to share and explore two volumes of The Highgrove Florilegium, a tome from 2008 – 2009, depicting plants from Prince Charles’ garden at Highgrove in Gloucestershire. These large-scale books feature prints from the best botanical painters in the world.

Emily Galusha Gallery | HomeWork: Jennifer Rogers
Alongside Florilegium, we exhibited HomeWork: Jennifer Rogers, a solo exhibition. HomeWork was a three-part, multi-media installation. The parts came together to present a quiet, dramatic landscape of ceramic objects surrounded by a large, soft, canvas cloud and a hand-stitched embroidery piece. Calling attention to process, form, and material, the work connected these different yet similar approaches to the repetitive making processes of coiling, stitching, and assembling to construct simple modular forms.
EXHIBITIONS

7/8 – 8/28 Gallery M and Emily Galusha Gallery | Six McKnight Artists
Our annual exhibition, Six McKnight Artists, featured new work by 2015 McKnight Artist Fellowship for Ceramic Artists recipients Ursula Hargens (Minneapolis, MN), and Mika Negishi Laidlaw (Mankato, MN), as well as 2013 McKnight Artist Residency for Ceramic Artists recipient Tom Bartel (Athens, OH), and 2014 McKnight Artist Residency for Ceramic Artists recipients Jessica Brandl (Cedar Falls, IA), Amy Santoferraro (Manhattan, KS), and Andy Shaw (Baton Rouge, LA). This exhibition, supported by the McKnight Foundation, showcased the success of each artist's fellowship or residency.

9/23 – 11/4 Gallery M | A Tipping Point: Technology in Ceramics
In the fall, we produced A Tipping Point: Technology in Ceramics. Through market demand, technologies like 3D printers and CNC routers—previously only available to industry and academic institutions—are becoming far more affordable and accessible. Today’s artists have a new toolkit, which was unavailable even a decade ago. Individuals of any material or educational background can now wield the power of a small factory, prototyping, rendering, and altering on a computer before an object is actually formed in clay. Curated by Heather Nameth Bren and Michael Arnold, A Tipping Point: Technology in Ceramics brought together the work of ceramic artists, designers, and architects. The exhibition included the work of Adam Chau, Adaptive Manufacturing (a collaboration between Olivier van Herpt and Sander Wassink), Michael Eden, Adam Nathaniel Furman, Rael San Fratello (a collaboration between Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello), and Jenny Sabin. This exhibition was supported through a partnership with the 3D printing company Tethon 3D. Jenny Sabin visited for the opening and presented an image talk. Ronald Rael was an artist-in-residence at NCC for two weeks prior to the exhibition. He and Tethon 3D presented a day of demonstrations to introduce 3D printing and the software to an audience of artists, educators, and collectors.

Emily Galusha Gallery | MN NICE
Work by the second year’s participants in NCC’s new MN NICE program (New Institute for Ceramic Education) was exhibited alongside A Tipping Point. The exhibition featured the work of eight emerging artists from the graduating MN NICE class. Their work ranged from functional pots to handbuilt sculptural vessels to installations. These bodies of work evolved through one-on-one dialogue with mentoring artists, individual research, and lively group critiques. Work in the exhibition was the result of yearlong investigations into each artist’s questions, motivations, and perspectives.

11/20 – 12/30 Gallery M | 2016 Holiday Exhibition and Sale
Emily Galusha Gallery | John Reeve: Some Hidden Magic
John Reeve (1929 – 2012) strove to capture what he called “the soul of the pot,” the charged air contained by a three-dimensional whirling orb. His pots reveal a masterful understanding of form and volume while possessing a fresh and often playful attitude. They resonate with an energy emanating from voluptuous interior spaces. Sometimes quirky, sometimes cutting edge, they reflect an unorthodox stance best described by Reeve when he said, “I'm not really interested in committing novelty upon the world, but only in making objects which have some hidden magic to them.”

Reeve’s talent and charisma inspired makers from Big Creek, California, to Castle Clay in Denver, to the Kansas City Art Institute, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, and England’s Farnham School of Art. In 1962, he began regular visits to Minnesota where he made pots at the home of his lifelong friend Warren MacKenzie; both men were students of Bernard Leach. While in Minnesota, Reeve taught periodically at the university, and sold his work. Many pots in this exhibition come from local collections and include pieces on loan from the Weisman Museum.

Curated by Nora Vaillant, this exhibition presented highlights—from his work in stoneware, porcelain, and earthenware—accomplished over the course of his fifty-year career. Trained as an anthropologist, Nora Vaillant is a teacher, writer, and potter who has worked in clay for over 20 years. She curated High Fire Culture for the University of British Columbia’s Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and has contributed to Studio Potter magazine and Thrown: British Columbia’s Apprentices of Bernard Leach and Their Contemporaries.
We published five catalogues, including the annual McKnight exhibition publication. While we do not have an explicit sales objective for our exhibition program, we were very fortunate to sell a great number of pots and sculptures from various exhibitions, well surpassing our budget, with over $20,000 in sales. Also, Northern Clay Center continued to grow its web presence with linked resources, works for sale online, additional images, downloadable didactic material, and six years of NCC publications viewable through the website and issuu.com.

In addition to producing the onsite exhibitions and catalogues, the Center continued offsite exhibition collaborations. NCC acted as co-curator for exhibitions featuring St. Croix Valley Watershed ceramic artists, hosted by the Phipps Center for the Arts, in Hudson, Wisconsin. Additionally, we toured the McKnight exhibitions to Winona State University, Bemidji State University, the St. Peter Art Center, and the Phipps Center for the Arts.

2016 EXHIBITION ARTISTS 69 individuals

- Brian Benfer
- Jessica Brandl
- Jamie Brogdon
- Joan Bruneau
- Chris Campbell
- Adam Chau
- Kelly Connole
- Naomi Dalglish
- Guy Michael Davis
- Sarah Dudgeon
- Nick Earl
- Michael Eden
- Sanam Emami
- Susan Feigenbaum
- Elspeth Fisher
- Brett Freund
- Adam Nathaniel Furman
- Adam Gruetzmacher
- Ursula Hargens
- Rain Harris
- Sarah Heimann
- Mike Helke
- Autumn Higgins
- Michael Hunt
- Rebecca Hutchinson
- Erica Iman
- Tom Jaszczak
- Alix Knipe
- Matthew Krousey
- Kip O’Krongly
- Amy Lee Cass
- Roberto Lugo
- Mark Lusardi
- Kate Maury
- JJ McCracken
- Brady McLearen
- Karen McPherson
- Anna Metcalfe
- Matthew Metz
- Julie Moon
- Heather Nameth Bren
- Mika Negishi Laidlaw
- Polonia Odahara Novack
- Brooks Oliver
- Katie Parker
- Liz Quackenbush
- Ronald Rael
- John Reeve
- Jennifer Rogers
- Tim Rowan
- Brenda Ryan
- Jenny Sabin
- Virginia San Fratello
- Amy Santoferraro
- Debbie Schumer
- Andy Shaw
- Linda Sikora
- Ginny Sims
- Joe Singewald
- Michelle Summers
- David Swenson
- Iren Tete
- Olivier Van Herpt
- Sidonie Villere
- Sander Wassink
- Christina West
- Jae Won Lee
2016 was a year of major growth in all areas of NCC’s education and outreach programs. The increased student participation challenged our creativity, the constraints on our facility, our staffing structure, and the ways that we think about learning and engagement!

2016 saw record clay camper enrollment and Outreach and Studio Technician Rob Lieder processed the work of 458 campers, so an estimated 5000 pots and sculptures found their way through our kilns. In terms of income, our 2016 camps garnered some $80,000+ in camp fees, which was up 30% over 2015’s number.

NCC’s Teen Pottery Punch Card class continued to grow in interest as it completed its second year of a drop-in format. Teaching artist Erin Holt has developed a significant rapport with the students in this demographic, maintaining contact with students after they move out of the high school setting into college. One of her former students has chosen to study ceramics in higher education, which we understand was influenced by this individual’s time spent at NCC. Other teaching artists have made a point to come share their overhead observations of the class, impressed by the dialogue Erin manages and encourages over technical ceramic demonstrations. She supports the teens in their creative explorations and as they are finding their voice within the complicated landscape of modern culture.

NCC, as an institution, pursues advancement in multiple guises. One opportunity we are able to offer is the annual Dona Turbes Summer Studio Internship. Dona Turbes was a long-time staff member at Smith-Sharpe Fire Brick Supply (SSFBS), a Minneapolis-based refractory supply, founded in 1924. She helped many potters and teachers across the country purchase kiln building materials and kiln furniture. This internship is funded by SSFBS and contributions in honor of her memory. It is just one more example of how the community of ceramics entrusts NCC to carry their legacies and uphold the values evidenced by a life in craft.

“My experience...was both helpful to me as an artist gaining more practical knowledge in the medium I love, and eye-opening in gaining a new perspective on the art world from the great diversity of people who surrounded me that summer at NCC. I was able to gain more practical skills...and was able to better understand the behind-the-scenes running of such a large clay center. Interning at NCC was a wonderful way to spend my summer and I am constantly looking for new ways to get involved there.”

Michaela Maupin, 2016 Dona Turbes Summer Studio Intern

Our ClayToGo program reached 11,196 youth, families, and school children in 2015, up 33% from 2015, which had been our record year. We continued long-standing relationships with dozens of Minneapolis/St. Paul and first-ring suburban public schools, as well as special learning programs within these schools and as part of after-school programming. While our total number of unique activities conducted under this program decreased, the depth of our collaborations increased dramatically with dozens of multi-week classes with new and returning partners. To date, since the purchase of the original ClayMobile, which enabled a major expansion of the Center’s offsite programming in 1999, we’ve served some 90,000 individuals through this program.

The ART@HAND program served adults 55+ in a variety of settings (at NCC, in nursing homes and care centers, at independent living centers, etc.) In 2016, we conducted 140 partnerships, reaching 3099 individuals (up from 2015 by 28%). Programs included short workshops and artist demonstrations, extended classes and residencies, and other activities that specifically met the needs of adults 55+

Overall, attendance in NCC’s educational programs totaled 30,237—an increase of 10% over 2015.
at various ability levels. We had a successful year of programming with 9 partners under our Minnesota State Arts Board Arts Learning grant, which enabled 92 unique collaborations with 2025 older adults and ensured our ability to address the changing demographic of Minnesota’s population through specialized clay programming. Our programs were conducted in transitional and assisted living communities and our teaching artists worked closely with our partner staff to develop educational programs that employed clay as a tool for creative, hands-on learning, while being mindful of physical, cognitive, and logistical challenges experienced by our partners’ clients. And, in 2016, we began what we hope will be a long-tenured relationship with Sholom, a St. Paul-based provider of services for aging adults. NCC established clay programs at two sites, will continue into 2017.

Lois, a participant from our partner, Volunteers of America, approached our artist. Her face was beaming and she shared, “you know, Angie, I never really liked clay; I did the class because I was here, but lately I have really fallen in love with this class and am so glad you’re here teaching.” Lois went on to improve her skills weekly and began to add her own creative elements. There’s no stronger indication of success than when a person comes to love the medium and awakens her own creativity.

In 2016, NCC developed a series of multi-day workshops, designed specifically for K-12 art educators, which took place in venues across the state, serving 135 art educators. We worked with 14 Minnesota ceramic artists, five Minnesota organizations, and one school. The first four workshops occurred between February and June, through which we partnered with regional organizations and ceramic artists in Greater Minnesota. Host sites and NCC staff and artists presented 2–6 days of historical and contemporary lectures, demonstrations of clay techniques, and platforms for K-12 art educators to revitalize their classrooms, engage in critical dialogue, discuss new lesson plans, create peer networks, and critique work. Offsite presentations enabled more regions of educators to be reached. During MN Educators Academy conference in October, NCC hosted a 4-day workshop extravaganza. Specialized content and guests presenters were selected based on direct feedback collected during the regional workshops earlier in the year. Topics ranged from firing techniques, clay construction/decorating methods, multi-media investigations, equipment operation/maintenance/best practices, presentations about Minnesota’s rich history of ceramics and its studio pottery movement, demonstrations, and exhibition tours. This program was created for K-12 Art Educators and was meant to inspire them to revisit or continue their own studio practice. This program provided the practical and scholarly resources, techniques, historical/cultural frameworks, and lesson plans to enhance existing classroom instruction. In addition, NCC will make all content, lesson plans, and presentations available on our website for future Minnesota Art Educators.

In the fall, we began our partnership with Metro State College, introducing a new element of diversity into our student body and providing a much-needed supplement to a regional institution of higher learning. The collaboration brought in 15 students, provided an accredited opportunity for teaching artist and MN NICE Program Head Ursula Hargens, and affirmed NCC’s mission as a place for the advancement of the ceramic arts. Moreover the relationship has laid the groundwork for a similar partnership with Saint Paul College in 2017. Fiscally speaking, both opportunities bring much needed revenue to NCC’s operating budget.

Throughout the 2016 calendar year, our adult classes served 1065 participants (14% increase over 2015), with over 94 adult classes. We ran 60 workshops, reaching over 1040 adults; 40 summer clay camps for ages 6 and up were conducted, reaching over...
458 campers, an increase of 21% over 2015. Our total participation for educational activities in 2016 grew to over 30,237, an increase of over 10% from 2015. We shared the talents of some 121 teaching artists; 84 of these artists are from the great state of Minnesota.

**MN NICE**

NCC has continued to nurture the MN NICE program in an effort to build upon the initial success of the program. Our unrequited desire to increase numbers thus far seems to be consistently balanced by the reward of student reports citing the depth of impact MN NICE programming has had on their practices. We endeavor to tailor the educational experience to each student’s needs—from visiting artist selection, to studio visits, to technical demonstrations. The quality of work produced for the graduation exhibition, in late September 2016, demonstrated marked risk-taking in students’ ambition and successful resolution of those ambitions, clearly demonstrating the growth experienced in just 8 months of instruction. MN NICE has formed a community of students turned volunteers turned ambassadors for the Center; it is already a model for other not-for-profit art centers contemplating their own programs that are an alternative to traditional higher education degrees. Six new students began in the fall of 2016, with three returning to complete from 2015. While the program continues to grow, we can easily see the larger potentials from our early harvests.

“It is not without trepidation that I look toward the future, but I am eager to stretch my wings using the tools, resources, and courage I have discovered through MN NICE. I feel honored and proud to have been a part of this program.”

Amy Cass, class of 2016

“During the program, there were numerous lectures by Ursula and invited artists on history, materials, and professional development. Outside of the classroom there were field trips to museums and the studios of wonderful local artists. Shared learning (with some hilarity) occurred with our classmates. Critiques of our work by peers and professional guest artists were extremely valuable in helping me to look for, understand, and challenge myself to keep searching for the meaning of my work. It was an opportunity, which provided many challenges, tremendous learning, and a valuable experience I will never forget.”

Brenda Ryan, class of 2016

We incorporated two changes/additions to MN NICE in fall 2016 with slight tweaks to the fees and budget: a weekend “boot camp” session entitled HUSTLE, which took place in September and welcomed students and initiated their studio work earlier, providing the vocabulary and setting the tenor of the year to come. Due to high demand from graduated MN NICE students, we began a follow-up program called “NICE2”. For an additional fee, MN NICE graduates enrolled in an online glaze calculation course offered as a partnership between NCC and Matt Katz, Adjunct Professor at Alfred University, as well as continued special events with visiting artists, studio visits with affiliated artists, and exploration of multitudinous enrichment opportunities the Twin Cities have to offer in art. Each event is thoroughly vetted by Program Head, Ursula Hargens, and NICE2 can be taken multiple times.
EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

2016 TEACHING ARTISTS 121 individuals

Marion Angelica
Linda Arbuckle
Ryan Archibald
Mike Arnold
Aaron Becker
Brendan Bennett
Megan Betts
Heather Bren
Joan Bruneau
Kevin Caufield
Bill Carty
Matt Cawley
Sarah Chenoweth-Davis
Linda Christianson
Garth Clark
Eileen Cohen
Elizabeth Coleman
Kelly Connole
TomHenry David
Leila Denecke
Katya Deve
Amanda Dobbratz
Lauren Duffy
Awele Eneanya
Gary Erickson
Kathryn Finnerty
Brett Freund
Joel Froehle
Willem Gebben
Ernest Gentry
Bill Gossman
Bianka Groves
Richard Gruchalla
Adam Gruetzmacher
Nancy Hanily-Dolan
Ursula Hargens
Mike Helke
Samantha Henneke
Melissa Henning
Autumn Higgins
Karín Holen
Erin Holt
Rebecca Hutchinson
Franny Hyde
Peter Jadoonath
Samuel Johnson
JD Jorgenson
Karín Kraemer
Matt Krousey
Jennica Kruse
Mark Lambert
Bri Larson
James Lawton
Glynnis Lessing
Robert Lieder
Lung-Chieh Lin
Samantha Longley
Mark Lusardi
Warren MacKenzie
Kate Maury
Alexa McAdams
Jan McKeachie Johnston
Brady McLearen
Anna Metcalfe
Ron Meyers
Ernest Miller
Sarah Milifelt
Megan Mitchell
Stefanie Motta
Emily Murphy
Mika Negishi Laidlaw
Risa Nishiguchi
Susan Obermeyer
Claire O’Connor
Jeffrey Oestreich
Kip O’Krongly
Mary Otremba
Helen Otterson
Robyn Peterson
Ian Petrie
Joseph Pintz
Ron Rael
Alex Reed
Angie Renee
Matt Repsher
Paula Rice
Jen Rogers
SC Rolf
Carrin Rosetti
Kimberlee Joy Roth
Tim Rowan
Jenny Sabin
Ted Sauer
Kathryn Schroeder
Todd Shanafelt
Jane Shellenbarger
Juliane Shibata
Linda Sikora
Christopher Singewald
Joe Singewald
Elisabeth Skibba
Lisa Skildum
James Smead
Audra Smith
Blake Smith
Albion Stafford
Blake Stolpestad
Michelle Summers
David Swenson
Iren Tete
Beth Thompson
Brittany Trushin
Abbie Ulstad
John Vigeland
Michaelene Walsh
Julia Walther
Paul Wandless
Valerie Wise
Josh Woof
Dustin Yager
Lucy Yogerst

Left to right: The 2016 MN NICE class visiting Linda Christianson’s studio. Linda Sikora demonstrates her throwing technique in conjunction with the exhibition Influenced and Evolved.
Our artist services program continued to serve artists at all stages of professional development—from advanced students and emerging artists, to mid-career and established ceramic artists.

NCC continued to re-grant funds on behalf of the Jerome and McKnight Foundations, as well as through our Fogelberg, Anonymous Artist, and Red Wing Collectors Society Foundation Award programs.

We also made the third year of awards under the newly developed Warren MacKenzie Advancement Award, a travel/study grant for current students, recent college graduates, or recent apprentices to continue their education in any number of ways. Two grants of up to $4,000 were awarded for artists to attend summer workshops, pursue public art projects, and study specific techniques with mentors. Awardees have also contributed to our online blog: www.northernclaycenter.blogspot.com. This grant program complements our emerging artist residencies, project grants, and mid-career residencies and fellowships, by providing important funding for current students and recent graduates around the country, while honoring an American master potter, Warren MacKenzie.

The 2015 grant recipients and respective jury panels included:
Jerome Ceramic Artist Project Grants—three grants of $6,000 were awarded to Bianka Groves, Brady McLearen, and Elizabeth Pechacek. Funded by the Jerome Foundation, St. Paul. The 2016 selection panel included: Kelly Conhole, sculptor and assistant professor of art at Carleton College; Molly Hatch, artist, designer, and author of *New Ceramic Surface Design* (2015); and Tim Rowan, a visiting artist whose wood-fired work was included in the exhibition *Influenced and Evolved* at NCC.

The 2016 McKnight Artist Fellowships were awarded to Nicolas Darcourt (Minnetonka) and Sheryl McRoberts (Minneapolis). Each McKnight Artist Fellow received a $25,000 cash stipend, and was featured in an exhibition in July of 2017. Two awards were made for the 2016 McKnight Artist Residencies, for artists to be in residence in 2017: Kosmas Ballis (Fl. Meyers, FL) and Anthony Stellaccio (Crownsville, MD). Two additional artists were invited through a nominative process: Eva Kwong (Kent, OH) and Forrest Lesch-Middelton (San Francisco, CA). Three individuals comprised the 2016 selection panel: Linda Armbuckle, studio potter and former professor at the University of Florida; Garth Clark, writer, gallerist, and Editor-in-Chief of CFile; and Catherine Futter, Director of Curatorial Affairs at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.

The Emerging Artist Residency (EAR) awards provide a furnished studio space for one year, plus a materials/firing stipend, a group exhibition, employment opportunities, Sales Gallery exhibition opportunities, and other benefits. The 2016 Anonymous Artist Studio Fellowships were awarded to Lily Fein (Syracuse, NY) and Valerie Ling (Valley Stream, NY). Under the Fogelberg Studio Fellowship program, we welcomed Gillian Doty (Portland, ME) and Gregory Palombo (Alfred, NY). The 2016 EAR Award selection panel consisted of: Todd Shanafelt, sculptor and Assistant Professor of Art at Minnesota State University–Mankato; and Linda Sikora, potter, professor, and division head at New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University.

NCC made its first award of the Jerome Ceramic Artist of Color Residency program to Ellie Bryan (Minneapolis, MN), who joined our studio in fall of 2016. The Jerome Ceramic Artist of Color Residency jurors included: Lung-Chieh Lin, sculptor living and working in Taiwan, and NCC Spring McKnight Artist Resident; Kate Maury, potter and professor at
the University of Wisconsin–Stout; and Paul Wandless, ceramic sculptor, printmaker, and writer from Chicago, where he also teaches at Harold Washington College.

The 2016 Red Wing Collectors Society Foundation Award, valued at $1,000, was made to an emerging potter, David “Swen” Swenson (selected through a nomination process). This award is supported by an endowed fund at NCC.

The Warren MacKenzie Advancement Award, intended to support continued ceramic education for clay artists at emerging/student/post-student levels, was given to Patrick Kingshill (Lincoln, NE) who worked with Takeshi Yasuda in Jingdezhen, China; and Candice Methe (Santa Fe, NM) who worked through Sirigu Woman’s Organization for Pottery and Art in the village of Sirigu, Ghana, where she took classes on traditional arts to learn about their clays, pigments, and firing methods. The 2016 selection panel consisted of: Mary Barringer, potter, writer, and Editor Emerita of Studio Potter magazine; Joan Bruneau, potter and instructor at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, and visiting artist in conjunction with NCC’s exhibition Florilegium; and Mark Shapiro, potter, curator, and apprenticeship leader.

We worked closely with each of our artist grant recipients, throughout 2016, to provide professional development, chances to engage with other artists and the public, and teaching, intern, mentor, and exhibition opportunities.

Our Studio Program in 2016 continued to have a waitlist of applicants, reflecting the lack of quality, tailored ceramic studio space elsewhere in the cities, but also NCC’s reputation as a lodestar for advancement of the ceramic arts and the dedicated loyalty of our current and former students who wish to take their practice to the next level. An observational conclusion, upheld when the applications are reviewed: advanced students, community artists, displaced artists, and common studio artists.

Education Technician Heather Barr continued her efforts with glaze recycling. Any waste glazes from visiting artists were tested and modified for use in our educational programming. One of her last efforts of the year was to rid the studio of any un-encapsulated glazes containing cadmium. She also made significant efforts toward standardizing systems for mixing glazes, firing kilns, and reclaiming materials. Most importantly, she developed educational labels for all hazardous materials, noting how individual toxins are transferred, when they become stable, and how to handle them safely.

The McKnight Residency studio was home to some lively characters in 2016, keeping a spirit of dynamism alive and augmenting NCC programming in ways we could not predict. Lung-Chieh Lin, our spring McKnight Artist Resident, was an unexpectedly fun addition to the community. He made a definite effort to integrate, taking the opportunity to participate in all invitations: Saints games, hamburgers (which he found incomprehensibly bad), a trip to Ax Man surplus store, participating in an anagama firing at Randy Johnston’s. A picture of Lung-Chieh hangs in the kitchen, a reminder of the mutual deep connections made possible by this residency.

Even when visits were abbreviated, the McKnight studio was a place for innovative inquiry. When visiting artists are as open and sharing as Ron Rael, Associate Professor of Architecture at UC Berkeley, and participating artist in NCC’s fall show, A Tipping Point, everyone benefits. He treasured “interruptions” from the studio artists, the current emerging resident artists, and the MN NICE students, liberally sharing his
concepts and experience with 3D printing technology. Beyond the studio experience, Rael engaged with our community neighbors, inviting local business owners into the NCC studios for a tour. Hospitality like his strengthens our relationships and interactions in a diverse community, even after his departure.

Audra Smith stepped into her new role of Studio Manager with an increased commitment to studio maintenance and enhancements. She constantly assessed the facilities and equipment in support of NCC programming, modifying and supplementing Studio Artists’ spaces where needed. This kind of attention to our physical space communicates excellence to our students, residents, artists, and staff. It not only maintains, but also builds, a level of pride that informs every effort made in every role.

The studio continues to be fertile ground for inventive, mutually beneficial, work exchange relationships. Several MN NICE students have enriched their programming experience while adding much needed volunteer hours to busy studio operations. Jamie Brogdon (MN NICE class of 2016) expanded her kiln vocabulary beyond electric processes, learning how to achieve reduction atmospheres in gas kilns by assisting our technicians. The studios continue to be a home for six current MN NICE students, and five MN NICE2 students. The rigor of the program is quickly becoming a cornerstone in the studio program community. MN NICE entered its third year.

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We ended the year in our studio program by introducing the idea of strategic planning initiatives for 2017, inviting Studio Artists to participate in committee conversations. We hope to invigorate stewardship in the studio program by examining the mission statement, visual merchandising, activity measures, jury processes, sales opportunities, studio license term limits, SPOT night initiatives, signage, and professional development.
In 2016, NCC’s gallery extended its representation of high-quality ceramics beyond its own store and website. Over twelve hundred pots by Minnesota and Wisconsin artists were for sale at the annual ceramic conference of NCECA (National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts) in Kansas City, Missouri, in March. Other gallery partnerships included continued relationships with Room & Board, Cargill, U.S. Bank, The James Beard Foundation, and Heavy Table’s Chef Camp, cookbook, and blog, which resulted in increased visibility as well as direct commissions. Overall, the Center’s sales gallery represented 148 artists throughout the year, including holiday and APF artists, with 50 of those artists residing in Minnesota. Represented artists included current and past grant recipients, emerging artists, as well as late-career and visiting artists.

Our year-end gallery sales totaled over $249,600. Online sales increased by 13% over 2015, which accounted for 11% of the overall gallery sales in 2016. Online analytics were employed throughout the calendar year in an effort to identify purchasing habits, steer traffic patterns on the website, and enhance the link between social media use and advertising and sales. We redirected staff talents and resources to create an updated and more efficient experience in the online gallery. This paid off with higher sales and stronger relationships with collectors interested in buying the work of Minnesota artists.

Northern Clay Center raised $5995 from the sale of Warren MacKenzie work online. These funds help to support NCC’s artist services program through the provision of grants, residencies, and professional development opportunities for emerging artists, including the Warren MacKenzie Advancement Award, a research/education/professional development grant for emerging ceramic artists from across the country. The sales gallery also raised $5309 through Recollect, a secondary market sale of pottery, proceeds from which go to support NCC’s Emerging Artist Residencies program. This reflects a steady Recollect sales increase, and our number of generous collector/donors continued to increase and provide us with the means to sustain this valuable program.

We continued to balance the national reputation and artists served through our gallery with our local community interest and neighborhood activities, as we partnered with neighborhood businesses, supported Seward Neighborhood’s Open Streets Festival, and the Franklin Winter Frolic. The gallery hosted a locally owned pop-up restaurant (Red Hen Gastrolab), Lawrence University’s reception for incoming students, and a memorial service for much-loved Minnesota artist Gary Erickson. The gallery employees worked alongside 5 interns in 2016 to teach and share experience in all aspects of gallery business such as inventory, shipping, photography, marketing, customer service, writing, editing, and special events planning.
One of the most impactful partnerships of 2016 was the first year of a collaboration between the James Beard Celebrity Chef Tour and NCC. U.S. Bank Flexperks Rewards sponsored the project, which provided a small ceramic saltcellar to each of 2400 guests at James Beard dinners across the country. NCC contracted with five Minnesota artists to create the small pots and paid them an 80% commission rate. Cards were designed to introduce each recipient to all five of the artists and NCC. This project put the Minnesota arts directly into the hands of 2400 people in new markets and not only raised visibility for each artists and the Minnesota clay community in general, but showed guests how art can be functional in everyday life.

In addition to the James Beard project, NCC also partnered with U.S. Bank Flexperks to sponsor our annual American Pottery Festival. This increased our annual Opening Night party attendance by over 160 people and our ticket revenue by $2610 (over a 100% increase). Throughout the weekend, we had guests repeatedly share that they had never been to NCC before and had heard about the event through U.S. Bank. People came back more than once throughout the weekend, and this new audience was an opportunity to share NCC, local artists, and education opportunities, and to increase sales for invited artists, sales gallery artists, and local studio artists.
2016 SALES GALLERY ARTISTS 148 individuals

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<td>Dustin Yager</td>
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STAFF

2016 was a year of transition in NCC’s staff, with the welcome of several new faces to our education team and a goodbye to a few long- and short-tenured colleagues. In the spring, we said goodbye to our sales gallery associates, Justina Ny and Ian Petrie, who left the Center to pursue other creative adventures. We welcomed our NCECA intern turned gallery assistant, Emily Pelton, as well as Alexa McAdams and Alison Beech as our new support structure in the sales galleries. Our building maintenance technician and long-time NCC student and volunteer extraordinaire, Mel North, left his post in May and was replaced by potter Patrick Barnick, who was also one of NCC’s Emerging Artists-in-Residence. Brittany Trushin, our outreach technician, left her position to spend more time on her artwork, and we welcomed in her absence Robert “Bobby” Lieder. Our Head of Education and Artist Service Programs, Dustin Yager, packed up his office and his ceramics studio and traveled out to New York City to establish residency and pursue his art more seriously. With such departure, NCC was able to bring in a face new to NCC, but not new to the ceramics community, Jill Foote-Hutton, who had previously worked extensively in the academic sector, as well as at Red Lodge Clay Center in Montana. The rest of our talented staff performed at the top of their game, often logging extra hours, taking on “other tasks as assigned” in between staff transitions, and bringing endless energy, optimism, and fun to work each day!

BUILDING AND EQUIPMENT

2016 continued NCC’s strategic objective of bettering our facility at 2424 Franklin Avenue East, as we made modest upgrades to various plumbing, electrical, and HVAC equipment throughout the building. Additionally, we made mindful improvements to our clay mixing ventilation system, rebuilt the door on a gas kiln, and built various storage cabinets for students and studio artists. We raised over $40K from institutional and individual donors towards the purchase of a new ClayToGo van for NCC’s outreach programs, as well as for traveling exhibitions.

MEMBERS

Our 2016 membership levels remained similar to those of 2015, as we largely retained the increase in members gained in 2015 from the Members Exhibition, which required an active membership to be eligible. Additionally, we tightened up the classification of membership types, by changing our donor form to ask for an opt-in to the membership programs, rather than entry by default. We secured a marketing intern to begin a research project on other local nonprofit membership programs, with the aim of convening a working group of select staff and board to discuss the effectiveness of NCC’s membership program in 2017.

Our giving highlights included:
NCC ran three major contribution drives in 2016: 25th Anniversary, ClayToGo van, and year-end contributions to general operations (up from our usual one drive).

We received in-kind contributions from 25 individuals of studio equipment, use of Subaru’s ClayBaru, gardening and plants, books and magazines for the library, pots for resale in NCC’s Recollect program, and food for APF and the 25th Anniversary party. Our ClayToGo Van Indiegogo campaign raised much-needed funds and inspired 50 new or lapsed donors to give.
NUMBERS

Earned income was up for a second year in a row, with over $1,139,000 in income from classes, workshops, gallery and exhibition sales, APF, and studio license fees, which is an 11% increase over 2015. Education income was at a record high with over $446,500 (due to a huge increase in demand for adult classes and fees associated with our MN NICE program), a 20% increase over 2015. Total ceramic sales were over $352,000, a 4.6% decrease over 2015, but strong considering the end of the year sales slump that many retail outlets and arts organizations experienced. Specifically, American Pottery Festival sales were up 2% and were the highest the event has seen in its 18-year history. Our year-end sales gallery sales totaled over $249,600, which exceeded our budgeted projections by just 2%, but fell some 3.7% from 2015. Online sales increased by 13% over 2015, which accounted for 11% of the overall gallery sales in 2016. Our contributed income jumped in the category of individual giving as NCC raised over $40K towards the costs of a new ClayToGo van; van funds were raised from both long-time funders and 60 new contributors through an Indiegogo online campaign. These increases, along with continued conservative budgeting and strict attention to spending, contributed to a slight year-end surplus.

Some 302 individual artists were served and celebrated by the Clay Center in 2016, up 8% from 2015’s 280. These teachers, studio artists, grant recipients, exhibitors, and gallery artists (156 of those from Minnesota) represented an impressive group of makers from the Twin Cities, Minnesota, the region, the country, and beyond. The Center paid over $567,000 to ceramic artists in 2016 (an increase of 10% over 2015) through teaching fees, commissions, and grants, bringing our total payout since 1995 (1st year of tracking) to over $8,127,648.
Not only did the support from our individual, corporate, and foundation donors enable us to take steps in building a new audience of participants and supporters, it also directly benefited the very individuals who continually participate, see, learn, explore, inspire, research, educate, and share. A few of them shared their thoughts about the Clay Center and our programming in 2016:

I wrote down a list of things that NCC does well; none are unique in and of themselves, but together they show how NCC can be so many things at once and do so many things so well. First, the longevity of programming—25 years—long enough to say you’ve made your mark. There’s been a consistency of growth over the 25 years. There’s diverse programming centered around ceramics—all ages, interest levels, all skill levels, many different genres, outreach programs, etc. NCC has its location in an urban setting (similar to other centers). There’s a dedicated staff. NCC hasn’t been diluted by too many different leaders. There’s been very consistent and strong leadership for a long time. There are avid students and supporters who surround the Center. There’s a very generous spirit that I associate with NCC in general (including the people and the facilities). Professionally speaking, students can observe educational types of context, from beginning to advanced, and the showing and selling of ceramics.

Overall, the commitment to education…not to mention the residencies for established and emerging artists is great. NCC is really well rounded…a clichéd term, yes, but I think of it as being a really well rounded organization, supported by a fantastic facility and people who know what they are doing and are dedicated.

Cary Esser, former McKnight Artist Resident

The McKnight Exhibition and reception was magic! All of the exhibiting artists were present. It felt like a time when things were a big deal like the opening of the first department store or zoo in a small town. We got to spend so much time together throughout the weekend. We shared and made meals, museum visits, attended pottery sales, and exchanged stories about our experiences at NCC as McKnight Artist Residents. The most amazing and somewhat unexpected part was how well the work existed together. I give a great amount of credit to the staff at NCC for curating the work, but I can’t help but think that all of the artists made some large strides that were a bit scary at the time but now feel right and came together beautifully in the end! It was also a great treat to reconnect with our host families and meet the current McKnight Artist Resident. It is and was an amazing thing to be a part of, and it was not the first or last time I will see all of the amazing artists that were present. I feel like I gained a new family or graduating class, and am honored to be in the ranks with artists that I love and respect so very much!

Amy Santoferraro, former McKnight Artist Resident

I’ve been a devoted fan of Northern Clay Center since the late 1990s. I first learned about it when I attended the NCECA (National Council on Education in the Ceramic Arts) conference in Minneapolis. At that conference, NCC celebrated Minnesota hot dishes! What a great idea. And, there have been great ideas ever since. Perhaps until very recently, American ceramics’ artists and potters have been under-appreciated. That should keep changing, just as quickly as possible; advisedly, via the leadership of NCC. For it combines the best of exhibitions, teaching, and curating, providing an important home for all of us who care about and collect in this field. Thank you, NCC!

Rebecca Sive, collector, appreciator

Throughout my years as a Teaching Artist doing outreach for Northern Clay Center, I’ve been fortunate to see the positive and lasting impact creating with clay has had on the students I’ve had the opportunity to teach. During a recent clay residency, I was working with a class of second graders in a school with a student population that has 93% of their students receiving free and reduced lunch. Many of these children come from difficult backgrounds and struggle with the academic requirements for their grade. Often times the kids struggling with the subjects they’re tested on are the artists and when given the opportunity to express themselves through clay, truly amazing creations happen.

As I toured the classroom checking the students work I came upon Jayden, a seven year old student who took my instructions for a small sculpture of an owl and completely made it his own. He became enthralled with the qualities of the medium, its texture and moldable qualities. He was focused and detailed and trusted his own vision for what his owl should look like. His work was unique to him and had a level of quality many of his classmates were unable to accomplish. I praised Jayden, told him his work gave me goose bumps it was so good and I was excited to see how awesome he would paint his piece the next day. His face lit up like a light bulb! The following day as the students began painting, Jayden’s classroom teacher came to me and said, “Jayden didn’t stop smiling the whole rest of the day yesterday after you complimented him. He reads 3 words a minute and struggles mightily in school. He took to the clay like nothing else. This is wonderful for a student like him. He knows now that he’s really good at something. Thank you for doing this.”
Jayden is just one of many children who, once given clay, finally have the opportunity to express themselves in a positive way. They gain confidence from being successful. Certainly the confidence they gain making art transfers to their academic subjects.

The Clay Center’s environment and mode of operation was the most important learning experience for me. The NCC gave me a large bright space to work in and access to all the necessary materials and equipment I required to begin my project. This opportunity allowed me to continue to develop ideas essential to my creative process that are embodied in my work. Without this valuable and successful opportunity, I would not have had the opportunity to accomplish the favorable outcomes that followed in my second residency that year, and are continuing in my studio at home.

The experience of being an artist-in-residence at an art center like Northern Clay Center means working amongst other artists to a certain extent. I enjoyed becoming acquainted with the other individuals working at the center and found it to be an enriching experience. As a result, I realized the value of creating art outside of my home studio and away from my home community as I stretched the boundaries of my creatively.

Kathryn Finnerty, winter 2016 McKnight Artist Resident
STAFF (with current titles)

Sarah Millfelt, Director
Michael Arnold, Exhibitions Manager
Pat Barnick, Building Maintenance Technician (from May)
Heather Barr, Education Materials Technician
Alison Beech, Sales Gallery Associate and Registrar (from August)
Elizabeth Coleman, Publications Assistant
Amanda Dobbratz, Digital and Marketing Manager
Jessie Fan, Bookkeeper
Jill Foote-Hutton, Director of Learning and Engagement (from August)
Robert Lieder, Outreach Technician (from May)
Tippy Maurant, Sales Gallery and Special Events Manager
Alexa McAdams, Sales Gallery and Online Associate (from March)
Mel North, Building Maintenance Technician (to May)
Justina Ny, Sales Gallery Associate (to March)
Ian Petrie, Sales Gallery Assistant and Registrar (to June)
Emily Pelton, Sales Gallery Associate (from March)
Chris Singewald, Outreach Manager
Audra Smith, Studio Manager
Jennifer Tatsuda, Business Manager
Brittany Trushin, Outreach Technician (to May)
Dustin Yager, Head of Education and Artist Services (to August)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (served all or part of 2016)

Lynne Alpert
Bryan Anderson
Nan Arundel
Mary K. Baumann
Craig Bishop
Heather Nameth Bren
Lann Briel
Robert Briscoe
Philip Burke
Linda Coffey
Nancy Hanily-Dolan

Bonita Hill, M.D.
Sally Wheaton Hushcha
Christopher Jozwiak
Patrick Kennedy
Mark Lellman
Brad Meier
Alan Naylor
Rick Scott
T Cody Turnquist
Ellen Watters
While always integral to our operations, volunteer efforts reached a new high in calendar year 2016, with many new volunteers sharing their expertise (teaching, photography, marketing, etc.), with over 176 volunteers (an increase of 17% over 2015) logging over 5,300 hours for the organization (up 23% over 2015). We continue to be humbled by the power of volunteerism at the Center and with our talented ambassadors who share their time, expertise, talents, and networks.
INSTITUTIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Northern Clay Center thanks its cadre of very special institutional and individual donors, who are crucial to our ability to fulfill our mission. Our ability to accomplish the items outlined above and serve a vast group of constituents was made possible because of the support from these entities who love and delight in the material itself. The continued support allowed us to be nimble and responsive to the various trends in ceramics, the changes in audience development and participation, and the needs of our constituents. Their confidence in the management and quality of our programs has been crucial to our ability to remain relevant to our audience, to the clay artists, and to the greater clay and craft world.

### INSTITUTIONAL DONORS

- Anoka-Ramsey Community College
- Anonymous
- Artistry at Bloomington
- Birchwood Cafe
- BNSF Railway Foundation
- The Boss Foundation
- Harlan Boss Foundation for the Arts
- Breadsmith
- Patrick and Aimee Butler Family Foundation
- Continental Clay Company
- Constance Mayeron Cowles and Charles Fuller Cowles Foundation
- Gardens of Salonica
- General Mills Foundation
- Great Ciao
- Walter McCarthy and Clara Ueland through the Greystone Foundation
- John L. and Catherine J. Hill Charitable Gift Fund
- Jerome Foundation
- KG Foundation
- LaCoste Gallery
- Longfellow Grill
- The McKnight Foundation
- John A. & Karen J. Meslow Charitable Fund
- Sheldon and Lili Chester through the Minneapolis Jewish Federation
- Steve Miles and Joline Gitis Charitable Fund
- Minnesota Potters of the Upper St Croix
- Minnesota State Arts Board
- Minnesota Women Ceramic Artists
- National Endowment for the Arts
- New French Bakery
- Peace Coffee
- Pictura Graphics
- Printing Enterprises, Inc.
- Prospect Creek Foundation
- RBC Foundation — USA
- R.E. Swager Family Foundation
- Red Wing Collectors Society Foundation
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