



VOLUMES

60th Annual Conference of the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts -
Detroit, Michigan, March 25–28, 2026, Huntington Place Convention Center

2026 CLAY CONVERSATIONS PROSPECTUS

Deadline THURSDAY, MAY 1, 2025 (11:59PM EDT)

ABOUT CLAY CONVERSATIONS

Clay Conversations are interactive networking sessions that foster dialogue around shared interests and issues at the outset of the conference. The goals of session facilitators are to frame the topic and engage all participants in the discussion.

Peer-to-peer conversational exchange is the goal of these sessions. Projectors, screens, and audio amplification are not provided. Up to two session facilitators may collaborate on generating and managing the process for engagement and inclusion.

Please submit a Clay Conversations proposal if you are interested in convening a group of people to share a discussion surrounding a topic you care about. Alternative submission formats exist for more formal presentations involving image presentation technology.

NUMBER OF PRESENTERS PER PROPOSAL: 1-2

ABOUT VOLUMES

Volumes, the 60th conference of the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA), explores diverse cultures, material-driven experimentation, and conceptual frameworks that animate art created through clay. The essential energy of voices and sounds of the Detroit region catalyzes this conference's theme.

Like the subterranean networks that connect trees in a forest, the meanings of words have roots that we can connect through etymology. Some of the earliest known artifacts containing writing were produced on scrolling spirals of papyrus that ancient Roman historians called *volumen*. The same underlying spiraling structure abides within pots, figures, and other forms fashioned from clay coils since ancient times. Today, neural networks carrying and harvesting volumes of information are generating Artificial Intelligence that will change how we learn, work, and create.

The meaning of volumes most integrally embodied in the 2026 conference theme lies within unseeable spaces of our clay works and the firing chambers that transform them. Volumes are forces that give power and shape to the world we experience. Detroit is a place that embodies this sense of interior energy. A real and metaphorical foundry of creative ambition and craftsmanship shaped by waves of migration, industry, and resilience, Detroit has volumes to teach us.

Teaching, learning, and creation through clay involve continual engagement with volumes as action and analysis. Volumes give form to our cultural identities, continuity, and change in a time of environmental crisis. Centered on ceramic art, this 60th NCECA conference will expand access and deepen understanding of ceramic art. Creators of culture, educators, and students involved in pottery, sculpture, design and installation, and performance will be its engines.

CONTENT CATEGORY - Applicants, please select a single content category that you think best aligns with your proposal. Content categories assist conference attendees in determining the focus of

Please read through this prospectus prior to submitting a proposal application: [CLICK for APPLICATION](#)

a presentation. The review process will take topic alignment into consideration when developing the conference program.

Career Growth - Geared toward all learners, this content category includes professional practices, ranging from hard skills such as planning, marketing, grant writing, and budgeting to soft skills such as networking, team building, and creative leadership. Share your knowledge on documenting and shipping artwork, preparing applications for exhibitions, analyzing career options, and formal and informal learning paths, including graduate school, apprenticeships, residencies, and assistantships.

Global Context & History - These presentations investigate ceramic traditions and innovations over time and from around the world. Additional topics include approaches to critique and considerations of ceramics in relation to other art forms or trends, innovations, and conversations in global ceramics. Share how intercultural exchange and culturally responsive approaches to research and interpretation are changing contemporary ceramics practice.

Materials & Processes - These presentations focus on clay, glazes, firings, tools, forming processes, and environmentally sustainable practices. Share what you have learned through experience, research, and trial and error.

Social Practices - These presentations focus on responsive methods for developing resilient, adaptive, and inclusive practices. Content encompasses advocacy and activism, collaboration, building community, and projects that investigate issues of gender, class, and race, both in the clay community and society at large. Share your insights about frameworks for creative encounters with clay in unanticipated places and working models that demonstrate human, social, economic, and environmental well-being.

Teaching & Learning - Topics of interest to educators of all kinds—K-12, community programs, universities & colleges, museums, apprenticeships, etc. Presentations can be focused on teaching and learning with clay and through ceramic art, whether in studios, community and arts centers, schools, or other settings. This content category is also a place to share resources and models for creating and sustaining diverse, equitable, and accessible learning environments.

HONORARIUM

Presenters whose proposals are selected will receive conference registration, NCECA membership for the calendar year, and an honorarium of \$200. No additional payments or reimbursements will be available through NCECA to support travel, lodging, food, or other expenses.

Presenters' honoraria are paid following the conference, **dependent on fulfillment of all contract obligations**.

PAST EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL PROPOSALS

Building Community Among Artists of Color: Join us in building community as we hope to connect artists of color from a diverse range of backgrounds, ages, and experiences in the ceramic field. We will facilitate dialogue on how to build a stronger network of artists regionally and globally and focus on opportunities, professional practices, technical questions, conceptual interests, and more.

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Veterans in Arts for Community: We will lead a discussion of nationally recognized artists who are veterans. The advocacy of this type of health engagement posits art making and community as the force impact of creativity. Bringing about positive public health outcomes for society in general.

Growth Through International Travel: This conversation will illustrate the many facets of how and why international travel strengthens creativity, promotes innovation, and contributes to professional growth. We will address questions and concerns according to the participants. Topics will include, but not be limited to, travel logistics, destinations, and professional development in ceramics.

REVIEW & NOTIFICATION

NCECA's Board of Directors and Programming Review Committee will consider and select proposals. Incomplete proposals may be excluded from the assessment process. Notification on the outcome of the review will be shared by email as soon as possible after decisions have been made. As NCECA evolves toward a model of year-round program delivery, some proposals submitted for the conference may be recommended for delivery at other times in the year.

NUMBER OF ACCEPTED PROPOSALS

60 minutes: 1–3

90 minutes: 1–3

APPLICATION PROCESS

- ☐ Read through the **Clay Conversations Prospectus** (this document) prior to submitting a proposal application.
- ☐ Use the **Clay Conversation Proposal Checklist** (below) to assemble all of the required materials before beginning your application.
- ☐ Review the **Clay Conversation Rubric** (below) to ensure your proposal meets the criteria the review panel will use in the selection process.

We recommend having all text in a word document to copy and paste into the application.

Please use the 'Save' option within the application if you will be working on the application for extended periods of time.

All proposals must be submitted using NCECA's online form. In order to access and complete the form, you must have an existing NCECA profile or create an account in NCECA's database at this [LINK](#). **Applicants, please log in and update your existing profile or create an account at least one week prior to the call deadline.**

*Presentation proposals are limited to **one submission** per individual across all formats. However, individuals who submit their own proposals may be listed as presenters on another applicant's proposal if it is for a multi-person presentation.*

If you have questions about any of the content discussed in this call for proposals, the conference format or require technical assistance, please email presentations@nceca.net. NCECA recommends using **Google Chrome or Firefox** when using forms on this site. Some forms do not respond well to Internet Explorer or Safari.

Please read through this prospectus prior to submitting a proposal application: [CLICK for APPLICATION](#)

After you complete your online submission form, please click SUBMIT only one time. The form data could take several minutes to submit, particularly with multiple images. An email will be sent confirming your application has been successfully transmitted and received. Please save the email. *If you do not receive a confirmation email within an hour after submitting your proposal, contact presentations@nceca.net*

CLAY CONVERSATION PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

Proposal Details

The following items are required for **each proposal**:

- ☐ Select one presentation duration:
 - 60 minutes
 - 90 minutes
- ☐ Select one content category (refer to prospectus for category descriptions):
 - Career Growth
 - Global Context & History
 - Materials & Processes
 - Social Practices
 - Teaching & Learning
- ☐ Presentation title – (Limit 6 words)
- ☐ Program Guide description – (Limit 50 words, proofed and print ready)
This description tells attendees what your presentation is about and will be used to promote your presentation. *NCECA reserves the right to edit descriptions to meet word count and style guidelines for its publications.*
- ☐ Presentation description – (Limit 300 words) For review process.
 - Include a framework and/or questions that will help guide the conversation.
- ☐ Presenter Access Needs (**optional**)

Applicant Details

The following items, unless noted as optional, are required for **each person included** in the proposal:

- ☐ Contact Information: First name, Last name, Email address (NCECA's primary form of communication), Phone number (cell preferred)
- ☐ Mailing Address (Comma separated in the following format: Street address, City, State, ZIP code, Country)
- ☐ Pronouns (**optional**)
- ☐ Selection or self-identification of race, ethnicity, and/or cultural background (**optional**)
- ☐ Previous NCECA presentation/s and year/s (if applicable)
- ☐ Experience and engagement with the topic of your presentation. (Limit 250 words)
- ☐ Short Bio (Limit 50 words, proofed and print ready, written in third-person, no "I" statements)
- ☐ Headshot (format as .png, 300 ppi resolution – sized 2" x 2" (600 x 600 pixels) – RGB color space)
- ☐ Resume (Optional) 2-page limit, upload as .doc, .docx or .pdf, not to exceed 2MB
- ☐ Optional resources to support your proposal: Website, Instagram, Facebook



CLAY CONVERSATIONS RUBRIC 1

Accessibility, Inclusivity, and Expansiveness of Content: The proposal contributes to advancing NCECA’s goals of fostering an expansive understanding of the ceramic arts including people, ideas, and histories that represent a globally inclusive understanding of the art form as practiced in varied contexts.			
1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20
The proposal includes only a single narrow perspective on the core subject matter. Multiple or non-mainstream perspectives are not explicitly identified in the proposal, nor are they reinforced through the presenters' backgrounds, qualifications, experiences, and/or research.	The proposal includes only a limited perspective on the core subject matter. Multiple or non-mainstream perspectives are not explicitly identified in the proposal, nor are they reinforced through the presenters' backgrounds, qualifications, experiences, and/or research.	The proposal includes moderately varied, though familiar, perspectives on the core subject matter. Multiple perspectives are identified in the proposal, and reinforced through the presenters' backgrounds, qualifications, experiences, and/or research.	The proposal includes global viewpoints and highlights perspectives that are often underrepresented, and whose absence has contributed to significant gaps of understanding throughout the field. The varied perspectives reveal new dimensions on the core subject matter.

CLAY CONVERSATIONS RUBRIC 2

Quality of Content and Contribution to the Conference as a Whole:

The conversation represents a strong contribution to the conference as a whole. There is a clear focus of topic, and the facilitator(s) experience and/or connection to the material and/or conference theme are compelling. The conversation will contribute to a conference program that addresses authentic interests within the field, extending beyond the promotion of the facilitator(s) personal artwork.

1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40
The conversation topic lacks focus or offers only time-worn or regressive perspectives on issues. The topic is only marginally relevant to current and emerging issues or investigates an historical issue, person, era, or event in ways that are conventional and do not critically reflect on the canon's limitations. The conversation will not be facilitated in a manner that is relatable to others working in the field. The focus of the conversation does not contribute to a conference program that addresses authentic concerns within the field. The conversation topic's connection with the conference theme is absent. The facilitator(s) and perspectives on key issues are too narrowly defined or absent.	The conversation topic's focus is underdeveloped and/ or explored in ways that offer familiar perspectives on issues. The topic is somewhat relevant to current and emerging issues or investigates an historical person, era, or event in unconventional ways that do not critically reflect on the canon's limitations. The conversation will be facilitated in a manner that is only marginally relatable to others working in the field. The focus of the conversation contributes to a conference program that addresses concerns within the field that are limited in authenticity or relevance. The conversation topic's connection with the conference theme is absent or forced. The qualifications of facilitator(s) do not adequately indicate that significant perspectives will be presented in a substantive manner.	The conversation topic is somewhat developed and explored in ways that offer fresh takes on issues. The topic is interesting and somewhat relevant to current and emerging issues or investigates an historical person, era, or event in unconventional ways that critically reflect on the canon's limitations. The conversation will be facilitated in a manner that is relatable and engaging to others working in the field. The focus of the conversation contributes to a conference program that addresses concerns within the field that are authentic and relevant. The conversation topic's connection with the conference theme is surface-level, superficial, or forced. Qualifications of facilitator(s) suggest that insightful perspectives will be presented on the key issues in a substantive manner.	The topic of conversation is clearly developed and explored in ways that have not previously been undertaken. The topic is very compelling, particularly relevant to current and emerging issues, or investigates an historical person, era, or event in ways that expand the canon and open new avenues of discourse, interpretation, and understanding. The conversation will be facilitated in a manner that is highly engaging and interactive, original, compelling, and/or relatable to others working in the field. The focus of the conversation contributes to a conference program that addresses authentic concerns within the field and opens new avenues of possibility for the expansion of research, discourse, or creation. The conversation topic makes an authentic connection with the conference theme. Evidence supports that the facilitator(s) have clearly identified key perspectives on the topic, cite research to support their perspectives, and suggest avenues for future discourse and understanding that will contribute to deepening understanding in the field.



CLAY CONVERSATIONS RUBRIC 3

Degree of Development and Suitability for the Format: The conversation topic is sufficiently developed and well-suited to the format of the presentation.			
1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40
The conversation topic described in the proposal is underdeveloped. There is a question or doubt as to whether it can be presented in an interesting manner by the date of the conference, and within the time, technical, spatial, and personal constraints of this presentation format.	The conversation topic described in the proposal is marginally developed. There is a chance it can be presented in an interesting manner by the date of the conference, and within the time, technical, spatial, and personal constraints of this presentation format.	The conversation topic described in the proposal is somewhat developed to the point there is a good chance it can be presented in an engaging manner by the date of the conference, and within the time, technical, and personal constraints of this presentation format.	The conversation topic described in the proposal is advanced to the point that it promises to result in a compelling conversation by the date of the conference, and within the time, technical, and personal constraints of this presentation format.