STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2018-2030
EXHIBITIONS | EDUCATION | SALES GALLERY | ARTIST SERVICES
INTRODUCTION

Northern Clay Center is pleased to share the results of its 2017 strategic planning process. Through intense collective assessment, we gained new perspective on our historical, current, and future efforts to advance the field of ceramics, increase and encourage diversity throughout our organization, and enact plans to more intentionally harness momentums already in action. Our efforts culminated in a new strategic framework for the organization, a retooled mission statement, renewed guiding principles and values for our organization, and appropriate and meaningful goals for our future work in advancing the ceramic arts.

Northern Clay Center’s strategic planning process took shape over the course of 10 months. We began our work in late winter of 2017 with confidential surveys to our board, staff, and affiliated artists. We also interviewed several funders and key individuals across the field of ceramics to share their insights about future trends in ceramic art and education. Our efforts culminated in an intensive, multi-day gathering of board and senior staff, to review our findings and to map out the next steps for this organization.

The resulting document—NCC’s new Strategic Framework—will guide the Center’s efforts over the next dozen years. These goals and strategies are attainable over the next dozen years; they address the needs of our changing audiences and ceramic artists in general; they provide opportunities for the organization to continue to be a leader in the field of ceramic arts; they reinforce our commitment to our artists, program users, funders, national/regional/statewide partners, our board members and staff, our local community, and to those who have yet to feel the impact of what we do.

As a member of our constituency, we thank you for the role you played in this planning process—whether you took the time to share feedback via a survey; continued your participation in one of our numerous programs; or served the organization through your time, talents, or financial support. We look forward to continuing to be a meaningful addition to the arts ecology here in the state of Minnesota, to creating responsive and impactful programming for all of our constituents, and to taking the next steps towards becoming the best ceramic art center in the country.

Read on to discover our new Strategic Framework!
VISION AND MISSION

VISION

Become the leading ceramic arts center in the United States.

MISSION

Northern Clay Center advances the ceramic arts for artists, learners, and the community, through education, exhibitions, and artist services.
CORE VALUES

• Honesty, integrity, and respect form the cornerstone of our culture.
• The ceramic arts are intrinsic to the human experience, while reflecting diverse cultural traditions.
• Every individual benefits from exposure to a wide variety of ceramic art that is beautiful, evocative, challenging, or innovative.
• The ceramic arts are advanced through the exploration of the full spectrum of the art and science of clay.
• The field of ceramics is enriched by a mutual exchange of active curiosity, dialogue, and learning through diverse partnerships.
• Professional ceramic artists need to be nurtured, cultivated, and supported in order to both advance the greater field of the ceramic arts and enrich our local community.
• Clay learners deserve the best educational opportunities appropriate to their learning level.
• All communities deserve access to our programs and services, delivered in a genuine and welcoming environment.
• Our local, national, and international community flourishes from exposure to local, national, and international ceramic makers and their artworks.
• Fiscal responsibility and artistic risk-taking simultaneously strengthen our organization.
• The highest level of quality within our means permeates everything we do.
Create and promote high-quality, relevant, and participatory ceramic arts educational experiences.

- Support, enrich, and engage adult learners at every ability, interest, and level of expertise through participatory ceramic arts experiences.
- Use the transformative power of ceramic art to engage children and families from our community through experiential practice.

Cultivate and challenge ceramic arts audiences through extraordinary exhibitions and programming.

- Produce and promote a dynamic array of exhibitions that expand and affirm the boundaries, traditions, and history of ceramic art.
- Animate and contextualize the ceramic arts through imaginative, engaging, and relevant programming.
- Strengthen and broaden the dialogue in the ceramic arts through exceptional digital and print publications.

Support ceramic artists in the expansion of their artistic and professional skills.

- Maintain and grow professional development, business training, and teacher training opportunities for ceramic artists.
- Provide meaningful residencies, fellowships, and financial support to outstanding national, regional, and local ceramic artists at all levels of their professional careers.
- Provide opportunities to exhibit the work of ceramic artists at all stages of their professional careers.
- Reimagine and develop a flexible workspace, complete with state of the art equipment, to provide a creative and enriching environment for ceramics artists.
- Create opportunities for critical discourse, mentorship, networking, and community among ceramic makers.
GOALS

Embrace makers from diverse cultures and traditions in order to create a more inclusive and dynamic clay community.

- Engage in thoughtful research, reflection, and dialogue with those inside and outside the field of ceramic arts in order to better understand how to build a more comprehensive culture of inclusion.
- Collaborate with diverse organizations and communities to form transparent, respectful, and mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Expand access to the ceramics arts by engaging in genuine and committed relationships with underserved communities.

Excel as a non-profit ceramic arts organization.

- Maintain a strong and sustainable financial position.
- Expand awareness of Northern Clay Center as a relevant, impactful, and trustworthy organization with key stakeholders across the ceramic arts field.
- Attract, retain, and develop exceptional staff and volunteers.
- Aspire to board excellence through thoughtful engagement, informed leadership, and roll-up-your-shirtsleeves participation.
- Provide a clear and compelling return on investment to foundations, corporations, public agencies, and donors.
- Ensure NCC’s physical location is fully operational and houses high-quality equipment.
STAFF

Sarah Millfelt, Executive Director
Pat Barnick, Building Maintenance Technician
Heather Barr, Education Materials Technician
Casey Beck, Sales Gallery Associate
Alison Beech, Community Engagement Manager
Mackenzie Catton, Program Associate
Amanda Dobbratz, Digital and Marketing Manager
Jessie Fan, Bookkeeper
Jill Foote-Hutton, Coordinator of Artist Services and Storytelling
Kyle Rudy Kohlhepp, Manager of Education and Studio Artist Programs
Robert Lieder, Outreach Technician
Tippy Maurant, Director of Galleries and Events
Alexa McAdams, Sales Gallery and Special Events Coordinator
Andrew Rivera, Galleries Associate
Emily Romens, Galleries Coordinator
Audra Smith, Studio Manager
Jennifer Tatsuda, Business Manager

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