

The San Diego County Art Education Association \$500 grant for personal development, supported my attendance of the annual conference for the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts in Rhode Island in March of 2015. The conference was invigorating and inspiring with outstanding presentations addressing technology, aesthetics, pedagogy, and encouraging life-long learning and academic excellence.

As a classroom teacher surrounded by young students, it's easy to become less connected to the rest of the artistic landscape as it progresses through university studies and professional possibilities. The NCECA conference gave me the chance to get a renewed sense of the significance and continuity of the ceramic art experience and had sophisticated influence on my studio program. The artistic enrichment that I gain from three solid days of meeting together with the best teachers and artists in the world, seeing the finest ceramic art the world has to offer both contemporary and historic, incredible work from students K-12, undergrad and MFA is rejuvenating. The host city was full of exhibits in all the major museums, galleries, local universities, and art institutes. Viewing the exhibits in the company of respected artists and teachers allowed for conversation and sharing that is rare and extraordinary. As a teacher/artist, this is some of the best personal and professional development that can be found; content, technology, pedagogy are explored in greater detail than at any other time or place.

Additionally, my school's broader arts curriculum benefits from the re-expansion of my individual sense of what's possible, desirable, necessary in a top-notch program. Returning to school with renewed academic vigor and rigor nourishes our department and in turn the academic culture of our school. Through a substantial conference like NCECA, valuable insights, experiences and relationships are passed on to the entire community.

Lastly, the National K-12 Student Exhibit (associated with NCECA) is one of the most respected competitions in the country. Seeing the exhibit live encourages continued participation and helps to set high standards for my students. Although my students have participated almost every year, staying involved and connected is valuable for the San Diego community as a whole.

The conference is always a lot of work for me. It takes me away from my home for a whole week and places a burden on my family. I also am gone from my students and their work. With the differentiated instruction and project-based learning that is the core of my curriculum, not being able to guide each student through their unknowns means I have a lot to catch up on upon my return. Nevertheless, the personal development grant from SDCAEA made the effort much easier. With support for the Arts always in question, such financial encouragement is critical. I am grateful for the opportunity to grow as a teacher, an artist, and, as we understand the power and meaning of the arts, I'm glad I had the time to immerse myself completely in art for a week. Everyone should be so fortunate.