

Southern Illinois Art and Design Educators Conference:

Creative Clay+ Workshop Synopses

Friday, March 20th 2026

Session One 9-10:15AM

JOSH SHEARER & KENNADEE GABBY

Illinois Room

Title: **Building Blind Boxes: Teaching Product Design with Google Draw in the Middle School Art Room**

How can we use free digital tools to teach real-world design thinking in engaging, culturally relevant ways? In this hands-on workshop, participants will explore a classroom-tested "Blind Box" product design unit where middle school students create an original character and develop professional-style packaging for retail display.

Using Google Draw and Chromebooks, students move beyond basic digital drawing to explore character development, branding, color theory, contrast, typography, and color schemes. This project connects visual culture to authentic design practices, helping students think like illustrators, marketers, and product designers while working within accessible, free software.

Participants will receive ready-to-use digital worksheets, project templates, and see property student examples. During the session, we will walk through the project process step-by-step and spend time creating in Google Draw, so you leave confident and prepared to implement the unit immediately. Please bring a laptop and be ready to design!

CANDACE CAMPANELLA

Allyn 102

Title: **Cardboard Cottages**

In this workshop we will create *Cardboard Cottages* out of recycled cardboard. We will explore how to complete this project with cheap materials using recycled cardboard, scrap paper, and Elmer's glue. For older students we will explore options for using more advanced materials like Exacto blades, cardboard saws, and hot glue.

While creating the cottages, open discussion is encouraged regarding ways to alter this project to fit specific age levels and interests. With slight modifications this project would work for kindergarten through twelfth grade and is adaptable to any size budget!

JACKIE BANKS-MAHLUM

Vermillion Room

Title: **Illinois Arts Council Funds for Arts and Education, and Other Resources**

Would you like to enhance the arts program in your school? Or would you like to bring a teaching-artist into your classroom to do workshops with your students? Or would you like to develop your practice as an artist? This session will cover Illinois Arts Council grant programs that can help you achieve these goals and will walk you through the agency's initiatives and grant procedures.

CARRIE STOVER

Ohio Room

Title: **Clay Explorations with Carrie: Lessons Learned at Cedarhurst**

This hands-on workshop will be fun and informative! Carrie has been teaching clay and running the ceramics studio at Cedarhurst for 20 years. In this session, you'll get your hands dirty working with two different types of air-dry clay. We'll cover the pros and cons of each clay body while creating project examples and sharing fresh, classroom-ready, lesson plan ideas. Carrie will also highlight the many resources Cedarhurst offers educators in our region, including the Annual Cedarhurst High School Art Competition, free docent-led museum tours, the School Performing Arts Series, an outdoor raku pottery kiln, exhibitions, concerts, Summer Art Camp, and more.

AMBER AKES

Craft Shop

Title: **Unlock the Mold: Slipcasting Essentials**

Ready to move beyond the potter's wheel, handbuilding, and explore the world of multiples and precision? Whether you're a seasoned ceramicist or a curious beginner, this hands-on workshop dives into the industrial-meets-artistic process of slipcasting. Slipcasting allows artists to create complex, thin-walled, and highly detailed ceramic forms by pouring liquid clay (slip) into plaster molds. In this session, we bridge the gap between mass production techniques and unique fine art expression.

- The Chemistry of Slip: Learn how to mix and "deflocculate" clay to achieve the perfect pouring consistency.

- The Plaster Magic: Understand why plaster is the essential partner in this process, absorbing water to create a solid clay "skin."
- The Pour & Drain: Master the timing of the "dwell" to control the thickness of your pieces.
- Creative Intervention: Explore ways to alter, carve, and combine cast pieces to ensure every "repeat" remains a unique work of art.

Workshop Details

- Focus: Mold prep, pouring techniques, and surface finishing.
- Takeaway: Your own cast vessels or sculptural forms, ready for the kiln.
- Vibe: Collaborative, technical, and slightly messy (in the best way possible).

All materials, including high-quality casting slip and pre-made molds, are provided. Just bring your ideas & an apron!

Session Two 10:30-11:45AM

ALEXIS MOORE & COLE MOORE

Illinois Room

Title: **No kiln? No problem!**

Discover the magic and ease of foam clay! In this interactive workshop, we will share a practical and innovative look at how to use a fun and mess-free clay medium. Presenters will walk through successful projects and lesson plans for the elementary and middle school levels (could be easily adapted to high school!) Participants will have the opportunity to experiment with foam clay and keep a sample for themselves!

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BETHANY SANDERS

Ohio Room

Title: **Discover the Magic of Sculpting with Hot Glue!**

Step into the world of unconventional sculpting as we transform simple dowel rods into wizarding wands using hot glue as our primary medium. In this playful, hands-on workshop, participants will create their own one-of-a-kind wand while learning how to build texture and detail through layered hot glue, where temperature is key to successful sculpting. Ideal for educators interested in experimenting with unconventional, accessible materials, this session blends sculptural technique with creativity and a little bit of magic.

STEPHANIE DUKAT

Craft Shop

Title: **Patterned Slab-Built Trays**

In this workshop, attendees will create slabs using ceramic clay and patterned stencils using craft foam. The patterned stencils will be used to create a pressed pattern in the completed slab. The finished product will be a patterned slab-built tray using GR pottery Forms.

Luncheon & Guest Speaker: 11:45am – 1:00pm

JOSH SHEARER

Old Main

All Attendees!

Title: **Hard Work and Bad Judgement: One Man's Quest for Equity in Visual Art, Design, and Media in Illinois Public Schools**

Session Three 1:15-2:30PM

STEPHANIE DUKAT

Craft Shop

Title: **Exploring the Pottery Wheel**

Attendees will learn the basics of throwing on the pottery wheel. We will learn how to make a cup and bowl. Demonstration will be given on how to trim pottery to create a finished refined pot. (Max 7 participants)

BRENDEN DEASY

Ohio Room

Title: **Go Big or Go Home**

Building BIG things in the studio/classroom can be intimidating. This workshop will explore methods for stability, constructing, and firing ceramic sculptures which stand tall. Graduate student, Brenden Deasy, will share successes and a few failures in the creation of large-scale abstract sculptures as he shares his process and examples of his work.

SHANNON BORG

Vermillion Room

Title: **What IS the Creative Process? How you can claim it for yourself in your teaching, art, and life**

The "creative process" can be elusive. Teachers inspire students in this area every day, but the concept is often misunderstood. This workshop helps clarify what the creative process is - and isn't - and gives you practical, creative ways to use its power in your teaching, as well as your own art and personal life.

Artist, art & business coach and certified life coach Shannon Borg leads you through a fun process of discovering why your creative process is unique, and how to claim this powerful force for yourself.

HALEY STANAFORD

Allyn 102

Title: **Ceramic Surface Explorations**

In this workshop we will explore the world of underglaze transfers. We will discuss how to use transfers and the different techniques of layering, cutting out, and adding underglaze used to enhance our ceramic surfaces. This workshop will feature hands-on instruction and transfer practice.

MEGAN LEWIS

Illinois Room

Title: **Illinois Arts Alliance - How Public Funding Works in Illinois**

Accessing public-sector funding can be confusing and complicated. And, government programs designed specifically for the arts and culture sector are limited. Megan Lewis, Public Funding Navigator for Arts Alliance Illinois, will talk about all the different types of public funding provided from the state - more than just grants! Hear about how other creatives have tapped into alternative funding resources and learn what you need to do to be in position to access these opportunities.

Super Session 2:45-3:15PM

T LANCE

SHARP MUSEUM

Title: **Utilizing Community Resources @ the Sharp Museum**

All Attendees!

Explore the Sharp Museum! Exercise your critical thinking skills and evaluate ways in which the museum can assist you and your curriculum. Plan a field for your students! Help us to develop specific programs to meet your needs. See what we have to offer so we can help you add more resources to your teaching arsenal.

Keynote Speaker 3:30 – 4:15pm

Beth Lo

Sharp Museum Auditorium

All Attendees!

Title: **A Chinese Immigration Story in Porcelain**