

Job Title – Ceramics Department Head

Job Overview and Requirements

Hyde Park Art Center seeks a full-time Ceramics Department Head to oversee all aspects of its dynamic ceramics programming, including the management of day-to-day operations of the ceramics program and facilities, strategizing long-term vision and growth opportunities, and implementing high quality instruction for a diverse community of makers. In this capacity, the successful candidate will embrace a range of essential instructional and operational responsibilities.

Key elements of the ceramics department include:

- The largest department within the Art Center's Oakman Clinton School and Studios, with over 500 adult and 200 youth enrollments annually.
- A diverse population of class-takers including functional potters, experimental sculptors, young people, first-timers, and professional artists.
- Program offerings that include multi-level throwing and handbuilding, figurative sculpture, majolica, surface design, youth and summer camp programs.

This position is supported by a skilled, collaborative team that includes:

- A part-time (approx. 20 hours per week) dedicated Ceramics Studio Assistant who supports firing, glaze mixing, studio organization, and other studio-related tasks.
- A School and Studio Coordinator who creates quarterly studio schedules, places and tracks supply orders, coordinates clay shipments and equipment repairs, and offers additional studio-related support.
- A Ceramics Studio Resident who supports bisque firing, clay reclamation, and miscellaneous studio maintenance.
- Ceramics Studio Monitors who offer student support and assist with general studio upkeep, cleaning, and maintenance.
- 2-3 Student Volunteers who assist with general studio upkeep, cleaning, and maintenance.

Key Responsibilities

Studio Operations and Maintenance (40%)

- Implement a timely and transparent schedule of cone 10 reduction and oxidation firing.
- Oversee the upkeep of glaze mixing; formulate and test new glazes.
- Oversee a studio maintenance team, including part-time assistant(s), studio monitors, and volunteers.
- Ensure the instruction and oversight of safety procedures involved in all aspects of the ceramics studio.
- Oversee the coordination of studio scheduling, in collaboration with the School and Studio Coordinator
- Create and maintain transparent and user-friendly organizational systems for students, teaching artists, and the ceramics studio team.
- Oversee clay distribution; track supply inventory; maintain and acquire equipment; and responsibly manage the department budget, in collaboration with the School and Studio Coordinator.
- Communicate studio policies, updates, and feedback loops professionally and regularly with the ceramics team, staff, teaching artists, and students.
- Organize and lead regular department meetings.
- Work with the ceramics team, staff, teaching artists, and students to address studio needs and challenges proactively and as they arise.

Teaching and Mentorship (40%)

- Teach 3 - 5 courses per term, including advanced practice and specialty workshops. Option to teach youth, but not required.
- Provide instructional, technical, and administrative support to teaching artists, students, and staff.
- Manage and formalize a yearlong ceramics residency apprenticeship program.
- Mentor the studio assistant(s) to develop leadership skills, confidence, and technical expertise.
- Oversee studio monitor program, in collaboration with the School and Studio Coordinator.
- Collaborate with the Director of School and Studio Programs to identify, recruit, hire, onboard, and supervise new part-time teaching artists and visiting artists.

Strategic Planning and Long-term Visioning (20%)

- Collaborate on creative and practical solutions for long-term program growth and changes in studio usage, with a focus on increased equity and access.
- Develop and implement a robust ceramics curriculum that caters to a diverse set of skills, needs, and goals – both attracting new students and nurturing an existing and long-time clay community.
- Collaborate with Art Center staff and external partners to create alignment and cross-pollination between and among Art Center departments, creative disciplines, and the wider arts communities.

Who We Are

Hyde Park Art Center is a hub for contemporary art in Chicago, serving as a gathering and production space for artists and the broader community to cultivate ideas, impact social change, and connect with new networks. The Art Center functions as an amplifier for today and tomorrow's creative voices, providing the space to cultivate and create new work and connections. We offer a comprehensive set of programs, of which the ceramics studio is an integral part, that serve the creative and resource needs of artists and our community. Through our exhibitions, artist talks, studio art classes, international and local residency program, free public events, satellite class sites, and professional development opportunities we work to provide the space for artists at every age and stage to cultivate their practice, build connections, and impact our world.

Organizational Culture

We're not perfect, but we work hard on being better every day. Here are some things that matter a lot to us:

- Contemporary art. And better yet, artists.
- Lifelong learning. We bring a sense of curiosity to our work, our hobbies, and one another.
- Intentional risk-taking. We embrace experimentation and trying new things for good and thoughtful reasons.
- Equity, inclusion, and access. We understand that these have become buzzwords, but semantics aside, we believe in the responsibility we have to change the inequitable landscape of the arts, and we're committed to the hard work it takes to make it better.

Key Relationships

The Ceramics Department Head works with many different people in the Art Center community. The Department Head reports directly to the Director of School and Studio Programs and works closely with the School and Studio Coordinator. This position collaborates with the ceramics teaching artists, the full Education team, and other Art Center staff to enrich the ceramics program and to align organizational initiatives. The Department Head oversees the part-time Ceramics Studio Assistant, the Ceramics Resident, and the studio monitors. This position is also accountable to the ceramics student community.

Essential Requirements

The successful candidate will have:

- Expertise in ceramics processes (including glaze development and cone 10 reduction firing), materials, and equipment;
- Minimum of 5 years of experience teaching advanced curricula;
- Experience managing a diverse ceramics studio;
- Their own artistic practice;
- Knowledge of contemporary ceramics practices with a curiosity to seek out new ideas and inspiring artists in the field;
- A thoughtful and inclusive communication style with a personable demeanor;
- Critical thinking skills, especially the ability to analyze program needs and make responsive improvements;
- An eye for details and a desire to improve systems;
- The ability to work with many different types of people in a hybrid public-private environment;
- A sense of perspective and adaptability;
- A commitment to equity, inclusion, and justice;
- The ability to lift moderately heavy items (including clay and equipment);
- Master's Degree in ceramics or equivalent experience required.

Schedule

This is a full-time position, approximately 35-40 hours per week. Exact schedule is dependent on teaching load and firing needs, and therefore may vary somewhat from week to week and term to term. Some evening and/or weekend hours will be required, especially for teaching and firing, as well as associated public programming. This position attends all bi-weekly staff meetings, bi-weekly Education Department meetings, quarterly faculty meetings and quarterly Teaching Artist Leadership Council meetings.

Our Hiring Process and Tentative Timeline

- Applications are due December 31.
- We will conduct phone interviews on a rolling basis with qualified candidates and expect to host in-person interviews in mid January.
- Finalists will be invited to a second-round one-hour interview in late January and will be asked to submit references. We hope to make an offer shortly thereafter.

Hyde Park Art Center is an equal opportunity employer. People of color and those with other marginalized identities are strongly encouraged to apply.

Compensation

The Ceramics Department Head is a full-time, salaried position starting in the \$45-\$50,000 range. Benefits include: health and life insurance, dental insurance, retirement matching after one year, and vacation time.

To apply: please submit cover letter and resume to: Jeannette Tremblay Chambers at jchambers@hydeparkart.org with the subject line Ceramics Department Head Application.