

ELI ZEMPER

Artist | Founder, *Curiouser Clay* | Founder, *Moxie Works*

✉ curiouserclay@gmail.com ☎ (734) 272-8615 📍 Chelsea, MI

ARTISTIC PRACTICE

Community-based artist working at the intersection of ceramics, collaborative art-making, and care. Develops participatory projects across community, rural, and healthcare settings, exploring how art creates conditions for reciprocity, belonging, and the circulation of knowledge and care.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Founder & Teaching Artist, *Curiouser Clay* 2022 – Present

Founded and operates a mobile ceramics studio bringing clay-making directly into community, education, healthcare, and arts settings, including an ongoing partnership with C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. Develops site-responsive workshops and participatory projects that adapt ceramic processes to the people, relationships, and structures of each host community.

Founder, *Moxie Works Studio* 2025 – Present

501(c)(3) nonprofit collaborative arts studio built around the creative practice, authorship, and professional development of artists with disabilities.

SELECTED PROJECTS, RESIDENCIES & PRESENTATIONS

Falls Community Arts Exchange, *Invited, Fergus Falls, MN* 2027

Four-week community-based residency with the Fergus Falls Public Library using participatory ceramics and "Fail-abration" to explore experimentation, failure, and creative risk-taking.

Soaring Arts Visiting Artist, *Napoleon, OH* 2025 – Present

Ongoing artist residency investigating reciprocity, belonging, and the circulation of care and artistic knowledge within a disability arts community. Uses participatory research, ceramics, and shared studio practice to examine how relationships and assistance shape artistic identity and contribution.

A Seat at the Table, *Pitch Haus Residency, Chelsea, MI* 2026

Six-month community arts project engaging 100+ participants across schools, assisted arts studios, senior communities, and arts organizations, culminating in a collaborative installation and public programming in a repurposed shipping container. Supported by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

Pocosin Arts Residency, *Columbia, NC* 2026

Ceramics residency focused on material research and process development for *A Seat at the Table*, a participatory installation exploring gathering, contribution, and shared space.

1000 Flowers Could Bloom, *Chelsea, Michigan and Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor*
Large-scale participatory ceramic installation transforming individually made flowers into a collective artwork for a community reading garden. Combined community clay-making with modular ceramic construction to explore individual contribution within shared public space.

2025

Passion Works Residency, *Athens, OH*

2024

Artist residency demonstrating printing-on-clay techniques and working collaboratively with artists in an assisted arts studio, expanding access to image transfer and surface-design processes in ceramics.

St. Louis Center Residency, *Chelsea, MI*

2024 – 2026

Artist-in-residence within a residential community for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, developing collaborative ceramics programming and relationships that became the foundation for Moxie Works Studio.

#ThisAbility, *National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA), Detroit*

2026

Short-form presentation examining disability, access, artistic identity, and disabled artists as creative contributors within collaborative ceramics practice.

COMMUNITY ARTS LEADERSHIP

Chelsea Area Friends for Recreation, *Board Member, Grant Writer*

2023 – Present

Develops public arts initiatives through project planning, partnerships, and grant writing, including *Pathway to Renewal*.

Art Market Coordinator, *Sounds and Sights Festival, Chelsea MI*

2021 – Present

Curates and coordinates participating artists for a two-day public art market within a community festival serving approximately 15,000 attendees.

EDUCATION

M.A. Education, *Marygrove College, Detroit, MI*

B.A. English, *University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI*

SELECTED TEACHING & FACILITATION

Adjunct Lecturer and Program Director, *University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI*

Directed International Poetry Guild and interdisciplinary arts programming.

Educator, *Washtenaw Technical Middle College, Ann Arbor, MI*

Extensive secondary education experience in facilitation, curriculum development, and collaborative learning.

Consultant and Facilitator, *Anti Defamation League, Bloomfield Hills, MI*

Facilitated workshops addressing identity, bias, and inclusive community-building.