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University of Michigan
The Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design
500 S. State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Dear Art and Design Search Committee: December 27, 2022

It gives me great pleasure to submit my application for the tenure-track Assistant/Associate/Full Professor position in Art and Design, at the Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. My teaching and commitment to diversity, equality, and inclusion, and approach in collaborative working, community practice, and beyond in two and three-dimensional visions and design, as well as experience with four-dimensional moving image, aim to deliver the highest quality of instruction, based on my education, knowledge, studio practice, and diversified experience; as well as, to demonstrate the creative potential within inter-disciplinary, traditional and contemporary art dialogues, methods and technologies which engage students within a broader realm of innovative ideas, desire to foster creative and critical thinking and research. As such, supporting students to experiment will enlighten their intellectual and creative strengths and positively impact their roles toward success in future careers as cultural leaders. My view on the role of higher education of contemporary art and design reflects a positive, forward-thinking, and supportive learning experience, growing explorative vision, and intellectual openness. My full participation and efforts to coordinate the influx of collaborative, multi-disciplinary, and multi-cultural environments are offered with intellectual, enthusiastic energy, and humbleness. The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor's professionalism, valued young artist development, and high caliber faculty members reflect a strong commitment and investment in a cultural and philosophical vision of growth and research. I strongly believe that "to teach is to touch a life forever" and to that end, I apply all my energy, intellectual and skilled professional in ceramics, art teaching, and extensive artistic background.

My education rests upon a foundation that integrates a strong bond between quality and commitment within experimental and innovative art and design ceramics based research as well as inter-disciplinary process, coupled with respect for their histories and traditions that expands beyond physical boundaries. I have over decades of full-time college teaching experience in ceramics, combined with a high level of creative practice, critical thinking, and a deep understanding of material applications as an expressive language. My teaching includes investigating information of historical interest in contemporary art and theory as it relates to architecture, installation, utility, design, conceptual aspects, and research. I also introduce in my curriculum a vast knowledge of critical thinking, details, and familiarity with artistic, cultural, environmental, technological, and scientific resources beneficial for innovative applications in the field. Personal direction, structure, discipline, challenge, and motivation are key components in my teaching toward preparing students for a professional career and their learning to challenge and reflect ideas creatively.

I have developed and taught ceramics courses, including seminars, at all levels of undergraduate and graduate studies, in addition to interdisciplinary courses such as Drawing, Sculpture, Color Theory and Practice, Intuitive Form-unfired clay and drawing, Image Revision and Translation-2D drawing and 3D sculptural translation, Visual Arts in Civilization, Two and Three-Dimensional Design and Color, Art Appreciation, and related 3D technology development (experimental 3D and 4D moving image, and exploded composition), as well as, working with Virginia A. Groot Foundation as a fellow in collaboration to work with other metal sculptor fellows for project fabrication and bronze casting; so as working and collaborating with local community project needs, and organizing symposia locally, nationally and internationally. My teaching experience covers many aspects: the use of computer technology and digital process, art and cultural theory, critical thinking and concept, technical methods and experimental practices, aesthetic applications, material and process, structure and construction, ceramics raw materials, glaze calculation and software, 3D clay printing methods and structure, kiln building/construction and firing, and program building and development which would contribute to the strength and energy of the program.

My experience in the field of ceramics, not only includes in hand-building and wheel throwing, mold making and slip casting, traditional and non-traditional, but also management. Space designing and supervising construction of ceramics lab, technical facilities and necessary maintenance, overseeing installation of new equipment/facility and system upgrading, maintaining supplies and raw material for studio operation, building a safety emergency response plan according to the US Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration, including maintaining Materials Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), are all part of the students' professional learning experience. I also have broad experience working with Facility and Risk Management Departments to ensure the proper and safe operation of a ceramics and 3D area.

I have been the recipient of numerous grants and teaching fellowships during my professional career. Throughout my teaching and artistic endeavors, I have developed my expertise and appreciation for both traditional and contemporary practices, and have become more knowledgeable about national and international currents in contemporary arts.

Professionally, I have a wide national and international exhibition background, and executive and curatorial experience, and have organized and co-organized symposia and conferences nationally and internationally. As an artist, I share my ongoing process of re-examining and studying advanced contexts, as well as, conceptual and contemporary artistic aspects that reflect new ways to reshape physical expressions, redefine modernism and elevate its visual language. My research demonstrates how changing circumstances and moving forward to a wider field, cultivate a culture that supports the awareness of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging, for gender's voice and family education within our society and around the globe, shape of our social and artistic values; it redefines and refines our individual role in society. My objective is to pursue excellence and challenge a vision of possibilities and present philosophical views of far-reaching international scope.

As an educator, I continually seek to refine, strengthen, explore and expand my knowledge of contemporary concepts and develop in my teaching new contexts for student learning-continuously improving teaching methodology and student-centered learning, as well as, developing, modifying, and assessing curricula, to guide and develop each individual's creative capacity and nurture a productive and interactive multi-cultural environment, advising, mentoring and maintaining availability to every student. The connections between my capacity of cultural experience, developing expertise in cross-cultural communication and collaboration in my teaching and my artist professional practice reflect a positive and supportive learning approach, growing explorative vision, and intellectual openness that also fosters a high priority of academic excellence in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. It references a new understanding about materials and applications, challenges, boundaries, creative expression, techniques, interdisciplinary, understanding and empathy, and connections with a rich experience and history of artistic motivation, movements and values in my teaching. In addition, I profoundly share commitments to principles of engagement, diverse interactions inspire and impact possibilities, including participating and collaborating in committee work in developing and managing courses, curricula, and academic policy in department, college, and university activities, service, public good, and other professional duties.

It would be my great honor to share my artistic, technical, teaching abilities and vision, together with my serious intellectual and critical exploration of creativity in two and three-dimensional art and design, research, and expended possibilities with the University of Michigan community. I am confident that my years of experience and in-depth knowledge of ceramics, ability in collaborating interdisciplinary across with exceptional skill and understanding, my self-motivated initiative, communicative and organizational skills, and commitment to excellence and leadership will be of value to the Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Please accept this letter, curriculum vitae, DEI statement, research statement, teaching statement, pdf portfolio, and reference information, as requested. I can be reached via phone (207) 807-8799, or by email at raychenclay@gmail.com. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Ray Chen