

## 2026 MAEA Museum Art Educator of the Year

### Grace VanderVliet



Grace VanderVliet is the Curator for Teaching and Learning at University of Michigan Museum of Art. A former high school English teacher and art history instructor at Michigan State University, she enjoys thinking about how learning happens outside traditional classrooms. She works with a team of Gallery Educators to create engaging art museum tours for K-12 classes and community groups. Every museum experience is a collaborative endeavor – with partner organizations, teachers, students, and colleagues. She maintains relationships with a cohort of alumni volunteer docents and provides professional development workshops for classroom teachers in Southeast Michigan.

She serves as Chair of the Museum Education Division of the Michigan Art Education Association. She is a participant in the National Art Education Association’s School for Art Leaders, a year-long program designed to foster leadership skills and develop action research projects.

Her publications and presentations focus on how art can promote growth toward equity and justice in K-12 classrooms and the museum field. A quote that shapes her practice comes from Decolonize This Place: our work “is possible because of a deep politics of friendship, an ethos of relational organizing and a strong belief that things do not have to be this way, but in fact we must live as if it could be different based on what we choose to do and how we choose to live.”

When not in a museum or classroom, Grace enjoys cooking, reading, and participating in risky outdoor sports.