

## 2026 MAEA Higher Ed Art Educator of the Year



### Michael Letts



Michael Letts is a Professor of Art Education at Northern Michigan University. He has over 30 years of experience as a teaching artist in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. He has taught at every grade level, with over 10 years teaching grades 7-12 in Ishpeming and Gwinn Schools, and 20 years preparing new art teachers at NMU.

Michael's mission has been to promote and improve visual arts in the K-12 schools of the Upper Peninsula. Many of his student teachers are now placed with art teachers that are graduates of his program. His passion is for working with creative young students in a team setting to share and grow their passion for art and teaching.

The Michigan Art Education Association has been a key resource for Michael and his students. He founded the MAEA student chapter at NMU and has been bringing students to the annual conferences since 2007. He has presented over a dozen times at MAEA state conferences and six times at the NAEA annual convention. Michael has also done extensive work in assessment, including as a member of the team that developed the Michigan Arts Education Instruction and Assessment (MAEIA) program.

As an active artist, Michael has shown his work extensively in galleries and museums throughout the Midwest. He is also a musician playing at the professional level at clubs and festivals around Michigan and Wisconsin, and enjoys mountain biking in the UP woods.