

# Elizabeth Paley

Artist

GeekPots

Durham, North Carolina

<https://www.facebook.com/potterspenguinproject>, <https://geekpots.com>

<https://geekpots.com/portfolio/the-potters-penguin-project/>

The Potters' Penguin Project (2016-2019) was a community art project based in Durham, NC. Its purpose was (1) to collectively create and exhibit  $\geq 1,500$  clay penguins, in order to make the impacts of global warming on distant places more immediately tangible to both makers and viewers; and (2) to then disperse the colony as a fundraiser for environmental advocacy non-profits. After exhibits at Claymakers Gallery (Durham NC), the NC State University Crafts Center (Raleigh NC), and the Greensboro (NC) Science Center, the colony cumulatively raised \$5,000+ for [earthjustice.org](http://earthjustice.org), [sancob.co.za](http://sancob.co.za), and [ellerbecreek.org](http://ellerbecreek.org).



**The Potters' Penguin Project**, 11 X 8 X 3 in. Ceramics, 2019

The project was inspired by 2016 news reports about the sudden population collapse of a colony of Adélie penguins in Commonwealth Bay, Antarctica. Colony size had plummeted from 160k to 10k birds within a 5-year span, due to climate-change induced stresses. To make the magnitude of this loss tangible, we noted that were a single artist to make 25 clay penguins per day, every day, it would take 16.5 years to reach 150k. With a goal of 1.5k penguins, we invited community participation. With nearly 600 makers, our colony grew to 2k birds in one year.