

***Whose Lakefront* (2020) Participatory Public Art Project**



This participatory public art project foregrounds the history and occupation of indigenous land by marking the boundary between ceded and unceded territory along Michigan Avenue in the heart of Chicago's downtown.

In 1914, the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians sued Chicago for land along the lakefront. As co-signers of the 1833 Treaty of Chicago, they had ceded land up to the shore of Lake Michigan, but since then landfill had created areas beyond the shore that included Streeterville, Lincoln Park, Grant Park, Soldier Field, and Jackson Park, some of the most valuable property in the city. The case went to the U.S. Supreme Court, where, predictably, the Potawatomi lost.

Mainstream Chicago history rarely includes this story. The proposed project, *Whose Lakefront*, aims to unsettle assumptions about land, history, and belonging by visibly marking this boundary between ceded and unceded land in the heart of Chicago's downtown.

Three workshops will be held during Winter/Spring 2020 for community members to learn about the history of the Potawatomi land claim and contemporary issues of Native Americans in Chicago. Workshop participants will then be invited to join the participatory public art event.

Over the course of one day in Summer 2020, participants will mark a red line along the sidewalk of Michigan Avenue, tracing the original shoreline for up to two miles between Division and Roosevelt. Postcards will be distributed with further information about the land, and passersby will be encouraged to think about their relationship to this land, and to Indigenous peoples.

ABOUT THE TEAM

The lead artist is JeeYeun Lee, an interdisciplinary artist, writer, and activist based in Chicago. The primary collaborator is Phoebe Kuo, a designer and woodworker based in Evanston, IL. A group of Indigenous leaders are advising the project, including John Low (Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians), Ohio State-University Newark; Heather Miller (Wyandotte Nation of Oklahoma), Executive Director, American Indian Center; Fawn Pochel (First Nations Oji-Cree), Education Coordinator, American Indian Center; Anthony Tamez-Pochel (Cree, Lakota), Co-President, Chi-Nations Youth Council; and Aaron Golding (Seneca), Assistant Director, Multicultural Student Affairs at Northwestern University, and Board Member, American Indian Center.