

Huura Šgaach

The Plants are Playing

Proposal for the Madison Public Market
by Nipinet Landsem and Caitlin Newago





Overview

Our design for this mural focuses on the intersection of the wetlands and prairies around the four lakes of Teejop and the creation of an ecosystem that has sustained the Ho-Chunk nation and their ancestors since time immemorial. It is composed of a depiction of the four lakes and Yahara river, botanical illustrations of plant medicines local to the wetlands and prairies of the Teejop area, and an Ojibwe floral frame that references the designs commonly found on bandolier bags among both the Ho Chunk and the Ojibwe. Teejop was a meeting place for many tribes, and so our process to create this design was deeply rooted in Indigenous community connections and knowledge.





Team

Nipinet Landsem is an Anishinaabe and Michif tattoo artist, muralist, and graphic novelist currently based out of Minneapolis, Minnesota. They are a descendant of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa and a citizen of the Manitoba Métis Federation. Nipinet is also known for their extensive knowledge of medicinal native plants in the midwest.

Caitlin Newago is a Bad River Ojibwe tribal member from Odanah, WI as well as Oneida from the Powless family. She is an independent artist, small business owner, tattoo artist, trained muralist, beadworker, and quillworker currently based in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Both Caitlin and Nipinet are former residents of Madison, WI and maintain deep community ties to the area.



Nipinet Landsem



Caitlin Newago



Design A





Design B





Design C





Research and design

Huura Šgaach is a mural created from entirely Indigenous sources of knowledge, focusing most on Ho-Chunk and Ojibwe plant medicines.

Special thanks to Kasey Keeler (Tuolumne Me-Wuk and Citizen Band Potawatomi), Jake Littlejohn (Ho Chunk) and Melanie Talmadge-Sainz (Ho Chunk) for introductions and support during this research.

- 01 | Theme and focus: Janice Rice, Ho Chunk Nation elder
- 02 | Ho Chunk plant medicines: Kjetil Garvin, Ho Chunk Nation Hoocąk Xatap Hirakara
- 03 | Area history, agriculture, and Oneida plant medicines: Dan Cornelius, Oneida Nation
- 04 | Ojibwe plant medicines: Kristin Klingman, Lac Vieux Desert Ojibwe; Nipinet Landsem, Turtle Mountain Ojibwe; Caitlin Newago, Bad River Ojibwe
- 05 | Ho Chunk traditions and plants: Jake Littlejohn, Ho Chunk Nation
- 06 | Mural name: Jon Greendeer, Ho Chunk Nation President





Imagery and meaning

1

Water

The lakes and waterways of Teejop are what allow these plants and medicines to grow here and are deeply important to the Ho-Chunk.

2

Florals

Both the Ho-Chunk and the Ojibwe share a tradition of floral beaded bandolier bags.

3

Plants

Every plant included in this mural is of cultural significance to the Ho-Chunk, Ojibwe, or Oneida and grows or used to grow in the Teejop area. Plant knowledge was sourced from exclusively Indigenous knowledge keepers with deep roots in the Madison community, and all plants pictured were and are used as food, medicine, or craft materials by Ho Chunk, Ojibwe, or Oneida peoples.



Full plant list

- Veronicastrum virginicum - Culver's root – Maaqasgii
 - Recommended by Kjetil Garvin
- Solidago speciosa - Showy goldenrod – Maaqā Reejuserec
 - Recommended by Kjetil Garvin
- Viburnum trilobum - American cranberry – Mashkiigimin
 - Recommended by Dan Cornelius
- Sanguinaria Canadensis - Bloodroot – Peexhišuc
 - Recommended by Kjetil Garvin, Nipinet Landsem
- Nelumbo lutea - American lotus – Ceerap
 - Recommended by Janice Rice, Kjetil Garvin
- Acorus americanus - Sweet flag – Maaqā Teek
 - Recommended by Kjetil Garvin
- Iris versicolor - Northern blue flag – Maaqā Saagre
 - Recommended by Kjetil Garvin
- Zizania palustris - Wild rice – Manoomin
 - Recommended by Janice Rice, Kristin Klingman, Dan Cornelius, Nipinet Landsem, Caitlin Newago
- Sagittaria latifolia - Wapato – Sjiiporo
 - Recommended by Kjetil Garvin, Janice Rice
- Fragaria virginiana - Wild strawberries – Ode'imín
 - Recommended by Kristin Klingman, Dan Cornelius
- Helianthus tuberosus L. – Jerusalem artichoke – Paaǵi
 - Recommended by Kjetil Garvin
- Physalis longifolia – Long leaf ground cherry – Haaṓpok Hišjasú
 - Recommended by Kjetil Garvin
- Asclepias syriaca – Milkweed – Maaḥjic
 - Recommended by Kjetil Garvin, Nipinet Landsem
- Liatris aspera – Rough blazing star – Ceesjchošok
 - Recommended by Kjetil Garvin
- Verbena hastata – Blue vervain – Maaqā Rejũksuksik
 - Recommended by Nipinet Landsem, Kjetil Garvin
- Verbena stricta – Hoary vervain – Caaxirico
 - Recommended by Kjetil Garvin
- Achillea millefolium – Yarrow – Haaḁsȳc
 - Recommended by Nipinet Landsem, Kristin Klingman, Kjetil Garvin
- Verbascum thapsus – Mullein – Caasgaa Naqáwa
 - Recommended by Kjetil Garvin, Nipinet Landsem
- Prunella vulgaris – Heal-all – Wiirašarak
 - Recommended by Kjetil Garvin, Nipinet Landsem
- Monarda fistula – Wild bergamot – Poaxu
 - Recommended by Janice Rice, Dan Cornelius, Kjetil Garvin, Kristin Klingman
- Ceanothus americanus – New jersey tea – Caa Waruc
 - Recommended by Kjetil Garvin



Mural schematics

One painted 12'x52' mural created on polytab and installed on the mountain surface with acrylic adhesive, then sealed with MuralShield.

Pros of polytab:

- Portable: mural can be created in Minneapolis, cutting down on travel time for artists
- Flexible: Mural fabric breathes with the mountain surface, reducing cracking over time
- Easy to maintain: Post-sealant, mural can be cleaned of any graffiti without damage, and patched should damage occur to painted surface





Fabrication process

1. Research and design phase (completed)
2. Adjustment phase: should the Madison Arts Commission request changes to the mural design, they will be completed digitally before mural painting begins
3. Fabrication phase: Mural will be designed digitally and transferred to polytab fabric, then painted in our studio in Minneapolis
4. Installation phase: Mural will be transported from Minneapolis to Madison and installed over the course of one week, during which the wall will be prepped with a pressure washer, the mural adhered to the wall, any necessary touchups applied, and sealed with UV protectant coating Muralshield and World's Best Graffiti Coating.





Upkeep and maintenance

Should the wall be tagged, or graffitied, World's Best Graffiti Coating can be removed and the tag or graffiti wiped away with it, a patch to the polytab applied if necessary, and the graffiti protectant reapplied. This is an inexpensive and low effort way to keep the mural graffiti-free and looking its best for years to come.

Should the wall be damaged, a polytab patch can be applied to seamlessly cover and repair any damage that occurs to the mural itself and the wall re-sealed. For smaller repairs, existing polytab can simply be painted over and resealed with Muralshield.



Importance and impact

This mural will be one of very few murals in Madison created by Native community members and a powerful symbol of Indigenous presence within the community that is legible and appealing to people of all backgrounds.

Visible Indigenous presence,
created by and for us

A representation of
Indigenous knowledge and
values created and presented
by Indigenous people

Wisconsin Tribal collaboration

Created in collaboration
between Ho-Chunk, Ojibwe,
and Oneida people using
traditional methods and
established community
connection

Universal appeal

The lakes and plants of the
Madison area will be
immediately recognizable to
anyone viewing the mural,
regardless of Tribal
connection