

# DAVIDBERNIE

August 21, 2023

Newberry Library  
Collection Development  
Will Hansen, Curator of Americana  
60 West Walton Street  
Chicago, IL 60610-3305

Newberry Library Collection Submission

Dear Will,

I am submitting thirty-one (31) printed art pieces for the Newberry Library Collection, including the White Privilege Series, Mascots Series, and collaborations with the Chi-Nations Youth Council and the First Nations Garden. In addition, there are new projects such as the Chicago Seal Series, Anishinaabek Land Series, Museums are Thieves Series and several nascent and to-be-developed series.

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) design collaborates with the Chi-Nations Youth Council (CNYC) to address the anti-Black values of Chicago-area Native organizations and groups. The design retains the integrity of the original BLM design while using a font tailored to CNYC's aesthetic. The CNYC's Black Lives Matter design was printed on shirts and given to community members to express and act in support of our Black, African American, and Afro-Indigenous communities.

Attached are the statements by the Chi-Nations Youth Council regarding the two designs.

The following organizations did not release a statement regarding the Black Lives Matter movement or the actions taking place in 2020:

- American Indian Association of Illinois
- American Indian Center (AIC)
- American Indian Health Services of Chicago
- American Indian Chambers of Commerce of Illinois
- Chicago American Indian Community Collaborative (CAICC)
- Mitchell Museum of the American Indian
- Native American Indian Cultural Center of Chicago, Illinois (Trickster Cultural Center)
- St. Kateri Center of Chicago
- Visionary Ventures

The following group made a statement on Facebook but was not posted to the University's page.

- Northwestern University, Native American and Indigenous Initiatives

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The Land Back Capitalist design is inspired by the work of Arnell Tailfeathers (Blackfoot Confederacy), who first coined "Land Back" in a satirical online post in 2018.

The Anishinaabek Land (token) design was a concept collaboration with Fawn Pochel (Oji-Cree) for an article that she wrote for the Sixty Inches from Center article, *Erasing Native Chicago Through Settler Occupation* (<https://sixtyinchesfromcenter.org/erasing-native-chicago-through-settler-occupation/>).

I must also acknowledge the history of theft by institutions such as libraries, universities, and museums and the systems that keep the resources away from Tribal communities. These institutions must return the remains of our relatives and artifacts stolen from Tribal communities.

I want to thank Will Hansen, *Roger and Julie Baskes, Vice President for Collections and Library Services*, and Analú López, *Ayer Librarian and Assistant Curator of American Indian and Indigenous Studies*, for taking the Chicago lead to provide space and opportunities for contemporary Native art from Tribally-verified and community-based artists.

Hopefully, their hard work and initiatives will lead other collections to do the same and change institutional policies to return resources to where they belong. By adding Native-created materials to the collection, there is an opportunity for future generations to have access to the work done in the community and through a Native lens.

Pidamayaye do (thank you),



David Emmanuel Bernie  
Ihanktonwan Dakota  
[www.davidbernie.com](http://www.davidbernie.com)

Encl: Black Lives Matter Statement by CNYC (1), First Nations Second City Statement by CNYC (1)

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## **First Nations Second City Design Statement by the Chi-Nations Youth Council**

First Nations Second City is about the resurgence of Indigenous sovereignty as a liberatory practice against settler colonialism.

First Nations is a term utilized primarily by members of Canada's Indigenous population to replace "Indian" in the 1970s because of the Red Power movement- primarily led by Urban Native Youth. Within the 1960s and 1970s, a pan-Indigenous civil rights movement spread across North America because of frustrations over the erosion of treaty rights.

This movement was coined the Red Power movement by Indigenous scholar Vine Deloria Jr., a member of the Standing Rock Sioux. The term First Nations is more commonly adopted to refer to American Indians in the United States as a moniker to unite Indigenous peoples across tribal nations, asserting separation from the settler colonial occupation of Canada and the United States.

Second City is a nickname given to Chicago. The nickname is theorized to have been bestowed on Chicago for two main reasons: the city's ability to rebuild itself in the aftermath of the Chicago Fire of 1871, and second, the nickname is said to result from the rivalry between Chicago and New York. The nickname is said to be a slight at the city by a New York native named A.J. Liebling, who published a travelogue entitled "Chicago: The Second City" boasting about how Chicago couldn't keep up with his beloved hometown. No matter the origin, Second City is a nickname Chicagoans humbly adopt as a marker of resilience and tenacity.

First Nations Second City has become a slogan to empower the movement work of Native peoples who stake claim to Chicago as their homelands ancestrally and through acts of ongoing displacement.

by Chi-Nations Youth Council

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## **Black Lives Matter Design Statement by the Chi-Nations Youth Council**

Indigenous sovereignty is tantamount to Black Liberation. These graphics are connected through the practice of collective liberation. Black and Indigenous folks pose a dangerous union to the stability of America.

Within Chicago's Native Community, we saw a rise in anti-Blackness with the American Indian Center (AIC), the oldest Native-serving institution in Illinois, commissioning an "All Life Matters" mural in the wake of the uprising for racial equity in the Summer of 2020. As a result, there was a need to showcase that the conservative beliefs of the AIC and other Native organizations that uphold AIC, including the Chicago American Indian Community Collaborative (CAICC), did not reflect the beliefs of all Native peoples in Chicago.

We deliberately point to the AIC and CAICC, the self-identified organizing agency for Chicago's Native people, due to their positionality within Chicago's political landscape. Despite public pushback for the "All Life Matters" mural, CAICC did not make a statement to address the public display of anti-Blackness from their member organization AIC. Additionally, non-CAICC member organizations such as the Center for Native Futures and Indigenous Peoples' Day Coalition-Illinois, founded by former AIC leadership who commissioned and advocated on behalf of the "All Life Matters" mural, are complicit in the perpetuation of anti-Blackness within Chicago's Native community.

*by Chi-Nations Youth Council*