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**THE SHELLEY & DONALD RUBIN FOUNDATION  
AT THE 8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR ANNOUNCES**

***THE HOUSE EDGE***

**Sixteen Artists Consider the Economic  
Dimensions of Indigenous Sovereignty**

**Curated by Caitlin Chaisson,  
2023 Curatorial Open Call Recipient**



G. Peter Jemison, *Treaty Indians/Violations*, 1990-95. Collage of paper with watercolor, pastel, and graphite pencil on foam board. Courtesy of the artist and K Art, Buffalo.

**The 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
17 West 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NYC  
September 28, 2023 – January 13, 2024**

**New York, NY – August 16, 2023** - The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation is pleased to present ***The House Edge***, curated by **Caitlin Chaisson**. The exhibition features the work of sixteen artists who consider the economic dimensions of Indigenous sovereignty. Though capitalism seeks to define relations between subjects and places, the artists demonstrate how notions of land ownership, property, and consumerism are contested and rewritten through diverse Indigenous practices. Showcasing drawing, painting, print, sculpture, video, and photography, with many works

exhibited publicly for the first time, *The House Edge* will take place at The 8<sup>th</sup> Floor and run from **September 28, 2023** through **January 13, 2024**. Featured artists include **David Bradley, Jim Denomie, Joe Feddersen, Harry Fonseca, G. Peter Jemison, Chaz John, Matthew Kirk, Terran Last Gun, Rachel Martin, Kimowan Metchewais, Nora Naranjo-Morse, Duane Slick, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Bently Spang, Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie, and Nico Williams.**

The 'house' addressed in the show's title suggests multiple meanings: a place of belonging, a site of governmental assembly, and a reference to gambling, where the house is colloquially understood as the dealer or the casino. Since the first signing of treaties with the United States, Native American nations have defended their preexisting rights to govern the activities happening on their lands. In the 1970s, this self-determination was tested in the courts by a case involving high-stakes bingo operations, and a legal precedent was set. Congress eventually passed the federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) in 1988, a jurisdictional framework to oversee what is now a multibillion-dollar industry.

The act has had immense material and symbolic effects. For nations that have pursued gaming (and less than half of federally recognized nations have), the wealth generated by casinos has been used for essential housing, education, medical, and infrastructural services, offsetting generations of hostile underfunding and deferrals of promised aid from the US government. Profits are further directed towards art and culture, including support for language revitalization and enabling governments to buy land back; however, IGRA has shifted the jurisdictions of state and federal powers, with Native American nations required to form state compacts to operate gaming enterprises. The fact that capitalist values of individual accumulation are incompatible with many Indigenous economies founded on principles of reciprocity and interdependence has also presented a divisive challenge.

That gaming is now a salient feature of Indigenous-US relations is not accidental, but rather the product of a centuries-long chain of events. The artworks in *The House Edge* articulate the entangled facets of capitalism and colonialism. **Chaz John** and **Harry Fonseca** situate the gambler as an archetypal character in individual, cultural, and national imaginaries. This trickster figure also offers lessons in the work of **Bently Spang** and **Rachel Martin**, whose works cleverly undermine colonial narratives of authenticity and the commodification of Indigenous cultures. **Nico Williams, Terran Last Gun, and Kimowan Metchewais** foreground the importance of land and the ongoing imperatives of settler-colonial capitalism to displace Indigenous peoples. The political and governmental dimensions of wealth across the US, from the gold rush up to recent conflicts, are considered by **G. Peter Jemison, David Bradley, Jim Denomie, and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith.** Artworks by **Duane Slick** and **Matthew Kirk** channel the power of symbolic value and transcend the fallacies of endless economic growth. Play, recreation, and tradition are emphasized in works by **Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie, Nora Naranjo-Morse, and Joe Feddersen** in support of a community-informed ethic.

Together, the multidisciplinary artworks presented in *The House Edge* facilitate important dialogues about wealth, power, culture, and the role of contemporary art in mediating value.

This exhibition is the result of the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation's second Curatorial Open Call. Chaisson was selected from a pool of applications by the Foundation's curatorial team, and will be supported in her administrative, planning, and promotional endeavors by the Foundation.

**Caitlin Chaisson** is a curator and critic based in New York and holds an MA from the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College. She recently worked at the Whitney Museum of American Art on *Jaune Quick-to-See Smith: Memory Map* (2023) and at The Drawing Center on *Drawing in the Continuous Present* (2022) and *Fernanda Laguna: The Path of the Heart* (2022). Previously, she served as the Director and Curator of Far Afield (2016–19), an initiative that supports regionally-

connected artistic and curatorial practices. She has also held positions at e-flux (New York City), Emily Carr University of Art and Design (Vancouver), and AKA Artist-Run Centre (Saskatoon). Her writing has appeared in *Canadian Art*, *C Magazine*, and *frieze magazine*, among others.

#### **About the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation**

The Foundation believes in art as a cornerstone of cohesive, sustainable communities and greater participation in civic life. In its mission to make art available to the broader public, in particular to underserved communities, the Foundation provides direct support to, and facilitates partnerships between, cultural organizations and advocates of social justice across the public and private sectors. Through grantmaking, the Foundation supported cross-disciplinary work connecting art with social justice via experimental collaborations, as well as extending cultural resources to organizations and areas of New York City in need. [sdrubin.org](http://sdrubin.org)

#### **About The 8<sup>th</sup> Floor**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Floor is an independent exhibition and event space established in 2010 by Shelley and Donald Rubin to promote artistic and cultural initiatives. Inspired by The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, the gallery is committed to broadening the access and availability of art to New York audiences. Seeking further cultural exchange, The 8<sup>th</sup> Floor explores the potential of art as an instrument for social change in the 21st century, through an annual program of innovative contemporary art exhibitions and an events program comprised of performances, salon-style discussions, and those organized by external partners. [the8thfloor.org](http://the8thfloor.org)

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#TheHouseEdge #RubinFoundation #The8thFloor #ArtandSocialJustice

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**Image description:** A colorful collage of newspaper clippings, photocopies, and drawings are assembled in a dense composition. In the center of the work, a line drawing pictures an eagle in flight. Surrounding the eagle are images of corn stalks, neon casino signage, military fatigues, dollar signs, and longhouse architectures, which are represented through additive and subtractive layering techniques.