



## Lakefront Anonymous: Chicago's Unknown Art Gallery

By William Swislow and Aron Packer

One of the world's great art treasures  
lies hidden in plain sight along  
Chicago's Lake Michigan shore

William Swislow and Aron Packer have spent three decades documenting the thousands of stone carvings that line Chicago's lakefront yet are largely unknown. Made over the course of nearly a century and ranging in size from a few inches to several feet, they constitute both a collective work of art and a spontaneous social history of Chicago at play. Like most art environments, though, this 22-mile-long monument to summer fun is under constant threat from the weather, neglect, and unsympathetic government projects.

Lakefront Anonymous tells the story of these carvings, their makers, and the lakefront where the carvers left behind a rich visual legacy. Designed by Don Di Sante, it includes more than 200 photographs of this important artwork. The book will open a new perspective on the lakefront for anyone interested in Chicago and its most glorious amenity while raising a pressing new preservation issue for the shoreline's historic character. It also will reveal the carvings – art made mostly by people who did not consider themselves artists – to the growing worldwide audience interested in graffiti and in outsider, folk, and vernacular art.

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*Aron Packer* has more than 25 years of experience as a Chicago gallerist, with a focus on contemporary art and expertise in folk and outsider art. He has staged more than 200 exhibitions over the years. He currently works as a fine art specialist at *Toomey & Co. Auctioneers* and curates exhibitions at various venues.

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