

**Cherokee Chairs** are public or private seating that looks like people. The seats are fully useable, robust and waterproof. The design is inspired by American settlers.

*Medium* Oak chairs and clothing sealed in polyester or bioresin, with strengthening, steel fixings, and fallen oak. Product of more than one country.

*Dimensions (approx., as a pair)* 120cm x 130cm x 70cm

The work references the American Dawes Act of the assimilation of native North Americans. Senator Dawes' main reason to instigate his Indian Allotment Act was Chief Standing Bear, a Ponca Indian of the Lakotas, who walked 600 miles though winter to bury his son after being



forcibly removed from his tribe's native territory and burial site. Tribal land was removed from tribal governance and allocated into immediate family ownerships, and to single males – small allotments, effectively removing collectivised responsibility and management of the land and nature.

“Assimilation” through the Dawes Act was the condition for any native inhabitants to have any rights to any land and resources at all. This required western schooling and church attendance, and replaced tribes' animal and earth spirits with the imperative to go



forth and multiply, with divine dominion over bird and beast. The Indians had to accept these conditions in order to be accepted people. Without it, they were beasts, not people, with no rights to land use. Chief Standing Bear's contention to rights to bury his son in the tribe's sacred ground was “I am a man”, a view which was eventually accepted because he wore western clothes and went to church, and asked to be taught how to farm land the western way.



After the Act was effected Standing Bear could have been renamed ‘Sitting Clothed’: a westernised sitting tenant in the required Euro-American attire. The chairs are dressed in keeping with the spirit of those traditional clothing customs at the time.

We can sit on these chairs in recognition of this heritage's fundamental support for our current condition, just as we may “stand on the shoulders of giants”. The frozen nature of the hermetic sealing of the chair people reflects the sealing of free

people into a restrictive and immobilising law and way of life.

The Cherokee are a native North American tribe. “Cherokee” means “the real people”.