

# Sacred Ground: Our History & the Power of Place

## MODERATOR

### **Kolton Harris**

CT Office of the Arts

Kolton Harris is a creative visionary leader, educator, facilitator and multi-disciplinary artist currently serving as a program manager at the CT Office of the Arts. In his role he is charged with the mission to design programs and experiences that empower artists and demonstrate the centrality of the arts to the human experience. He spent years working with youth as the artistic and executive director of a social justice youth theater, while also instructing educators and theater

practitioners in his method of devising new works of theater that center on community engagement and development.

As a recording artist, producer and musician he has created a growing body of work that sonically explores dream-like landscapes with timeless messages in both lyrical and visual presentation. He is also a director, actor and writer whose mission is to inspire the artist in every human being by telling powerful stories that can shift the culture towards a posture of innovation and forward thinking



## PANELISTS

### **Jason Mancini** CT Humanities

Dr. Jason Mancini joined CT Humanities as Executive Director in 2018. At CTH, he is focused on strengthening organizational partnerships, engaging diverse audiences, and anchoring Connecticut's placemaking, public history, and integrative digital initiatives.

Jason is also co-founder of Akomawt Educational Initiative and the former Executive Director of the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center.

Jason holds a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Connecticut with expertise in the archaeology and ethnohistory of New England. His article, "in contempt and oblivion": Censuses, Ethnogeography, and Hidden Indian Histories in Eighteenth-Century Southern New England, and forthcoming work "The Narraganset Chief, or the Adventures of a Wanderer": Recovering an Indigenous Autobiography, examine the nuanced and subverted histories of the Indigenous peoples of the American northeast.



### **Nakai Northup** Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center

Nakai Northup, a member of both the Narragansett and Mashantucket Pequot tribes, is a museum educator at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and has more than ten years of experience teaching eastern woodland tribal history. Northup has spent his entire life in his Native communities and is passionate about preserving tribal histories and traditions for future generations. He also serves as a vice-chair for the Mashantucket Pequot Natural Resource.

**Nicole Thomas**  
Connecticut Landmarks

Nicole works for Connecticut Landmarks as the Assistant Site Administrator at the Hempsted Houses Museum and is also a researcher for New London's Black Heritage Trail. The New London Black Heritage Trail was honored as a History Gamechanger Project by Connecticut Explored in 2022.

