



# Meet the NW Trolls



**THOMAS  
DAMBO**



*Advancing Danish-American Relations*

## About the Exhibition

The *NW Trolls: Way of the Bird King* is a public art exhibition built during the summer of 2023 in the USA's Pacific Northwest. The project is presented by Scan Design Foundation, whose mission is to enhance Danish-American relations with a focus on environmental sustainability. Scan Design Foundation brought this exhibition to the Pacific Northwest to share a message about the importance of environmental stewardship through unique recycle art from Denmark. This project was made possible by a small army of dedicated partners and hundreds of volunteers.

The exhibition features six giant hand-built troll sculptures by Danish recycle artist, Thomas Dambo. The publicly-accessible sculptures are located in Oregon and Washington, where each whimsical troll sculpture is part of an underlying environmental story. Thomas Dambo wrote a playful poem for each troll. The NW trolls project celebrates the human experience of art by amplifying the connections of cultural heritage between Coast Salish tribal communities and Scandinavian traditions.

Thanks to our funding partners and host site partners, there is no admission fee to visit any of the trolls. Adventure Lab Geocaching has created 6 fun, interactive and location-based troll treasure hunts. Visit [www.nwtrolls.org](http://www.nwtrolls.org) to learn more about the project and to download the app.



### OLE BOLLE

Ole Bolle is hosted by Nordic Northwest in Portland, Oregon. The house Ole is peeking into is a replica of the other Scandinavian style cottages on the Nordic Northwest campus.

There's something in the air  
That something makes my belly rumble  
Something smells so strong, it hits me  
Almost makes me stumble  
Could it be the little people cooking  
something smelly  
in the big red cookie jar  
So I can put them in my belly

*Photo credit Erik Davidson*

## THE ARTIST

Thomas Dambo is one of the world's leading recycle artists from Odense, Denmark. His prolific work spans over 20 years and can be found around the world. He and his team have been creating giant trolls, made from recycled/reclaimed materials for the past ten years, and to date, they have built over 130 sculptures. By using the stories and mythologies of his childhood, trolls became a vehicle to marry his large-scale artwork with his intention to follow his passion to "waste no more".



***"In nature, there is no landfill. Nature is circular, everything has a meaning and everything is recycled "***  
***- Thomas Dambo***

## Pia the Peacekeeper

Pia is located on Bainbridge Island, a short ferry ride from Seattle, Washington. Her curly hair is made from salvaged apple tree branches.



Pretty pretty please, let's keep the  
peace beneath the trees,  
Hold you in my hand I will remind you  
with a squeeze,  
Quiet little people  
cause your criers make me tired,  
Pia likes to play with people,  
people they keep quiet

*Photo credit Thomas Dambo*

## Bruun Idun

Bruun Idun plays her flute across the Puget Sound from the shores of Lincoln Park in West Seattle, Washington. As Thomas Dambo's story goes, the flute, which is made from driftwood, allows her to communicate with Orca whales. Bruun Idun was the product of a strong collaboration with the Muckleshoot Tribe. John Halliday, aka Coyote, carved the flute by her feet, and created the beautiful adornments such as her necklace and bracelet.

In the night there was a storm  
There at the beach where she was born  
And Idun felt a feeling wrong and so she  
walked there in the dawn  
And in a flute, the magic horn, a tune so  
passionate and strong  
She played for them an orca song  
To ask them where they all have gone



Photo credit Thomas Dambo

***"Working shoulder to shoulder with Thomas and his team was a real trade of our respective cultures. I feel we are kindred spirits and have formed life-long friends. I'm proud to be part of the Dambo tribe now, too!"***

***-John Halliday (aka Coyote), Muckleshoot tribe***

## Trolls & Nordic Culture

Trolls, originating from Norse mythology and folklore, draw their magic from nature. As fierce protectors of the natural world, they are not always friends to humans, who tend to disrupt the trolls' natural environment. The trolls visiting the Pacific Northwest have a desire to help 'the little people' - us humans. Spending time exploring, troll hunting and being in nature are core elements of the NW Trolls experience.

# Jakob Two Trees

Jakob Two Trees resides in the foothills of the northwest alps in Issaquah, Washington. In partnership with the Snoqualmie tribe, Jakob was adorned with cedar accessories. His birdhouse necklace connects him to the birds in the forest.



Ginger de los Angeles from the Snoqualmie Tribe braided Jakob's cedar bark hair tie, bracelets and a necklace



*Photo credit Erik Davidson*

A thousand circle suns, not old  
Time will stretch and loop and fold  
So stop, breathe in, breathe out, behold  
The trees have sung a story told

## Trolls & Coast Salish Tribes

Scan Design Foundation and Thomas Dambo consulted with tribal groups and Nordic representatives to best integrate the shared values of protecting the PNW's natural resources. For some sites, such as Issaquah and West Seattle, more involved collaboration was nurtured and factored into the creative process. Throughout the project artist exchange opportunities were facilitated to Dambo's workshop in Roskilde, Denmark.

# Frankie Feetsplinter

The troll with the attitude, Frankie, is smashing a bench in front of the National Nordic Museum in the Ballard neighborhood of Seattle, Washington. Frankie, the youngest and most irresponsible of all the trolls, is one of the few trolls who has come out of the forest into an urban environment.



Frankie don't like slimy fish,  
cause fishes are all so dumb  
And Frankie don't like little humans,  
humans are so dumb  
Frankie don't even like trolls,  
cause trolls are also dumb  
But Frankie's mouth's the only one that  
says the word of dumb

*Photo credit Erik Davidson*

## The Build Process

The large head, hands and feet of each troll were built by the Dambo team in Denmark and then shipped via container to the Northwest. The six trolls were built over the span of 7 weeks during the Summer of 2023. Each troll took 7-9 days to build, and the Dambo team and volunteers worked on two trolls simultaneously.

# Oscar the Bird King

Oscar the Bird King sits on his majestic handbuilt throne on Vashon Island, Washington. He is the largest of the Northwest Trolls. Oscar points his finger at us humans, urging us to take responsibility for the health of our planet.



He swam here from the island where  
his mother once had birthed him  
He walked across the mountains 'til  
his giant feet start hurting  
He spoke a crow, a little girl,  
the Orcas heard him sing  
He used to be a little troll,  
Now Oscar is the Bird King!

*Photo credit Allison Tourville*

## Materials

It takes between 140-200 used pallets to make each troll. Other materials include 600-800ft of structural lumber and 10,000 screws! Thomas also uses tree branches, shells, stones and other organic material in the design of each of his unique sculptures. For each sculpture the used pallets, recycled and reclaimed lumber, construction scrap wood, and decorative materials were donated from local businesses and individuals.

# Tusind Tak! Thank you!

*NW Trolls: Way of the Bird King* is presented by  
Scan Design Foundation  
in partnership with the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation

*Site partners include*  
Bainbridge Island Metro Park and Recreation District  
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City of Issaquah  
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Visit Issaquah  
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