



Questions, Answers & a few fun facts

“We are excited to showcase the creative ingenuity of Dambo’s work to Northwest audiences in this ambitious exhibition. His message of turning trash into treasure and building community through art will resonate with all who experience his mystical troll sculptures.”

Fidelma McGinn
President, Scan Design Foundation





What is the Way of the Bird King?



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The Northwest Troll project, themed “Way of the Bird King,” includes six sites in the Pacific Northwest where Danish environmental artist, Thomas Dambo, installed large-scale whimsical Trolls, each contributing to an underlying environmental story. This project is the latest in Dambo’s global Troll installations that now exceed 100 sites across Europe, Asia, Australia and the US. The PNW site locations include Portland, Bainbridge Island, Issaquah, West Seattle, Vashon Island and Ballard.

Who is Thomas Dambo?

Thomas Dambo is a Danish artist, environmental art activist and one of the world's leading recycling artists. His prolific work spans over 20 years and can be found in Europe, Asia, Australia and the United States. He has been creating giant trolls, made from recycled/reclaimed materials for the past ten years, and to date, he has built over 120. By using the stories and mythologies of his childhood, trolls became a natural vehicle to marry his large-scale artwork with his attention to the natural world.

"I want to take trash and turn it into something that will open people's eyes and minds. We shouldn't throw the world out - then we'll have a world with no mountains, no woods."

Thomas Dambo, Artist

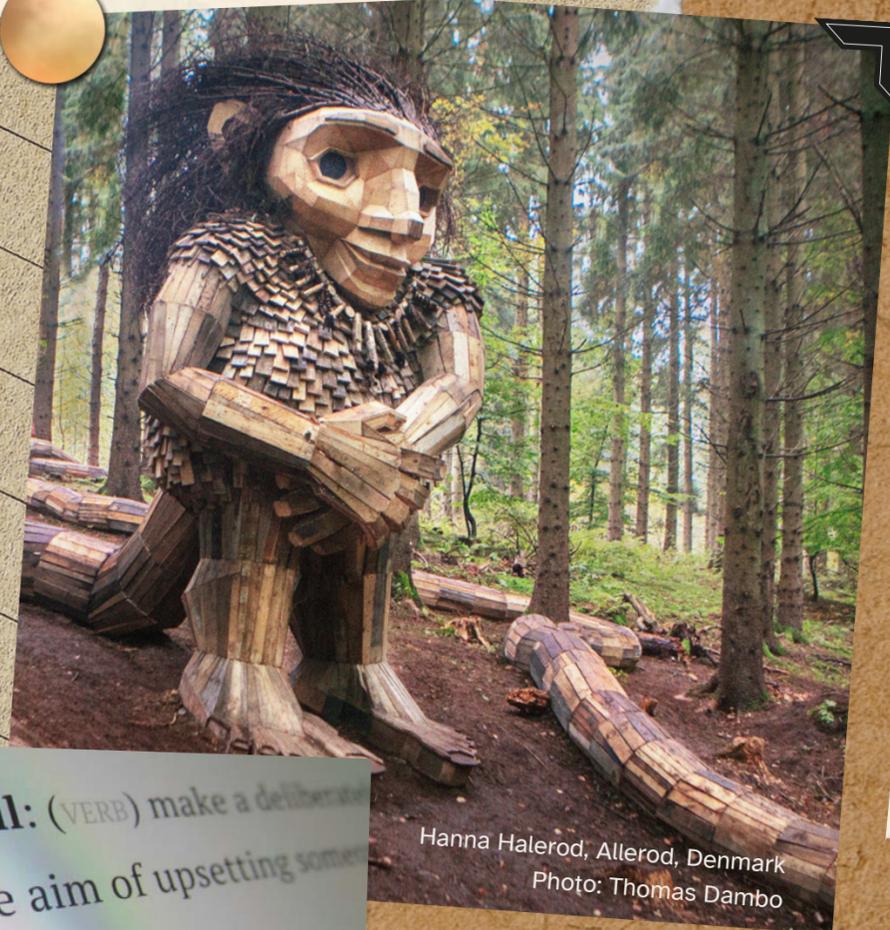


“Trolls run deep in Nordic folklore and imagination. Since olden times, they have lived deep in the forests and mountains of the Nordic countries. The trolls were feared because they owned nature. The natural resources were theirs and they were rich... Their question for us, the little people, is: What have you done to the planet”

Dr. Lotta Gavel Adams
Professor Emerita, Scandinavian Studies,
University of Washington



Mikil Boom, Belgim,
Photo: Thomas Dambo



Hanna Halerod, Allerod, Denmark
Photo: Thomas Dambo

*“If you venture out into their
(the troll’s) wilderness, you
most likely return
with something valuable—
gold, experience.”*

Jonas Wellendorf
Associate Professor
of Old Norse, University of
California Berkeley

Why Trolls?

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.

By using trolls as his medium, Thomas Dambo is able to unite his environmental messaging with his heritage and the stories from his childhood.

Explore further: [Trolls: Legendary Creatures of Myth and Folklore - Oddity Hive](#)

troll: (VERB) make a deliberate
the aim of upsetting someone

How were the trolls built?

When were the trolls built?

In the summer of 2023, over a span of 7 weeks, the Dambo crew and a small army of volunteers completed the 6 installations.

How long did it take?

A troll takes roughly 7-9 days to build. The trolls were built concurrently during the 7 week timeframe, with two trolls being worked on simultaneously.

What are they made from?

A combination of structural wood, used pallets, and found decorations including shells, tree branches, stones and other organic material.

Where were the trolls built?

The head, hands and feet of each troll were built by the Dambo team in his Denmark studio. Those parts were shipped via container to the US. Starting with these elements, the Dambo team and local volunteers constructed the body and bulk of the structures in situ. There is a good bit of improvisation and artistic "eye" that goes into the creation, siting, position, attitude and character of each troll.

How much material is used?

Each troll is comprised from 140-200 used pallets, roughly 600-800ft of structural lumber, 10,000 screws, assorted decorative elements.

How were the materials sourced?

Each site sourced its own materials, but almost all of the recycled and reclaimed culled lumber, construction scrap wood, used pallets and decorative materials were donated from local businesses and individuals.



Are they publicly accessible?

Yes! All the trolls are located within publicly accessible locations. Each installation is tastefully integrated into public settings that already have trails. Most of the trolls are in ADA accessible locations and do not require a long hike. Please see site visitor guides for specific information.



more details...

Can we touch the trolls?

Yes, the intention is that visitors can interact and engage with the Trolls. Visitors are free to hug and/or take pictures with the trolls.

Can we climb them?

No climbing is allowed. Signage requests visitors refrain from climbing the sculptures to avoid injury and to ensure that the trolls can be enjoyed for many years to come.

How will the trolls be maintained?

Each site will oversee ongoing maintenance. In the unlikely event that more substantive work is needed, Thomas may be reengaged. SDF is working to create a comprehensive maintenance guide to assist site partners and share resources to optimize maintenance and ongoing upkeep.

How long will the trolls survive?

By virtue of the recycled materials, and the PNW climate, the trolls are intended to be temporary installations. Each site partner has committed to hosting the sculptures for a minimum of three years with the hope and goal of maintaining the trolls for as long as possible. Many of the sites are equipped to repair and maintain the trolls for many years to come. Each site requests that in order to keep the trolls healthy, visitors treat them and their surroundings with care.

Talk about the Volunteers

Volunteers were vital to this project, here are some fun facts about them:

- volunteers disassembled over 1000 pallets.
- volunteers ranged in age from 10-80
- one family had three generations working together on a site



How many volunteers were involved and what did they do?

Each site had approximately 50-60 volunteers to help build each troll. The project also needed fund raisers, meal & lodging donors, media assistance, and other skills to bring the trolls to life. In total, each site required approximately 100 volunteers, and 600-700 volunteers overall.

This is a community project at its finest!



Cultural Connections

Thomas consulted with tribal groups and Nordic representatives to best integrate the shared values of protecting the PNW's natural resources. For some sites, more involved collaboration was nurtured and factored into the creative process.



Bruun Idun: Muckleshoot artist, Coyote, carved a flute with killer whales, symbolizing the call for whales back to the Salish Sea. He also wrapped her horn in traditional materials made of cedar and abalone shells.



Jakob Two Trees: Ginger de los Angeles from the Snoqualmie Tribe gifted braided cedar bark hair tie, bracelets and a necklace.



Ole Bolle: Nordia House built a traditional Fogelbo (meaning "bird's nest") house to lure Ole Bolle.



"This project celebrates the human experience of art and the connection ... and our shared value of environmental stewardship. It uses the power of storytelling to engage people of all ages to learn about the environment and the steps we can all take to better preserve and protect it."

Cat Martin

*Arts & Communities Program Director,
Paul G. Allen Family Foundation*

"Dambo brings messages to the world about taking care of our planet and not being wasteful ... Our tribe embraces the same values, so it was a natural collaboration"

Coyote

*Artist, Muckleshoot Duwamish
Tribal member*

What is the best way to visit?

There are many ways to visit the trolls. Walking, biking, and public transportation are all in keeping with our sustainability goals. Understandably, many people will use motor vehicles to travel to each site. Visitors are highly encouraged to utilize non-motorized transportation whenever possible.

Visitor Info

Site specific visitor info including parking, trail details, ADA, restrooms, ferry, adventure lab links, etc. can be found on the website.

www.nwtrolls.org

Can we visit all six trolls in one day?

Probably not. While visitors/explorers can chart their own course, Portland is about a 3 hour drive from Seattle, Vashon Island is only accessible by ferry. Bainbridge Island is best accessible by ferry, although it is possible to visit via the Agate Pass bridge. It is best to plan 2-3 days to visit them all.

Stay awhile: We highly encourage you to visit and linger in the parks, museums, cultural centers where the trolls are living - there is much to see and enjoy.



Ferry info?

Please visit Washington State Ferries | WSDOT. or download either WSDOT or the FerryFriend app.

Make it an adventure

AdventureLab(R) has teamed up with Scan Design Foundation and the individual site partners to create fun, interactive and location-based troll treasure hunts.

Each destination presents a unique set of discoveries to be made on the way to finding the troll.

Troll
Hunt

Tell us more about Geocaching!

AdventureLab(R) has teamed up with Scan Design Foundation and the individual site partners to create fun, interactive and location-based troll treasure hunts.

Geocaching Adventure Lab

**Get Out
and
Explore!**

**Get In
on the
Fun!**

*Very fun!! Lots of
great history!!!*

*Our First Troll. What
a cutie. TFTTroll*

*We had never been to this
park, but had to follow the
song call of the troll. Thank
you for a fun adventure!*

*5 stars! Thanks for
creating this
adventure lab!*

*This was such a cool walk. We
combined it with visiting the
troll. We got to watch the ferry,
walk along the shoreline, play
with dogs, and get rained on.*

*I really enjoy these troll-
centric adventures!*

Super danke

Grandiose, super



Who is overseeing this cool project?



Advancing Danish-American Relations

Project Management

The project is being managed by Scan Design Foundation (SDF) which advances Danish-American relations by supporting cultural exchanges focused on environmental sustainability. The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation provided major funding and supported communications outreach. Media partners include the Embassy of Denmark, Visit Seattle, Washington State Tourism and the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation. The six site partners include both private and public entities with a full list of participating sponsors at nwtrolls.org

Funding

The initial seed funding for the project was generously donated by SDF in partnership with the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation. Additional funding for each site-specific troll was generously donated by passionate individuals, local businesses and, on occasion, some municipal public funds. 501(c)3 fiscal sponsorship is provided by the National Foundation for Danish America



Site Links

There are currently six trolls in Western Washington and Oregon. The locations represent a range of non-profit organizations, public agencies and local park districts. To learn more about each site, and site specific details about the individual trolls, links to each location are below.

- Portland, OR (Ole Bolle). [Nordic Northwest](#)
- Ballard, WA (Frankie Feetsplinters). [National Nordic Museum](#)
- West Seattle, WA (Bruun Idun). [Lincoln Park](#)
- Issaquah, WA (Jakob Two Trees). [Issaquah's Troll](#)
- Bainbridge Island, WA (Pia the Peacekeeper). [Sakai Park](#)
- Vashon Island, WA (Oscar the Bird King). [Vashon Troll](#)





What is with the bird houses?

Early in Thomas' career, he used birdhouses as part of his signature art installations. Each of the site bird houses, made from pallet scraps, indicate a troll is nearby. Volunteers were eager participants to make the hundreds of birdhouses that adorn and portend the trolls.

Other

What are the educational components?

Teachers of all age groups are using the Trolls for educational purposes. Various programs throughout the three years of this exhibition will facilitate learning opportunities for folks of all ages.

Has there been any impact on local businesses?

Local businesses have seen an increase in their visitors. Visitors from all over the country and world are coming to see the trolls, and that influx of new faces is a welcome and happy consequence of the entire installation. People have reported making new friendships and sharing troll hunting stories as a huge joy and a large part of the fun.

Additional Questions/Comments?

If you have additional questions or comments, we'd love to hear from you.

nwtrolls@gmail.com

Happy Troll Hunting!