



Donovan Dahmen

Donovan Dahmen Cover Artwork: *Giinew - The Protector*

As an Anishinaabe from Grand Portage, MN, Donovan Dahmen received artistic inspiration from his traditional Ojibwe culture and the natural world that surrounds him. From a child who admired watching his father drawing landscapes to attending college at the

Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, NM, art has been his passion and influential in his life's direction.

For many years Dahmen worked with mixed media with pen and ink and colored pencils, until more recently when he began focusing on the fine art of wood design. Specifically, he cuts shapes and glues smaller pieces of wood together to create a larger composition or portrait – similar to the craftsmanship and discipline of intarsia or in using different color modalities to create the attributes of a mosaic.

“The wood speaks to me in a language that has no words; it allows me to express myself and connect me to my culture,” said Dahmen. “I love the energy of wood and how it feels in my hands. Each species of wood has its own characteristics,

color, and grain qualities. Once I get the concept and composition on paper that I'm looking for, the wood comes alive. It tells me where it wants to be in the composition and how it wants to be presented.” He continued, “I like to think of my art and the projects I work on in terms of an analogy – that all individual pieces of wood are like people. Individually, we are all unique. No one person or piece of wood is the same. We are all our own individual pieces of art with our own color, grain and unique thumbprint. However, collectively, we are the same. We can use our individual pieces like puzzles to compliment each other in creating something bigger than ourselves.”

Dahmen's projects take many months or in some cases over a year to complete. He uses some electrical tools to cut the individual basic shape, but mostly relies on a variety of hand files to get the desired and personal affect he is looking for. Each piece is then hand sanded with various degrees of coarseness and finally finished with many coats of polyurethane or beeswax.

The installation works of *Manidoo-giizhikens* (little cedar spirit tree) and *Giinew- The Protector* (golden eagle) can be viewed in his home community at the Grand Portage Lodge & Casino. ♣

Donovan Dahmen can be followed on Facebook or email donovandahmen@gmail.com.

Navigating your path

 **American Project Management**
Project Management / Scheduling / Project Controls / Earned Value Management / Consulting

 NATIONAL INDIAN GAMING ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATE MEMBER

11700 W. Charleston Blvd, Suite 170-315, Las Vegas, Nevada 89135, Phone: 702.220.4562 Fax:702.220.9784 www.apmlasvegas.com