

Cover Artist: Dennis Shorty

My Dad and our dog team | Watercolour & black ink drawing on watercolour paper

"My dad and my mom were famous for dog mushing; this was our vehicle for the winter."



I Denesini gushazi esguzua lete

My art is a reflection of how I feel

Dennis Shorty, whose Kaska name Gah Zahse means Rabbit's Nephew, was born under a tree at Pelly Lakes on the headwaters of the Pelly River near Ross River, Yukon. His earliest memories are watching his grandfather and father make snowshoes and arrowheads while his grandmother and mother sewed moccasins and mittens. Family members were his constant teachers and from them he absorbed the deep love of his homeland, together with the spiritual connections to it that inspire all of his art today.

Today Dennis works in his studio at his Ross River home, warmed by a cozy wood stove and sunshine streaming through the windows. He travels to his cabin at Beautiful Lake to gather the bone, antler, wood, and other materials for his art. He uses natural pigments from cranberries, coffee, tea, and other sources to create accent colours for some projects. Dennis's art encompasses many media including large scale, intricately carved antler sculptures; mixed media pieces using wood, antler, fur and metals; jewellery of copper, silver and gold and semi-precious stones; and carved wooden masks with fur or hair decorative work.

Every piece evolves from a story or idea he is considering in his mind. He acknowledges the ongoing presence and connection with his ancestors as influences in all his work: "I talk to them – listen to them and take that spirit out to the world through my art."

In addition to his visual arts, he also performs under the name Dena Zagi, offering original songs accompanied by traditional Kaska drums and guitar, along with his wife Jennifer Fröhling. Dennis and Jenny also offer healing through music, art and language workshops.

Dennis says: "Carving is energy. Drumming is energy. Through my art and my songs I want to make people feel that energy."

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Contact

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