



**DENNIS SHORTY**



**Dennis Shorty** is of Mountain Slavey and Kaska heritage and has lived most of his life in Ross River, Yukon (YT).

By watching his grandfather and father carve traditional tools and toys, Dennis became interested in art. For him, making art is a spiritual path and a way to communicate with his ancestors. Carving natural materials, including moose and deer antler, muskox and sheep horn, and wood, he achieves his refined and detailed imagery using a variety of hand and power tools.

Acknowledging their importance to the survival of First Nations people, Dennis carves animals to honour them. When depicting humans, he will include their animal totem, relating the work to the idea of transformation and legend. He utilizes natural pigment derived from cranberries, coffee or tea for accent colours and to achieve the traditional Kaska colours such as red, which is considered sacred, and blue which represents the sky.

The Yukon Art Centre Public Art Gallery, Whitehorse, YT, has included Dennis' work in two exhibitions, and in 2008, he participated in the First Nation Art Festival, Whitehorse, YT, where he received the People's Choice Award. In 2009, Dennis received an award from the Yukon Department of Tourism and Culture, to participate in the Great Northern Arts Festival, Inuvik, NT.

His work is included in the Kaska Dena Council, Ross River, YT; and the Yukon Permanent Art Collection, Whitehorse, YT; and was purchased for presentation to the Premier of British Columbia and the Governor General of Canada.