

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(SOLVANG, CA, October 15, 2024)

Media Contact:

Joni Kelly, Joni Kelly Communications
jonikellycomm@gmail.com • 805.886.1869

Giant Troll by Renowned International ‘Recycling Artist’ Thomas Dambo to be Installed at California Nature Art Museum in Solvang

New exhibit is first permanent piece in California and the only one housed indoors

The Museum requests community support in the form of sponsorship and in-kind material donations

The **California Nature Art Museum** (formerly the *Wildling Museum*) is pleased to announce its most ambitious project to date which is commissioning **Thomas Dambo**, a world-renowned Danish artist who specializes in creating large, whimsical trolls made from recycled materials, to build his first permanent troll in California. Dambo who is celebrated for his imaginative and colossal sculptures, breathes new life into discarded resources, showcasing the boundless potential hidden within the world’s trash cans. The recycling artist chose to install his first permanent troll in Solvang, the Danish Capital of America, at the California Nature Art Museum. With the community’s help, this troll, whose name, back-story, and design will be kept a mystery until “she” (*the only clue that has been revealed to date*) will be constructed and installed in the latter half of January 2025.



Dambo has built well over 100 of these large trolls, each with its own unique story and name, in 16 countries, with 52 here in the United States, none of which are in California. This troll will be unique, as it will be the only one to be housed indoors. With the contract now finalized with the artist, the Museum is launching an effort to complete the fundraising to build this troll which will quickly become a major visitor attraction in the Santa Ynez Valley and beyond. The Museum has raised \$120,000 to date and needs \$180,000 to complete the campaign. They are also looking for in-kind donations to support the project, such as wooden pallets and used wine barrels. Given the large size of the troll, dozens of pallets and barrels will be required. Dambo always involves the local community during installation, so the Museum will soon announce volunteer opportunities to be part of that effort.

“We are so excited and proud to be working with Thomas Dambo and to soon be hosting his first permanent troll in California as well as his only indoor troll. She will welcome visitors to Solvang and the Valley from our tower 24/7 and connect us to the unique Danish culture and heritage here in Solvang,” said Stacey Otte-Demangate, Executive Director for California Nature Art Museum. “Most importantly she will be made out of recycled pallets and wine barrels, which speaks to our mission, and our love for the environment and desire to operate as a green business,” she concluded.



Dambo has been commissioned to create a large, wooden, sustainably built troll to be installed in the Museum's highly visible tower, which faces a well-traveled entry point to Solvang. The troll will welcome and attract both tourists and locals to the Museum and the Valley and provide special opportunities to engage the community. Dambo's method of community involvement and his artistic ethics are a perfect match for the Museum's mission: *to inspire a love of nature through art*. His trolls reflect an ancient tradition in Scandinavian culture that remains relevant today.

"My mission is 'Waste No More'. Our world is drowning in trash while we are running out of natural resources," said self-described recycling artist Thomas Dambo. "I spend my life showing the world that beautiful things can be made from trash, and I give new life to discarded materials by turning them into large-scale artworks. These projects come to life using hundreds of tons of recycled materials, working in and with local communities – who are the co-creators of the art that I make – because the mission I follow needs the involvement of everybody. My aim is to build 1,000 trolls using recycled materials all over the world," Dambo concludes.

Dambo crafts a unique story for each troll about the importance of exploring and protecting nature. Several months ago, Dambo was featured on *CBS Sunday Morning* and his work was recently profiled in the *Washington Post* and *USA Today*. Dambo has an active social media presence and shares stories of his unique trolls from all over the world. Dambo has a large following who enjoy traveling to find his trolls, most of which live outdoors in nature, as an enticement to get people outside. He even has a "[troll map](#)" to assist searchers in locating his pieces.



This very special installation would not be possible without the generosity of our early sponsors including **Schiele Family Foundation, Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, Visit the Santa Ynez Valley, Allan Hancock College, Margaret Weiss and Sterling Collett, and Belinda and Robert Hart**. More information about the troll project can be found at <https://www.calnatureartmuseum.org/news/thomas-dambo-at-calnam> which also includes a link for online donations. Donations of \$500 and above will be listed on a sponsor board in the museum lobby, near the entrance to the Michele Kuelbs Tower where the troll will soon live.

The media is invited to attend a member's-only artist reception and first unveiling of Thomas Dambo's new Troll installation on a date and time to be announced, by advance arrangement. The event will feature the first view of this large-scale piece, a meet-and-greet with the Copenhagen, Denmark-based artist, delicious drinks and light charcuterie.



To schedule interviews with Executive Director of California Nature Art Museum, Stacey Otte-Demangate or recycling artist, Thomas Dambo, or to request broadcast-quality B-roll and high-res images, please contact Joni Kelly, Communications Specialist at 805-886-1869 or jonikellycomm@gmail.com. For additional information about Dambo's works and creative process see his [full press kit](#) and [artist video](#).

California Nature Art Museum is open weekdays 11am – 4 pm (except Tuesday and Wednesday) and weekends 10am – 5pm and is supported by the generosity of its sponsors and members. For more information, please visit www.calnatureartmuseum.org.

#####

ABOUT CALIFORNIA NATURE ART MUSEUM

California Nature Art Museum uses art to educate and inspire people to better understand and care for our dwindling natural and wilderness areas. **California Nature Art Museum** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a small staff of 2 full-time and 4 part-time employees, augmented by 35 dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers. The **mission** of **California Nature Art Museum** is to inspire our community and visitors to enjoy, value, and conserve wildlife and natural areas through art, and provide artistic, educational, and field experiences of nature for that purpose. Our **vision** is to be recognized as an exceptional and innovative leader in inspiring our communities and visitors to value wilderness and other natural areas through the lenses of a diversity of artists. The **California Nature Art Museum** strives to collaborate with others for the betterment of our communities.

THOMAS DAMBO

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Thomas Dambo (Odense, Denmark; 1979) is the world's leading recycling artist. Since 2014, he has produced artwork with discarded materials in more than 20 countries on five continents, including the USA, China, Brazil, Australia, GB, Germany, France, South Korea, Chile, and Puerto Rico.



Among Thomas Dambo's most famous works are his giant Trolls, made out of recycled materials. More than 138 of them have been built from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, from forests to deserts. He has also built more than 7,000 birdhouses all over the world. Some of his most acclaimed works include the Happy Wall (Beijing, Las Vegas, Hollywood, Rio De Janeiro, Santiago de Chile, Edmonton, Copenhagen, Roskilde) and the Future Forest (Chapultepec Park, Mexico City). Click here for a [complete list of his works](#).

His passion for recycling and upcycling started when Thomas Dambo's parents taught him and his brother the value of protecting nature and using recycled materials to make their own toys, costumes, tree houses, and items. In 2010, he graduated in Interactive Design from Kolding Design School. In his life, he has shown a multifaceted interest in art and the music world: he has performed as a rapper, human beatbox, graffiti- and street artist. In 2011, he decided to quit his job in Danish television to fully embrace a full-time career in art. Today, Thomas Dambo lives on his farm in the Danish countryside, where he has his studio. He also offers talks about his activist art practice and workshops to teach people how to reuse and upcycle.

Thomas Dambo's creative vision is to match together the beauty and the trash, together with the sense of adventure coming from the research needed to find his works on-site – most of which are hidden in natural settings. He works in and with local communities, who are involved in several stages of his projects, such as finding the discarded materials and maintaining the works.

Learn more about Thomas Dambo and his work by visiting his website and join his mission by following him on [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#).