Artist: BOB, Dempsey (b. 1948, Telegraph Creek, British Columbia, Tahltan and Tlingit First Nations.

Dempsey Bob is a senior artist and Order of Canada Recipient (2013) for his significant dedication to Talhaltan-Tlingit cultural preservation.

Dempsey Bob (born 1948) is a Northwest Coast carver from British Columbia, Canada, who is of Tahltan and Tlingit First Nations descent. He was born in the Tahltan village of Telegraph Creek on the Stikine River in northwestern B.C., and is of the Wolf clan. He began carving in 1969, studying with the Haida carver Freda Diesing in Prince Rupert, B.C. In 1972-1974 he studied at the Gitanmaax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art ('Ksan) at Hazelton, B.C., in Gitksan territory and then taught there for many years. In 2006, Bob helped found the Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Arts, to carry on Diesing’s legacy and guide the next generation of First Nations artists. His apprentices have included the Tahltan carver Dale Campbell and Tlingit carver Keith Wolfe Smarch. He was recently appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada (2013) for his work as a carver and teaching the next generation of carvers.

His work is in many important museum and gallery collections including the Canadian Museum of Civilization; the Royal British Columbia Museum; the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology; the Columbia Museum of Ethnology; The Aboriginal and Northern Affairs art collection, Ottawa; the Smithsonian Institution; National Museum of Ethnology in Japan; and the Hamburgisches Museum fur Volkerskunde in Hamburg, Germany. Major commissions include the Vancouver Airport Authority, the Museum of Northern B.C., Prince Rupert; and the Owase Community Cultural Centre, Japan.

Dempsey’s preferred medium is wood although he uses many different materials in his work. He carves bowls, masks, and totem poles and other works, mostly in the Tlingit style. The first time his work was shown at the NGC was in 1992. He was included in the landmark exhibition Land Spirit Power, the first survey exhibition of First Nations contemporary art to be held at the NGC. Since then he has had many solo and group exhibitions in Canada and around the world and his works have been widely collected in major public and private collections.

Please cite in the following manner:

Greg Hill, Acquisition Proposal for Dempsey Bob’s Eagles North and Wolf Warrior Helmet, accession #46710 and #46711, Curatorial File, National Gallery of Canada.