

# DOLAN GEIMAN: THE STORY



**DOLAN & ALI MARIE GEIMAN**

Born in 1977 in Hermitage, Virginia, Dolan Geiman grew up among the rolling pastures, Blue Ridge Mountains, and pastoral expanses of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. Raised by a motivated farmer-turned-schoolteacher (Dad) and an entrepreneurial artist (Mom), Dolan spent his formative years exploring his native surroundings, rummaging through abandoned houses, collecting artifacts, and accompanying his parents on their agrarian and artistic endeavors.

After high school, Dolan attended James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. In 2001, he graduated with a BFA concentrating in printmaking, sculpture, and biology. While attending JMU, Dolan apprenticed at a local fabrication shop and served as a part-time art instructor for public schools in the Valley. After graduation, he spent a summer as an Interpretive Naturalist for the USDA Forest Service, guiding families through the flora and fauna of the George Washington National Forest. Dolan was quickly drawn back to the art world, however, and soon moved to Charlottesville where he began producing his own blend of folk-meets-pop art prints, paintings, and collages.

After spending 25 years in the Valley, Dolan set off for Chicago in 2002, intending to raise his artistic profile to a national level. Equipped with just his car, a handful of artwork, a few supplies, and a fishing pole, he landed in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood. (In true entrepreneurial style, he bartered the art he brought in exchange for a living space and moved into a home that was pending demolition.) Just a few weeks later, thanks to an introduction by then Chicago Artists' Coalition executive director Olga Stefan, Dolan met his present day wife and business partner, Ali Marie Geiman, and the two began making plans for future art ventures.

In the spring of 2003, Dolan and Ali Marie moved to Pilsen and founded a grassroots gallery and studio called Hockshop. Hockshop hosted regular open-studio shows, solo and group exhibitions, trunk shows and sidewalk sales. During this time, Dolan also created two of his

signature interactive pieces, the Art Machine and the Give & Take Box. It was the creation of these pieces and the overall desire to connect to a larger audience that led the duo to participate in expositions such as the Stray Show and Art Boat, both offshoots of Art Chicago.

After spending a summer and fall back in Virginia to reconnect with the countryside, restock on materials, and, most important, fine-tune a business plan, Dolan and Ali Marie returned to Chicago and launched the [dolangeiman.com](http://dolangeiman.com) website in March 2005. Since the launch, the couple has worked diligently to turn Dolan's prolific art production and marketing savvy into a full-time profession. Keeping a busy art-fair schedule, selling work through home decor and handmade retailers, and constantly maintaining and growing an online presence, the couple found their rhythm and demand for Dolan's work grew steadily.

In early 2008, Dolan and Ali Marie moved their studio and office into the Chicago Sustainable Manufacturing Center, the first sustainably renovated structure in Chicago's Bridgeport neighborhood. While most mornings, afternoons, and evenings are spent working, Dolan and Ali Marie take a break from the city whenever possible, pack some sweet tea and corn on the cob, and head straight to the nearest river to restock their inspiration tanks.

