

# Peruko Ccopacatty's Art Graces Kennedy Plaza

His attraction is magnetic. His occupation attire consists of a hat, a pair of glasses and thick gloves. His tool is the blowtorch. The man? Peruko Ccopacatty. With a solid metal-man appeal, he is a well-known international sculptor from Peru. Driven by his creativity, spirit and Aymara culture, Providence is extremely fortunate to have Ccopacatty's work on display at Kennedy Plaza. The space serves not only as a transportation hub in the heart of the city, but a public space that is transforming into a "true civic heart," according to Mayor Jorge Elorza's vision.

From his early beginnings on Lake Titicaca, cradling the past of Peruvian ancient civilization, Ccopacatty's roots run deeply entwined with themes of tight-knit family and hard work that often came with struggles, but also tremendous joy. His spirit has been transformed into many mediums of art, but eventually morphed into metal and three-dimensional forms. The past is very present in his works, and the connection he holds closest is the one to his past.



Photo: Carrie Decker

Ccopacatty's four sculptures in Kennedy Plaza are of a man, an angel and two llamas - parent and child. With the llamas opposite each other, they form a strong presence and seem to have admiration for each other. Llamas are related to the camel family: They are intelligent, easy to train and originally migrated to South America from the North. They are widely used as pack animals because they are well-suited to harsh environments, and they played a big part in the Andean civilization, an important component of the Aymara culture.

The man's stance is widely grounded, bold and proud. The Peruvian male performs intensive physical labor and takes responsibility as the protector of his entire family. He is unmistakable and very powerful as the city wraps itself around his force.

Angels, by historic definition, are messengers of God. Each culture's definition differs slightly - Ccopacatty's winged angel is the protector and overseer of the three other forms as it guides them through their journey in life.

The journey these sculptures took to reach Kennedy Plaza stretches back almost 20 years. Ccopacatty, an artistic hero in Peru, was honored with a key to the city and an intended installation in Kennedy Plaza 20 years ago. There was an official Ccopacatty day in the city (another accompanied the recent installation), and sculptures were developed showing intergenerational relationships in a family. The installation didn't end up happening then, and was only resurrected recently by the efforts of local arts organization **The Avenue Concept**, which has been creating installation-quality sites and foundations around the city,



Photo: Carrie Decker

and through the persistence of the artist himself, who spoke at the unveiling about never relinquishing your dreams.

This is the first installation to grace the new Kennedy Plaza foundations. Most of the work from the original plan was sold in the intervening years - only the paternal figure remains, but the other parts were added to create a new dynamic that's still about generations (it's taken a generation to be realized), including the parent and child llamas and protective angel. "We try to connect the dots on as many levels as possible. The work is chosen for its many aspects - the stories, the history, the materials," explains **Yarrow Thorne** of The Avenue Concept, who notes that the angel is constructed from car bumpers, an appropriate material to use in PVD's transportation hub. "We want to reinforce the positive energy around the space in the heart of the city," Thorne explains.

As part of the installation, the giant puppets of **Big Nazo** can be found in the plaza a few times a week, giving interested visitors guidance on the back story of the installation.

It's a wonderful experience to find yourself surrounded by these forms in Kennedy Plaza because it's easy to sense the energetic and powerful presence of the artist. Visit these statues to view figures of history, ethnicity and present-day art at its best.

*Ccopacatty's exhibition is on display at Kennedy Plaza through May 2018. He will also have a legacy show featuring 40 years of his world renowned art work — including 2D and 3D pieces. at a show from May 23 - June 15 at PVD's Skye Gallery, 381 Broadway.*