The Avenue Concept

World-Class Public Art Comes to Providence

By Beth Adamo

Providence has a striking new landmark downtown, thanks to a partnership between The Avenue Concept, CYNTHIA-REEVES Gallery, and RISD Museum. The landmark is a sculpture entitled "Lotus" by internationally renowned Korean artist JaeHyo Lee, which now occupies the corner of Exchange Terrace and Dorrance Street.

"This is one of RISD Museum's first public art partnerships that showcases museum-quality work out in the public," says Yarrow Thorne, founder and artistic director of The Avenue Concept, a nonprofit organization that promotes public art in Providence. Based in New York City, CYNTHIA-REEVES Gallery represents the artist JaeHyo Lee and is committed to artwork that provokes a discourse, something The Avenue Concept works to stimulate as well.

The monumental work was installed last fall as part of INFLUX, an explosion of public art encounters by The Avenue Concept. Cited for its meticulous craftsmanship, "Lotus" is a conical pillar comprised of Korean big cone pine logs that are burned, shaped, and hand carved, stretching up 20 feet on a steel armature. Lee's works emphasize the essential nature of his materials and their inherently complex texture. The artist writes: "I certainly do not have the power to create 'beauty.' I just hope to reveal the beauty in what is usually seen but not noticed. If one looks closely, one sees how beautiful simple elements can be."

"Lotus" originally made its debut in New York City's popular Union Square Park in the spring of 2013, a collaboration with New York City Parks, the Union Square Association, and CYNTHIA-REEVES, before it traveled to Sarasota, Florida for the annual Season of Sculpture Exhibition in 2014. The work will remain on display in Providence—enhancing our city and stimulating conversations—through the summer of 2016.

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Photographs by Cheryl Adams Johnson Photography, courtesy of The Avenue Concept.

To learn more about The Avenue Concept, visit theavenueconcept.com.

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