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Salt Lake airport's newest art feature moves Utah's mountains closer to its terminal

By Carter Williams, KSL.com | Posted - Nov. 8, 2023 at 3:03 p.m.



Artist Gordon Huether speaks during a ceremony Wednesday to unveil his latest sculpture, "The Peaks," outside of Salt Lake City International Airport. (Salt Lake City International Airport)

107



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These tend to symbolize the community the airport serves, says Bill Wyatt, executive director of the Salt Lake City Department of Airports. Salt Lake City International Airport has lacked this feature, especially since the new airport terminal opened in 2020.

"For Salt Lake City, that was a green highway sign out here that said, 'Salt Lake City Airport that way,'" he said.

That is no longer the case. Salt Lake City leaders and airport officials gathered Wednesday to formally dedicate "The Peaks" — a 75-ton art feature paying homage to Utah's mountains — on the road leading people from the airport into Salt Lake City. The massive feature has five peaks made from weathered Corten steel reaching as high as 90 feet tall, according to artist Gordon Huether.

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The peaks symbolize the state's five Native American tribes and the five elements of the natural world: air, earth, fire, space and water, Huether said. He also placed a glass orb near the top of the tallest peak that points to Utah's location on a globe. Giant block letters spelling out "SLC" are at the front of the sculpture and there's also a light feature that illuminates the peaks at night, too.

It joins Hoberman Arch, a piece from the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics, [installed there in August](#) to help welcome people to the city, as well.

we are known."

The massive project cost about \$6 million to complete and was covered with the airport's redevelopment budget and not the city's general fund, according to the mayor.



A rendering of Gordon Huether's "The Peaks" outside of Salt Lake City International Airport lit up at night. (Photo: Gordon Huether + Partners 2023)

It's also Huether's latest piece for the airport. The artist, who has crafted public art installations all over the world, has had his hand in many of the airport's art features, highlighting Utah's natural wonders, in most cases.

His massive installation inside the airport's main terminal is a large-scale replica of the slot canyon landscapes found throughout Utah. He's also behind the [river-themed tunnel set to open next year](#), as well as [more slot canyon-themed artwork](#) for the airport's forthcoming North Concourse. Even Hoberman Arch, which he helped restore, was partly built to reflect Utah's natural features.

Huether views his latest installation as an "enormous hello and welcome" to Utah, building on this theme.

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Carter Williams is an award-winning reporter for KSL.com. He covers Salt Lake City news, as well as statewide transportation issues, outdoors, environment and weather. Carter has worked in Utah news for over a decade and is a graduate of Southern Utah University.

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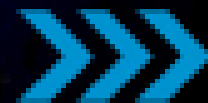
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