



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FORTOPIA, A LIFE-SIZE FORT EXHIBITION, BREAKS GROUND AT POWELL GARDENS

Explorers of all ages are invited to tap into the nostalgia of childhood fort building

KINGSVILLE, Missouri – On May 26, Fortopia opens to the public at Powell Gardens, Kansas City’s Botanical Garden. This playful outdoor exhibition, comprised of eight awe-inspiring forts, encourages outdoor discovery and adventure. The eight fort designs were hand selected by a jury comprised of educators, architects, horticulturists, and fabricators. Designed to inspire an appreciation of the natural landscape, Powell Gardens is excited for visitors to experience Fortopia’s beauty through the variety of creative perspectives represented in the chosen forts. This year’s fort designers include preschool children, artists, landscape designers, architects, and more. Fortopia runs May 26 – October 16.

“Of all the exhibitions I have had the pleasure of supporting, Fortopia is the most playful,” said Cambria Floyd, Exhibitions Manager at Powell Gardens. “The eight designers behind these forts have creatively captured how forts not only bring about the nostalgia of play but foster epic exploration. What they have dreamed up in their designs and A to Z Theatrical Supply and Service accomplished in the fabrication, is the transformation of a grassy lawn into a launch pad for imagination. From pirate ships to labyrinths to portals, visitors of all ages can play, climb, and enjoy the garden as a place of discovery.”

Learn More About the 2022 Forts:

- **Petal Post**
Designed by Jennings + Santa-Rita Architects
Petal Post is built upon the idea that even the simplest structures can evoke the universal memory of childhood fort building using common household items.

- **Portal**
Designed by Brandon Kirmer
As one travels through Portal, they will experience the transformation of different materials, starting with a “blanket” fort and moving into a log fort, as if venturing off to a different land.

- **Cover/Uncover**
Designed by James Walls & Kristopher Dabner of The Greensman
Drawing inspiration from the large Corten steel sculptures of artist, Richard Serra, the winding paths and high walls of Cover/Uncover encourages explorers to appreciate the landscape in new

exciting ways.

- **Skully the Pirate Ship**

Designed by enthusiastic preschool children of UMKC Berkley's Zoo Room

Skully the Pirate Ship transforms an open grassy lawn into a sea to be traversed by a ship using found and reclaimed materials, and a little imagination. "We need a huge rock that we can find to make the monster's head," said one student. "And paint it a little bit blue and a little bit red so you know it is mad."

- **The Lucky Woodland Find: Morel Fort**

Designed by UMKC's Early Childhood Education Team

Inspired by feedback from over 100 early childhood education professionals, The Lucky Woodland Find: Morel Fort evokes nostalgia for childhoods spent exploring nature and playing in forts.

- **Nature's Colors**

Designed by Patricia Bordallo Dibildox

Using their textile artist skills, the designer uses inspiration from colors found in plants and how they can transform over time to naturally dye the fabric from which Nature's Colors takes shape.

- **GEOCAMO HIDEAWAY**

Designed by Carter Floyd

GEOCAMO HIDEAWAY nods playfully toward occasionally sardonic ideas regarding minimalism, nature, and camouflage in contemporary art as well as within the general zeitgeist.

- **Reflection Fort**

Designed by Gould Evans

Reflection Fort serves as a catalyst for the imagination of children, and to inspire the rekindling of this ability in adults, ensuring participation of each visitor regardless of physical ability.

With Fortopia's 124 day run, visitors are encouraged to visit several times to experience the forts in a different light throughout the changing seasons. While hours and ticket pricing may vary (Festival of Butterflies runs July 21 – August 7), please check the website at powellgardens.org/fortopia for the most up-to-date information. Happy exploring!

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About Powell Gardens

As Kansas City's Botanical Garden, Powell Gardens plays a vital role in the community as a space for release, rejuvenation, and the celebration of the fleeting nature of nature itself. Visitors enjoy eight themed display gardens, a three-mile nature trail, seasonal festivals, rotating exhibitions, exceptional architecture, and dining options featuring ingredients grown in our Heartland Harvest Garden, one of the nation's premier edible landscapes. Established in 1988, Powell Gardens is a non-profit, public garden, maintaining 970 acres of lush, rolling hills and windswept meadows, with more than 175 acres and a large collection of plants open to the public for education, exploration, and recreation. Many of the plants in the Gardens are regionally native, and all highlight the changing seasons and Midwest spirit of place.