

Fortopia

A Playful Outdoor Exhibition at Powell Gardens
May 25-October 15, 2023

Powell Gardens: Kansas City's Botanical Garden seeks fort proposals from creative individuals, groups, firms and students to design forts as part of its recurring temporary outdoor exhibition, Fortopia. This year, chosen forts will encourage play and interaction, inspiring an appreciation of our natural environment, encourage discovery through active engagement and be innovative in their approach to design, use of sustainable materials and construction.

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 more.

Established in 1988, Powell Gardens is a 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. Visiting the Gardens provides the public with the opportunity to step away from the rules and routines of every day to learn, explore, reset, and feel free.

The Gardens feature the largest collection of public buildings designed by renowned architects E. Fay Jones, a protégé of Frank Lloyd Wright, and his partner Maurice Jennings including the Visitor Center, Meadow Pavilion, Gate House, and Marjorie Powell Allen Chapel. More recent architectural additions to the Gardens including the Missouri Barn and Miller Hammond Chapel Study as well as front entrance are also designed by the same firm, now called Jennings + Santa-Rita Architects, LLC. Each of the buildings serve as exceptional settings for life's milestone moments and are available for wedding, memorial, corporate, and private rentals.

As a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization, Powell Gardens is supported by foundations, corporations, individuals, and members, in addition to income generated from admission, gift shop sales, and rentals. The Gardens has over 4,000 member households and serves over 100,000 visitors annually.

Exhibition Description

Fortopia at Powell Gardens is a playful, family-friendly exhibit that features a selection of community-designed forts set within the gardens' scenic landscape. Each fort in this exhibit explores the nostalgia of childhood, time spent exploring the outdoors, and fosters a sense of imagination. Fort designs are selected through a competitive process, selected by a blind jury and chosen forts are curated within a shaded, treed lawn near the Fountain Garden, a favorite destination for visitors of all ages.

Winning designs will:

- Consider Powell Gardens' landscape
- Actively promote playful interaction

- Provoke the imagination of exhibit visitors of all ages
- Promote sustainability through the creative use of materials
- Educate visitors on nature and the surrounding environment
- Be structurally sound, safe and resilient to weather and other high impact activities
- Consider mobility, accessibility and how visitors move through a fort safely
- If climbable, meet playground safety standards

Exhibition Objectives:

- Create emotional souvenirs through the interaction with forts created with natural materials and inspired by childhood memories
- Inspire children and their families to explore their environment
- Highlight environmentally responsible designs and materials and how they relate to the landscape
- Create nostalgia for childhood time spent exploring and building forts
- Engage people's sense of adventure and imagination by seeing forts as a special place to celebrate nature
- Demonstrate how the built environment can complement the landscape
- Create and promote partnerships with architects, students, artists, designers and cultural organizations
- Increase awareness and understanding of public art, architecture and design
- Provide a showcase for local, regional and national designers, groups and firms

Stipend and Recognition

Selected designers will receive a \$1,000 stipend for exhibiting their work for the duration of the show. A half (50%) of the stipend is awarded upon signing the Exhibitor agreement and the remaining half (50%) will be awarded after the opening weekend. Before any payments are processed, all designers must be set up as vendors with Powell Gardens.

Fort designers will be listed in printed exhibition materials, on exhibition signage and in other appropriate media. All designers will be provided with 20 free passes to Powell Gardens that can be used anytime during 2023.

Selection Process and Criteria

Fortopia is coordinated by Powell Gardens. To ensure the highest quality exhibition, designs will be chosen by a blind panel of jurors that includes artists, educators, architects, landscape architects, builders, and horticulturalists.

Judges will rate each fort based on the overall design, connection to the exhibit prompt, consideration of durable and sustainable materials, impact on the environment, safety, and durability. Chosen fort designers will work closely with Powell Gardens throughout the design, build and fabrication of their respective fort.

Please consider the following criteria for the design:

- Incorporation of natural materials and botanical themes
- Creativity, imagination, and sustainability
- Durability of structure for weather and heavy use by children and adults

- Ability to be climbed safely up to but no higher than 6 feet by children and adults
- Creative use of materials that have minimal impact on the environment
- Connection to themes of play and environmental discovery
- Engaging for all ages
- Range of accessibility for all guests (ADA accessibility desired, please note that forts will be on grass)
- Sensitivity to public safety for all guests

The following materials **are not** allowed when designing:

- Artificial turf
- Imported soil
- Live plants
- Materials that corrode in the elements

Each submitted design requires the following:

- A title for the fort
- A narrative explanation of the design concept (maximum of 1000 words)
- Inspiration behind the design (maximum of 500 words)
- Design with measurements in the form of digital rendering, schematic, architectural drawing or other images with a plan showing scale (3D models and other graphic representations are welcome but not required)
- Identification of desired fort environment (open air lawn, nestled near trees, etc.)
consideration of whether the design is flexible for other locations (see map)

Submission Process:

To submit a fort proposal, all required information, materials, references and designs must be submitted to exhibitions@powellgardens.org or by mail to Powell Gardens ATTN: Fortopia, 1609 NW US Hwy 50, Kingsville, MO 64061 by **Monday, November 28, 2022**. Details of the information required for the proposal are found in the Proposal Checklist of this RFP.

Powell Gardens reserves the right to use any and all images, renderings and models for the promotion of the exhibition in print or electronic formats.

Fort Exhibit Guidelines and Responsibilities

The health and integrity of the plants in our living collections are vital to our mission and institution. It is necessary to protect and maintain our collections by adhering to the following guidelines for the construction, installation and maintenance of all forts.

- Powell Gardens reserves the right to photograph and reproduce images of the forts for marketing and educational materials. Private event and photography permit clients may also photograph the forts as stated in their contract.
- Powell Gardens will promote the exhibition with events, website promotions, social media posts, media releases, advertising, and calendar listings.
- Exhibitors are welcome to photograph or video their fort. Drone use must be authorized by Powell Gardens.

- Exhibitors are highly encouraged to attend the Preview Party on Wednesday, May 24th and to participate in interviews or other promotional activities during the installation process and exhibition.
- Exhibitors are also highly encouraged to participate in programs around Fortopia such as designer talks, opening weekend, exhibit programs and events that are planned. Exhibitors will be contacted by Powell Gardens' staff for more details.

Upon notification of selection, Exhibitors will be required to sign an Exhibitor Agreement. Up to three entries per Exhibitor are accepted.

Exhibition Schedule:

Request for Proposals Announced:	Thursday, September 1, 2022
Information Sessions:	Tuesday, September 29, 2022 -1 pm (Zoom) Saturday, October 8, 2022 -10 am (On-Site)
Proposals Due:	Monday, November 28, 2022
Proposal Acceptance Notification:	Friday, December 16, 2022
Fort Design Review with Fabricators:	Scheduled after acceptance
VIP Opening Reception and Member Preview:	Wednesday, May 24, 2023
Exhibition Opens to the Public:	Thursday, May 25, 2023
Exhibition Closes:	Sunday, October 15, 2023

Contact Information

Entries may be submitted electronically via email or by mailing hard copies of materials.

Via Email, send to exhibitions@powellgardens.org

Via Regular Mail, send to:

Powell Gardens
ATTN: Fortopia
1609 NW US Hwy 50
Kingsville, MO 64061

Additional questions can be sent to exhibitions@powellgardens.org

Fortopia Site Map:

Note this map is not indicative of final fort locations but rather a visual guide of the type of sites available. Proposals, if site-specificity is relevant to the design, should identify which locations are ideal for their fort but Powell Gardens' Horticulture and Exhibition teams reserve the right to make a final decision on where all forts are located within the exhibit in support of the health of the Gardens.



Fortopia

Exhibition Proposal Checklist

The following information is required for all Fortopia proposals. The information should be submitted to exhibitions@powellgardens.org or Powell Gardens, 1609 NW US Hwy 50, Kingsville, MO 64061 by Monday, November 8th, 2021.

Contact Information:

- Designer/Group Name (as would appear on marketing materials)
- Address
- Primary Contact Person
- Phone
- Email

Fort Details:

- Fort title (as would appear on marketing materials)
- A narrative explanation of the design concept (maximum of 1000 words)
- Inspiration behind the design (maximum of 500 words)
- Fort design with measurements
 - Accepted in the form of digital renderings, schematics, architectural drawings or other images that outline scale (3D models and other graphic representations are welcome but not required)
- Identification of desired fort environment (open air lawn, near trees, etc.) consideration of whether the design is flexible for other locations (see map)

Any questions, please contact:

Powell Gardens
ATTN: Fortopia
1609 NW US Hwy 50
Kingsville, MO 64061
816.697.2600
Exhibitions@powellgardens.org