

Welcome to Wonderland

This project cultivates and celebrates imagination by creating an eccentric biome which is composed of gigantic and multi-scaled flora inspired by Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. While Silicon Valley and San Jose is known for its technological advancements, "Welcome to Wonderland" celebrates the idea that it has been through imagination and wonder that has driven Silicon Valley's innovative spirit.

As in the novel, Alice says "Being so many different size in a day is very confusing", this project gives chaos to people inside the flora as if their body size changes.

Alice's journey is filled with surreal encounters, and those help for cognitive development. Alison Gopnik at the University of California Berkeley has found that children who play pretend and practice "believing the impossible" tend to develop more advanced cognition. Travis Proulx at Tilburg University in the Netherlands has investigated the influence of surreal and absurd literature on cognitive ability. The research says that violation of your expectation in a strange and fantastical circumstance refines the flexibility and creativity of your brain, and you can learn new ideas quicker.

The multi-scaled flora, abstracted in white plaster finish, relate to each other by touching, leaning and embedding, to produce various spatial qualities. These qualities and the circulation through the piece separates the project from pure sculpture to architecture. In addition, the flora is built using the ash that is the by-product of the constant incineration process to encourage San Francisco's Zero Waste scheme.

At large, the flowers are packed in a huge container (700' Length X 100' Width X 200' Height) and protruded edges are sliced off. It looks like a gravel wall creating peculiar perforation to see through real nature. The minimality of a glass floor (20' width) and ramps (5' width) held up with the flora enhances the project's two-sided nature, complexity and linearity, where people become a bee or butterfly. They walk in a zigzag from one end to another due to the flora's irregular arrangement even though the whole looks a rectangle volume from a distance.

At night, the flora is framed in the city by lighting fixtures embedded in the ground and each sculpture to map colors using electricity generated with flexible solar panels attached to the sculptures. Also the wonderland is populated with super-scaled hologram creatures to evoke its unusuality as a global iconic landmark.