

Holden Forests and Gardens
Kirtland, Ohio



At Holden Arboretum, seeing the forest for the trees took on new meaning when two new experiential structures were built. How would we take advantage of the views to tell compelling stories about the forest?

The Murch Canopy Walk is a walkway built 65' above the forest floor. Here, visitors have a squirrel's eye view of the forest and its wildlife, such as woodpeckers, songbirds, and even snakes. The Kalberer Emergent Tower invites visitors to climb 202 steps. Swaying high above the forest canopy, visitors are rewarded with views that sweep cross treetops to Lake Erie.

In 2015, The Acorn Group began designing the interpretive media. For the canopy walk, we created six stations, each showcasing one species, such as the black rat snake and red bat. We paired interpretive panels with striking imagery, audio recordings, and tactile experiences.



For the tower we proposed media that celebrate both the climb and the changes visitors experience—an ever-increasing pulse, shortness of breath, and unsteady feet due to the swaying. We went further to relate human physiology to a tree's condition.

We also created new media to engage visitors as they embark on the climb, including a water-squirting model of stomata on a leaf's surface.

