

UNDER THE COUNTER CULTURE

MAP ROOM

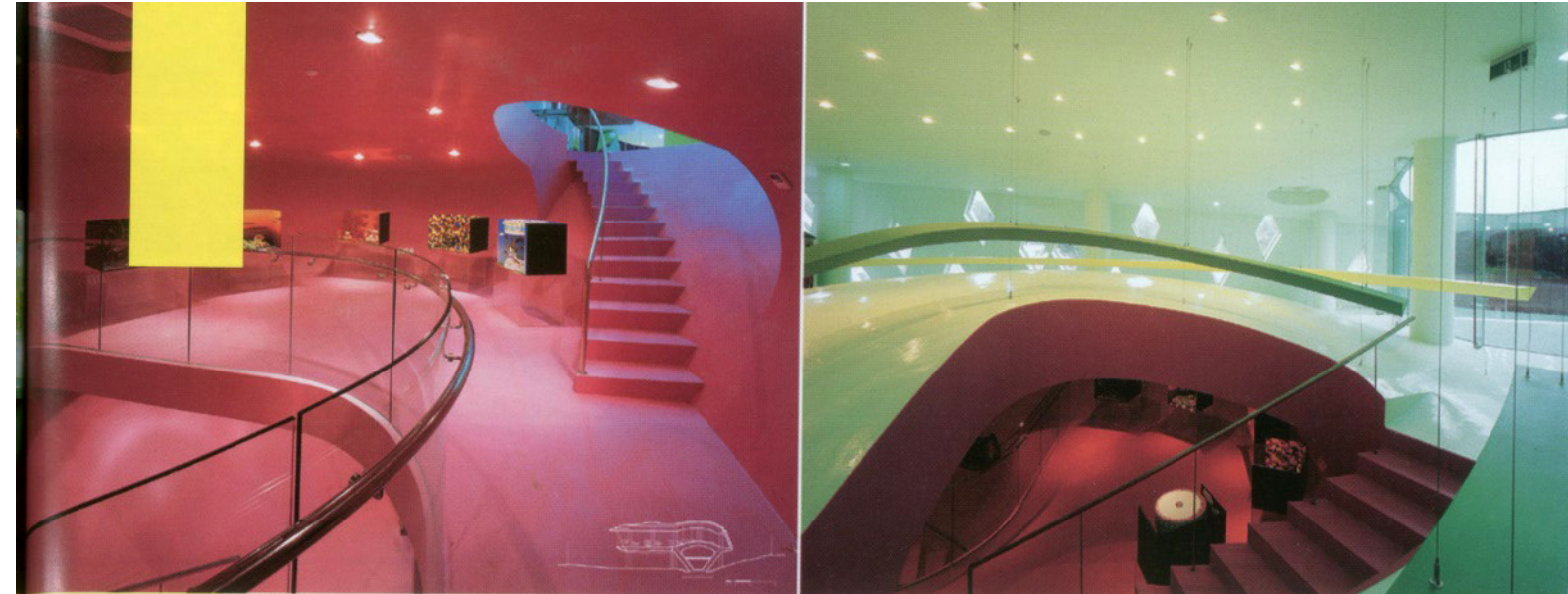
TIM BISKUP JEFF SOTO SCOTT MUSGROVE
FERIC MISERY CULT OF BLYTHE FURILLA
CYCLECIDE CAT CHOW DALHI THEME PARK

VOL. 2



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I LIKE DALKI THEME PARK

I want to live at Dalki! Or the "I Like Dalki" theme park, if you will. Will you? Okay, I can't live there but if I could, I'd wake up every morning and stroll out on to the rooftop garden of really, really big fruit to fetch the morning paper. I'd read that paper on one of the many giant yellow cheese-wedge-shaped cushions scattered throughout the highly polished concave floor (perfectly suited for Extreme Sock Gliding), situated smack in the middle of the ground level shopping arena.

The "I Like Dalki" structure is the product of close collaboration between architects James Slade of Slade Architecture and Minsuk Cho of Mass Studies, teaming with Moon Cho of Ga A Architects and client Hokyun Chu, President of Ssamzie Corporation and avid patron of the arts.

The theme is the cartoon character Dalki and the world in which she lives. (Perhaps Hello Kitty's distant

cousin?) Residing in a fruit patch with all her fruity friends she is sort of the Strawberry Shortcake of Korea as well as branding icon of Ssamzei Corp., popping up on T-shirts, purses, luggage and a variety of other popular merchandise.

Nestled in the heart of Heyri Art Valley, just an hour north of Seoul, is the 27,000 square foot UFO-shaped wonderland shopping fantasia.

"I think that the space is very successful in terms of what we set out to achieve," Slade says of the work. "The curving and varied ceiling and floor surfaces do not give the user many references for scale and location (no Cartesian geometries to help place and scale things in perspective). These surfaces also create differences within the open field that encourage different types of use without defining spaces or boundaries in a hard way. It is more like an occupied landscape than a traditional mix of rooms."

The structure certainly blurs the lines between fantasy and reality and takes a good hearty stab at bridging the divide between play and commerce.

The anamorphic spaces that merge the indoors with outdoors, and the multi-level floors traversed by tunnels, slides and spiral staircases create a TRON-meets-Dr. Seuss type videogame experience. Commenting on the finished project, Slade says, "Many adults feel uneasy in the space however, kids immediately know how to take it—the same way they would a field or a playground."

This shiny architectural confection makes my toes curl with anticipation as I stand at one of the two entrances near the gigantic figures of Dalki and her pals, poised to greet each visitor with enormous cartoon smiles.

By Annie Owens
Photos by Yong Kwan Kim

