

the City beneath the City

City Beneath the City was originally organized by the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art in conjunction with the ZER01 art and technology biennial thematic, “Seeking Silicon Valley.”

This exhibition by artist Rene Yung, presented in partnership with Chinese Historical and Cultural Project, History San José, and the Stanford Archaeology Center, presents artifacts excavated from the site of the Market Street Chinatown in downtown San Jose.

Rene Yung’s sensitive design connects the daily lives of the people of the Market Street Chinatown to the present day. She remarks: “Through this installation I want to bring these buried objects to light, by making palpable the fragile thread through time that links the day-to-day lives of the early Chinese settlers in San Jose, and this moment in time in Silicon Valley.”

To bring this artwork to Stanford University, Rene Yung redesigned City Beneath the City into an exhibition suitable for a public passageway. This new iteration of City Beneath the City transforms the everyday spaces of archaeological research into unexpected places for reflection.

Without a geographic center, Silicon Valley is more of an idea than a physical place. However, as a western territory, this region has promised opportunity throughout its history, whether in gold, agriculture, or technology. In reflecting on layers of history beneath our feet, we may begin to understand our past, connect it to the present, and imagine the future we would like to see.

