

The Shell

The Shell is a unique public space that has all the ingredients to become an iconic destination for the city of San José that will build civic pride and welcome diverse communities from throughout the world.

The space consists of two components: a convertible roof structure that sits on top of a slope where the park smoothly drops down, creating a cultural gravity field and a place of expectations. By doing this, we also minimize the loss of green area, an important environmental gesture for the delicate environment within the Los Gatos Creek/Guadalupe River area. This will also apply to the usage of a sensitive lighting that is projected on the roof structure.

The roof is made of two pairs of rotating sections that can be overlapped, which means that the roof can be folded and positioned in many different ways.

The roof has integrated white solar panels on the outside and a matte chrome layer on the inside that will give a subtle reflection of the events that will take place on the slope.

The flexibility of the roof caters to a variety of configurations which gives the space under it a diversity of moods and context.

The Shell can be a highly immersive and contemplative space when the roof is a fully extended half-sphere, with only a crescent of light touching the grass. It can just as easily host an intimate outdoor concert when the roof becomes a backdrop, or act as a large parasol for a temporary playground with slides that cover parts of the slope.

The roof celebrates the smooth high-tech end of what the region is pushing for, while the grass slope brings the notion of freedom and joy, which also is something that is highly associated with the area.

To invoke net-zero energy, all power that is needed to rotate the roof is taken from the energy that is harvested from the photovoltaic cells that are integrated in the roof.

There will also be plenty of energy left to power the whole park.

Since the height limitations are quite strict due to the airport, a spherical form gives the structure a strong visual presence both during day and night. Since the roof is able to rotate and form different shapes, it is also possible from a distance to see what kind of event is taking place at the moment.