

Swarm

Rising from the confluence of Guadalupe river is a swarm; a landmark that physically embodies the virtual nature of Silicon Valley. It sheds light on the adaptability of the area from two perspectives - first as a long-term historical evolution from an agricultural area to the short-term technological developments that it witnesses every day as the home of modern technologies.

The landmark consists of 200-foot-tall vertical pillars that connect to an array of origami “birds” through fine cables. These “birds” are creased in a manner that allows them to fold and unfold as a reaction to a flow of data from the city. These origami “birds” are painted yellow on their top face and red on the bottom one, giving the effect of a changing color with the changing positions of the “bird” and the position of the viewer. Seen from afar, the structure is a moving gradient of warm sunset colors. The “birds” are constantly in motion due to the continuous digital activity in the city, always depicting a new image as a collective.

Like the cluster of the cities of San Jose, Palo Alto, Cupertino and others that form the collective identity of Silicon Valley, the swarm is a cluster of individual “birds”, each with its own data inputs, that outlines the fluctuating form of the structure at a macro-scale, adding color and information to the city.

The landmark introduced in Arena Green West is one that has a zero-waste impact on the park; the lightweight structure is designed to fit around the existing landscape and pathways and touches the park only at a few key points. It enhances the experience of the park such that a wanderer becomes a part of the swarm, moving with it as one kinetic body. One is incorporated into a materialized data cloud, experiencing its colors, movement, and shadows from within, fully immersed in its ephemeral nature. At the scale of the individual, the project is a promise and an inspiration that one person can influence a larger system.

The landmark's key location by the river also draws the attention to the area's diverse animal life which should be protected, from the fish in the river to the land animals reaching the birds in the sky.