

## Dark Stars

A collection of massive mysterious technical objects creates an enchanting civic plaza at its feet. Each object comes to rest at its own scale and orientation, more like a giant toy than a monument. Strong silhouettes striated with twinkling lights invite wonder, piquing curiosity rather than appealing to known symbols. Although the forms are very large, they come to rest lightly. The plaza on which they land is shaped by three sets of shadows generated by the objects themselves, and from the lights each contains. In the evenings, the ground is animated by dark sky lighting in the guise of a meadow of multicolored stars, as if they had fallen from the forms above. The effect is both intriguing and playful.

An ensemble of multiples rather than a singular, unified piece, the objects feature amenities including a cafe, theaters, a coffee bar, and restrooms, each activated at different times of the day or evening. In the largest object, dramatic exhibition space celebrating the history of invention and ideas is surrounded by circulation elements that weave up between an inner LED light wall and an outer skin of aluminum louvers to a viewing deck and restaurant destination above. Overlooking the meeting point of two rivers, the civic plaza and park below, and the city of San Jose, visitors are exposed to an energizing and futuristic vision of Silicon Valley's place in the world.

During the day, embedded solar arrays (carefully positioned to avoid glare) turn these alluring objects into power plants. Although they are net-zero objects, their solar technology is not expressed as an added "sustainable" layer but rather fully integrated to become one aspect of these complex forms. Like an iPhone with its sleek exterior and magical inner workings, or like a data server center, filled with multi-colored lights that are only rarely glimpsed by humans, these "dark stars" act as enigmatic icons, inviting discovery and engagement with the unknown.