HERE : ON

Project Statement

The natural environment has long inspired us to transcend beyond the possible. In Silicon Valley, nature has translated into technology - native habitats were converted to vast farmlands, then replaced by the technology campuses that now dominate the built landscape. How could the future technological innovations instead enhance our connection to nature?

HERE:ON aspires for a symbiotic relationship between technology and the natural environment. It embodies this duality through an organic form that offers an experiential journey. The form celebrates the cultural diversity of the surrounding context through its simultaneous embracing and openness.

The experience begins on the Native Level, blending the site with historical habitats: coast live oak, bay laurel, and madrone trees frame a public amphitheater against the backdrop of the Guadalupe River. A smaller pavilion houses learning-making spaces to explore the natural and technological symbiosis. Outputs from these explorations can contribute to the evolution of the project. The journey along a spiral path continues upwards to two platforms that form the Agricultural Level. The lower platform hosts farmer's markets and various gatherings, while the upper one features hydroponic farming systems for a community garden. The path culminates at the Digital Level, a platform of digital gardens, art galleries, and an observation deck. A central core encloses vertical circulation with seasonal plantings. Visitors experience the continuous dialogue between nature and technology through multiple counterpoints and their specific views: the dense native planting below, the SAP Center, the amphitheater and the Guadalupe River, downtown, and the Diablo Range beyond.

In **HERE:ON**, technology supports nature even in construction. The mass timber structure stretches engineering limits, touching the ground lightly as it cantilevers. Timber also helps minimize embodied carbon. The shell is a circuit board patterned system of programmable LEDs that responds to solar conditions and integrates 24-hour lighting. During the day, the shell is a screen. At night, it glows to activate its presence, while its focus inward minimizes wildlife disruption in the riparian habitat. The roof collects wind and solar energy and rainwater via panels and channels within the girders. Recycled water is stored in cisterns in the core to feed the hydroponic systems and other site plantings. Soft and hardscape materials limit water usage and reduce run-off.

HERE:ON builds upon the dichotomies of Silicon Valley in an aspirational experience – an upward, transformative motion, inviting the local and global community to make it their own.