Cloud of Steel

Urban Confluence Silicon Valley and the San Jose Light Tower Corporation introduce this competition to build the next hotspot in San Jose. The competition demands to design a landmark which embraces Silicon Valley. The competition seeks a transformative design complete with zero net energy approach and a physical presence that would be a powerful symbol of Silicon Valley.

This project “Cloud of Steel” is based on the idea of information made visible. The Cloud is a meta-physical entity we use for storage of data. The Cloud is a romanticized idea of storage or information, but in actuality it is a data center somewhere, rather nowhere, in the desert of Nevada.

Similarly, this project physically represents an intricate digital network which is the essence of Silicon Valley. Network mapping is a common term used in software engineering and hence it perfectly fits into the technological ecology of silicon valley. It captures the technology world in a single sculpture. This cube is made of a dense network of stainless steel pipes welded together to hold up against each other. The cube has no straight edges and hence makes it look like a blurb when seen from the freeway. This cube blurs your view of the city from inside and out. This makes you focus on the present, your immediate surroundings. It adds to the cityscape of San Jose as an intriguing object that one must definitely visit, making it memorable.

This dense network sits on the edge of North Autumn Street, directly opposite the SAP Center. The project has entrances on all sides, the density of the network makes it hard to locate. The pathways lead to an elevator and a double helix staircase which makes way to a platform in the middle of the cube. The network has varying densities to make your view shift constantly changing your focus of the city.

The monument is almost a zero net energy structure. The main source of energy consumption is the elevator. By using a zero net energy elevator like the Thyssenkrupp Synergy elevator which produces as much energy as it consumes. It uses a 3.75 kW photovoltaic array that could fit within the elevator footprint. It has a regenerative hard drive, efficient LED cab lighting and a deep sleep controller. When these features are enabled, the elevator uses around 8 kWh/day.