Heartland

Where The Land Lives in Us

Heartland is a solution to create a work of art that provides clean water and energy to Marou Village. We drew inspiration from the concept Vanua an iTaukei word that encompasses land, home, and community. This idea led us to envision an object capable of symbiosis that offers clean water and energy while receiving culture and community in return.

Inspired by the natural resistance of palms to cyclones, we designed a modular structure based on their morphology: lightweight, branched forms crafted from natural and minimal synthetic materials such as bamboo, palm fronds, and steel rods. The module harmonizes with its surroundings, respecting existing trees and the original shape of the terrain.

Each unit harvests rainwater through a concave spiral at its top, channeling it into a soakaway system for storage. The water travels visibly along a rain chain, falling toward a ground-level catchment point. This gesture provides a sense of transparency and reinforces the symbolic and functional presence of water throughout the site. During the dry season, the water is filtered for domestic use using a treatment system based on activated carbon derived from coconut shells. This locally produced material, known for its high adsorption capacity of chlorine, pesticides, heavy metals, and organic compounds, offers a sustainable solution that valorizes abundant organic waste in tropical regions, promoting low-impact, context-specific environmental technologies. Above the module, a palm-weave canopy supports solar panels arranged in patterns reminiscent of traditional regional textiles. The energy generated serves both residential and commercial purposes, including the operation of the new community site.

Moving southwest, residents, students, and visitors will encounter a vibrant clearing where the modules coexist with trees, blending seamlessly into the landscape. The ground is firm yet permeable, reinforced by geometric plastic grids that protect the soil structure. Along the path, the soothing sound of water flowing through percolation ditches fosters a serene, immersive atmosphere.

To ensure a space that is accessible to everyone, including those with accessibility requirements, the design includes wide circulation paths (1.2 m), level surfaces, and adapted features that provide a safe and comfortable experience for all users. The journey begins with an elongated pavilion dedicated to gastronomy and crafts, functioning as a marketplace where both locals and tourists can engage in cultural and commercial exchange. Further along, the pavilion leads to a small natural amphitheater surrounded by native trees and modular structures, serving as a stage for local musical performances. Continuing along the path, a semi-open classroom welcomes students from Yasawa School, who learn about solar energy through direct interaction with the modules and active participation in the construction of new community spaces. Workshops organized by and for the community will enhance technical capacities and support participatory planning processes, fostering empowerment and long-term sustainability.

This proposal creates a cultural space for education, commerce, and socialization, thereby strengthening the identity of Marou Village. The modular system's flexibility allows the community to adapt and reconfigure the space according to their needs: transforming it into a park, a community garden, or a sports court, using the module as a versatile building block.