*Grounded* takes its precedent from Energy Vault’s concrete stacking model. It is relatively low-tech, relying on the basic principles of energy conservation to store electrical energy as gravitational potential energy. The lifting system is attached to a simple generator, using energy created on site to lift the blocks. When their energy is needed, the lift is run in reverse through the generator as the blocks are lowered, turning the stored potential energy into electricity that can then be used to power Burning Man festival or other on-site events.

Although the primary function of *Grounded* is to store the energy harvested on site for when it is needed, it acts as a medium for introspection and creative outlet in its secondary function. As long as the blocks are stacked above ground level, the formation of the blocks does not significantly impact the performance of the battery, meaning that the formation can be creatively determined and arranged by artists as an ever-changing, large scale sculpture. Each block is also tunneled through, allowing the combined form to create a large-scale labyrinth, a space invoking meditation and spirituality. Throughout the labyrinth, openings to the outside highlight the views that are augmented by the relationship between the high tower and the flat playa.

The system does not exist alone; it is dependent on outside sources of energy generation. To keep visitors safe as they explore the labyrinths, *Grounded* would require maintenance of “active” floors, keeping each level barred off until it has been fully laid out and no longer has blocks that will move. Although it can function as a battery without any human input, in order to function as a sculpture, *Grounded* would require an artist to predetermine the sculptural formation of the stacked tower each year.

Centered around a 40m tall crane and using 600, 48 cubic meter blocks (4m x 4m x 4m, with 16 cubic meters hollowed out to walk through) each weighing 99 tons, this battery system has the potential to store up to 6.5 MWh at any given time. The system, however, is flexible for construction at both larger and smaller scales, depending on the determined need for energy storage.

*Grounded* consists of one 40m tall steel crane, and 600 4m3 rammed earth blocks. Although the crane would remain in place year-round, the sculpture created by the blocks would rise and fall over the course of the year. The soil for the rammed earth construction can be sourced from the site, and the blocks can be created on site as well. This allows for minimal imported material, making both construction and demolition easier at the end of the design’s life cycle.

The costs associated with *Grounded* would include the cost of a 100-ton rated crane and its erection, as well as the labor costs of fabricating rammed earth blocks.

If this project is selected to test as a prototype on site, it could be tested at a much smaller scale, using a mobile crane rather than a constructed crane, along with a smaller number of rammed earth blocks, which could potentially be fabricated at a smaller size as well.

Although the project requires the import of a steel crane, the rest of the project consists of blocks using rammed earth construction from on-site soil. This allows for minimal foreign materials to be imported for construction and exported for demolition. The project also chooses the playa as its site, acknowledging the impact it will have on the soil through the constant moving of earth that will prevent growth. The soil of the Hualapai flat is perfectly suited for this purpose, as it is already considered poor soil for growth, and this intervention would have minimal, if any, impact on existing vegetation.