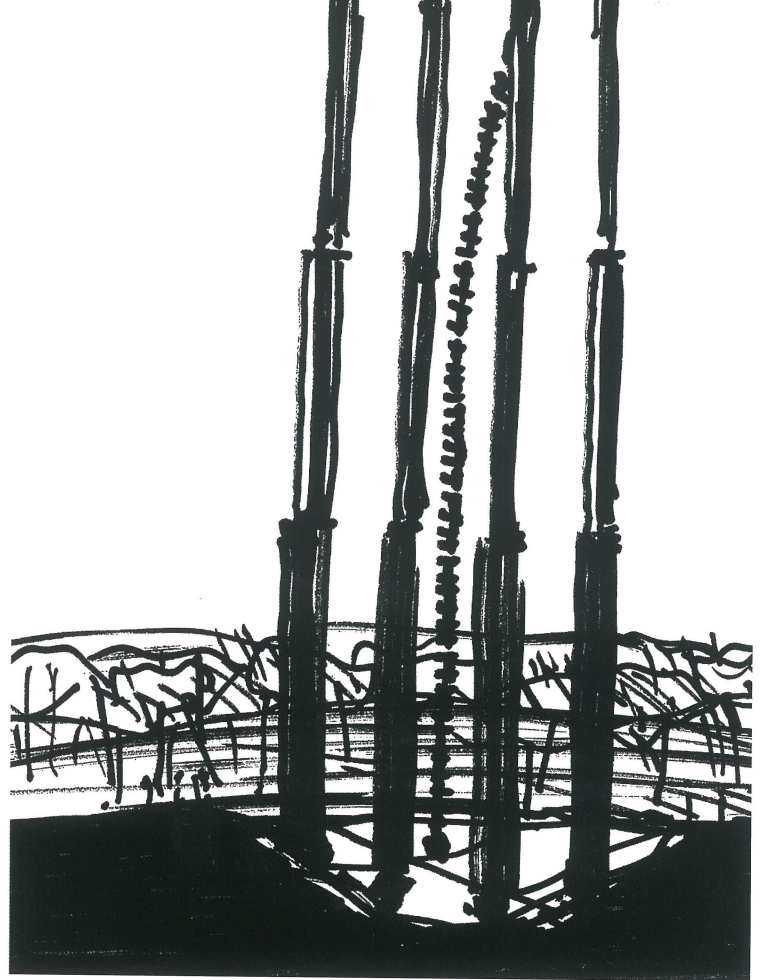


Sketch by Bernard Khoury / DW5  
**Urban Confluence**



For more than 50 years, California's Silicon Valley has enjoyed a worldwide reputation as a region that is a global leader in technology, business innovation and venture capital. In the summer of 2019, an international ideas competition was announced in order to create a recognisable landmark for this famous region on the Arena Green in the Guadalupe River Park northwest of San Jose's city centre. One of the submitted designs came from the Lebanese architect Bernard Khoury.

At the end of the 19th century, the Californian city of San Jose had a landmark: an approximately 72-metre light tower, which made it the first city west of the Rocky Mountains to be illuminated by electric light. It survived the earthquake of 1906, which destroyed many of the surrounding buildings. However, strong winds brought it down in 1915 and, more than a century later, there was still no replacement for the tower. The international ideas competition was intended to change that. The design of Bernard Khoury was limited to a small part of the land and proposed a platform with a scenic design that would move vertically and offer its visitors a vantage point from which they could view the city and the existing park at a height of 61 metres. The platform covers an area of approximately 20 x 20 metres and it features various plants that can also be found in the park. Located in the northeastern part of the site, it optically blends into its surroundings when retracted. It rests on hydraulic pistons that lift it upwards. When it is in the upright position, the reflecting surface of the pistons cannot be recognised as a load-bearing structure. The heavy mass of the viewing platform appears to be floating above the park. Bernard Khoury is convinced that San Jose, as home to the minds behind some of the most significant breakthroughs in the age of dematerialisation, does not want to impress the world with another static, rhetoric mass. Therefore, his proposal was meant to "celebrate the unexpected appearance of a piece of our Earth and the beauty of its frequent absence". The platform is intended to remain in an upwards position for 20 minutes and, following a travelling time of 5 minutes, rest on the ground for 30 minutes. The architects also considered the recovery of energy from the movement of people in and around the park.

