

In this project, we invite people to reconsider their relationship with the world.

Humanity has left its mark both above and below the surface. And throughout history, they had associated the underground with shelter, concealment or storage.

This design transforms the underground spaces into an architectural narrative, respecting the silent layers of nature. We imagine a place that lies underground but rises above the boundaries; an underground architecture that pushes conceptual boundaries.

Ihlara Valley, the project site, is a landscape distinguished by its topographic complexity, ecological sensitivity, and geological diversity. Rather than being simply placed on the terrain, the structure shapes itself with it. Carved into the ground, it visually and physically merges with the landscape. The stone texture and natural cavities of the site become key inputs that determine both the geometry and spatial distribution of the design.

The circular form is one of nature's most balanced geometries. Our project brings this form underground, representing continuity, centering, and inclusivity both structurally and symbolically. The spaces are not conventional rooms but organic hollows—shaped by stones drawn from nature, nourished by natural light, and born from within the earth itself.

The use of natural light lies at the core of the design in this underground space. Openings and light shafts carved into the surface guide daylight into the interior, serving both as a source of illumination and as a tool for crafting atmosphere. These apertures are strategically positioned to allow users to sense the passage of time, shifting shadows, and the subtle movement of light throughout the space.

The excavation of the structure was carried out using precise technologies such as water-jet and laser cutting, rather than traditional blasting methods. This approach preserved the site's natural topography while promoting a sustainable construction practice. The material concrete—often disconnected from natural context—was avoided. Instead, the excavated local stone was repurposed for load-bearing walls, interior surfaces, and flooring, establishing a circular material strategy that reinforces both environmental responsibility and local identity.

In this project, the underground structure is envisioned as a visitor center—an experiential landscape where nature, architecture, and human presence converge. More than a functional space, it offers a multisensory journey.

Exhibition areas unfold through a spatial narrative inspired by the stratified nature of the earth, guiding visitors along an immersive path of exploration.

Workshop and educational spaces redefine production as a means of reconnecting with nature, enabling participatory and hands-on learning experiences.

Café and resting areas, located beneath light-filled openings, offer serene pauses—moments for reflection, stillness, and a visual dialogue with the surface above.

The project aims to demonstrate that underground spaces are not merely technical solutions or spaces of retreat, but can serve as layered, sensory, and publicly accessible environments in harmony with nature. While the structure is physically embedded within the earth, it conceptually transcends boundaries — offering a new ground of encounter between human, nature, and architecture. It proposes a sustainable, boundary-defying, and contemporary model of underground living.