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The 'inner' space of the Norwegian Cabin and the Moulin – from Nature's sheltering to 'safe' architecture

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Abstract

Northern landscapes accommodate several inner worlds in movement. An example of this dramatic transformative power is the "Moulin". An interior surface that can be accessed, 'built' on ice, with an exterior shape on the surface of the landscape. Morphed by the action of the water, air, and atmosphere. When considering what is a shelter, or safe space, both the "Moulin" and the Norwegian cabin can eventually fit a stable Architecture narrative. They both 'blend' with the landscape. And both seem 'primordial' and enhanced by the same topicality. As an architectural object, the cabin also changes over time. Influenced by elements such as temperature, water flows, terrain, wind, and users. It is in constant re-formation, encompassed by an interaction with the surrounding landscape, upon the possibility to cross it. The cabin suggests a certain 're-birth' to happen. The "Moulin" is encompassed by its ephemeral presence. When descending into its 'gut', one chooses that path of 'safety'. Those ice walls shelter human presence in a unique space, that is a representation of place. Out of there, 're-birth' also happens. So, it is interesting to address what "safety" in architecture can be. Why the "Moulin" can deploy an idea about architectural space. Why both can relate to physical structures of architectural representation, and landscape transformation, or metamorphose? Across scales of space. The article aims to frame the topic and answer these questions.

Keywords: Norwegian cabin, Moulin, Architecture, Metamorphosis, Northern landscapes