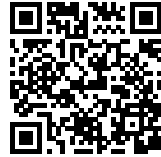




Dorte Mandrup  
Icefjord Centre in Ilulissat

## ICEFJORD CENTER IN ILULISSAT

*Posted on October 21, 2022 by xavigonzalez*



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Icefjord Center in Ilulissat  
<https://urbannext.net/icefjord-center-in-ilulissat/>

In the harsh yet beautiful Arctic landscape surrounded by snow and ice, Dorte Mandrup has designed Ilulissat Icefjord Centre, highlighting the effects of climate change, on the edge of the UNESCO-protected Greenland wilderness.



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Overlooking the Kangia Icefjord on the west coast of Greenland, 250 km north of the Arctic Circle, the building blends effortlessly into the landscape and offers a unique vantage point from which to experience the astonishing Icefjord and understand the dramatic consequences of climate change on this remarkable landscape.

Described by founder and creative director Dorte Mandrup as "a snowy owl's flight through the landscape", the light aerodynamic structure appears to levitate over the magnificent, rugged terrain like an outstretched wing gently touching the bedrock. The shape frames the views towards the fjord while preventing snow build-up and creating a shelter from the snow and freezing winds.

*"The Icefjord Centre offers a refuge in the dramatic landscape and aims to become a natural gathering point from which you can experience the infinite, non-human scale of the Arctic wilderness, the transition between darkness and light, the midnight sun, and the Northern lights dancing across the sky," says Dorte Mandrup.*

Designed as a year-round visitor center and meeting place for local residents, companies,

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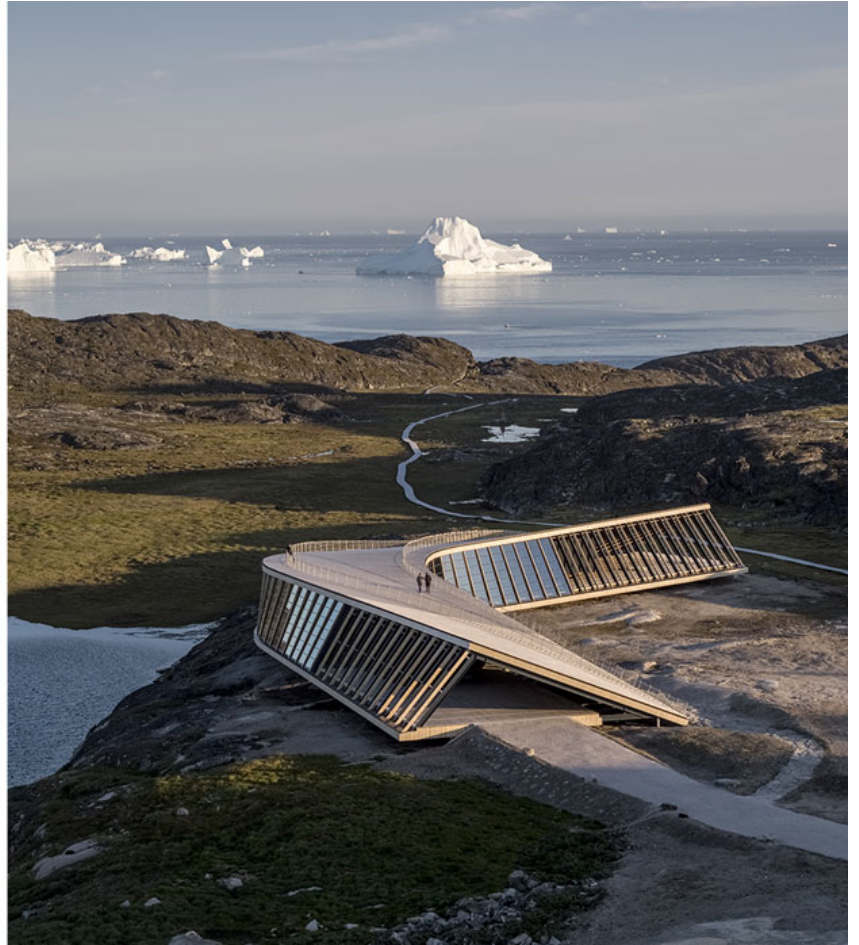
politicians, climate researchers and tourists, the center will house exhibitions, a film theatre, a café and shop as well as research and educational facilities. It tells the story of ice, of humankind and evolution on both a local and global scale and relates to the history of time – sitting lightly on the Greenlandic bedrock, which is the oldest in the world.

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## **Shaped by Extreme Conditions**

The unique arctic surroundings outline the design of the Icefjord Centre. The complex structure of the building consists of 50 skeletal steel frames, creating a boomerang shape – almost resembling the remains of an animal lying on the rocky terrain. This aerodynamic shape prevents the build-up of snow, allowing the wind to swipe snow away from the façade. In the spring, when the snow melts, the melting water follows its original path underneath the building into the Sermermiut Lake in front.

The roof provides a natural extension of the area's hiking routes, leading visitors onto one of the best lookout spots to see the massive icebergs in the fjord and the surrounding landscape. It is created as a public space: a kind of gateway between the town of Ilulissat and the wilderness beyond. It is open to the public and free to access. At each end of the building there are covered spaces, creating shelter and gathering places.



When the first glimmer of light hits the horizon in January after six weeks of darkness, the community gathers in this area to celebrate the sun coming up for 40 minutes before leaving again. The hope is that the roof will become the place for this important gathering.

An important factor is that the building is as sustainable as possible. It is mainly constructed around a steel frame with the absolute minimum use of concrete – usually the main contributor to the carbon footprint – which also means the structure is extremely lightweight. The lightness of the structure makes the impact on the ancient bedrock and its fragile flora and fauna minimal.





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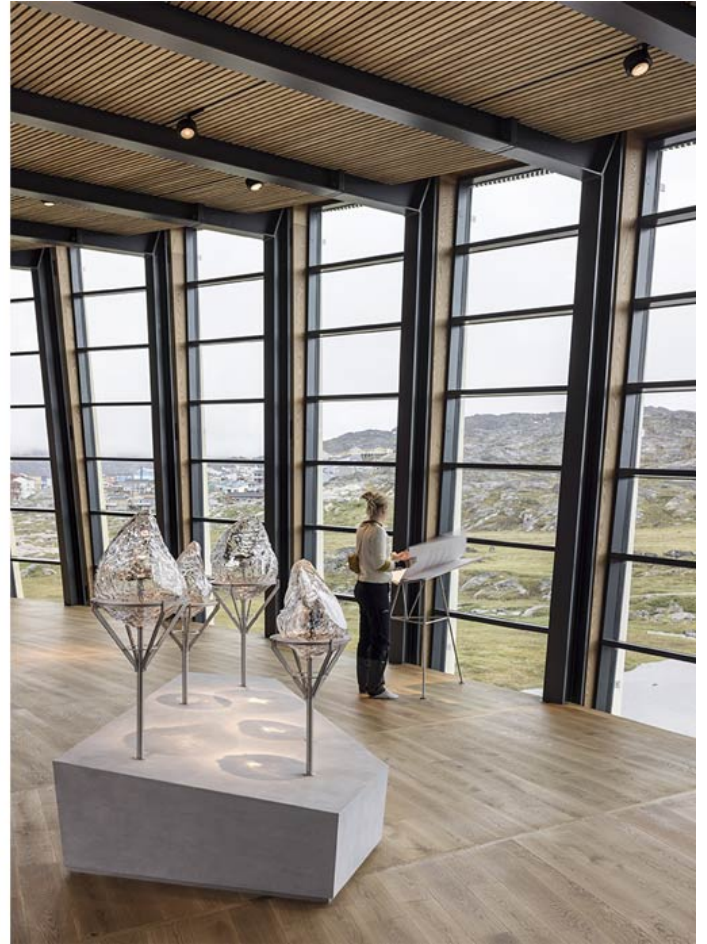
## **The Story of Ice**

Inside the center, visitors can learn more about the nature and culture unfolding before their eyes. They can experience the journey of ice, from the birth of the ice crystal in Greenland's cold cloud layer to when it becomes part of the inland ice and finally moves towards the glacier and breaks off in icebergs. Also, how different Inuit cultures lived under these harsh conditions and how climate change manifests itself in the Arctic landscape.



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The exhibition, designed by JAC Studios, consists of a landscape of ice flakes where archaeological objects and films are exhibited in ice prisms of glass that visitors can move between. The ice prisms are created from ice blocks collected in the Kangia Ice Fjord, 3D scanned, and mouth blown in glass. Central to the exhibition are authentic ice core drillings taken from the ice sheet; they tell the story about our culture and climate from 124,000 years BC to the present.

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