

ULLEM CHAPEL

EXCELLENCE IN CRAFT, MERIT

CRAFT: DANIEL SCHMUCKER
ARCHITECT: ASK STUDIO
LOCATION: MORAVIA, IOWA

It was imagined as a place to consider a place: a framed view of cows on green hills, where they have been for generations on this family-owned farm. The frame's focus is a century tree that is the ranch marker used for wayfinding throughout the hills. The structure is to be spiritual: a chapel without denomination or creed, simply considering a place. The materials are to speak of agrarian frugality, sensible for a temporal insertion on a land that hides the ruins of houses belonging to past stewards in the nearby trees. It is white because that is the color of churches and corn cribs in this plain-spoken part of the Midwest. The march of the horizontal wall slats feels familiar, but in this context with gothic arches, there is a tension. When the horizontal slats begin to form the roof plane, the tension approaches heresy. The structure appears vernacular on the horizon, but upon examination its amalgam of materials and systems can be understood as novel, an understanding only known to those who visit. It is a crib. It is a chapel. It is not to be readily understood. Spirituality is complex. It is a considered place to consider. The site has no road, path, electricity, or water source. Materials were chosen to be readily transported, without requirements for specialized tools or processes: site-mixed concrete, dimension lumber, and five-gallon buckets. The materials are chosen to defy logic and time. The horizontal cribbing boards are a color-body composite material. They serve as a rainscreen over a continuous, fluid-applied membrane. There are no doors or windows. The specious challenge to nature is the genesis of the allegory. The chapel cannot be seen from any road. It is not public. It marks a place. It is found. Not seen.

