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Sky Mission Yokohama AOBA House | Yokohama City, Japan | 2023

Architects: Principal Home Co., Ltd.
Lead Architect: Shin Takamatsu
Client: Private
Photographers: Principal Home Co., Ltd.

A house cannot exist without a physical, abstract, and poetic relationship with the sky. SKY MISSION is about considering how to live with the sky and creating a form of residence that embodies this relationship.

"Summary"

Similar to the traditional Kyo-machiya, the Japanese people have long been accustomed to living with a garden placed inside their homes, surrounding the sky. This house draws inspiration from this time-honored lifestyle, offering a living space that converses with the sky while encircling a courtyard. The entire house becomes a unified space centered around the sky, allowing the sky to extend into every corner of the home. This expansive dialogue with the largest environmental element—the sky—creates a living experience that transcends the scale of a small residence.

"Key Points"

The unified space, with all rooms connected around the central courtyard, creates a rich experience where one is always in the presence of the sky, no matter where they are in the house. The expansive interaction with the sky—the largest element of the environment, including light, wind, and scenery—provides a living experience that transcends the scale of a small house. This house, embraced by the sky and natural light, creates a world that retains its value even when all artificial lighting is turned off.

"Reason/Background behind the design"

Since ancient times, Japanese homes have evolved by responding to the unique climate of the land and supporting the lifestyles of the people who live there, cultivating a distinctive sense of beauty. However, modern residential architecture has become industrialized, with a focus solely on performance evaluations such as airtightness, insulation, and energy efficiency. In response to the excessive pursuit of these factors, which has led to the gradual loss of what is truly important, a collaboration between a housing company that has provided homes and an architect pursuing the essence of living gave birth to this new form of residence, 'SKY MISSION EPISODE 4 IN THE SKY.' When we look up, the sky is always there. 'IN THE SKY' is a home that allows people to experience the joy of living under the sky. By reassessing such essential values and integrating them with the performance and demands required of modern homes, we sought to offer a new kind of house that holds both contemporary and timeless value.

"The process of realizing the design and its outcomes"

A courtyard of the maximum size permitted by law serves as the central focus, with all rooms surrounding it, forming a unified space—a one-room house, in essence. The sky extends into every corner of each room, allowing the residents to always live in harmony with the sky. From the rooms, the sky, reflecting the changing seasons, can be seen, bringing a rich sense of time into the home. The courtyard creates a sense of openness and flow that exceeds the actual living area, fostering a lifestyle filled with spaciousness and vitality in various aspects of daily life. This generous layout is designed with the flexibility to accommodate the feelings of the future residents and the evolving dynamics of the family as they grow. The central tree within the house is named the 'Tree of the Sky,' growing toward the heavens, symbolizing the passage of time spent in the home. The meticulously symmetrical exterior subtly conveys that the house is a sacred space where people are born, grow, and eventually pass away. The black color of the exterior represents the nightscape, while the blue lines symbolize the daytime, evoking the presence of the house throughout all times of day.

"Miscellaneous thoughts"

Architecture inevitably encounters certain limitations throughout its creation process. Sometimes these limitations pertain to volume, and other times to scale. Nevertheless, architects constantly strive to surpass such boundaries, whether through physical means or through abstract approaches, in an effort to create something new. In this sense, 'SKY MISSION' presented the most provocative challenge in the form of the limitation of 'height.'

