

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART OPENS LARGE EXHIBITION OF THE WORK
OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, AMERICAN ARCHITECT

The United States has for many years been the leader of the world in government, industrial methods and technology. Its influence in the fine arts, however, has not often been conspicuous. But for the past half century, through the work of its greatest architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, it has held world leadership in architecture. This influential achievement will be shown in the exhibition which opens at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, on Wednesday, November 13, and which will remain on view through January 5.

The exhibition, Frank Lloyd Wright: American Architect, consists of eighteen large and extremely detailed architectural models, many enlarged photographs, color transparencies and architectural plans and original drawings. The entire exhibition is being installed by Mr. Wright himself and several apprentices he has brought with him to New York from his unique workshop-school-home community at Taliesin, Wisconsin.

The great pioneer of modern architecture was for many years almost neglected in his native country. In Europe, however, Frank Lloyd Wright began to exert a powerful influence on the younger architects in the second decade of this century. After twenty years this influence came back to the United States in the form of European importations. In 1931, with the publication of a series of lectures which Wright delivered at Princeton and the special number of the Architectural Forum devoted to his work in 1937, his direct influence in his own country began to increase; and with his spectacular new activity in building, begun three or four years ago, Wright became a living "old master" of our living architectural tradition.

Wright has not yet, however, received from his own country honors equal to those bestowed upon him by foreign lands;

among these are: Honor Fellow F.R.I.B.A. (Fellow Royal Institute of British Architects), England; Honor Fellow Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp, Belgium; Honor Fellow Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Berlin, Germany; Honor Fellow Academy of Fine Arts, Brazil; Honor Fellow Institute of Architects, Brazil; Honor Fellow Institute of Architects, Cuba; People's Guest of Honor, Moscow, Russia, 1937; Kenchiku Ho, Imperial Household, Japan, 1915; Sir George Watson Chair, London, England, 1939.

Work for which Wright is particularly noted includes the following: about fifty Prairie Houses (1900-1910); Unity Church (1904), Chicago; Larkin Administration Building (1904), Buffalo; Taliesin (1911-1925-1940), Spring Green, Wisconsin; Millard House (1922), Pasadena; Imperial Hotel (1916), Tokyo; Kaufmann House (1937), Bear Run, Pennsylvania; Johnson Administration Building (1938), Racine, Wisconsin; Taliesin-West (1939), Phoenix, Arizona.

John McAndrew, Curator of the Museum's Architecture Department, comments on Wright's genius and work as follows:

"Wright created a new kind of open plan for the house. Instead of being measured out into many box-like rooms, the living-space flowed freely from hall to living-room to dining room, reaching out for abundant light and air wherever needed. Continuous long bands of windows brought indoors and outdoors intimately together.... This open plan gave spaciousness to many new small houses, and grandeur to large ones. His easy but disciplined compositions, with their long low sweeping eave-lines, have become part of our modern American idiom. His sympathetic use of wood, stone, and brick, traditional materials avoided by the stricter functionalists, has been a refreshing example to many younger men. Opposed to the International style is his warm humanitarian approach to architecture, his insistence on providing not only for the physical needs of a family but also for the more subjective comforts--soft light, surfaces pleasant to touch, intimacy with nature, and even release from the very Machine Age the functionalists were domesticating....

"If one were to make a small crystal model of the air in the main spaces of one of his early Prairie houses, one would see a carefully composed piece of abstract sculpture, with long rectangular prisms harmoniously united, side by side or interpenetrating. The main forms would be bold and clear, yet indissolubly welded to one another. Episodes of smaller angular shapes might enliven or emphasize the whole.

"The space-conception created by Wright in 1904 was destined to be the most characteristic one of modern architecture, above all, of the modern house:

"In its beauty and in its originality, this idea is one of the great creations of recent architecture, and one of the most fruitful.

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"Though made up of straight-edged and angular parts these compositions of Wright's appear to have grown more than to have been built from carefully ruled blue-prints. He thinks of their creation as a sort of natural process: 'Conceive now that an entire building might grow up out of conditions as a plant grows up out of soil, as free to live its own life according to Nature as is the tree.' A house and a plant 'both unfold similarly from within.'

"The whole form, seeming so closely related to natural forms is never an imitation of them; its organic arrangement rivals rather than imitates the organic arrangements of nature'.

"Perhaps this is why the houses of Wright more than those of any other architect unite with their natural surroundings in serene and effortless harmony. The pantheism of their author is poetically expressed in their oneness with nature. He has reestablished the ancient lost collaboration between the builder of a structure and the character of a site, and has served in an ancient office, as interpreter between nature and man, translating the spirit of places into shapes that are habitable."

The Wright exhibition is being shown simultaneously with an exhibition of the work and films of David Wark Griffith, the two combined under the title Two Great Americans: Frank Lloyd Wright, American Architect and D. W. Griffith, American Film Master. Both exhibitions will be open to the public through January 5, except for Christmas Day when the entire Museum will be closed. The Museum hours are 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. daily including Saturday; Sunday 12 Noon to 6 P.M.; and Wednesday from 10 A.M. to 10 P.M.