

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

ARCHITECT

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For Immediate Release

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The Museum of Modern Art included Frank Lloyd Wright's work in its inaugural architectural exhibition, MODERN ARCHITECTURE, INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION, in 1932. The inclusion was an uneasy one. Organizers Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock acknowledged the genius of Wright's earlier work, but saw Europe as the cutting edge of architectural innovation. Wright himself rejected the International Style and was offended by being grouped with other architects.

Wright's achievements of the late 1930s forced a re-evaluation of his position. In 1940, the Museum mounted FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT: AMERICAN ARCHITECT, a major retrospective of his work to date. Wright himself arrived with an entourage of apprentices, amid a fanfare of publicity, to supervise the installation of the one-man show. In 1962, three years after his death, the architect's lifetime achievements were surveyed in FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT DRAWINGS.

Individual Wright projects were the subject of a series of focused exhibitions during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. The single-project exhibitions began in 1938, with FALLINGWATER. This was followed by A NEW COUNTRY HOUSE (1946), featuring Wright's model for the then-unbuilt G.M. Loeb House in Redding, Connecticut; FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT: TALIESIN AND TALIESIN WEST (1947); and FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT: A NEW THEATRE (1949). In 1952, FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT: BUILDING FOR JOHNSON'S WAX COMPANY was installed as a peep show of

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three-dimensional slides in individual viewers. The Museum's last single-monument exhibition of Wright's work took place in 1963, when a display of new color photographs of Fallingwater honored the recent gift of the house by Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., to the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

The Museum continued its celebration of Wright as an American master in the survey exhibitions THREE CENTURIES OF AMERICAN ART, 1609-1938 (prepared in 1938 for the Jeu de Paume, Paris), where the Robie House (1908-10) appeared in the architecture section, and in its tenth anniversary exhibition, ART IN OUR TIME (1939), where the Robie House was joined by the more recent Jacobs House (1936-37). The Museum's fifteenth anniversary show, ART IN PROGRESS (1944), included Wright's work, but was more cautious in affirming his influence on contemporary modern architecture. Wright's designs for the Pittsburgh Civic Center and the Mile High Skyscraper appeared in VISIONARY ARCHITECTURE (1960), and his Unity Church (1905-08) opened the exhibition MODERN ARCHITECTURE USA (1965).

Other Museum of Modern Art exhibitions in which Wright's works have appeared were EARLY MODERN ARCHITECTURE, CHICAGO 1870-1910 (1933); WHAT IS MODERN ARCHITECTURE? (circulating, 1938-44); MODERN ROOMS OF THE LAST 50 YEARS (circulating, 1946); A BID FOR SPACE (1959); and THE NEW CITY: ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN RENEWAL (1967).

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