

Organic Architecture: Frank Lloyd Wright's Architecture

Postmodern architecture evolved from the modernist movement, yet contradicts many of the modernist ideas. Combining new ideas with traditional forms, postmodernist buildings may startle, surprise, and even amuse. Familiar shapes and details are used in unexpected ways. Buildings may incorporate symbols to make a statement or simply to delight the viewer.

Organic Architecture is a term Frank Lloyd Wright used to describe his approach to architectural design. The philosophy grew from the ideas of Frank Lloyd Wright's mentor, Louis Sullivan, who believed that "form follows function." Wright argued that "form and function are one". Organic architecture integrates space into a unified whole.

Frank Lloyd Wright has been called America's most famous architect. During his 70-year career, Wright designed buildings, including homes, offices, churches, schools, libraries, bridges, and museums. Five hundred and thirty-two of these designs were completed, and 409 still stand.

Frank Lloyd Wright was not concerned with architectural style, because he believed that every building should grow naturally from its environment. Organic buildings are never linear or rigidly geometric. Instead, wavy lines and curved shapes suggest natural forms.

Robie House, Chicago, Illinois, USA

Frank Lloyd Wright revolutionized the American home when he began to design Prairie Style houses with low horizontal lines and open interior spaces, linear white stones and wide, nearly flat roof and overhanging eaves. The Robie House in Chicago, Illinois, has been called Frank Lloyd Wright's most famous prairie house—and the beginning of modernism in the United States.

Fallingwater is the name of a very special house that is built over a waterfall. Frank Lloyd Wright designed the house for his clients, the Kaufmann family. Fallingwater was built between 1936 and 1939. It instantly became famous, and today it is a National Historic Landmark. It doesn't appear to stand on solid ground, but instead stretches out over a 30' waterfall. Wright even incorporated a rock into his massive central fireplace, further uniting the house with the earth. "Can you say" Wright challenged his apprentices "when your building is complete, that the landscape is more beautiful than it was before?". Wright further emphasizes the connection with nature by liberal use of glass; the house has no walls facing the falls, only a central stone core for the fireplaces and stone columns. The architect's creative use of "corner turning windows" causes corners to vanish. Wright even bows to nature by bending a beam to accommodate a pre-existing tree.

