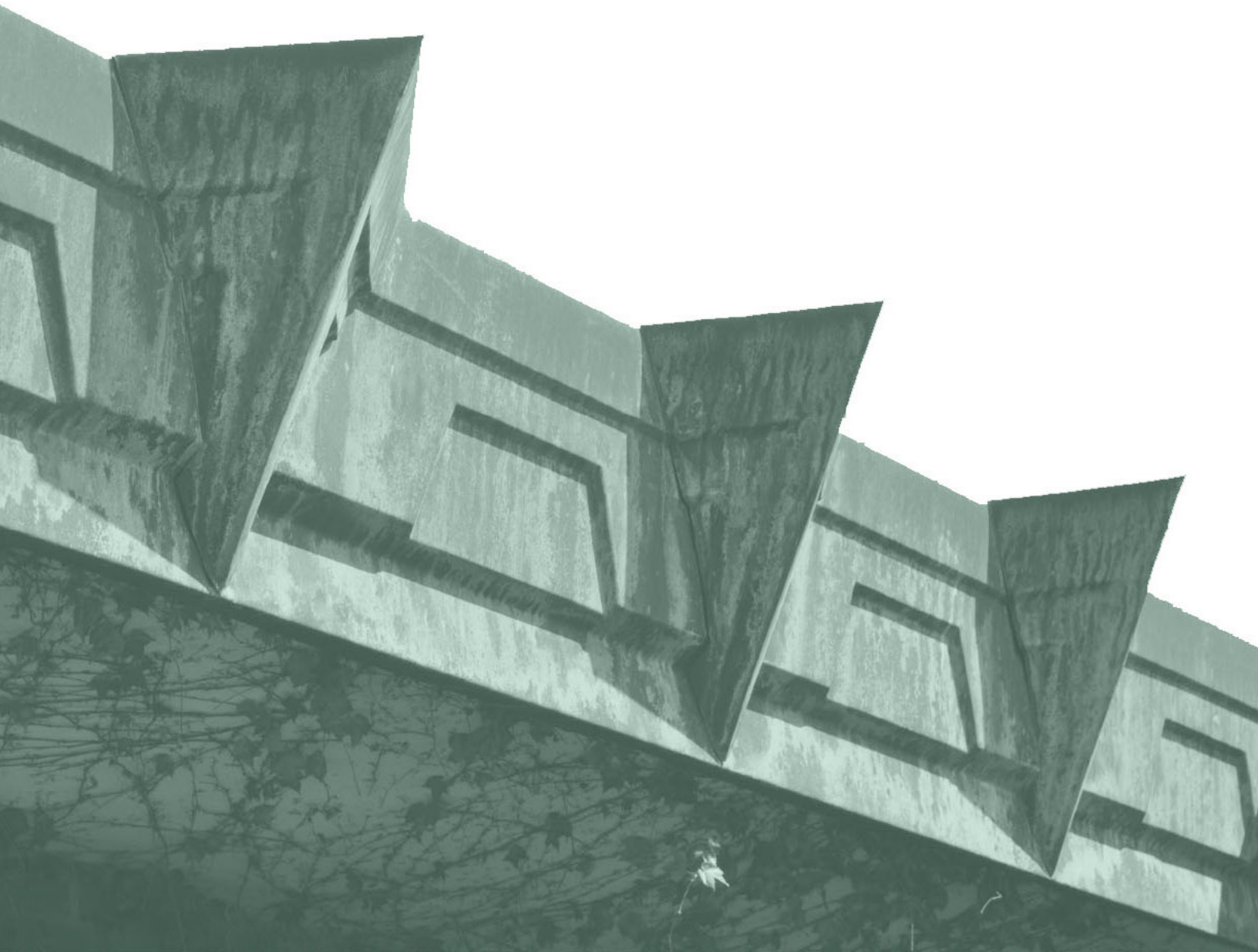


FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

activities guide





THE WRIGHT LIGHT

ACTIVITY I

Introduction:

Frank Lloyd Wright incorporated shapes, patterns, and lines that he found in nature into the designs of his buildings. In the case of Samara, a winged seed in motion became design inspiration. It may be difficult to see objects from nature in his design; this is because Mr. Wright would abstract, or simplify natural objects to their most basic forms. Mr. Wright once said, “Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you.” In this activity, participants will have an opportunity to study natural forms from their region and abstract them onto a paper lantern.

Required Materials:

Samples of natural objects from your region
(flowers, pinecones, plants, seeds, grasses, etc.)
Scratch paper and pencils
Construction paper in nature hues
White or yellow tissue paper
Scissors or Exacto knives
Stapler or tape

Directions:

1. Draw participants’ attention to the Samara cut-out motif found throughout the exhibit in both artifact material, images, and on the brochure.
2. Ask participants if they recall how the house came to be referred to as “Samara” and the natural element that inspired the name.
3. Identify the following term for participants. “Abstraction”: refers to depicting a being, place or thing in a simplified, generalized manner, such as using a circle to represent the sun or a triangle a tree.
4. Instruct participants to choose a natural object from those you have gathered and make

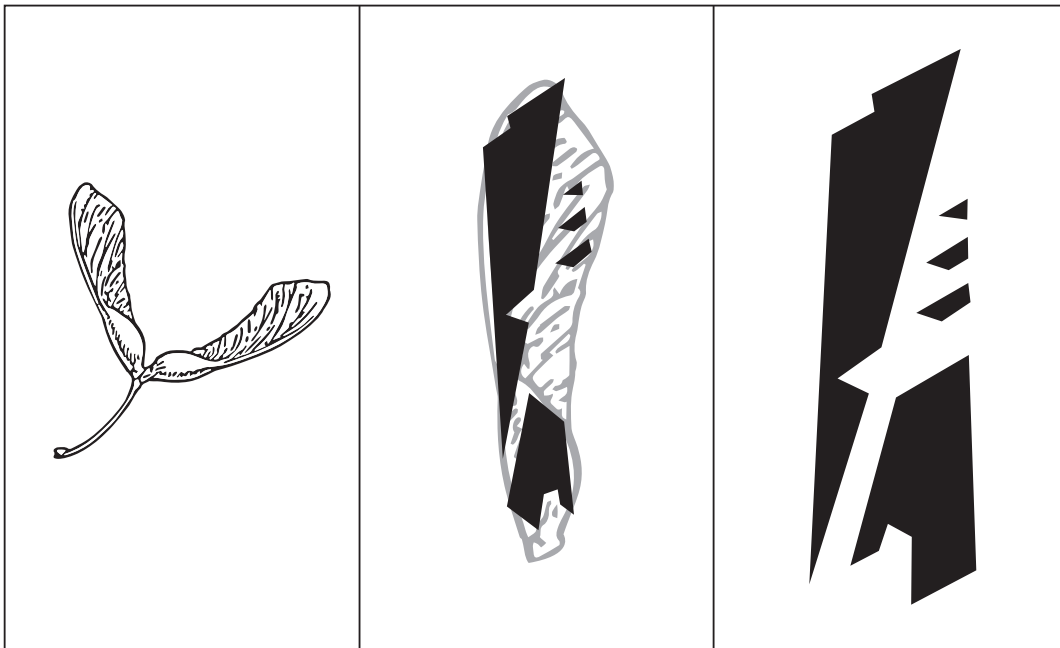
an abstraction, or a simplified representation of that object on their scratch paper. Since they will ultimately be creating a cutout of this object, their aim should be a basic outline of a shape that mimics the natural object they selected.

5. Transfer several smaller versions of their simplified nature graphics onto pieces of construction paper. Cut out nature graphics with Exacto knives or scissors. Younger visitors might need assistance with this step.

6. Place a piece of tissue paper over the back side of the construction paper which now has several cutout nature motifs and secure with tape or glue at the edges. Round the entire piece so that a cylinder is created and staple or tape at one edge.

7. Participants have now created a lantern that they can either take home and place a small tealight candle in (a flashlight would also work) or can leave to display at your institution.

A Samara seed was the inspiration for Wright's geometric design motif in the Christian's house. The design was featured in both the architecture details and in the furnishings.





THE WRIGHT GEOGRAPHY

ACTIVITY II

Introduction:

Frank Lloyd Wright's design philosophy centered on the idea that the human dwelling should be linked to the earth surrounding it. The houses he designed were built to suit the natural features characterizing the earth instead of changing the natural features to suit the house. This activity allows visitors to explore the natural features of their region and apply the architectural principles Frank Lloyd Wright may have used designing a dwelling to fit their region's unique landscape.

Required Materials:

- Photographs of landscape in their region
- Several regional nature guides (trees of their region, rocks and minerals, etc.)
- Colored pencils
- Drawing pencils
- Paper
- Tracing paper
- Photocopier (optional)

Program Directions:

1. Ask participants if they have ever witnessed new building or home construction in their area. If there is a current project underway that their community is familiar with, consider using this as a reference. Ask participants to explain what they have observed during the demolition and construction phases. How was nature transformed during the process? Was the ground leveled? What about trees or water features?
2. Explain that Frank Lloyd Wright worked with the natural features already present at a building site. He did not flatten sloped land; he did not remove rocky outcroppings or renavigate waterways. In fact, he took inspiration from the unique qualities of the land site and incorporated them into his design plans. Even the building material he used, from stone to sand, were cues taken from what was already abundant near the building site. He used native materials in his construction and his design reinterpreted nature using a philosophy referred to as organic architecture.

3. As an example, refer to Frank Lloyd Wright's use of the horizontal line. In designing dwellings that were in harmony with nature Wright frequently used the horizontal line

because he felt that houses should be “married to the ground,” ensuring a closeness with the earth. The branches of trees and other foliage above and below the horizontal roof line would reinforce and extend this design concept.

4. Ask visitors to explain how he applied the concept of organic architecture to Samara. What cues from nature did Frank Lloyd Wright integrate into his design of Samara? How did the arrangement of the house reflect the landscape?

5. Invite participants to imagine that they are a contemporary architect working from the same organic philosophy as Frank Lloyd Wright. Suggest that they will be designing a house for a small family in their region. What types of landscapes can the architect anticipate? Would there be waterways to incorporate into the design? Is there a tree or flower in abundance that will be mimicked in design? What kind of locally resourced building material could the architect use?

6. Using local landscape photographs and nature guides for design inspiration, participants will create two sets of drawings. The first drawing is a rendering of the building site. Participants should seek to identify the natural features present, like:

Waterways (lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, waterfalls, coastlines, etc.)

Geological features (rocks, outcroppings, etc.)

The slope of the land (flat, hilly, undulated, steep, etc.) topography

Plants (trees, shrubs, grasses, flowers, vines, etc.)

Other landscape features typical of the area

Natural resources of the area that could be used for building material

Sustainability (Climate ...)

Give each participant a piece of drawing paper and colored pencils to complete the building site drawing, inspired by landscape photos and nature guides.

7. The second drawing will show the house merged into the landscape of the first drawing. Provide participants with tracing paper and pencils to create this sketch. They should initially trace the landscape from their first drawing, and then merge the house into the scene. You might wish to stress that these are not to be architecturally detailed renderings, just examples of how a human dwelling can be incorporated into already existing natural surroundings that exhibit the environmental character of the region.

8. Finally, on a second sheet of drawing paper, participants are to identify the locally resourced (native) building material they will use for construction and give the house a name, perhaps one inspired by nature.



THE WRIGHT CLIENT

ACTIVITY III

Required Materials:

2-3 copies of Kay Christian's "What We Need For How We Live"

Pencils/pens

Copy of "What We Need For How We Live Today" for each participant (attached)

Optional: home design magazines, home décor magazines, glue sticks, scissors, construction paper or card stock.

Program Directions:

1. Pass around copies of Kay Christian's "What We Need For How We Live" to group of participants.
2. Explain that in 1953, the Christians presented this document to Frank Lloyd Wright at his home in Taliesin. Being fairly conservative, the Christians' main requirement was that "We want a home and its surroundings to have a future—one that will grow with us." The result was Samara, a home the Christians loved and a showpiece that grew with them over time.
3. The beginning of the document introduces the Christians as a family and explains their reasons for wanting a Frank Lloyd Wright home. The document continues with room-by-room descriptions of what they wanted each room to accomplish, its function, its location, its approximate size, and any special features. A listing of existing trees is also provided because they recognized that Frank Lloyd Wright's philosophy was to integrate the property into nature.
4. Inform participants that they are going to create an updated version of "What We Need For How We Live Today." The revised document is not a direct translation of Mrs. Christian's, but an abbreviated one more relevant to today's families. It has also been abbreviated in the interest of the time needed to complete this activity. Family groups (and individuals in some cases) will create their own documents based on the guided worksheet on the subsequent page.

5. Alternatively, families (especially those with young children) could create a collage that represents “What We Need For How We Live Today” using cutouts from home and design magazines.

Extensions and Discussion:

Do you know the history of your house? Do you know who designed it or who built it?

Do middle-income families in contemporary society have opportunities to work directly with an architect and express that their needs be met through architectural and interior design?

Why has this changed over the years?

What would it be like if your house was listed on the National Register of Historic Houses? Would you welcome tours? What would you want visitors to know about your house?

WHAT WE NEED FOR HOW WE LIVE TODAY

Complete the following on a separate sheet of paper(s).
You may wish to use drawings to better describe your needs.

I. Introduction: Explain why Frank Lloyd Wright should design your family's dream home.

II. All About Us: List family members and describe how they like to spend their time.

III. Our Needs and Desires

- a. Kitchen Area
- b. Family/Entertainment Area
- c. Bathroom Area(s)
- d. Master Bedroom Area
- e. Children's Bedroom Area
- f. Recreation Area
- g. Carport or Garage Area
- h. Outdoor Entertainment Area
- i. Other

IV. Our Property

- a. Major Trees
- b. Other natural features