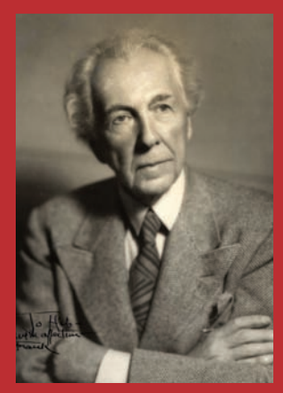
THE PRAIRIE-STYLE DESIGNS OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT:

CONNECTING WITH NATURE

Prairie Houses is the debut exhibit at *The SC Johnson Gallery: At Home with Frank Lloyd Wright*, which showcases a rotating selection of Wright designs and artifacts, and explores the legendary architect's influence on families and the American home. Here's a primer on Wright's iconic Prairie-Style designs.



"I loved the prairie by instinct as a great simplicity – the trees, flowers, sky itself, thrilling by contrast. I had an idea that the horizontal planes in buildings, those planes parallel to earth, identify themselves with the ground – make the building belong to the ground. And at this time I saw a house, primarily, as livable interior space under ample shelter. I liked the sense of shelter in the look of the building. The house began to associate with the ground and become natural to its prairie site."

– Frank Lloyd Wright

HELPFUL TERMS

Prairie-Style – During the early 20th century, Frank Lloyd Wright developed a philosophical foundation for his work based on how people connect with nature. His Prairie-Style homes from 1899 to 1909 bring this notion to life. They are characterized by horizontal lines, low-pitched roofs and open plans.

Organic Architecture – A phrase used by Wright to describe buildings that appear to fit with, and even grow from, their natural surroundings. The term also refers to the connectedness of all elements of a design. In organic architecture, all of a structure's features — from its interior space and exterior shape, to its windows and furniture — relate to and complement each other as organic parts of a whole.

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Open Plan – Architectural designs that make use of large, open spaces. As his Prairie-Style designs evolved, Wright planned the living room and dining room — and occasionally other social gathering spaces — as one continuous space free from partitions and doors. This aimed to create a natural flow and to draw occupants out of rooms and into a shared central space.

Light Screens – Rather than traditional windows and drapery, Wright designed leaded glass windows to bring additional color into interiors while also providing a sense of privacy.

FLWright FDN

PRAIRIE-STYLE HOME FEATURES

House walls started at the ground on a cement or stone foundation that looked like a **low platform under the building**.

On the upper level, the **broad, low roof** extended out over the **out-swinging windows** for protection from the elements.

Leaded glass windows and doors, and the relocation in many instances of the main living area to the second level, added an element of privacy from people passing by outside.

Wright used materials each in accord with its nature: stone as stone, brick as brick, wood as wood. **No painting or wallpaper, nothing applied that was not in its natural state.**

In the hope of preventing his clients from placing their old Victorian furniture in their Prairie-Style homes, **Wright began designing furniture for the homes**.

Tours of the Wright-designed SC Johnson campus and *The SC Johnson Gallery: At Home with Frank Lloyd Wright* are free and open to the public.

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Exhibition organized by S.C. Johnson and Son, Inc. in cooperation with the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Scottsdale, AZ.