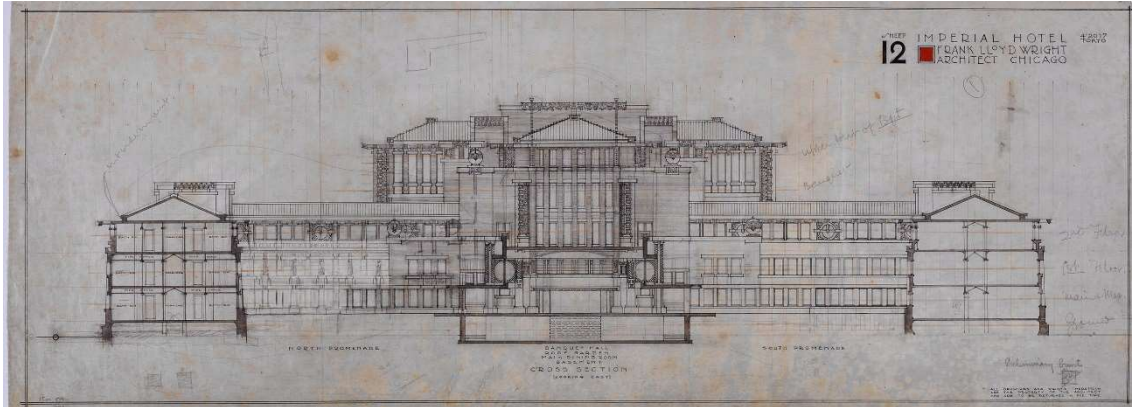


14 August 2023

**The Wright Imperial Hotel at 100:  
Frank Lloyd Wright and the World**



《Imperial Hotel (Tokyo, Japan). Scheme 2, 1915 Sheet #12. Cross section (looking east)》 1915-1922  
© The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts library, Columbia University, New York)

**Exhibition Overview**

**Date/Venue:**

October 21 - December 24, 2023 Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Aichi

Organizers: Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

Co-organizer: The Chunichi Shimbun

January 11 - March 10, 2024 Panasonic Shiodome Museum of Art, Tokyo

Organizers: Panasonic Shiodome Museum of Art, Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation,  
The Tokyo Shimbun

March 20 - May 12, 2024 Aomori Museum of Art, Aomori

Organizers: Frank Lloyd Wright Exhibition Aomori Executive Committee (Aomori  
Museum of Art, Radio Aomori Broadcasting, Aomori Prefectural Tourism  
Federation), Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

**With the special cooperation of:**

Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, Imperial Hotel, Ltd.

**With the sponsorship of:**

Union Foundation For Ergodesign Culture

**With the exhibit cooperation of:**

Forest Sawmill Risola Limited Liability Partnership

**With the support of:**

Embassy of the United States of America, Architectural Institute of Japan, The Japan  
Institute of Architects, DOCOMOMO Japan, Archives of Organic Architecture Japan

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This exhibition is supported through generous donations from the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Scottsdale, Arizona.

## Introduction

Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959), the master of modern American architecture, known for the Edgar J. Kaufmann House (Fallingwater) and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, was an architect with deep ties to Japan, having worked on the Imperial Hotel's second main building and the Jiyu Gakuen School, and was also an avid Ukiyo-e enthusiast.

The Imperial Hotel was inaugurated exactly 100 years ago, in 1923, on the day of the Great Kanto Earthquake, and the fact that the hotel survived the disaster brought Wright great fame. It was a grand project, a hotel that seemed to be a city in itself, with its vast grounds and various facilities, including a theatre and ballrooms, as well as guest rooms. Also, the hotel was a project that drew on the diverse cultures Wright had encountered in the past, and his experimentation at this time was to have a rich development in his architecture in the years to come. For example, these were organic connections with the surrounding landscape, dynamic correspondences between the part and the whole, and the conception of skyscrapers in connection with nature. The Imperial Hotel was a nodal project in his career.

In 2012, the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation transferred over 50,000 drawings and other materials to the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Avery Library of Architecture and Art at Columbia University, where research has continued to illuminate his broad vision and intelligence, not only in architecture, but also in art, design, writing, landscape architecture, education, innovation, and urban planning.

Based on the results of this recent research, and with the full cooperation of Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation and the Avery Library of Architecture and Art, this exhibition will reveal his pioneering activities and his interaction with diverse cultures, with the Imperial Hotel as its main theme.

Wright's global perspective, which traversed the world, resonates with today's challenges of the 21st century and should provide inspiration for the world yet to come.

## Exhibition Structure

### **1. Modern Beginnings: Chicago – Tokyo and the Culture of Ukiyo-e**

Wright began his architectural career in Chicago, in the United States, which was undergoing metropolitanisation. At the same time, Tokyo, the newly born capital of Japan after the Meiji Restoration, was also rapidly moving towards becoming a modern city. He was greatly influenced by the cultures of these two great cities and their interactions. Most

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notably, he was exposed to the growing enthusiasm for Japanese art in Chicago and was greatly attracted to Japan and the world of Ukiyo-e. In 1905, he visited Japan for the first time and brought back a large collection of Ukiyo-e prints with him when he returned to Japan.

The exhibition introduces Wright's architectural drawings, which clearly show the influence of Ukiyo-e, as well as Wright's plan for the Ukiyo-e collection room. The exhibition also features drawings and models of the important early building "Unity Temple", and the meticulous decorative drawing he made under his mentor, the leading Chicago architect Louis Sullivan.

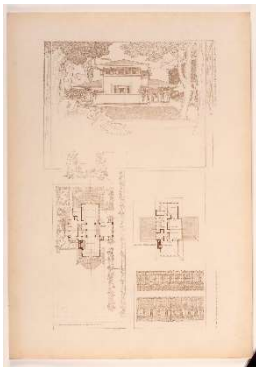


Plate XXIX. Ground plan and Perspective of the House for K.C.DeRhodes at South Bend, Indiana. *Wasmuth Portfolio*. 1910. Toyota Municipal Museum of Art

## 2. Views from the Shining Brow

For Wright, topography and climate were inextricably linked to architecture. The Prairie Style was established after it was conceived in the American Midwest. These houses with the deep eaves and horizontal expanses are a unique example of his architecture, in which the exterior and interior are organically connected. And His experiences of designing buildings in the varied topography of Japan, such as Yamamura House (currently Yodoko Guest House), encouraged the creation of rich architecture that blended with nature, which culminated in Edgar J. Kaufmann House (Fallingwater). The garden "Floricycle" at Darwin D. Martin House, created in collaboration with garden designer Jens Jensen, is also noteworthy for its seasonal changes and as an expression of the many worlds and many cultures where native and non-native species coexist.

The exhibition introduces the Coonley House and Robie House as representative Prairie Style, and features Yamamura House and the Odawara Hotel as examples of Prairie Style in practice in Japan.

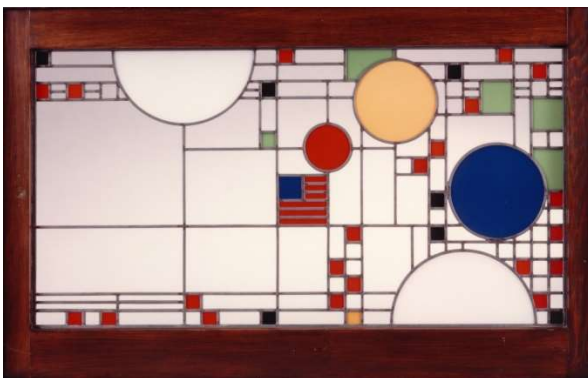


Odawara Hotel, Odawara, Japan. Unbuilt Project, Perspective 1917. © The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

### 3. Designing Progressive Education Environment

There is a deep connection between Wright and education. His mother and aunts, who were educators, were probably a major influence. The relationship between his architectural thinking and his early childhood education in the method of Friedrich Fröbel is often noted, and motivated him later to establish the Taliesin Fellowship as a place for practical architectural education.

This section includes drawings for the Avery Coonley Playhouse and the art glass that was used in there, as well as drawings and model of Jiyu Gakuen School, which continues to this day, and this school's educational materials. This chapter will also provide a fresh look at the progressive activities of Wright and the women of their time with whom he interacted.



Clerestory window from the Avery Coonley Playhouse, Riverside, Illinois. c.1912. Toyota Municipal Museum of Art

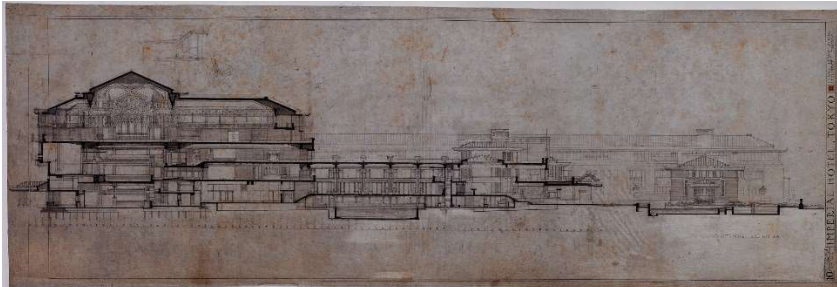
### 4. Imperial Hotel at the Global Crossroads

The construction of the Imperial Hotel, with its vast site and various ancillary facilities, was a mega-project akin to city planning. It is also noteworthy that Wright was involved in the comprehensive design of not only the building but also the furniture and tableware. Oya stone and terracotta were chosen as materials suitable for the Japanese site, and each decoration shows his application from the various cultures he had experienced up to that point.

The exhibition includes drawings and plans of the Imperial Hotel and the furniture that

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was actually used, as well as documentary photographs and leaflets that show the hotel as a new culture at that time. The drawings of the Midway Gardens, designed at the same time as the Imperial Hotel, will also be on display, revealing the characteristics of his architecture through two resonant designs.



Imperial Hotel, Tokyo, Japan. Scheme 2, Longitudinal section. 1915. © The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

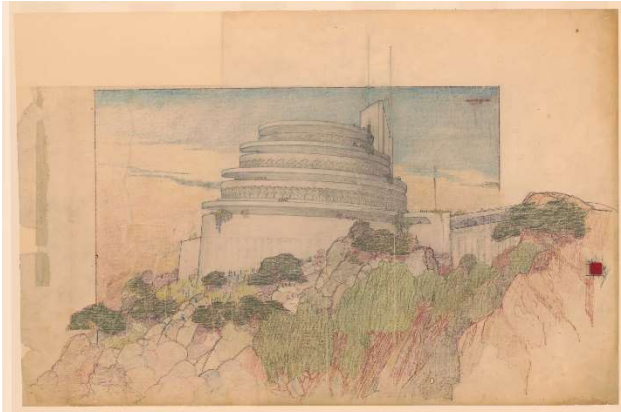


Chair from the Ball Room (Peacock Room) at the Imperial Hotel, Tokyo, Japan. after 1950. Toyota Municipal Museum of Art

## 5. Micro/Macro Dynamics of Wright's Building Blocks

Wright devised of architecture as a unit construction system that could be developed from small to large. It has been pointed out that his conception of architecture, in which the whole and its parts dynamically respond to each other, was based on his childhood experience of playing with the Froebel Gifts. He also had a strong interest in materials, and while he used locally-derived materials, his focus on the plasticity of concrete also enabled him to create integrated megastructures such as the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

This section features drawings such as Millard House (La Miniatura), in which the concrete blocks are decorated with relief patterns, and the unbuilt mega-projects Doheny Ranch Development, and San Marcos-in-the-Desert Hotel. The section also recreates some of the 'Usonian Houses', affordable compact housing for the average family, made possible by new construction methods devised by Wright. Also, the drawings of the spiral building, which he conceived as the ultimate form of concrete architecture is exhibited.



Gordon Strong Automobile Objective and Planetarium, Maryland. Automobile Objective. Unbuilt Project. Perspective. 1925 Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## 6. Elevating Environment

While Wright's architecture is impressive for its horizontal expansiveness, he also showed an early interest in vertical skyscrapers. Although never realized due to landscape restrictions, the original plans for the Imperial Hotel show a skyscraper with a tower. His later Johnson Wax Headquarters Administration Building is known for its dendriform columns and the Research Tower for its tap root structure. His continued challenge could be observed in the plan for the skyscraper Mile High Illinois conceived after the experience of the "Price Tower".



Viewing looking south into the Great Workroom of the SC Johnson Administration Building, 2015. Photo courtesy of SC Johnson

## 7. Wright and Global Cultures

Wright's encounters and interactions with diverse cultures gave rise to his unique architectural style. This chapter focuses on his interactions with artists outside the United States, as well as Italy as an important source of inspiration. As a look at the non-Western world, we introduce the Nakoma Country Club, unrealized project, which incorporated Native American culture, and the bird's-eye view drawings of the Plan for Greater Baghdad, unrealized project, a proposal for the Islamic world. Wright's eye for the future is also remarkable. A world of skyscrapers on wide expanses of land, networked together by new

technologies such as telephones and helicopters, seems to indicate our future.



Living City. Unbuilt Project. Aerial perspective. 1958 © The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

## Exhibition Highlights

### **1.Content based on the latest Wright research**

The exhibition is organized with the full cooperation of Ken Tadashi Oshima and Jennifer Gray, who were members of the curatorial team for the highly reputed 2017 exhibition "Frank Lloyd Wright at 150: Unpacking the Archive" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The exhibition will feature architectural drawings and plans that were transferred from the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation to the Avery Library of Architecture and Art at Columbia University and the MoMA in 2012, and are being shown for the first time in Japan. This is a rare opportunity to view his meticulous, delicate, and compositionally inventive architectural drawings up close and personal.

### **2.Imperial Hotel 100th Anniversary - Reviewing the charm of the Imperial Hotel's second main building on the occasion of after 100 years of the Great Kanto Earthquake**

The Imperial Hotel, which took 10 years to realize from its initial conception (now partially moved and preserved in Museum Meiji-Mura), is a concentrated collection of elements from the various climates and cultures Wright experienced, from the American Midwest to Latin America, Europe, and Japan. His experiences and ideas derived from this architecture at this time were also shaped and varied in his later architecture and city planning. This exhibition focuses on the Imperial Hotel as the central axis of his career.

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### **3. Mock-up of Wright's proposed "Usonian house"**

With the cooperation of Ryosuke Isoya, who studied from 1991 to 1994, at the Taliesin Fellowship a place for practical education presided over by Wright, a mock-up of a portion of an Usonian house proposed by him will be exhibited in the venue. Visitors will be able to experience the unique spatial scale, such as its compression and release in the space, the development of space that becomes increasingly apparent as one progresses, and the composition of inside and outside that are organically connected, which will further deepen their understanding of his architecture.