

## Fallingwater: Born of Its Surroundings

### Description

*In March 2014, A+A reached out to some of this nation's finest architects, curators and designers, making a simple request of each: Give us 300 words about your favorite building and its architect, and why both are important. Today, we're re-posting a contribution from Roy Young, Fallingwater's curator of education:*

My favorite building? Even for an architecture enthusiast that's easy: Fallingwater, the masterwork of Frank Lloyd Wright, located in Mill Run, Pennsylvania. While many know Fallingwater from a brief visit or the countless images caught to highlight its innovation, I have the distinct pleasure of knowing the house and site more intimately.

As the curator of education, I have the privilege of spending significant time in and around Fallingwater and its site. Whether I am ushering school groups along Bear Run, sketching with residency students in the living room or hosting a Focus Tour discussion on the pottery terrace, I am always moved by the architecture and its ability to inspire. Architecture enthusiasts – as well as those motivated by mere curiosity – flock to Fallingwater every year.

I feel, the only true way to know Fallingwater is to spend time with it, just as the Kaufmann family did. Fallingwater is a study in unified contrasts: the rugged natural site and the spare modernist architecture; the daring vistas and the comfortable enclosed spaces; and the compression and expansion of space all exist harmoniously.

Wright's life-long goal to create what he called "organic architecture" and to connect occupants to nature is evidenced in countless ways at Fallingwater. The breeze that gently flows from the hatch into the living room, the rock outcropping masterfully wedded to the foundation and floor and the seamless visual connection to the landscape all hint at Wright's abilities.

Wright's use of specific, site-inspired materials helped him create not only a house, but a work of art. The house, although cantilevered off the site, appears in many ways to have always been here, gently perched above the waterfall. Wright knew that living in a building that is born of its surroundings, nurtures and inspires the soul.

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Images courtesy of Fallingwater

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mike

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