

C O L U M N S



LIVING ARCHITECTURE
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Taliesin Apprentices:

Seven Decades of Organic Architecture

Students from Carnegie Mellon University School of Architecture, and apprentices at the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture, Scottsdale, Arizona, are researching, designing, building, and installing an exhibition of the work of former Frank Lloyd Wright apprentices.

The exhibition, organized by the Taliesin Fellows, CMU, FLLWSA, and the American Institute of Architects Pittsburgh will document the careers, work, influences, and impact of the large group of apprentices who studied at Wright's architecture school. The exhibition reviews Wright's architectural training program, called the Taliesin Fellowship, from its founding in 1932 by Wright and his wife, through the transitions brought about by Wright's

death, and later his widow's death, to the present day, with apprentices now earning degrees from the accredited Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture.

The exhibition will include a review of many of the traditions of the school including box projects, shelters, and the evolution of the Wright school's campuses. The box projects began in 1932 when apprentices presented Wright with examples of their designs in commemoration of Wright's birthday. The tradition continued through the years with apprentices designing elaborate boxes in which they placed their drawings to present to Wright. The exhibition will analyze the scope and nature of the projects, relate the box projects to events, buildings, and other projects, and examine presentation, media, and size.

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AIA GALLERY
211 NINTH STREET
PITTSBURGH,
PENNSYLVANIA

JUNE 18 - JULY 2



Frank Lloyd Wright with apprentices in 1938. From left, Gene Masselink, Benny Dombar, Edgar Tafel, and Jack Howe. Photo courtesy Frank Lloyd Wright Archives.

The exhibition will also document the history of apprentice tents and shelters at Taliesin West over the decades, the continuing tradition of the tents, changing materials, the concept of the shelter as a "primitive hut" - the natural origin of all architecture, according to some theories - and the role the tents and shelters retain in the education of Taliesin apprentices.

Daily life including a chart of a typical day, week, and year in the life of apprentices will be included as well as a history of the annual pilgrimages between the two Taliesins.

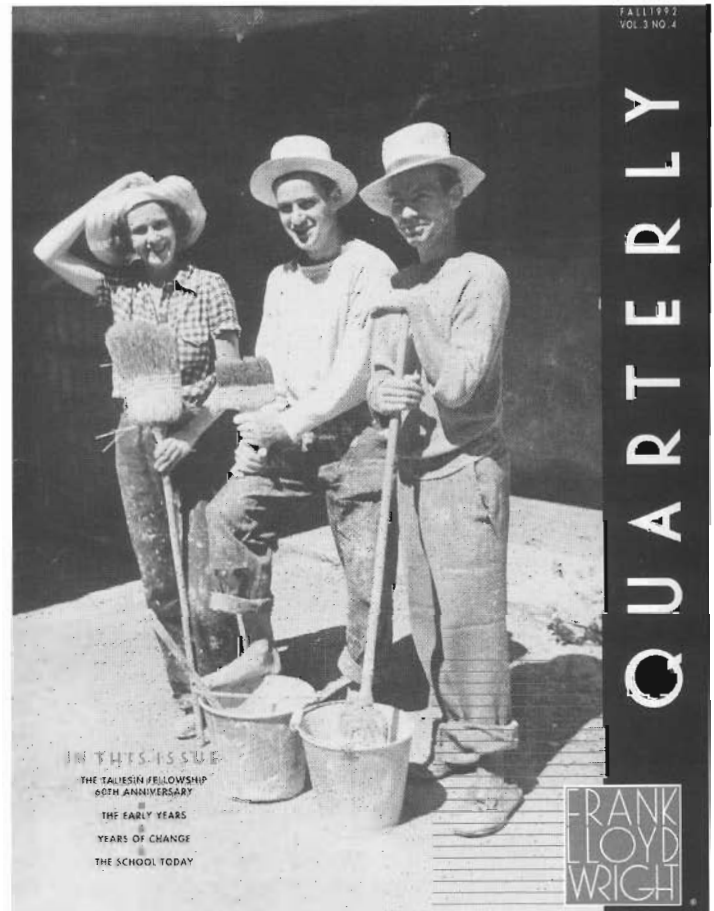
Approximately ten to fifteen former apprentices will be selected for in-depth review. Carnegie Mellon students and apprentices from the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture will make the selections. Many of Wright's former apprentices are well-known architects.

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Along with the presentation of the content of the exhibition, the organizing group of students and apprentices is documenting the process of creating the exhibit. This documentation will include the production of the show with photos, video, and text, as a record of the process of collaboration between Carnegie Mellon University and the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture.

Due to the distance between the two institutions, the group is experimenting with using the Internet as a virtual desktop and workplace. Students are developing a joint Web site to collect the data for the exhibit (www.arc.cmu.edu/taliesin).

The preparation of the exhibit is an element of a new architectural history course at Carnegie Mellon University, "Frank Lloyd Wright and His Taliesin Apprentices," offered by Professor Kai Gutschow. The Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture portion of the project is being coordinated by Ari Georges, Director of Curriculum.



Taliesin apprentices at work. Frank Lloyd Wright Quarterly, Fall 1992. Photo from the Henry Schubart collection.

Gutschow said the documentation of the production process will be included as an element of the exhibit, "as part of the legacy, as a sign of self-reflection by the school, and finally as a bridge between Taliesin and its colleagues in architecture education."

Opening Friday, June 18, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Following the showing at the AIA Galleries, the exhibition will move to the Hewlett Gallery at Carnegie Mellon University in the fall. For additional information call (412) 268-7999.

