



# Architecture

**Movements and Trends  
from the 19th Century to the Present**



Page 2

Frank Lloyd Wright,  
Fallingwater, Mill Run, 1935

Opposite  
Emilio Ambasz, Fukuoka  
Prefectural International Hall,  
Fukuoka, 1995

*Design*  
Marcello Francone

*Layout*  
Paola Oldani

*Editorial coordination*  
Emma Cavazzini

*Editing*  
Marco Abate

*Iconographical research*  
Massimo Carmignani

*Translations*  
NTL, Firenze

*Photographic credits*  
Archivio Skira  
Archivio Scala, Firenze  
Andrea Jemolo, Roma

First published in Italy in 2015 by  
Skira Editore S.p.A.  
Palazzo Casati Stampa  
via Torino 61  
20123 Milano  
Italy  
[www.skira.net](http://www.skira.net)

© 2015 Skira editore  
© Giorgio de Chirico, Gerrit  
Rietveld, Walter Gropius, Victor  
Horta, Konstantin Melnikov,  
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe,  
Oscar Niemeyer, Amédée  
Ozenfant, Rudolf Steiner,  
UNStudio, Henri van de Velde  
by SIAE 2015  
© FLC, by SIAE 2015  
© Frank Lloyd Wright  
Foundation, by SIAE 2015

All rights reserved under  
international copyright  
conventions.

No part of this book may be  
reproduced or utilized in any form  
or by any means, electronic  
or mechanical, including  
photocopying, recording, or any  
information storage and retrieval  
system, without permission  
in writing from the publisher.

Printed and bound in Italy.  
First edition

ISBN: 978-88-572-0473-4

Distributed in USA, Canada,  
Central & South America by  
Rizzoli International Publications,  
Inc., 300 Park Avenue South,  
New York, NY 10010, USA.  
Distributed elsewhere in the  
world by Thames and Hudson  
Ltd., 181A High Holborn, London  
WC1V 7QX, United Kingdom.

Antonello Marotta

**Jugendstil, Sezessionstil,  
Catalan Modernism,  
the Glasgow School**

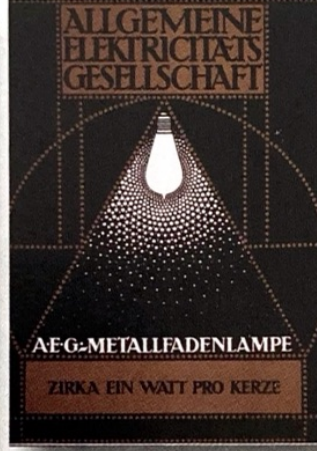
54



Anna Barbara

**Wiener Werkstätte and  
Deutscher Werkbund**

62



Anna Barbara

**The avant-garde movements:  
Futurism, Czech Cubism,  
Suprematism, Constructivism,  
Expressionism, De Stijl**

68



Fabio Mangone

**Neo-eclecticism**

74



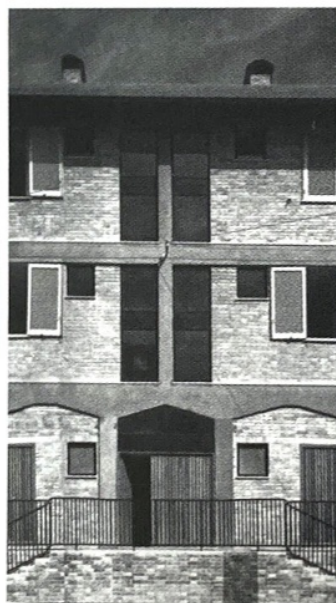
Alessandro Benetti  
**New Empiricism  
Bay Region Style**

152



Alessandro Benetti  
**Neorealism**

160



Maria Vittoria Capitanucci  
**International Style**

168



Anna Barbara  
**Organic  
Architecture**

176



# Organic Architecture

**T**he first official definition of “organic architecture” dates back to 1939, with the title of a book by the architect Frank Lloyd Wright. More than an architectural style or season, it is an approach to design that has officially spanned the history and geography of architecture for over a century. Because of its vastness, it has encompassed many different types of designers and many different architectural traits. In some cases, its complexity even generates confusion inasmuch as some architects embraced organic architecture for just one part of their lives and not as a faith to the bitter end. The theoretical centre of organic architecture is the balance between nature, technology, building and the idea that architecture is a single organism, at one with the environment and its inhabitants. Organic architecture was mainly inhabited by communities that subscribed to its theories as their own, capable of guiding not only spatial choices, but also existential and social choices. A cornerstone of organic architecture is the participation of the senses in the architectural design, using them not for design scenic purposes, but as a tool to pursue a profound coherence in the design and a strong sense of place.

One reference to organic architecture is the

work of Rudolf Steiner, founder of the worldwide Anthroposophy movement. The movement built two buildings that summarize the idea of oneness between man and nature. In different eras, but with the same concept, Steiner designed *Goetheanum*, first in wood, which was destroyed by fire (1913-1922), then in concrete. This was completed after his death in 1928. The headquarters for the movement was used to host events, conferences and meetings, but also recounted the fluid nature of space, dynamism, and above all the tension engendered by the elements in a state of transition from the invisible to the visible, capable of formulating balances in energy. The key figure for organic architecture is F.L. Wright. In his first architectural period, that of the prairie houses, the architect attempted to summarize the key elements of this architecture:

- fluid relationship between air and light that must move smoothly through space;
- strongly sliding horizontal planes so as to slide the architecture in nature and vice versa;
- eliminate the idea of circumscribed and delimited rooms to ensure an opening into the spaces;
- use windows as permeable openings;

- use a limited quantity of materials and establish a relationship between the material and the architecture's identity;
- integrate systems and furnishings.

The residences built by F.L. Wright in Oak Park are a synthesis of these basic premises. Robie House, designed (1908-1910) for the 27-year-old Mr. Robie, extends over two bands that slip over one another both in the plan and in the section where the deep overhangs of the ceiling allow the light to slide into the open interior spaces, open but with distinctions in volume through recesses in the roof and material lines. The architectural choices are also the synthesis of a vision of society and the family, as well as the relationship between the American bourgeoisie and nature through the use of technology.

The most famous organic design by F.L. Wright is *Fallingwater* – the house over the waterfall – which Wright designed in 1935 for the Kaufmann family. Rarely in the history of architecture has it been so difficult to separate nature from architecture, inasmuch as one is blended with the other, penetrating each other. The house was built with the same stone as that of the waterfall, just as the rushing sound of the water and the colour of moss are ingredients shared by the landscape and the building.

The organic research also continued into F.L. Wright's later career, particularly at Taliesin West, where the architect resided during the winter and where he had established a campus of architecture. The Taliesin project was the statement that architecture is an evolving organism, and that it has continuity with its context and materials and the resident community that is continually transforming.

There were heirs to Wright's organicism throughout the world. One of his collaborators for a short, but important period of his life was Richard Neutra, who

understood Wright's organic language more than others. It was not so much a case of style, but rather a design approach where the elements of nature and architectural elements had equal weight. Neutra believed that architecture should improve the lives of its inhabitants, and that the relationship with nature should be cultivated and designed in constant balance: light, air and ventilation, water and sun, but also the arrangement of the indoor and outdoor spaces into a single composition without fractures. Nature is central to the genesis of Neutra's works, as a context and a constructive element. Neutra's architecture had certain constants: huge windows that open to the view of the landscape, but also for cooling the environment, thinner ceilings and overhangs for shelter from the sun and supported by *spider legs* or slender pillars, curtains and adjustable slats for the sun, pools of water to provide reflection. The exterior landscape is consistent with the interior, but also with the physiological and psychological elements of its residents. For Neutra, architecture interacts with the perceptions and from this sensory experience comes a greater organicity.

Alvar Aalto, widely regarded as one of the masters of the Modern Movement, designed organic architecture with great care. However, because he was a Finnish designer, it is impossible not to take into consideration the special attention inherent in the Nordic cultures towards the relationship between architecture and nature, and a great ability to integrate a building with its environment. Therefore, Aalto's works are organic in an environment where there is already an awareness in regard to the use of materials, a precise relationship with the natural light, the curved forms (but not necessarily) that connect the architecture to the landscape. A prime example is the Viipuri Library (1927-1935) in which the details



show this organic relationship between the interiors, architectural form and the surrounding environment. This can be seen in the cones of light that are used to make indirect natural light to illuminate the reading rooms or a section of the conference room, with a corrugated ceiling, in wood, that defines a harmonic and acoustic section capable of ensuring (though of no great height) perfect sound.

With a leap in time and space, organic architecture arrived in the Sixties in Italy, where Bruno Zevi, with his theoretical writings and the magazine *Architettura cronaca e storia* created a fundamental critical and controversial tool for the diffusion of the organic culture after the Second World War. The work that best conveys organic architecture in Italy is a church, Chiesa dell'autostrada (San Giovanni Battista) by

Giovanni Michelucci, 1960. This controversial work summarizes the expressive and moral tensions that underlie the architect's effort to synthesize the architectural composition with the structures and the environment. The relationship with light, the surfaces, the materials and the forms can be considered organic, although some brutalist variations can be found there, such as the pattern on the concrete forms. Michelucci avoided classifications and one of his most famous works denounced the banality of slotting the masters and their unique experimental research into theoretical categories. There is an equally volatile strength in the work of Paolo Soleri, who in the late Sixties decided to found the city of Arcosanti in the Arizona desert. It is, first and foremost, a concrete utopia, built on the basis of "arcology", in other words, the idea of urban



scale construction with a high population density, capable of having an internal form of ecology. Arcosanti has been a work-in-progress since 1971 and has been uninterruptedly supported by active volunteers since then. Soleri is another "descendant" of Wright and his Taliesin West experiment, where once again nature is the matrix for architecture, devoid of formalism. It is nature that suggests, first and foremost, organic behaviours that can generate forms and spaces. The organic dimension is inherent in the vision, but also in the production that uses poor and elementary techniques to create domes, building mounds of earth in the shape of half-spheres to empty them from the inside later on. But its cosmological design is also organic, as is the relationship between private and public space, a spatial hybrid and continuum that

gives strength to the architectural and urban organism as an inseparable whole.

#### *Bibliography*

Curtis W.J.R., *L'architettura moderna del Novecento*, Bruno Mondadori, Milan 1999.

Wright F.L., *Architettura organica*, Muggiani Tipografo editore, Milan 1945.

Zevi B., *Verso un'architettura organica*, Einaudi, Turin 1945.

Frank Lloyd Wright, *Taliesin West*, Scottsdale, 1937

Opposite  
Rudolf Steiner, *Goethenaum*,  
Dornach, 1928

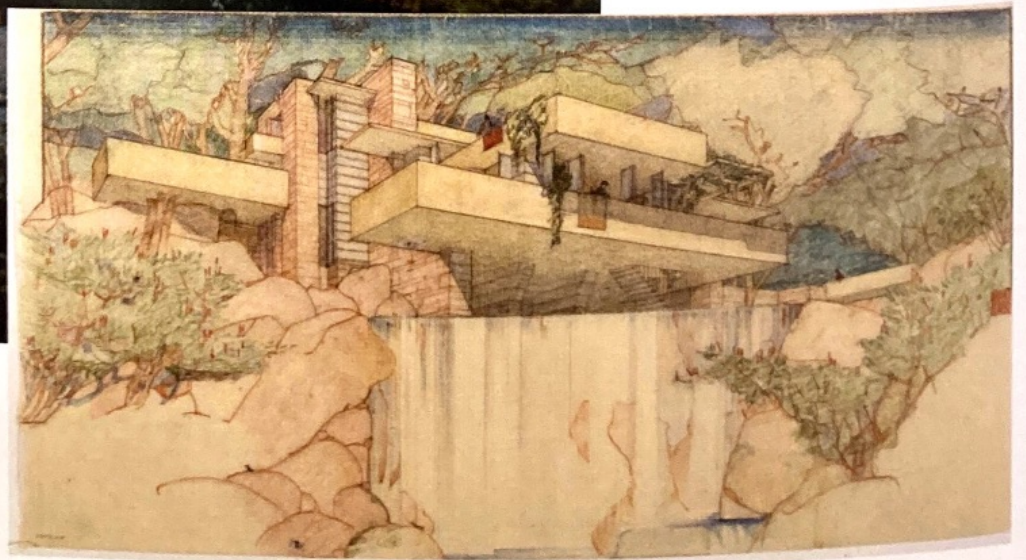
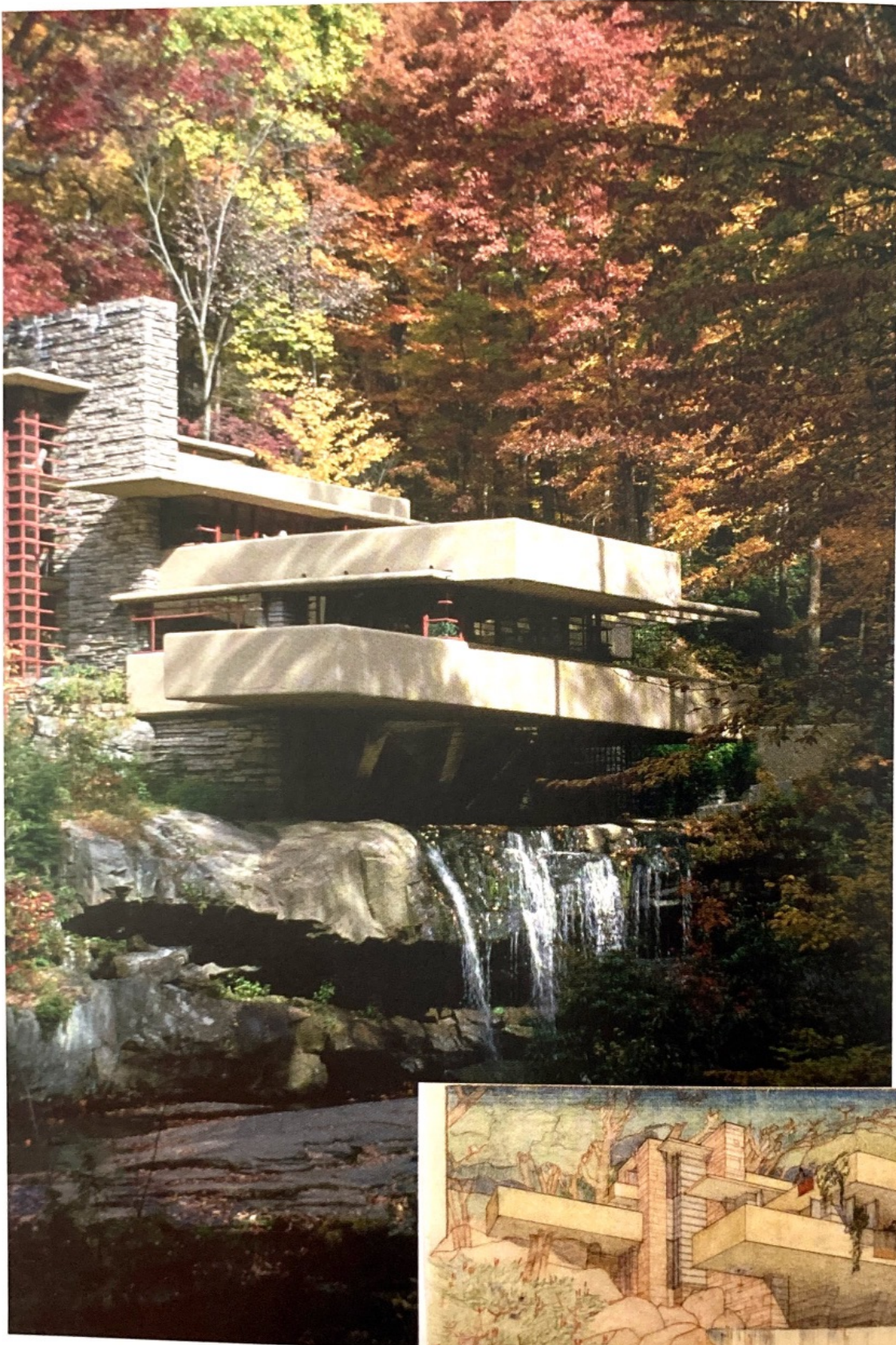




Paolo Soleri, Arcosanti, 1971



Frank Lloyd Wright,  
Fallingwater, Mill Run, 1935





Giovanni Michelucci,  
San Giovanni Battista  
Church, Autostrada del Sole,  
Campi Bisenzio, 1960

**Movements and Trends from the 19th Century to the Present.** Art Déco, Arts and Crafts, Bauhaus, Bay Region Style, Brutalism, Catalan Modernism, Chicago School, Ciam, Constructivism, Critical Regionalism, Czech Cubism, De Stijl, Deconstructivism, Deutscher Werkbund, Digital Architecture, Expressionism, Five Architects, Functionalism, Futurism, Glasgow School, Gruppo 7, High Tech, International Style, Jugendstil, L'Esprit Nouveau, Landscape Architecture, Mars Group, Metabolism, Miar, Minimalism, Modern Movement, Modernisms, Neo Liberty, Neo-eclecticism, Neorealism, Neue Sachlichkeit, Neues Bauen, New Empiricism, New Italian Design, New Urbanism, Nordic Romanticism, Organic Architecture, Postmodernism, Radical Architecture, Rationalism, Return to Order, Sezessionstil, Suprematism, Team 10, Tecton, Totalitarian Architecture, Trend, Tropicalism, Vkhutemas, Wiener Werkstätte.

ISBN 978-88-572-0473-4



5 3 8 9 5



9 788857 204734

\$ 38.95 Can \$ 38.95 £ 25.00