TEACHING BY DESIGN

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT TRUST

CONTOURED NATURE

GRADE: 6-12
TIME: 20-25 minutes

While strongly geometric, the designs Frank Lloyd Wright created for Robie House are stylized forms of natural elements that reflect his deep respect for nature. To further investigate this relationship, participants will create blind-contour drawings of Robie House art glass windows and add further reflections of the natural world to their sketch.

INTEGRATED SUBJECTS: Visual Art & Science

MATERIALS & RESOURCES

Images of Robie House Windows
Drawing paper
Pencils

OBJECTIVES

1. Increase awareness of Frank Lloyd Wright's design legacy.
2. Understand the influence of nature on Frank Lloyd Wright's work.
3. Challenge abstract thinking.
4. Examine designs found in the natural world.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How are art and nature connected?
2. What steps do you take to complete a design?
3. What is the relationship between what you see and how your hand moves as you draw?

LESSON PROCEDURE

- Introduce Frank Lloyd Wright and the Frederick C. Robie House (https://www.teachingbydesign.org/about/frank-lloyd-wright/).
- Share images of the art glass designs for the Robie House windows and discuss the integration of nature in its design. Images available at: https://www.teachingbydesign.org/multimedia/
- Have participants create a blind contour drawing of one of the art glass designs. To create a blind contour:
    1. Choose a starting point or line to follow in the design.
    2. Without looking down at your paper or picking the point of your pencil up, create a line drawing of what you see. Do not look until you are finished.
- Once participants have finished their blind contour drawing, have them spend a few minutes examining the shapes and forms they see. Encourage them to turn their sketch around and look from different angles.
- Have participants brainstorm what their sketch could represent or be a part of in nature and add further elements to complete the drawing.
- Briefly discuss the outcome and have participants share their sketches.