

# Art Hum in the City: Wright

Frank Lloyd Wright in New York City

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Left to right: With students at Columbia University, 1956; Usonian Exhibition House, 1953; Overseeing construction of the Guggenheim Museum, 1958

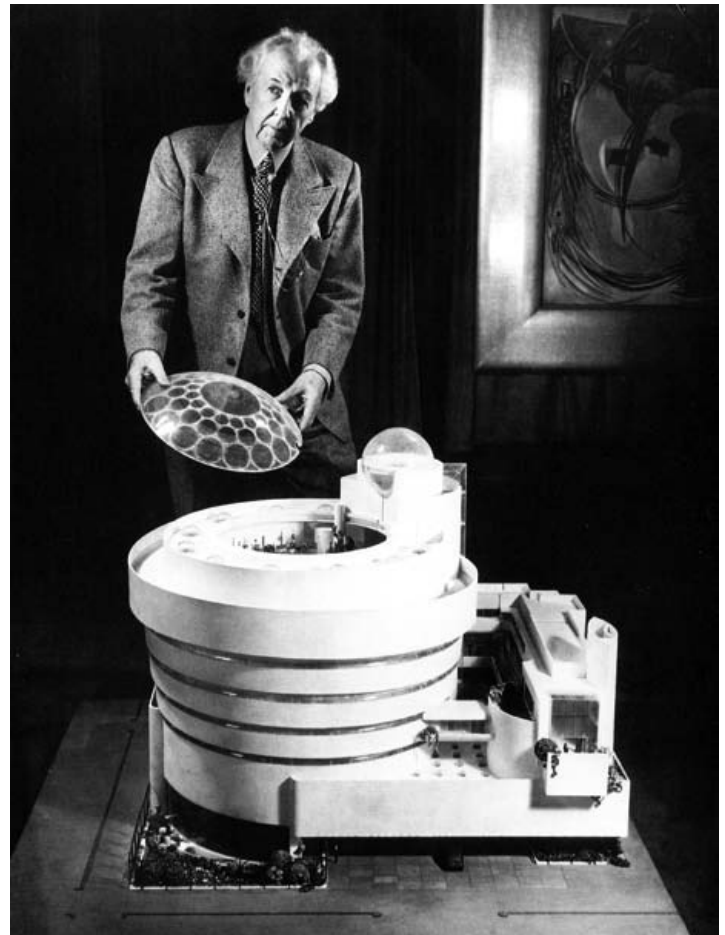
## COMPLETED PROJECTS

### Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

1071 Fifth Avenue, 1956 to 1959

In 1943, Hilla Rebay, director of Solomon R. Guggenheim's Museum of Non-Objective Painting, wrote to Wright inviting him to design a home for Guggenheim's collection. She envisioned "a temple of spirit, a monument." Instead of being constrained by conventional ideas of what a museum should be, Wright moved away from boxlike galleries, seeking to stimulate both visitor and museum staff with a fluid use of space that would result in his most iconic work. At first Wright believed that the museum would require a vertical rather than horizontal emphasis. He made several preliminary studies showing the building with the rotunda on the south side of the site and an apartment wing for Rebay on the north, with offices and museum workspaces connecting the two. The design and construction process would go on for sixteen years, and neither Wright nor Guggenheim would live to see the building completed. Guggenheim died in 1949 and Wright in 1959, six months before the museum's October 21 inauguration.

-Text from the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Website



## COMPLETED PROJECTS Cont.

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### **Hoffman Auto Showroom (now Mercedes-Benz Manhattan), 1954**

430 Park Avenue (at 56th Street). Free and open to the public.

Wright's first permanent work in New York City, his first constructed automotive design, and one of his very few interior-only projects. The sales area's central feature was a kinetic combination of a rotating turntable and a spiral ramp on which six automobiles could be displayed. The spiral, a signature element of several of Wright's automotive and retail designs, would be used most famously for the Guggenheim Museum, which would rise thirty blocks north on Fifth Avenue before the end of the decade.

- Text adopted from *Frank Lloyd Wright in New York*, Jane King Hession, 2007.



*N.B. All of the Wright homes in the New York area are private, and are not open to the public.*

### **The Crimson Beech (Cass House), 1956**

48 Manor Court, Staten Island, N.Y.

Wright introduced his own line of prefabricated homes in 1956; Crimson Beech was one of only eleven of these houses ever constructed. It was the architect's sole New York City commission.





## COMPLETED PROJECTS Cont.

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**Reisley House, 1951**  
44 Usonia Road, Pleasantville NY.



**Sol Friedman House (Toyhill), 1948**  
11 Orchard Brook Drive, Pleasantville, NY.



**Max Hoffman House, 1955**  
North Manursing Island, NY.

In 1954, European automobile importer Max Hoffman commissioned Wright to design a showroom for his Jaguar dealership in New York City. The following year, Wright designed a private home for the Hoffmans.



## DEMOLISHED PROJECTS

### Sixty Years of Living Architecture Pavilion and Usonian Exhibition House, 1953

1071 Fifth Avenue

In 1953, before construction on the Guggenheim began, *Sixty Years of Living Architecture*, an exhibition of Wright's work, was mounted in a pavilion of his own design on the museum's site. A full-scale, completely furnished *Usonian Exhibition House* accompanied the show.





## UNBUILT PROJECTS

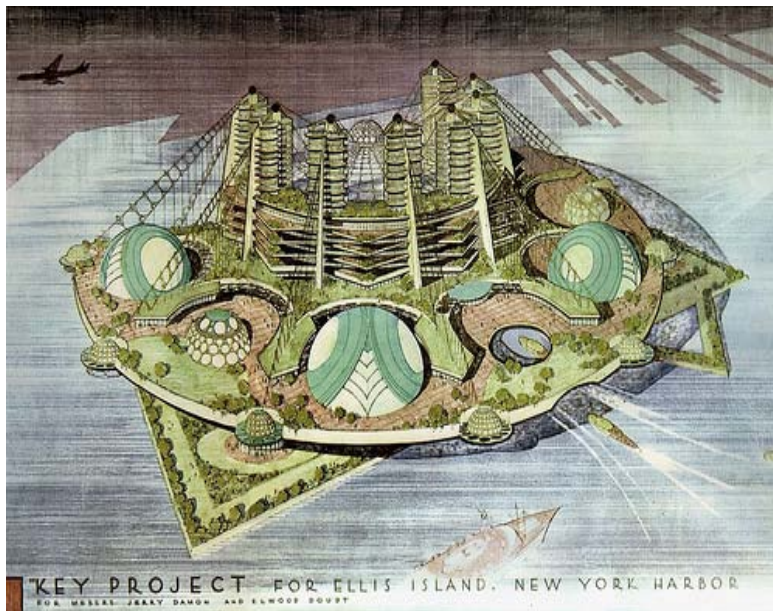
### St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie Apartment Towers

NW corner of Second Ave. and Stuyvesant St.  
c. 1927-31

This project stemmed from Wright's vision for Usonia, a new American culture based on the synthesis of architecture and landscape. The organic "tap-root" structural system resembles a tree, with a central concrete and steel load-bearing core rooted in the earth, from which floor plates are cantilevered like branches. This system frees the building of load-bearing interior partitions and supports a modulated glass curtain wall for increased natural illumination. Floor plates are rotated axially to generate variation from one level to the next and to distinguish between living and sleeping spaces in the duplex apartments. The three towers on the triangular park site are positioned apart from other tall buildings to avoid creating the dark urban canyons that Wright detested. Although the St. Mark's project was never realized, its concepts were materialized thirty years later in Wright's H. C. Price Company Tower in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

-Text from the Museum of Modern Art's website, accessed July 8, 2009.

[http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object\\_id=305](http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=305)



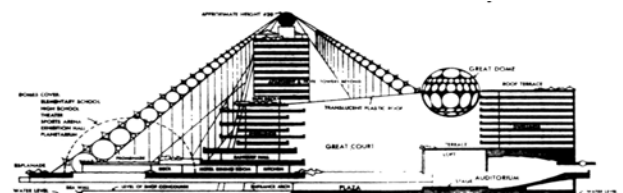
Drawing, above, and section, right, of Wright's Key Project for Ellis Island

### Ellis Island Key Project

New York Harbor, 1959

Wright Usonian vision for Ellis Island included "7,500 permanent residents, a 500-room luxury resort hotel, a yacht basin, an agora containing banks, restaurants, night clubs and shops. Moving sidewalks will rule out automobiles. Huge air-conditioned domes would house churches, auditoriums and exhibition halls. A filigree of gold-hued steel cables will support an expansive terrace on the main level."

Text from St. Petersburg Times - Aug 20, 1961



### New Sports Pavilion

Elmont, New York, 1956

As construction on the Solomon L. Guggenheim Museum began, Guggenheim offered Wright a second commission: the design of the New Sports Pavilion at Long Island's Belmont Park, home of the annual Belmont Stakes. A "massive concrete slab" served as the foundation for the grandstand, and radiant heating was planned for the floors.

-Text from Frank Lloyd Wright in New York, Jane Hession, 2007.

