

Exploration 15 Programmatic Architecture

Programmatic (also known as mimetic or mimic) architecture is characterized by constructions in the forms of objects not normally associated with buildings, such as characters, animals, people or household objects. There may be an element of caricature or a cartoonish element associated with the architecture. Some people think that Fallingwater looks like a waterfall, but if so, it's highly abstracted. One of the most famous examples of programmatic architecture in western Pennsylvania is the Coffee Pot building on the Lincoln Highway.

Materials:

- Something to write and draw on
- Something to write or draw with
- Images illustrating programmatic architecture
- Images of the Bavinger House

Objective:

After analyzing images of programmatic architecture, students will demonstrate their understanding of this concept through their own designs for a "Snail House."

Standards:

- Arts: NA-VA 1, 2, 3, 4, 6
- English: NL-ENG 4, 7, 12
- Mathematics: NM-GEO 1, 2, 4; NM-PROB.CONN 3; NM-PROB.COMM 2; NM-PROB.REP 2, 3
- Science: NS 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
- Social Studies: NSS-G 2, 5

Procedures:

- Show your students images of the unusual buildings. While showing them, ask:
 - What is the function of this building?
 - How big is it?
 - Where is it?
 - Who might use this building?
 - What would you do there?
 - Who might go there?
 - When it was built
 - Did it have an architect?

- Who was the client?
 - What's it like inside the building?
 - How many spaces are inside the building?
 - What surrounds the building?
 - Imagine a day in the life of this building. Write about it.
- Using these as a point of departure, ask the students to imagine what a "Snail House" would look like. Ask them to draw it and write about it, describing the experience of being inside it.
 - How would you enter the house?
 - What is the sense of space in your "Snail House"?
 - What natural, or constructed, features are around the house?
 - Write a piece of guided imagery to take your classmates on a "mental imagery tour" of your Snail House.
 - Next, show images of Bruce Goff's Bavinger House—ask them to compare and contrast his work to their designs.
- Ask the students to design their own programmatic architecture for a building next to their school. Identify a need and address it with a building that takes its form from an object not normally associated with a building that will still describe its use. For example, a building that looks like a stack of books might be a study center; a football shaped building may house locker rooms for the team. Students should draw an image of the building and a floor plan. Ask them to write a guided imagery tour of the building.



Coffee Pot Building just west of Bedford, PA on the Lincoln Highway
Photo by Ron Johnson



Longaberger Basket Company headquarters in Newark, Ohio.

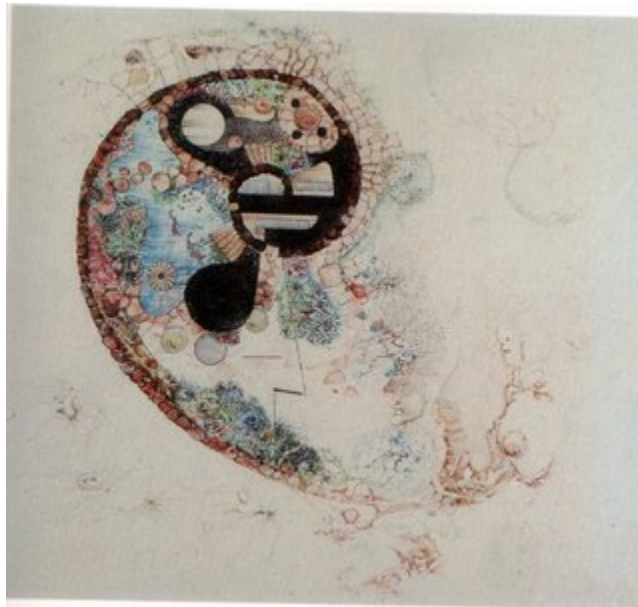
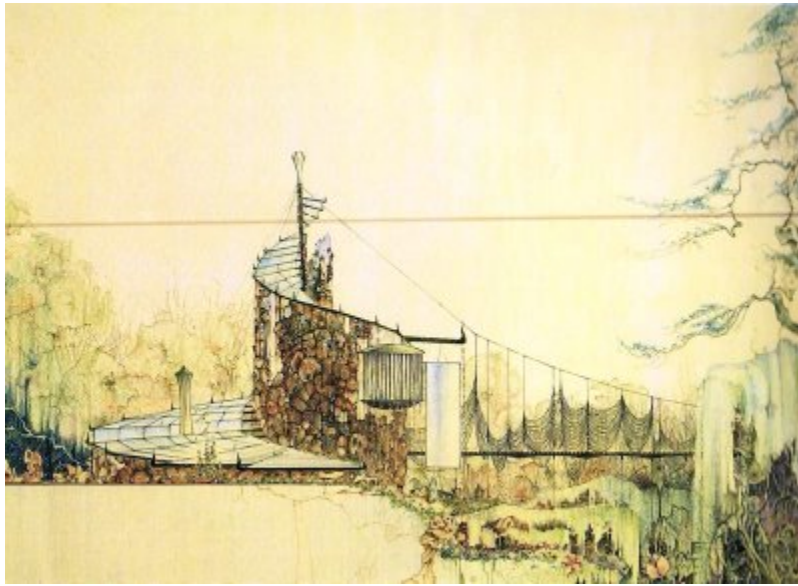
Photo by Derek Jensen



Lucy the Elephant
Margate City, New Jersey



Brown Derby Restaurant
Photo by Chalmers Butterfield



Elevation and Plan
Bavinger House



Bavinger House
Bruce Goff



Bavinger House
Bruce Goff