

# UNSTAKED TERRITORY: Frontiers of Beginning Design

Proceedings of the 19th National Conference on the Beginning  
Design Student, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma  
April 3-5, 2003



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Challenging The Boundaries I  
Challenging The Boundaries II  
Integrating The Boundaries  
Obscuring The Boundaries  
Various Terrains  
Initial Terrain

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## **The High School Residency at Fallingwater and the Value of Place in the Introduction of Design**

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For one week every summer Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater hosts a pre-college residency program. Twelve students from across the United States and Canada are selected to participate in the program. For most of the participants this one-week program is their first introduction to the methodology of architecture school and the process of design.

The program is conceived as an intense introduction to architectural ideas and processes applying several different media and design projects in quick succession. While part of (nearly) every day is spent in the vicinity of Fallingwater, design projects are not figuratively based on the building. Visits to the house coincide with drawing assignments and discussions of perception that then form a basis for a sequence of design projects. Projects build upon one another through both topical consideration and certain aspects of construction method: this way, despite the program's short duration, individual assignments are perceived as part of an overall flow of activity and concept.

The design projects – while asking the students to consider Fallingwater for insight – are intentionally disassociated from the construction methods of the house. When the visitor's center was designed for Fallingwater, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (the conservator and curator of the property) was concerned that the form of the house not be sentimentalized in the contemporary additions to the site. Taking cues from this wisdom design projects in the residency are considered in a similar fashion so that the lessons come from transference of insight and passion rather than form. This summer will be the fifth season of the residency program using the current curriculum. This paper will present an overview of the assignment sequence followed by an analysis of where projects have been most and least effective and will conclude with a consideration of the program's context: some of the lessons appear to be effective in a manner which is autonomous of place where others are clearly enforced by the palpable qualities of Fallingwater.