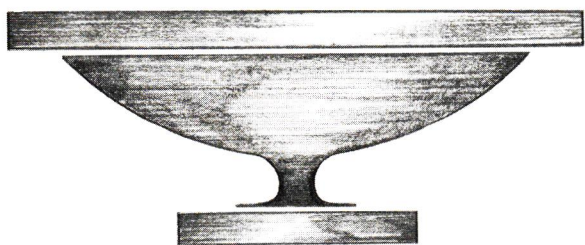
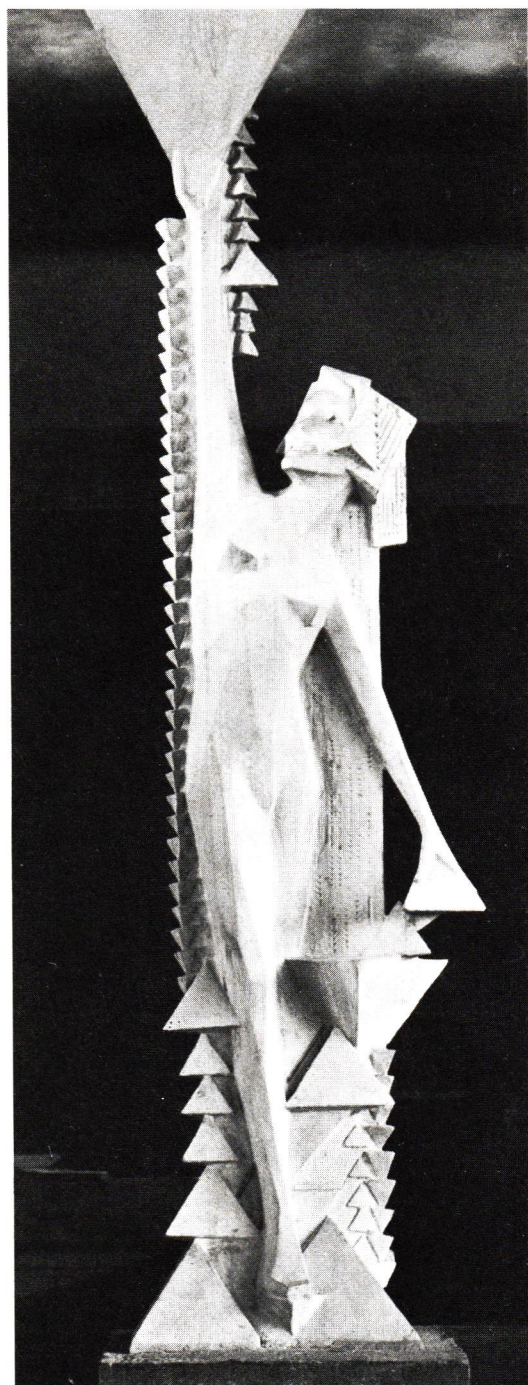


ALFONSO IANNELLI



The PRAIRIE SCHOOL *Review*

Volume II, Number 4

Fourth Quarter, 1965

\$2.50 a copy



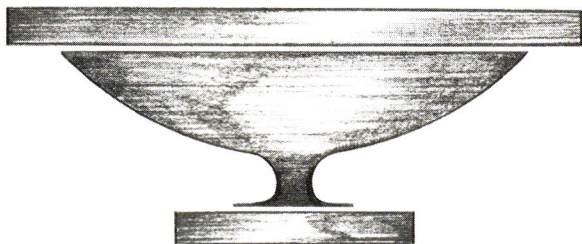
LEFT and COVER: The evolution of one of the Midway Gardens Sprites is illustrated on these pages. The tiny sketch below, reproduced actual size, was dated March 25, 1914, three days earlier than the larger finished drawing shown here. The finished sprite, illustrated on the cover, was remarkably similar to this drawing. Mr. Iannelli's superb ability to move from two to three dimensions is clearly evident in this instance.



*March 25th 1914
A. Iannelli*

*March 28th 1914
A. Iannelli*

THE PRAIRIE SCHOOL REVIEW is published four times a year by The Prairie School Press, 12509 South 89th Avenue, Palos Park, Illinois 60464. W.R. Hasbrouck, AIA, Editor and Publisher, Marilyn Whittlesey Hasbrouck, Assistant Editor. Manuscripts concerning the Prairie School of Architecture and related arts are solicited. Reasonable care will be used in handling manuscripts and such material will be returned if return postage is enclosed. Single copy price \$2.50, subscription \$10.00 per year in U.S. and Canada, \$12.00 elsewhere. Issues are mailed flat in envelopes. Address all change of address notices, subscription or back issue inquiries to the Editor at the above address. © Copyright 1972 by W. R. Hasbrouck.



The PRAIRIE SCHOOL *Review*

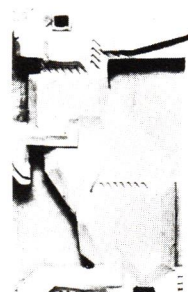
Volume II, Number 4

Fourth Quarter, 1965

CONTENTS

- 4 From the Editors
- 5 Alfonso Iannelli, *The Prairie Spirit in Sculpture*
by Joseph Griggs
- 24 Book Reviews
- The Work of Purcell and Elmslie*, Gebhard
Reviewed by Lloyd Henri Hobson
- The American Association of Architectural Bibliographers, Papers I*
Reviewed by W. R. Hasbrouck
- Short Reviews
- Great American Mansions*, Folsom
Frank Lloyd Wright, Jacobs
The Valley of the God-Almighty Joneses, Barney
Architecture of Chicago and Vicinity, Webster
- 26 Letter to the Editor
- 27 Selected Bibliography

Unless otherwise noted, all photographs in this issue were supplied by the Iannelli Studios.



From the EDITORS

In January of 1966 an exhibit will open in Chicago's new steel and glass Civic Center building. It is to be the first public showing of the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibit of Chicago buildings recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey. It will include several Prairie School houses as well as many of the great Chicago commercial buildings. Upon leaving Chicago this show will be seen throughout the United States for the next three years.

The HABS catalog, Chicago and Nearby Illinois Areas, issued concurrently with this exhibit indicates that 307 historic buildings, represented by 243 measured drawings, 600 photographs, 612 data pages and 216 inventory forms have been recorded to date. Most of this work has been as a result of the work of Earl H. Reed, FAIA, dean of American Architectural Historians. Mr. Reed was the most recent recipient of the gold medal of the Chicago Chapter AIA for this and other accomplishments. He has been assisted by Mr. James Massey, Supervisory Architect of the National Park Service.

However, these 307 buildings are but a sample of the historic architecture of Chicago and the midwest that should be recorded. The majority have been recorded only on inventory forms, largely thru efforts of interested volunteers, but many should be photographed and measured without delay. Of note is the fact that 57 of these buildings have already been demolished.

The National Park Service has furnished a substantial portion of the funds necessary to perform such photography and measuring in the past. In 1966, however, they advise that no funds will be available. President Johnson's great society has not seen fit to support this important phase of the National Park Service's program. This is extremely unfortunate but does not present a hopeless case. It means that funds must be raised in the Chicago area from other sources.

As a beginning, the Prairie School Press has offered to donate any profits from the sale of the HABS catalog, a PSP publication, made at the Chicago exhibit mentioned above. It won't be a great sum, but we hope it will be the beginning of a fund to enable Mr. Reed to direct a Chicago HABS recording project in 1966.

ALFONSO IANNELLI



1888-1965

The Prairie Spirit in Sculpture

By Joseph Griggs

Mr. Joseph Griggs graduated from the School of Architecture at the University of Oregon before coming to Chicago. He presently is working in the office of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe while teaching at the Chicago Art Institute. He interviewed Mr. Iannelli several times for this article before his death March 23, 1965. Since that time, Mr. Griggs has worked closely with Miss Ruth Blackwell, Mr. Iannelli's artistic executor and partner for many years.

Of the teachings of the Prairie School of Architecture, "integrity" and "unity" seem of foremost importance to organic design. To achieve these ideas required either that the complete design, including building, landscaping, ornament and sculpture, furniture and selection of furnishings, be done by one person, or that the coordination of these multiple elements be guided by the essential ideas basic to the overall design. For the architects of the Prairie School it was seldom easy to find art-

ists and craftsmen willing to discipline themselves within the Prairie School principles, or, indeed, any capable of understanding the aims of those principles. Of those few artists who were able to attune themselves to the radically new ideas being developed, the sculptor, Alfonso Iannelli, ranks high. His understanding of the artistic problems presented, his ideas regarding the primary importance of the integration of the arts with architecture, and his sensitivity to the inherent nature of

materials led to a long and highly successful series of collaborations with the architects of the Prairie School on some of their most important buildings.

Alfonso Iannelli was born in Andretta, Italy in 1888. His father, a shoemaker, left his young family to come to America, planning to send for them as soon as he could. During this time the Iannelli family inn was host to the artist who came each year to work on the renewal of the murals in the Andretta church. Alfonso and his brothers were enlisted as helpers, collecting bristles for brushes and pressing walnuts to produce the oil for the paint. Before he was ten years old, Alfonso Iannelli was attracted by this exposure toward an artistic career.

When he was ten, the family was finally called to Newark from Andretta. The change could not have been more profound. Andretta was a sunny, southern Italian town with an indigeneous architecture of simple, whitewashed buildings. Newark, in 1898, was a bustling industrial city with sooty, industrial architecture and gray, smoke-filled skies. It is a tribute to Iannelli's characteristic strength and adaptability that he did not succumb to the cultural and environmental shock.

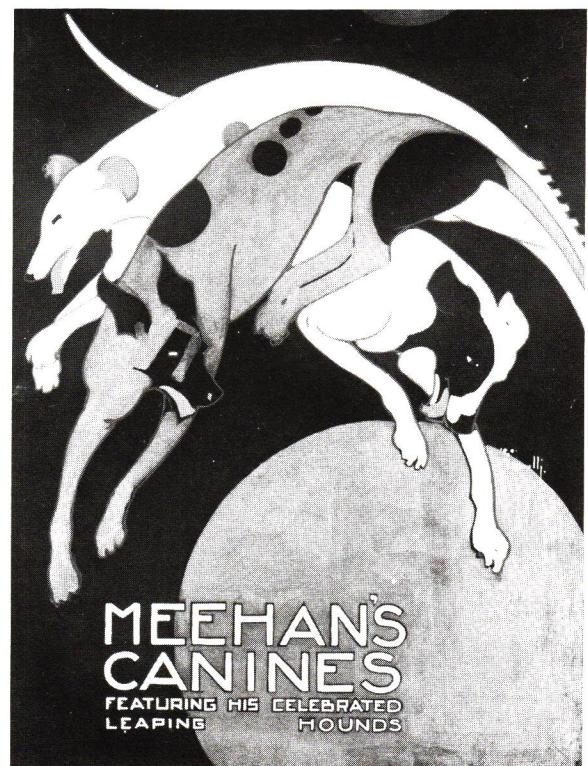
These are two early posters executed by Iannelli for the Orpheum Theater in Los Angeles. The long curved lines are reminiscent of the Art Nouveau. The evolution from this work to the later, more mature posters is one of continuous development.



THE DANCE of the TEMPTRESS
ALICE ELBERT FRENCH

Due to the rising industrialization of the shoe-making industry, the elder Iannelli's fortunes began to decline, and, at thirteen, Alfonso was forced to leave school and become an apprentice in a jewelry factory. Shortly after, perhaps because of some of his work as an apprentice, he received a scholarship to study at the Newark Technical School under William St. John Harper. His work as an apprentice during this time dealt primarily with the decoration of objects, and his ideas regarding simplification and use of untouched areas were regarded as highly unconventional. For nearly three years he continued his apprenticeship training, attending the Newark School at night. During his third year there he won a scholarship to the Art Student's League in New York. He was the first Newark student ever to be so honored, and although he had nearly completed his apprenticeship in the jewelry factory, he quit, and at the age of seventeen went to New York to study at the Art Student's League under George B. Bridgman and Gutzon Borglum.¹ Two months later he became an assistant in Borglum's studios, and by the end of the first year he had won the St. Gaudens prize for sculpture and Borglum's prize for general work in composition, design and sculpture. He worked about five months for Borglum on the sculpture for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine before establishing his own studio in New York.

¹ Gutson Borglum is best known for his sculpture of the presidents at Mount Rushmore Memorial in South Dakota.



The 1907 panic directed Iannelli toward the commercial arts as a means of earning a living. He was employed by several advertising agencies before striking out on his own again to produce work for magazines such as *Harpers Weekly*, *Colliers* and *Ladies Home Journal*, in addition to occasional work for Borglum. In 1908 he left New York for Cincinnati where he worked as chief designer for a lithograph company. A year later the restless young Iannelli "decided to go West to get away from all so-called art and find what there was inside of me".² His ideas regarding the graphic arts had already begun to be concerned with relating all aspects as integral to the whole, that is, an organic relationship of all the parts. He was considering the effect of color as it related to the message to be conveyed and worked with the copy writers to enable him to use lettering as part of the design. By this time he had developed his feeling that "commercial" art was as valid an endeavor for the creative artist as "studio" art, a feeling he maintained throughout his life and that led him to continue work in that area as well as in the field of industrial design.

Iannelli's decision to go west rather than to go to Europe as his contemporaries were doing represented an extension of his early orientation. As a youth his life had been centered around the anticipated immigration to America, and now at least part of his purpose was to find artistic expressions suited to the needs of America, rather than turning back to Europe for inspiration. In his search for an "American" art and his rejection of the generally held belief in European cultural supremacy, Iannelli was unwittingly in company with the movement in architecture begun with the formulation of the philosophy of Louis Sullivan and continued in the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and other Prairie School architects. The Auditorium had been under construction the year of Iannelli's birth and as he proceeded toward California, Wright was building the Robie house.

Iannelli arrived in Los Angeles in 1910 intending to set out for the Indian reservations, but lack of money forced him to look for work. Together with a man experienced in stained glass he obtained the job for the Orpheum Theatre windows, and through the window commission he received the job for the vaudeville posters for the theatre. A new poster was required each week, and Iannelli was allowed complete freedom in their design giving him his first opportunity to actively seek appropriate form in his work. With the posters he felt that he had "... developed a scientific

2 Conversation with the author.

method of handling this medium to express the vaudeville spirit".³ Although they were done one at a time, the later posters were considered as a continuous visual sequence and several posters were displayed simultaneously. The first posters were related in style to the New York magazine covers, but there was a continuous evolution and definition



Gustav Klimt, *Portrait of Frau Adele Bloch-Bauer* (1907)
Photo from *Art Nouveau*, by Robert Schmultzler.

of his philosophy. The work of the Viennese Secessionist artist, Gustav Klimt,⁴ influenced the development of Iannelli's approach to abstraction of subject and his ideas of composition, but the posters were clearly the result of Iannelli's own vision. The approach to abstraction, the development and enrichment of his formal vocabulary and the definition of his ideas regarding the use of color provided much of the material which he was soon able to translate meaningfully for further development in conjunction with architecture. Much of the philosophy which guided him throughout his life was either formulated or came to maturity during this time. Iannelli recognized the importance of the posters in his development and thoughtfully retained the originals. Many people urged their publication, but he did not want to be known as a "poster man". It was not until 1960 that he wrote in a letter to John Lloyd Wright "now I feel it (the Orpheum posters) can be included with the other activities . . .".⁵

It was the posters which originally attracted the

3 *Ibid.*

4 Ed. note: The work of Gustav Klimt is covered extensively in the Secessionist publication *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* published by Alexander Koch in Darmstadt, Germany during the period 1900 to 1905.

5 Letter from Alfonso Iannelli to John Lloyd Wright, 1960.

attention of John Lloyd Wright, Lloyd Wright and Barry Byrne in Los Angeles. John Wright was employed in the office of Harrison Albright at this time, and Lloyd Wright was working for I. J. Gill. Barry Byrne was staying with the Wrights prior to his return to Chicago from Seattle. John Wright was in the habit of attending the Orpheum weekly and was fascinated by the posters. "A bold colorful geometric background pattern ran through the series relating each to the other. The impression produced was that of one continuous mural."⁶ The posters became as important to John Wright as the shows and he asked the theatre manager for the name and address of the artist. About this time Iannelli had received the commission to do the sculpture for the Spreckels Organ Pavilion at the Panama Pacific Exposition which was being designed by Harrison Albright. When Iannelli went to Albright's Los Angeles office and gave his name at the desk, he was greeted with "Are you the one who does the Orpheum posters? . . . My name is John Lloyd Wright and we have been enjoying your posters. I have tried to see you a few times but we were scared away by the sign on your door."⁷

6 Letter to the author from John Lloyd Wright, Sept. 1965.

7 Conversation with the author. John Wright's account of the meeting differs from Iannelli's as follows:

At my first opportunity I sought him (Iannelli) out. After walking through passages and over roofs to the rear of a building I came to the Iannelli Studio. Alfonso Iannelli

That evening Iannelli was the guest of John and Lloyd Wright and Barry Byrne at their apartment and saw for the first time the work of Frank Lloyd Wright.

In designing the Workingman's Hotel in Albright's office in 1913 for San Diego (later known as the Golden West Hotel), John Wright had included a provision for sculpture in the upper four corners of the building. Having seen examples of Iannelli's sculpture on his first visit to the studio, he suggested to Mr. Albright that Iannelli be given the commission for this job, also. The Workingman's Hotel was reinforced concrete construction and the sculpture was to be made of a combination of plaster and cement, a material about which Iannelli was somewhat skeptical. He later said that he often walked blocks out of his way to avoid going by the hotel for fear of being hit by pieces of falling sculpture. There were no problems, however, and the sculpture is still intact.

sat at his easel painting posters for the next week's show. When he showed me about his studio, I noticed several small but highly interesting pieces of sculpture in various stages of completion . . . I had indicated sculpture in the upper four corners of a building I was designing for the J. D. Spreckels Workingman's Hotel for Architect Harrison Albright in San Diego. I arranged a meeting between Alfonso and Mr. Albright which resulted in Alfonso's first architectural sculpture commission.

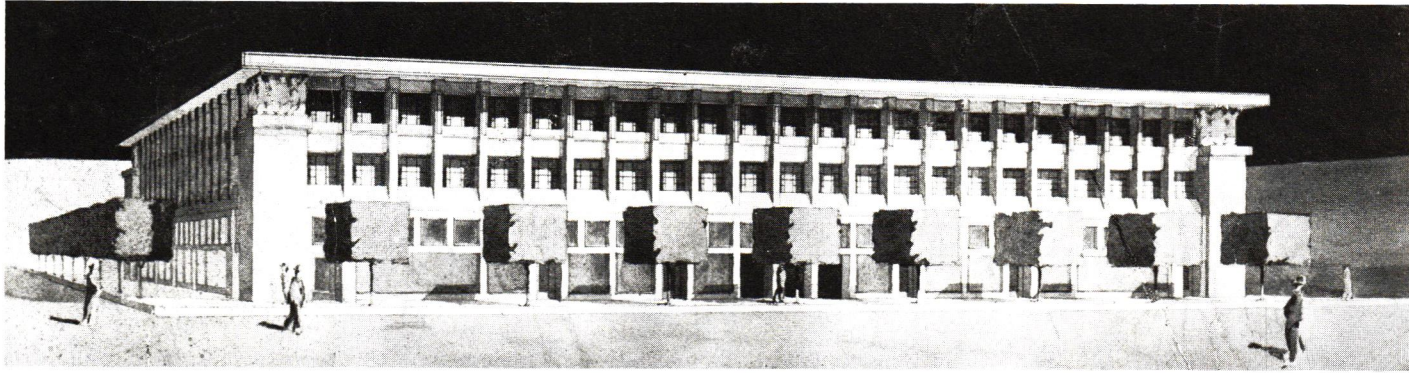
Letter to the author from John Lloyd Wright, Sept. 1965.



BERTISH
An EXHIBITION of STRENGTH & AGILITY



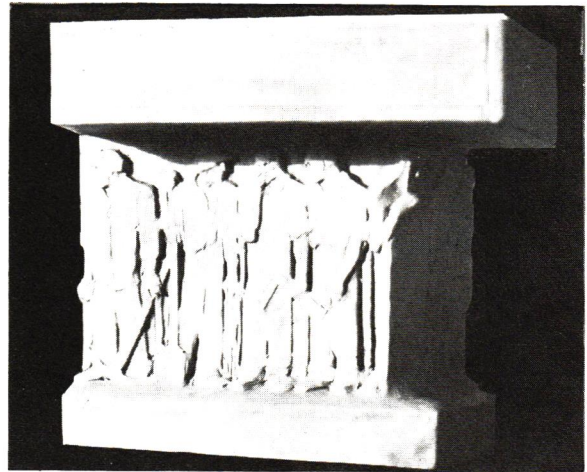
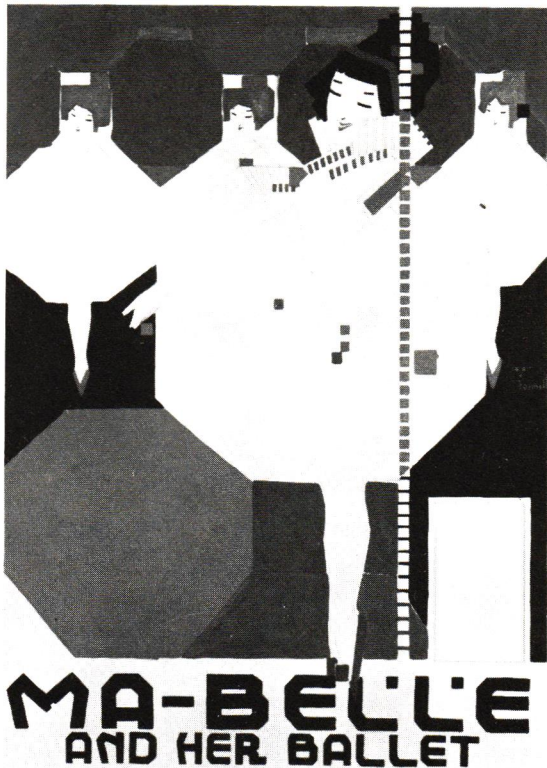
**MAE MELVILLE &
ROBERT HIGGINS.**
"PUTTING ON AIRS"



This is a rendering of the Workingman's Hotel, designed by John Lloyd Wright in 1913 while employed by Harrison Albright in Los Angeles.

The model at left was designed by Alfonso Iannelli in 1913 to be used for the Workingman's Hotel. It was not used and the final figures were much different as shown on page 14.

This series of posters clearly demonstrates Iannelli's style of work during the period immediately preceding his first encounter with Frank Lloyd Wright. Over 100 of these were done, 30" by 40" in size and all in brilliant primary colors plus black and gold.

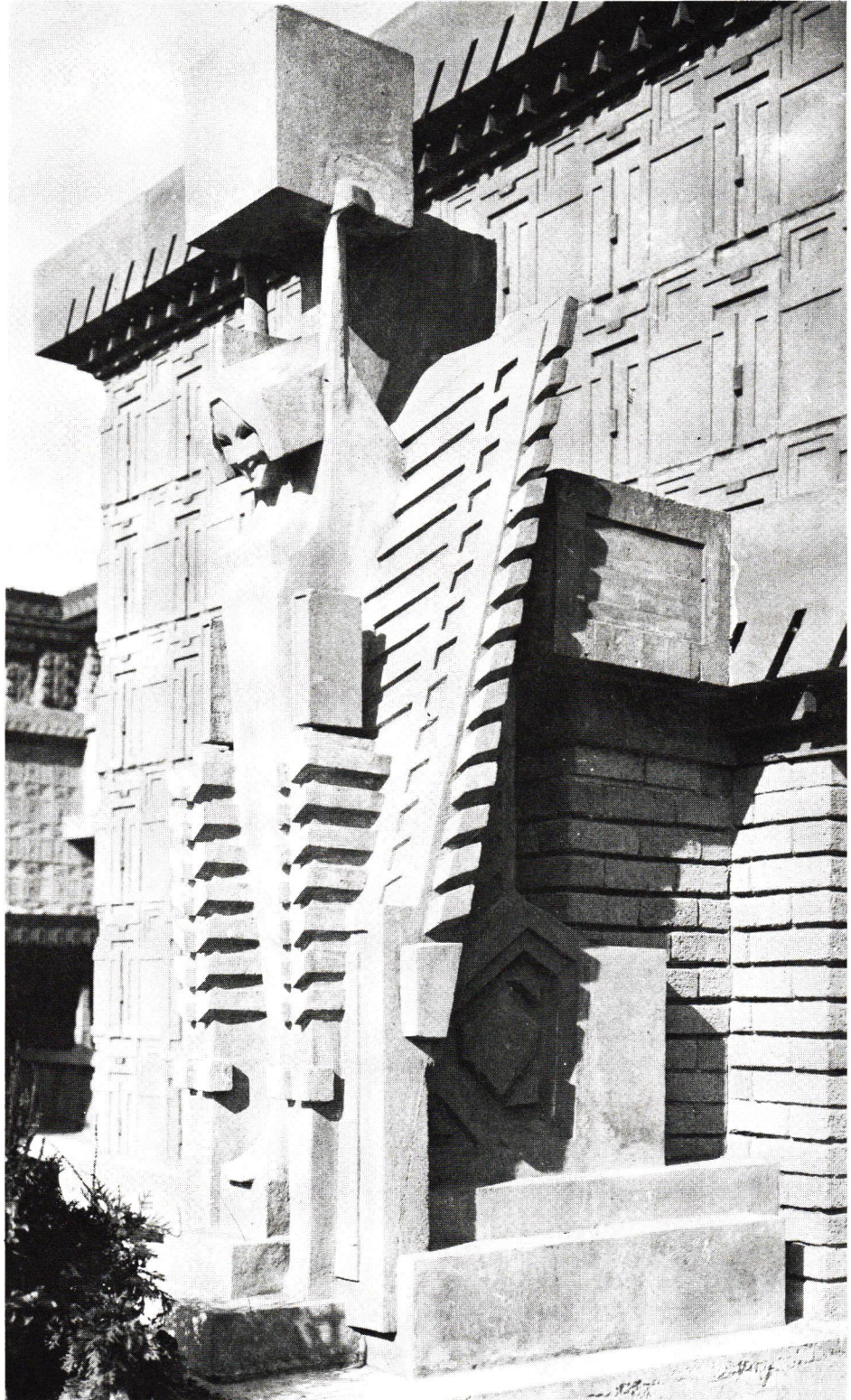


In 1913, before the hotel construction began, John Wright returned to Chicago to join his father at his Orchestra Hall office where designs for the Midway Gardens were being prepared. John Wright recalls "After my enthusiastic recital of Alfonso's ability, Frank Lloyd Wright gave me permission to telegraph Alfonso to come to Chicago It was not long thereafter before Iannelli was established in the sculptor's shack at the construction site together with Richard W. Bock who produced the four large stair tower pediments for the Winter Garden of Midway Gardens Bock and Iannelli hit it off well under the cooperative spirit that existed in the one mind direction of Frank Lloyd Wright." ⁸

Henry-Russell Hitchcock in *In the Nature of Materials* points out that in the Midway Gardens, Wright sought to create " . . . a fresh open fantasia in which sculpture and painting, not as independent entities but closely related to the essential architectural conception, should play an important part". ⁹ Hitchcock's evaluation of Iannelli's role in this project is somewhat vague, and he attributes the sculpture solely to Wright's genius. Study of the previously unpublished Orpheum Theatre

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *In the Nature of Materials*, New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1942, p. 63.

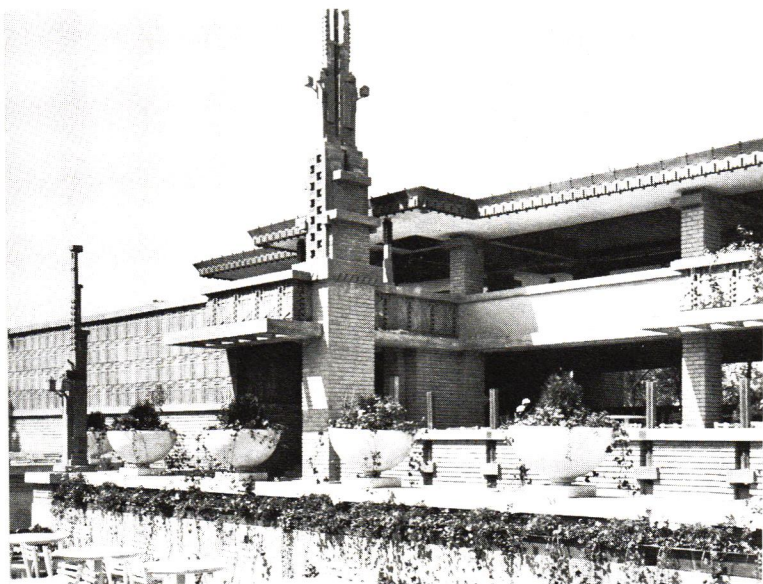


Wright and Iannelli worked very closely on the figures for the Midway Gardens. Compare this figure with that shown as figure 294 in The Drawings of Frank Lloyd Wright by Arthur Drexler. In this case only the figure's face is Iannelli's, the remainder evidently Wright's, although Iannelli certainly executed this as well as the other Midway Gardens figures.

posters makes very clear Iannelli's independent development of an aesthetic vocabulary prior to 1914, clearly the direct predecessor of the "Cubist figures" which Hitchcock says "... are not derivative from European work, but rather almost exactly contemporary parallels to the work of the most advanced French and German painters and sculptors".¹⁰ However, there is no doubt that young Iannelli was influenced by Wright's powerful personality, perhaps more in the form of a crystallization of his ideas — a transference from the two dimensional character of the posters to the three dimensional sculpture. But it is interesting, indeed surprising, to compare Iannelli's independent poster designs with the ornamental quality of earlier Wright works such as the Coonley Estate.

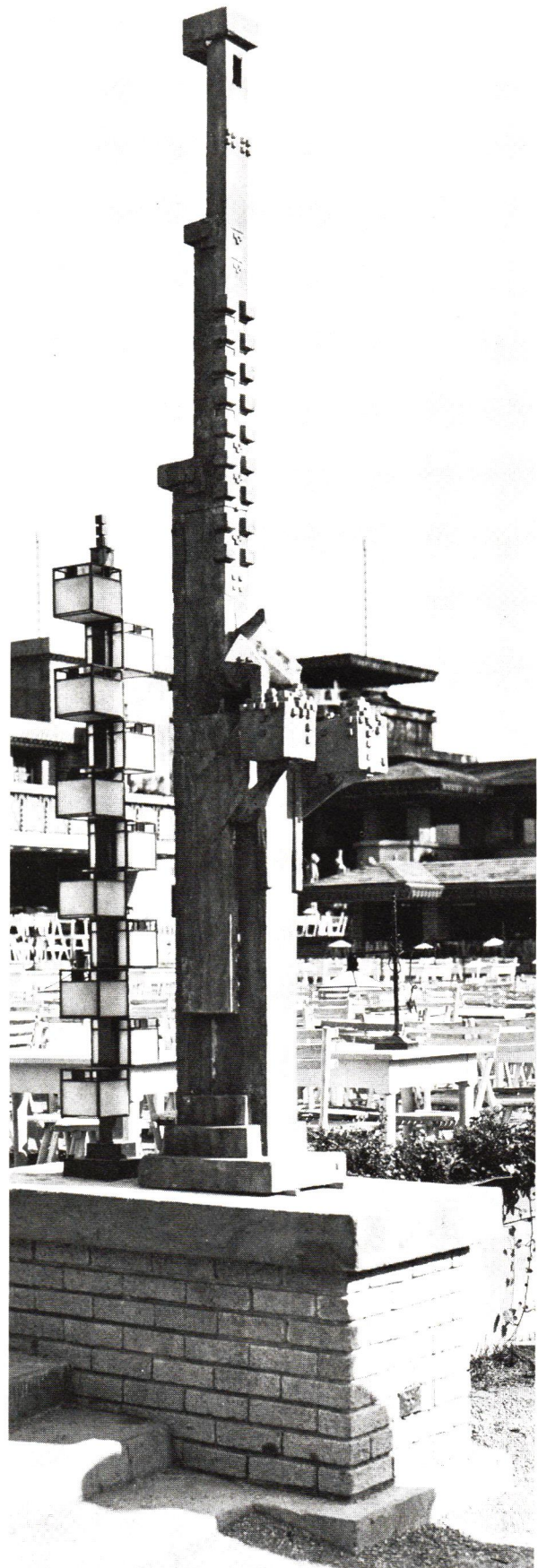
Iannelli wrote in 1961 that "... it was a pleasure to work on Midway Gardens with Mr. Wright, whose creative view in invention of forms was such that it was possible to work in harmony with his theme". "Here was a mutual understanding of the aims to be achieved and

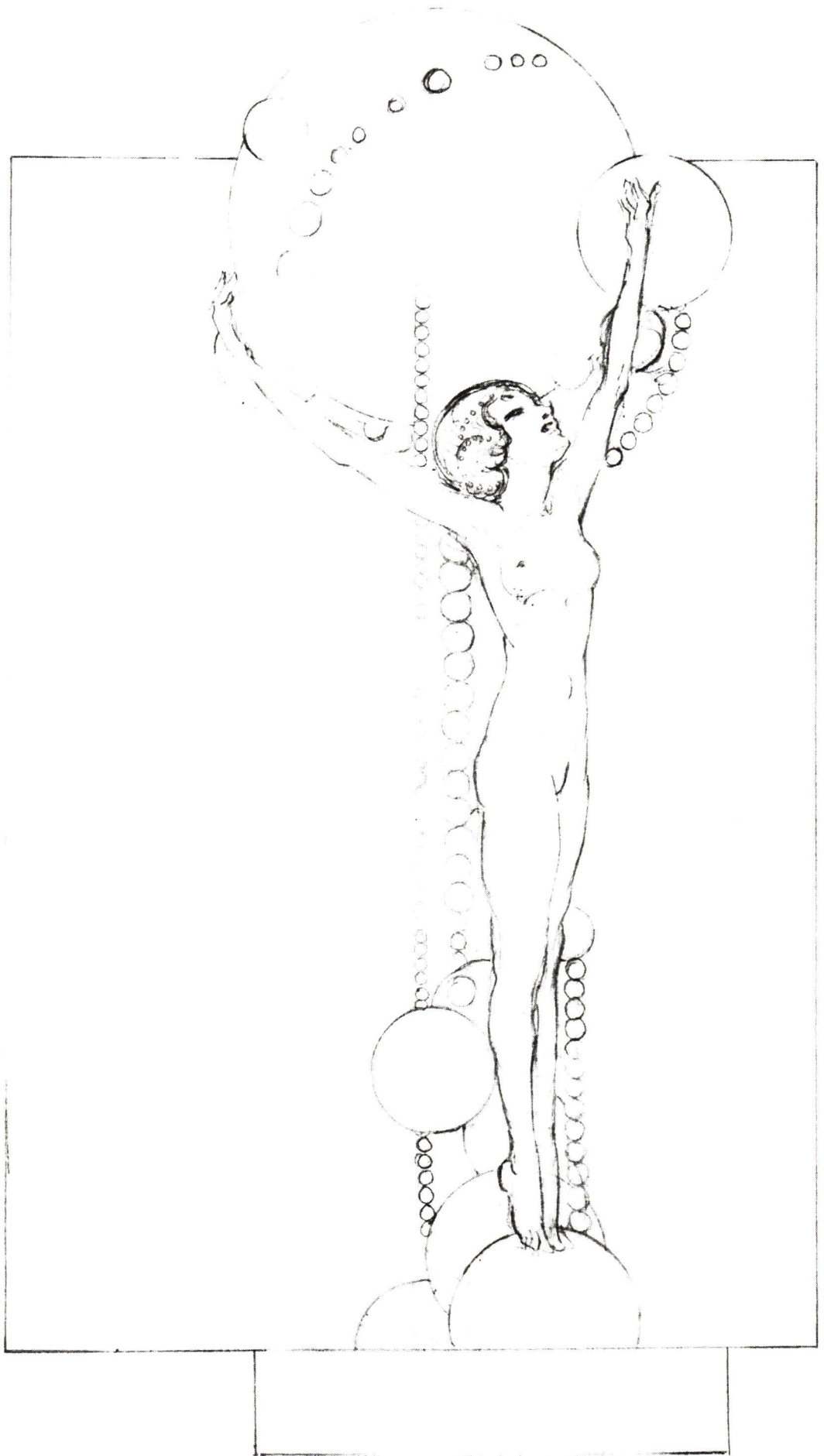
¹⁰ *Ibid.*

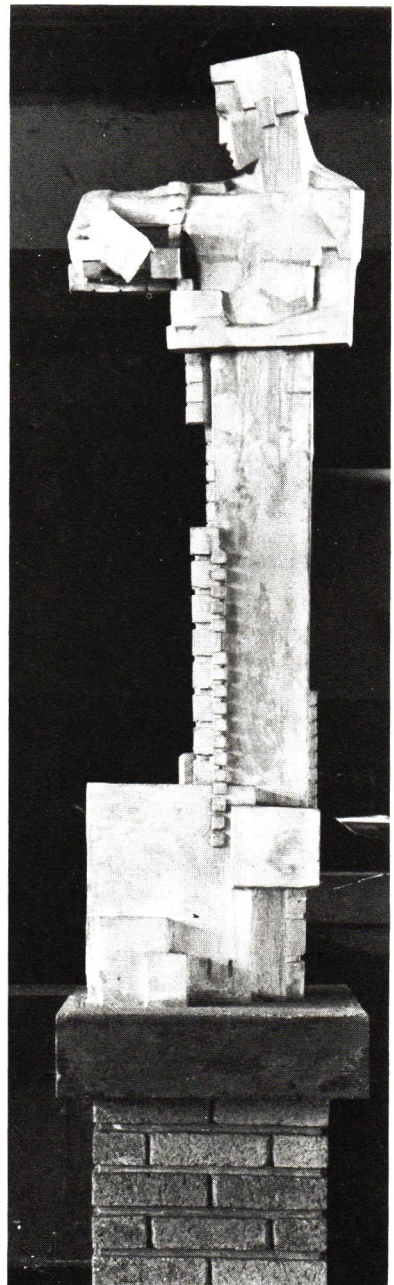
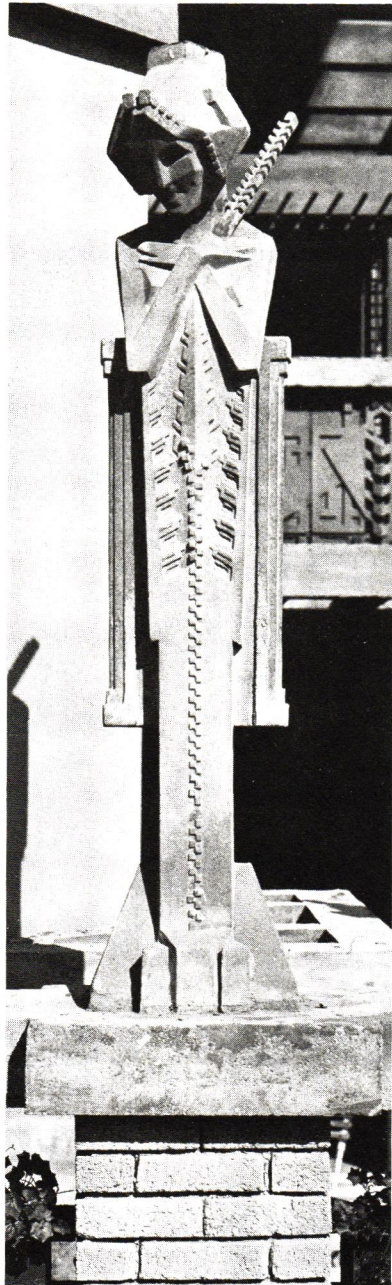
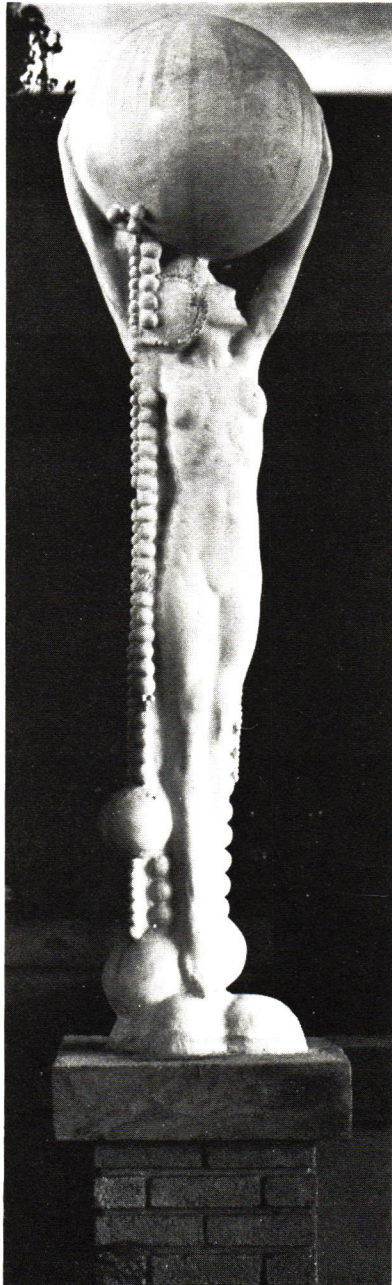


The interweaving of sculpture and architecture at the Midway Gardens was a culmination of the combined talents of Wright and Iannelli. The loss of this great building was one of the tragic events of modern architecture.

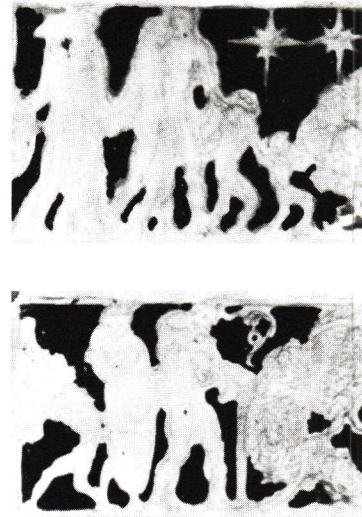
This strong geometric piece was one of a pair flanking a low stair in the inner garden. The vertical light tree was the ancestor of similar fixtures used by Wright in many of the Usonian houses in the last years of his life.







Frank Lloyd Wright's often professed love for his T-Square and triangle in creating ornamental forms is evident in these figures. Nevertheless, Alfonso Iannelli's sensitive hand gave the forms a delicacy that Wright's geometry alone would have sorely missed. Mr. Iannelli's sketches of the "sphere" figure are illustrated along with the executed piece to show his careful attention to detail in planning his work.



Upon completion of his work on the Midway Gardens, Iannelli returned to California and executed this sculpture for use on the Workingman's Hotel.

where to accelerate and where to modify the enrichment . . . we could discuss and communicate.”¹¹ That Iannelli had not produced a synthesis of his poster vocabulary in his sculpture prior to the Midway work is suggested, as John Wright has pointed out,¹² in the difference between the forms of the original plaster model done before Alfonso's journey to Chicago and the executed work for the Workingman's Hotel. The simplification to a few repetitive elements was partly due to the necessity of reducing the cost, but Iannelli's vision of architectural sculpture had most certainly changed, and that change is attributable to the close association with Frank Lloyd Wright.

14 Iannelli had spent about eight months in Chicago working on Midway Gardens before returning to Los Angeles. It was a considerable blow to him when the Gardens were published that his name as sculptor was omitted.¹³ The

impression was given that Wright was solely responsible for all aspects of the design. A series of letters was exchanged in which Wright subsequently admitted that a mistake had been made, but no public correction was ever published. In a letter to Iannelli in 1954 John Wright, speaking of Midway Gardens, wrote "Of course we know that recognition of any living creative collaboration such as this, by the architect, my father (the 'Benvenuto Cellini' personality in architecture), is impossible. But I know that you were there too. I know too that you had the recognition of the architect until your work was done. But never after the building was completed, which, rightful recognition would have been greatly helpful to you as it would have to any young artist."¹⁴ Vincent Scully in his monograph on Frank Lloyd Wright mentions Wright's " . . . tragic need, which was to keep the romantic myth of the artist as isolated creator and superman

11 Alfonso Iannelli, "Architect and Sculptor in the Making of Midway Gardens", *The Midway Gardens, 1914-1929*, University of Chicago, 1961.

12 Letter to the author from John Lloyd Wright, Sept. 1965.

13 Ed. Note: The first publication was in the magazine

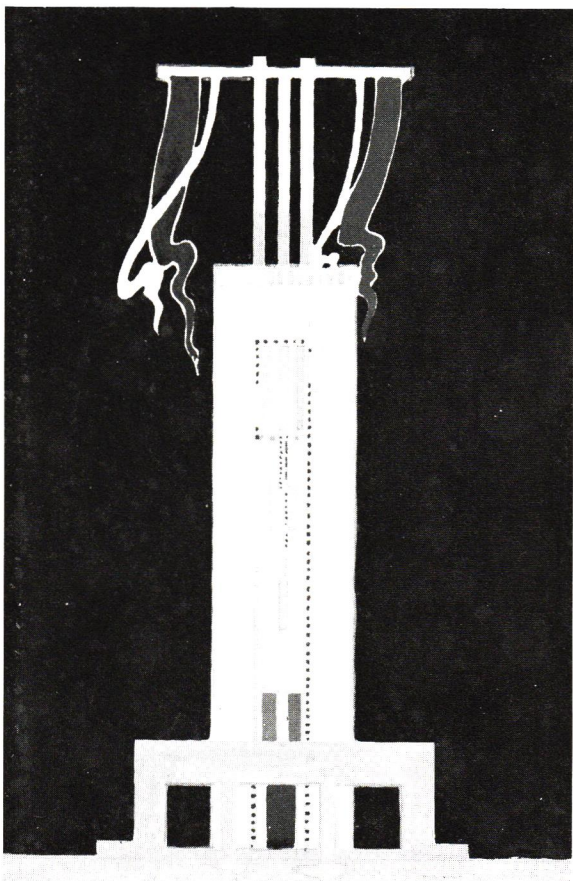
The Studio; later more extensive coverage was given in the Dutch magazine, *Wendingen*, reissued in book form by Horizon Press in 1965. Finis Farr, in his book, *Frank Lloyd Wright*, published part of the exchange of correspondence between Wright and Iannelli resulting from this publication.

14 "Letter to Mr. Iannelli from John Lloyd Wright", *The Midway Gardens, 1914-1929*, University of Chicago, 1961.



The two panels above are models of sculpture proposed for use on the interior of the Sioux City courthouse designed by W. L. Steele with Purcell and Elmslie, Associated Architects. The panels were not used but remain as interesting examples of Iannelli's work in the late teen years.

This is the only remaining rendering of the Mission Beach Project, a collaborative effort by I. J. Gill and Alfonso Iannelli, 1914.



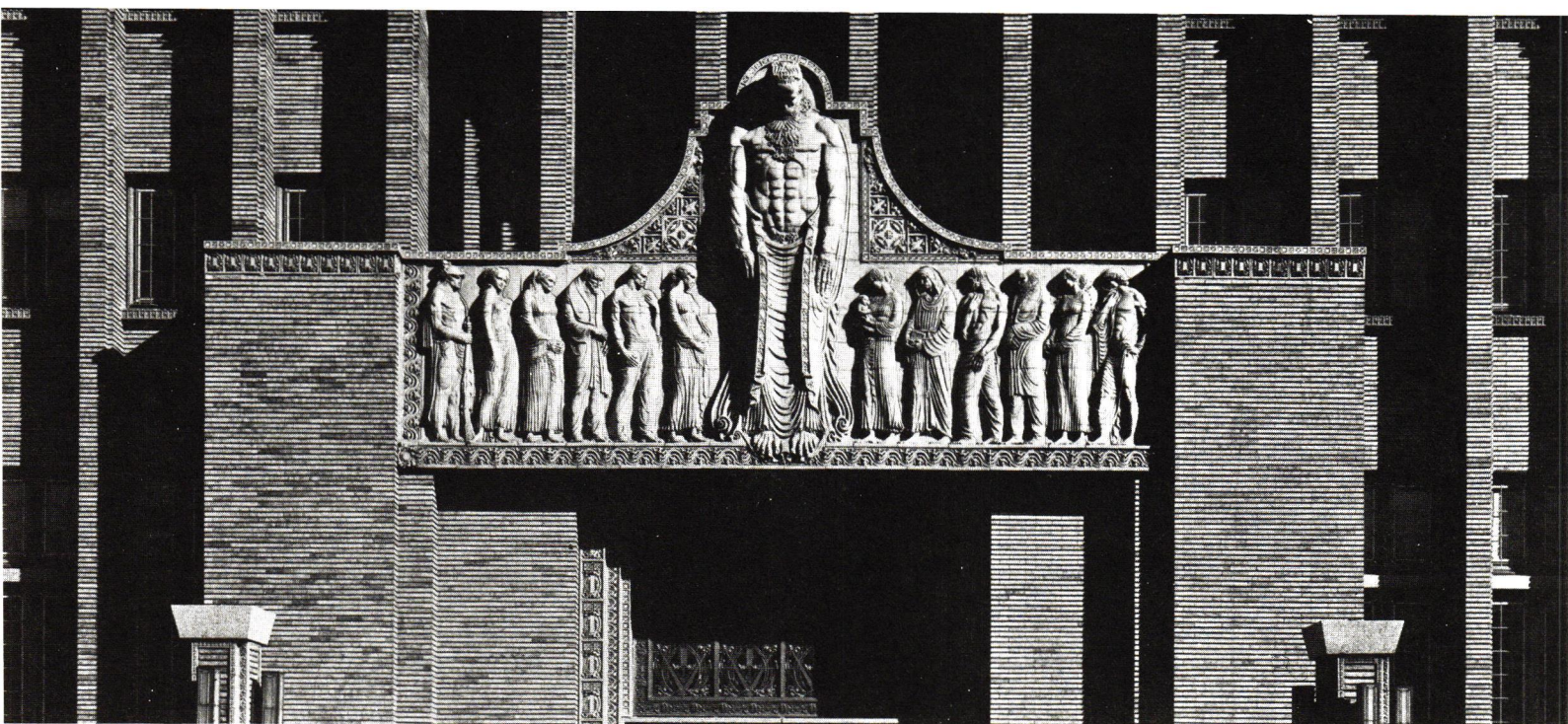
alive in himself'.¹⁵ It was this need that prevented Wright from acknowledging his influences and his collaborators.

The Midway experience had been so difficult for Iannelli that when Wright later offered him the sculpture commission for the Imperial Hotel he turned it down — an action which he later said he had always regretted.¹⁶ It has always seemed curious that Wright, whose earlier work was so related to Japanese design, would, when building in Japan, allow the more recent Mayan influence to dominate. Whatever one thinks of the building, it is certain that a lighter touch would have been desirable for the ornament. Perhaps Iannelli's sensitivity to mood, materials and situation would have provided that lightness. In turn the revelation of the Shinto philosophy toward materials would almost surely have exerted a profound influence on Iannelli.

Lloyd Wright had remained in California working in the office of Irving J. Gill whose distinctive style and pioneering use of reinforced concrete had by this time influenced the architecture of the entire San Diego area. Gill had received his architectural training in the office of Adler and Sullivan in Chicago between 1890 and 1893, the period when the Transportation Building was being designed for the World's Columbian Exposition. Iannelli met Gill on his return to California and found him receptive to the idea of architectural sculpture. Of the Mission Beach project on which they collaborated about 1914, only one rendering is known, but it shows clearly the characteristic forms of Gill enriched by the sparkling ornamentation of Iannelli.

15 Vincent Scully, *Frank Lloyd Wright*, New York: Braziller, 1960, p. 13.

16 Letter to the author from Bruce Goff, August, 1965.



This is the terra cotta sculpture over the main entrance of the Sioux City, Iowa courthouse, 1916. On the left from center are: Unmarried motherhood, Agriculture, Old Age (2), Folly and War; on the right are Motherhood, Religion, Labor, Capital, Youth and Art.

Sioux City Courthouse, West Entrance. Iannelli executed all of the heroic sculpture for this building. The terra cotta ornament, however, was done by others, and it suffers in comparison to Iannelli's more sensitive use of the material.

Iannelli had originally come to California in his search for an "American art". In a roundabout way he had finally found it — not in California but in Chicago — within the principles embodied in Prairie School architecture. Perhaps Iannelli's ideas of the importance of integration of the arts with architecture had been formed or at least strengthened by his experiences with the Midway Gardens and the philosophy of Wright. But he had long before begun to search for what he called "the significance of form", this underlying his search for an American art and leading to his desire to express the "vaudeville spirit" in the posters.

Iannelli found the Chicago spirit tempting and returned there shortly after completion of the Workingman's Hotel groups. He became immediately involved in collaboration with Purcell and Elmslie on the Woodbury County Courthouse in Sioux City completed in 1915. Of this job Mark Peisch writes in *The Chicago School of Architecture*:

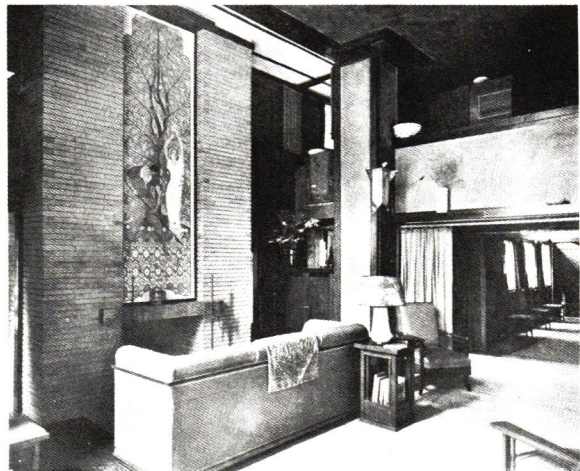


"The Chicago sculptor, Alfonso Iannelli, who collaborated with Wright and other members of the group, contributed to the sculptural decorations of the entrance to the courthouse. Depicting scenes of local interest and also expressing the role of law in society, they are a striking example of collaboration between sculptor and architect."¹⁷ Although the sculpture for this building does not in its particular forms follow the line established in the Midway Gardens work, it does, nevertheless, in its more conventional sense relate exquisitely to the forms of the building. The entry group picks up and quickens the rhythm of the piers, bringing them to dramatic focus above the entrance.

Iannelli's collaboration with the architect Francis Barry Byrne also began immediately following his permanent arrival in Chicago. Mr. Byrne has characterized their continuing association as a "dialogue" in which both parties were able to give and take according to the requirements of the project. He had received his architectural training in the Oak Park studio of Frank Lloyd Wright and had left the studio to enter partnership with the Seattle

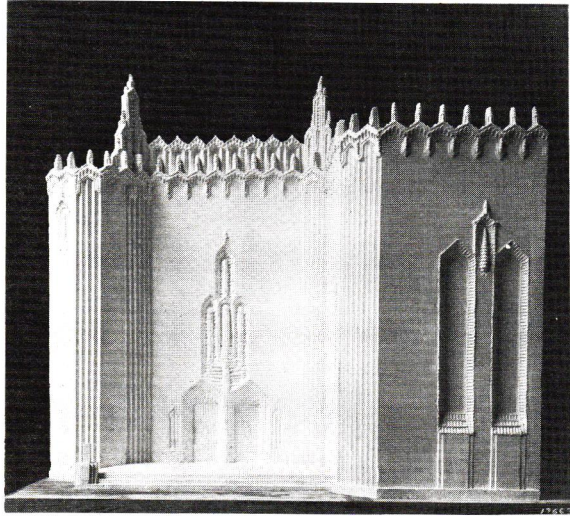
17 Mark L. Peisch, *The Chicago School of Architecture*, New York: Random House, 1964, p. 81.

Iannelli's long collaboration with Architect Barry Byrne began with the J. B. Franke house illustrated at right above and continued through a number of important commissions including that of the W. F. Tempel house below.



architect, Andrew Willatsen, who had also been in the Oak Park Studio. The partnership was dissolved about 1913 when Byrne went to California. This preceded a call from Walter Burley Griffin asking him to take over Griffin's Chicago practice while he was in Australia. The collaboration began with Byrne's first independent commission, the J. B. Franke residence in Ft. Wayne, Indiana for which Iannelli was responsible primarily for the color scheme and for the "Tree of Life" mural over the fireplace. Iannelli was familiar with the "earth colors" of Wright's interiors and had also seen Irving Gill's white interiors in the brilliant San Diego sunlight which relied for color on reflectance from sky or grass and flowers outside. Neither of these approaches were direct influences, but they did stimulate Iannelli's desire to experiment with his own ideas for the use of color in interiors with the palette of the posters as a foundation. The influence of Frank Lloyd Wright is clearly evident in this residence, but in subsequent buildings Byrne immediately began the development of his personal style with Iannelli, who continued to be responsible not only for color schemes but for such interior furnishings as light fixtures, carpet designs, and in general for the simplification of wall and ceiling planes. In 1920 he also designed the furniture for the William F. Tempel residence in Kenilworth, Illinois.

The most successful of Iannelli's collaborations with Byrne, that is, more significant in terms of the philosophy of integration of the arts, were of a more complete type, concerned not just with the interiors but with the actual forms of the buildings and their decorative elaboration. Most of this work occurred in the period between 1923 and 1928 in a series of church and school buildings. Perhaps the most illustrative of these buildings is the

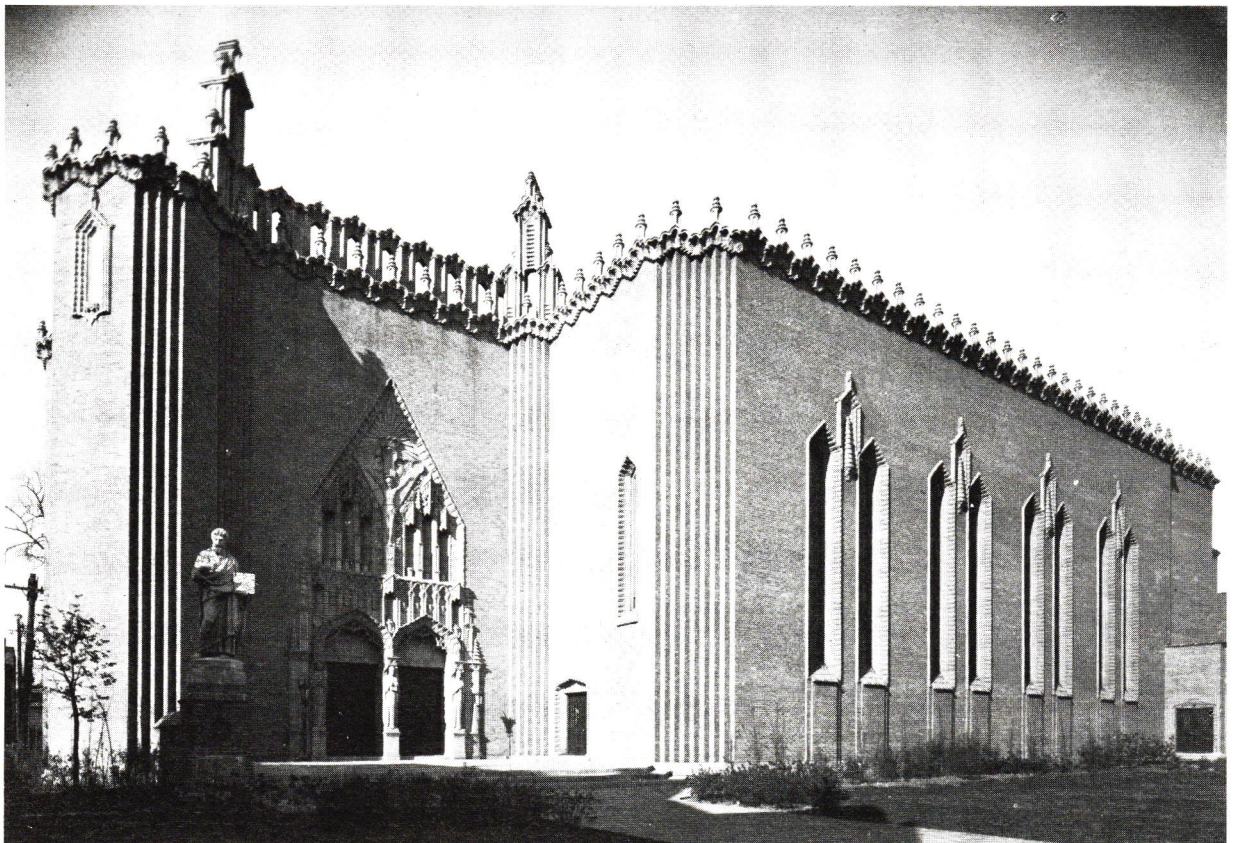


This plaster model shows the original design of the Apostle Church in Chicago designed by Barry Byrne in collaboration with Alfonso Iannelli in 1923.

This is Iannelli's plaster model sculpture for St. Francis Xavier in Wilmette, Illinois.



Below is St. Thomas the Apostle as executed in 1924. The entrance shown here was not by Iannelli.



Church of St. Thomas the Apostle in Chicago, done in 1923-24. Although this project did not go smoothly and parts of the project were later completed without adherence to the original designs, there are nonetheless some of the finest illustrations of the success of the collaboration between the two men. Iannelli's collaboration here was not limited to decorative work alone. He influenced the form of the main building itself by his suggestions for elaboration of the corners producing a more angular mass than Byrne might have done himself. The parapet wall and cornice provide an extremely effective meeting of building and sky and Iannelli's sensitivity to materials is illustrated in the plasticity of the terra-cotta as used in these elements. The elaboration of the deep window reveals gives life to the surface and provides elements of scale in the brickwork. The entrance was unfortunately done later by someone else. The original scheme for the entry shown in the plaster model was far more appropriate to the scale of the wall as well as being reinforcing to the overall concept. The elaboration of the brickwork itself as seen in St. Thomas or in St. Francis Xavier in Wilmette is expressive of the material and at the same time provides a link with the sparkling visual themes first explored in the posters of the previous decade. Barry Byrne has described this kind of complete collaboration as being like dancing, with the lead shifting back and forth depending on the specific need.¹⁸ The attitude which both men seem to have held to make such a situation possible was expressed by Iannelli in the catalog for his 1925-26 exhibit at the Chicago Art Institute: "The reasonable way is the artistic way. Art is the sense of fitness."¹⁹

In 1924 while traveling through Tulsa for another job, Iannelli happened to see the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce and Tulsa Club Building which was then under construction. The building so impressed him that he took the time to look up the architects. After determining that he was not a salesman of some kind, the architects asked Iannelli if he would be interested in meeting the designer whereupon he was introduced to Bruce Goff, then about twenty years old. Like Barry Byrne Goff's education in architecture was a purely practical one. He had been working for Rush, Endacott and Rush since age twelve and had discovered for himself the work of Sullivan and Wright. His interest had also been aroused by Iannelli's work with Barry Byrne and Purcell

and Elmslie through its publication in *The Western Architect*. He had determined that if he ever got to Chicago he would seek out Iannelli.²⁰ When Goff did visit Chicago, he was taken by Iannelli to Taliesin to meet Frank Lloyd Wright and also introduced to Barry Byrne. There was one collaborative job in 1929, a music studio in Tulsa. Because of the lack of architectural work due to the depression, Goff came to Chicago in 1934 to work in the Iannelli Studios. During this time they



This is a series of stained glass windows executed for Christ the King Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

collaborated on industrial design, the entry for the Chicago War Memorial competition and a hotel project for the Dakota Badlands. Goff says that Iannelli "was quick to grasp the grammar of a building and knew how to integrate his work as part of it"²¹

About 1934 Iannelli produced designs for two concrete block houses, one of which was built in England. Such activity was the result of his continuous quest for appropriate application of materials. It is reasonable to assume that he had maintained an interest in the work of Frank Lloyd Wright after the Midway Gardens job and was interested by the "textile block" houses in California, more probably the experiments for the Ocotillo Camp in 1927, and the Richard Lloyd Jones residence in Tulsa in 1929. It was not unusual for Iannelli to explore such an idea on his own when it seemed to relate to his own work in

¹⁸ Interview with Barry Byrne, Sept. 1965.

¹⁹ Chicago Art Institute Catalog for the Alfonso Iannelli Exhibition, Dec. 1925-Jan. 1926.

²⁰ Letter to the author from Bruce Goff, August, 1965.

²¹ *Ibid.*

some way. Perhaps he felt that this idea represented a particularly appropriate combination of material, technology and art.

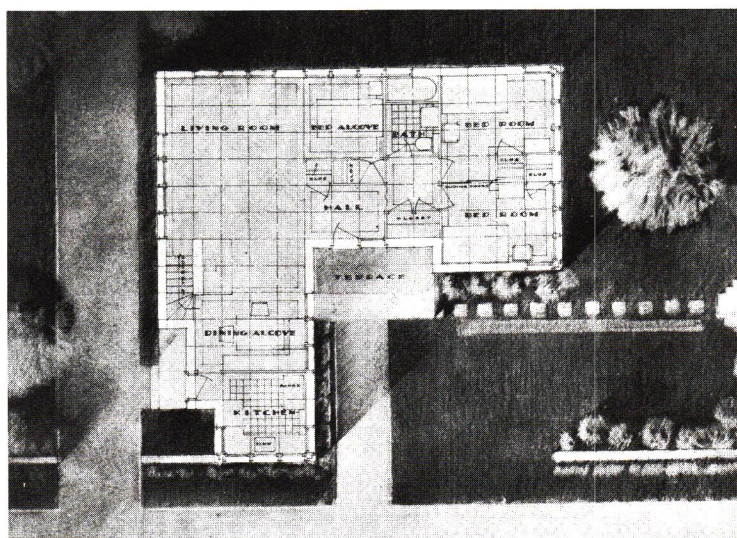
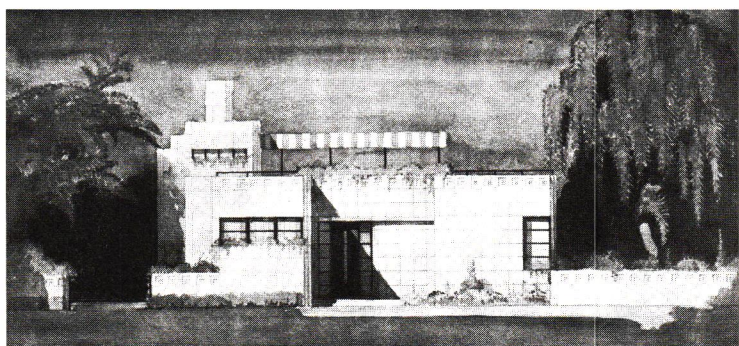
Throughout Iannelli's life education of the artist and education of the public to the role of the artist were primary interests. In Cincinnati, in California and finally in Chicago, his studios were places of learning and teaching, and in California he had actually set up a school. He took every opportunity to address groups regarding the need for intelligent design in all fields. His message was that the artist must address himself to the problems presented by an industrial society, that the artist's job is that of interpreter and communicator. His early conviction that the "useful" arts of advertising and commercial design were as noble as "studio art", had broadened to include his feelings regarding integration of the arts with architecture, and the work of the artist in the field of industrial design. The realization of the problems existing in the relationship of architecture and industry followed naturally.

In Chicago his concern for the development of industrial design seemed to offer hope of fruition. He had pioneered in the field for Chicago industrialists and was involved in a very early attempt to set up a school of industrial design in connection with Hull House where Frank Lloyd Wright had delivered his address in 1901 on "The Art and Craft of the Machine", a statement which became an inspiration for Iannelli. In 1923 while teaching at the Chicago Art Institute, he prepared a program for establishment of a department of industrial design. The following year Iannelli left to finally travel in Europe with Barry Byrne, and in 1925 he resumed work in his studios with a sequence of industrial commissions for Sunbeam, Eversharp, Parker and others. In 1928 he was invited back to the Chicago Art Institute as head of the Department of Design which was sponsored by the Association of Arts and Industries, a group of Chicago industrialists who had recognized the need for a school which would help to fill the pressing need for designers in industry. There was apparently considerable opposition in the school to the idea of setting up workshops in which student-designers would have an opportunity to deal with actual materials and machine processes. After a year without progress Iannelli resigned, although the resignation did not become effective until two years later. The Association of Arts and Industries also withdrew their support, and the principles originally formulated by Iannelli in his 1923 program were not realized until 1937 when the "New Bauhaus" (later the Institute of Design) directed

by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy was established under the sponsorship of the Association.

Probably the last work produced by Iannelli in the style of the Prairie School was the Fountain of the Pioneers in Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1936-37. This was the result of a competition sponsored by the Kalamazoo Business and Professional Woman's Club. The winner of the competition was one of Iannelli's students who had prepared her drawings under his guidance. Iannelli was called in and the fountain was developed through many stages, guided by the historic facts from which the idea came and by the physical facts of the location such as the paths used by people walking through the park. In composition and in decorative concept it is related to the Prairie School, and in spirit it is also of the prairie. Iannelli's description reveals its symbolic meaning: the tower faces westward as the pioneers faced. "The upper part (of the main mass), a perforated screen to shield the light fixtures and waterspouts, is patterned to symbolize the rich vegetation of the land. The tower sym-

These two renderings are Iannelli's 1934 design for a concrete block residence. The similarity to Wright's designs in concrete block is pronounced.



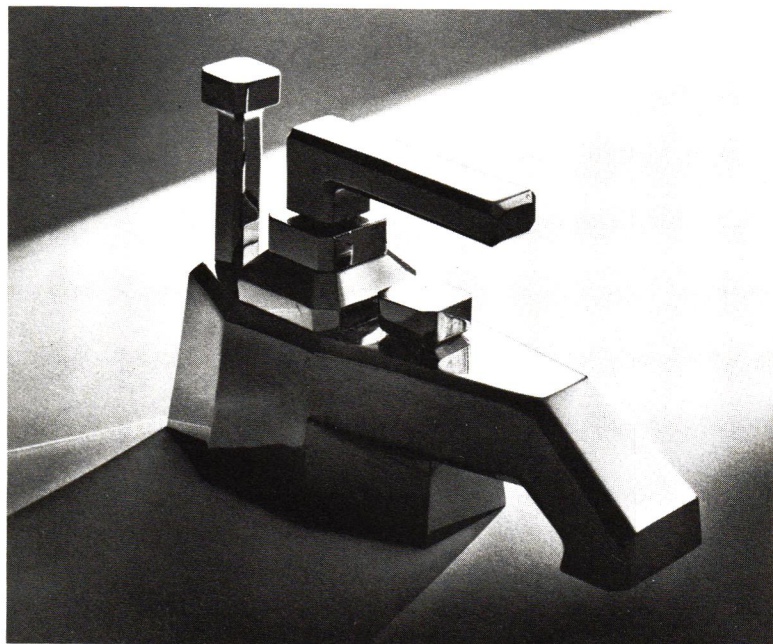


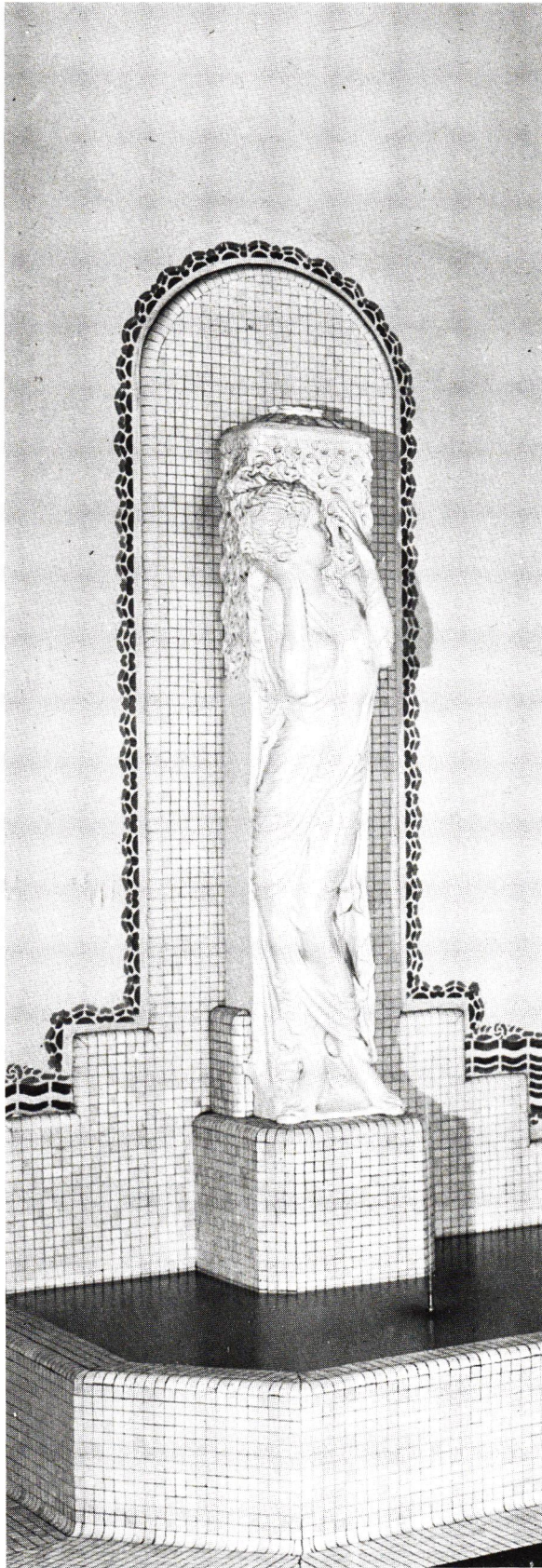
THE MODERN ART IDEA

This is the cover for a brochure designed by Iannelli describing classes in design offered by himself and Barry Byrne at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts in the early 1920's.

The Fountain of the Pioneers, Kalamazoo, Michigan, symbolizes the pioneers' advance westward, the Indians' resistance and the lush vegetation. It was executed in concrete. Alfonso Iannelli, designer & sculptor. Photo by Fons Iannelli.

Mr. Iannelli's interest in industrial design continued throughout his life. This combination hot and cold water faucet and plunger was designed for Mueller Plumbing Company in 1936. Photo by Fons Iannelli.





This terra cotta fountain, "The Sapling" was executed for the National Plumbing and Heating Company. It is located in the Illinois Athletic Club in Chicago.

bolizes the pioneers' advance against the Indians' stalwart and fateful resistance. . . . The scale of details is in harmony with the civic structures surrounding the park, and the visual intention was to convey a recurring appearance out of the Kalamazoo Epic Movement of the Pioneers."²²

Iannelli's approach to all things, including life, seems to have been organic in the Prairie School definition of that term. He did not attempt to oversimplify things in order to make them easier to deal with. He accepted the necessity for complex interrelationships, and his approach to architectural ornament is illustrative of this. It was important that the ornament be expressive of the building and of the purposes it served while simultaneously expressing the characteristics of its material.²³ It can be seen in his approach to collaborative work — the realization that his work was subject to the concepts and needs of the project — that the project was not a stage for display of his products. The reason for Iannelli's success in his collaborations with architects can be found in his belief in the need for integration of the arts and architecture, his willingness to strive in concert with the architect for the achievement of common goals, and his desire to seek out "appropriate forms" which would communicate the desired character. Perhaps it was this willingness to accept the role as a contributing member of a larger organic whole that kept him from becoming more widely recognized, but it was this same attitude which made possible the abundance and variety of collaborative work that marks his lifetime.

The contributions of an artist of this scope, who had been so active as a producing and thinking artist for over 60 years until his death this spring, cannot be assessed so briefly. His search for the "significance of form" was a motivating force in all of his work and led in many directions. Hopefully, the record of his long and productive career and the remaining work will be properly preserved for future study.

22 Alfonso Iannelli, "The Kalamazoo Fountain of the Pioneers", *The American City*, Sept. 1941.

23 Iannelli had great respect for Louis Sullivan as a creative architect, but he had some quarrel with Sullivan's ornament. His own feeling was that architectural ornament "which has no structural relation . . . should communicate the purpose of the building" But as important as this communication was the sensitivity to materials. He was not satisfied with Sullivan's understanding of the materials he used for ornament and wrote that "One of the factors that prevents architects from achieving the proper treatment for materials is that they do not themselves work in the material . . ." "Evaluation of Louis H. Sullivan's Ornament", *The Prairie School Review*, Vol. I #2, p. 25.



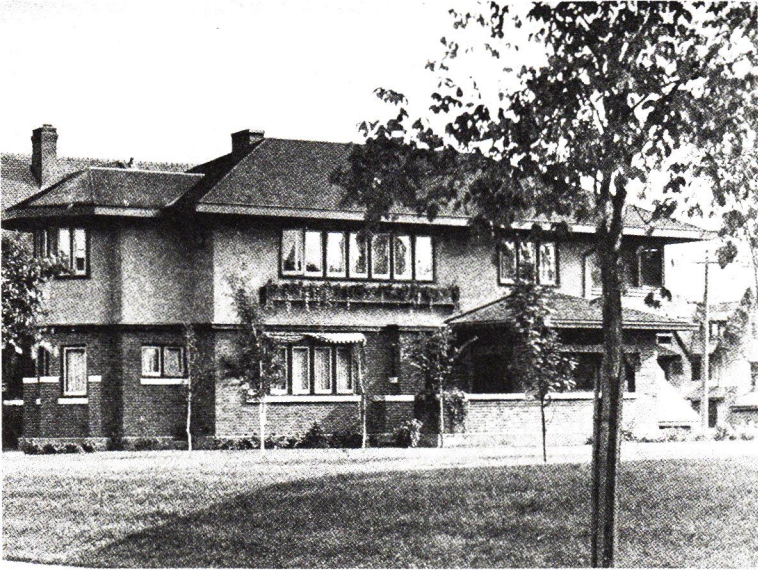
Photo by Nancy Hayes

The Church of St. Francis Xavier at Kansas City, Missouri was designed by Barry Byrne, architect, Joseph Shaughnessy, associate architect, in 1940. Mr. Iannelli was collaborating artist. The interior photo shows five of the series of 12 "Stations of the Cross", metal sculpture in aluminum.



Book Reviews

THE WORK OF PURCELL AND ELMSLIE, from The Western Architect. Edited by David Gebhard. Prairie School Press, Park Forest, Illinois, 1965. 92 pp. illustrated, \$4.00, paper, \$6.50, cloth.



POWERS, E. L. — dwelling, 1910-11.
1635 26th Street West, Minneapolis, Minnesota

The partnership of Purcell and Elmslie has been considered by some, including the editor of this book, to be the successor firm to Louis Sullivan. With due respect to Dr. Gebhard, who has written an excellent introduction, this reviewer will disagree. Purcell and Elmslie were *Prairie* architects, not part of the Chicago School, but rather products of it.

Both William Gray Purcell and George Grant Elmslie worked in the office of Louis Sullivan: Elmslie for 20 years, Purcell for only a short time. When Elmslie left the master in 1909 to join his younger friend's firm, Sullivan's career was nearly over. The several small town banks that he did in the following 15 years of his life may, in fact, owe something to the influence of the work of Purcell and Elmslie.

The relatively short lived firm of Purcell and Elmslie (Purcell, Feick and Elmslie until 1913) produced a remarkably large number of buildings, primarily residences and small commercial structures. All were and still are easily recognizable as *Prairie* architecture. The uninitiated often mistake them for the work of Frank Lloyd Wright or

Sullivan; the more experienced see them as smaller, less sophisticated, but beautifully detailed buildings.

Purcell and Elmslie maintained their principle office in Minneapolis and were close friends of the editor of *The Western Architect* which was then being published in the same city. It was through this friendship that three special issues of *The Western Architect*, January 1913, January 1915 and July 1915 which were devoted entirely to the young firm's work were published.

The partners did more than supply the material for these issues. They wrote most of the text and designed the page layout, and Elmslie drew the page ornaments used throughout the three issues. Together, these magazines made up what was at that time the most complete contemporary coverage of any architectural firm.

This book is a composite of these three issues of *The Western Architect*. David Gebhard has written the introduction and has furnished notes to identify all of the drawings and photographs not properly captioned in the original. This, along with the dating of the illustrations, makes this reissue particularly valuable. The original page numbers have been retained as well as new ones added in the margin which makes for some confusion, but this is small criticism for so welcome a reference.

As a whole, the reproduction is good, though slightly reduced in size from the original. The quality of the book, available in both paper and cloth, is excellent. One wonders why it wasn't done long ago.

Reviewed by Lloyd Henri Hobson

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ARCHITECTURAL BIBLIOGRAPHERS, PAPERS, Volume I, 1965. Edited by William B. O'Neal. University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville. 128 pp. \$5.00.

Outside of the scholarly, close knit circle of professional architectural historians, The American Association of Architectural Bibliographers is practically unknown. However, since 1954 the Association has published some twenty-eight papers concerning the history of architecture. All are scholarly, most readily readable. Unfortunately, over half are also out of print. The current volume is the only one in hard covers and, hopefully, is the first of a series.

Four subjects are covered, including "Henry-Russell Hitchcock: The First Thirty Years", compiled by James H. Grady and edited by Henry-Russell Hitchcock; "Walter Gropius: A Bibliog-

raphy, Part I," compiled by Caroline Shillaber; "Writings by and about Philip C. Johnson, Part I", compiled by William B. O'Neal; and last, "The Early Architecture of Virginia, Original Sources and Books", compiled by Frederick Doveton Nichols. All are probably as nearly complete as could be desired.

Mr. Grady's work on Henry-Russell Hitchcock is strictly a bibliography with only title, date, page numbers, etc. given in chronological order. This is acceptable in a publication of this kind although one does appreciate the somewhat more complete treatment given by Caroline Shillaber in her work on Walter Gropius. She includes a listing, with descriptions, of the publications of the Bauhaus under the direction of Gropius, a chronology of Gropius' life and complete listings of writings both by and about her subject. Each entry includes a brief description.

Mr. O'Neal has used a technique similar to that of Mr. Grady in doing his bibliography of Philip C. Johnson. Mr. Johnson's own writings are treated in chronological order and articles about him are alphabetized. These articles are also separated into books and pamphlets, and magazine articles. The final subject, Early Virginia Architecture, by Frederick Doveton Nichols is divided into primary sources and secondary sources which are further divided into manuscripts and books. Each section is in alphabetical order.

No real objection can be voiced to any of the bibliographical methods used, although the work of Miss Shillaber certainly seems to be the most useful. Perhaps it would be worthwhile for the Association to establish a standard format for use by all of its contributors.

This book and the series to follow will prove to be of great value to professional architectural historians, students and interested laymen for many years hence. It is a worthwhile addition to any library.

Reviewed by W. R. Hasbrouck

THE VALLEY OF THE GOD-ALMIGHTY JONESES, Reminiscences of Frank Lloyd Wright's Sister, by Maginel Wright Barney with Tom Burke. Appleton-Century, New York, 1965. 156 pp. illustrated, \$4.95.

The information in this book concerning the roots and background of Frank Lloyd Wright is both interesting and valuable. It is unfortunate that it is written in a style that would appeal to a teen-age reader rather than an adult.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, America's Greatest Architect, by Herbert Jacobs. Harcourt, Brace and World, New York, 1965. 224 pp. illustrated, \$3.95.

This is a book written by a friend of its subject, and it shows on every page. Mr. Wright built two houses for the author and designed a third, yet unbuilt. Herbert Jacobs was more than a client, he was a journalist who found his architect a fascinating person. He has used his talents to share this fascination. While aimed at a youthful audience, this book will be enjoyed by all who are interested in the life of America's greatest architect.

GREAT AMERICAN MANSIONS and Their Stories, by Merrill Folsom. Hastings House, New York, 1963. 310 pp. illustrated, \$10.00.

Forty-two homes of monumental proportions are covered in this tourist's guide to architectural America. Most of the structures covered, however, are significant only because of their size, cost, or owners. Only a sprinkling, including Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin, are of architectural merit. Even these are treated in Sunday supplement fashion with emphasis on the sensational.

ARCHITECTURE OF CHICAGO AND VICINITY, by J. Carson Webster. Society of Architectural Historians, Box 94, Media, Pennsylvania, 1965. 72 pp. illustrated, \$2.50.

The annual August tour of the Society of Architectural Historians was held in Chicago this past summer. Professor J. Carson Webster wrote this excellent guide for use by the tour participants.

It is much more than a guidebook, being well illustrated with plans and drawings as well as photographs. Descriptive data concerning major buildings is very complete and locations of related minor buildings are clearly given. For the serious enthusiast, brief side tours are suggested with convenient directions.

About a third of the buildings are Prairie houses with a number of Chicago commercial structures also covered. The book also includes modern structures and might be described as being a well balanced presentation of Chicago area architecture.

Unfortunately, no index is included and the only division is by four geographical areas. A useful selected bibliography is included along with a few pages for additional notes. It is particularly welcome for the minor but important structures not published elsewhere.

Letters to the Editors

Sirs:

Your issue (concerning the Sutton House) has been brought to my attention. Mrs. Donaldson and myself are the present owners of the house referred to in your article as "A Wright House on the Prairie."

While we are unacquainted with the veracity of the statements as to the history of the house in the past, we do note in this published article a number of inconsistencies . . . you report that this house was purchased by the present owner in "1961" . . . it would be noted that the house was purchased on May 26, 1960.

. . .

Perhaps, . . . we should briefly report to you about the present-day changes in the house. During World War II the second floor was remodeled into two or three apartments with the original inside staircase being closed off and made into a closet for the first floor of the house. In doing this an addition was added to the house to give access to the second floor (. . . shown in photograph on page 17 . . .) In making this addition some of the old windows were added to the new section — and these are the windows seen in this photograph.

During the latter part of 1960 in having this house remodeled, the majority of our remodeling

expense was . . . restoring the second floor to the original plans.

Further projects in this remodeling were to put in 4 partitions on the first floor, but in doing so, the original decorating style was maintained and, where necessary, was matched in the new partitions. A special order of oak lumber had to be ordered from out of town in order to match the moulding of the existing walls. The original Frank Lloyd Wright fireplace, as shown in the other photograph on page 17 of your publication, was left intact. An addition was made to the building in the same area that was proposed for the library as mentioned on page 18. The exposed outside of this addition was finished in the same style as the rest of the house so as not to distract from the original architecture.

In the process of the remodeling it was found that the attic (above the second floor) was vented through the chimney with a large opened area in the bricks — possibly to save the cost of an extra vent in the roof. It appears from present evidence of the timber's, that the fire you mentioned occurred in 1932 resulted from embers going up the chimney from the fireplace and being blown into the attic by a down draft resulting from winds outside. This area had to be closed before the fireplace could again be safe. (*Ed. note: This is an interesting theory, very different from Mr. Morgan's thesis which stated that the fire started in the basement.*)

In the process of remodeling, besides putting on a new roof . . . many leaded glass windows . . . were saved and left in place or repaired. In fact the front door with its leaded glass was refurbished and is still being used today. The particular glass window shown in the photograph . . . was broken in a hail storm in 1964 and was renovated . . . in fact, this window maintains only the design and is not the original glass except for sections.

In 1962 the present wall was added to the property mainly to preserve it from repeated acts of vandalism. In adding this wall, concrete block was used to keep in the same style as the original house. At the time of adding the wall, fish ponds and lily pools were added to break the monotony of a concrete wall and to beautify the grounds.

. . .

Yours very truly,
J. H. Donaldson, Jr., M.D.

Editor's Note: We thank Dr. Donaldson for his comments in regard to the Sutton House issue. His letter has been edited slightly because of space requirements.

Preview

The next issue of THE PRAIRIE SCHOOL REVIEW will be devoted to the work of Hugh Garden, designing partner of the firm of Schmidt, Garden and Erickson. Text will be by B. C. Greengard of Chicago.

To be reviewed:

Wendingen, The Work of Frank Lloyd Wright — Reissued by Horizon Press

Encyclopedia of Modern Architecture
Abrams

Articles concerning the Prairie School of architecture are invited from contributors. Those planning a major article should write in advance giving a fairly complete outline of what is proposed. Measured drawings, sketches and photographs are also welcome. Original material will be returned if a stamped, self addressed envelope is enclosed.

Bibliography



- Farr, Finis. *Frank Lloyd Wright: A Biography*. Scribner, New York, 1961.
- Hitchcock, Henry-Russell. *In the Nature of Materials*. Duell, Sloan and Pearce, New York, 1942.
- Peisch, Mark L. *The Chicago School of Architecture, Early Followers of Sullivan and Wright*. Random House, New York, 1964.
- Scully, Vincent, Jr. *Frank Lloyd Wright*. George Braziller, New York, 1960.
- Wendingen, *the Work of Frank Lloyd Wright*, edited by H. Th. Wijdeveld. Reissued by Horizon Press, New York, 1965.
- Wright, John Lloyd. *My Father Who Is On Earth*. Putnam, New York, 1946.
- "The Autobiography of Richard W. Bock," Unpublished manuscript. (William Gray Purcell Archive, Pasadena, California).
- "Alfonso Iannelli Exhibit," *Chicago Art Institute Bulletin*, (January, February 1922).
- "Alfonso Iannelli, Sculpture," *Chicago Art Institute Scrapbook*, (April 1921, March 1922).
- "Debate," *Chicago Art Institute Scrapbook*, (August 1927--March 1928).
- "The Evolution of a Personal Style: As Shown in the Work of Barry Byrne and Ryan Company," *Western Architect*, (March 1924).
- "F. A. Zumpfe Residence, John Lloyd Wright, Architect," *Western Architect*, (November 1929).
- Harper's Bazaar*, March 1922, p. 61.
- Iannelli, Alfonso. "Architect and Sculptor in the Making of Midway Gardens," *The Midway Gardens, 1914-1929*. University of Chicago, (1961).
- _____. "The Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church of Tulsa, Oklahoma," *Western Architect*, (October 1929).
- _____. "Evaluation of Louis H. Sullivan's Ornament," *Prairie School Review*, (Second Quarter, 1964).
- _____. "Instruction in the School," *Chicago Art Institute Bulletin*, (November 1923).
- _____. "Kalamazoo Fountain of the Pioneers," *American City*, (September 1941).
- _____. "Lectures on American Art," *Chicago Art Institute Scrapbook*, (January--June 1926).
- Iannelli Resigns, *Chicago Art Institute Bulletin*, (October 1929).
- "Midway Gardens," *Western Architect*, (October 1930).
- "The Pickwick Theatre, Park Ridge, Illinois," *Western Architect*, (November 1929).
- "Radio Motifs -- Hall of Social Sciences," *Design*, (October 1933).
- "Relief," *World's Fair Weekly*, (July 1, 1933).
- "St. Patrick's Church, Momence, Illinois," *Liturgical Arts*, (Third Quarter, 1933).
- "St. Thomas High School," at Racine, Wisconsin, *Western Architect*, (October, 1930).
- "The Sioux City Courthouse," *Western Architect*, (Sept. 1924).

