

Making Connections Between Print and Place

By: Meri Lau

ABOUT THE LESSON

Students make connections about a central theme about water, land and architecture. They investigate how water moves in a sudden rain shower and how a waterfall cascades over a landform in Japanese prints by Hiroshige. Hiroshige's prints can be paired with the work of architect Frank Lloyd Wright who interpreted the natural force of water into his prized building, Fallingwater. Students will discover that Wisconsin has an interesting relationship with Japanese prints and Frank Lloyd Wright.

GRADE LEVEL Grades 1-2

CLASSROOM TIME 2 class periods - 60 minutes each

RESOURCES

- [National Core Arts Standard](#)
- Article: [Hiroshige's Ukiyo-e Through The Lens of Frank Lloyd Wright](#)
- [Chazen Museum of Art - Online Print Collection](#) Books:
 - Hess, A 2012, *Frank Lloyd Wright natural design, organic architecture*, Rizzoli International Publications, Inc. New York.
 - Powell, P 1990, *The Edward Burr Van Vleck collection of Japanese prints*, The Regents of the University of Wisconsin System.

BACKGROUND

Nature above all else was Frank Lloyd Wright's most inspirational force. He advised students to "study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you." In the PBS essay by Ken Burns, he explains that Frank Lloyd did not suggest copying nature, but instead allowing it to be an inspiration.

This interest in nature may be one of the reasons why Wright was fascinated by Japanese prints and interested in collecting prints by Hiroshige because the dominant subject was the natural world. Wright collected numerous Japanese prints but unfortunately lost them during a financial crisis in 1926 when the Bank of Wisconsin acquired his 5000 prints. In 1928, four thousand prints were sold to Edward Burr Van Vleck, a mathematics professor at the University of Wisconsin. Later, his son, John Hasbrouck Van Vleck, Nobel Prize Winner for Physics in 1977 gave 2800 prints to the Chazen Museum of Art which are now part of their permanent collection.

There are interesting connections between Frank Lloyd Wright and Japanese prints because his architecture reflects the beauty of Japan portrayed in the prints by Hiroshige, 1797-1858. *You can't help wondering what Hiroshige may have envisioned about how his prints would influence others...especially a Wisconsin architect to design homes and buildings that capture the style, serenity and the natural balance of his world in Japan.*

If you look at the range of prints by Hiroshige you will find many prints of waterfalls, rain showers, bridges, rolling landscapes, fire towers, lumberyards, winter scenes and a variety of cranes that are similar to Wisconsin.

Fallingwater is in Mill Run, Pennsylvania but there are several wonderful sites in Wisconsin to visit that mirror the Japanese prints like: Herbert Jacobs Usonian House, Romeo and Juliet Windmill, Unitarian Meeting House, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, Taliesin in Spring Green, Johnson Wax Research Tower, Seth Peterson Cottage, Monona Terrace, The Usonian Inn, and the Unity Chapel. These are just a few but a place to start your search for organic architecture that reinterprets *how nature's principles build forms which are more natural than nature itself*.

OBJECTIVES

Students will discover the connections between Frank Lloyd Wright and Hiroshige prints through water exploration, printmaking and cantilever construction activities in art.

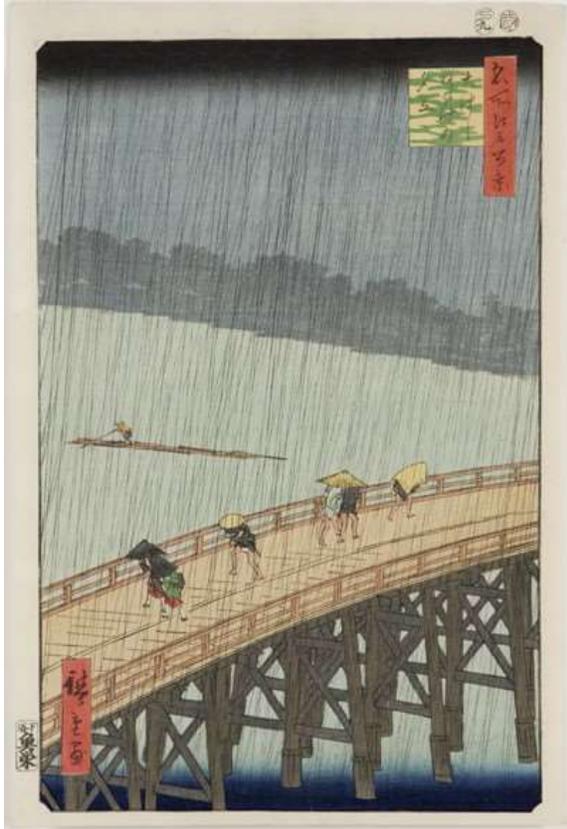
Students will work collaboratively in pairs or small groups to construct a structure and test out cantilever positions that will balance in place. Students can pour water over their structures and respond to how the water flows while making connections to Frank Lloyd Wright's *Fallingwater* and Hiroshige's waterfall prints.

Bridges connect ideas and land and Frank Lloyd Wright designed bridges that were never built. Students will explore with water and create their own bridge drawing inspired by a Japanese print by Hiroshige, Sudden Rainshower on the Atake Bridge. Students recreate rain showers using water and a pan with holes. Students will use a block wrapped in string to print rain on their drawing to learn about a simple printmaking technique.



Architect Frank Lloyd Wright hovers over a rendering of his proposed 'Butterfly Wing Bridge' in 1953.

<https://www.eichlernetwork.com/article/visionaries-wing>



Utagawa Hiroshige (1797 - 1858)
Sudden Shower over Shin-Ohashi Bridge and Atake, No. 52
from the series One-hundred Views of Famous Places in Edo
(Meisho Edo hyakkei)

STANDARDS

Wisconsin Standards for Art and Design

- Standard A.A.1: CREATE - Students will generate, develop, and refine artistic work.
- Artistic Process A.A.Cr.2.e: PLAN - Describe process and choices while creating art.
- Artistic Process A.A. Pr.1e: DEVELOP MEANING - Explore and develop meaning by viewing personal, historical and contemporary art.
- Standard A.A.3: RESPOND - Students will critically interpret intent and meaning in order to evaluate artistic work.
- Artistic Process A.A.R.3.e: INTERPRET - Use details and subject matter to interpret an artwork's mood or meaning.
- Standard A.A.4: CONNECT - Students will relate their artistic work with prior experience and external context.
- Artistic Process A.A.Cn.3.e: CULTURAL, SOCIAL, & HISTORICAL AWARENESS - Understand that people from different times and places have made art and design for a variety of purposes.

LESSON 1 - Bridges Connect Ideas and Land

Learning Target: Students discover how bridges connect ideas and land by investigating water while learning about a Japanese artist, Utagawa Hiroshige and Wisconsin Architect, Frank Lloyd Wright.

Materials: paper, pencil, markers, colored pencils, ink and stamp pad. String, tape, woodblock, cardboard scraps. Container with holes pierced in the bottom, sink, bucket or tray to catch the water and something to pour the water into the pan like a cup or pitcher.

Introduction and Motivation: Frank Lloyd Wright, a famous Wisconsin architect designed many ideas for buildings, homes and bridges. He was captivated by Japanese prints by Utagawa Hiroshige who made many prints of how Edo (Tokyo) in Japan looked hundreds of years ago which may have influenced his style of architecture. Maybe you will see hints of Hiroshige's print in the designs of the Butterfly Bridge?

Students view the print, *Sudden Shower over Shin-Ohashi Bridge and Atake, from the One Hundred Famous Views of Ed, Utagawa Hiroshige 1856-58* and a photograph of Frank Lloyd Wright's drawing of *The Butterfly Bridge*, which is a proposal of a bridge to connect San Francisco and Oakland.

What do they notice about each bridge? What is the purpose of these bridges? What connections can you make about Frank Lloyd Wright's style and the print by Hiroshige?

Group Activity: Students can use blocks and found materials to make bridges at their work space. What is the bridge connecting?

Materials: woodblocks, found materials, fabric, paper, ribbon for water

Demonstration:

1. Art teacher makes a drawing of a bridge and sets it aside.
2. Art teacher pours water through a pan that has several holes pierced through the bottom to create a shower of rain.
3. Rain can be added to my bridge drawing by using a block of wood that is covered in string. Show students how to press the block of wood in an inked stamp pad that can be transferred to make a print on the bridge drawing. Does it look like rain? How much rain do you want to show?
4. Add details in the picture that can tell a story.

Note: Several prints of Hiroshige have streaks of lines angled over the landscape to represent rain.

LESSON 2 - Falling Water in Print and Place

Learning Target: Students investigate how water falls on natural and man made landforms while learning about waterfalls in Japanese prints by Hiroshige and Frank Lloyd Wright's building, *Fallingwater*.

Introduction and Motivation: Students analyze waterfalls in Hiroshige's prints. What makes the water fall and how does it flow?

Frank Lloyd Wright was curious about how water flows on landforms and may have been inspired by the scenes of these waterfalls in Japanese prints by Hiroshige when he designed his famous home, *Fallingwater*.

Show students how to use found materials of woodblocks, stones and bricks to construct a structure in a pan. Pour water over the structure and watch how the water flows.

Rearrange the woodblocks, stones and bricks using a cantilever method and see if there is a difference in how the water flows.

Group Activity: Students will construct their own structures in pans and pour water over them to explore the properties of falling water!

Materials: wood, bricks, stones, water, buckets, pitchers, trays, dishpan or sink.

Demonstration: Art teacher prompts discussion on the importance of thinking out ideas by drawing. Many drawing plans by Frank Lloyd Wright and other architects never were built but the idea was real. For example, The Butterfly Bridge was never built but is recognized as an idea that has great potential.

Show students some basic shapes to use in designing a plan for their own *Fallingwater*.

Materials: paper, pencil, markers, colored pencils.



Utagawa Hiroshige

Urami Waterfall in the Nikko Mountains in Shimozuke Province, No. 27 in the series of pictures of Famous Places in Sixty-Odd Provinces.



Utagawa Hiroshige

The Fudo Waterfall at Oji, No. 47 from the series One Hundred Views of Famous Places in Edo



Fallingwater Mill Run, Pennsylvania

Assessment Options:

Students can present their artwork to their family, friends, students or community in formal or informal ways as part of a summative assessment.

Students can present their artwork using videos, slide decks or make a display in the classroom, school, home or community.

Students can be interviewed about their experiences and capture their responses on video or transcribed.

Students can fill out an exit slip or quiz on the connections they made about Frank Lloyd Wright and Hiroshige's prints.