

the ink-to-stone letters



in your backyard

## Close to Nature: The Whole World in Your Backyard



hearts beating moments  
when our minds are free to make  
now & then; precious

As trees bloom, Spring soars, until... next! Seasons can hold great meaning for us all. Any client, who comes to me wanting to connect their indoor spaces with the outdoors, can open doors to the whole world, right in their backyard. What do I mean by this? Oasis. It's a desire, to connect with the ways of Nature. Planting garden seeds by day and catching the shooting stars in twilight. Nowadays, the countless dings on our smart devices, may inspire a need to find these simple moments in your own backyard.

My goal through design is to inspire contemplation, or meditative experiences as opportunities for anyone or anyplace. Everyone is unique, and no two places on this planet are the same. Whether we are building a shed or a church, I see the potentials in how we touch the earth, turn a corner, or meet the sky.

Meditation can be internal, and also it can participate externally, watching the 'daily parades' from one's porch. Maybe it's how you swim, dine, dance or play badminton, eventually the various forms translate and influence our lives internally. Perhaps you play competitive sports for recreation, but when you get home, it's time to decompress with a cup of tea on the back porch or in your gazebo.



We try to identify and define with our clients, what their unique considerations will be, and how these will become part of their home and backyard, tennis court or jacuzzi, grill or pool house. “Form follows function.” Interweaving that tenet with Nature, according to Frank Lloyd Wright, depends on three things: material, freedom and inspiration joined in a meaningful, spiritual union.

The materials we choose to build with contribute to sensibilities close to Nature. In view of their pros and cons, we study each possibility and how it relates to our ideas. Wood is a traditional choice in either indoor or outdoor settings, yet fiberglass composites like Trex, may be more economical as it would last longer. Yet Trex is actually not the best choice for winter conditions, it can be slippery. An ipe or cedar deck provides the wooden feel, which gives us an instinctive rapport, at first sight, we want to touch and smell its aroma. No two pieces of wood are the same. Manufactured composites are cold, and have great capabilities in reproducing ‘natural’ characteristics, yet somehow, not comparable in its capacity to inspire.

Man-made materials may inspire freedom to imagine with algorithmic processes which are undeniably impressive. Yet, how do they tell a story like rings of a tree? Which one is most likely to resonate with our senses and the craftsmanship that brings them to life?

It's a foregone conclusion that working with natural materials inspires freedoms on many levels, from our imagination to the final implementation. It's a process that continues over time, to realize the possibilities. Imagine an inspiring space in your backyard that relates to an indoor space of your home. You feel relaxed, or creatively curious, as you wander out to the deck, rather than worrying about maintenance, fertilizers and pesticides.

Our relationship with Nature is demonstrated throughout history. In French gardens of the 18th and 19th centuries, the landscape is highly controlled, manicured and symmetrical; while the traditional English cottage gardens show less efforts to dominate and more compliance with Nature's significant self-determination. Companion plants take care of each other, (alyssum flowers attract pollinators to potatoes). Some people enjoy the French style, others the English. Both are uniquely beautiful. In each case, it's just a matter of assigning order and balance.



quick trip to Chi-town  
had a hot dog in the park  
like to go back soon



When you step outside, will you be inspired to write an algorithm or haiku?, either one can open a door in our imaginations. Within our grasp is a chance to reach above and beyond right in our own backyards. Architects discover how their clients want to feel and live, and then design the best environment, planting seeds for that to become, full of wonder.

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