

# Coyotes not talking turkey at Johnson's Glass House

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NEW CANAAN, Conn.—When it was built in 1949, the iconic Glass House was called an architectural breakthrough.

But in recent years, breakthroughs of a different kind threatened the house: wild turkeys.

They have crashed into the house several times after spotting their reflection and rushing at the windows in a territorial act, or because they simply did not see the glass.

Caretakers think they've found a solution, though, by stationing plastic coyote cutouts along the perimeter of the house to scare away the wild turkeys who roost nearby.

The caretakers rotate the fake coyotes each day to make them seem more realistic to the turkeys.

It seems to be paying off: There haven't been any turkey-house collisions for two years. They've also put a scare in other creatures, including the two-legged variety.



AP photo

**Plastic coyote cutouts and Basil, a pit bull, guard the Philip Johnson Glass House from wild turkeys.**

“Even contractors who didn't know about them have stopped short when they see them,” said Marty Skrelunas, director of preservation at the Glass House.

Renowned architect Philip Johnson, who died in 2005 at age 98, designed the three-level Glass House to celebrate the elements with views of changing

fall leaves, falling snow and deer. The home, where Johnson lived with his partner David Whitney until his death, won the Architectural League of New York's silver medal in 1950.

When the house was built, the state turkey population was depleted. But in the past several decades, the population has rebounded. For caretakers at the Glass House, that meant confronting a problem that no one anticipated.

Skrelunas tried several other methods to ward off the wild turkeys before finding the coyote decoys at a hardware store. Now, visitors often mistake the coyotes for a modern art installation.

“People ask, ‘Is this some sculpture, or what's the intention of it?’ because the property is so filled with art, and sometimes it requires interpretation from the guide,” said Christy MacLear, executive director of the site for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, to which Johnson bequeathed the house.

*The Advocate*