

# Art & ANTIQUES

FOR COLLECTORS OF THE FINE AND DECORATIVE ARTS



BAUHAUS LEGACY | FRANK STELLA | ART MARKET BUBBLE | EXPLORING MADRID

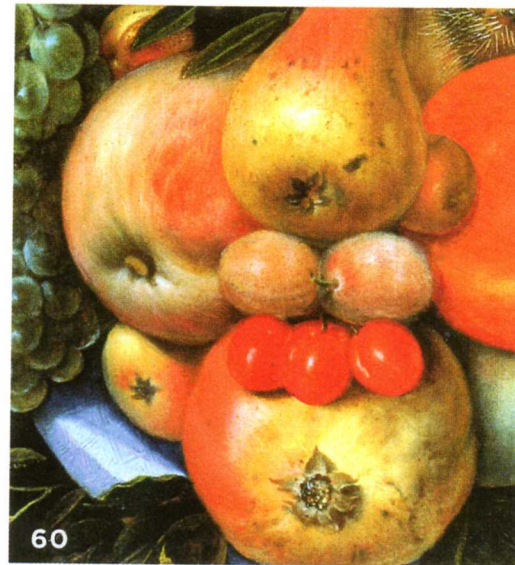
ARCIMBOLDO'S ABOUT-FACE



## French Inspiration

Luxury watch manufacturer Severin Wunderman is a collector who defines his own taste, and his Los Angeles home reflects his lifelong pursuit of quality and historical importance in the fine arts.

STORY BY WILLIAM A. EMBODEN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRED LICHT



## Wizard of Transmutation

With his inventive, yet whimsical, portraits, Giuseppe Arcimboldo expressed the Renaissance's fascination with metamorphosis.

STORY BY ROBERTA BARTOLI

## Grassroots Movement Goes International

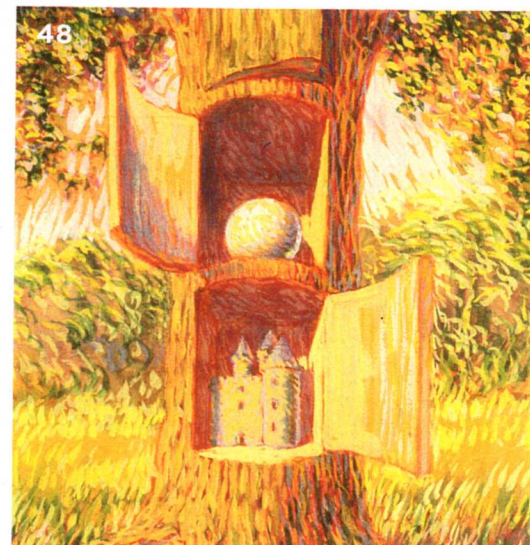
In Germany after World War I, the Bauhaus started out as an Arts and Crafts-influenced trade school. This "school of the future" ended up having a massive, worldwide impact on the development of modern architecture and design. STORY BY CYNTHIA ELYCE RUBIN



## Collecting Evolution

A Los Angeles collector's desire for personal growth leads him on a path to reinvention—and sets him on the chase for one elusive Basquiat.

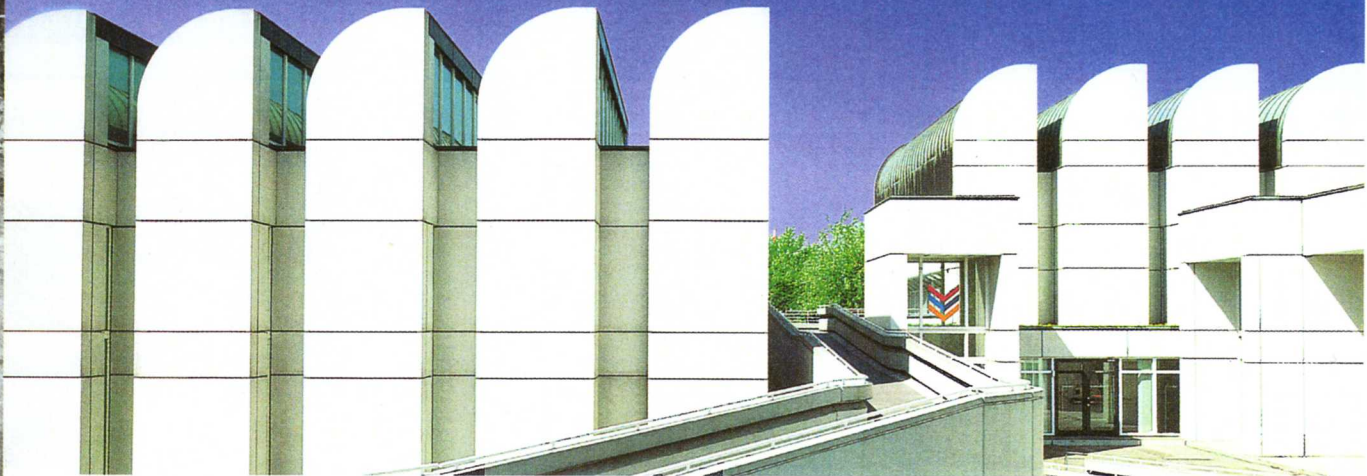
STORY BY DAVID LANSING | PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRED LICHT







# GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT GOES INTERNATIONAL



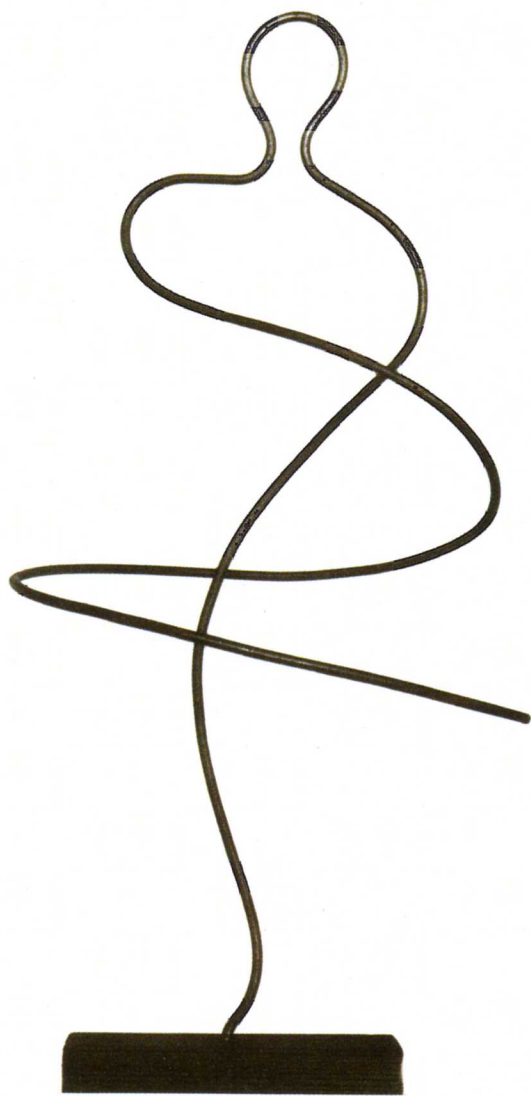
AN EXPERIMENT WITH THE GOAL OF REFORMING  
GERMANY'S ART EDUCATION TRANSFORMED THE WORLD'S DESIGN  
AND ARCHITECTURE FOREVER.

BY CYNTHIA ELYCE RUBIN



# “To understand the Bauhaus as a school of the future,

you must view the Bauhaus as a whole, not in parts,” says Michael Siebenbrodt, curator of the Bauhaus-Museum/Klassik Stiftung Weimar. That the school was founded in the small town of Weimar, where Goethe spent much of his life, is no coincidence. An intellectual and cultural center since the Age of Classicism, after World War I it became the capital of a republic that paved the way for a democratic Germany, with political and social changes generating the optimism necessary to promote new solutions to old problems. The Bauhaus, founded in 1919 for a future-oriented society as an interdisciplinary, anti-establishment art school with international and avant-garde dimensions, tells



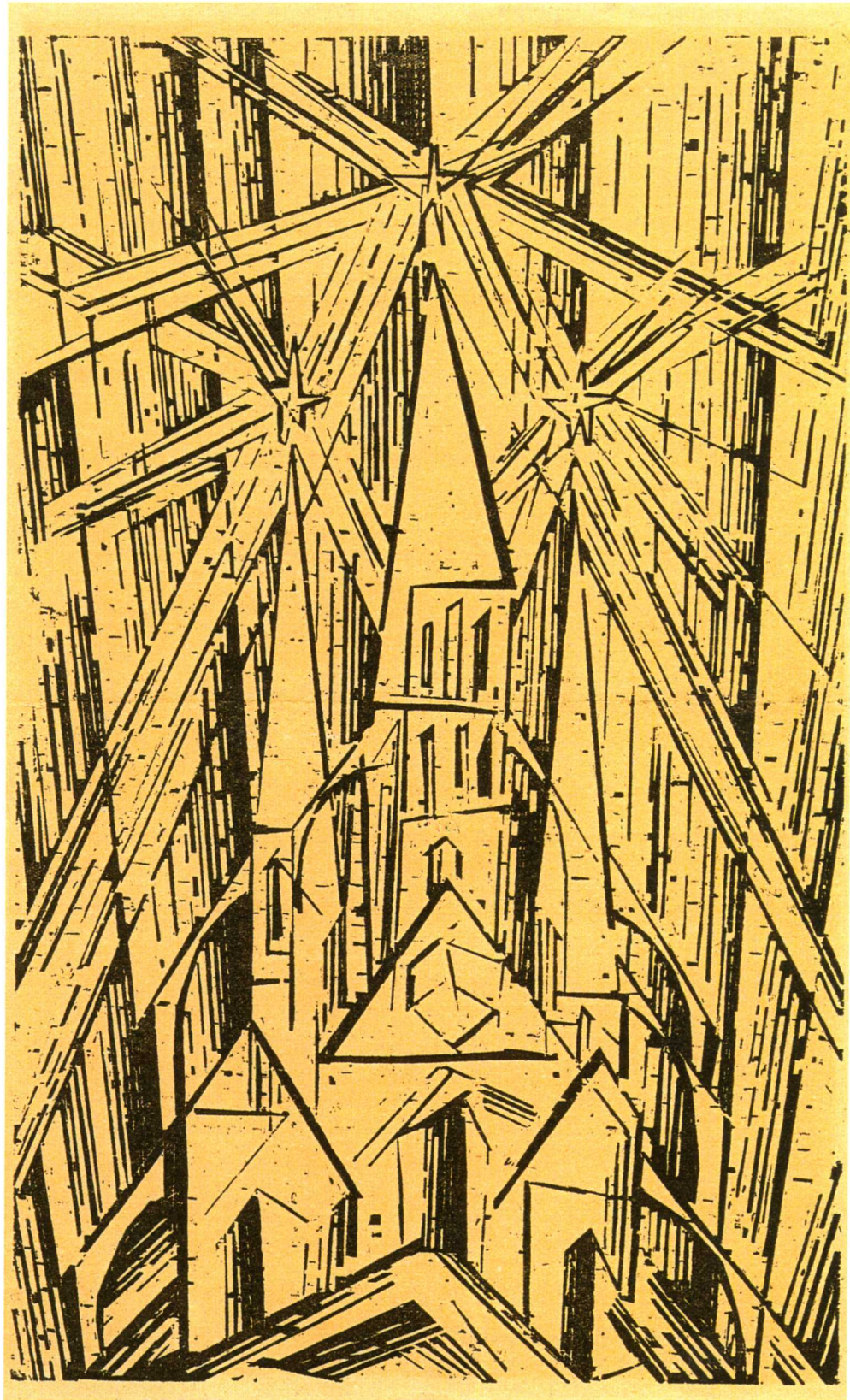
Clockwise, from top: Walter Gropius, 1921. Peter Keler, iconic child's cradle, at the Bauhaus Museum in Weimar. A Franz Ehrlich figurine, 1930. Facing: Lyonel Feininger, "Cathedral," 1919, woodcut, for the *Bauhaus Manifesto*. Previous pages: Masters' Houses, designed by Walter Gropius (p. 70). The Bauhaus Archive/Museum of Design (p. 71).



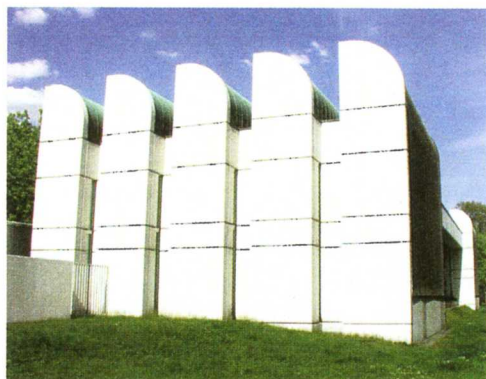
a story as complex as the volatile political and social events of its times. When Nazi pressure finally shut its doors in 1933, many Bauhaus teachers immigrated to America, where their ideas blossomed in the free atmosphere, growing into the dynamic and irrepressible force the world calls Modernism.

Bauhaus roots, however, run deep. Reaction to the profound social changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution in the 1850s generated the Arts and Crafts Movement in England and then throughout Europe. Progressives in Germany who were concerned with social evils and growing criticism of poor-quality, machine-made goods founded the Deutscher Werkbund in 1907, an organization of independent artists and industrialists, whose purpose included “the refinement of commercial processes through the collaboration of arts, industry and crafts.” Its aims were to bolster Germany’s economy after the destructive chaos of World War I by “enhancing craft work” and to help designers find industrial employment—which also had the effect of improving the quality of German products. Aspects of this movement to bring art and design to the public included inexpensive, healthy housing and functional, affordable wares. Peter Behrens, one of the founders of the Deutscher Werkbund, was a painter turned designer, architect and educator, as was another member, Belgian-born Henry van de Velde. Their influence on a young architect, Walter Gropius, who joined the Werkbund in 1910, cannot be underestimated.

Appointed director of a new school to reform art education in 1919, Gropius named it “Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar,” or State Bauhaus Weimar. In a revolutionary pamphlet, the *Bauhaus Manifesto*, he called for artists and craftsmen to reunite all arts under one roof and to work with a sense of social responsibility under the dominance of architecture. With Lyonel Feininger’s expressionist woodcut cover depicting a towering cathedral, the *Manifesto* rejected historic monumental styles, elevated crafts to the level of fine arts and embraced lofty social ideals: “The ultimate aim of all creative activity is a building! ... Let us desire, conceive, and create the new building of the future together. It will combine architecture, sculpture, and painting in a single form, and







#### WHAT DOES BAUHAUS MEAN?

According to biographer Reginald Isaacs, Gropius originally envisioned his school as a "Bauhütte with a few like-minded artists." Literally, *Bauhütte* means "building huts," but as the name given to the medieval masons' guild, *Bau* is associated with the guilds of old German history as well as the crafts aspect of the Bauhaus idea. On the opposite end, the noun *Bau*, "building," is short, simple and honest, and thus suits the break with Historicism that the streamlined Machine Age espoused.

Joined with another simple word, *haus*, or "house," Bauhaus loosely translates as "house of building." Given Gropius' high regard for architecture as the supreme union of all the arts, this catchy combination of building and house in one word seems entirely fitting, given that all arts were reunited under one roof and all instructors were to work toward one goal—the idea being to train architects, not to teach architecture.

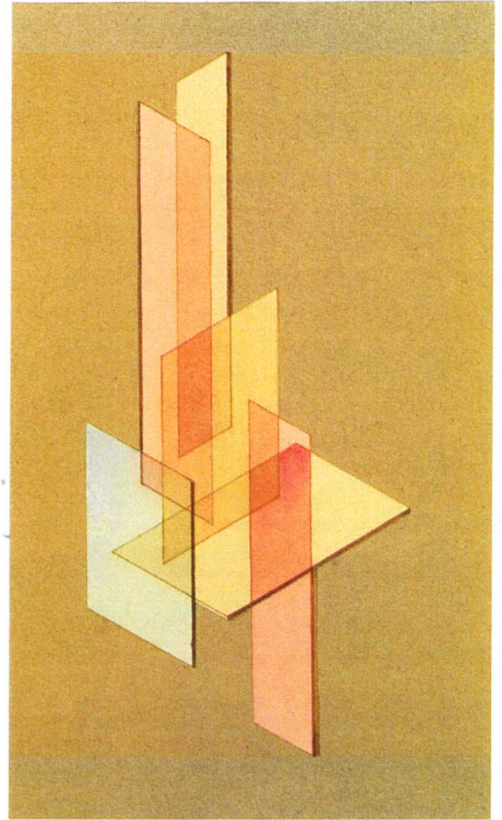
Interestingly, the verb *bauen* "to build" has a secondary meaning, "to till or cultivate," which evokes the idea of nurturing and growing seedlings. Metaphorically speaking, students who learn, in turn become the teachers who spread and disseminate Bauhaus ideas.

In hindsight, could Gropius have coined a more perfect word? It is simple, but complex in its multi-level range of associations, an appropriate addition to the vocabulary of the modern age.

In 1923, Gropius staged "Bauhaus Week." Hundreds traveled across Europe to view what fired the imaginations of many visitors. "I had a glimpse of a world that was being reborn," reminisced architectural theorist and critic Sigfried Giedion.







will one day rise towards the heavens from the hands of a million workers as the crystalline symbol of a new and coming faith.”

Breaking with the past called for a curriculum as radical as its philosophy. During the first semester, students worked to discard preconceptions in the compulsory preliminary course or *Vorkurs*, the backbone of the educational program. To tap into their creativity, they practiced exercises using texture, form, color, tone and line analysis. Training to become a master craftsman in the artisan apprentice tradition also played an important role, since craft was considered the ideal unity of creative design and material production. “Schools,” the *Manifesto* proclaimed, “must return to the workshop.” Students had to complete practical hands-on training in workshops both with a master of form, an artist responsible for the aesthetic aspect of the work, and a master of crafts, who oversaw technical skills. This dual approach promoted teamwork and allowed method and technique to go hand-in-hand with intuition and creativity.

In a highly unusual move, Gropius chose masters of form who were not art teachers but artists. The first appointments, all associated with the avant-garde Der Sturm Gallery in Berlin, were Johannes Itten (Swiss painter and mystic), Lyonel Feininger (German-American painter and cartoonist) and Gerhard Marcks (fellow Werkbund member, sculptor and printmaker). Then came Oskar Schlemmer, Georg Muche, Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky, already a noted abstract painter and theorist of synthesis in the arts. These men, each of them intelligent with a shared sensibility, curious about fundamental problems and fiercely independent, were more likely to embrace new

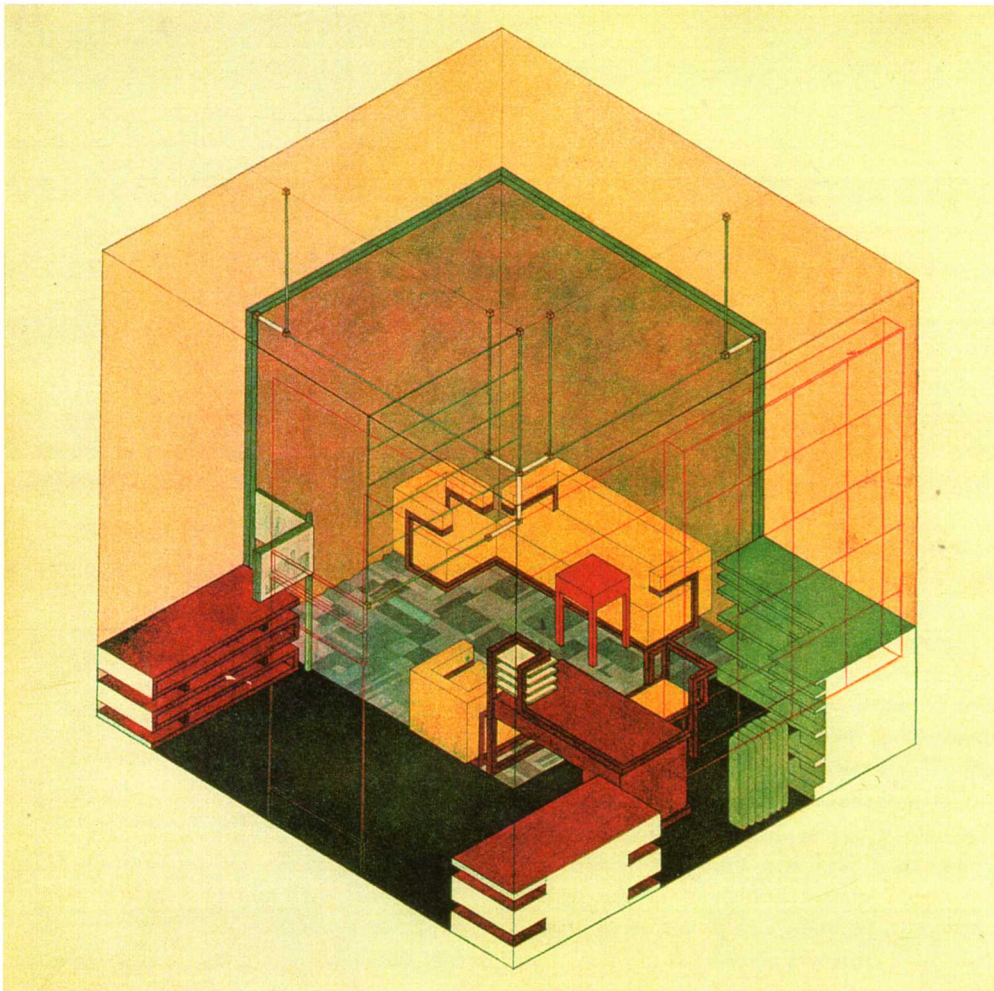
ideas than craftsmen—or so Gropius believed.

But should a school that wanted to be modern revive age-old crafts? When the avant-garde Dutch founder of the De Stijl movement, Theo van Doesburg, arrived in Weimar in 1921, his skepticism galvanized Bauhaus students and forced Gropius to deal with issues that ultimately changed the school’s direction away from crafts towards industrial methods of production and their consequences for design. Rejecting this new focus, Itten, who conceived and taught the *Vorkurs*, departed, paving the way for the charismatic Hungarian Constructivist, László Moholy-Nagy.

From the beginning, the dual-masters system heightened a kind of class warfare that raised its ugly head when mundane subjects like vacation days and salary increases were in dispute. Although all masters were equal in theory, the reality of the situation was different. Gropius’ ideal of the Bauhaus as microcosm of a utopian society did not materialize. Despite unrelenting efforts to quiet tensions, against a backdrop of turbulent monetary and political crises, internal squabbles demoralized both staff and students. In addition, local government authorities were demanding evidence of the school’s progress. As a state-financed school, the Bauhaus depended on subsidies,

Masters’ Houses, 1926, designed by Walter Gropius. Franz Ehrlich, exercise from a class led by László Moholy-Nagy (top), 1927. Facing (far left): Bauhaus Archive/Museum of Design.





**"The ultimate aim of all creative activity is a building! ... It will combine architecture, sculpture, and painting in a single form, and will one day rise towards the heavens ... as the crystalline symbol of a new and coming faith." — Bauhaus Manifesto**

**An isometric unit construction of Walter Gropius' office and desk. Facing: Herbert Bayer, "Section Allemande" poster for the German Werkbund, 1930, color lithograph. Page 78: Marianne Brandt, cylinder lamp. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Barcelona Chair, 1929. Page 79: The Bauhaus in Dessau.**

but almost from its inception, its very existence was endangered by politicians' attacks on the program. In 1923, to placate official demands, Gropius staged "Bauhaus Week," including modern dance and music performances, an exhibition of Bauhaus products under the new central theme, "Art and Technology: a New Unity," and the construction of Haus am Horn, the prototype for the single-family house of the future, entirely furnished by the workshops. Owing to Gropius' public relations campaign, hundreds traveled across Europe to view what fired the imaginations of many visitors. "I had a glimpse of a world that was being reborn," reminisced architectural theorist and critic Sigfried Giedion, who later wrote a Gropius biography. A student at the time, he journeyed by overnight train from Munich and never forgot the impression.

Modernity had arrived, but to little fanfare. Among the detractors were unsympathetic

political officials under pressure from hostile unions, frustrated old-school academics and townspeople who had always regarded Bauhaus art students as strange and unsavory. Government officials reacted by cutting funds and revoking the masters' contracts, forcing the dissolution of the Bauhaus in Weimar. A Gropius searched for alternative locations, he received a tempting offer from mayor Frit Hesse of Dessau, an industrial city awash in cash due to the success of the Junkers airplane factory. "To Mayor Hesse the Bauhaus represented a chance to renew the city's cultural prestige," writes Reginald Isaacs in *Gropius: An Illustrated Biography of the Creator of the Bauhaus* (1991). Not only did Hesse promise ample funds for a new school and accommodations, he also offered a lucrative contract to design a low-income development called Törten for workers' housing.

Gropius jumped at the chance. The new Bauhaus complex housed the workshops, school, auditorium and dining hall with an attached dormitory, the first student housing of its kind in Germany. Filled with innovative details, its outstanding visual feature, a vast glass wall on the main building's workshop side, epitomized the "all it takes and no more" philosophy that also advocated no heavy velvet cushioned seats, no carpets and no materials to swallow sound. An enclosed two-story bridge housed the administration as well as Gropius' private office. The painting workshop did the interior decoration of the entire building. The metal workshop designed and executed every lighting fixture. Marcel Breuer designed the tubular steel furniture of the assembly hall, dining room and studios. Three semi-detached duplexes for the six masters and a house for the director were provided nearby.

Here in Dessau, art and design turned to industry with a passion. Over the years, workshops had been established for stone and plaster work, woodwork, carpentry, metalwork including gold and silver, pottery, wall painting, house painting and color decoration, stained glass, weaving, wood and stone sculpture, theater and the graphic arts. In Dessau the pottery, wood and stone sculpture workshops closed; others merged or changed direction. The new printing workshop, run by Herbert Bayer, emphasized layout, typography and advertising. In 1925 Bauhaus Ltd. branded



itself to sell school-designed products and patents, exactly the cooperation with industry that Gropius wanted to ensure outside income. Earlier, there had been private sales and several commissions, notably, then-student Herbert Bayer's redesign of Germany's inflated million-mark currency in 1923 and the Josef Hartwig chess set manufactured in 1924—hardly money-making ventures. That would change.

Bauhaus workshops were now laboratories where students acquainted themselves with the tools and materials that would enable them to understand machines and their processes. Following the motto, "necessities, not luxuries," product guidelines stipulated that each component consist of as few parts as possible so that the design could easily be adapted to industrial production. "A thing is defined by its essence," Gropius taught. In order to design an item, its essence must first be explored. In the end, it serves its purpose by fulfilling its function as well as being durable, cheap and attractive. Students worked, then reworked prototypes of products and furnishings by combining and interlocking geometric shapes (squares, triangles and circles), often in primary colors (red, yellow and blue), using contrasting textures, proportions and innovative materials such as chrome-plated steel tubing, plastics and neon lights, as well as innovative ways to work with standard materials such as glass. The end result? Average people had access to quality items at affordable prices.

The aim to "educate a new, as yet non-existent type of worker for the industries and trades who has an equal command of both engineering and form" led versatile, entrepreneurial students like Josef Albers, Marcel Breuer and

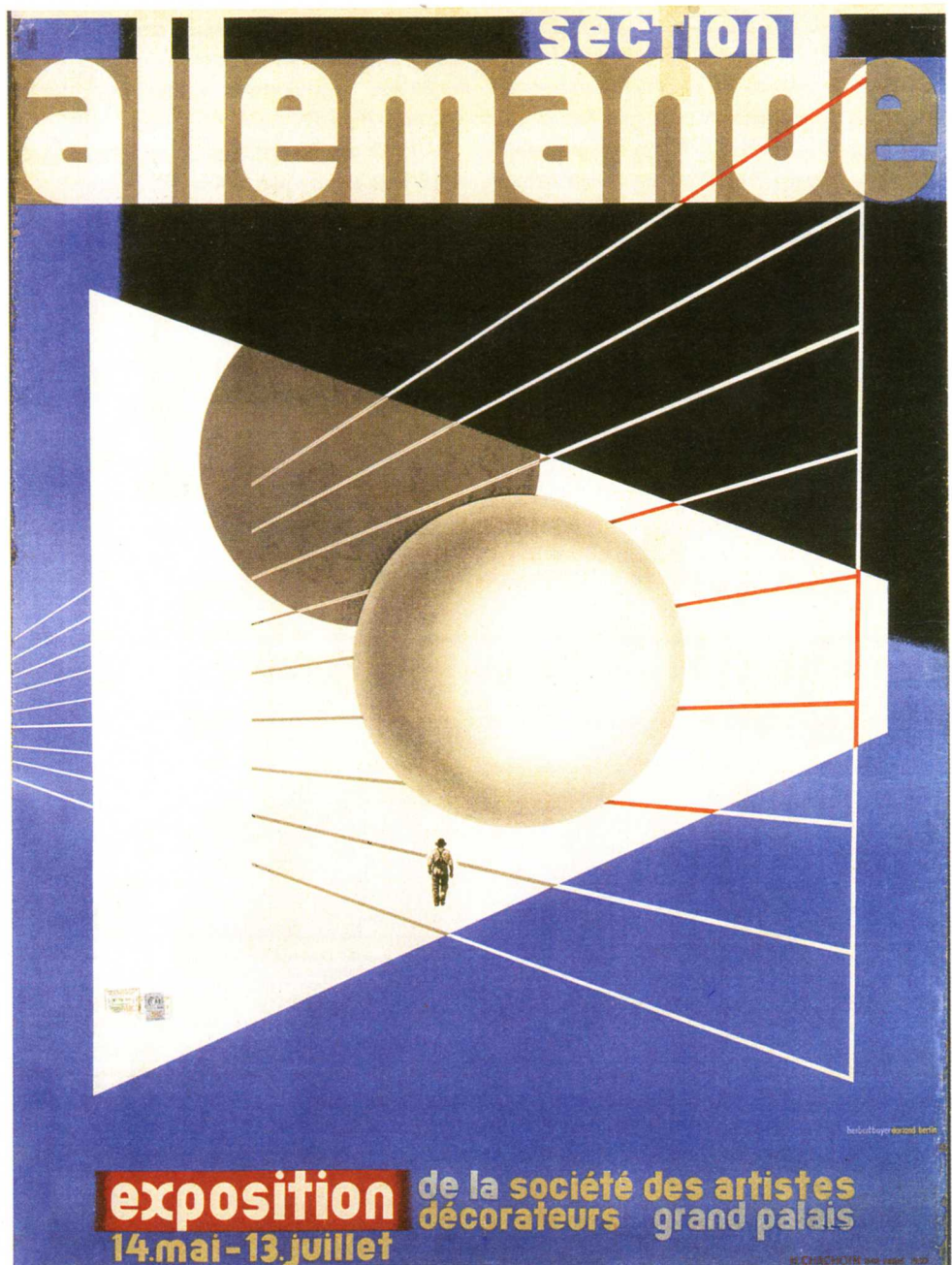
Gunta Stölzl to develop impressive portfolios. Marianne Brandt became known for her adjustable hanging cylinder lamp produced in the metal workshop, but she was also a painter and photographer whose talent in photomontage is acknowledged in the current National Gallery of Art traveling exhibition, "Foto: Modernity in Central Europe, 1918–1945" at Milwaukee Art Museum (Feb. 9–May 4) and terminating at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (June 7–Aug. 31).

#### RECOMMENDED READING

Countless publications deal with every aspect of the Bauhaus, but two titles on the historic Bauhaus stand out for the collector:

*Bauhaus* by Frank Whitford (Thames & Hudson, London, 1984).

*Gropius: An Illustrated Biography of the Creator of the Bauhaus* by Reginald Isaacs (Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1991). Out-of-print, but available from [historicnewengland.org](http://historicnewengland.org).





**Bauhaus product guidelines stipulated that each component consist of as few parts as possible so that the design could be adapted to industrial production.**

umerous Bauhaus products have achieved classic “Modern” status, including Marcel Breuer’s steel furniture and lamps by Wilhelm Wagenfeld, but at the time, the most successful commercial product was wallpaper designed in the mural painting workshop.

But even growing acclaim for Bauhaus products and rising enrollment after accreditation in 1926 could not halt pressure from financial problems, political attacks and internal dissent. Gropius resigned in 1928. His successor, Swiss architect Hannes Meyer, continued to make low-cost furnishings but reoriented the institution toward architecture, sacrificing many basic courses. On the plus side, although Georg Muche and László Moholy-Nagy earlier introduced photography as a means of visual learning within the basic curriculum, Meyer established an independent photography course in 1929 under Walter Peterhans, making the Bauhaus an early school to recognize its value

as an art form. Meyer’s Marxist leanings, however, ultimately forced his termination. Under the succeeding directorship of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, the Bauhaus abolished the apprenticeship system altogether and from 1930 on developed into an architecture school, entirely changing its founding orientation. But the public perception of the Bauhaus as a liberal hotbed of international and Jewish elements and therefore a source of degenerate, Bolshevik, anti-German values was already well established.


In 1932 the Nazis, having achieved control of the Dessau city parliament the previous year, declared the Bauhaus closed. “The disappearance of this so-called ‘School of Design’ will mean the disappearance of one of the most significant sites of Jewish, Marxist ‘artistic’ will from German soil,” wrote Paul Schultze-Naumburg in the September 30, 1932 issue of the *Anhalt* newspaper. “Let homes or faculties



(TOP) BAUHAUS-ARCHIV BERLIN; (BELOW) SVG BILD-KUNST BONN; PHOTO: KELLY KELLERHOFF/BAUHAUS DESSAU FOUNDATION; FACING: COURTESY GERMAN NATIONAL TOURIST BOARD



soon be built that allow the German people to feel at home and relax.” The Bauhaus, a shadow of its former self, continued as a private institution in Berlin but lasted only a year under the Hitler regime.

In the end, the short-lived educational experiment that began in small-town Germany achieved a world-wide impact likened to what poet Ralph Waldo Emerson called “the shot heard round the world” when he immortalized the band of Massachusetts farmers who engaged the British redcoats in his *Concord Hymn*. Many Bauhaus teachers, a veritable “Who’s Who” of Modernism including Gropius (who taught at Harvard University, Graduate School of Design), Mies van der Rohe, Josef and Anni Albers, Breuer, Bayer, Feininger and Moholy-Nagy, immigrated to America where their works and teaching revolutionized artistic and architectural thinking. Their legacy? Alive and well. Ask any first-year art, design or architecture student. Better yet, focus on the average person buying quality, well-designed products at reasonable cost and consider the Michael Graves Design teakettles sold at Target. It warms the heart of any Bauhaus enthusiast. Gropius would surely be pleased. 

*Curator, lecturer and writer Cynthia Elyce Rubin has written books and exhibition catalogues on art topics, including SOUTHERN FOLK ART; ABC AMERICANA FROM THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART; and LARGER THAN LIFE: THE AMERICAN TALL-TALE POSTCARD, 1905-1915.*



## ON THE BAUHAUS TRAIL

In 1996, UNESCO included the Bauhaus sites located in Weimar and Dessau in its roster of World Heritage Sites on the grounds that the Bauhaus buildings in Weimar (Thuringia) and Dessau (Saxony-Anhalt) “revolutionized architectural and aesthetic concepts and practices. The buildings built and decorated by the school’s professors (Walter Gropius, Hannes Meyer, László Moholy-Nagy and Wassily Kandinsky) launched the Modern Movement, which shaped much of the architecture of the 20th century.”

Weimar and Dessau, which became part of East Germany after World War II, underwent great changes in attitudes toward the Bauhaus ideas during Communist times. At first reviled, they were respected by the end of the 1960s, but the emphasis was on the social renewal and community aspects of Bauhaus philosophy rather than on architecture and design. Importantly, in Weimar, collections were conserved, organized and displayed; in Dessau, the main Bauhaus building was restored after some 30 years of disuse. After German reunification, additional restoration to Bauhaus architecture makes Dessau a must-see destination today.

The former Grand Duke’s Saxon School of Fine Arts (1904–11, now **Bauhaus University**) and the former School of Art and Crafts (1905–06, today the **Art & Design Faculty of Bauhaus University**), both designed by Henry van de Velde and considered fine examples of Art Nouveau or Jugendstil architecture, were home to the Bauhaus.

Walk from there to land that once grew Bauhaus vegetables. You come upon **Haus am Horn**, the only original example of early Bauhaus architecture in Weimar. The model house (1923) was planned as a synthesis of art and function, an experiment in design for future living featuring new construction methods and materials. This was to be the first house for an entire Bauhaus settlement, a project that never came to fruition.

In Weimar’s city center on Theaterplatz, across from the famous statue of Goethe and Schiller and the German National Theatre—best known as the place where the National Assembly drafted the constitution of the Weimar Republic in 1919—visit the **Bauhaus Museum**. On display is one room devoted to the Art Nouveau of Henry van de Velde; several rooms exhibit Bauhaus works in different media, including rare postcards, graphics, toys, furnishings and textiles.

For the Bauhaus aficionado, Dessau remains



the mother lode. Visit the key modernist **Bauhaus building** with its signature “Bauhaus” sign. About 10 minutes away are the white, cubed restored duplex **Masters’ Houses**, where you imbibe the vibes of Kandinsky, Mücke, Schlemmer and Klee. The Feiningerhaus, where artist Lyonel Feininger lived with his family, now is home of the **Kurt Weill Centre**.

By the 1950s Gropius was returning to Germany to work and visit, but he always felt most at home in Berlin. The Bauhaus Archive, originally established in Darmstadt in 1960 by art historian Hans Maria Wingler, moved to Berlin in 1971. In the city where the Bauhaus died, it is ironic but fitting that the **Bauhaus Archive/Museum of Design** resides in a Gropius-designed building opened in 1979 on a lot that Gropius himself chose on the edge of Tiergarten Park. Here is the 1919–33 history of the Bauhaus as the 20th century’s most significant school of architecture, design and art, with a collection covering the entire spectrum. There is a small permanent display and changing thematic exhibitions. The library and document collection is the best of its kind and holds the Gropius papers.

Gropius’ first architectural commission after his move via London in 1937 to teach at Harvard was his own house in “unspoiled” countryside bordering an apple orchard in Lincoln, Mass. Here, in 1938 with a vocabulary of typical New England materials and forms, such as brick chimney, screened porch and fieldstone foundation, he juxtaposed materials that were rarely used in house interiors at the time, including glass block, chrome and industrial lighting fixtures.

Upholding Bauhaus philosophy, each aspect of the **Gropius House**, which is open to the public and its landscape was designed for maximum efficiency and simplicity. Most of the furniture originated in the workshops in Dessau. In his daughter’s room is the desk he designed for his office in Weimar that served him in Dessau and Berlin as well. Although much of the original art now resides in the Bauhaus Archive in Berlin, Mrs. Gropius kept works by friends, including Alexander Schawinsky, Max Ernst, László Moholy-Nagy, Henry Moore, Joseph Albers, Joan Miró and Herbert Bayer. The Gropius House, explains daughter Ati Gropius Johansen in *Historic New England Magazine* (Fall 2003), “was not conceived of as a monument to the Modern movement but designed and built according to its core beliefs which makes it a natural laboratory in which to discover the Bauhaus approach to design and problem solving.” And so, the Bauhaus trail comes full circle with ideas and a visual idiom that continue to resonate into the 21st-century.

For those interested in further study, the **Weimar Summer Course** (June 22–July 6, 2008) is an intensive two-week art course taught in English. The first week is a study of Bauhaus ethics and aesthetics with Dr. Hildegard Kurt, cultural researcher in Berlin. The second week discusses these issues in relation to “social sculpture” (the expanded view of art that Joseph Beuys outlined as a strategy to foster humanity and ecological sustainability) with Shelley Sacks, former Beuys student and director of the world’s first research center for Social Sculpture at Oxford Brookes University in England. [summerkurse-weimar.de](http://summerkurse-weimar.de)