

The Museum of Modern Art

14 West 49th Street, New York, N. Y.

Telephone: Circle 7-7470

Cable Address: Modernart

December 2, 1938.

TO: City Editors
News Photo Editors

Dear Sirs:

On Wednesday, December 7, the Museum will open to the public what will probably be considered its most unusual exhibition--and certainly one of its largest. More than a year has been required to assemble the objects in the exhibition.

Under the deceptively quiet title of THE BAUHAUS 1919-1928, it will set forth through nearly seven hundred exhibits in wood, metal, canvas and paint, textiles, paper, glass and other substances the entire philosophy and practice of the remarkable school in Germany, now closed, that has had such a great influence on modern art and modern design.

Because of the news values in the exhibition it has been decided to hold a

NEWS (not Art) Conference
SATURDAY (December 3)
at 2 P.M. at the Museum of Modern Art,
14 West 49 Street, Concourse Level.

Dr. Walter Gropius, founder and director of the Bauhaus, will be present to answer questions. (Dr. Gropius is now Chairman of the School of Architecture, Harvard University.)

Unusual news photographs will be possible. (It is urged that photographers be sent as it will be much easier for them to get good shots before the installation is entirely completed. The photo services will unquestionably want pictures.)

Sincerely yours,



Sarah Newmeyer
Publicity Director

Goodyear
President:
Whitney
President:
A. Lewisohn
and
President:
A. Rockefeller
N. Bliss
Robert Woods Bliss
C. Clark
Murray Crane
Duveen of Millbank
Field
Ford
Goodwin
S. Paley
Charles S. Payson
Wiley Resor
John D. Rockefeller, Jr.
Ray Ruml
Sachs
John S. Sheppard
M. M. Warburg
H. Barr, Jr.
Director:
Dabney Mabry, Jr.
of Film Library:
Abbott

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

14 WEST 49TH STREET, NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 7-7470

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The shapes of "things to come," the forms of things which have recently become a part of everyday life--such as modern lighting fixtures, tubular steel chairs, new typography--and the fundamentally new principles that combine art with industry so that genuinely new forms and shapes can come into being, will be set forth in THE BAUHAUS 1919-1928. The exhibition includes paintings,

architectural models and plans, original ballet costumes, photographs and cameraless photographs, typography, furniture, lighting fixtures, rugs, textiles, mobile sculpture, tin and paper sculptures, metal and glass dishes, an abstract motion picture film and many other objects, which the Museum of Modern Art, 14 West 49 Street, New York, will open to the public Wednesday, December 7.

To bring into a fundamental unity all branches of art, architecture and design the Bauhaus was founded in 1919 in Weimar, Germany, by Walter Gropius, one of the world's leading modern architects and now Chairman of the Department of Architecture at Harvard University. Its success was so remarkable, before it was closed in 1933 by the National Socialists, that it became a world-influence in modern architecture and design.

The exhibition is under the auspices of the Museum's Department of Architecture and Industrial Art. It has been organized and installed by Herbert Bayer, one of the former masters at the Bauhaus. It will fill all the Museum's galleries and will comprise about 700 individual items in wood, metal, canvas and paint, textiles, paper, glass and many other substances. The entire installation will exemplify, as far as possible in the given gallery space, the Bauhaus principles of exhibition technique in which clarity and arresting

arrangement are combined. For example, the Museum floors--traditionally not part of an exhibition--will be decorated with painted guide-lines, footprints and abstract forms which will not only direct the visitor step by step through the exhibition but will bear artistic relation to the actual physical shape of each gallery and the type of the objects exhibited in it.

In 1919, after much preliminary work, Walter Gropius merged the Weimar Art Academy and the Weimar Arts and Crafts School to form the Bauhaus. Its first proclamation declared that "The complete building is the final aim of the visual arts....Architects, painters and sculptors must recognize anew the composite character of the building as an entity."

The Bauhaus was not merely a school in the ordinarily accepted sense but, much more, a community of architects, painters, sculptors, engineers, photographers and craftsmen who contributed their special talents and experience. The pupils studied and experimented under their direction. All, working together, continued to "learn by doing," discovering new principles and developing new techniques. Designs created in the Bauhaus were used in mass production. In this way the Bauhaus bridged the gap between the so-called "fine arts" and industry. It also began to solve the problem of fitting the artist to take his place in the machine age. As it grew in influence and reputation the Bauhaus brought together on its faculty more artists of distinguished talent than has any other art school of our time.

At the beginning the Bauhaus had about 225 students chiefly from Germany and Austria; within a few years at least 50% of its students came from other European countries and the United States. Approximately two-thirds of them were men and most of them were in their early twenties. The Bauhaus masters, or teachers, were Walter Gropius, its founder and first director, Kandinsky, Klee, Feininger, Schlemmer, Itten, Moholy-Nagy, Albers, Bayer, Breuer, Staelz and others.

In 1925 the Bauhaus moved from Weimar to Dessau, where the new Bauhaus building, designed by Gropius and decorated, furnished and equipped in collaboration with the Bauhaus workshops, was completed in 1926. In the development of modern architecture it was

the most important and influential modern building of the 1920's. In 1928 Gropius left the active directorship of the Bauhaus, together with Bayer, Breuer and Moholy-Nagy, to devote their time to private practice.

During the first decade of its existence hundreds of Bauhaus students went out into the world spreading by their works more than through their words the new doctrine of the Bauhaus unity of art, architecture and industrial design.

In his preface to the book which the Museum of Modern Art is publishing in connection with the exhibition, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of the Museum, writes:

"The world began to accept the Bauhaus. In America Bauhaus lighting fixtures and tubular chairs were imported or the designs pirated. American Bauhaus students began to return; and they were followed, after the revolution of 1933, by Bauhaus and ex-Bauhaus masters who suffered from the new government's illusion that modern furniture, flat-roofed architecture and abstract painting were degenerate or bolshevistic. In this way, with the help of the fatherland, Bauhaus designs, Bauhaus men, Bauhaus ideas, which taken together form one of the chief cultural contributions of modern Germany, have been spread throughout the world."

The exhibition will be open to the public from December 7 until the end of January, closing only on Sunday, December 25, Christmas Day, and Sunday, January 1, New Year's Day.

NOTE: Under existing conditions in Germany it was not possible to bring more actual objects to this country for the exhibition. Limited to objects which were available, supplemented by enlarged photographs, the exhibition does not show the entire scope of the Bauhaus in every field of its work.

Although most of the objects and designs shown were made more than a decade ago, they were based on such sound principles of beauty and usefulness that even today many of them seem well above the level of ordinary contemporary design.

However, the principal theme of the exhibition is the Bauhaus as an idea. That idea seems as valid today as it was in the days when the Bauhaus flourished.