

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART PRESENTS MAJOR EXHIBITION CELEBRATING THE INFLUENTIAL BAUHAUS SCHOOL

Exhibition Focuses on the Historical Moment of the School and Includes Over 400 Works, with Many on View for the First Time in the United States

Bauhaus 1919–1933: Workshops for Modernity

November 8, 2009–January 25, 2010

The Joan and Preston Robert Tisch Gallery, sixth floor

NEW YORK, November 3, 2009—The Museum of Modern Art presents ***Bauhaus 1919–1933: Workshops for Modernity*** from November 8, 2009, to January 25, 2010. The Bauhaus school in Germany—the most famous and influential school of avant-garde art in the twentieth century—brought together artists, architects, and designers in an extraordinary conversation about the nature of art in the modern age. Aiming to rethink the very form of contemporary life, the students and faculty of the Bauhaus made the school the venue for a dazzling array of experiments in the visual arts that had a transformative effect on the 1920s and 1930s. The effects are still felt in our contemporary visual world. The exhibition brings together over 400 works that reflect the extraordinarily broad range of the school’s production, including industrial design, furniture, architecture, graphics, photography, textiles, ceramics, theater and costume design, painting, and sculpture. It includes works by famous faculty members and well-known students including Anni Albers, Josef Albers, Herbert Bayer, Marianne Brandt, Marcel Breuer, Lyonel Feininger, Walter Gropius, Vasily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, László Moholy-Nagy, Lucia Moholy, Lilly Reich, Oskar Schlemmer, and Gunta Stölzl, as well as less well-known, but equally innovative, artists.

The exhibition is organized by Barry Bergdoll, The Philip Johnson Chief Curator of Architecture and Design, and Leah Dickerman, Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, in collaboration with a cross-departmental group of MoMA colleagues, in the spirit of the Bauhaus.

Bauhaus 1919–1933: Workshops for Modernity opens 80 years after the founding of MoMA, and 90 years after the establishment of the Bauhaus. It brings together a rich group of approximately 150 rarely seen works of art from the three German Bauhaus collections—Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, and Klassik Stiftung Weimar—and over 80 works from MoMA’s own collection to form the foundation of the exhibition. In addition, major loans come from The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation; the Centre Pompidou, Musée national d’art moderne/Centre de création industrielle; the Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum; The

Metropolitan Museum of Art; and numerous other public and private collections in the United States and Europe.

This exhibition is the first comprehensive treatment by MoMA of the Bauhaus since 1938. That early exhibition, titled *Bauhaus 1919–1928*, was organized by the founder and first director of the Bauhaus, Walter Gropius, and designed by former Bauhaus student and instructor Herbert Bayer. It excluded the final five years of the school under Gropius's successors, Hannes Meyer and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. For many years, the 1938 exhibition's catalogue was the vehicle by which Americans learned about the Bauhaus. No museum was more influenced by the Bauhaus than The Museum of Modern Art itself, whose collections were organized to include an unprecedented range of mediums in both art and design. "I regard the three days which I spent at the Bauhaus in 1928 as one of the most important incidents in my own education," recalled MoMA founding director Alfred Barr, Jr. in a letter to Gropius. MoMA's second major Bauhaus exhibition offers an extraordinary opportunity for a new generational perspective on this influential school.

In popular discussion, the Bauhaus is often used as shorthand for a timeless style of international modernism. In contrast, *Bauhaus 1919–1933: Workshops for Modernity* looks at the Bauhaus as a radically new school deeply in tune with its historical moment from 1919 to 1933. These were the exact years of the tumultuous tenure of the Weimar Republic. The school was led by three different directors—Walter Gropius (1919–1928), Hannes Meyer (1928–1930), and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1930–1933)—each one of the 20th century's most important architectural minds, but each quite distinct in outlook and philosophy. The school also occupied homes in three cities with distinct cultural and political climates: founded in 1919 in Weimar, the city of Goethe and Schiller, the school was later forced by local political opposition to depart for the industrialized city of Dessau in 1925, where it moved into the internationally acclaimed buildings Gropius designed for the school. In 1932, after the National Socialist-dominated local government closed the school in Dessau, a small core of students and faculty tried to hold on in an abandoned telephone factory in Berlin, but the institution was closed in less than a year.

The exhibition is organized in loose chronological order, with sections dedicated to the Weimar, Dessau, and Berlin years. This historical grounding demonstrates the degree to which the school functioned as a cultural think tank for trying times; its diverse faculty of prominent artists, designers, and architecture engaged in a 14-year conversation about the nature of art in the age of technology, industrial production, and global communication. The exhibition installation focuses on the productive interrelations among diverse mediums, mixing works from the school's different workshops to trace formal and conceptual ideas as they manifest in objects made of different materials and for different purposes. The focus on cross-pollination makes the show pertinent as a re-evaluation of the Bauhaus in its time, with resonance for our own. The color palette used in the exhibition comes from those that Gropius used in houses he designed for

himself and the Bauhaus masters in Dessau in 1925. Along with the standard Bauhaus colors of white, black, and gray, unexpected colors such as gold, pink, and tangerine are used.

A full range of historical work is presented in the exhibition, including such Bauhaus icons as Marcel Breuer's tubular steel furniture and László Moholy-Nagy's oblique angle photographs, as well as works that counter expectations, like Lothar Schreyer's design for a coffin (1920) or Kurt Kranz's project for an abstract cinema (c. 1930).

Among the many other objects in the exhibition are rare textiles by Anni Albers woven in the Bauhaus period (most seen today are rewoven later) and others by Gunta Stölzl; important paintings by Vasily Kandinsky (including *On White II* and *Black Form*, both from 1923), Paul Klee (such as *Fire in the Evening* and *Highway and Byroads*, both from 1929), and Oskar Schlemmer (*Bauhaus Stairway*, from 1932); graphic designs by Herbert Bayer and Joost Schmidt; a superb range of photographs, including a selection of Lucia Moholy's close-up photographic portraits; stained glass windows by Josef Albers; a tea set by Marianne Brandt; and marionettes by Kurt Schmidt from the 1923 Bauhaus production of *The Adventures of the Little Hunchback* directed by Schlemmer.

Also included is Marcel Breuer's "African" Chair (1921), created in collaboration with the weaver Gunta Stölzl. Made of painted wood with a colorful woven textile, this chair embodies the spirit of the early Bauhaus in its romantic experimentalism. The chair was presumed lost for the past 80 years—the only documentation available was a black-and-white photograph—until 2004, when its owners offered the chair to the Bauhaus-Archiv in Berlin. This is the chair's first appearance outside of Germany.

This exhibition was organized in cooperation with Bauhaus-Archiv/Museum für Gestaltung, Berlin; Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau; Klassik Stiftung Weimar; and the German Federal Cultural Foundation. A version of the show was presented at Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin from July 22 to October 4, 2009. The New York and Berlin exhibitions share a core group of loans, but have distinct curatorial perspectives.

SPONSORSHIP:

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The accompanying publication is made possible by The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art.

PUBLICATIONS:

Bauhaus 1919–1933: Workshops for Modernity is accompanied by a major publication. Featuring over 400 full-color plates, richly complemented by documentary images, it includes two essays by curators Barry Bergdoll and Leah Dickerman that offer new critical perspectives on the Bauhaus. Thirty shorter essays by over 20 leading scholars discuss specific objects in the exhibition. An illustrated narrative chronology provides a lively glimpse of the Bauhaus's history, and guides readers through important events, exhibitions, and publications. The book is published by The Museum of Modern Art and will be available at the MoMA Stores and online at www.momastore.org in November. It is distributed to the trade through Distributed Art Publishers (D.A.P.) in the United States and Canada, and through Thames + Hudson outside North America. Hardcover, 12h x 9.5 in.; 328 pages, 400 illustrations. Price: \$75.

The book ***Gunta Stölzl: Bauhaus Master*** is also available. Gunta Stölzl (1897-1983) was the only woman to teach at the Bauhaus. An inventive textile designer, Stölzl was head of the weaving workshop, and during her tenure there transformed it into a flourishing, productive enterprise. *Gunta Stölzl: Bauhaus Master* illustrates more than 75 key works by Stölzl, accompanied by excerpts drawn from her journals, letters, and articles, some of which are published here for the first time. Accompanied by explanatory comments and a foreword by Monika Stadler, Stölzl's daughter, these personal writings offer an intimate view of the artist's life and work between 1917 and 1931, from her student years in Munich to her service as a Red Cross nurse during World War I, and continuing through her years at the Bauhaus in Weimar and Dessau to the establishment of her own hand-weaving business in Zurich. The chronological organization of the texts paired with related works gives rise to many surprising discoveries and provides a vivid portrait of Gunta Stölzl as both individual and artist. The book is published by The Museum of Modern Art in conjunction with Hatje Cantz and is available at the MoMA Stores and online at www.momastore.org. It is distributed to the trade through Distributed Art Publishers (D.A.P.) in the United States and Canada, and through Hatje Cantz outside North America. Hardcover, 8 x 9 in.; 144 pages, 110 illustrations. Price: \$39.95.

PROGRAMS:

The exhibition is accompanied by a series of workshops and lectures, a music program, and scholarly symposia. **Bauhaus Lab**, an interactive classroom space in the Museum's Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Education and Research Building, offers audiences of all ages the opportunity to participate in hands-on workshops on color theory, graphic design, photography, drawing, and other creative processes that were integral to Bauhaus practice. Other programs include a series of evening lectures that highlight the contributions of some of the women artists who worked at the Bauhaus, a symposium on Hungarians at the Bauhaus, and a closing symposium that brings important scholars to MoMA and offers new perspectives on the international legacy of the Bauhaus. For detailed information, please see separate press release or visit www.moma.org/bauhauslab.

The **Bauhaus Lounge**, located on the first floor of The Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Education and Research Building, is a space that is furnished with chairs, tables, and couches designed by Bauhaus faculty, and offers visitors a relaxing space to further explore the creative processes of Bauhaus artists.

WEBSITE:

A website, www.moma.org/bauhaus, complements the exhibition. The site presents an overview of the Bauhaus that situates it both geographically and historically, allowing exploration of works made throughout the school's 14-year existence in Weimar, Dessau, and Berlin. Featuring 150 works from the exhibition, the site allows users to explore this influential school's faculty, students, workshops, and artworks through a series of interactive screens. Special features

include a high-quality presentation of László Moholy-Nagy's 1930 film *Lichtspiel: Schwarz Weiss Grau* (*Lightplay: Black White Gray*) and a selection of vintage snapshots of daily life at the Bauhaus. In addition, visitors to the site can fill in the questionnaire Vasily Kandinsky presented to incoming Bauhaus students, and witness the behind-the-scenes preparation of MoMA's exhibition through a series of video clips and interviews with Museum staff. The site is designed by Hello Design of Culver City, CA (www.hellodesign.com). The site launches on November 8, but will be up for preview starting on November 3, 2009.

VIDEO:

Clips of the exhibition will be posted to MoMA's YouTube Channel and on MoMA.org. Please visit:

YouTube: www.youtube.com/MoMAvideos

MoMA.org Exhibition page: <http://www.moma.org/visit/calendar/exhibitions/301>

MoMA.org Multimedia page: www.moma.org/multimedia

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MoMA Press Contact: Daniela Stigh, 212-708-9747, daniela_stigh@moma.org

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019

The public may call 212/708-9400 for detailed Museum information.

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