

Press Information:

Slats | Purlins | Knots
Sheet | Membrane | Porthole
Bricks | Roof | Power

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Slats | Purlins | Knots

Outdoor presentation

28.3.2026 – 28.2.2027

Junkers Steel Slat Hall

Boathouse of the canoe club Junkers Paddelgemeinschaft,
Dessau, Leopoldshafen 4

Internationally marketed modular construction system from Dessau

The Steel-Slat Hall in Dessau that is now used as a boathouse was built in 1930 and is one of the few surviving examples of the system patented by Hugo Junkers. Its characteristic curved steel roof is based on a modular construction system that was an international success because it used many prefabricated elements, was easy to transport and quick to assemble, and was made of robust materials.

The presentation *Slats | Purlins | Knots* shows this system using the concrete example of the steel-slat hall of the canoe club Junkers Paddelgemeinschaft Dessau e.V. and tells the story of its adventurous exporting: Beginning in 1926, the Junkers delivered a complete aircraft factory with eleven steel-slat halls, furnishings, machines, and know-how from Dessau to Kayseri in central Turkey.

This large-scale project is evidence of a transfer of materials and knowledge from Central Europe to the young Republic of Turkey. At the same time, it shows the limits of the operations of European firms abroad: Many of the projects failed because of misjudgements about the local conditions.

Slats | Purlins | Knots combines the art of engineering, the history of industry, and the global transfer of architecture. The exhibition shows how Junkers technologies crossed the lines between aircraft construction and building and set new standards modular, exportable structures – with varying degrees of success.

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Outdoor presentation

28.3.2026 – 28.2.2027

Steel House on the Dessau-Törten Housing Estate
Südstraße 5, Dessau

Metal as a material of the future

In the years after World War I, steel was considered a material of modernity. Originating in Great Britain, skeleton, frame, and panel structures employing drywall were developed in Germany. Innovative materials for insulation materials such as peat-based Torfoleum, pumice concrete, and plant fibres were employed – many of them in the Dessau-Törten Housing Estate as well.

The presentation *Sheet | Membrane | Porthole* at the Steel House shows the example of the experimental building constructed primarily from sheet metal in 1926 in the Dessau-Törten Housing Estate. The Bauhaus master Georg Muche designed it with the architect Richard Paulick with support from the Carl Kästner steel-house factory in Leipzig. The uncompromisingly modern construction of custom profiles offered spatial modules that could be expanded flexibly. But their rust protection and insulation turned out to be inadequate. A renovation has restored the Steel House to its historical appearance.

The Steel House combines Bauhaus visions with their industrial implementation during an innovative construction boom. The presentation shows how Dessau became a centre of experiments with metal, which ended with the rearmament for war after 1933.

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Outdoor presentation

28.3. – 27.9.2026

Historical Employment Office

August-Bebel-Platz 16

The Employment Office in Dessau, built in 1928–1929 based on designs by Walter Gropius' office, is considered an important example of functionalist modern architecture. With its yellow brick façade, the building contrasts with the radiantly white Bauhaus buildings and forms a tie to the materials of the Fagus factory, which Gropius designed with Adolf Meyer (1911). The origin of the yellow bricks has yet to be determined.

Based on a study by the Reich Ministry of Labour from 1925, Gropius created a new type of building with the Employment Office that united functionality and aesthetics. The concept provided for public traffic without intersections, electric signs, and networking by telegraph. The flexible use of space made it possible to adapt to changing labour-market data even though the Great Depression made alterations necessary already in 1930.

After several subsequent reuses, the Federal Employment Agency bought the building back in 2025. In 2027, on the occasion of the centennial of unemployment insurance, it will reopen as an events and conference centre for the challenges of “Modern Labour” in the twenty-first century.

SUPERFLEX: Superbricks for all species

Accompanying the new use of this historic site, the Danish artists' group SUPERFLEX is opening the installation *Superbricks for All Species* on 1 May 2026. The installation consists of pink, curved bricks of unfired clay made in the nearby Schultheiss-Patzenhofer brewery. These “superbricks” break with the straight lines of the Bauhaus, and their susceptibility to weathering builds a bridge between the transience of the historical location and an ecological vision of the future.

Bauhaus Dessau

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Danish Arts
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