

Press release

To the Core.

Bauhaus Dessau 100

Material for the Future: One hundred years ago, the Bauhaus moved to Dessau. Beginning in September 2025, the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation and numerous partners will celebrate the centennial with exhibitions, an art programme, conferences, and festivals.

The culmination is the opening of five exhibitions in all in various locations in Dessau in March 2026.

In 1925, the Bauhaus moved from Weimar to Dessau – to a rising industrial city characterised by innovation and a pioneering entrepreneurial spirit. In Dessau, the former School of Design experienced its most successful and most productive period. The Bauhaus Dessau Foundation is celebrating this event 100 years later with a large centennial programme. Under the title *To the Core*, it focuses on the materials of the modern era and of the present in numerous exhibitions and events at the Bauhaus Museum Dessau, in the historical workshop wing and in various places in the city. From the arrival of the members of the Bauhaus in Dessau in 1925 to the opening of the Bauhaus Building on 4 December 1926, the Centennial 2025/26 draws an arc from the past to the present. The history of the Bauhaus is thereby linked to the issues and challenges of the present.

Many of the now iconic items of furniture were created in Dessau. In that city, Marcel Breuer developed his first tubular steel furniture, and Marianne Brandt her famous Bauhaus lamps. During its seven years in Dessau (1925–1932), more Bauhaus buildings were built than in any other city – including the school building, the Masters' Houses and the historical Employment Office. By dovetailing form, function, and the use of materials such as concrete, iron, steel, aluminium, glass, and bricks, these buildings and their furnishings not only embody a sense of a new dawn, progress, and modernity but also changed our perception, sense of space, and way of life.

Dr Barbara Steiner, Director of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation:
“On the occasion of the centennial, the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation is addressing fundamental issues: its collection, the Bauhaus buildings, and the educational heritage of the Bauhaus form the substantial foundation of our work. Our questions and understanding repeatedly take a critical look at this substance and thus also put to the test ideas about the modernism associated with the Bauhaus. The centennial programme digs at foundations, so to speak, in search of socially and ecologically responsible design today.”

The centennial will begin with the Bauhaus Festival in September 2025. Among other things, the historical Material Dances that were once part of the course of the Bauhaus teacher Oskar Schlemmer will be reinterpreted and premiered on the historical Bauhaus stage. The Italian composer and sound artist Piero Mottola is working with participants from Dessau, Berlin, and Weimar on a score titled *Voices of Bauhaus*. It will receive its

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world premiere at the opening of the centennial on 4 September on the historical stage at the Bauhaus Building in Dessau.

The climax of the centennial programme will be the opening of the main exhibitions at the end of March 2026: The close ties of work at the Bauhaus to the industrial history of the early twentieth century are the subject of the three-part exhibition *Glass / Concrete / Metal* in the historical Workshop Wing. It will explore the material, economic, and technical bases of the iconic building and its workshop production that have thus far received little attention in the history and reception of the Bauhaus. It will address the frustrations and upheavals but also the revolutions associated with innovations in materials in the early 1920s. And it shows the dirty and dark sides of these flights of fancy with materials. It literally gets to the core. This subject has thus far received little attention in scholarship on the Bauhaus is also highly relevant and connects to current discourses on shortages of raw materials and energy, vanishing resources, the climate crisis, and the imminent threat of trade wars.

The exhibition *Algae / Debris / CO₂* in the former Zeeck department store in downtown Dessau is dedicated to current challenges. It begins in the present and designs scenarios for the future. It focuses on material cycles, organic resources, reuse, valorisation, and new experiments with materials. The exhibition reflects on shared responsibility for our environment and examples what and how design can contribute to implement social change.

The steel slat hall, which is still used as a boathouse today, was built in 1930. It is one of three historical halls still preserved in Dessau based on the system that Hugo Junkers had patented in various designs from 1924/25. The open-air exhibition *Slats / Purlins / Knots* sheds light on the history of the building and other slat halls in Dessau.

These exhibitions from March 2026 onwards are the heart of the centennial programme. They offer profound insights in the foundation of the Bauhaus, its material and immaterial substance, and its relevance to the present.

The programme of the centennial 2025/2026 also includes exhibitions, a video walk (*Invisible Bauhaus Dessau*), film series, conferences, festivals, and other event formats that make it possible to experience and provide access to the diversity of the Bauhaus heritage. In addition to the programme items of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, the projects of its municipal cooperation partners are integral components of the centennial. These local initiatives have their own emphases but are linked to central themes of the centennial.

Already in the first half of 2025, we will begin to report on the arrival of members of the Bauhaus according to important historical dates. In Cooperation with the Department of Culture and the Municipal Archive of Dresden, its arrival in the city will be flanked by a separate series of events titled *1925 – The Bauhaus Comes to Dessau*. It focuses on the meeting of

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liberal-progressive and conservative-traditionalist political currents and moods.

Information on the centennial programme 2025/2026 and press photo material can be found in the press release and at bauhaus-dessau.de

