

To the
Core

Bauhaus
Dessau
100



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Window cleaning, south entrance of the Bauhaus Building, ca. 1920s/1930s

Message of greeting It was for political reasons that the Council of Masters decided in 1925 to move the Bauhaus from Weimar to Dessau. The “Ordnungsbund”, an alliance of conservative and liberal parties tolerated by nationalist forces, had just assumed power in Thuringia. The new state government exerted financial pressure on the Bauhaus and made life difficult for faculty members and students.

Thus the artistic avant garde of Classical Modernity was driven out of Weimar, the very city in which Germany’s first democratic constitution had been adopted, which said: “Art, science and instruction in them are free. The state guarantees their protection and participates in their promotion.”

But the history of the Bauhaus also shows that freedom and democracy were by no means lost in the Weimar Republic of 1925. Indeed, several cities lobbied Gropius and offered a new location for his art school. The decision of the Council of Masters to opt for Dessau was in part due to the open, democratic climate there.

A better life for all – that was the great aim of the Bauhaus. And it was no coincidence that this goal aligned with the great promise of the Weimar Republic: the Bauhaus needed the freedom offered by democracy in order to grow, whilst at the same time bestowing on democracy a special form. For precisely that reason, it was a thorn in the side of the Republic’s right-wing radical enemies.

The history of the Bauhaus in the Weimar Republic also reminds us how important it is again today to protect artistic freedom and to defend it against attacks. And it shows us how important it is for the democratic state to support the arts, without giving any directions regarding content beyond the prohibition of incitement to hatred.

I extend my gratitude to all those keeping alive the Bauhaus’s legacy, in Dessau-Roßlau, Weimar, Berlin and many other places. One hundred years of the Bauhaus in Dessau: that is a reason to celebrate, not only in the city and region, but across the entire country. My sincere congratulations on this anniversary!

Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier

Bauhaus Dessau 100 Starting from September 2025, we are celebrating 100 years of the Bauhaus in Dessau. To mark this centennial, under the motto *To the Core*, we have chosen to focus our programme on the material, economic and technological foundations of the Bauhaus's pioneering contributions to architecture and design. We will be celebrating the centennial through to December 2026 with all kinds of events in the areas of architecture and design, but also art and cultural history, education and research, dance and music.

In this spirit, we have come up with events in a wide variety of formats including exhibitions and guided tours, workshops, readings, discussions, excursions, walks, performances, festivals and film screenings, both in and around the Bauhaus buildings and at other sites linked to the work of Bauhaus members in the city. Interactive offers and experimental educational formats enable our visitors to experience the Bauhaus's materials in an individual and inclusive way and create personal links for them.

Our programme is rounded out by cooperations with a number of institutions from the city of Dessau, the state of Saxony-Anhalt and other actors. You will find their events in our centennial programme booklet. This booklet is your guide to the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation's own centennial programme. We welcome your interest and wish you a fascinating and enjoyable journey of discovery!

Barbara Steiner and the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation team



Fragment of a glass brick from 1926, found during the general renovation of the Bauhaus Building, 2024

Builders in the shell of the workshop wing, part of the Bauhaus Building, 1926

bauen

alle dinge dieser welt sind ein produkt der formel: (funktion mal ökonomie)

alle diese dinge sind daher keine kunstwerke:

alle kunst ist komposition und mithin zweckwidrig.

alles leben ist funktion und daher unkünstlerisch.

die idee der „komposition eines seehafens“ scheint zwerchfellerschütternd!

jedoch wie entsteht der entwurf eines stadtplanes? oder eines wohnplanes? komposition oder funktion? kunst oder leben? ? ? ? ?

bauen ist ein biologischer vorgang. bauen ist kein ästhetischer prozeß. elementar gestaltet wird das neue wohnhaus nicht nur eine wohnmaschine, sondern ein biologischer apparat für seelische und körperliche bedürfnisse. — die neue zeit stellt dem neuen hausbau ihre neuen baustoffe zur verfügung:

stahlbeton	drahtglas	aluminium	si-stahl	ripolin	asbest
kunstgummi	preßkork	euböolith	kaltleim	viscose	azeton
kunstleder	kunstharz	sperrholz	gasbeton	eternit	casein
zell-beton	kunstthorn	kautschuk	rollglas	goudron	trolit
woodmetal	kunstholz	torfoleum	xelotekt	kanevas	tombak

diese bauelemente organisieren wir nach ökonomischen grundsätzen zu einer konstruktiven einheit. so entstehen selbsttätig und vom leben bedingt die einzelform, der gebäudekörper, die materialfarbe und die oberflächenstruktur. (gemütlichkeit und repräsentation sind keine leitmotive des wohnungsbaues.)

(die erste hängt am menschenherzen und nicht an der zimmerwand. . .)

(die zweite prägt die haltung des gastgebers und nicht sein perserteppich!)

architektur als „affektleistung des künstler“ ist ohne daseinsberechtigung.

architektur als „fortführung der bautradition“ ist baugeschichtlich treiben.

diese funktionell-biologische auffassung des bauens als einer gestaltung des lebensprozesses führt mit folgerichtigkeit zur reinen konstruktion: diese konstruktive formenwelt kennt kein vaterland. sie ist der ausdrück internationaler baugesinnung. internationalität ist ein vorzug der epoche. die reine konstruktion ist grundlage und kennzeichen der neuen formenwelt.

- | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. geschlechtsleben | 4. gartenkultur | 7. wohnhygiene | 10. erwärmung |
| 2. schlafgewohnheit | 5. körperpflege | 8. autowartung | 11. besonnung |
| 3. kleinfierhaltung | 6. wetterschutz | 9. kochbetrieb | 12. bedienung |

solche forderungen sind die ausschließlichen motive des wohnungsbaues. wir untersuchen den ablauf des tageslebens jedes hausbewohners, und dieses ergibt das funktionsdiagramm für vater, mutter, kind, kleinkind und mitmenschen. wir erforschen die beziehungen des hauses und seiner insassen zum fremden: postbote, passant, besucher, nachbar, einbrecher, kaminfeger, wäscherin, polizist, arzt, aufwartefrau, spielkamerad, gascinzuger, handwerker, krankenpfleger, bote. wir erforschen die menschlichen und die tierischen beziehungen zum garten, und die wechselwirkungen zwischen menschen, haustieren und hausinsekten. wir ermitteln die jahresschwankungen der bodentemperatur, und wir berechnen danach den wärmeverlust der fußböden und die tiefe der fundamentsohlen. — der geologische befund des haus-



peer bücking
rechts: TI 200 a
stuhl mit stoffsitz
links: TI 200 b
stuhl mit polstersitz
foto binnemann, dessau



gartenuntergrundes bestimmt die kapillarfähigkeit und entscheidet, ob untergrundberieselung oder schwemmkanalisation. wir errechnen die sonneneinfallswinkel im jahreslauf und bezogen auf den breitengrad des baugeländes, und wir konstruieren danach den schattenfächer des hauses im garten und den sonnenlichtfächer des fensters im schlafzimmer. wir errechnen die tagesbeleuchtung der arbeitsfläche im innenraum, und wir vergleichen die wärmeleitfähigkeit der außenwände mit dem feuchtigkeitsgehalt der außenluft. die luftbewegung im erwärmten raum ist uns nicht mehr fremd. die optischen und die akustischen beziehungen zum nachbarhaus werden sorgfältig gestaltet. wir kennen die atavistischen neigungen der künftigen bewohner zu unsern bauhölzern und wählen je nachdem als innenverkleidung des genormten montagehauses die flammige kiefer, die straffe pappel, das fremde okumé oder den seidigen ahorn. — die farbe ist uns nur mittel der bewußten seelischen einwirkung oder ein orientierungsmittel. die farbe ist niemals mimikri für allerlei baustoffe. buntheit ist uns ein greuel. anstrich ist uns ein schutzmittel. wo uns farbe psychisch unentbehrlich erscheint, mitberechnen wir deren lichtreflexionswert. wir vermeiden reinweißen hausanstrich: der hauskörper ist bei uns ein akkumulator der sonnenwärme. . . .

das neue haus ist als trockenmontagebau ein industrieprodukt, und als solches ist es ein werk der spezialisten: volkswirte, statistiker, hygieniker, klimatologen, betriebswissenschaftler, normengelehrte, wärmetechniker. . . . der architekt? . . . war künstler und wird ein spezialist der organisation!

das neue haus ist ein soziales werk. es erlöst das baugewerbe von der partiellen arbeitslosigkeit eines saisonberufes, und es bewahrt vor dem odium der notstandsarbeit. durch eine rationelle hauswirtschaft schützt es die hausfrau vor versklavung im haushalt, und durch eine rationelle gartenwirtschaft schützt es den siedler vor dem dilettantismus des kleingärtners. es ist vornehmlich ein soziales werk, weil es (wie jede DINnorm) das industrie-normen-produkt einer ungenannten erfindergemeinschaft ist.

die neue siedlung vollends ist als ein endziel der volkswohlfahrt ein bewußt organisiertes gemeinkräftiges werk, in welchem auf einer integral-genossenschaftlichen grundlage die kooperativkräfte und individualkräfte zum gemeinkräftigen ausgleich kommen. die modernität dieser siedlung besteht nicht aus flachdach und vertikal-horizontaler fassadenaufteilung, — sondern in ihrer direkten beziehung zum menschlichen dasein. in ihr sind die spannungen des individuums, der geschlechter, der nachbarschaft und der gemeinschaft und die geopsychischen beziehungen überlegen gestaltet.

bauen heißt die überlegte organisation von lebensvorgängen.

bauen als technischer vorgang ist daher nur ein teilprozeß. das funktionelle diagramm und das ökonomische programm sind die ausschlaggebenden richtlinien des bauvorhabens.

bauen ist keine einzelaufgabe des architekten-ehrgelzes mehr.

bauen ist gemeinschaftsarbeit von werktätigen mit erfindern. nur wer als meister in der arbeitsgemeinschaft anderer den lebensprozeß selbst meistert, . . . ist baumeister.

bauen wird so aus einer einzelangelegenheit von einzelnen (gefördert durch arbeitslosigkeit und wohnungsnot), zu einer kollektiven angelegenheit der volksgenossen.

bauen ist nur organisation:

soziale, technische, ökonomische, psychische organisation.

hannes meyer



TI 202
links: g. hassenpflug
polstersuhl
TI 202
rechts: p. bücking
stuhl mit sperrholzsitz



Hannes Meyer: bauen, in:
bauhaus. zeitschrift für gestaltung,
Issue 4, 2nd volume, 1928, pp. 12, 13



Marianne Brandt, Self-portrait for "Metal Festival" at the Bauhaus,
9 February 1929



Concrete mixer, presented at Leipzig Autumn Trade Fair, 1928



Piece of brick from 1929, found during the renovation of the
Neurath House in Dessau, 2025



Substance is the malleable yet open foundation of creative processes; it can be defined, abstracted and redesigned. As an independent material, it comes with its own rules and is transformed through deliberate interaction in order to take on new meanings, forms and roles.

Substance is not static: it changes, merges with design ideas and becomes part of new material realities without losing its essential nature.

Johann Bauerfeind

research associate in the BioLab of the BurgLab project,
Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design Halle

To the Core 1925 – the School of Design founded six years earlier in Weimar relocates to Dessau. The Bauhaus lands in a region of booming industry. Over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, metal industries, mechanical engineering, cement plant production, chemical plants, thermal engineering, modern transport technologies and the electrical industry have turned the once agricultural region into a completely human-made landscape. Introduction by Barbara Steiner

After a design and construction phase of just one year, the Bauhaus Building is opened on 4 December 1926. In addition to the school building, the Masters' Houses and the Dessau-Törten Housing Estate are being built. By 1932, numerous other Bauhaus buildings such as the Konsum Building, the Houses with Balcony Access, the Employment Office and the Kornhaus have been erected. The Bauhaus becomes an actor in an industrialised and mechanised society. The substances and materials the Bauhaus is made of, which double as subject matter in its teaching and workshop practices, are the most visible expression of this dedication to modernity. The school strives for holistic, cross-disciplinary design which combines architecture, art, craftsmanship, science and technology. At its centre is the modern human being.

Prototypes for mass production emerge from the Bauhaus workshops: Marcel Breuer develops his first tubular steel furniture; Marianne Brandt designs Bauhaus lamps that are still popular today; Gunta Stölzl and Otti Berger work on utility textiles for industry. Yet the Bauhaus members are also critical of this growing emphasis on industrial production. Scepticism and irony are expressed in performances by the stage workshop and in contributions to the Bauhaus celebrations.

Ideas about what design can be expected to achieve have changed enormously over the last 100 years when it comes to contemplating a desirable future and anticipating possible scenarios. Against a backdrop of raw material and energy scarcity, dwindling resources, climate emergency and trade wars, fundamental questions on material and sociocultural constructs of world are being asked anew. Knowledge of the planetary limits of growth creates a growing awareness of our common responsibility towards the environment, framed in terms of material and substance cycles. In this paradigm, humans realise they

are part of an ecosystem and thus part of a web of interdependencies with other species.

To the Core. Bauhaus Dessau 100 is dedicated to the interweaving of modern design with the industrial history of the early 20th century. All the exhibitions, performances, workshops, art and inclusive educational projects are inspired by the materials of modernism – concrete and cement; iron, steel and aluminium; sheet metal, glass and brick – and the pursuit of alternatives in the here and now. The contributions to the centennial not only engage with the Bauhaus products themselves but also with manufacturing processes, working conditions, skills and technologies. They trace the links between landscapes, materials and regional identities and explore local and global production cycles, supply chains, trade routes, and impacts on nature and ecosystems.

Across the materiality of architectures and everyday objects, multiple voices and perspectives weave a rich, multifocal tapestry of narratives and materials from different eras. Past visions of the future claim their place alongside speculations about the present day and sustainable design alternatives.

The centennial reflects on modernism's break with the past and its promise of a new era of progress while also exposing the unpleasant downsides of material successes. We look behind the shiny steel surfaces and smooth concrete façades. Research into the foundations and conditions that gave birth to modern object culture and everyday aesthetics is paired with a search for socially and ecologically responsible design today – as an interplay between economies, materials, technologies, types of knowledge, human and non-human actors.

Centennial Launch The programme for the centennial launch takes its cue from the historical Bauhaus's investigations into materials and its experiments with the materiality of space, body and movement. By testing, touching, feeling, experimenting, contemporary artists engage in multisensory explorations of materials – in other words, they test the power of materials to shape bodies and movements and delineate spaces. The human voice will be explored as a compositional material too. Festive evening programme, 5.9.25, Bauhaus Building

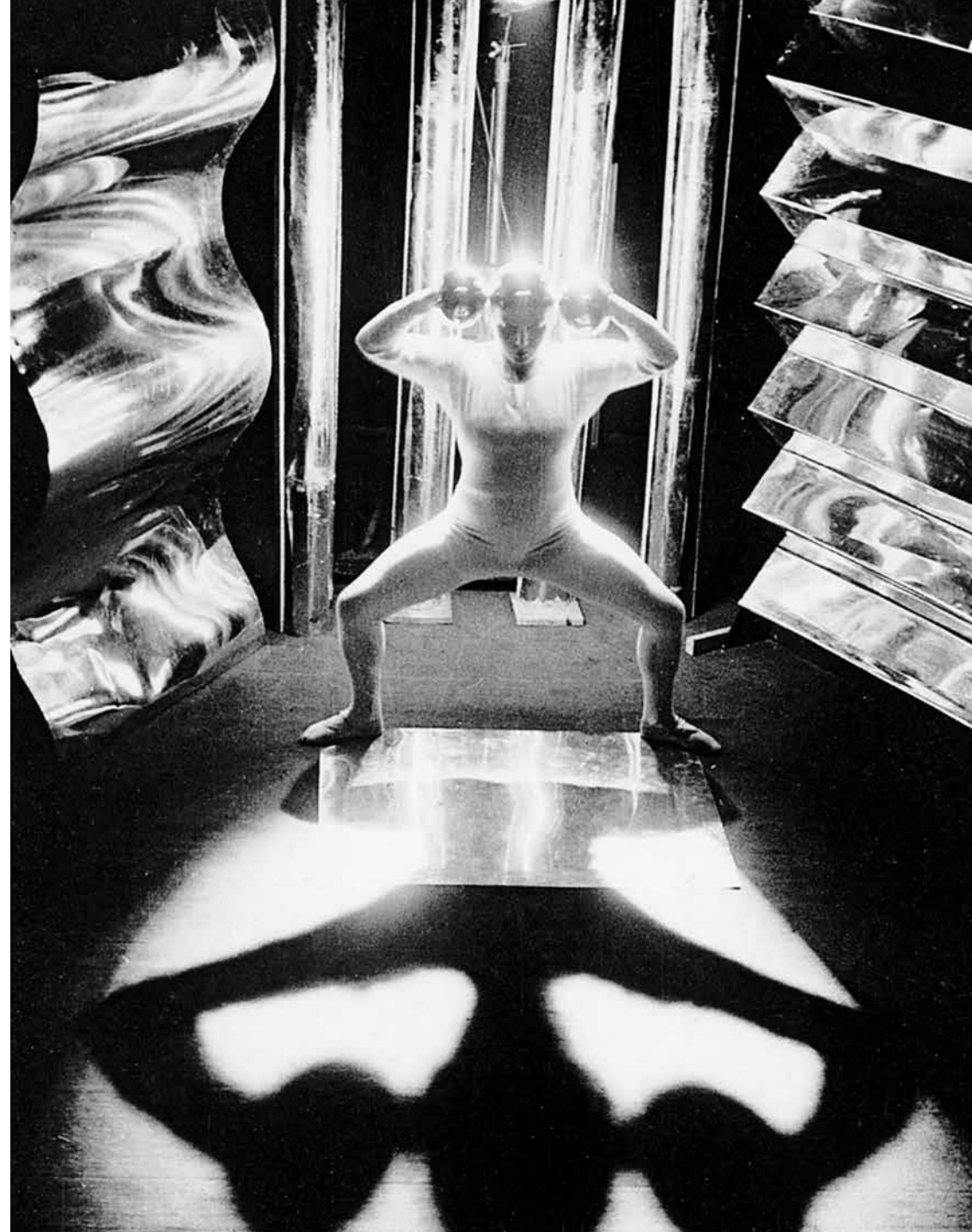
The creative connection between the Bauhaus stage and the workshops with their material experiments is symbolised by the so-called material dances: the metal, glass and stick dances. Choreographed between 1926 and 1929, these were integral to Oskar Schlemmer's course "Der Mensch" (The human being). The dances were one to three minutes long on average. They embody the experimental and playful culture at the historic Bauhaus par excellence.

The performers Isabelle Schad/Manuel Lindner, Joana Tischkau and Mike Dele Dittrich Frydetski/Raiko Sánchez reinterpret Oskar Schlemmer's historical material dances for the 21st century. Schad/Lindner are interested in cyclical processes and the changes in materiality caused by movement. Tischkau's reinterpretation of the material dances addresses the asymmetrical relationship between different cultures of memory, seen from a Black German perspective. In their *Geborgenheitstanz* (Dance of emotional security), Frydetski/Sánchez harness the capacity for intimate cooperation as material for their performance.

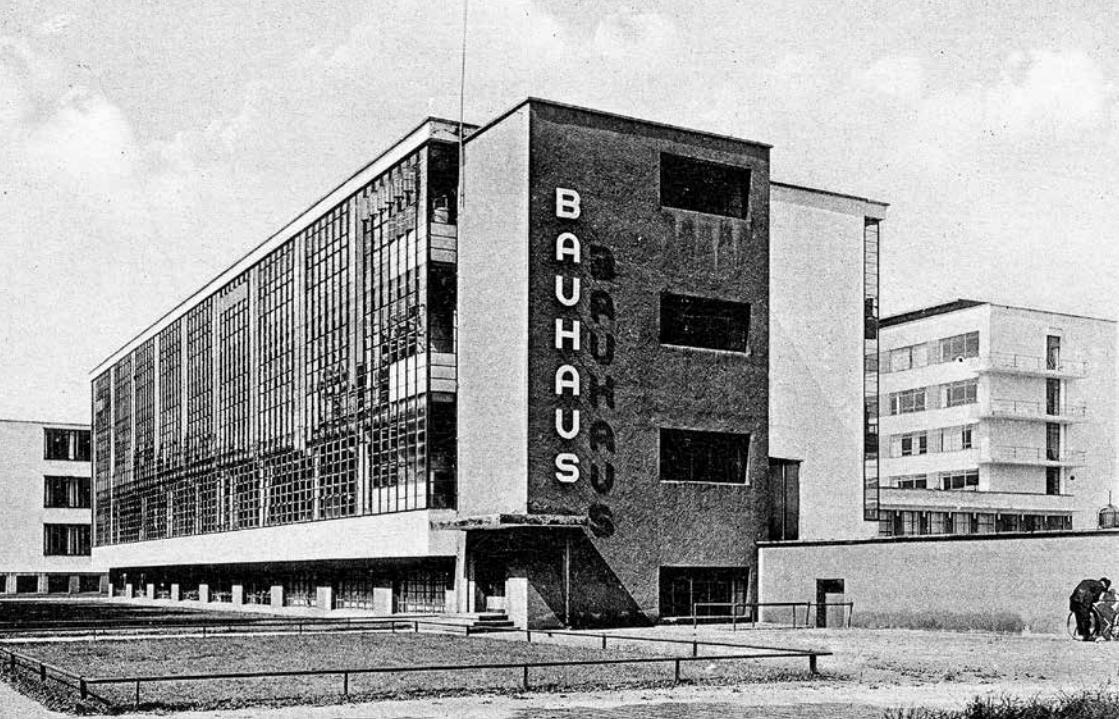
Other items on the programme are screenings of *S-Tanz* (S-Dance) from the *Farbenlichtspiele* (Coloured Light Plays) by Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack (1923/2000), *Opus 3* by Walter Ruttmann/Lore Leudesdorff (1924), *Tanz der Muscheln* (Dance of the Shells) by Alfred Ehrhardt (1956/59) and one part of *Reflektorische Farbenlichtspiele* (Reflecting Colour-Light-Play) by Kurt Schwerdtfeger/Rudolf Jüdes (1922/68).

Piero Mottola presents the world premiere of *Voices of Bauhaus*, his composition for a complex orchestra of voices. The piece is conceived as an emotional stroll, evoking associations with images, stories and emotions. It is based on recordings of 43 voices, all belonging to people who have some Bauhaus connection. *Voices of Bauhaus* will be premiered by the Extrachor of the Anhaltisches Theater under the direction of Sebastian Kennerknecht, with soloist Marina Drobyshevskaya and baritone Alexander Argirov. Mottola began his long-term research in 2015 at the Universitat Politècnica de València and continued at universities in South and Central America as well as in Europe.

Funded by the Ostdeutsche Sparkassenstiftung and Altro Deutschland GmbH & Co. KG



T. Lux Feininger, Karla Grosch in the "Dance in Metal", Oskar Schlemmer and Bauhaus stage workshop, 1929



“Gentlemen, we’re all Weimared out, now we’re Dessauing” quipped Bauhaus master Lyonel Feininger in 1925, affirming the school’s move from Weimar to Dessau.

The conditions offered by Dessau struck the director Walter Gropius and the Masters’ Council as highly favourable. Funding to build the school and the Masters’ Houses was granted, with prospects of annual financial support to follow. Dessau, in turn, hoped that attracting the Bauhaus would give a boost to the city’s cultural and architectural development. This vision was backed by an alliance of politics, culture and industry, embodied among others by the mayor Fritz Hesse, the state’s chief monument conservator Ludwig Grote and the entrepreneur Hugo Junkers.

Right from the start, the Bauhaus had both enthusiastic supporters and hard-line opponents. These tensions only mirrored the city’s social dynamics: old-school conservatives clashed with liberal-progressives, and pre-industrial heritage collided with rapidly accelerating industrialisation. The Bauhaus was in touch with the cooperative movement and the trade unions and cooperated with industry and the skilled crafts.

Over time, the divisions in society deepened – until 1932, when a Nazi-led Anhalt state government instigated the closure of the design school in Dessau.

Bauhaus Building, architect: Walter Gropius, south-west view, ca. 1927

Three Bauhaus members beside the studio building, 1927

1925. The Bauhaus Comes to Dessau To commemorate the early days of the Dessau Bauhaus, the Stadtarchiv Dessau-Roßlau launched a German-language reading series in January 2025 titled *1925. The Bauhaus Comes to Dessau*. The series shines a light on the social context that greeted the newly arrived Bauhaus community: a growing industrial city shaped by a mix of bourgeois and proletarian interests. Reading Series, January–December 2025

23 March 1925 is a pivotal date in Dessau's history: On that day, the city council called an extraordinary meeting to confer about the relocation of the Bauhaus, whose masters had only just broken off negotiations to keep the school open in Weimar. After a long and contentious debate, the council leaders' proposal was accepted, with 26 councillors voting in favour while 15 were against. The next day, the *Volksblatt für Anhalt* newspaper led with an article celebrating this majority, headlined "Good luck to the Dessau Bauhaus".

Nevertheless, the path to this outcome was anything but straightforward and trouble-free. After city councillors took an excursion to Thuringia to form their own opinions about Bauhaus concepts and methods, a heated debate of the pros and cons was aired in the local press. The *Anhalter Anzeiger* and the *Volksblatt* gave ample space to opponents and supporters alike – and reported extensively on the final extraordinary council meeting. These sources disclose a whole panorama of expectations and misgivings, which prompted the *Volksblatt's* lead article writer to conclude: "If the Bauhaus is to accomplish anything productive, if it is to prove what it can do, if it is to work at all, then it absolutely must have peace. All sides have emphasised that the Bauhaus must not be dragged into party-political conflict. To that, I would add: nor into conflicts of opinion between so-called 'art experts'." Andreas Hillger, author and dramaturg, curator of the reading series

The series will conclude with the publication of Frank Kreißler's book *Dessau 1925. Das Jahr, in dem das Bauhaus kam*, Halle (Saale): Mitteldeutscher Verlag. Chronological in form, it looks back at the developments in Dessau in 1925 and at the people, who had to navigate their lives in a world of rapid change. The Bauhaus and its protagonists play their parts in the story.

A cooperation of the Stadtarchiv Dessau-Roßlau and the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation
In cooperation with the European festival *Triennial of Modernism 2025*



Zerbster Straße with city hall and Jubilee Monument, ca. 1910–1920



The *Volksblatt für Anhalt* workers' printing press in Askanische Straße, destroyed by the SA, 1933

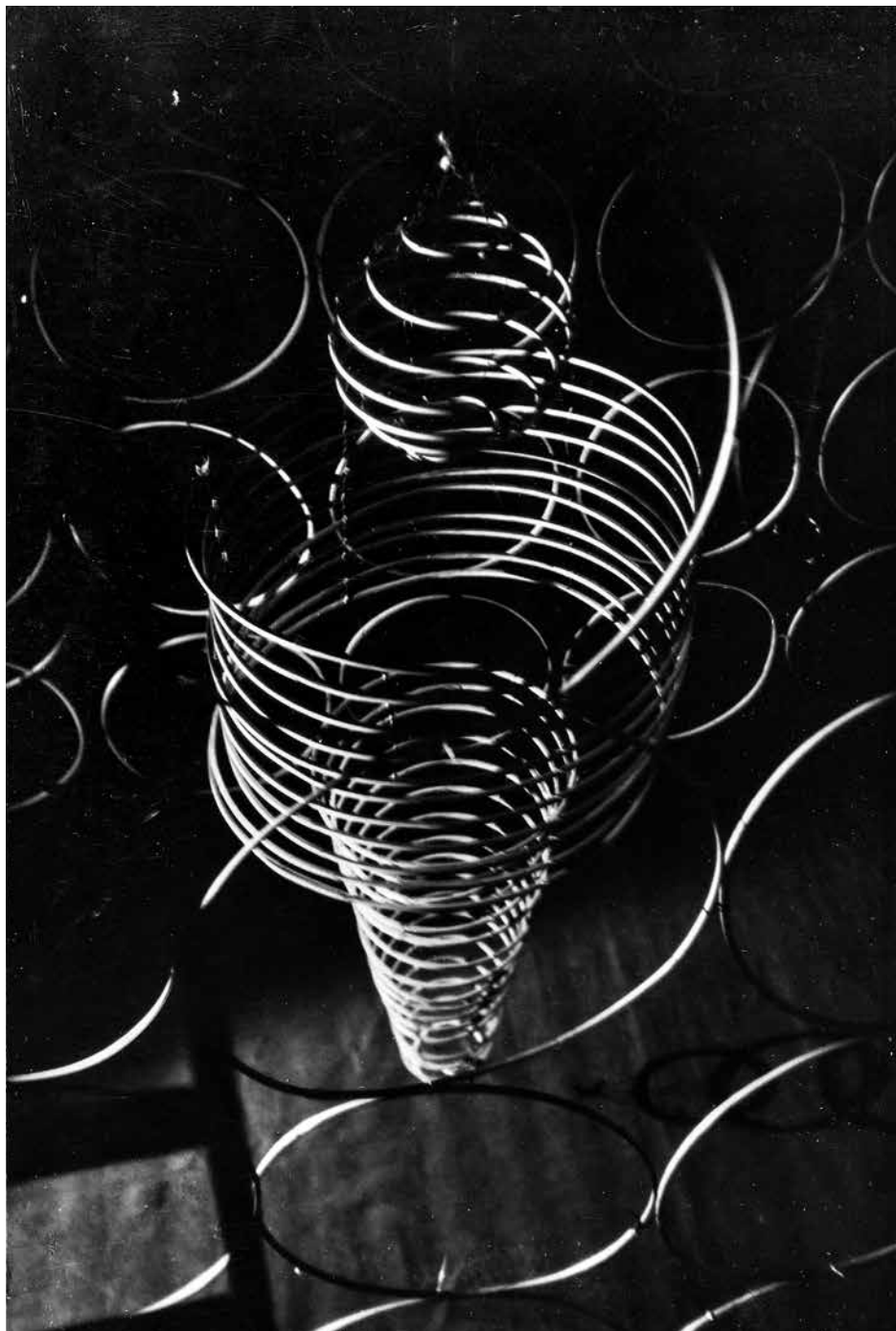


Invisible Bauhaus Dessau The project closely tracks the early period following the Bauhaus's arrival in Dessau in 1925/26. At that time, the Bauhaus Building and the Masters' Houses had not yet been built, but Bauhaus members were already living and working in the city. The city's culture, its art association, theatre, industry, floodplains and footpaths along the Elbe and Mulde rivers all became rich sources of fascination for the Bauhauslers and inspired their creative work. Video and Audio Walk, from 27.9.25 around the city and in the Georgium Landscape Park

"How do we honour 100 years of Bauhaus Dessau visually without rehashing clichés? That question became our guiding light in developing a clear, functional and zeitgeisty design that puts the story front and centre. With no frills, lots of contrasts and low barriers to access. With elements from plan drawings – transparencies, grids and collage – we reconstruct the part of the story that is almost invisible today."
navos create

Invisible Bauhaus Dessau, devised by Elisabeth Kremer and navos create, combines digitally supported walking tours with analogue signage pointing to Bauhaus sites in Dessau that are no longer visible. Short videos, accessed via QR codes, intentionally link the historical events with the images and symbols of present-day communication. A separate audio walk, *In the Footsteps of Paul Klee*, guides listeners through the Georgengarten and shows just how much its park landscape influenced the artist and his oeuvre. Klee's daily walks there flowed directly into his painting: his own landscapes absorbed all the different impressions and were created on the go, so to speak.

In cooperation with the Stadtmarketinggesellschaft Dessau-Roßlau
In cooperation with the European festival *Triennial of Modernism 2025*
Funded by the Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Tourismus, Landwirtschaft und Forsten of the state of Saxony-Anhalt



When I ask myself what substance means for me and my work, I understand it as something that is immaterial yet connected to bodies. I would wish for substance to be able to move as freely as possible between my work, the environment and myself.



Glassmaker Otto Heintz at work, Jenaer Glaswerk Schott & Gen., ca. 1936–1939

Filling of caissons in a Jena glass factory, Jenaer Glaswerk Schott & Gen., ca. 1936–1939

Everything Is Made of Something – Everything Changes More than mere substances! Make no mistake, materials are far from inert objects – they are mutable, dynamic and full of stories. They can change in form, colour and consistency, from liquid to solid, from transparent to opaque. Our perception of materials is individual to us: from the scent of a perfume to the feel of a book or the coldness of a bench at the bus stop, materials define our environment and influence how we experience it.

Materials science: educational programme Even in the earliest years of the Bauhaus, questions raised by materials were core to the curriculum. One of the central tenets was an open-minded and creative way of learning about materials by working with them. During technical training, Bauhaus teachers made their students investigate the potential of materials, understand their properties and develop new design options. Often this meant experimenting – for example, to test the balance between stability and flexibility, new materials and their possible uses.

Following this exploratory movement, the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation is setting out to expand experimental and established approaches to cultural education on the Bauhaus heritage. In developing these formats, the aim will be to design educational programmes in collaboration with cultural mediators with and without disabilities, using an artistic and interdisciplinary approach. In addition to new programmes for school classes and families with children, architectural tours, as well as various formats are planned that convey the Bauhaus heritage from a queer perspective, in the historical context of National Socialism, and in the historical, international context.

Through workshops, interactive formats, excursions and the exhibitions themselves, we invite participants and visitors to join us in exploring the materials that originally shaped the Bauhaus – and to analyse how these materials are produced, used and recycled today. We also ask where they come from and what happens to them if they are no longer needed. Our events will cover production conditions, material cycles and the social and ecological impacts of resource extraction – looking especially at our own region and the resources that shape it. Globalisation, too, has significantly changed how materials are sourced. Join us in unpacking these issues and what

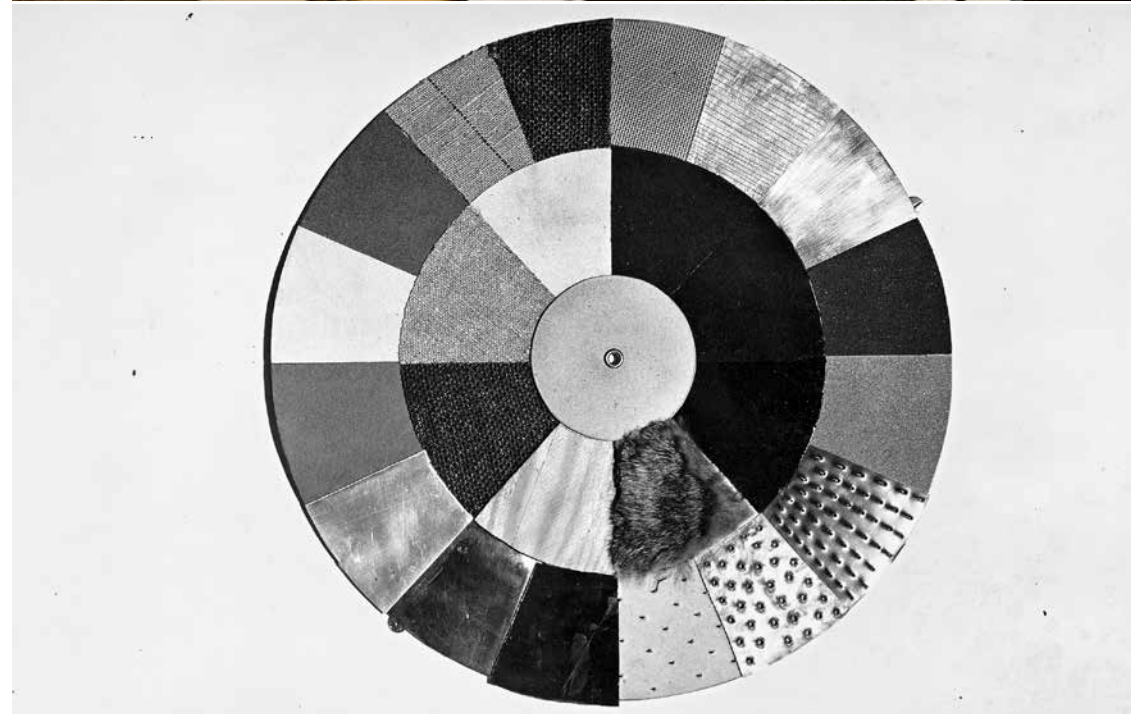
they mean for Dessau, for our daily lives and for the world we live in. The educational programme therefore focuses on experimental and inclusive formats in which we engage in dialogue about the environment, design and barriers.

At the centennial launch on 6 and 7 September 2025, there will be a range of workshops and interactive sessions: the Fabmobil mobile digital workshop (sponsored by the Ostdeutsche Sparkassenstiftung with the Stadtparkasse Dessau) and the workshops *Bauhaus*³ and *Tricks of Transformation*.

Between September 2025 and November 2026, we are organising eleven open workshops intended as “material research labs”. These are aimed at adults and young people aged 14 and over. For younger material researchers aged between 10 and 14, we offer holiday workshops in October 2025, February, July and October 2026. Young people can come and try out new craft and design methods alongside artists and designers.

For *Glass / Concrete / Metal*, we introduce a new education format, *New Connections*, that sets up a dialogue between our visitors and facilitators – and gets visitors talking to each other as they explore the exhibition. To encourage these interactions, a dedicated team will be on site on certain days to provide hands-on experience of sensory understanding of material properties with material samples and demonstrations. We are also producing an audio play (in German) specifically for the exhibition, titled *Baustelle Bauhaus* (Bauhaus under construction).

With Diana Acker, Cox Ahlers, Moritz Appich, Loukas Bartatilas, Peter Biewer, Anne Deuter, Jonas Duteloff, Thesea Efstathopoulos, Gesine Försterling, Ben Garit Hernandez, Heiko Gerdes, Anna Gille, Rouven Guder, Lenki Hoppenkamps, Johanna Ledermann, Irene Lehmann, Antje Schiffrers, Paulina Schulze, Gunther Schumann, Henning Seilkopf, Moritz von Seyfried, Pernille Sonne, Tobias Tietze, Fritz Laszlo Weber, Lissy Willberg, Gabriel Wörfel, Andreas Wohmann, Katrin Zickler, Sylvia Ziegner, Verena Zimmermann and Holger Ziolkowski



Luxfer prism glass, as installed on the Dessau-Törten Housing Estate, Bauhaus Dessau Foundation's Building Research Archive, 2023

Erich Consemüller, rotating disk by Walter Kaminski, made from various materials for a tactile exercise in László Moholy-Nagy's preliminary course class, 1927

Nitrate Silver Light

Film screening 6.11.25
Installation 22.10.–12.11.25
Bauhaus Museum Dessau

For the Bauhaus artists, the medium of film with its material nature and components become pivotal: projected light, film grain, chemical development and scratches on the filmstrip.

In 1922, Kurt Schwerdtfeger is the first student to project coloured light onto a screen using stencils in his *Reflektorische Farblichtspiele* (Reflecting Colour-Light-Plays). In 1923, Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack designs his own *Farbenlichtspiele* (Coloured Light Plays). Since neither colour nor sound film have yet been invented both artists always perform their light plays live and with minimalist music. This was not captured on film until the 1960s. Two short “making ofs” explain the apparatus used.

Heinrich Brocksieper's *Flächen, perpelleristisch* (Surfaces, Perpelleristically) shows two rapidly rotating trapezoids against a black background, producing an afterimage effect on the retina. His animated film *Ente* (Duck) continuously morphs a bottle into a duck and back again. In the negative film *Näherin* (Seamstress) white buttons, scissors and safety pins meet in the black, absolute space and form new groups.

In László Moholy-Nagy's *Ein Lichtspiel schwarz-weiß-grau* (A Lightplay: Black White Grey) glittering, perforated metal and glass objects rotate, copied over each other multiple times: painting with light instead of pigment. In his film *Tönendes ABC/ABC in Sound*, which intentionally consists of black film, Moholy-Nagy does not record the sound with a microphone but draws it by hand and produces sounds that no-one has ever heard before. This is no longer a (naturalistic) reproduction – it is pure production! The programme has been put together by film-maker and curator Thomas Tode.

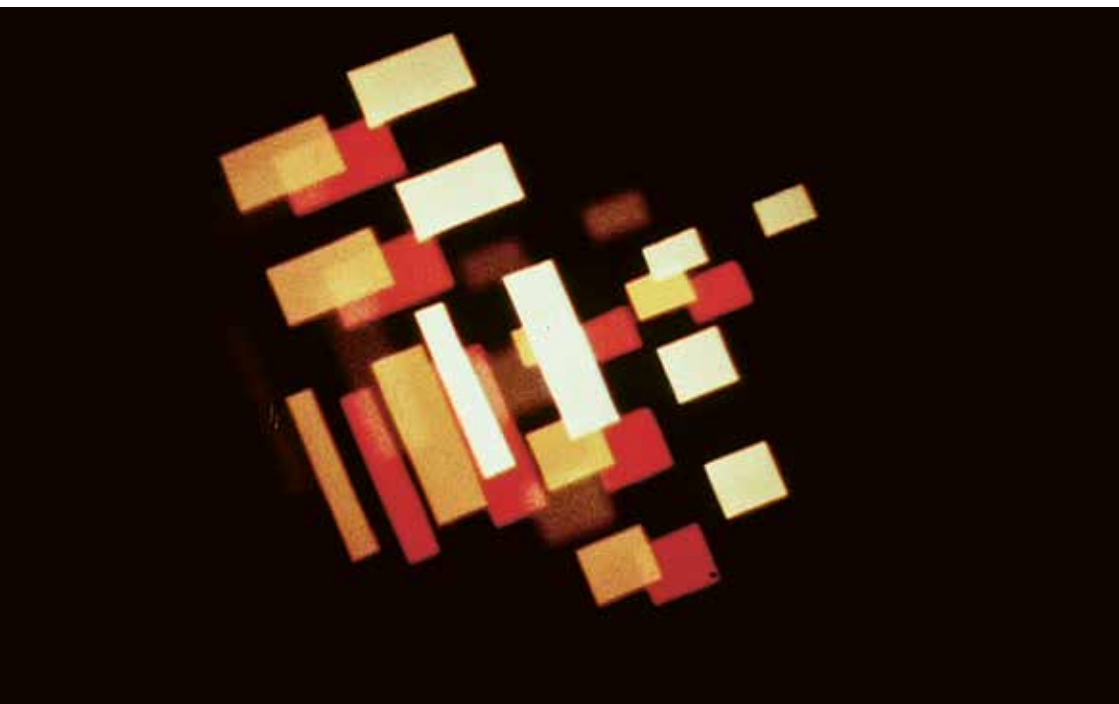
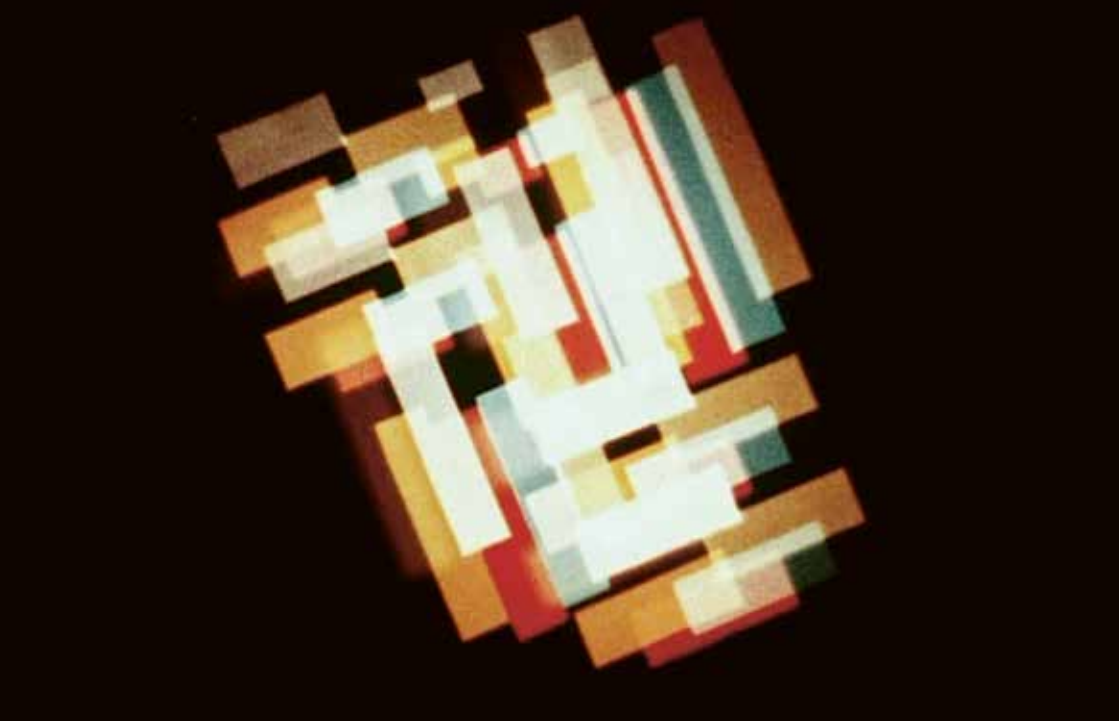
Reflecting Colour-Light-Plays, 1922/68
1922/68, Kurt Schwerdtfeger/Rudolf Jüdes, Music: Wolfgang Roscher, 23 min.
[Five parts: Vegetative Form, Bauhaus 1922, Stripes and Grids, Red Square, Hommage à Schlemmer + Making of]

Coloured Light Plays, 1923/2000
Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack/Corinne Schweizer, Music: Peter Böhm, 20 min.
[Four parts: Sonatina II – Red, Cross-Play, Sonatina – Ultramarine Green, S-Dance + Making-of]

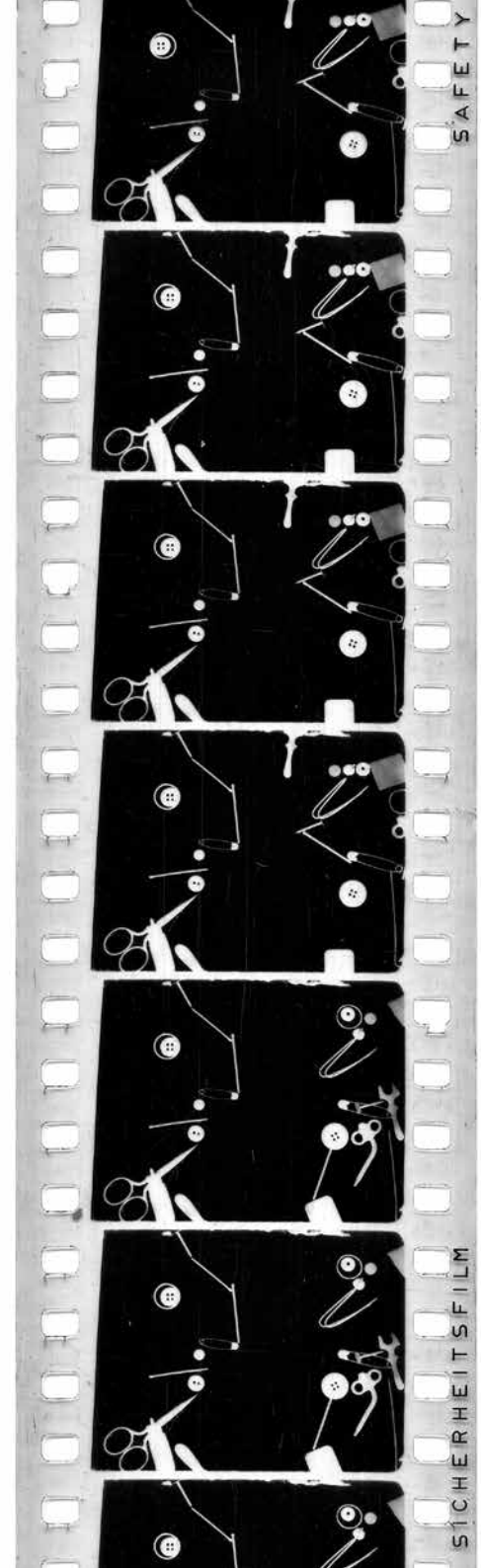
Surfaces, Perpelleristically; Duck; Seamstress, 1930
Heinrich Brocksieper, 6 min.

A Lightplay: Black White Gray, 1930/32
László Moholy-Nagy, 6 min.

Tönendes ABC/ABC in Sound, 1932
László Moholy-Nagy, 2 min.



Negative film, *Seamstress*,
director: Heinrich Brocksieper,
1930



Discourse Cracks Narrative



Public Conference 29.1.26–31.1.26
Bauhaus Building

The aim of the international conference “Bauhaus Matters” is to help reframe the narratives of architectural modernism. Among other things, it is interested in knowledge that has been ignored in architectural history writing, but more generally, in readjusting the perspectives of architecture as a discipline.

The conference therefore proposes to take a fresh look at the material artefact of the Bauhaus. It intends to be an invitation to negotiate current building practices in dialogue with the architectural legacy of the Bauhaus.

Immediately after it opened in 1926, the Bauhaus Building was hailed in the trade press as the agent of a new idea of architecture. Its use of steel, glass and concrete as building materials was seen as groundbreaking for modern industrial society. From a cultural perspective, the implications of these building materials in shaping the architectural history of modernism have been widely studied, but little or no research has been devoted to their economic, geopolitical and environmental implications. Today, the buildings of classical modernism, of which the Bauhaus Building in Dessau is regarded as the most representative, have become problematic precisely because of their materials. Being industrially produced, they entail the overexploitation of natural resources and ecosystems, and now we are confronted with the consequences.

The conference will address three thematic blocks: “Building Materials: Mediums of Modernism”, “Architecture of the Building Industry” and “Building as Assemblage”. Apart from lectures and panel debates with international architecture researchers, historians and practitioners, there will be tours that activate discussion of the Dessau buildings themselves.

We chose the term *matters* for the conference title because of its connotations: emphasising the cultural and social relevance of the legacy today, but also referring to activity involving physical materials, which includes ongoing processes and potential for change. These facets of the term are ever-present in the Bauhaus Building itself: in the tension between solid concrete ceilings and stone-wood floors as evidenced by cracks in the floor, in the rich repository of the Construction Research Archive tracing the cycles of materials, economies and technologies, and in the diverse narratives used in architectural training even now to help explain this building made of glass, steel and concrete.

A joint project of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation and Anhalt University of Applied Sciences, Dessau
With Albena Yaneva, Kim Förster, Philipp Misselwitz, Monika Motylinska and others

Are the design questions that the Bauhaus articulated, with an eye on the material innovations of its time, still relevant today?

The 1920s saw rapid progress in the development of materials in industry and the construction sector. Hannes Meyer's emphatic proclamation of a new age, written in 1926, also specified the new building materials that would revolutionise the very foundations of architecture: "Today we have new building materials at our disposal for building a house: aluminium and duralumin in plates, rods, and bars, Euboölith, Ruberoid, Torfoleum, Eternit, rolled glass, Triplex sheets, reinforced concrete, glass bricks, faience, steel frames, concrete frame slabs and pillars, Trolith, Galalith, Cellon, Goudron, Ripolin..." (Hannes Meyer, *The New World*, 1926).

At the building exhibitions of the 1920s, from Stuttgart in 1927 to Berlin in 1931, new construction materials became the subject of avant-garde show rooms: memorable examples were Lilli Reich's glass room and the linoleum room created by Mies van der Rohe for Deutsche Linoleumwerke.

The centennial exhibitions revisit this historic moment, which also marked a turning point for the material foundations of society. On the one hand, the material innovations were enthusiastically welcomed, but on the other, the developments they set in train aroused fears and unease. For the rise of the new materials suddenly cast doubt on existing qualifications, traditional knowledge, craftsmanship and skills, even calling everyday customs and practices into question.

A central concern of the exhibition *Glass / Concrete / Metal* is to treat the buildings and artefacts of the Bauhaus as reservoirs of material – to illuminate the depths of their many layers and make them visible to visitors. Why does it make sense to approach the Bauhaus from the perspective of the present day in this way? Because our own material environment is marked by a similar sense of uncertainty about the substances we encounter and deal with every day.

Building materials, furnishings, consumer goods, where they come from, how they are manufactured, what they are made of – these things trouble us, because we know that the material resources at our disposal are fragile and finite. At the same time, we find ourselves at a turning point not unlike the one faced by the Bauhauslers a century ago: an abundance of material innovations, developed to meet criteria such as circularity, climate neutrality and recyclability, present us with alternative materials that are more environmentally responsible, more ecologically sound. Yet for now, they are still viewed with scepticism, considered with uncertainty, rejected outright or kept at a distance. Because they mean changes in our habitual practices and everyday behaviour and come with consequences for our own way of life. In short, they pose a radical challenge to our habits and demand a willingness to change and adapt.



Slag-concrete breeze block from 1928, manufactured on the building site of the Dessau-Törten Housing Estate

Material Cultures in Transition



If someone reduces their livestock herd, neglects the upkeep of buildings or machinery, stops tending their pasture or croplands, or even sells off land and undermines the basis for future production, then they are living off the substance.



Fábrica de cemento Carlos Marx, Cienfuegos, Cuba, 2025

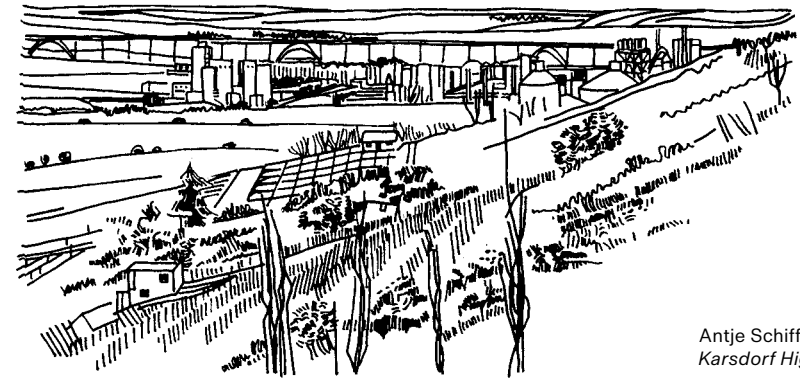
Former brick factory in Westeregeln, 2024

Antje Schiffers
Artist

Soda Lentils Fluff

Exhibition 13.2.–12.7.26
Bauhaus Museum Dessau

In 2025, artists Antje Schiffers and Thomas Sprenger travel to locations associated with the production and history of building materials and construction techniques. The journey takes them to cement plants, sheet-glass works, mines, chemical factories and museum brickworks in Saxony-Anhalt, in Cuba and in Turkey. They set out to investigate what remains of the historical works and facilities and what has taken their place today. Their project thus deals with continuities and rifts, structural change and its impacts on local communities, and ways of remembering, dealing with losses and embracing new opportunities.



Antje Schiffers,
Karsdorf High Ridge, 2024

Schiffers and Sprenger bring back pictures, objects and stories gathered on their travels, which they share in the exhibition at the Bauhaus Museum Dessau. In this way, the exhibition becomes a point of convergence for the strands of a project that has spanned considerable terrain and time since it began in summer 2024. Meanwhile, at the sites visited by the artists, the encounters live on: in a seminar at the university in Kayseri, in paintings and in memories of intense collaboration and time spent together.

The architecture of the Dessau exhibition reflects both the journey and the encounters. Some artefacts, for instance, are displayed on wooden shelves from the former brick factory in Westeregeln (now a brickworks museum) – shelves that were used for drying bricks until well into the 1980s. Piece by piece, the artists carefully dismantled and brought them to Dessau for the exhibition. When it is over, they will be reinstated at the brickworks museum.

Cement Mr Bissot guides me through the Hugo Junkers Technical Museum in Dessau, and at my request, lingers in the section dedicated to cement plant construction. From 1886, Dessau was where cement plants were developed, constructed and exported. Mr Bissot built plants in many of East Germany's partner countries for VEB ZAB, the state-owned enterprise for cement plant construction. The Ethiopian plant was paid for in **lentils**. How many tonnes of lentils does it take to buy a cement works? What size of fields were they grown on? How many years' harvests were handed over? We trawl the German Federal Archives for answers.

Karsdorf, Deuna and Bernburg are cement works in the vicinity of Dessau. Karsdorf is in the valley of the river Unstrut. Wine and cement are often close neighbours, says Alexander Paatsch. Hoping to find the best vantage point for a painting of the cement works in the landscape, we climb up through the vineyards.

Cement works run day and night, and no one halts the production process willingly. One vast hall holds the stockpiles of materials used to fire the rotary kiln: lignite dust from Lusatia, heavy fuel oil, sewage sludge, old tyres, solvents and, above all, "Fluff". At first, I take **Fluff** for affectionate in-house banter, but it stands for *flugfähige Fraktionen* or light-fraction waste and refers to the shredded remains of recyclable waste collected from German households.

The Cuban National Council of Visual Arts (CNAP) has been deputed to assist me in painting the cement factory in Cienfuegos, supplied in the 1970s by Zementanlagenbau Dessau. Every morning I drive past old kapok trees, tamarrinds and royal palms, mango plantations and avenues of

mimosas. And then there it is, the Karl Marx Cement Factory. I stand by the roadside with my easel. Next to me is the fenced-off compound where coal is stored, coal that at some point arrived in Cuba by ship. Beneath the firefighting platform of the coal tip, horses are watered.

Sitting beside me is Alexander, vice-chairman of the Regional Council of Visual Arts. He's been appointed to accompany me each day as I paint the cement factory. To stave off boredom on the roadside next to the coal tip, Alexander paints the cement factory too. He'd like to treat us to pizza, but sadly there's no flour.

Glass We drive through the Salzland district of Saxony-Anhalt. Eventually, the walls of the settling basins used in soda production come into view. Wind sweeps across the Glöthe quarry. On Monday, we have a prearranged meeting at Solvay in Bernburg where rock salt is processed into **soda**, a vital ingredient for making glass. At Euroglas in Haldensleben and Osterweddingen, nobody answers calls for weeks on end. Should we try via Switzerland where the parent company is based??

Brick Of the several brickworks once owned by Wienerberger AG in Saxony-Anhalt, only one is left: Wefensleben, with its own clay pit holding over 50 years' worth of geological reserves. Our research uncovers an opportunity to acquire a plot of land with clay deposits in Jerichower Land district.

Steel Short-time working has been imposed at the electric steelworks in Hennigsdorf, and we try to make contact with the works council. It's first-name terms from the outset with the IG Metall trade union members. Rolling mill scale from the Salzgitter steelworks is needed at the Karsdorf cement plant.

Report from the Primary Production Stage



To be hooked by three words: substance, sustain, sustenance. They do somersaults and turn into a braid inside me as I hesitate at the iconic entrance of the Bauhaus Building in Dessau. I see a black iron hook. It's in plain view and at the same time hidden. I stay there and ponder the ways we have been lured into and taught to focus on the shine that is emitted by singular and individualised objects.

But there are other historical threads to draw on in the Bauhaus. The planet is one household (Gibson), and extractivism creates shadow places (Plumwood). How can we teach our imagination to stay with troubled memories of the fingers touching the coal that will be heating up the building? How can we train ourselves to feel the tension of the muscles, and how can we learn to put this into an ecosystemic view of entangled relations? What substances at the core sustain our sustenance?

Glass Concrete Metal



Exhibition 28.3.26–10.1.27
Bauhaus Building

In his book *Bauhaus Buildings Dessau* (1930), Walter Gropius called iron, concrete and glass the new industrial materials that would supersede the old natural building materials. The Bauhaus Building itself is a testament to the many material innovations that emerged from industry and the construction sector in the 1920s.

The three-part exhibition is dedicated to the very substances and materials from which the Bauhaus Building is made – and which the school’s workshops dealt with in their design work. It asks questions about the foundations of the Bauhaus’s modern everyday aesthetics and casts light on the processes, production sites, working conditions and sourcing of the raw materials that went into the Bauhaus buildings and products. Using historical artefacts, photographs, tools, documents and machinery, the exhibition offers insights into the material, economic and technological underpinnings of the iconic building and its workshop production – facets that have received little attention to date in the history and reception of the Bauhaus.

In the historical Bauhaus, the seemingly “featureless” material **glass** came into use in architecture as well as in the production of utility goods and lighting fixtures. The Bauhaus Building itself is a veritable glasshouse, fitted with 8,864 individual panes. Perhaps more than any other material, glass embodied ideals of radically modern design of the environment. It stood for lightness, transparency and infiltration of space, but also for cleanliness and hygiene. One part of the exhibition therefore focuses on the use of glass in laboratory equipment for the chemical industry and in vessels produced for domestic settings such as the Sintrax coffee maker and Durax cookware. A presentation on process and material techniques calls attention to traces of manufacturing processes crystallised in the very substance of the vessels.

The **construction** material concrete is a mixture of cement, gravel, sand and water. When combined with a steel mesh, it forms the composite material reinforced concrete. Illustrated using the Bauhaus Building itself, the exhibition explains the manufacturing processes, work procedures and logistics of a 1920s building site. At the same time, we turn the spotlight on the origins of the raw materials and the impacts of their extraction on landscapes and ecosystems. Even then,

the cement industry was globalised. We map out its energy cycles and its distribution and transportation routes. The exhibition places the Bauhaus Building in the context of other reinforced concrete designs of the era and asks why concrete became such an influential factor in the emergence of modernism in architecture and urban planning.

As the Bauhaus shifted its focus to industrial products, its new Dessau context brought about changes in its approach to the material **metal**. In Weimar, the school had predominantly used brass and nickel silver; in Dessau, aluminium and steel became the metals of choice. They were especially important in the design of lighting and furniture to complement Bauhaus architecture projects, taking advantage of the availability of pliable and resilient steel and aluminium alloys. We present examples of iconic works by Marianne Brandt and Marcel Breuer as well as lesser-known pieces by Hin Bredendieck and Max Krajewski.

Photographs from the 1920s and 1930s convey a sense of the hardships workers were exposed to at the time. Advertising materials from the metal industry and facsimiles of press illustrations reveal how the public reacted to industrial developments at the time. By presenting metal resources and raw materials from central Germany alongside the complex processes involved in refining them, we also trace the intensive consumption of resources and energy in the metal industry.

Today, in full knowledge of the fragile and finite nature of material resources, we look at building materials in a different light. Much like the architects and designers of modernism, we find ourselves at a turning point – confronted with a wealth of material innovations! These new developments are aligned to criteria like circularity, climate neutrality and recycling, and they mark out environmentally responsible and ecologically sound alternatives.

The exhibition section “Metal” is supported by LOTTO Sachsen-Anhalt





Substance is, literally, that which “stands beneath”; that is, the content that something consists of. In heritage conservation, it is a core theoretical concept and is often used in opposition to the concept of the image, particularly when the premise of a restoration is being questioned: is the aim to restore the original appearance of the object regarded as an artwork or is it to preserve the monument as a historical document, complete with the damage and alterations it has undergone? For buildings from the 20th century, the preferred approach for a long time was to reinstate the image, literally the “icon”. Lately, substance has fought for and won its right to remain. An important development, in my view, because it rightly claims parity with the image in defining what truly makes a monument: its content.

Slats Purlins Knots

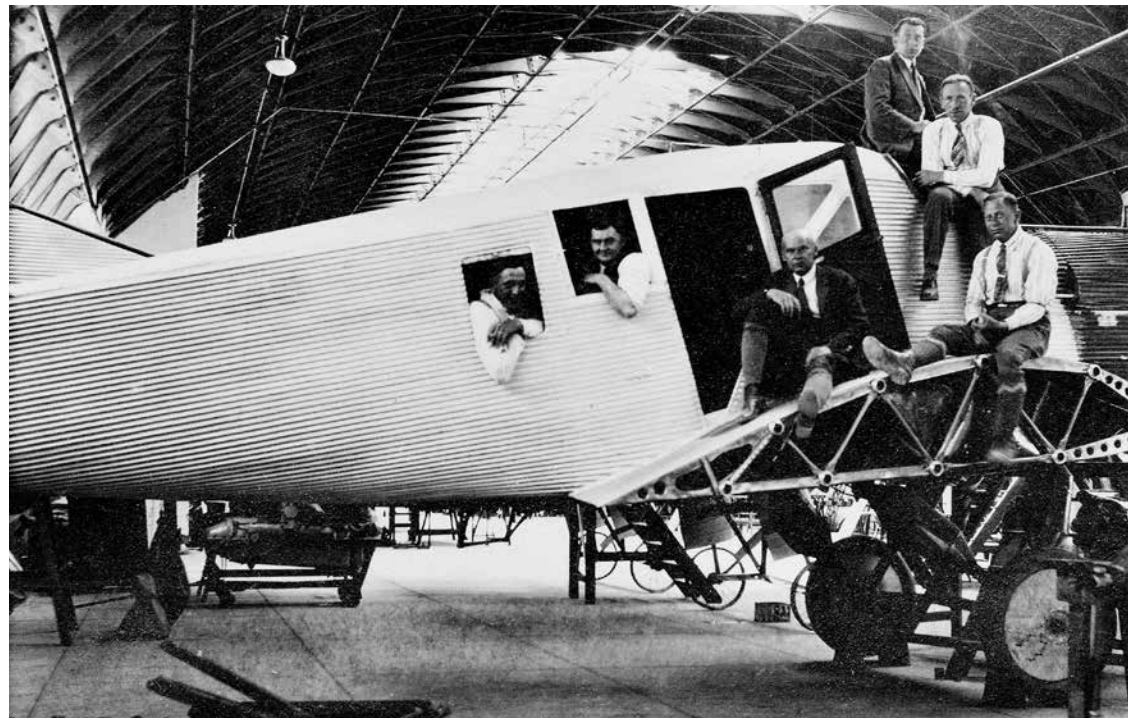
Open Air Presentation
28.3.26–28.2.27
Junkers steel slat hall

The presentation at the heritage-listed boathouse of the canoe club Junkers Paddelgemeinschaft Dessau explains the history and construction of the Junkers slat halls.

The steel slat hall today was constructed in 1930. It is one of a few surviving structures in Dessau based on the modular system patented by Hugo Junkers in 1924/25. Largely made from prefabricated parts, the arched steel roofs could be marketed worldwide as transportable, easy to assemble and robust.

At the boathouse, we present an early example of international distribution: from 1926, the Junkers works exported a complete aircraft factory – comprising eleven steel slat halls, equipment, machinery, materials and know-how – to Kayseri in central Turkey. The adventurous transportation of the modular components by ship, rail, truck and camel to the Anatolian highlands was documented in photographs and writings. Specialised workers from Dessau teamed up with Turkish workers and constructed the first six halls in a matter of weeks.

The project stands as a striking testament to the transfer of materials and expertise from Central Europe to the young Turkish Republic. At the same time, it is one example among many of European companies that failed abroad by misjudging local realities and not involving local stakeholders on an equal footing.



Assembly worker, undated

Junkers employees in the steel slat aircraft hangar supplied by Junkers, Kayseri, Turkey, 1926

One of the most charming Bauhaus anecdotes proves how closely the design school was linked to the aircraft factory run by Dessau entrepreneur Hugo Junkers. On 18 December 1929, to mark the 50th birthday of their revered master Paul Klee, students hired a Type F 13 aircraft to drop gifts above the artist's house – to everyone's considerable hilarity, although the roof of the studio on Burgkühnauer Straße (today's Ebertallee) did not escape undamaged. These days it's hard to imagine just how much aviation was part of everyday life in what was a comparatively small central German city. But even at the beginning of 1925, when the Bauhaus masters were deliberating on a viable city for a fresh start, one of Dessau's advantages – beyond its geographical location and the progressive outlook of political leaders – was the presence of the thriving Junkerswerke (Junkers works). Like the Bauhaus itself, the factories stood for modernity and cosmopolitanism. The move to Dessau went ahead at a time when the school and its workshops were devoting ever more attention to industrial product development, embracing the dictum "Art and technology – a new unity".

Hugo Junkers, who supported the work of the Bauhaus in Dessau and became a member of its friends' association Kreis der Freunde des Bauhauses, shared Walter Gropius's hope that a cooperation could produce powerful synergies. The innovative potential of the Junkers company provided fresh momentum for the development work at the Bauhaus, while the media presence of the locally produced aircraft fused the avant-garde's self-image with the dream of flight. Gropius saw the aircraft engineer as a role model for the artist; it was incumbent upon both, he believed, to create things that "in both the spiritual and the material sense" were designed to function. In the end, however, the differences between their doctrines proved insuperable – which,

in itself, speaks volumes about the sheer abundance of competing innovations at the time.

The most fruitful collaboration developed in the field of metal furniture construction. Aircraft manufacturing experience could usefully be applied to these products. Not only that, but the Junkers plant was equipped with the necessary bending equipment. From 1925 onwards, junior master Marcel Breuer worked together with master locksmith Karl Körner to develop prototypes for a new generation of furniture – initially using duralumin as a substitute, and later exclusively tubular steel. Several models soon went into series production: the B 9 skid stool, for example, which owed its elegant form to the analytical design approach.

When it came to visual branding, however, the design school seldom had any direct influence on the company's practice. One of the rare examples was an advertisement published in 1927 by the Junkers advertising department, which featured a photograph of the Gropius House taken by Lucia Moholy. The Masters' Houses, like the earlier Haus Am Horn in Weimar, were fitted with Junkers gas-fired bath boilers and radiators. Generally speaking, Junkers products were frequently used in Bauhaus buildings – economy bathtubs in some homes on the Dessau-Törten Housing Estate, water heaters in the apartments of the Konsum Building, and radiators like the ones on surprisingly conspicuous display in the stairwell of the Bauhaus Building.

Two years later, the Bauhaus advertising workshop, headed by Joost Schmidt, designed the presentation of the Junkers factories at the exhibition *Gas and Water* in Berlin. For the most part, however, the different sections of the Junkers firm ran their own advertising campaigns. Overall responsibility for corporate publicity (known as the "works propaganda") lay with Peter Drömmmer, expressionist painter and creator of the company's "Flying Man" emblem. It was also Drömmmer, whose own work history included a brief spell at the Bauhaus in Weimar, who had made Hugo

Aviation and Construction

Junkers aware of the institute as early as 1920.

In Ludwig Hilberseimer's classes, Bauhaus students designed housing estates for the Junkers works with extensive communal facilities. Some of their seminar papers were presented internationally. When it came to industrial construction, however, Junkers and the Bauhaus followed different paths. Ottokar Paulßen, the head of architecture at Junkers, made it clear to his director that their own emphasis on metal construction would be difficult to reconcile with Gropius's preference for building in concrete. He also suspected that the Bauhaus would commandeer joint activities for the purpose of self-publicity. After the people at Junkers responded rather critically to the Steel House experiment by Georg Muche and Richard Paulick, the Bauhaus set its sights on collaborating with the Junkers engineer Bruno Urban to implement his prefabricated construction system for the 1927 Weißenhof Estate in Stuttgart, but ultimately Gropius designed the two planned buildings alone. Nevertheless, mutual respect remained intact. Take the promotion of Junkers steel slat halls, designed for on-site assembly in various designs and sizes and exported worldwide but also erected locally, like the one on the grounds of the Junkers calorifier factory in 1927. In its advertising for these products, the Junkers firm praised the "beauty of technology", a phrase attributed to Walter Gropius.

A sophisticated synthesis of Junkers and Bauhaus ideas was presented in the architectural theory treatise *Space as Membrane* by Siegfried Ebeling (1894–1964), published in Dessau in 1926. In his book, the author developed the idea of the building as an organism, whose walls act as membranes mediating physical and social exchange. Although Ebeling, who had studied at the Bauhaus in Weimar and Dessau and had been working for Junkers in 1925, was never able to put his ideas into practice, they still make inspiring reading today.

Open Air Presentation
28.3.26–28.2.27
Steel House

Sheet Membrane Porthole

In the 1920s, steel was considered the material of the future. Building on work he had started in Weimar, painter and Bauhaus master Georg Muche was investigating ways of using this material for mass housing construction. Together with architecture student Richard Paulick, he designed an experimental structure made of steel. The resulting Steel House was presented to the public in December 1926 at the opening of the Bauhaus Building in Dessau. In spring 1927, the house was completed.

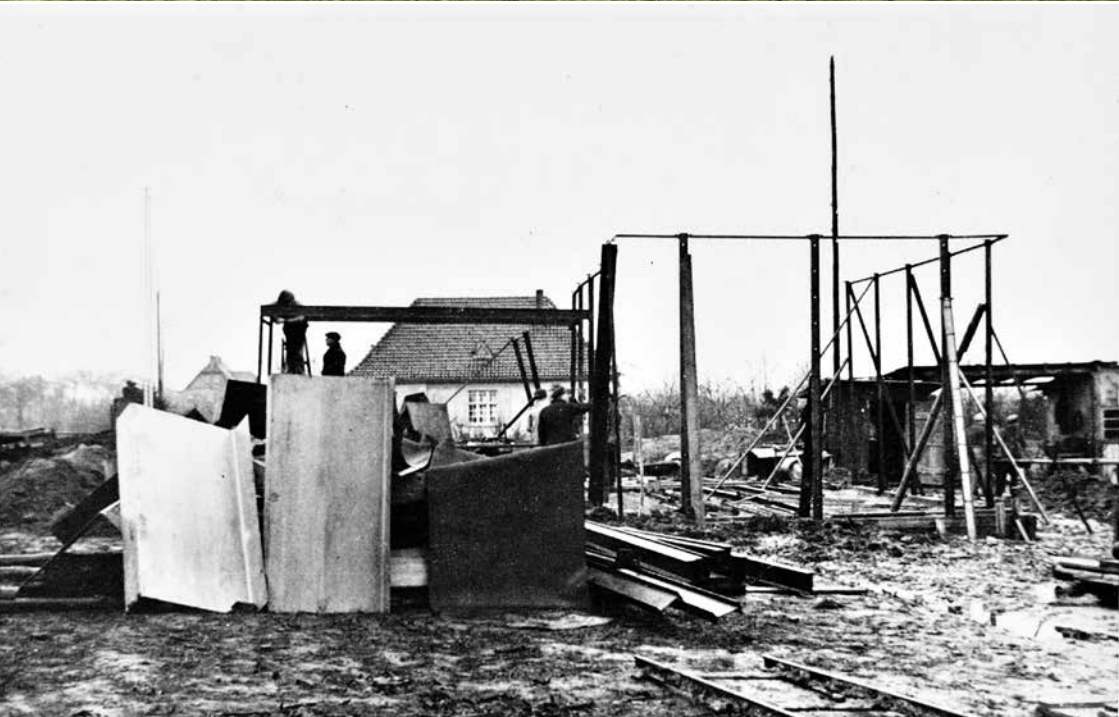
Dry assembly of prefabricated elements was a technique that permitted construction even in winter. The square room module was designed to be expandable. Different space requirements could then have been met by adapting the steel skeleton. The special profiles necessary to realise this, however, proved too costly to produce for just one house. The project was supported by the Carl Kästner safe factory in Leipzig, which had already begun serial production of steel houses. Nonetheless, the stringent design solution drew criticism because it was prone to rust and not effectively insulated.

At about the same time, the Junkers factories in Dessau were also working on standardised metal buildings. The competitive climate gave Junkers an incentive to capitalise on their own expertise in metal processing and machining.

After many transformations over the years, the most recent renovation in 2024/25 brought the Steel House up to modern technical standards, and its original appearance was approximated.



No one is closer to the substance than the craftsman – he handles it. He does things to the substance. Day in, day out. Often that does things to his substance. Craftsmen have created the substance of our material world.



Steel House on the Dessau-Törten Housing Estate, 2012

Construction site of the Steel House,
architects: Georg Muche and Richard Paulick, 1926/27



Algae Debris CO₂

Exhibition 28.3.26–27.9.26
Former Zeeck department store

To mark the centennial, we are creating an exhibition on an empty floor of the former Zeeck department store in Dessau city centre. The Zeeck building is an outstanding example of modernist department store design, with an interior that looks almost exactly like the workshop wing of the Bauhaus Building. Both buildings symbolise new departures and the spirit of progress in the industrial era – sentiments intensified by the use of steel, cement concrete and glass.

The department store building, with its layers of construction history, material substance and architectonic transformations, serves as a starting point for the exhibition *Algae / Debris / CO₂*. More than just a venue, the building itself is a central topic of the exhibition. Traces of past uses and processes of fabrication – such as preparation of the space for further use and the realisation of the exhibition – remain visible. Apertures called “time windows” cut into the staircase, floor, pillar and ceiling offer views into the material layers of the building.

Any other additions and interventions to the built substance follow the logic of the least possible disruption. These minimal alterations to the existing building are almost invisible at first glance: flaking plaster is removed, holes are filled, and anything suitable for repair is repaired or remade – including old window panes or the panels of the Hetaflex aluminium façade, which were removed during the façade renovation in spring 2025. Additions such as the ceiling lighting system follow the principles of circular economy or – like the waterless toilet installed for demonstration – are designed to be sustainable from the outset.

A dense microhabitat will be established outside the former department store to coincide with the exhibition opening and allowed to grow and develop naturally. As a further initiative, we demonstrate alternatives to the canon of materials of (classical) modernism – such as clay, mycelium, algae, flax or geopolymer concrete based on natural substances and waste material.

Across all the measures, craftspeople and enterprises of all sizes work in close cooperation with researchers, designers and artists. They share an understanding of building as a process conserving material resources which is subject to continuous updating and change. So the dynamics and synergies unleashed by the exhibition

will have lasting effects beyond the Bauhaus anniversary. A case in point is the floor taken over for the exhibition: it will remain available for public-benefit uses for at least three more years. Some projects will only produce results gradually over the years.

Algae / Debris / CO₂ serves as a “model exhibition” for aesthetic and sustainable design. It is a showcase, a functional space and an event location in equal measure. The project demonstrates crossdisciplinary research approaches and collaborative working methods that bring together human and non-human stakeholders, different disciplines, economic systems, types of knowledge, technologies as well as substance and material flows.

The Zeeck department store was opened in 1908 and enlarged in the 1920s. In 1945, it became part of the state-run “Handelsorganisation” (HO) retail chain and subsequently the Magnet department store in the 1960s. It long endured as a city landmark with its distinctive blue sheet aluminium panel façade and “Magnet” lettering. Following the collapse of the GDR, the building stood vacant. In the early 2000s, the Dinh family purchased the building and used part of it for their textiles trading. Today the Asian restaurant Lou is located on the ground floor.

Exhibition team Jule Aleithe, Martin Grabner, Martina Schiller, Rainer Stadlbauer, Barbara Steiner

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The built substance of the present day is not a neutral resource. The extent of our possible knowledge about it depends on the perspective we take. If we view it as part of a network, we can better understand its potential.

Engaging with the substance means taking responsibility – in the spirit of Donna Haraway’s concept of “response-ability”. This approach opens up a form of communication with materials. By leaving behind old dualisms of subject and object, mind and matter, nature and culture, we come to recognise that we ourselves are part of the world – a prerequisite for acting responsibly in the climate crisis.



Johanna Kandl, *Kawtar Tansui zeigt Kobaltstufe*, 2021

Former Zeeck department store, interior, second floor, 2024

Martina Schiller and Rainer Stadlbauer

architects and designers, studio-itzo, Vienna

At the beginning of the 20th century, industrially manufactured building materials such as cement concrete, steel and glass unlocked new and previously unknown possibilities in the fields of construction and design. They revolutionised construction and essentially defined the building industry of the 20th century.

Today, the building sector is responsible for 37 percent of global CO₂ emissions, 35 percent of global energy consumption and a major share of the total resources consumed by humankind. The production of concrete, steel and aluminium alone accounts for nearly a quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, the construction industry is now the largest waste producer, generating 55 percent of (Germany's) national total.

To reduce this colossal consumption of resources and cut greenhouse gas emissions, it is necessary to transition towards a circular model – one that includes both technical and biological dimensions of production and material cycles. While we must scrutinise the necessity of every newbuild project from a “sustainability hierarchy” perspective – and preferably convert or repurpose existing buildings and reuse structural elements and recycled materials – some additional building materials will still be necessary for newbuilds and conversions.

At the level of processes and materials, this calls for a radical rethink – a critical and reflective stance towards the legacy of modernism. The relatively short era of wasteful resource use must make way for a mindset based on sustainability, which was the norm for centuries before the industrialisation of building in the modern post-war period. This shift back to material prudence and recycling awareness in construction is also a step forward – towards new

building materials made from renewables that are “harvested” rather than mined. Harvesting applies to human-made (or anthropogenic) materials in the technical cycle as well as naturally regenerating raw materials in the biological cycle. “Circular construction” means that all the resources used to complete a building are fully reusable, recyclable or compostable. Apart from the materials themselves, it requires buildings to be designed for disassembly, with reversible connections that allow clean segregation of materials when the time comes.

(Cement-based) concrete is the most widely used construction material in the world, but also one of the most energy- and CO₂-intensive. For all those reasons, countless research efforts are under way to reduce its use and negative impacts: scientists are seeking alternative binding agents to replace cement, alternative reinforcement materials – because to prevent corrosion, reinforced concrete typically requires more concrete than is structurally necessary – and alternative processes and geometries to make more sparing use of concrete.

Cement-free concrete can be produced using mainly anthropogenic sources such as construction waste and industrial by-products like ash, slag, silicate dust or alkaline liquids (known as geopolymers). Clay concrete made from demolition material, recycled bricks and clay excavation waste can be poured like traditional concrete when fresh, hardens quickly and, like rammed earth, is well suited for numerous structures with low to medium load requirements. In basalt or carbon concrete, the steel reinforcement is replaced with rods, mats or fibres made from basalt or carbon.

These materials, although lighter, have significantly greater tensile strength. Alongside the CO₂ savings and lower costs of production, the biggest gains in CO₂ reduction and resource-efficiency come from the fact that basalt and carbon do not corrode. This means that less concrete cover is required – and in total, around 50 percent less

Circular Construction, Innovative Materials

concrete is needed. Currently, researchers are looking at flax as another alternative reinforcement material.

Although red brick and clinker feature less prominently than steel, concrete and glass in our reception of the Bauhaus, they were still essential building materials at the time – and remain so today in terms of global construction volume. They, too, can now be replaced with various novel materials. Bricks are being made from recycled materials (such as excavated soil and construction waste) and from clay- or algae-based concrete, but most groundbreaking of all, structural mycelium offers a whole class of building materials – bricks, panels, insulation materials – based on fungal networks. The fungi act as a natural binding agent, and parameters such as rigidity can be fine-tuned by controlling the duration of their growth. In the longer term, even heavy-duty structures could one day be replaced by hybrid forms of architecture created through interplay of living and non-living construction elements, transforming building into a continuous process.

Important factors on the way to sustainable construction are which building materials we choose, where we source them – regionality is key! – what quantities we use, how long materials remain in the building and how we ensure reuse and recycling. All these questions have a fundamental influence on resource consumption and the carbon footprint of our buildings. In building practice, considering the urgency of the situation, it is vital to pursue different strategies in parallel – and that means considering all options.

No matter if we look to the present or the future, the modern era or long ago – the most sustainable architecture is whatever remains in lasting use. As well as materials appropriate to that lifespan, the best guarantee of built sustainability is high-quality architecture, which permits changing uses over time and which people are happy to live in and live with.

For Pigs and People Inspired by Walter Gropius's original idea, studio-itzo is redesigning the existing pigsty at Tierpark Dessau, the city's zoo. Architecture, from 27.3.26, Tierpark Dessau

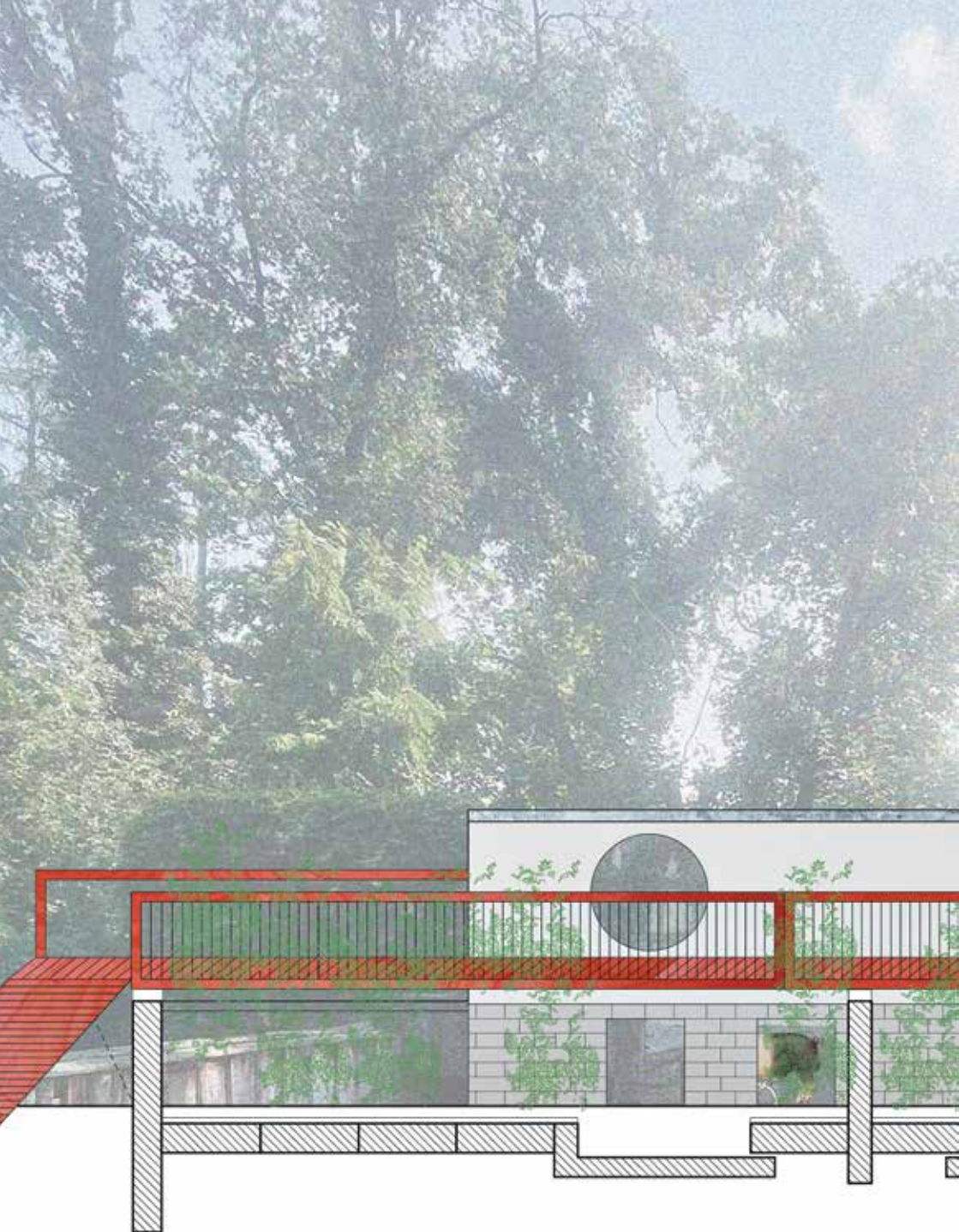
In the 1960s, The Architects Collaborative (TAC) was designing a new production facility for the German Rosenthal porcelain company in Selb. Walter Gropius, a member of TAC at the time, lost a bet with company principal Philip Rosenthal. As his forfeit, he had to design a pigsty for Rosenthal's pet pig RoRo. The brief was to provide RoRo with indoor and outdoor quarters at ground level, fenced off from people. A round window opening and a horizontal window strip would admit natural light to the inside.

The “bungalow” is consistent with the architectural ideas of modernism: the design, layout and choice of materials clearly respond more to the needs of human beings than of pigs. From a pig welfare perspective, Gropius's design was entirely unsuitable. It was never realised.

For the project, studio-itzo pursues a contemporary architectural approach: building within existing structures. The material components of the existing building are treated as a resource. The pigsty is opened up, partition walls and concrete surfaces are removed. In this respect, the designers follow animal welfare criteria. The project defines zones with distinct qualities, which interconnect with the surrounding open space: zones where pigs and humans can meet. These are arranged in levels like a shelving system: on the lowest level is the “pigs bar” while one level up is a zone accessible to people, which is greened with edible, regionally sourced plants. The shelters offer protection from strong sunlight and other adverse effects of the weather.

In and around the pigsty, this concentrates into a narrative in which people, animals and plants can encounter one another in ways that respect each species' needs.


The project is a cooperation between the Kulturstiftung Dessau-Roßlau, Tierpark Dessau and the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation.



In contemporary design, substance is no longer merely the carrier material but an active protagonist in the design process – it speaks, resists, transforms.

And in terms of new materialism too, substance is not seen as a passive object but as a dynamic mesh of relationships that generates meaning through its interaction with human and non-human actors. Design thus becomes a practice of substantial listening – a synergy of intention, improvisation and materiality.

Bricks Roof Power



Exhibition / Performance Programme
28.3.–27.9.26
Historical Employment Office

The project *Bricks / Roof / Power* pushes brick to the forefront. While modern architecture is most immediately associated with steel, glass and concrete, brick was just as important as a building material – and ubiquitous during the period. Without it, the pioneering Bauhaus architecture would be unthinkable. Today, the question is whether brick, produced industrially through resource- and energy-intensive processes, has a future as a building material.

One of the most prominent Bauhaus buildings to feature exposed brickwork is the historical Employment Office in Dessau, designed by Walter Gropius. Until April 2025, it was still in use by a Dessau-Roßlau municipal authority. Now, the Federal Employment Agency plans to transform the site into a convention and training centre by January 2027.

We are facilitating the transformation process and using the interim period to host tours, workshops, performances and artistic interventions. Our approach is to transform the space around the historical Employment Office into a performance zone. In a nod to the building's original history as a new “Office for Employment” and today's fast-changing world of work, we are renaming this playful zone the “Office of New Work”.

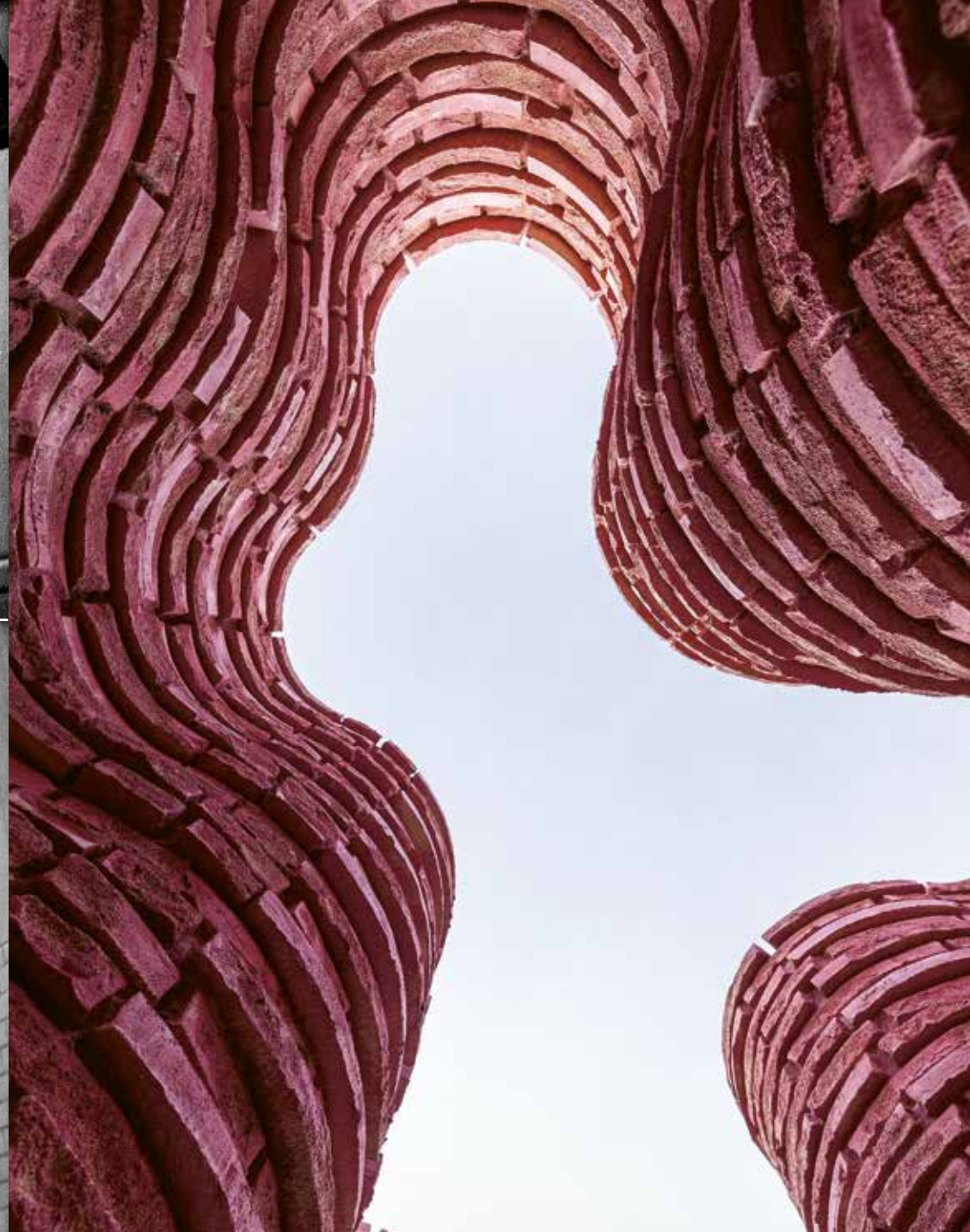
In this context, we have invited the Copenhagen artists' group SUPERFLEX. One of their big themes is seeking out interspecies solutions to the drastic encroachment of human industrialisation and human infrastructures on the ecosystem – damage which continues unabated. For *Bricks / Roof / Power*, the artists have developed what they call “superbricks”: a new type of pink, organically shaped brick, which they use to build sculptural installations on site.

Funded by Danish Arts Foundation



Dessau Employment Office, glass panels being reinstalled after cleaning, 1955

Dessau Employment Office, flat roof after glass cleaning, 1955



SUPERFLEX, *Interspecies Campus* (detail), 2022

Superbricks are pink, curved bricks made from unfired clay that are constructed to avoid the right angles and straight lines of human architecture. They are designed to be used to build structures that accommodate the needs of other species. Because of the curved design of the bricks, each sculpture features cracks, holes, and paths for all sorts of creatures, from fish to insects, to navigate through it – facilitating the possibility of informal and unexpected meetings between species.

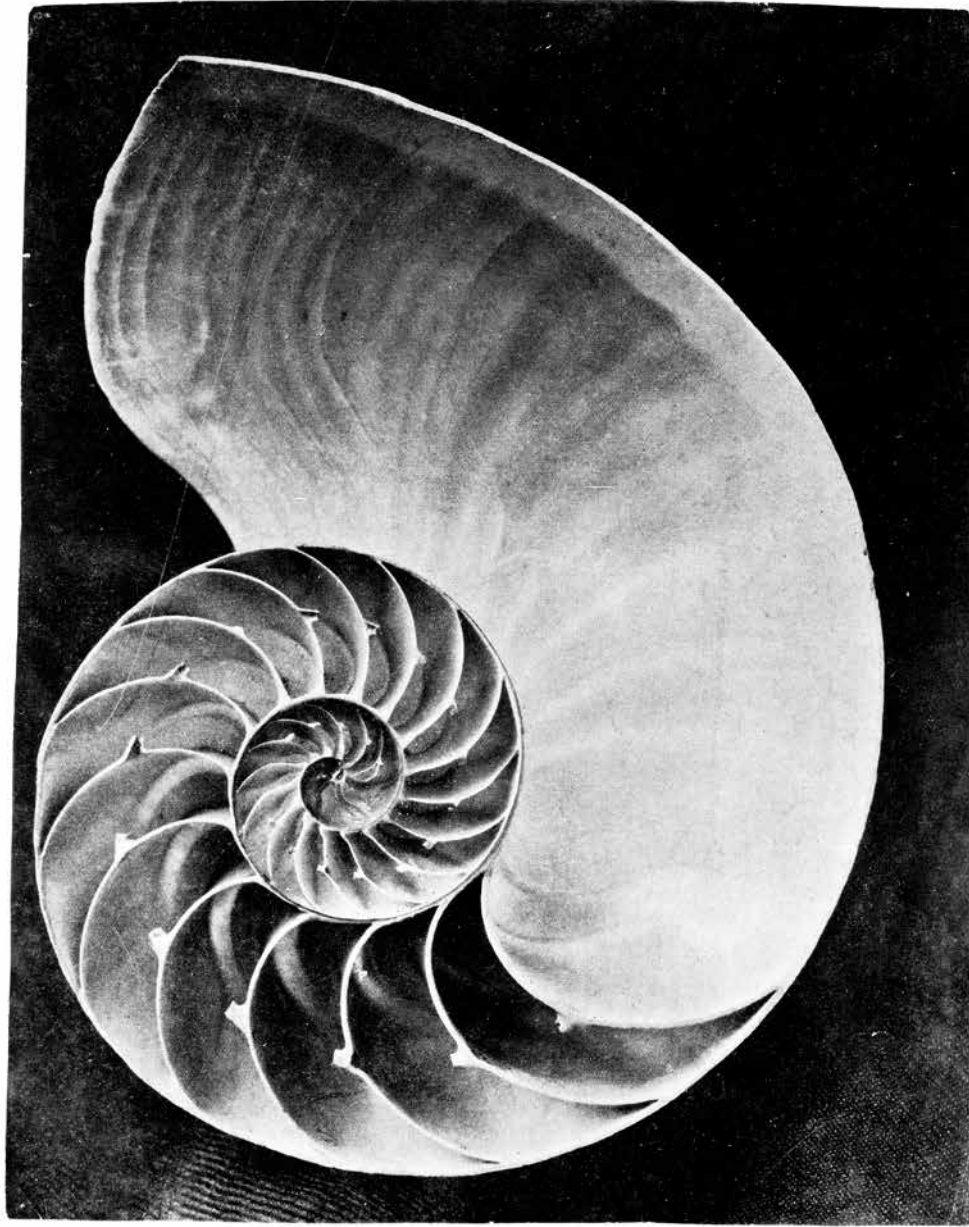
For the installation at the Employment Office by Walter Gropius, SUPERFLEX will use these bricks to build temporary sculptures, modeling how new designs can be used to create artworks for humans and housing for other creatures. The sculptures will be laid out in patterns that work with and against the existing architecture.

Originally, the Employment Office was designed so that people who practiced different trades would enter through different doors which led them to the relevant offices. In this way, like much Bauhaus architecture, it suggested industrial progress and efficiency; the sculptures made from Superbricks will move in the opposite direction. Because they are difficult to build with, they require careful attention and decision making. In this way, both their form and the process of using them suggests a slower and less human-centric future.

The Employment Office was designed to facilitate human work, but this exhibition proposes an alternative kind of development, toward a relationship with other species as ecological equals. In this way, the tension between the building's past and its potential future will be made visible in the work.

Superbricks. Pink Elements





“Nothing is lost, nothing is created,
everything transforms.”

[Antoine Lavoisier, 1789]

In the garden, substance is what has always been there, what endures and what is yet to appear. Substance is the matter that transforms, that interacts with light, shadow and air, sometimes seeming to be less and sometimes more. In winter, it hides in the soil, and in summer, it fills the space and the landscape. Substance is earth, substance is water, substance is plants, substance is the new beginning and the end of a life cycle: a tree that sprouts from the earth, sheds its leaves and forms a carpet that turns to soil once more. Substance is the force that stirs the garden. Substance is life. Substance is what the gardener interacts with.

Gong Bang Whistle

Exhibition 5.9.26–29.3.27
Bauhaus Museum Dessau

"With music and seductive storytelling, we want to invite the audience to speculate with us in an exhibition that both celebrates and fantasises widely in an attempt to understand why the Bauhaus can seemingly continue to house all our dreams." Astrup & Bordorff

For their first exhibition in Germany, the artists Kirsten Astrup and Maria Bordorff have created an extensive new work. At its centre is a filmic work with music of their own composition.

"When you, as artists, are to deal with an institution like the Bauhaus, it feels like turning over a stone that has been turned over countless times, studied closely by many others before you, all with the same eagerness to see something new. Our work is about this; the longing for the good story that the Bauhaus (like another fairy tale book) seems able to keep pouring out."

Astrup & Bordorff

The Danish artist duo is known for their "film cabarets" in which they blend stagecraft, musical cinema and performance art. This approach is firmly in the tradition of the historical Bauhaus stage, which had a definitive influence on everyday life and the culture of celebration at the Dessau Bauhaus.

Based in findings from an archaeological excavation and other evidence, the film speculates on the existence of a forgotten fifth Masters' House and its supposed residents. What were their jobs? How did they live? What did they dream about?

In the exhibition at the Bauhaus Museum Dessau, the medium of film meets props and objects in a large-scale spatial installation which come together to create a surprising new story. Although it draws on documentary forms of expression, it is a work that subverts the rules of documentation for presenting facts and evidence and employs unusual narrative. Facts and fictions intermingle in a dialogue with reality to expose the Bauhaus history as an (unstable) construction.

Supported by the Kunststiftung Sachsen-Anhalt, the New Carlsberg Foundation and the Danish Arts Foundation





The Bauhaus Festival 2026 focuses on the innovative aspect of the circus and celebrates it as a force for community. In that spirit, we are developing and producing projects that actively promote broad social participation and shared responsibility.

Circus was a popular art form in the Europe of the 1920s. Like the wider public, Bauhausers were fascinated by the circus. They recognised that it was full of potential for experimental, playful and fantastical artistic practice. Circus brought together – ideally, they thought – the precise handling of objects and materials, bold testing of the boundaries of performative and visual expression, and the humour and immediacy of the performance. Essentially it was all about experiencing community and participation, both within and beyond traditional performance spaces.

Among the Bauhaus members who engaged intensively with the circus were László Moholy-Nagy with his manifesto “Theatre, Circus, Variety”, Lou Scheper with circus scenes for the opening of the Bauhaus Building in December 1926, Xanti Schawinsky with the scene sequence *Circus*, Stefan Wolpe with the composition *An Anna Blume* for piano and musical clown, Andor Weiniger’s musical clowning, and Oskar Schlemmer’s turn as a musical clown and his *Komisches Ballett* (comic ballet), a variety interpretation of the *Triadic Ballet*. Schlemmer’s aim in drawing on circus and variety theatre was to create new forms of expression for a reformed theatre and for the performing arts.

Flip / Beat / Shape is shorthand for kinetic exploration of human bodies, objects, space, dance and sound, turning the Bauhaus Building into both an arena and one of the numerous performers within it.



Hedwig Dances, Chicago, *META | MOR | PHOS – A Triadic Fiction*, 2022

T. Lux Feininger, *Black-White*, Bauhaus stage dance, 1928

Lis Beyer wearing bag costume by Oskar Schlemmer at the “Festival in White”, 1926

Malte Peter, *Kor-Phi*, Bauhaus Festival, 2016



Bakelite Glaze Colour

Exhibition 5.12.25–31.1.27
Bauhaus Museum Dessau

The exhibition at the Bauhaus Museum Dessau displays recent donations to the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation's collections. Its theme is how this substance has enlarged and taken shape since the 100th anniversary of the Bauhaus in 2019.

We drew from more than 3,000 new objects donated by more than 100 individuals over the past six years in making our selection of exhibits. While the items chosen for the exhibition reinforce familiar areas of existing Bauhaus research and our established collecting activities, the selection also opens up new aspects. The presentation is interwoven with the permanent exhibition – yet clearly marked out within it.

The inventories of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation collections have grown significantly over the years, thanks especially to the many donations. Without this steady stream of acquisitions, the Bauhaus Dessau could never have attained the prominence it has today, both in Bauhaus research and in the public eye. And without them, there would never have been enough relevant and material substance to be presented at the Bauhaus Museum Dessau, let alone to fill it.

Inseparably bound up with the physical existence of the objects and their factual metadata are the fascinating personal stories of those who have entrusted the objects to us – people's unique testimonies to their emotional ties to the Bauhaus Dessau, both historically and now. These stories, too, are an essential part of the exhibition – and of its "core" on which we can build for the future.



Untitled (Arieh Sharon at the draughtsman's table), undated.
Donated by Ariel Aloni, New York, 2025

Coffee cup, designer: Christian Dell, manufacturer from 1929: Römmler AG, Spremberg.
Donated by Matthias Mynett, Mildenau, 2023

There is no entity called “substance” that is unchanging and self-identical in nature.

But there are *substances*, in the plural, that mix and mingle with others. Substances are heterogeneous and porous: they are always already permeated by what they are not: by hollows, pores and cracks. That is how time, too, seeps into substances and goes to work within them. Where substances decay, dwindle or decompose, voids are left behind: every open-cast mine is a reminder that we live off now-depleted substances.

In a porous world pitted with holes, we must learn to rethink substances: as fragile preconditions of our existence.

Martin Siegler

Research associate at the Chair of Media Philosophy,
Bauhaus-Universität Weimar

Projections Promises Echo

Festival 4.12.+5.12.26
Bauhaus Building
Exhibition 5.12.26–29.3.27
Bauhaus Museum Dessau

We orchestrate installations, interventions, forums, interactive tours, readings and performances to produce the festival *A Building enters the stage*. Our chosen theme is the institutional legacy of the Bauhaus Dessau – as lived practice, as a political space and as a memorial site. We celebrate the hybrid status of the institution, which runs like a silver thread through its 100-year history – it has never been exclusively a museum or a research centre, a university or an archive. We let the building itself take centre stage and bear witness to the myriad experiences etched into its structure, preserved in images and retold in reminiscences.



Bauhaus Building, view from staircase during the opening, 4/5 December 1926

Opening of the Bauhaus Building, view towards the entrance, 1926

Two historic public moments 50 years apart are the cornerstones of the festival and exhibition, marking two special public “debuts” for the building: on 4 December 1926, the Bauhaus Building designed by Walter Gropius was ceremonially opened. It was a widely publicised event that attracted enormous attention. The Bauhaus in Dessau was a design school and much more besides. For the marketing of Bauhaus products, it founded its own limited company, bauhaus gmbh, with branches abroad. The school also cultivated an impressive network of contacts in German and international avant-garde circles and in business, science and industry.

On 4 December 1976, in a radically different political and geo-political context, the now ageing Bauhaus members were invited to return to Dessau to celebrate the reopening of the building as the Scientific-Cultural Centre, a gesture of appropriation by the communist state. Amid international critiques of modernism, which considered modernism and the Bauhaus to be the same thing, behind the Iron Curtain the German Democratic Republic opened the Bauhaus once again – not as a museum, not as a university, not as an archive, but as an institution tasked with bringing together various activities and programmes.

Given this institutional history, some questions of current relevance spring to mind, for which we want *A Building enters the stage* to be a forum: how do cultural institutions behave in the face of growing political pressure? What institutional frameworks and resilient structures do cultural institutions need in order to be places of cultural diversity, democratic participation and cultural co-production?



Second “Bauhaus Reunion”, festival at the Scientific-Cultural Centre in the Bauhaus Building, 1984

Bauhaus Building, west view, workshop wing after the first complete renovation, 1976

Design in the Centennial Year The centennial has prompted the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation to collaborate with a range of acclaimed international designers and architects, who are developing special graphic works, scenographies, exhibition architectures and other artistic and design-based contributions for the programme.

They include the architects Gonzalez Haase AAS, the graphic designers Heimann + Schwantes, the exhibition designers Martha Schwindling and Marlene Oeken, studio-itzo, Vienna, stage-designer Carlo Siegfried and graphic designer Jan Kiesswetter, the type design collective Camelot, the textile artist Bettina Mileta and the design studio NODE Berlin.



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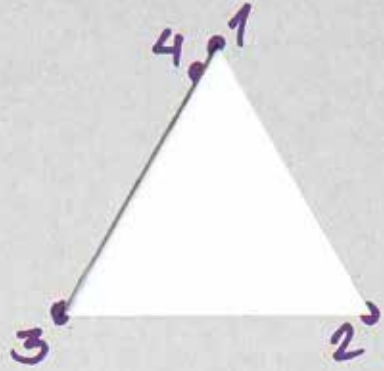
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