

Happy Birthday, Bauhaus!

Berlin is celebrating the Bauhaus centenary with a host of events and thematic tours

Berlin, January 2019 One of the world's most influential schools of architecture, art, photography, theatre, and design – not just during the period of classical modernism but throughout the 20th century – is celebrating its 100th birthday in 2019. Its aesthetics have had a lasting impact on our perception of style to this day.

The beginnings in Weimar

Berlin architect Walter Gropius founded the “Staatliche Bauhaus Weimar” in Weimar in 1919. His founding document “Together let us desire, conceive, and create the new structure of the future...” manifested the yearning of the avant-garde for a new design language. It should involve craftsmanship and industrial manufacturing processes, yet detach itself from the promoted, historicist and serially manufactured art production at the time. The guiding theme was – starting from architecture – to unite all the arts such as the visual, applied, and performing arts into a Gesamtkunstwerk, or total artwork. The school's aim of promoting equality between craftsmen and artists, teachers – the so-called Bauhaus masters – and its students in order to abolish social inequality was just one of the new and radical ideas of the Bauhaus.

Gropius, who had long been known as an architect and designer from the Werkbund context, quickly succeeded in attracting esteemed artists such as Johannes Itten, Lyonel Feininger, Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Oskar Schlemmer and, over time, László Moholy-Nagy and Josef Albers to work as masters for the Bauhaus. The different origins, education, and orientation of the three academy directors as well as those of all the teachers created a markedly free and experimental climate. Bauhaus members and their followers were seen as communist-oriented, and after the shift to the right in the Thuringia parliamentary elections, they came under increasing economic and political pressure. As a consequence, they decided to move the Bauhaus to Dessau in 1925.

The period in Dessau

Swiss architect Hannes Meyer replaced Gropius as second director. He focused mainly on the social aspects of architecture. Under the motto “the needs of the people instead of the need for luxury”, he turned increasingly to industrial mass production, among other things to make Bauhaus products accessible to the general public. In contrast, his successor Mies van der Rohe, appointed director in 1930, turned his attention to the aesthetic aspects of architecture.

Berlin – from the idea to the dissolution

Berlin was the place of work, centre of life, and artistic medium for a large number of prominent Bauhaus members. Walter Gropius, born in Berlin and founding director of the Bauhaus movement in Weimar in 1919, had his architectural office in Berlin. Mies van der Rohe, the third director of the Bauhaus during the Berlin period, came to Berlin before the

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First World War and stayed until 1938. Both worked together in Peter Behrens' Berlin architectural office in the 1910s along with Le Corbusier. Behrens, considered a pioneer of modern industrial design and the inventor of corporate design, had a decisive influence on his young colleagues. The Bauhaus master Johannes Itten also moved to Berlin in 1926 and founded his private art school there. Renowned artists such as Kandinsky and the married couple Moholy-Nagy worked in Berlin. The social and cultural centre of Germany fascinated and challenged the protagonists of the Bauhaus movement. Berlin, the almost mythical city of modernism, with its social and political contrasts, a dazzling cultural life and its own ambivalence and gruffness, served as a source of inspiration for the ideas of modernist Bauhaus artists. With its radical way of thinking and its break with tradition, the Bauhaus movement found its ideal sparring partner in this innovative industrial metropolis.

However, the National Socialists closed the Bauhaus in Berlin in 1933 due to its left liberal cultural view and forced it to dissolve. After the Nazis seized power, many Bauhaus comrades-in-arms emigrated abroad and further developed the ideas of Bauhaus there. Walter Gropius went to Harvard University to teach architecture, Mies van der Rohe settled in Chicago with his architectural office and began teaching again. László Moholy-Nagy founded New Bauhaus in the USA. Today, Tel Aviv has the largest number of Bauhaus-inspired buildings in the world. The 'White City' counts some 4,000 Bauhaus-style buildings.

Berlin post-war modernism and the present day

Due to the Nazi era and the consequences of the Second World War, architects committed to New Objectivity were only able to return to activity again in the 1950s and early 1960s. Mies van der Rohe, for instance, created the New National Gallery. Walter Gropius, Eduard Ludwig (one of Mies van der Rohe's Bauhaus students) and Max Taut took part in the International Building Exhibition in Berlin (IBA 1957), which took place in the war-torn Hansaviertel in Berlin's Tiergarten district. The buildings in the Hansaviertel brought together all of the prominent architects of post-war modernism: renowned German architects as well as international icons such as Le Corbusier, Alvar Aalto, Oscar Niemeyer and Arne Jacobsen.

With the construction of the Neue Nationalgalerie (New National Gallery), completed in 1968, Mies van der Rohe created his only building in Germany and with it a landmark of 20th-century architecture.

The Bauhaus Archive, built according to designs by Gropius, was opened in 1979 and houses the world's largest collection on the history of the Bauhaus, with an associated archive. To mark the anniversary, the building is undergoing renovation works that are planned to be completed in 2022 and will be complemented by a new building by Staab Architekten, resulting in a threefold increase of its exhibition area to 2,000 square metres. The current branch, the temporary Bauhaus Archive, is located in Hardenberg House.

Modernist architecture in Berlin

Modernism has had a lasting impact on the cityscape of Berlin. In 2008, six Berlin modernist

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housing estates were listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Numerous other buildings, such as the Lemke House, the ADGB Trade Union School, and the Bauhaus Archive itself bear witness to the ground-breaking power of these ideas, which spread all over the world. A selection is integrated into the “Grand Tour of Modernism”, which will highlight Germany’s important modernist buildings to mark the Bauhaus anniversary in 2019.

Five architectural highlights in Berlin

Lemke House

In the early 1930s, Mies van der Rohe designed the Lemke House, a one-storey residential building with a simple brick façade, for the manufacturer couple Lemke. The villa was completed in 1933 and is located in the Berlin district of Alt-Hohenschönhausen. Despite the client’s numerous specifications, Mies was able to implement his concept of flowing space, which sought to mediate between interior and exterior spaces and do away with a hierarchical spatial structure. The couple had to leave the property when Berlin was captured by the Red Army in 1945. During the GDR era, it was used as a canteen and washhouse for Stasi employees and was only renovated between 2000 and 2002 after the fall of the Berlin Wall. As an exhibition pavilion for modern and contemporary art, the Lemke House, today called the Mies van der Rohe House, is a miniature jewel: the simple L-shaped building lies in an idyllic property on the Obersee and offers Mies van der Rohe fans a unique spatial experience. The original furnishings designed by Mies and his colleague Lilly Reich can be viewed in the Kunstgewerbemuseum (Museum of Decorative Arts) in Berlin.

Hufeisensiedlung

The “Horseshoe Estate” in Britz was one of the first social housing projects and is considered a pioneer of housing estates throughout Germany. Built between 1925 and 1933 on the site of the former Britz Manor according to plans by Bruno Taut and Martin Wagner, its central building structure forms a horseshoe-shaped housing block. A total of 679 terraced houses with private gardens and integrated green spaces were also built in different construction phases and were to form a striking contrast to the poor living conditions of the inner city at the time. As was typical for Taut’s designs, the buildings followed a rhythm of projections and recesses and, above all, used colour as an independent architectural element: white, yellow red and turquoise green in constantly varying combinations in each construction phase. A special attraction in the housing estate is “Tautes Heim”: the terraced house can be rented by a maximum of four people and is furnished in the design style of the 1920s, enabling you to journey back in time to the Bauhaus.

Siemensstadt

The Siemensstadt housing estate is located in what is now Berlin’s Charlottenburg-Nord district and primarily provided the workers at the neighbouring Siemens plants with new housing. Walter Gropius, Otto Bartning, Fred Forbát, Hugo Häring, and Rudolf Henning worked on it between 1929 and 1931, erecting buildings in various design languages. They created a multi-faceted ensemble that revealed the entire spectrum of New Objectivity. This

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included the dissolution of rigid urban row buildings, the integration of nature, and the creation of green spaces. The architectural diversity of classical modernism presented here is unique. The Siemensstadt housing estate was planned under the direction of Martin Wagner, head of the municipal planning and building control office, and the urban development concept of Hans Scharoun as a social alternative to the Berlin tenements. The overriding aim of the design was to promote relaxation and the quality of life of the workers. Hans Scharoun's building in the estate became known as the "Panzerkreuzer" (armoured cruiser) because of its ship-like appearance. The many open spaces and green areas invite you to take a walk through the architectural monuments of classical modernism. Since parts of the housing estate were destroyed in the war, architectural reconstructions and extensions were carried out by Scharoun and Hans Hoffmann in the 1950s.

Erich Hamann chocolate factory

The original interior furnishings of the Erich Hamann chocolate factory shop in Berlin-Wilmersdorf have been preserved. A visit to this gem from 1928 is worth your while. Charismatic Bauhaus artist Johannes Itten designed the interior of the shop over 90 years ago. It is still in its original condition, with the rhythmic arrangement of glass display cases standing out from the wall cladding of the sales room. The chocolate is still made according to the old recipe and also comes in the same packaging decorated with the creator's slogan. The "Best of the Best" for fans of the Borcken chocolate invented by Erich Hamann himself or the bitter thin bars that were specially developed for the figure-conscious girls from boarding schools in the neighbourhood. The fine chocolates and pralines can still be purchased today, almost exclusively in specialist shops. It is the only Hamann shop to have survived the war.

ADGB Trade Union School

Located to the north-east of Berlin's city limits, Bernau is home to the ADGB Trade Union School; a Bauhaus monument that was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2017. The building was occupied by the then General German Trade Union Confederation in 1930 and served as the first central trade union educational institution. Until its closure by the National Socialists, more than 4,000 trade union members attended training courses in occupational, economic and socio-political subject areas. The building contract was awarded to Hannes Meyer, who held the position of Director of the Bauhaus Dessau during the planning period of the ensemble. He worked on the ADGB Trade Union School together with Hans Wittwer, who at that time was Master of the Construction Department at the Bauhaus and Head of the Construction Office, to realise a prime example of an articulated structure that is uniquely integrated into the surrounding landscape. Today, the ensemble has been faithfully restored.

Four major events and a variety of smaller ones accompany the Bauhaus year

The opening festival will be held at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin from 16–24 January 2019, with dance, theatre, film and immersive art. The programme features over 25 productions with more than 100 international artists such as Robert Wilson, Michael Wollny,

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and Richard Siegal, who grapple with the linguistic, musical, and performative experiments of the former Bauhaus. <https://www.visitberlin.de/de/event/100-jahre-bauhaus-das-eroeffnungsfestival>

The “Bauhaus Imaginista” exhibition in the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (House of World Cultures) is open from 15 March to 10 June 2019. Four exhibitions, which will be shown on several continents, will be united to provide an overall picture in the Haus der Kulturen. The topic is the effect of the Bauhaus ideas on modernist movements around the world. <https://www.visitberlin.de/de/event/bauhaus-imaginista>

During the “Bauhaus Week Berlin” from 31 August to 8 September 2019, cultural projects will enable you to experience the ideas of the Bauhaus movement in public spaces. The Long Night of the Museums, shop-window exhibitions, and pavilions invite you to go on a journey through modernism. <https://www.visitberlin.de/de/event/bauhauswoche-berlin-2019>

The “original bauhaus” exhibition is a collaboration between the Bauhaus Archive and the Berlinische Galerie. From 6 September 2019 to 27 January 2020, 14 case histories based on 14 original objects and their reception will be showcased. For more information, see the *Bauhaus Agents*. <https://www.visitberlin.de/de/event/original-bauhaus>

Further events in 2019

Photographs of Bauhaus architecture around the world by Jean Molitor in the Willy Brandt Haus. 15 Jan to 14 Mar 2019: <https://www.visitberlin.de/en/event/bau1haus-die-moderne-der-welt-bau1haus-modern-world>

An exhibition on photography in the Bauhaus will be on show at the Museum of Photography. 12 Apr to 25 Aug 2019: <https://www.visitberlin.de/de/event/bauhaus-und-die-fotografie-0>

“Chicago Grid” displays work from the students of László Moholy-Nagy in the Galerie Kornfeld. 17 Jan to 12 Apr 2019 <https://www.galeriekornfeld.com/exhibitions>

At the end of January 2019, the Bröhan Museum will present an exhibition on the English ‘Arts and Crafts’ movement, the predecessor to the Bauhaus. 24 Jan to 5 May 2019 <https://www.visitberlin.de/de/event/von-arts-and-crafts-zum-bauhaus-kunst-und-design-eine-neue-einheit>

An exhibition on photography in the Bauhaus in the Museum of Photography. 12 Apr to 25 Aug 2019 <https://www.visitberlin.de/de/event/bauhaus-und-die-fotografie-zum-neuen-sehen-der-gegenwartskunst>

The Kunstbibliothek (Art Library) at the Kulturforum will reconstruct an exhibition that László Moholy Nagy put on in Berlin in 1929 in which he summarised his teaching activities at the Bauhaus. 31 Aug to 15 Sep 2019 <https://www.visitberlin.de/de/event/laszlo-moholy-nagy-und-die-neue-typografie>

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Bauhaus and Shopping

You can purchase art and photography from the Bauhaus period in the Galerie Kicken (photography from classical modernism to the present day), and in the Galerie Berinson (masterpieces of the 20th century, including Bauhaus) <http://www.kicken-gallery.com/>; <http://www.berinson.de/artists/>

You can view vintage Bauhaus furniture at Zeitlos, Stilspiel, works berlin, wbf-berlin, aiberlin - Art + Industry, and the Bauhaus Archive store <http://www.zeitlos-berlin.de/>; <http://stilspiel.de/>; <https://worksberlin.com/>; <http://wbf-berlin.com/>; <http://www.aiberlin.de/>; <https://www.bauhaus-shop.de/>

Guided Bauhaus tours and excursions

art:berlin: public Bauhaus tours on fixed dates

https://www.bauhaus.de/de/programm/31_bauhaus_touren/ Contact: info@artberlin-online.de

GoArt!: customised tours and excursions in Berlin, Dessau, Weimar, and Bernau

<https://goart-berlin.de/tours-travel/> Contact: contact@goart-berlin.de

Ticket B: customised tours and multi-day programmes in Berlin, Dessau, Weimar, and Bernau

<https://www.ticket-b.de/architekturfuehrungen-touren-architektur-berlin.html/> Contact: info@ticket-b.de

You can find more information and photos on the homepage:

<https://www.visitberlin.de/en/events-100-years-bauhaus>

<https://about.visitberlin.de/en/press/press-releases/bauhaus-100>

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