

Bauhaus Dessau

Press release

The Bauhaus  
Museum Dessau  
opens its doors

The exhibition “Versuchsstätte Bauhaus” tells the story of the famous school in Dessau

Press contact

Ute König  
T +49-340-6508-238  
[presse@bauhaus-dessau.de](mailto:presse@bauhaus-dessau.de)

Bauhaus Dessau Foundation  
Gropiusallee 38  
06846 Dessau-Roßlau  
[bauhaus-dessau.de](http://bauhaus-dessau.de)  
[facebook.com/bauhausdessau](https://facebook.com/bauhausdessau)  
[twitter.com/gropiusallee](https://twitter.com/gropiusallee)

Dessau-Roßlau,  
September 2019

*The exhibition at the Bauhaus Museum Dessau is titled Versuchsstätte Bauhaus. The Collection. It features over 1,000 exhibits and tells the story of the famous school in Dessau. It describes Bauhaus as a vibrant place where people taught and learned, conducted artistic experiments and worked on industrial prototypes.*

With a total of about 49,000 objects, the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation’s collection is the second largest Bauhaus collection world-wide – and one of the newest: The first purchase was made in 1976 when the Bauhaus Building was reopened as “Wissenschaftlich-Kulturelles Zentrum” in the former GDR. Since then, new objects have regularly been added. Student works, teaching notes, drafts and prototypes from the workshops in particular define the character of the collection.

For this reason, the exhibition *Versuchsstätte Bauhaus* does not focus primarily on the famed design icons and the masters, but rather the school and the students: the daily reality of learning and teaching between the poles of creative design and industrial prototype production, artistic experiment and economic pressure, educational institution and emancipatory aspiration. The individual thematic sections concentrate on the teaching concept and the instruction provided, on the Bauhaus as a versatile “testing ground”, as a partner that cooperated with industry, and as a bustling and imaginative communicator.

The exhibition derives the Bauhaus design ideas with which we are so familiar today from the historical context, and at the same time does not omit mentioning the crises and constraining factors under which the epoch-making school fought to survive. In a climate of political change and cultural uncertainty, the Bauhaus community, a world-wide network, questioned the customary conventions of teaching, coexistence and gender relations. Similarly, in Dessau the school did not receive unequivocal support, but also faced criticism. *Versuchsstätte Bauhaus* highlights the many conflicts involved in the tussle to ensure art and design gained social relevance.

For the exhibition *Versuchsstätte Bauhaus* in the *Black Box* of the Bauhaus Museum Dessau, curated by Regina Bittner, Dorothee Brill and Wolfgang Thöner, the Berlin office *chezweitz* developed a scenography of changing modes of showing. It makes the complexity of the Bauhaus school a spatial experience.

Bauhaus Dessau

10 Objects and their place in the  
Versuchsstätte

Press release

The Bauhaus  
Museum Dessau  
opens its doors

The exhibition "Versuchsstätte  
Bauhaus" tells the story of the  
famous school in Dessau

Press contact

Ute König  
T +49-340-6508-238  
[presse@bauhaus-dessau.de](mailto:presse@bauhaus-dessau.de)

Bauhaus Dessau Foundation  
Gropiusallee 38  
06846 Dessau-Roßlau  
[bauhaus-dessau.de](http://bauhaus-dessau.de)  
[facebook.com/bauhausdessau](https://www.facebook.com/bauhausdessau)  
[twitter.com/gropiusallee](https://twitter.com/gropiusallee)

Dessau-Roßlau,  
September 2019



Breuer, Marcel (design): Club Chair B3  
1927 – Steel, chrome-plated with screws; canvas

To mark the opening of the Bauhaus Building on December 4, 1926 in Dessau the first magazine of the avant-garde school featured a filmstrip of Marcel Breuer: "Vom Afrikanischen Stuhl zur Luftsäule" (From the African Chair to a Column of Air). The film strip not only summarized the evolution of the young Breuer's chair designs but also set out his agenda for a new object culture. "It will get better from year to year, and in the end you will sit on a column of air." is the ironic comment that Breuer used as a subtitle for this visualization that is a cross between an advertisement and a film script. The Club Chair replaces the comfortable upholstery with a tightly stretched canvas seat. "The sled base enhances flexibility. This metal furniture item should be nothing but a necessary tool of contemporary life," Breuer wrote in an essay dated 1928.

The B3 Chair, which has since conquered the cosmos of design classics, accompanies visitors through the exhibition: It stands in the area *Bauhaus as Experiment* as an example of the search for mobile furniture items for modern nomads, in *Factory as Horizon* as a prototype for serial furniture production and in the *Exhibition as Platform* as an internationally exhibited item that contributed to the canonization of the Bauhaus.

> Bauhaus as Experiment > Factory as Horizon > Exhibition as Platform

Bauhaus Dessau

Press release

The Bauhaus  
Museum Dessau  
opens its doors

The exhibition "Versuchsstätte  
Bauhaus" tells the story of the  
famous school in Dessau

Press contact

Ute König  
T +49-340-6508-238  
[presse@bauhaus-dessau.de](mailto:presse@bauhaus-dessau.de)

Bauhaus Dessau Foundation  
Gropiusallee 38  
06846 Dessau-Roßlau  
[bauhaus-dessau.de](http://bauhaus-dessau.de)  
[facebook.com/bauhausdessau](https://facebook.com/bauhausdessau)  
[twitter.com/gropiusallee](https://twitter.com/gropiusallee)

Dessau-Roßlau,  
September 2019



Oskar Schlemmer: Split Half Figure to the Right  
1923 – Gouache, pencil on paper

Oskar Schlemmer included this gouache as a prize in the tombola at the *Metallisches Fest* (Metal Festival) on February 9, 1929 and it was won by Gunta Stözl. This is documented by the date on the rear. The subject is like a variation on a theme. Ten years previously Schlemmer already produced compositions exploring a type of human figure. Now Schlemmer the artist transferred this search for a universally valid type that transcends the individual to the three dimensional.

In multimedia experiments in the stage class that he taught at Bauhaus Dessau he explored the new relationships between space, movement, body and sound and in the process was a lasting inspiration for students like Xanti Schawinsky, who later taught at Black Mountain College.

> School as Testing Ground, Student-Teacher-Pairs



Bauhaus Dessau

Press release

The Bauhaus  
Museum Dessau  
opens its doors

The exhibition "Versuchsstätte  
Bauhaus" tells the story of the  
famous school in Dessau

Press contact

Ute König  
T +49-340-6508-238  
[presse@bauhaus-dessau.de](mailto:presse@bauhaus-dessau.de)

Bauhaus Dessau Foundation  
Gropiusallee 38  
06846 Dessau-Roßlau  
[bauhaus-dessau.de](http://bauhaus-dessau.de)  
[facebook.com/bauhausdessau](https://www.facebook.com/bauhausdessau)  
[twitter.com/gropiusallee](https://twitter.com/gropiusallee)

Dessau-Roßlau,  
September 2019

5  
of  
11



Grete Reichardt: Bauhaus dress

Around 1928 – Wool with white satin weave, rayon; plain weave

It was not the prime task of the weaving workshop to produce fabrics for garments. The focus was not on fashionable clothing but rather on practical, durable fabrics. But students like Grete Reichert and Lis Volger also made clothes from the fabrics they wove.

This rare Bauhaus dress is highly individual evidence of the work of the Bauhaus student Grete Reichardt. She took her artistic inspiration for it from her classes with Wassily Kandinsky, translating his abstract ideas into woven textures.

> School as Testing Ground, Student-Teacher-Pairs

Bauhaus Dessau

Press release

The Bauhaus  
Museum Dessau  
opens its doors

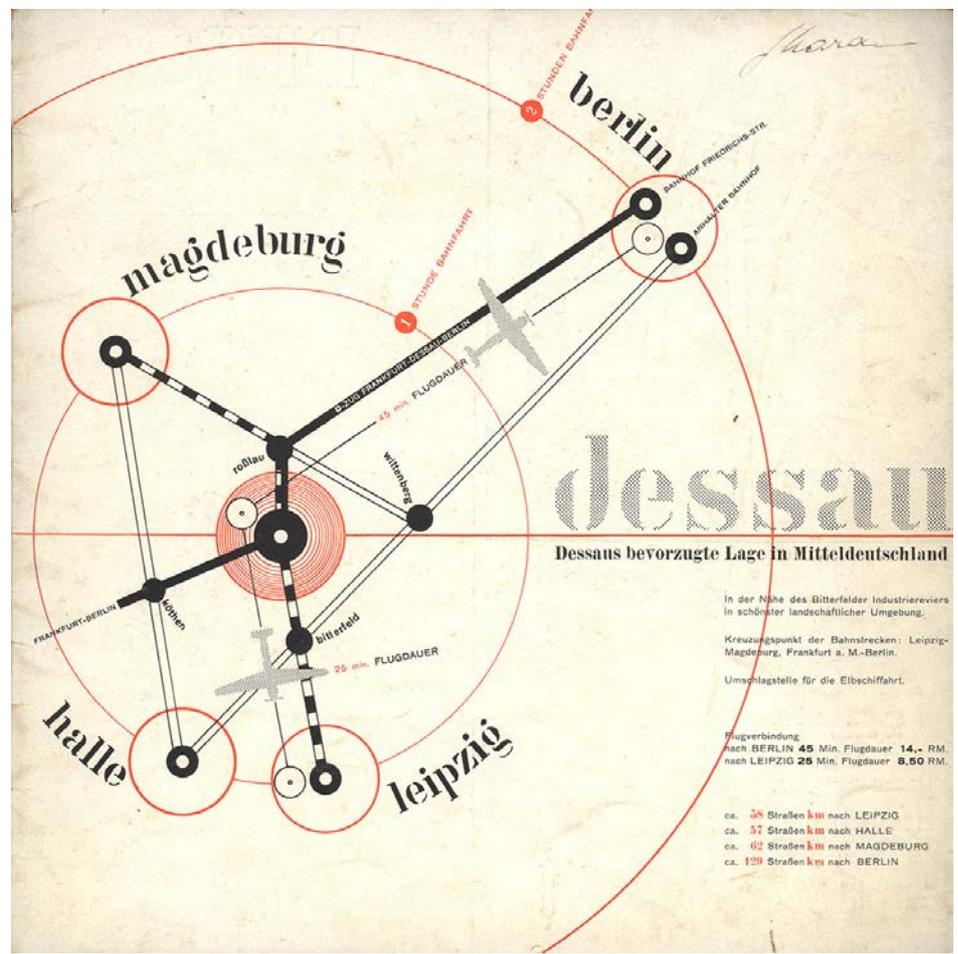
The exhibition “Versuchsstätte  
Bauhaus” tells the story of the  
famous school in Dessau

Press contact

Ute König  
T +49-340-6508-238  
[presse@bauhaus-dessau.de](mailto:presse@bauhaus-dessau.de)

Bauhaus Dessau Foundation  
Gropiusallee 38  
06846 Dessau-Roßlau  
[bauhaus-dessau.de](http://bauhaus-dessau.de)  
[facebook.com/bauhausdessau](https://facebook.com/bauhausdessau)  
[twitter.com/gropiusallee](https://twitter.com/gropiusallee)

Dessau-Roßlau,  
September 2019



Joost Schmidt (design), Ludwig Grote (texts): Dessau – On the Ground of Old Culture – Lively Creation of the Present. Gemeinnütziger Verein Dessau e. V., dept. tourist information office, Dessau (editor) 1931 – letterpress on glossy paper; wire stitching

The fact that the “modern city of Dessau” developed on the “ground of old culture” was a phrase Joost Schmidt used in his advertising brochure designed in 1931. It is not only a special document of the collaboration between the City of Dessau and the Bauhaus, its text was written by State Conservator Ludwig Grote, who in 1925 played a major role in getting the Bauhaus accepted in Dessau. In its graphic language and composition it is also a testimony to the Bauhaus printing and advertising workshop that was headed by Joost Schmidt in addition to the sculpture workshop.

In *School as Testing Ground* Schmidt comes together with one of his most talented students, the painter, architect and designer Franz Ehrlich as *Pioneers of Sculptural Thinking*.

> School as Testing Ground, Student-Teacher-Pairs

## Bauhaus Dessau

Press release

### The Bauhaus Museum Dessau opens its doors

The exhibition "Versuchsstätte  
Bauhaus" tells the story of the  
famous school in Dessau

#### Press contact

Ute König  
T +49-340-6508-238  
[presse@bauhaus-dessau.de](mailto:presse@bauhaus-dessau.de)

Bauhaus Dessau Foundation  
Gropiusallee 38  
06846 Dessau-Roßlau  
[bauhaus-dessau.de](http://bauhaus-dessau.de)  
[facebook.com/bauhausdessau](https://www.facebook.com/bauhausdessau)  
[twitter.com/gropiusallee](https://twitter.com/gropiusallee)

Dessau-Roßlau,  
September 2019



7  
of  
11

Marcel Breuer (design), Bauhaus Dessau carpentry workshop (manufacture):  
Lady's dressing table ti 60 from the Moholy-Nagy House  
1926 – wood, varnished

Only little now remains of the interiors of the Masters' Houses, whose furnishings were generally produced in the Bauhaus workshops. In particular the Director's House and the semi-detached house occupied by László Moholy-Nagy until 1928 served as showcases for modernist living. The furnishings designed for the houses were more like prototypes.

The lady's dressing table ti 60 designed by Marcel Breuer that cites wooden furniture he developed between 1924 and 1927 and a selection of which can also be seen in the exhibition, was originally intended to go into serial production. In *Factory as Horizon* this furniture is exemplary of the efforts of the Bauhaus workshops to act as "laboratories for industry" (Walter Gropius). It was here that craftsmanship encountered factory, experiment came up against assembly-line work, artistic one-off against industrial mass product.

> *Factory as Horizon*, Apartment

Bauhaus Dessau

Press release

The Bauhaus  
Museum Dessau  
opens its doors

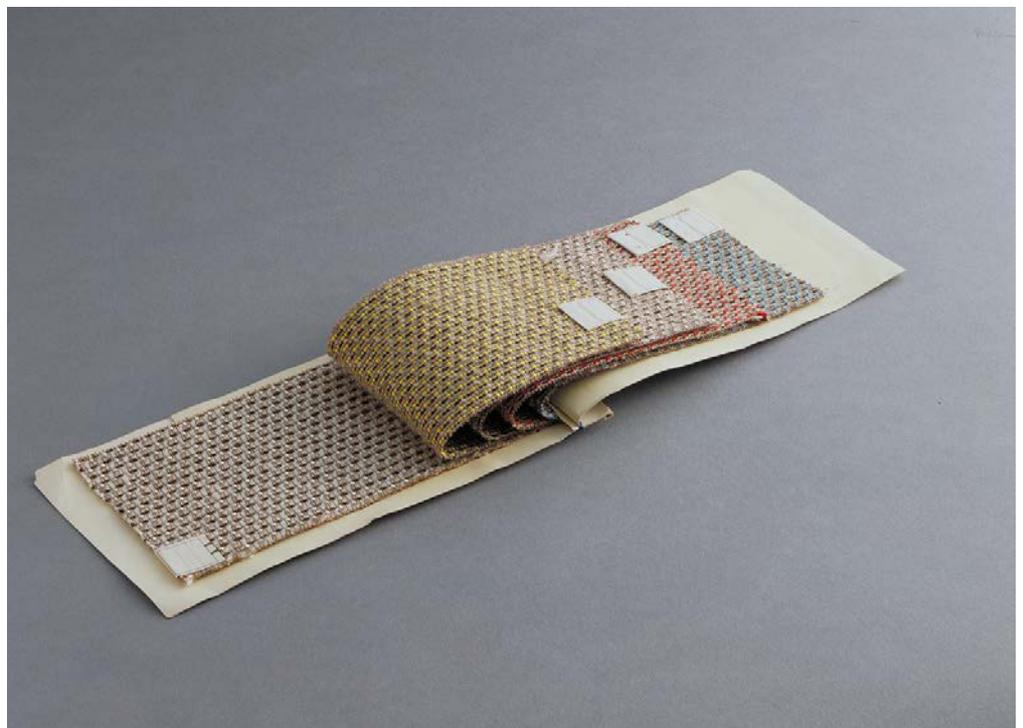
The exhibition “Versuchsstätte  
Bauhaus” tells the story of the  
famous school in Dessau

Press contact

Ute König  
T +49-340-6508-238  
[presse@bauhaus-dessau.de](mailto:presse@bauhaus-dessau.de)

Bauhaus Dessau Foundation  
Gropiusallee 38  
06846 Dessau-Roßlau  
[bauhaus-dessau.de](http://bauhaus-dessau.de)  
[facebook.com/bauhausdessau](https://www.facebook.com/bauhausdessau)  
[twitter.com/gropiusallee](https://twitter.com/gropiusallee)

Dessau-Roßlau,  
September 2019



Gunta Stölzl (design), Bauhaus Dessau weaving workshop (manufacture):  
Fabrics for furniture covers, sample book  
1925 – 1928

Not “pictures made of wool” (Gunta Stölzl) but “fabrics for the home” (Otti Berger)! That was the agenda of Gunta Stölzl, who took over as head of the weaving class after a joint revolt in it.

The modern Bauhaus weaving workshop saw its experimental work as a contribution to the development of modern furnishing fabrics: it explored new combinations of materials and textile structures for stretch covers, curtain material and similar fabrics that could be manufactured industrially. The sample book comprises machine woven production samples for furniture cover fabrics in six colors and testifies to the efforts the weaving workshop made to have its produce accepted by the textile industry.

> Factory as Horizon, Apartment, Textile

8  
of  
11

Bauhaus Dessau

Press release

The Bauhaus  
Museum Dessau  
opens its doors

The exhibition “Versuchsstätte  
Bauhaus” tells the story of the  
famous school in Dessau

Press contact

Ute König  
T +49-340-6508-238  
[presse@bauhaus-dessau.de](mailto:presse@bauhaus-dessau.de)

Bauhaus Dessau Foundation  
Gropiusallee 38  
06846 Dessau-Roßlau  
[bauhaus-dessau.de](http://bauhaus-dessau.de)  
[facebook.com/bauhausdessau](https://www.facebook.com/bauhausdessau)  
[twitter.com/gropiusallee](https://twitter.com/gropiusallee)

Dessau-Roßlau,  
September 2019



9  
of  
11

Marianne Brandt, Helmut Schulze (design), Körting & Mathiesen AG, Leipzig (manufacture): Kandem dual cylindrical lantern No. 666 P 40  
1928 – brass, nickel-plated; opal glass

In February 1928 the head of the metal workshop László Moholy-Nagy visited Körting & Mathiesen (Kandem), a manufacturer of luminaires in Leipzig, to discuss collaboration with the Bauhaus Dessau. It marked the start of one of the school's most successful business relationships. In the document setting out design proposals that the company expects from Bauhaus Dessau, mention is also made of a pendant luminaire “that does not allow any dust to accumulate.”

The pendant lamp made from two different sized glass cylinders with “favorable light yield” can be traced back to a suggestion by Moholy-Nagy: In a letter to Walter Gropius dated 1935 Marianne Brandt mentions a collaboration with Helmut Schulze. The dual cylindrical lantern was soon part of the Kandem program and is exemplary for the 50,000 luminaire bodies based on Bauhaus designs the company sold up until 1931.

> Factory as Horizon, Apartment

Bauhaus Dessau

Press release

The Bauhaus  
Museum Dessau  
opens its doors

The exhibition “Versuchsstätte  
Bauhaus” tells the story of the  
famous school in Dessau

Press contact

Ute König  
T +49-340-6508-238  
[presse@bauhaus-dessau.de](mailto:presse@bauhaus-dessau.de)

Bauhaus Dessau Foundation  
Gropiusallee 38  
06846 Dessau-Roßlau  
[bauhaus-dessau.de](http://bauhaus-dessau.de)  
[facebook.com/bauhausdessau](https://www.facebook.com/bauhausdessau)  
[twitter.com/gropiusallee](https://twitter.com/gropiusallee)

Dessau-Roßlau,  
September 2019



10  
of  
11

Josef Albers (design), Bauhaus Dessau carpentry workshop (manufacture):  
Armchair ti 244 (from the Müller apartment, Dessau)  
um 1928 – Ash, bent, veneered, stained; horsehair fabric  
(renewed); metal, nickel-plated

A wall chart to demonstrate how easily the armchair ti 244 by Josef Albers could be assembled and dismantled featured as part of an exhibition on Bauhaus managed by Hannes Meyer that traveled to Zürich, Mannheim, Basel and Breslau (now Wrocław, Poland). Prior to that the armchair was an exhibit in the *Volkswohnung* (people’s flat) – a show flat with two rooms, kitchen and bathroom and largely with wooden furniture – that was displayed in 1929 in Grassimuseum Leipzig.

The Bauhaus fitting-out workshops under Hannes Meyer relied on inexpensive materials and simple designs to develop home furnishings that met the demands for minimization and standardization of the apartment layouts. The ti 244 shown in *Factory as Horizon* belonged to the Müller family from Dessau, who ordered the chair from the Bauhaus workshops along with other standardized items of furniture.

> Factory as Horizon, Apartment

Bauhaus Dessau

Press release

The Bauhaus  
Museum Dessau  
opens its doors

The exhibition "Versuchsstätte  
Bauhaus" tells the story of the  
famous school in Dessau

Press contact

Ute König  
T +49-340-6508-238  
[presse@bauhaus-dessau.de](mailto:presse@bauhaus-dessau.de)

Bauhaus Dessau Foundation  
Gropiusallee 38  
06846 Dessau-Roßlau  
[bauhaus-dessau.de](http://bauhaus-dessau.de)  
[facebook.com/bauhausdessau](https://facebook.com/bauhausdessau)  
[twitter.com/gropiusallee](https://twitter.com/gropiusallee)

Dessau-Roßlau,  
September 2019

11  
of  
11



Elsa Thiemann: Photograms (wallpaper designs), No. 22 Feathers  
1930/31 – Vintage Prints; silver gelatin paper, white ink, collaged; mounted  
on card.

Elsa Thiemann took part in the competition for the wallpaper firm Rasch organized by Hannes Meyer. She arranged feathers, leaves and blossoms on light-sensitive paper to create decorative elements. Her designs are collaged photograms made using plants, string or blobs of paint. However, they did not really correspond to the Bauhaus preference for light colors and small, subdued patterns.

Elsa Thiemann was one of the most talented students in the photography workshop that from its establishment in 1929 was headed by Walter Peterhans. Like Peterhans she produced portrait and object shots that were highly detailed, but also experimented with alienations, structures, and occasionally dabbled with abstraction.

> School as Testing Ground, Student-Teacher-Pairs