

Lecture Notes

Syllabus 2/28 – BAUHAUS

WEIMAR – 1919

DESSAU – 1926

BERLIN – 1932

Susie's Notes from VIDEO:

Bauhaus tried to find a way to deal with life on an aesthetic level.

- **It's contribution:** developing a visual science.
- Born out of catastrophe. **Gropius** a WWII soldier. Wanted an ideal school that would change world. Where machine would be tamed for the benefit of mankind.
 - **His Manifesto:**
 - Return to craft!
 - Abolish class distinctions between artist and craftsman!

I. WEIMAR: founded in 1919 by Walter Gropius

Revolutionary workshop-based training: artists and craftsmen as one

Teachers: master craftsmen/artists

Students: apprentices

First time design is taught

Stressed texture and 3-D structure

Long-haired radical art students attracted

Prototypes emerged for mass production

Emphasized color and geometry

Blue circle

Red square

Yellow triangle

School NOT popular in Weimar – too radical; Art became a political football.

Klee –

Kandinsky –

abstract painting

no nature!

Itten –

metaphysical dreamer.

There only 3 yrs.

Taught compulsory foundation courses

Oskar Schlemmer –

- **Theater department**



- **Triadic Ballet study – 1921 - Schlemmer transformed performers into abstracted, kinetic sculptures. His collage, Study for the Triadic Ballet, demonstrates his concept of the stage as an abstract, gridded space through which performers moved to mathematically precise choreography.**

- **Students experimented with backgrounds, costumes**



- **Abstract Figure – bronze – 1923 – sculpture – Schlemmer is seeking to express same clarity of form and geometric precision he brought to his theatrical designs. Gleaming, streamlined.**

Moholy-Nagy –

- Took over in 1923 and taught basic course with Albers
- **Replaced Itten’s mysticism with mystique of the machine**



- **LIGHT SPACE MODULATOR – 1922- Moholy-Nagy’s kinetic sculpture of steel, plastic, wood w/ electric motor. Demonstrates his expression of light, space, and motion.**

Albers –

1st graduate to teach there
Drove the “madness” out of young people, forcing them to think clearly

II. DESSAU - 1926:

- moved to Dessau when Nazi's took over Weimar
- **opened school in modern glass building, 1926**



- **Shop Block, Bauhaus, Dessau -- by Gropius**
 - **EPITOME OF INTERNATIONAL STYLE:**
 - **Curtain walls**
 - **Non-load bearing walls**
 - **Form follows function:**
 - **Windows allow natural light and air**
 - **Simple and efficient; economy of space**
 - **Interior space flexible and moveable to be changed if needed**
 - **Repetition of identical units**
 - **Exterior form reflects construction of interior**
 - **Allows for integration of exterior space with interior space; integration with surroundings**
- Emphasized functional simplicity
- Handicraft yielded to design for manufacture.
- Wood became metal:



- **Vassily Chair** – by Breuer – metal, tubular, modern, icon of the age

Photography – new means of visual communication

Typography – simplified. No serifs!

Music – modern music, concerts, masked performances of ballets

Architecture - designed workers bldgs residences.

Hannes Meyer –

new Bauhaus head for 2 years – communist leftist
removed in 1930
Replaced by Van der Rohe

Mies van der Rohe –

Architecture dominated.
Political activity banned.

Nazis closed it down
Moved to Berlin

III. BERLIN- 4/11/33

school housed in depressing factory
teachers closed it for good.

TO AMERICA: (many came to Chicago)

Gropius
Van der Rohe
Moholy-Nagy
Albers

McClintock's discussion post-film:

Most important period of Bauhaus: DESSAU. Gropius still there, and Itten lost battle between mystical, spiritual side and more production side.

- **Moholy Nagy** wrote New Typography (movement about typefaces) but in reading he is talking about **prototypes/archetypes** not actual typefaces.
 - **“Nothing is as beautiful as when form follows function.”**
Standardized prototypes/archetypes for mass production creates form following function and true industrial beauty for a new age.
- **Gropius Manifesto**
 - has quote about new school **“rising forth like a crystal vision of a new faith”**. **“It's all in the building”**: architecture is highest goal but not to the exclusion of the other arts. All other arts are integral to this ultimate expression which is architecture. Painters, designers, etc. all come together in the ultimate goal which is architecture.
 - **Also says there's no such thing as a professional artist. “The artist is nothing but an exalted craftsman.”** Talking about the idea that artists are not separate from craftsmen. They are all integral, working toward same goal which is building a future.

Bauhaus NOT arts and crafts movement (making things by hand.) IT'S THE OPPOSITE of that. **Bauhaus intent was twofold:**

- **design things that were beautiful (to make the world a better place) and**
- **make things intended for mass production (to make art accessible to everyone)**