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Bauhaus: Art as Life

Barbican Art Gallery, Barbican Centre, UK

Media View, 10am – 1pm, Wednesday 2 May
3 May – 12 August 2012

Bauhaus: Art as Life is produced in co-operation with Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin / Museum für Gestaltung, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau and Klassik Stiftung Weimar

The exhibition is supported by tp bennett, The Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, The Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation and The Henry Moore Foundation

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Exploring the world's most famous modern art and design school, ***Bauhaus: Art as Life*** is the biggest Bauhaus exhibition in the UK in over 40 years. From its avant-garde arts and crafts beginnings the Bauhaus shifted towards a more radical model of learning uniting art and technology. A driving force behind Modernism, it further sought to change society in the aftermath of World War 1, to find a new way of living. This major new Barbican Art Gallery show presents the pioneering and diverse artistic production that make up the school's turbulent fourteen-year history from 1919 to 1933 and delves into the subjects at the heart of the Bauhaus – art, design, people, society and culture. ***Bauhaus: Art as Life*** opens at Barbican Art Gallery on 3 May 2012.

Bringing together more than 400 works, the show features a rich array of painting, sculpture, architecture, film, photography, furniture, graphics, product design, textiles, ceramics and theatre by such Bauhaus masters as **Josef Albers, Herbert Bayer, Marianne Brandt, Marcel Breuer, Walter Gropius, Johannes Itten, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Hannes Meyer, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, László Moholy-Nagy, Oskar Schlemmer and Gunta Stölzl** and students including **Anni Albers, T. Lux Feininger, Kurt Kranz, Xanti Schawinsky and Alma Siedhoff-Buscher**. Set in a dynamic installation designed by award-winning architects Carmody Groarke with graphic designers APFEL, Barbican Art Gallery is transformed into a series of dramatic and intimate spaces. Loosely chronological and arranged thematically, the exhibition celebrates the life and spirit of the Bauhaus – one that is characterised by experimentation, collaboration and play.

Kate Bush, Head of Art Galleries, Barbican Centre, said: *The Bauhaus was an inescapable force in the development of modern visual culture, whose impact was felt around the world from Tel Aviv to Tokyo. The Bauhaus was inspiring not just because of the extraordinary group of brilliant, visionary people who worked and made art there, but because it was fuelled by an idealism and a commitment to creativity and experiment that remains ever more relevant today. I am delighted that Barbican Art Gallery is staging this major exhibition, which is itself the product of the creativity, scholarship and imagination of a group of talented people at the Barbican and at the Bauhaus archives.*

Bauhaus: Art as Life traces the life of the school from its founding by Walter Gropius in Weimar in 1919, and its expressionist-influenced roots, to the embrace of art and industry and subsequent move to a purpose-built campus in Dessau in 1925 under the direction of Gropius and then Hannes Meyer. Finally it looks to the Bauhaus' brief period in Berlin, led by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and its dramatic closure in 1933, under pressure by the Nazis.

Significant works in the exhibition include Moholy-Nagy's *Construction in Enamel 1 (EM1)*, 1923, the largest in a series of three famously known as the 'Telephone Pictures'. Moholy-Nagy commissioned the work from an enamel sign factory by communicating the co-ordinates of a drawing on graph paper over the telephone. In Kandinsky's *Circles in a Circle*, 1923, two bands of colour intersect in a thick black circle containing 26 overlapping circles of varying colours and sizes. Also on show is Paul Klee's exquisite watercolour *Doppelturm*, 1923, with its geometric forms in pink and green hues. Painted during his time at the Bauhaus Weimar it exemplifies his fascination with abstraction and colour theory. Klee's influence on students is especially evident in textiles by Anni Albers and Gunta Stölzl. For example, Stölzl's magnificent two metre-high wall hanging, *Fünf Chöre (Five Choirs)*, 1928, on show in the UK for the first time, shows technical precision, a love of colour and musicality. It is woven using the Jacquard technique, a mechanical process that offers unlimited variety in pattern-making.

Works from every area of Bauhaus study are presented, alongside key pieces completed by Bauhaus masters in their individual practices. Early student experiments in metal, wood, ceramic and textile are a highlight and include the now-iconic tea-infuser by Marianne Brandt; Wilhelm Wagenfeld's MT8 table lamp and Anni Albers' 1924 wall hanging, produced as her diploma project. Experimenting with new materials, production processes and engaging with industry was actively encouraged at the Bauhaus. For example, Marcel Breuer's tubular steel chair, *Club Chair (Wassily Armchair)*, 1925-6, inspired by the frame of his bicycle, was designed to be dismantled into nine parts for economical transportation. Conceived for mass production, light, and easy to clean it was the 'necessary apparatus of modern living'. Experiments in form, colour, light and space – from works made for the pioneering preliminary course to projects devised for stage and film – reveal the breadth of ideas explored throughout the school's history.

To give visitors a greater insight into everyday life at the Bauhaus, the exhibition presents a range of unique material reflecting the Bauhaus community, from party and festival invitations to hand-made gifts, paintings commemorating special occasions and intimate photographs. For Paul Klee's 50th birthday, students including Anni Albers, hired a local Junkers aircraft and dropped gifts from the sky in an angel-like package over his house. Klee reflects on this exuberant gesture in his highly personal painting *Gifts for J*, 1928. Throughout the Bauhaus years, students and teachers socialised together, frequently throwing parties, festivals and gatherings – captured in black & white photographs, wearing handmade costumes and surreal masks, revealing that playful experimentation went beyond the classroom.

Other highlights include an examination of the school's architectural legacy, from the first sites of experimental building, realised in the little-known Sommerfeld House in 1920-2 and the prototype house, *Haus am Horn*, 1923, to Gropius' designs for the now infamous school and master houses in Dessau. Residents included Klee, Kandinsky, Schlemmer and Georg Muche. Other innovative projects range from the Törten Housing estate and the Federal School of the German Trade Union Federation, 1928-30, completed under Hannes Meyer's direction. The impact of Mies van der Rohe can be seen in some of the student projects on show, when, during the final years of the school, a more classical approach to teaching architecture was adopted.

Architects, artists, and designers in the exhibition include:

August **Agatz**, Marianne **Ahlfeld-Heymann**, Anni **Albers**, Josef **Albers**, Alfred **Arndt**, Gertrud **Arndt**, Theo **Ballmer**, Rudolf **Baschant**, Eugen **Batz**, Herbert **Bayer**, Irene **Bayer**, Max **Bill**, Robert **Binnemann**, Theodor **Bogler**, Heinrich-Siegfried **Bormann**, Alexander **Bortnyik**, Marianne **Brandt**, Hin **Bredendieck**, Marcel **Breuer**, Paul **Citroen**, Heinz **Clasing**, Hugo **Clasing**, Roman **Clemens**, Edmund **Collein**, Erich **Comeriner**, Erich **Consemüller**, Margarete **Dambeck**, Friedl **Dicker**, Otto **Dorfner**, Franz **Ehrlich**, Friedrich Karl **Engemann**, Lyonel **Feininger**, T. Lux **Feininger**, Werner David **Feist**, Carl **Fieger**, Etel **Fodor**, Hans **Fricke**, Walter **Funkat**, Hermann **Gautel**, Albert **Gleizes**, Nathalie **Goncharova**, Werner **Graeff**, Walter **Gropius**, Josef **Hartwig**, Louis **Held**, Florence **Henri**, Toni **Hergt**, Karl **Hermann Haupt**, Wilhelm Jakob **Hess**, Ludwig **Hirschfeld-Mack**, Irene **Hoffmann**, Johannes **Itten**, Martin **Jahn**, Hedwig **Jungnick**, Wassily **Kandinsky**, Peter **Keler**, Felix **Klee**, Paul **Klee**, Walter **Köppe**, Kurt **Kranz**, Erich **Krause**, Max **Krehan**, Felix **Kube**, Fritz **Kuhr**, Hajnal **Lengyel-Pataky**, Otto **Lindig**, Heinz **Loew**, Eduard **Ludwig**, Rudolf **Lutz**, Friedrich **Marby**, Gerhard **Marcks**, Carl **Marx**, Adolf **Meyer**, Hannes **Meyer**, Lena **Meyer-Bergner**, Ludwig **Mies van der Rohe**, Takehiko **Mizutani**, Lucia **Moholy**, László **Moholy-Nagy**, Farkas **Molnár**, Georg **Muche**, Josef **Müller**, Theobald Emil **Müller-Hummel**, Johannes **Niegemann**,

Pius E **Pahl**, Gyula **Pap**, Alfred **Partikel**, Walter **Peterhans**, Walter **Puff**, Konrad **Püschel**, Hilde **Rantzsch**, Curt **Rehbein**, Lilly **Reich**, Grete **Reichardt**, Carl **Rogge**, Agnes **Roghé**, Karl Peter **Röhl**, Hajo **Rose**, Wolf **Rössger**, Reinhold **Rossig**, Alfred **Schäfter**, Xanti **Schawinsky**, Hinnerk **Scheper**, Fritz **Schleifer**, Oskar **Schlemmer**, Joost **Schmidt**, Kurt **Schmidt**, Ernst **Schneider**, Eberhard **Schrammen**, Fritz **Schreiber**, Lothar **Schreyer**, Herbert **Schürmann**, Naum **Slutzky**, Gunta **Stölzl**, Wolfgang **Tümpel**, Monica Bella **Ullmann (later Broner)**, Otto **Umbehr (Umbo)**, Charlotte **Voepel-Neujahr**, Hans **Volger**, Lis **Volger**, Toni **von Haken-Schrammen**, Wilhelm **Wagenfeld**, Andor **Weininger**, Otto **Werner**, Margarete **Willers**, Hans **Wittwer**, Anni **Wottitz**, Iwao **Yamawaki**, Werner **Zimmermann**.

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Notes to Editors

Press Information

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Public Information

0845 120 7550, www.barbican.org.uk/artgallery

Barbican Art Gallery, London

Daily 11am–8pm, Wed 11am–6pm, every Thurs LATE until 10pm

Tickets: Standard £10 online/£12 on the door, Concessions £7 online/£8 on the door

Secondary school (groups of ten or more) £6, Under 12s free

Red members: unlimited free entry for member + guest

Orange members: Unlimited free entry for member

Yellow members: 30% off which is £7 online/£8.40 on the door

Exhibition

Bauhaus: Art as Life is a Barbican Art Gallery exhibition produced in co-operation with Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin / Museum für Gestaltung, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau and Klassik Stiftung Weimar. It is co-curated by Barbican curators, Catherine Ince and Lydia Yee, and designed by architects Carmody Groarke, creators of the Barbican Art Gallery's dramatic *The Surreal House* exhibition installation, working in collaboration with graphic designers A Practice For Everyday Life (APFEL). *Bauhaus: Art as Life* draws on the unparalleled collections of the Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin / Museum für Gestaltung, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau and Klassik Stiftung Weimar, as well as other major lending institutions including; Centre Georges Pompidou; Harvard Art Museum, Busch-Reisinger Museum, the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation; The Museum of Modern Art, New York and Zentrum Paul Klee.

Catalogue

Supported by the Ernst von Siemens Art Foundation

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue co-published by Barbican Art Gallery and Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König and designed by APFEL. It features newly commissioned texts from a range of leading scholars, critics and commentators such as Anja Baumhoff, Éva Forgács, Kathleen James-Chakraborty, Melissa Tringham, Philip Ursprung, Nicholas Fox Weber as well as Barbican and Bauhaus archive curators. The catalogue will also include a series of original writings by Bauhaus artists from previously published texts to personal correspondence.

Talks & Events

Supported by The Goethe-Institut London, The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, London, The Embassy of Switzerland in the United Kingdom and The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
As one of Europe's leading multi-arts centres the Barbican embraces the spectrum of Bauhaus arts throughout its parallel learning programme. A host of workshops, talks, films and performances accompanies a major Creative Learning initiative, the Bauhaus Summer School, an intensive two-week experimental school in July 2012 led by dynamic practitioners from a wide range of creative backgrounds.

For more information visit www.barbican.org.uk

Barbican Art Gallery Shop

The shop features an extensive range of books, stationery and design led home-ware, including original pieces designed by the Bauhaus as well as new products by contemporary designers inspired by the school. Collaborations with Ideas Tap and University of the Arts, London are also featured.

Barbican Art Gallery

One of the leading art spaces in the UK, Barbican Art Gallery presents the best of international visual art with a dynamic mix of art, architecture, design, fashion and photography. From acclaimed architects to Turner prize-winning artists, the Gallery exhibits innovators of the 20th and 21st centuries: key players who have shaped developments and stimulated change. The Curve is dedicated to a vibrant programme of new commissions, created by leading international artists in direct response to this distinctive gallery space.

Barbican Newsroom

All Barbican Centre press releases, news announcements and the Media Relations team's contact details are listed on our website at www.barbican.org.uk/news

About the Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](#) pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Our creative learning programme further underpins everything we do. In 2012 we celebrate the Olympic year with many of our projects forming part of the Cultural Olympiad and [London 2012 Festival](#) – it is also our 30th birthday year. Over 1.5 million people pass through our doors each year, hundreds of artists and performers are featured, and more than 300 [staff](#) work onsite. Our architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises the Barbican Hall, Barbican Theatre, the Pit theatre, a cinema (with [two new cinemas to open in September](#)), the Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery The Curve, foyers and public spaces, a library, Lakeside Terrace, [a glasshouse conservatory](#), conference facilities and three restaurants.

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