

Beyond Cold War Interpretations: Shaping a New Bauhaus Heritage

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The year 2009 marked the ninetieth birthday of the Bauhaus as well as the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The collapse of communism and the reunification of Germany have dramatically altered the understanding of the legacy of the twentieth century's most influential art school. The past two decades witnessed two quite different developments in how the Bauhaus is understood at home and abroad. First, the school's physical heritage has been harnessed to legitimize new institutions in the former East, chief among them the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation in Dessau and the Bauhaus University and Bauhaus Museum, both in Weimar. These now compete with each other and with the Bauhaus Archive in Berlin as the official successors to the original Bauhaus and the chief repositories of its art and related documentation. Second, German scholars, along with their American and English counterparts, have deconstructed Cold War myths about the school. In particular, they have questioned its relevance as an antifascist bulwark of democratic and/or socialist ideals. The challenge to the accounts of the school disseminated by Walter Gropius after his emigration from Germany that commenced with the rediscovery of its expressionist origins in the late

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1960s and early 1970s has been expanded in other directions as well.¹ Once privileged as metaphors for production, Bauhaus designs are now examined to expose the school's participation in a market economy and its interaction with consumerism. This in turn has focused attention on the school's many female students and its much smaller female staff. Finally, those who are tracing aspects of its heritage back to sources as diverse as Goethe's color theories and Wilhelmine nationalism have challenged the idea that everything about the school was radically new. Many of these approaches, although not the reappraisal of the school's relation to National Socialism, were highlighted in exhibitions mounted in the summer of 2009 in and around Weimar and in Berlin. The audience for these interpretations stretches far beyond Germany. The *Modell Bauhaus* exhibition held in Martin Gropius Bau in Berlin inspired the *Bauhaus, 1919–1933: Workshops of Modernity* exhibition that opened later in the year at New York's Museum of Modern Art, where it assisted in marking the eightieth birthday of that august institution.²

The history of the Bauhaus matters greatly to scholars of art and culture, adept at chronicling shifts in style and taste, but it is important also for the degree to which the school has been understood, almost since its founding in 1919, as representative for the first German republic, whose constitution was written in the same city that same year. The two institutions collapsed within months of each other in early 1933. Interpretations of the Bauhaus are inevitably embedded in interpretations of German democracy and its history. As an early victim of Nazi dictatorship, the Bauhaus was feted by the Federal Republic of Germany as well as in the United States, to which a small but influential group of its faculty and students eventually emigrated. It was regarded, however, with greater ambivalence by the German Democratic Republic (GDR), in whose territory it had actually resided until transferred to Berlin only months before its final closure. Early attempts to revive its pedagogy fell victim to social-realist orthodoxy, but many Bauhaus graduates pursued suc-

1. The key work in the rediscovery of the Bauhaus's expressionist roots was Marcel Franciscano, *Walter Gropius and the Creation of the Bauhaus in Weimar: The Ideals and Artistic Theories of Its Founding Years* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), which was foreshadowed by Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918–1945* (1968; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985). Nor has this vein been in any way exhausted by 1989, as demonstrated in the magisterial summation by Wolfgang Peht, *Die Architektur des Expressionismus* (Ostfildern: Hatje, 1998).

2. It also recalled the importance of the museum in launching the Bauhaus in America. See Karen Koehler, "The Bauhaus, 1919–1928: Gropius in Exile and the Museum of Modern Art, N.Y., 1938," in *Art, Culture, and Media under the Third Reich*, ed. Richard A. Etlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 287–315.

successful careers in the GDR, and by the time the Dessau Bauhaus was renovated in 1976, the school was officially appreciated.³

Although the Bauhaus, particularly the Gropius-designed Dessau building into which it moved in 1926, was a staple of all surveys of the history of twentieth-century art, architecture, and design, few of those who taught or studied these subjects outside the communist bloc between 1933 and 1989 had ever traveled to either Weimar or Dessau, much less had access to the archives that remained in East Germany. Western scholarship focused on the people, art, and papers that had ended up in the West, above all in the Bauhaus Archive. Founded in 1960 in Darmstadt by Hans Wingler, who assembled the first comprehensive history of the school, the archive moved in 1971 to Berlin, where its present quarters, designed by Gropius's office in 1964 for a site in Darmstadt, opened eight years later.⁴

The fall of the Wall and German reunification made the landmarks of German modernism located in the former GDR easily accessible to an audience that was greatly expanded and that included many Westerners trained to understand them as models of democratic free expression.⁵ New institutions quickly emerged not only to care for them but also to use them as a basis for an open, civil society and, equally importantly, as a means of economic development. In 1994 the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation was founded to, in its own words, “preserve, transmit and study the legacy of the historic Bauhaus, as well as to contribute to solving the problems involved in designing today’s environment.”⁶ This is a somewhat contradictory brief, as it implies loyalty to the original institution yet an ability to encourage both scholarship and design capable of challenging its precepts. There is no question, however, that the foundation has been a faithful caretaker of the buildings under its charge, a provocative agent for change on the local architectural scene, and a shrewd steward of its role as the most architecturally important successor to the

3. For the reception of the Bauhaus in postwar Germany, see Philipp Oswalt, ed., *Bauhaus Conflicts, 1919–2009: Controversies and Counterparts* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2009); Jeannine Fiedler and Peter Feierabend, eds., *Bauhaus* (Cologne: Könemann, 2000); and Kathleen James-Chakraborty, *Bauhaus Culture from Weimar to the Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006). See also the seminal Paul Betts, “The Bauhaus as Cold War Legend: West German Modernism Revisited,” *German Politics and Society* 14, no. 2 (1996): 75–100.

4. Hans Wingler, *Bauhaus: Weimer, Dessau, Berlin, Chicago*, trans. Wolfgang Jabs and Basil Gilbert (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976); and www.bauhaus.de/bauhausarchiv/geschichte_bauhausarchiv.html (accessed December 9, 2009).

5. This viewpoint was epitomized by the Bauhaus exhibition held in Stuttgart in 1968. See also Walter Gropius, *Apollo in der Demokratie* (Mainz: Kupferberg, 1967).

6. See www.bauhaus-dessau.de/index.php?The-bauhaus-building-history-of-use (accessed February 13, 2012).

original Bauhaus. The Bauhaus and the surviving master houses were named to the UNESCO World Culture and Natural Heritage list in 1996, as was the nearby Torten housing settlement.⁷ Since 2002 the foundation has been organizing the International Building Exhibition, focused on urban redevelopment in the state of Saxony-Anhalt; the exhibition concluded in 2010. The most internationally visible activity of the foundation is almost certainly the Bauhaus Kolleg, instituted in 1999. A one-year course focused on urban issues, the Kolleg attracts students, faculty, and guest speakers from around the world while continuing the education mission of the original institution and the building designed to house it.⁸ Following the example set in late-GDR times by Rolf Kuhn, Omar Akbar, a native of Afghanistan, nurtured the international orientation of the foundation and its interest in sustainability during his ten-year term as director, which ended in 2009. His successor is Philipp Oswald, a Berlin architect.

More entrepreneurial was the approach taken in Weimar. Although founded there, the Bauhaus left few physical traces in a city more often associated with Goethe and Schiller but also with Nietzsche.⁹ On the school's departure in 1926, the Hochschule für Handwerk und Baukunst (College for Craft and Architecture) was established under the leadership of the architect Otto Bartning.¹⁰ In 1930 the National Socialists came to power in Thuringia, and Bartning was dismissed. His Hochschule was fused with the Hochschule für bildende Kunst (College for the Visual Arts), founded in 1921 by more academically inclined local artists dissatisfied with Gropius's direction of the Bauhaus. At that point the notorious Paul Schulze-Naumburg was named director. (An influential, if relatively conservative, advocate of design reform before World War I, Schulze-Naumburg later equated modernism with racial degeneration and became an early supporter of Hitler's.) Under communism this school focused exclusively on construction. The fall of the Wall inspired a restructuring that encompassed the integration once more of the art of architecture into the curriculum. In 1995 this school became the Bauhaus University of Weimar.¹¹ The change of name, which included the elevation to uni-

7. See whc.unesco.org/en/list/729/multiple=1&unique_number=861 (accessed December 9, 2009).

8. See www.bauhaus-dessau.de/index.php?kolleg_en (accessed December 9, 2009).

9. Alexandre Kostka and Irving Wohlfarth, eds., *Nietzsche and "An Architecture of Our Minds"* (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999).

10. Dörte Nicolasién, *Das andere Bauhaus: Otto Bartning und die Staatliche Bauhochschule Weimar, 1926–1930* (Berlin: Kupfergraben, 1996).

11. See www.uni-weimar.de/cms/index.php?id=117 (accessed December 9, 2009).

versity status, also symbolized a new desire to capitalize on the innovative and imaginative legacy of a school in which few previous inhabitants of Weimar had publicly expressed pride. A local Bauhaus Museum, opened in the same year, provided a small, if highly visible, display area, catering to scholars and tourists alike. Challenging this former supremacy of the Bauhaus Archive in Berlin, it has acquired an outstanding collection of Bauhaus-related material. Both institutions have benefited from the opportunity to acquire material long kept in private hands, usually those of former students and their family and friends, especially in the former GDR.

The Bauhaus label gave once relatively marginal institutions the opportunity to reconfigure themselves as serious players, especially in Germany but also internationally. At the same time, changes in how the history of the Bauhaus was being written in the West threatened to undercut the uncomplicated association between the Bauhaus and democracy on which support for all Bauhaus institutions initially depended. This shift in historiography continues to be largely ignored by most of the wide range of institutions in the East and the West (and not only in Germany) whose credibility rests partly on the old equation. Although the Bauhaus Archive originally took the lead in researching the fate of Bauhaus design and of *Bauhäusler* (members of the Bauhaus) during the Third Reich, all the major exhibitions staged in 2009 were framed in ways that sidestepped the results of this new scholarship. Interest in the explosive topic was prompted originally as much by the emergence abroad of postmodern architecture as by the political upheavals in Germany with which it was often too easily associated.

Put simply, the revival of classical order and ornament in Western architecture beginning in the 1960s challenged the widespread West German espousal of modernism as inherently democratic. Although a few German architects, particularly O. M. Ungers, were eager postmodernists, many were wary, as were clients. It was no accident that foreigners, including Peter Eisenman and Richard Meier, both American Jews, and the British architect James Stirling, designed many of West Germany and West Berlin's most notable buildings of the 1980s.¹² German architectural historians such as Tilmann Buddensief and Fritz Neumeyer were in the forefront of reclaiming modernist monuments, such as the AEG (Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft) turbine factory and the work of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, as possible paradigms for a revived classicism and thus absolving the style of its associations with

12. Kathleen James, "Memory and the Cityscape: The German Architectural Debate about Postmodernism," *German Politics and Society* 17, no. 3 (1999): 71–83.

Nazism.¹³ More purposely shocking were the parallel attempts to rehabilitate Albert Speer, not least by defending his work on “purely” aesthetic terms.¹⁴ But the final rhetorical flourish was to tar modernists with the same brush—now political accountability rather than style—that had been applied to Speer and his ilk. Revisionist accounts demonstrating that prominent modernists had been willing to work for the Third Reich were written before the fall of the Wall, but these seldom dented the popular equation in both the United States and Germany of modernism with democracy or changed scholarship focused on the Bauhaus.¹⁵ After 1989, however, these cases became more difficult to ignore. In particular, a collection of essays edited by Winfried Nerdinger and published by the Bauhaus Archive definitively exploded the myth of universal Bauhaus opposition to the Third Reich, not least through its well-chosen illustrations of drawings from the offices of both Gropius and Mies van der Rohe, the first and third directors of the Bauhaus, of designs for buildings in front of which flew flags with swastikas. Although both men found the Nazis abhorrent, they each worked on government-sponsored propaganda exhibitions and sought official commissions before emigrating, Gropius first to London in 1934 and then to Harvard University in 1937, Mies van der Rohe directly to Chicago in 1938. Other *Bauhäusler* exhibited their work in state-sponsored venues during the Third Reich and assisted in designing the factories that were the backbone of Germany’s rearmament.¹⁶

13. Tilmann Buddensieg, *Industriekultur: Peter Behrens and the AEG, 1907–1914*, trans. Ian Boyd Whyte (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984); Fritz Neumeyer, *The Artless Word: Mies van der Rohe on the Building Art*, trans. Mark Jarzombek (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).

14. Following Speer’s own self-serving *Inside the Third Reich*, trans. Richard Winston and Clara Winston (New York: Macmillan, 1969), the most notorious example of this was Albert Speer, *Architecture, 1932–42* (Brussels: Archive d’Architecture Moderne, 1985), with its defense of Speer by the editor, Leon Krier.

15. In the case of Mies van der Rohe alone, these included the accounts published in Lane, *Architecture and Politics*; Richard Pommer, “Mies van der Rohe and the Political Ideology of the Modern Movement in Architecture,” in *Mies van der Rohe: Critical Essays*, ed. Franz Schulze (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1989), 96–147; and Elaine S. Hochman, *Architects of Fortune: Mies van der Rohe and the Third Reich* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989). The last of these is, however, quite unscholarly. The most important German work of this kind, Werner Durth, *Deutsche Architekten: Biographische Verflechtungen, 1900–1970* (Brunswick: Vieweg, 1986), focused not on the work of Weimar modernists during the Third Reich but on the contributions, many of them modernist, of architects close to the regime in the postwar Federal Republic of Germany.

16. Winfried Nerdinger, ed., *Bauhaus-Moderne in Nationalsozialismus, zwischen Anbiederung und Verfolgung* (Munich: Prestel, 1992). See also Paul Betts, *The Authority of Everyday Objects: A Cultural History of West German Design* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); and James Reidel, “Walter Gropius: Letters to an Angel, 1927–35,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 69, no. 1 (2010): 88–107.

The irony of this effort to decouple modern architecture and design from their enduring association with progressive politics was that its impact on Bauhaus scholarship would endure much longer than the architectural positions it was created in part to support. Enthusiasm for postmodernism has largely given way, in Germany as elsewhere, to a revived modernism, one, moreover, that fuses expressionist transparency and acute angles to the industrial aesthetic espoused by Gropius in 1923 and closely associated with Bauhaus design ever since. (This is true even in Berlin, where the expressionist-inflected dome of the Reichstag and the Jewish Museum have been far more popular than the “critical reconstruction” espoused by postmodernists.)¹⁷ Such buildings, although erected at times to serve civic and institutional functions, are often patently commercial. Left unrevived are the thin white stucco surfaces of much of the original Bauhaus and the Dessau houses and housing closely associated with it, as well as the political purpose of the housing settlements that were modern architecture’s original core social achievement.

Moreover, the increasing acceptance by scholars of the impossibility of making an absolutely clean distinction between the enlightened taste of the Weimar Republic and that sponsored, at least at the level of industrial exhibitions, by the Third Reich made little headway with the broader public. The publicity for the preservation and adaptive reuse of one of the most impressive industrial installations erected in interwar Germany, the Zeche Zollverein Schacht XII, which opened in Essen in 1932, repeatedly described it as a Bauhaus building and implied that its architects, Fritz Schupp and Martin Kremer, had studied at the school. In fact, they had studied in Stuttgart, probably with Paul Schmitthenner, whom Gropius successfully campaigned to have fired from his Stuttgart professorship after the war, and the building, although a factory, displayed none of the characteristic Bauhaus interest in dematerialized,

17. The prototype is not a German building but the Institut du Monde Arabe, designed by Jean Nouvel and completed in Paris in 1987; other influential examples include Santiago Calatrava’s 1992 Galleria in Toronto; Günter Behnisch’s 1993 Bundestag in Bonn; Norman Foster’s dome of the Reichstag in Berlin, opened in 1999; and Toyo Ito’s 2001 Mediatheque in Sendai, as well as the new skyscrapers of Pudong in Shanghai. For Berlin, see Deborah Ascher Barnstone, *The Transparent State: Architecture and Politics in Postwar Germany* (London: Routledge, 2005); Annegret Berg, *Downtown Berlin: Building the Metropolitan Mix* (Berlin: Bauwelt, 1995); Jennifer A. Jordan, *Structures of Memory: Understanding Urban Change in Berlin and Beyond* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006); Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Karen Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Werner Sewing, *Architektur zwischen Retrodesign und Eventkultur* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 2003); and James E. Young, *At Memory’s Edge: After-images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002).

destabilized form. (It may, however, have been a precedent for Mies van der Rohe's early Illinois Institute of Technology buildings in Chicago.)¹⁸

As many commentators have noted across this anniversary year, a further irony was the gap between the school's enduring association with art for the masses ("Volksbedarf statt Luxusbedarf," in the words of its second director, Hannes Meyer) and the contemporary popularity of Bauhaus design as a status symbol.¹⁹ Not surprisingly, the second major shift in Bauhaus scholarship has moved from focusing on the apparent relationship between form and industrial production to examining the context in which designs were made, marketed, and used. Consumerism proves central to an institution often assumed to have been preoccupied only with pure form.

Three examples suffice. There has been explosive growth in scholarship on *Lichtreklame*, the illuminated advertising that was such a new and prominent feature of the German cityscape during the Weimar Republic.²⁰ Many have pointed to the fascination shown by László Moholy-Nagy, the Hungarian artist who helped lead Bauhaus students away from painting and toward photography, in this abstract aspect of contemporary commerce. The blatant commercialism of this signage, as well as the degree to which it had served as a crucial precedent for Nazi spectacle, had previously discouraged recognition of its obvious abstraction, much less inclusion in the modernist canon, which in any case had until relatively recently marginalized its expressionist origins.²¹ What was long seen as an inherent contradiction between the Bauhaus's supposed socialist content and capitalist advertising has been eroded by those who have reinterpreted the Weimar German cityscape as democratic precisely because its commercialism was abstract. Nostalgia for a dynamic pedestrian-oriented streetscape lined with buildings influenced by avant-garde art (as

18. Kathleen James-Chakraborty, "Inventing Industrial Culture in Essen," in *Beyond Berlin: German Cities Confront the Nazi Past*, ed. Paul Jaskot and Gavriel Rosenfeld (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 116–39; Wolfgang Voigt and Hartmut Frank, *Paul Schmittthener, 1884–1972* (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 2003).

19. See, e.g., Ulrike Bestgen and Werner Möller, "do it yourself bauhaus: Vice Versa—Art or the People's Need," pages 5–7 of the leaflet that accompanied Christine Hill and the Volksboutique's *do it yourself bauhaus* installation in the Martin Gropius Bau.

20. Kathleen James, *Erich Mendelsohn and the Architecture of German Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Kathleen James-Chakraborty, *German Architecture for a Mass Audience* (London: Routledge, 2000); Dietrich Neumann, *Architecture of the Night: The Illuminated Building* (Munich: Prestel, 2003); Janet Ward, *Weimar Surfaces: Urban Visual Culture in 1920s Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Ulrich Gärtner, Kai-Uwe Hemken, and Kai Uwe Schierz, *Kunst Licht Spiele* (Bielefeld: Kerber, 2009).

21. See, e.g., Dieter Bartetzko, *Illusionen in Stein: Stimmungsarchitektur im deutschen Faschismus; Ihre Vorgeschichte in Theater- und Film-Bauten* (Reinbeck: Rohwohlt, 1985).

opposed to shopping malls clad in cheap historicist veneers and floating in seas of parking) threatens to overwhelm awareness of Weimar-era criticism of the degree to which modernist spectacle distracted workers from their class interest.²²

New attention has also been paid to the school's own engagement with advertising and even to the way that it so effectively branded itself in discussions that examine graphic art's purpose rather than only celebrate its abstractness.²³ A comprehensive examination of Gropius's talent as a publicist, his effective deployment of branding, and his less successful attempts to commercialize what had been a state monopoly on arts education remains, however, to be written. One suspects that many people who admire the radical abstraction of Bauhaus publicity would condemn similar funding initiatives in their own institutions as "neoliberal privatization."

Finally, the way that Bauhaus designs function in contemporary society to define an intellectual and social elite has encouraged a reexamination of their original cost and purpose. Robin Schuldenfrei, for example, has proved that, despite the rhetoric of industrial design for the masses, many of the most famous Bauhaus objects were necessarily handcrafted luxury goods, inseparable from the social practices that defined bourgeois social status.²⁴ Her discussion of Marianne Brandt's silver tea infusers, with their ebony handles, presages the installation staged by Christine Hill and the Volksboutique in the Martin Gropius Bau in the summer of 2009. The exhibition's press release, titled *do it yourself bauhaus*, stated: "The renewal of domestic culture was one of the main preoccupations of the historical Bauhaus, with the aim of anchoring modernism in everyday life. It had to be advertised, marketed and sold. Today exquisitely selected Bauhaus products have become a fixed component of our homes and lives via many different reception and marketing routes."²⁵

22. In addition to Ward, *Weimar Surfaces*, see Sabine Hake, *Topographies of Class: Modern Architecture and Mass Society in Weimar Berlin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008). See also Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, ed. and trans. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), esp. 323–28.

23. This is not, however, the main focus of the most concerted examination of Bauhaus commercialism: Frederic J. Schwartz, "Utopia for Sale: The Bauhaus and Weimar Germany's Consumer Culture," in James-Chakraborty, *Bauhaus Culture*, 139–52.

24. Robin Schuldenfrei, "Luxus, Produktion, Reproduktion," in *Mythos Bauhaus: Zwischen Selbstfindung und Enthistorisierung*, ed. Anja Baumhoff and Magdalena Droste (Berlin: Riemer, 2009), 71–89. See also Jeffrey Saletnik and Robin Schuldenfrei, eds., *Bauhaus Construct: Fashioning Identity, Discourse, and Modernism* (London: Routledge, 2010).

25. See cgi.eigen-art.com/user-cgi-bin/files/chill_diy_en.pdf (accessed December 9, 2009). For the exhibition itself, see the leaflet *do it yourself bauhaus* that accompanied the exhibition.

There was always a commercial dimension to what was, after all, the first German arts institution to aspire to support itself through the sale of its designs, combined with subsidies from industry, and admitting this fact has important implications as well for reevaluating the role that gender played at the school. One of the most obvious ways that recent Bauhaus publications and 2009's Bauhaus exhibitions differ from their predecessors is in the prominent credit now given to female *Bauhäusler* and the attention paid to work patently designed for, if not always by, women.²⁶ Gropius's fear that the school would not be taken seriously if it had too many female students has been replaced by enthusiasm for the degree to which, despite confronting blatant sexism, women affiliated with the Bauhaus made unconventional art while leading equally unconventional lives. Beside weavings by Gunta Stözl, Anni Albers, and Otti Berger, and photographs of Lilly Reich and by Lucia Moholy, the exhibition in the Martin Gropius Bau featured not only dresses but also a pair of wooden dressing tables, the latter both designed by Marcel Breuer. It is difficult to imagine Gropius including such objects either in the exhibition he helped organize at the Museum of Modern Art in 1938 or in the one staged three decades later in Stuttgart. Even more unthinkable would be his approval of Hill and the Volksboutique installation, which drew overt attention to the Bauhaus's impact on contemporary consumer culture, from Ikea to the German chain of home supply stores that bear the Bauhaus name.

An explosion of research on women artists has been in turn fully integrated into mainstream scholarship on the school.²⁷ Once again Gropius, who tried to confine women to the weaving workshop, is exposed as something less

26. Although not every object included in the exhibition is featured in the catalog, *Bauhaus: A Conceptual Model* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2009), 10 of the 68 works included were made at least in part by women. For Barry Bergdoll and Leah Dickerman, *Bauhaus, 1919–1933: Workshops for Modernity* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2009), the catalog of the Museum of Modern Art exhibition, it was 6 out of 29 essays on works ascribed to individuals, while 68 of the 434 works with identified authorship in the New York exhibition were credited at least in part to women.

27. Magdalene Droste, ed., *Gunta Stözl* (Berlin: Bauhaus-Archiv, 1987), is the pioneering scholarly study here, while Droste, *Bauhaus, 1919–1933* (Cologne: Taschen, 1990), was the first survey to incorporate women systematically into the school's history. See also, in particular, Sigrid Wortmann Weltge, *Women's Work: Textile Art from the Bauhaus* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1993); Anje Baumhoff, *The Gendered World of the Bauhaus: The Politics of Power at the Weimar Republic's Premier Art Institution* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2001); Elizabeth Otto, *Tempo, Tempo! The Bauhaus Photomontages of Marianne Brandt* (Berlin: Bauhaus-Archiv, 2005); Otto, "A 'Schooling of the Senses': Post-Dada Visual Experiments in the Bauhaus Photomontages of László Moholy-Nagy and Marianne Brandt," *New German Critique*, no. 107 (2009): 89–131; and Ulrike Müller, *Bauhaus Women: Art, Handicraft, Design* (Paris: Flammarion, 2009).

than an ideal social pioneer. The weaving workshop is now widely understood to have been one of the school's most commercially successful divisions, as well as a font of ideas that helped transform textile art and design on both sides of the Atlantic. Almost as important has been recouping the work of female photographers.²⁸ Until the appointment of Walter Peterhans in 1929, no one taught photography at the Bauhaus, but the production of light-dependent mass-produced images was in concert with many different aspects of Bauhaus experimentation.²⁹ Gropius, whose theoretical defense of collaboration did not consistently extend to sharing credit with his immediate associates, did not publicize the fact that the most widely reproduced photographs of the Dessau Bauhaus were the work of Lucia Moholy, who lived in relative obscurity after her divorce from Moholy-Nagy.

The burst of scholarly attention to Weimar-era illuminated advertising has also undoubtedly been encouraged by the centrality of such spectacle to contemporary neomodernism, not least in such Berlin buildings as the Galleries Lafayette (Jean Nouvel, 1996) and Kurfürstendamm 70 (Helmut Jahn, 1994). More broadly, the degree to which contemporary architects and designers unabashedly mine modernism's increasingly long history in ways that, although inevitably celebrated as innovative, are in fact relentlessly historicist has encouraged the continued examination of how the apparent modernism of the Bauhaus was itself steeped in precedent. For example, John V. Maciuika demonstrates that nationalist Wilhelmine economic policies prompted reforms in design pedagogy that foreshadowed Gropius's strategies at the Bauhaus.³⁰

More comprehensive is the pioneering scholarship that has accompanied the efforts of Weimar to obtain financing for expanding its Bauhaus Museum. Five exhibitions held there in 2009 highlighted that, in the words of their collective title, "Das Bauhaus kommt aus Weimar."³¹ Scholarship on both sides of the Atlantic has increasingly demonstrated that Gropius not only inherited

28. Ute Eskildsen, ed., *Fotografieren hiess teilnehmen: Fotografinnen der Weimarer Republik* (Essen: Museum Folkwang, 1994); Jeannine Fiedler, ed., *Photography at the Bauhaus* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).

29. Rose-Carol Washton Long, "From Metaphysics to Material Culture: Painting and Photography at the Bauhaus," in James-Chakraborty, *Bauhaus Culture*, 43–62.

30. John V. Maciuika, *Before the Bauhaus: Architecture, Politics, and the German State, 1890–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For important scholarship on the pre-history of the Bauhaus, see Frederic J. Schwartz, *The Werkbund: Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996).

31. Ute Ackermann and Ulrike Bestgen, *Das Bauhaus kommt aus Weimar* (Weimar: Klassik Stiftung, 2009).

from Henry van de Velde his job and the building in which the Bauhaus was originally housed but also appropriated many aspects of its curriculum and its goals. These included the craft workshops, an emphasis on abstraction, and the hope of profitable ties with industry.³² Far more original was the discovery of Goethe's influence, especially of his color theory, on the school's pedagogy.³³ Seeing Goethe's own color studies, and even his crystals, next to work by Johannes Itten, who was originally responsible for the preliminary course, and by his students was immediately convincing. An exhibition mounted in Schiller's house also established clear links between the city's theatrical heritage and Bauhaus performances. It is hardly astonishing that in a city famous for its playwrights and its theater, Bauhaus students would become such self-conscious performers.³⁴ Why had Bauhaus scholars continued for so long to believe that Weimar, which hosted some of the early twentieth century's most innovative artistic conversations and projects, was a provincial backwater, against which the school rebelled, rather than a city with a long history of creativity, of which even the most avant-garde-oriented young art students, not to mention their classically educated teachers, were acutely aware and which they very much appreciated?

The exhibitions held subsequently in Berlin and New York placed many of the same works in slightly different interpretive frames. While the publicity surrounding the pair often repeated familiar myths, the two teams of curators drew in particular on relatively unfamiliar work by female students to emphasize the stylistic variety that had existed at the school. The Berlin show, organized by the Bauhaus Archive/Berlin, the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, and the Klassik Weimar Foundation, was large and somewhat ungainly. Its focus was on the major German collections of Bauhaus material. The smaller New

32. In addition to the essays by Ute Ackermann and Thomas Föhl in Ackermann and Bestgen, *Das Bauhaus kommt aus Weimar*, 25–57, see Kathleen James-Chakraborty, "Henry van de Velde and Walter Gropius: Between Avoidance and Imitation," in James-Chakraborty, *Bauhaus Culture*, 26–42; Volker Wahl, ed., *Henry van de Velde in Weimar: Dokumente und Berichte zur Förderung von Kunsthandwerk und Industrie (1902 bis 1915)* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007); and Klaus Weber, "Wir haben viel an Ihnen gut zu machen: Einige Dokumente zum Verhältnis von Henry van de Velde und Walter Gropius," in *Henry van de Velde: Ein europäischer Künstler seiner Zeit*, ed. Klaus-Jürgen Sembach and Birgit Schulte (Cologne: Wienand, 1992), 366–71.

33. This theme is expanded on in Hellmut T. Seemann and Thorsten Valk, eds., *Klassik und Avantgarde: Das Bauhaus in Weimar, 1919–1925* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009).

34. It failed, however, to credit the design of stage sets with the development of abstraction in architecture to the degree currently proposed in James-Chakraborty, *German Architecture for a Mass Audience*; Juliet Koss, *Modernism after Wagner* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); or the ongoing research of Katherine Kuenzli.

York display, which included material from American collections, focused more on the significance of the Bauhaus to modern art and photography. Both were viewed, and their catalogs read, by a much larger public than would turn to specialized scholarship on the subject.³⁵

In the last twenty years Bauhaus scholarship has, not least because of the fall of the Wall, shifted direction dramatically. Old myths endure, but they are not as convincing as they once were. New emphases develop. It may also seem as if everything possible has already been said about the school. Yet there are always surprises. A recent one has been the discovery that the first Bauhaus exhibition was held not in Germany but in Calcutta, at the instigation of the poet and artist Rabindranath Tagore.³⁶ This may seem astounding, but it suggests an entirely new avenue of scholarship on the Bauhaus, that of its reception not in the conventional West but beyond it, whether on the eastern edges of Europe or farther afield in Latin America and Asia.

That Tel Aviv prided itself on what was locally referred to as Bauhaus architecture, even when it was actually based on the designs of Le Corbusier or Erich Mendelsohn, has long been known, but to what extent has the claim of postwar Americans to be the Bauhaus's heirs overshadowed other Bauhaus experiments?³⁷ One wants to know more about the school's reputation in Japan, from which it attracted several extraordinarily talented students, about the years that Meyer spent in exile in Mexico City, and about the varied destinations of those Bauhaus students who left Europe altogether as well as about the school's impact in Turkey, to which many German-speaking architects emigrated.³⁸ As what once appeared to be the margins of modernism became the center of a story in which abstract form was adopted partly because it is economical and partly because of its power to communicate forms of modernity, such as colonialism's rupture from indigenous traditions that were not necessarily technological, it increasingly appears that the United States adopted

35. See Barbara Miller Lane, review of *Bauhaus, 1919–1933: Workshops for Modernity*, and Karen Koehler, review of *Modell Bauhaus (Bauhaus: A Conceptual Model)*, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 69, no. 3 (2010): 430–34, 434–36.

36. Partha Mitter, *The Triumph of Modernism: India's Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1922–1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

37. Irmel Kemp-Bandau, *Tel Aviv: Neues Bauen, 1930–1939* (Berlin: Wasmuth, 1993); Jeanine Fiedler, ed., *Social Utopias of the Twenties: Bauhaus, Kibbutz, and the Dream of the New Man* (Wuppertal: Müller + Busmann, 1995).

38. See Esra Kacan, "Toward a Cosmopolitan Ethics in Architecture: Bruno Taut's Translations out of Germany," *New German Critique*, no. 99 (2006): 7–39; and Sibel Bozdogan, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).

modernism as much to curry favor with Third World intellectuals as to demonstrate any innate interest in representing its own industrial might.³⁹

Wherever the next twenty years of Bauhaus scholarship may lead us, it is clear that the fall of the Berlin Wall prompted an explosion of new insights into an institution that remains at the core of our understanding of modern art, architecture, and design. New institutions have been founded that focus renewed attention on the structures the Bauhaus inhabited and on the student work produced in them. New interpretations resituate the school in relation to the mass culture of its own day as well as contemporary consumerism. Designs made by women are now seen as integral to the school's success and its legacy rather than as a threat to its seriousness of purpose. And now that it is situated in a previous century, its own debt to the past can be acknowledged and explored.

39. Kathleen James-Chakraborty, "Architecture of the Cold War: Louis Kahn and Edward Durrell Stone in South Asia," in *Building America*, vol. 3 of *Eine große Erzählung*, ed. Anke Köth, Kai Krauskopf, and Andreas Schwarting (Dresden: Thelem, 2008), 169–82.