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AVT 318: Graphic Design History

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## The Bauhaus Movement

The legacy of the Bauhaus Movement has become the décor of our daily lives. The movement’s combination of form and function and embrace of industrialization have allowed these principles into people’s homes and everyday lives. Producing for the masses with both skill and artistry, as well as forced globalization at the hand of the Nazi party, makes the Bauhaus Movement uniquely situated for far reaching and long lasting impact,

* The Bauhaus Movement
  + Created in opposition to the ornate and opulent styles of Art Nouveau and Art Deco that came before
  + Objects defined by their nature, must be practical. “Form follows function”
  + Marrying arts and industry
  + Characterized as: (**Roseanne)** Bauhaus artists favoured linear and geometrical forms, while floral or curvilinear shapes were avoided. Only line, shape and colour mattered. Anything else was unnecessary and needed to be reduced.
* The Bauhaus School (Intro + Weimar)
  + Opened in 1919, lasted 14 years, closing in 1931
  + Three locations, three directors, across the rise and fall, and all shaped Bauhaus to be the impactful movement it is today
  + Founded by Walter Gropius in Weimar **(Siebenbrodt)** On the basis of a positive assessment of social and technical industry potential and new products such as aircraft, fast trains, washing machines and automobiles, aesthetics were developed which emphasised usefulness and functionality as well as material appropriateness in architecture and consumer devices, in the spirit of an industrial culture for all.
  + Workshops in many crafts and fields including courses of carpentry, metal, pottery, stained glass, wall painting, weaving, graphics, typography, and stagecraft
  + Admittance and equality of women (albeit admittedly equality overall a failure)
  + **(Winton)**“Art into Industry” Started off overreaching with emphasis on craft, dialed it back to focus on mass production
* The Bauhaus School (Dessau)
  + New building encapsulated the Bauhaus style: **(Winton)** This building [in Dessau] contained many features that later became hallmarks of modernist architecture, including steel-frame construction, a glass curtain wall, and an asymmetrical, pinwheel plan, throughout which Gropius distributed studio, classroom, and administrative space for maximum efficiency and spatial logic.
  + **(“Bauhaus Building by Walter Gropius”)** Gropius designed the various sections of the building differently, separating them consistently according to function. He positioned the wings asymmetrically; the form of the complex can thus be grasped only by moving around the building. There is no central view.
  + The emphasis on practicality and affordable, simple design allowed the school to sustain itself. **(Cook)** Bauhaus wallpaper became the school’s bestselling product. At last, here was an art school which could actually pay its way.
* The Bauhaus School (Berlin)
  + The new location in Berlin was a result of pressure from the Nazi party.
  + **(Eskilson)** Scholars today view the political climate at the Bauhaus as harboring one central contradiction: the simultaneous embrace of communist ideology and an adoration of the capitalist industries that stood as icons of the modern machine age.
  + **(“100 Years of Bauhaus”)** Nazi party viewed Bauhaus as representing ‘foreignness’ and view designs and un-German
  + The ultimate closing of the school led to relocation for many of the schools’ founders, teachers, and students, spreading the movement and its teachings across the world.
  + Impact on Americas, etc.
* Legacy
  + Products: **(Morley)**
  + A New European Bauhaus – modern application of bauhaus **(A New European Bauhaus)**
  + Famous artists
    - Marianne Brandt
      * **(Bauhaus)** Marianne Brandt became the first female student in the metal workshop, going on to design the iconic Kandem bedside table lamp (1928)
    - Herbert Bayer
      * Universal typefont – **(Eskilson)** Bayer inadvertently found yet another way to aggravate German conservatives, who argued that his Universal was not only ‘un-German’, but also that its roman lineage associated it with the tradition of France, Germany’s sworn enemy…Universal became symptomatic of all that was wrong with the Bauhaus in the minds of right-wing politicians.
    - László Moholy-Nagy
      * **(Eskilson)** Bauhaus Books + typophoto
    - Marcel Breuer
      * **(Eskilson)**A fine example of Breuer’s work at the Dessau Bauhaus is the Wassily Chair, named for his colleague Wassily Kandinsky. Its spare steel frame forms cubic shapes that seem to pass through each other, its beauty resting in proportion and the balance of simple forms
* Summary
  + The Bauhaus legacy is a result of making form and function commonplace, accessible, affordable, and is also a product of the historical times.
  + **(Cook)** Once a radical revolt against the status quo, Bauhaus style has become the new normal. And by becoming ubiquitous, it has disappeared - into the décor of our daily lives.

## Sources

Siebenbrodt, Michael, and Lutz Schobe. *Bauhaus.* Parkstone International, 2009.

* On the basis of a positive assessment of social and technical industry potential and new products such as aircraft, fast trains, washing machines and automobiles, aesthetics were developed which emphasised usefulness and functionality as well as material appropriateness in architecture and consumer devices, in the spirit of an industrial culture for all.

Eskilson, Stephen J. *Graphic Design A New History.* 3rd ed., 2007. Yale University Press, 2017.

* An essential component of modern graphic design espoused at the Bauhaus was the use of rational, geometric letterforms…sans sertif type was indispensable for three reasons: first, it was the only type capable of expressing the spirit of the machine age…; second, sands serif lacked any nationalist associations, so it could serve as a unifying force in the post-war era; and third, it’s simple clarity and impersonal character were the best match for photography—hence typophoto. (221)
* Scholars today view the political climate at the Bauhaus as harboring one central contradiction: the simultaneous embrace of communist ideology and an adoration of the capitalist industries that stood as icons of the modern machine age. (221)
* While these materials had been used for decades in architecture, in conventional buildings they would be cloaked under a skin of stone or terra cotta. Gropius, in contrast, boldly left these materials exposed, demonstrating the beauty of the Machine Aesthetic. (216)
* A fine example of Breuer’s work at the Dessau Bauhaus is the Wassily Chair, named for his colleague Wassily Kandinsky. Its spare steel frame forms cubic shapes that seem to pass through each other, its beauty resting in proportion and the balance of simple forms. (217)
* Bayer inadvertently found yet another way to aggravate German conservatives, who argued that his Universal was not only ‘un-German’, but also that its roman lineage associated it with the tradition of France, Germany’s sworn enemy…Universal became symptomatic of all that was wrong with the Bauhaus in the minds of right-wing politicians. (223)

Roseanne. “The Characteristics of Bauhaus.” *Catawiki,* 31 Aug. 2020,www.catawiki.com/stories/5263-the-characteristics-of-bauhaus.

[www.catawiki.com/stories/5263-the-characteristics-of-bauhaus](http://www.catawiki.com/stories/5263-the-characteristics-of-bauhaus)

* Influenced by movements such as Modernism and De Stijl, and as a counter-movement to the Art Deco and Art Nouveau styles; Bauhaus artists favoured linear and geometrical forms, while floral or curvilinear shapes were avoided. Only line, shape and colour mattered. Anything else was unnecessary and needed to be reduced.

Hartov, Oren. “The Bauhaus Is One of the Most Influential Design Movements in History.” *Gear Patrol,* 30 Jun. 2020, www.gearpatrol.com/briefings/a609440/influence-of-the-bauhaus-movement.

<https://www.gearpatrol.com/briefings/a609440/influence-of-the-bauhaus-movement/>

* Examples of Bauhaus items and influence

Cook, William. “The Endless Influence of the Bauhaus.” *BBC,* 10 Nov. 2017, www.bbc.com/culture/article/20171109-the-endless-influence-of-the-bauhaus.

<https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20171109-the-endless-influence-of-the-bauhaus>

* The Bauhaus produced an incredible array of artefacts, from angle poise lamps to chess sets, all distinguished by their functional and elegant construction. They were simple and useful, and their simplicity made them beautiful. In an era of ornamentation, their streamlined appearance was revolutionary.
* Bauhaus wallpaper became the school’s bestselling product. At last, here was an art school which could actually pay its way.
* Mies van der Rohe’s motto, ‘Less is More,’ is a good place to start (‘chuck out the chintz’ is just as good). Form follows function. Each element is stripped down to its bare essentials. Everything is fit for purpose. The result is austere, but strangely pleasing on the eye.
* Once a radical revolt against the status quo, Bauhaus style has become the new normal. And by becoming ubiquitous, it has disappeared - into the décor of our daily lives.

“Bauhaus Building by Walter Gropius (1925-1926).” *Bauhaus Dessau,* www.bauhaus-dessau.de/en/architecture/bauhaus-building.html. Accessed 10 Mar 2021.

<https://www.bauhaus-dessau.de/en/architecture/bauhaus-building.html>

* Gropius designed the various sections of the building differently, separating them consistently according to function. He positioned the wings asymmetrically; the form of the complex can thus be grasped only by moving around the building. There is no central view.

Morley, Madeleine. “Examples of Bauhaus Graphic Design that Shaped the Movement.” *Aiga Eye on Design,* 2 Dec. 2019, eyeondesign.aiga.org/5-examples-of-bauhaus-graphic-design-that-shaped-the-movement.

<https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/5-examples-of-bauhaus-graphic-design-that-shaped-the-movement/>

* May need more citation for graphics

“100 Years of Bauhaus: What it is and How it Shaped Today’s Design Industry.” *Amara,* 14 May 2019, www.amara.com/us/editorial/styling/bauhaus-design-movement.

<https://www.amara.com/us/editorial/styling/bauhaus-design-movement>

* Decades prior to Bauhaus favored ornate and opulent styles like Art Nouveau and Art Deco.
* Objects defined by their nature, must be practical
* “Form follows function”
* Three stages of Bauhaus following 3 German Cities: Weimar, Dessau, Berlin
  + Weimar – very little architecture
  + Dessau – building design encapsulated Bauhaus
  + Berlin – Nazi party viewed Bauhaus as representing ‘foreignness’ and view designs and un-German. Closed the school in 1931
* By facilitating closing and fleeing of the students teachers and students, caused worldwide spread of the movements teachings.
* Furniture/graphic design/architecture – accessible and mass production

Winton, Alexandra Griffith. “The Bauhaus, 1919-1933.” *The Met,* Oct. 2016, www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/bauh/hd\_bauh.htm.

<https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/bauh/hd_bauh.htm>

* This building [in Dessau] contained many features that later became hallmarks of modernist architecture, including steel-frame construction, a glass curtain wall, and an asymmetrical, pinwheel plan, throughout which Gropius distributed studio, classroom, and administrative space for maximum efficiency and spatial logic.
* typography was conceived as both an empirical means of communication and an artistic expression, with visual clarity stressed above all.
* During the turbulent and often dangerous years of World War II, many of the key figures of the Bauhaus emigrated to the United States, where their work and their teaching philosophies influenced generations of young architects and designers.

“Bauhaus.” *Brittanica,* 29 May 2020, www.britannica.com/topic/Bauhaus.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bauhaus>

* “The Bauhaus was founded by the architect Walter Gropius, who combined two schools, the Weimar Academy of Arts and the Weimar School of Arts and Crafts, into what he called the Bauhaus, or “house of building,” a name derived by inverting the German word Hausbau, “building of a house.””
* Intent to train students equally in art and technically expert craftmanship, as executed in architecture.
* William Moris – English designer of the Arts and Crafts movement
* Emphasis on machine production, “producing functional and aesthetically pleasing objects for mass society rather than individual items for a wealthy elite.”
* Students required to take 6 month pre-liminary course, followed by 3 years of workshop courses of carpentry, metal, pottery, stained glass, wall painting, weaving, graphics, typography, and stagecraft. “generally taught by two people: an artist (called the Form Master), who emphasized theory, and a craftsman, who emphasized techniques and technical processes.” Receive a journeyman’s diploma.
* Nazi regime forced the school to close in 1933
* Bauhaus admitted women.
  + Anni Albers experimented with weaving unusual substances.
  + Marianne Brandt became the first female student in the metal workshop, going on to design the iconic Kandem bedside table lamp (1928)
  + Other women: Gertrud Arndt, Benital Koche-Otte, Gunta Stozl, Lucia Moholy

Perren, Claudia. “Bauhaus: The School of Modernism.” *Google Arts & Culture,* artsandculture.google.com/story/bauhaus-the-school-of-modernism/6gIi8UW9Rfa-Kw. Accessed 10 Mar 2021.

<https://artsandculture.google.com/story/bauhaus-the-school-of-modernism/6gIi8UW9Rfa-Kw>

* Founded in Weimar in 1919 by architect Walter Gropius, then moved in Dessau in 1925. The Dessau university building became iconic representation of the Bahaus movement.

*A New European Bauhaus*. Luxembourg: Publications Office, 2020. Print.

* Ad for modern application of Bauhaus

Capps, Kriston. “The Women of the Bauhaus” *Bloomberg CityLab,* 15 Mar. 2019, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-03-15/the-false-equality-of-the-bauhaus.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-03-15/the-false-equality-of-the-bauhaus>

* “No difference between the beautiful and the strong sex,” Gropius told students in his first speech to the school, according to Ulrike Müller, author of 2009’s Bauhaus Women. “Absolute equality but also absolutely equal obligation to the work of all craftsmen.”
* Women outnumbered men in the first Bauhaus class (84 to 79) and the school dropped gender-specific tuition rates that charged women a higher fee

<https://www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior/chapter-4/women-weimar-republic>

* an increasing number of women were turning toward conservative parties like the Nazis, who made Kinder, Küche, Kirche for women an integral part of their proposed program.

<https://www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior/chapter-4/women-weimar-republic>

* They succeeded [at women’s suffrage] in 1919, when Article 109 of the Weimar Constitution stated that men and women have the same fundamental rights and duties as citizens, including the right to vote and to hold office
* Yet, according to Rühle-Gerstel, the “new women” were “pioneers” who never constituted a majority and did not succeed in changing most Germans’ ideas about the role of women in society.
* an increasing number of women were turning toward conservative parties like the Nazis, who made Kinder, Küche, Kirche for women an integral part of their proposed program.

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2009/nov/07/the-women-of-bauhaus>

* More women than men applied to the school in 1919, and Gropius insisted that there would be "no difference between the beautiful and the strong sex" – those very words betraying his real views. Those of the "strong sex" were, in fact, marked out for painting, carving and, from 1927, the school's new architecture department. The "beautiful sex" had to be content, mostly, with weaving.
* He [Gropius] believed women thought in "two dimensions", while men could grapple with three.
* As Gunta Stölzl (1897-1983) put it, "We wanted to create living things with contemporary relevance, suitable for a new style of life. Huge potential for experimentation lay before us. It was essential to define our imaginary world, to shape our experiences through material, rhythm, proportion, colour and form."

The Bauhaus movement The Bauhaus movement was born to succeed. It combined form and function, embracing industrialization to produce everyday products for the masses. A combination of form and function, targeting the masses and embracing industrialization, and the historical persecution the movement faced culminated in a widespread

The Bauhaus movement was primed for lasting impact through its very essence.

impact of the Bauhaus movement has been long lasting and directly impacted modern design. The Bauhaus Movement’s embrace of both art form and industrialization allowed for mass production of items. It’s focus on everyday items and making those accessible to every man allowed the impact to be seen and used by common people. The additional historical significance of the Nazi party also made the Bauhaus movement privy to expansion and globalization. The Bauhaus Movement’s lasting effect on modern design and graphic design is a culmination of the embrace of industrial production, access to products by the masses, and the historical context that allowed for reception on a global scale.

Resiliance

By marrying form and function, the Bauhaus movement created simple products that were beautiful in their simplicity. The emphasis on simplicity and craftsmanship, allowing for mass production meant that costs were kept low, and production and distribution high. The focus on everyday items and utilitarian use meant that these objects made an impact in daily life. The Nazi party persecution of the school caused many to flee Germany and led to globalization, making the teachings and principles spread further.

* The Bauhaus Movement
  + Created in opposition to the ornate and opulent styles of Art Nouveau and Art Deco that came before
  + Objects defined by their nature, must be practical. “Form follows function”
  + Marrying of arts and industry
* The Bauhaus School
  + Opened in 1919, lasted 14 years, closing in 1931
  + Three locations, represent the rise and fall, and all shaped Bauhaus to be the impactful movement it is today
    - Weimar
      * Workshops in many crafts and fields including courses of carpentry, metal, pottery, stained glass, wall painting, weaving, graphics, typography, and stagecraft
      * Admittance and equality of women (albeit admittedly equality overall a failure)
      * **[MetMuseum]**“Art into Industry” Started off overreaching with emphasis on craft, dialed it back to focus on mass production
    - Dessau
      * New building encapsulated the Bauhaus style
        + **[MetMuseum]** This building [in Dessau] contained many features that later became hallmarks of modernist architecture, including steel-frame construction, a glass curtain wall, and an asymmetrical, pinwheel plan, throughout which Gropius distributed studio, classroom, and administrative space for maximum efficiency and spatial logic.
        + **[BauhausDessau]** Gropius designed the various sections of the building differently, separating them consistently according to function. He positioned the wings asymmetrically; the form of the complex can thus be grasped only by moving around the building. There is no central view.
        + The emphasis on practicality and affordable, simple design allowed the school to sustain itself. **[BBC]** Bauhaus wallpaper became the school’s bestselling product. At last, here was an art school which could actually pay its way.
    - Berlin
      * The new location in Berlin was a result of pressure from the Nazi party. The ultimate closing of the school led to relocation for many of the schools’ founders, teachers, and students, spreading the movement and its teachings
      * **[Amara]** Nazi party viewed Bauhaus as representing ‘foreignness’ and view designs and un-German

## The Bauhaus Movement (Sexism)

Despite claiming equality between the sexes, the Bauhaus school was still a sexist institution. A result of the times and social standards, the Bauhaus movement allowed some women to break free of stereotypes and pursue their own paths, but the equality purported by Gropius and the school was never realized.

“Absolute equality but also absolutely equal obligation to the work of all craftsmen.” Idealistic words from the founder of the Bauhaus school, Walter Gropius. Spoken to the first class of the Bauhaus school, one might rejoice at the celebration of equality between the genders, if taken in isolation. But earlier in that same speech, Gropius led with “No difference between the beautiful and the strong sex” (Bloomburg article, citation todo). The simple juxtaposition of such ideals of equality coupled with blatant sexism evidences that the Bauhaus School and movement, were not able to live to the ideals of equality between men and women. A result of the times and changing social standards, the Bauhaus movement allowed some women to break free of stereotypes and pursue their own paths, but the equality purported by Gropius and the Bauhaus school was never realized.

* The Bauhaus Movement
  + Walter Gropius combined Weimar Academy of Arts and the Weimar School of Arts and Crafts, into what he called the Bauhaus
  + The name “Bauhaus” means “house of building” derived by inverting the German word Hausbau, “building of a house.”
  + Emphasis on machine production, marrying art and industrialization
* The Bauhaus School
  + School opened in 1919
* The Bauhaus Movement
* What was the Bauhaus movement?
  + German origin
  + Combined crafts and fine arts
* The Bauhaus school
* Important Bauhaus artists/influencers
  + Anni Albers
  + Marguerite Friedlaender-Wildenhain – ceramicist
  + Benita Otte – weaving
  + Marianne Brandt – metalworker
* How did it fit into the picture historically? What was the impact?

The Bauhaus Movement has always stood out to me as very iconic and distinct. I’ve done some projects in previous classes in the Bauhaus style, but haven’t dug into the details of the movement. The history of the movement and strong players would give me more context and deliberate understanding of the movement. The geometric shapes and bold colors are effective and iconic, and despite being bold and blocky, still manage to have movement and balance.

The Bauhaus movement embraced the relationship between art, society, and technology. It’s an interesting balance of fine arts and industry. More than just graphic design or fine art, it’s influence has made its way into real life buildings and objects, from architecture to furniture to utensil designs. I expect this research paper to develop the history of the movement and those that contributed to the movement as well as explore the effects on modern design and graphic design.

*Preliminary Research:*

<https://99designs.com/blog/design-history-movements/know-your-design-history-the-bauhaus-movement/>

<https://mymodernmet.com/what-is-bauhaus-art-movement/>

<https://www.theartstory.org/movement/bauhaus/>