

ENGLISH
SUMMERS

RE.bauhaus

INTRODUCTION

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In 2019, the world of art and design was celebrating the centenary of Bauhaus. Walter Gropius established a school that, even though it existed for merely 14 years, strongly influenced the architects, interior architects and designers of the twentieth century. The legacy of Bauhaus is founded not only on design, but also on the pedagogical tradition – tutors at this university introduced novel methods of teaching thanks to which they brought up a generation of conscious artists and pedagogues.

The importance of Bauhaus is marked, among other things, by the fact that the school buildings in Weimar as well as in Dessau were entered onto the UNESCO World Heritage List. Today Bauhaus is the symbol of the modern perception of architecture; designs and their realizations created by Bauhaus masters and their students still provide inspiration for artists worldwide.

Yet, what is Bauhaus? In 2019 in the *Autoportret* magazine (no. 2), an interview was published in which Aleksandra Kędziorek talked with architect and art historian Jean-Louis Cohen. According to him, there are at least three definitions of Bauhaus. Specifically the term denotes the educational institution with its tutors, students and curriculum. Another interpretation includes also the extracurricular artistic activity of these Bauhaus students and their intellectual mentors. The popular view however equates the notion of Bauhaus with what is thought of as

a modern style. In its broadest definition, Bauhaus becomes a metonym for modern design.

Performative and media oriented activity at Bauhaus constitute an area that remains loosely associated with this institution, though it is in fact essential to modern art. On the experimental Bauhaus stage, Oskar Schlemmer was developing the idea of the Triadic Ballet where space became a means of expression acting together with the dancers' bodies seen as moving forms. And Laszlo Moholy-Nagy foretold that the twentieth century would be the age of light, encouraging his students to experiment with reflections and the play of light. This artist also searched for spatial and projecting mechanisms to enhance the experience of poly-cinema spectacles. Many of these pioneer ideas are still in use nowadays.

On November 27-29, 2019 at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, the *RE.bauhaus* conference took place. It was organized by the Faculty of Architecture and Design, with its program created by the editors of this thematic section: Katarzyna Zawistowska, Martyna Groth and Michał Pszczółkowski ('The Bauhaus Brigade'). Three modules were designed, each dealing with a certain category singled out from the vast body of research regarding Bauhaus: architectural, performative, media oriented. This division is retained in this issue of *Art and Documentation*. There are articles by scholars based in various Polish research centres in which they present ideas conceived in Bauhaus as continuous and up to date, because they still resonate among Polish artists and designers. The authors attempt to answer the question why the role of Bauhaus is still found to be to some degree essential within the design, visual and performative art of the twentieth century, as well as whether (and in what way), the influence of Bauhaus presents itself in Polish architecture. A final issue is the exploration of the manner in which those century-old, experimental ideas regarding stage performances inspire contemporary theatre artists.

Articles included in this *RE.bauhaus* thematic section present a critical reflection upon an extended way of perceiving art and design that addresses the needs of our present modern day, modern people and modern surroundings.

PERFORMATIVE MODULE

Małgorzata LEYKO

OSKAR SCHLEMMER: THE “NEW MAN” PROJECT

From the end of the nineteenth century, a great number of attempts were made to create proper conditions for human development and well-being in the world destroyed by the effects of the advances of civilization and urbanization. The article presents the vision of a new man that appeared after the First World War in Bauhaus, a modern design school. During the school's activities in 1919-1933, this pro-modernist vision evolved from the idea of a metaphysical man – at the stage of a stronger relationship of education in Bauhaus with art, to the social man in the second stage, when team design dominated and the university started to be considered the “design university.”

The most consistent vision of the new man was represented by Oskar Schlemmer - a painter, sculptor, author of milling cutters and wall metalworks, stage designer and choreographer. At the centre of Schlemmer's work in each of these areas was man who was for the artist “the measure of all things.” However, Schlemmer portrayed man in his visual and performing arts in a fundamentally different way.

While easel painting offered unlimited possibilities of portraying the human figure, Schlemmer, especially in the years 1921 – 1933, sought to present the figure of man in his typical, universal, and timeless form. However, in the space of the stage, where the principal material was a living man, Schlemmer used full-body masks, under which he hid the figure of the dancer transformed into a stage object.

An example of these experiments is the *Triadic Ballet* and *Bauhaus Dances*. The basis of these activities was the belief that visual arts use the surface to “recreate” the figure of a man, while the three-dimensional space of the stage allows the man to “be created” again.

Katarzyna UCHOWICZ

SPATIO-TEMPORAL. THEATRICAL ARCHITECTURE BY THE PREASENS GROUP

The idea of simultaneous theatre developed in 1928 by Szymon Syrkus and Andrzej Pronaszko, in cooperation with Zygmunt Leski, serves here as a starting point for discussing the projects of theatrical architecture by the group of artists called Praesens. My investigation reveals the new idea of the theatrical stage developed with particular attention paid to the first project of this type, namely Andrzej Pronaszko's moveable theatre (the first version dated to 1927), and to the dialogue between modernist stage design and architecture within the practices of this avant-garde collective. To reconstruct the process of how the new stage was created, an analysis of the biographies of artists was made and subsequently collated with source material related to the projects of theatrical architecture. It considerably enriches the present state of knowledge of this canonical project of the avant-garde. The chronological order was also interlaced with the discussion of the theatrical architecture of Praesens, in relation to crucial ideas of modernism, such as movement, time, space-time, simultaneity, mock-up, stage design, and creative dialogue. Moreover, several other strategies were discussed, such as advertising practices employed by modernists to promote their achievements and the importance of precedence and novelty in the interdisciplinary artistic network. These strategies and practices determined the way that Polish avant-garde artists operated.

Barbara ŚWIĄDER-PUCHOWSKA

ART IN MOVEMENT. THE ELEMENTS OF THE PRACTICE AND IDEAS OF BAUHAUS IN THE ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCES OF GDAŃSK INDEPENDENT THEATRES

This article is an attempt to indicate, in the activities and performances of selected Gdańsk-based independent theatre ensembles, direct inspiration, along with more remote analogies to the legacy of the Bauhaus, in terms of (among other things) organizational and artistic issues, as well as with regard to the sociopolitical context. The author also focuses on practice and on ideas that might, consciously or unconsciously, have been taken up by the founders of the first Gdańsk student theatres of the 1950s and by alternative theatre groups of the subsequent decades, until the beginning of the twenty-first century. The latter include Bim-Bom, Cyrk Rodziny Afanasjeff (The Afanasjeff Family Circus), Co To (What's That), Galeria A (A Gallery), Teatr Ekspresji (Theatre of Expression), Teatr Snów (The Theatre of Dreams) and Teatr Dada von Bzdülów (The Dada von Bzdülów Theatre). The influence of the artistic research of the Bauhaus was most entirely revealed, above all, in the fascination of Jerzy Krechowicz, the founder of Teatr Galeria, with the experiments of László Moholy-Nagy. With regard to the performances that were proposed by the independent Gdańsk theaters mentioned above, their more or less distant analogies and references to Bauhaus's stage experiments form two strands, which intertwine in the activity of individual groups, namely that of visual narrative and that of dance/movement – these are discussed by the present author. What appears to be the main issue is the fact that in the Bauhaus as well as in the first university student groups in Gdańsk, this theatre was created and transformed mainly by visual artists and not by “theatre people”. What was characteristic for the Gdańsk student theatres of the first period was this dominance of visual art, even a certain pictoriality, which remained to a large extent as a characteristic feature of independent groups from Gdańsk. With the assumption (after Zbigniew Taranienko) that the

theatre of visual narrative was entirely created in theory and realized in practice by the artists of the Bauhaus, mainly by Oskar Schlemmer and by Moholy-Nagy, the author situates Gdańsk theatres within such a tradition of theatrical experimentation, in which “The art in movement fulfills (...) the superior structural function and determines the content.” The purpose of this text is to demonstrate how individual elements, similar to those of the practice and of Gropius's concept of formation are visible in various scenes, in different times and places, and in other contexts, which this text demonstrates in a concise manner.

Mateusz CHABERSKI

FROM BAUHAUS TO THE ART OF THE FOGGY ANTHROPOCENE. A SPECULATIVE FABULATION

In recent years, the western humanities have witnessed a proliferation of various “speculative fabulations” (Haraway) concerning the ongoing ecocrisis. These are the new epochs in Earth's history such as the Capitalocene (Moore) and the Plantationocene (Tsing), which allow us to understand better what is happening to our planet. The emergence of various “-cenes” coincided with the celebration of the centenary of the Bauhaus, provoking questions about the extent to which the tradition of that school allows us to understand contemporary hybrid forms of performative arts at the intersection of nature, culture and technology. This paper argues that the Bauhaus tradition makes it possible to understand the phenomena occurring in the ‘foggy Anthropocene.’ In this epoch that I have called into being, we are dealing with both an ecological crisis and a serious epistemological crisis. The ‘foggy Anthropocene’ is therefore a speculation on what the world would look like if the dominance of sight as a tool of orientation had been weakened. It is this sense that guarantees, as the Modern age wanted, the most certain

knowledge about the world. By combining Anni Albers's works with a contemporary installation, I will show what the Bauhaus tradition can say about the epoch.

MEDIA MODULE

Andrzej GWÓŹDŹ

THINKING BAUHAUS... LEGACY OF THE ART OF LIGHT IN CONTEMPORARY PROJECTION PERFORMANCES IN PAINTING

The theory and practice of Bauhaus seem to be an unsurpassed commentary on contemporary phenomena in the field of projection light practices, the expansion of which is undoubtedly a legacy of the advancement of the use of light almost a century ago in the practice and theory of this School (light games by Kurt Schwerdtfeger and Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack, and particularly by László Moholy-Nagy). Among numerous forms of aesthetic qualities in the field of light practices present in the rapidly developing High Definition epoch light festivals (applying various types of video-mapping practices in urban areas) and immersive performances based on projection (screen) design of painting (*Alive* cycle, performances using the AMIEX Technology® – Art & Music Immersive Experience) have become increasingly successful all over the world. One development is the creation of a kinetic art of light (a kind of video art) on the basis of paintings. This art promotes “using” the projection of the design of paintings in such a way that they are viewed in a manner that differs from mere contemplative watching (as in the case of a museum). In this way, a digital form of timed painting in motion is implemented that initiates new styles of experiencing traditional painting art, equipped with qualities of an immersive light spectacle. “Video frescoes” come into existence – an intermedium at the junction of painting and projection, simulation and registration, and

the subject of experience is comprised of a light spectacle together with the place of its disclosure. Therefore, we are dealing with images of painting transferred to the dimension of a digital spectacle, which are managed by users in an environment where a trick of light acts in favour of the design of “poly-cinema” (Moholy-Nagy). The program of Moholy-Nagy's school of vision has come true: painting by means of light in a simultaneous cinema.

Kamil KOPANIA

ANDRZEJ PAWŁOWSKI'S PUPPET THEATRE AS AN UNREALISTIC PROJECT

At the beginning of the 1950s, Andrzej Pawłowski, inspired by the achievements of the Bauhaus movement and the work of Sergey Obraztsov, director of the Central State Puppet Theatre in Moscow, was engaged with creating a mirror puppet theatre. He patented his project, which was intended to facilitate the work of puppeteers and ensure wider social accessibility of the theatre, and tried to develop it by attempting to create an epidiascope puppet theater. Ultimately, however, his efforts failed due to the lack of interest in the project of the puppeteers, as well as down-to-earth problems, primarily with the precise optical tools that were difficult to access at that time. Nevertheless, the derivative of the experiments he conducted were *Kineforms*, important for Polish art in the 1950s and 1960s.

This text completes our knowledge of the mirror puppet theater. Thanks to the discovery of its design in the archives of the Patent Office in Warsaw, it became possible to accurately reconstruct the form and principles of operation of Pawłowski's portable stage. On the other hand, an in-depth analysis of the puppetry milieu of post-war Poland, its aspirations, needs, and artistic horizons made it possible to determine why Pawłowski's project did not meet the interest of those for whom it was created.

Martyna GROTH

AUDIOVISIONARY LABORATORY. CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES BY LASZLO MOHOLY-NAGY AND JERZY KRECHOWICZ

The article describes and compares the ideas and practices of two experimental artists – the Hungarian László Moholy-Nagy and the Pole, Jerzy Krechowicz. The relation between them, even they did not know each other or did not work simultaneously, seems to be important, because they both shared a fascination with expanding the visible image with the use of technologies. This encouraged them to realize optical and kinetic actions, as well as to design or implement spatial solutions which would create conditions for multi-dimensional and multi-sensory audiovisual events. The author recalls the little known concept of experimental cinema of the simultaneous and total theatre, discusses the score of an unrealized audiovisual event and project of the Stage of the Mechanized Eccentric (1924), as well as the creation of a kinetic modulator (1930). Their individual continuation was the activity of Jerzy Krechowicz in the Galeria Theatre (1961-1968), which was an audiovisionary laboratory and his little-known participation in a residency program at the Stichting Mickery Workshop in Loonersloot (Netherlands), where he worked on an audiovisual performance in an exceptional space - a hemispherical tent.

Paulina OLSZEWSKA

HOW TO MOVE IN THE COLOUR BLUE AND HOW TO SING IN THE COLOUR RED. GERTRUD GRUNOW AND HER HARMONY CLASSES AT THE BAUHAUS IN WEIMAR

The text is about my project, working together with German artist Jenny Brockmann, created for the Kunstfest festival in Weimar in 2018. Our project was based on the method developed by Gertrud Grunow, who taught at the Bauhaus school in Weimar in its early years. At the Bauhaus, Grunow invented and taught a method she called harmony lessons, based on analyzing the relationships between colour, sound and movement. Her class was part of what was known as a “preparation course” and students were required to take the class in order to be able to continue their education at the school.

The aim of our project *Collective Dialogue: Gertrud Grunow* was to focus more on Gertrud Grunow, whose work as a teacher at the Bauhaus School is often forgotten. We also wanted to familiarise people with her theoretical research and with her method. Because of a lack of historical materials, we did not try to reconstruct her teaching method but instead took a different approach and interpreted it artistically. In the text I analyse the method of Gertrud Grunow and describe one of the discursive events *Colour, Sound, Movement* organized as a part of the *Collective Dialogue: Gertrud Grunow* project, which also involved a jazz singer and a choreographer. Using their own methods working with sound and movement, they prepared their individual interpretations of Grunow’s method.

ARCHITECTURAL MODULE

Katarzyna UCHOWICZ

[OVER]WRITE MODERNISM. THE LETTERS BY SYRKUS TO GROPIUS

The article reveals a little-known aspect of an international architectural milieu, the correspondence network animated by women and their typing machines. Helena, born Eliasberg, together with her husband and professional partner Szymon Syrkus, were key figures in the history of the Polish Avant-garde; founders of a prominent modernists group and the journal *Praesens*. Nevertheless, Helena Syrkus, secretary and vice-chairwomen of CIAM (*Congrès international d'architecture moderne*), was carrying out the correspondence on behalf of her husband and herself. There exists a lot of letters exchanged between Polish architects and the famous “Bauhaus-couple” – Walter and Ise Gropius, as well as the Dutch architect Cornelis van Eesteren and his wife Frieda Fluck. In fact, letters from Walter, who was a Bauhaus leader were also typed by Ise Gropius on her typing machine (equipped with small lamp designed by Marianne Brandt from the Bauhaus group). Apparently, correspondence is an uncommon research field for architectural historians, but seems to be important phenomenon; these letters are a fertile source for the history of modern movements, including issues like minimal dwellings, functional cities, social settlement, urban planning. We can better understand unexpected twists in individual biographies, coherently related to the antisemitism of the late 1930s; the disaster of World War II, and the delusions of socialism. Regardless of the demise of their husbands, Helena Syrkus and Ise Gropius continued their correspondence for many years (“Use a typing machine and describe me everything” – wrote Gropius to Syrkus in one of her late letters). Additionally, the article depicts means such as photographs and typed texts used as promotional tools of Bauhaus ideas. Moreover,

the typing machine itself became a substantial challenge for Bauhaus designers (in fact, Gropius designed a typing machine for the Adler Company). This appliance was also regarded as an attribute of a modern woman (like the automobile for a modern man). The ability to use new stenotyping and stenography techniques, and expertise in four languages allowed Helena Syrkus to be financially independent and – finally – one of the most significant women in international architectural society of the twentieth century. The article “(Over)write modernism. The Letters by Syrkus – Gropius” relates to the publication: *CIAM Archipelago. Letters of Helena Syrkus*, which presents a selection of personal letters in Polish and English language. This book, edited by Aleksandra Kędziorek, Katarzyna Uchowicz and Maja Wirkus has been published by the Polish National Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning (Narodowy Instytut Architektury i Urbanistyki) in 2019. The article provides a short introduction to this book.

Szymon Piotr KUBIAK

BUILDING – MONUMENT – INTERIOR. GREGOR ROSENBAUER AND THE BAUHAUS NETWORK IN STETTIN/SZCZECIN

Peter Behrens is one of the forerunners of twentieth century architecture. He is often referred to as the intellectual father of three modernists: Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Each was apprenticed in his studio in Neubabelsberg around 1910. From 1919, Gregor Rosenbauer, a graduate of the University of Arts and Crafts in Frankfurt am Main, was the head of the Behrens studio. In 1922, he directed the construction of Behrens’ *Dombauhütte Pavilion* in the *Deutsche Gewerbeschau* in Munich, where the controversial *Crucifix* by Ludwig Gies was shown (later bought for the *Stadtmuseum* in Szczecin). Rosenbauer assisted Behrens in 1923 at his *Meisterschule für moderne Kunst unter Berücksichtigung der Monumental- und Industriebauten* at the Academy of Fine Arts in

Vienna. In the same year, despite the excellent reception by Viennese students, he decided to take on the position of director of the *Städtische Handwerker- und Kunstgewerbe-Schule* in Stettin (now Szczecin). His mission was to implement the reform initiated by Hermann Muthesius. Rosenbauer employed three Bauhaus graduates: Kurt Schwerdtfeger (from 1924), Else Mögelin (from 1927) and Vincent Weber (from 1931). The *Vorkurs* was led by Johannes Itten (as a visiting professor) for two years, and Mies came with guest lectures. Theoretical subjects were taught by the *Stadtmuseum* director Walter Riezler – a member of the *Werkbund* and publisher in chief of its magazine *Die Form*. Riezler presented the works of Stettin students in the *Mostra internazionale delle arti decorative* in Monza (1925 and 1927). An expression of appreciation for the reform of Rosenbauer was an article in *The Studio* dedicated to the school. In 1930, it moved to a functionalist building and changed its name to the *Werkschule für gestaltende Arbeit*. The most important designs by Rosenbauer in Stettin included: the interiors of the Provinzialmuseum Pommerscher Altertümer, remodelling of the fair pavilions for the exhibition *Die Gesundheitspflege* as well as houses and interiors for intellectuals and bourgeois: Richard Biesel, Gero Lüth, Wilhelm Léclair, Gerhard Salzweder, Siegfried Platzer. Most were associated with the Stettiner Museumsverein, in which Rosenbauer was on the board. His formal language combined the inspiration of De Stijl with Expressionism and *Neues Bauen*. The experience gained in Behrens' studio played a crucial role for his designs. In the second half of the 1930s, Rosenbauer's constant "love for tradition" was emphasized. Folk arts and crafts did indeed inspire all the leading artists from the Stettin school. The monument to the victims of the First World War in Massow (now Maszewo), designed by Rosenbauer in 1926, became most famous in 1939. It played a major role in propaganda due to the changing situation in global politics. The Szczecin modernists lost their positions after the Nazis came to power, but the new authorities partly continued to use their talents.

Aneta BOROWIK

THE THEORY OF ARCHITECTURAL FORM BY JULIUSZ ŻÓRAWSKI AND HIS STUDENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GESTALT PSYCHOLOGY CONCEPTS DEVELOPED IN THE BAUHAUS

The article discusses some still not fully recognized scientific issues such as the impact of the idea of Gestalt Psychology on the education and creative practice of Bauhaus and on the architects operating in Poland after World War II. The first part of the article, reviews the current state of knowledge about the influence of the Gestalt on Bauhaus school teachers and students (among others on Wassily Kandinsky, Josef Albers, László Moholy-Nagy and Paul Klee). The second part of the text briefly presents the theory of architectural form of Juliusz Żórawski and its impact on Polish architects, especially the generation taught by Żórawski. The theory of architecture and the creative practices of Henryk Buszko and Aleksander Franta were analysed. Both architects belonged to the group of the most outstanding architects of post-war Poland. Their most well-known works: the rehabilitation district Ustroń-Zawodzie (the famous "pyramids") and two housing estates – Tysiąclecia and Roździeńskiego in Katowice were clear example of the Gestalt theory in practice.