

BAUHAUS & ART DECO ROZ HOAGLAND

F103 -- LLI FALL 2020 DEC. 9 & 16, W 10 – 11:30 am

The Bauhaus, an art and design school created in Germany in 1919, ultimately advocated simple functional design. While closed by Hitler in 1933, its impact can still be felt today in product design and International Style architecture. The glitzy, jazzy Art Deco style flourished at the same time during the 1920s and 1930s, and was much more popular than Bauhaus modernism. It faded following World War II. These two contemporaneous approaches seem very different but they do have elements in common.

THE BAUHAUS, 1919 – 1933

Origins and History:

Roots in the English Arts & Crafts Movement, but Bauhaus recognized the value of machines. William Morris:

“Have nothing your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful.”

Deutsche Werkbund (German Association of Craftsmen, begun 1907 by Herman Muthusius) laid the foundations for the Bauhaus, seeking a synthesis between “machine style” and sound craftsmanship: “a marriage of art and technology.”

Werkbund split into two factions:

- 1) No ornament, maximum use of mechanical manufacturing (Gropius)
- 2) Individual artist’s expression (Taut)

Cologne Exhibition, 1914 – posters, buildings

Walter Gropius -- succeeded Van de Velde as head of School of Arts & Crafts, Weimar. Founded Das Staatliches Bauhaus Apr. 12, 1919, combining Arts & Crafts School with Weimar Art Academy to create the most influential design institution of the 20th century.

Three locations:

Weimar Bauhaus, 1919 - 25: Weimar city council withdrew funding in 1925

Visionary period, inspiration from expressionism

Greater emphasis on crafts than later – first major exhibition in 1923

Feininger: Bauhaus prospectus / Auerbach, Schlemmer: logos

Dessau Bauhaus, 1925 - 32: Dessau’s new city council cancelled funding in 1932

Gropius built the Bauhaus building, 1925-6; resigned, 1928

Hannes Meyer, director 1928-30; emphasized socialism, standardization

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, director 1930-33; emphasis moved to architecture

Berlin, 1933: July 20, 1933, the faculty voted unanimously to dissolve the school

Moved to Berlin and opened as a private school

Closed by Nazi regime for 3 months in 1933 for anti-government activity.

Philosophy: Initially a unity of art and handicraft; then a greater emphasis on technology. The 1923 Exhibition motto: “Art and Technology: A New Unity” Gropius: “a reunion between creative artists and the industrial world.” Emphasis on individual creativity, experimentation, new materials, plus practical shop and manual training.

Faculty: The faculty brought the influence of contemporary fine art movements to the Bauhaus. Gropius hired the most avant-garde artists of the time. New concepts of design and teaching emerged. Initially it was similar to English Arts & Crafts; then there was a change toward functionalism. De Stijl and Constructivism influenced Bauhaus design

Gropius, Johannes Itten (Swiss), Wasily Kandinsky (Russian), Paul Klee (Swiss/German), Josef Albers, Annie Albers, Oskar Schlemmer, Lionel Feininger (American), László Moholy-Nagy (Hungarian), Joost Schmidt, Gerhard Marcks, Marianne Brandt, Marcel Breuer (Hungarian), Herbert Bayer (Austrian), Mies van der Rohe, etc.

Students: from over 29 countries; peaked at 200 enrolled, but the preference was for 150

Curriculum:

Foundation Course (Vorkurs) – 6 month introduction to all craft materials and design principles; Designed to “unlearn” traditional academic training. (Taught by Itten, then Albers and Moholy-Nagy after 1923.)

Study of Form (Formlehre) – instruction in color, texture, composition (Klee, Kandinsky)

Journeyman Stage – 3 years of workshop training: stone, wood, cabinetmaking, metal, pottery, stained glass, wall painting, weaving, bookbinding, printing, typography, advertising design, stage design; architecture beginning in 1927 and photography after 1929.

Bauhaus design:

Metalwork: lamps – Wagenfeld, Marianne Brandt

Weaving: Annie Albers, Gunta Stolzl

Graphic design: Schmidt, Bayer, Moholy-Nagy

Stage design: Triadic Ballet – Schlemmer

Furniture: Peter Keler, Breuer, Mart Stam, Mies

Influence of the Bauhaus:

Created a valid modern design style

Dissolved the boundaries between fine and applied art

Formed the basis for the International Style

Established design, educational concepts used today

Designed for the machine thru standardization

Many Bauhaus teachers and students emigrated to the U.S. bringing modernism with them:

Moholy-Nagy, Mies (Chicago)

Gropius, Breuer (Harvard)

Bayer (NY)

Albers (Black Mt. College, Yale)

ART DECO

Most art historians say the style developed after WWI, but some date it to 1909-12.

Continuation of the more geometric version of Art Nouveau

Use of lavish ornament, fine materials and craftsmanship

Expensive one-of-a-kind decorative items and furnishings

Art Deco was opposed to Modernism -- first new 20th century style to be popular with the public.

The aim was to exploit the decorative value of the object, rather than its functional utility.

Early style was called "Art Moderne." A 1966 retrospective show in the U.S. coined the term "Art Deco" (Bevis Hillier) from the name of the 1925 Paris *Exhibition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*

Peak = 1920s and 30s -- new transportation systems, new technologies

Contradictions: time of economic crises during the Depression beginning in 1929.

Mass poverty vs. entertainment activities of the wealthy

French Art Deco: emotional, exuberant, colorful, playful

1925 Paris Exhibition:

Americans and Germans did not participate. Almost 150 pavilions, including those of the four major Parisian department stores. Modernist + foreign pavilions were exiled to right bank of the Seine.

This was the triumph of Art Deco, but also the beginning of its demise.

Style characteristics:

Exotic materials: snakeskin, tiger skin, ivory, ebony, crystal (Ruhlmann)

Luxury, one-of-a-kind pieces, expensive

Bright colors; shiny, metallic

Art Deco Imagery:

Flowers (Ruhlmann, Lalique)

Animals of grace and speed, women (Vera, Scolis, Chiaparus, Lalique)

Fountain (Edgar Brandt)

Ziggurat (Chanin Bldg., Templier)

Circles (Ruhlmann, Puiforcat)

Curves (Deskey)

Geometric shapes

Repeated lines (Cheuret)

Zig-zag (Deskey)

Streamlined (Bel Geddes)

Cross cultural influences: African-American (Josephine Baker), Egypt;

Also Assyria, Aztec, and the influence of Cubism

American Art Deco -- “Zig-Zag Modern” – American style was more functional
Rise of department stores in promoting French decorative art; museums promoted modern design competitions (MoMA).

Art Deco style became adaptable to machine production in U.S.; adopted more modernist elements, used more industrial materials

Style motifs: zig-zags, spirals, circles, sunbursts, machine imagery;
Sparse design was considered “modern”, yet it related to the Depression;
Influence of cinema -- silver, gold, black and white were popular colors

Architecture: Best seen in NYC, Miami Beach, and interior details.

William Van Alen: Chrysler Building, 1928-30

Raymond Hood: Rockefeller Center, 1931

Shreve, Lamb, Harmon: Empire State Building, 1932

Graphic Design: fonts & posters

There are differences, but also shared characteristics, with the modern approach of the Bauhaus.

Morris Fuller Benton (Amer.): Parisian font, 1928

A.M. Cassandre (Adolphe Jean-Marie Mouron) (Russian): foremost poster artist

Typefaces: Bifur, 1929; Peignot, 1931; Acier Noir, 1936

Posters: simple color planes, symbolic images

L’Intransigant, Nord Express, L’Atlantique

Jean Carlu: strong images, minimum of words, worked in U.S.

Pico (Maurice Picault): Cubist influence

Paul Colin: tremendous output, association with Josephine Baker

Jean Chassaing: Josephine Baker