

WALTER GROPIUS, *BAUHAUS MANIFESTO* (1919)

SOURCE: *FORM AND FUNCTION: A SOURCE BOOK FOR THE HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN, 1890-1939*,
ED. TIM AND CHARLOTTE BENTON (MILTON KEYNES: OPEN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1975)

Introduction

The ultimate aim of all creative activity is a building! The decoration of buildings was once the noblest function of fine arts, and fine arts were indispensable to great architecture. Today they exist in complacent isolation, and can only be rescued by the conscious co-operation and collaboration of all craftsmen. Architects, painters, and sculptors must once again come to know and comprehend the composite character of a building, both as an entity and in terms of its various parts. Then their work will be filled with that true architectonic spirit which, as "salon art", it has lost.

The old art schools were unable to produce this unity; and how, indeed, should they have done so, since art cannot be taught? Schools must return to the workshop. The world of the pattern-designer and applied artist, consisting only of drawing and painting must become once again a world in which things are built. If the young person who rejoices in creative activity now begins his career as in the older days by learning a craft, then the unproductive "artist" will no longer be condemned to inadequate artistry, for his skills will be preserved for the crafts in which he can achieve great things.

Architects, painters, sculptors, we must all return to crafts! For there is no such thing as "professional art". There is no essential difference between the artist and the craftsman. The artist is an exalted craftsman. By the grace of Heaven and in rare moments of inspiration which transcend the will, art may unconsciously blossom from the labour of his hand, but a base in handicrafts is essential to every artist. It is there that the original source of creativity lies.

Let us therefore create a new guild of craftsmen without the class-distinctions that raise an arrogant barrier between craftsmen and artists! Let us desire, conceive, and create the new building of the future together. It will combine architecture, sculpture, and painting in a single form, and will one day rise towards the heavens from the hands of a million workers as the crystalline symbol of a new and coming faith.

Program of the Staatliche (National) Bauhaus in Weimar

The Staatliche Bauhaus resulted from the merger of the former Grand-Ducal Saxon Academy of Art with the former Grand-Ducal Saxon School of Arts and Crafts in conjunction with a newly affiliated department of architecture.

Aims of the Bauhaus

The Bauhaus strives to bring together all creative effort into one whole, to reunify all the disciplines of practical art – sculpture, painting, handicrafts, and the crafts – as inseparable components of a new architecture. The ultimate, if distant, aim of the Bauhaus is the unified work of art – the great structure – in which there is no distinction between monumental and decorative art.

The Bauhaus wants to educate architects, painters, and sculptors of all levels, according to their capabilities, to become competent craftsmen or independent creative artists and to form a working community of leading and future artist-craftsmen. These men, of kindred spirit, will know how to design buildings harmoniously in their entirety – structure, finishing, ornamentation, and furnishing.

Principles of the Bauhaus

Art rises above all methods; in itself it cannot be taught, but the crafts certainly can be. Architects, painters, and sculptors are craftsmen in the true sense of the word; hence, a thorough training in the crafts, acquired in workshops and in experimental and practical sites, is required of all students as the indispensable basis for all

artistic production. Our own workshops are to be gradually built up, and apprenticeship agreements with outside workshops will be concluded.

The school is the servant of the workshop, and will one day be absorbed in it. Therefore there will be no teachers or pupils in the Bauhaus but masters, journeymen, and apprentices.

The manner of teaching arises from the character of the workshop: Organic forms developed from manual skills.

Avoidance of all rigidity; priority of creativity; freedom of individuality, but strict study discipline.

Master and journeyman examinations, according to the Guild Statutes, held before the Council of Masters of the Bauhaus or before outside masters.

Collaboration by the students in the work of the masters.

Securing of commissions, also for students.

Mutual planning of extensive, Utopian structural designs – public buildings and buildings for worship – aimed at the future. Collaboration of all masters and students – architects, painters, sculptors – on these designs with the object of gradually achieving a harmony of all the component elements and parts that make up architecture.

Constant contact with the leaders of the crafts and industries of the country. Contact with public life, with the people, through exhibitions and other activities. New research into the nature of the exhibitions, to solve the problem of displaying visual work and sculpture within the framework architecture.

Encouragement of friendly relations between masters and students outside of work; therefore plays, lectures, poetry, music, costume parties. Establishment of a cheerful ceremonial at these gatherings.

Range of Instruction

Instruction at the Bauhaus includes all practical and scientific cares of creative work.

A. Architecture,

B. Painting,

C. Sculpture

including all branches of the crafts.

Students are trained in a craft (1) as well as in drawing and painting (2) and science and theory (3).