

ABC

Press Release / Pressemitteilung

The ABC of Bauhaus

07.06.2019 – 26.04.2020

Kaiser Wilhelm Museum

Opening: 06.06.2019, 5:00 pm, Kaiser Wilhelm Museum

Press Conference: 05.06.2019, 2:00 pm, Kaiser Wilhelm Museum

When Walter Gropius founded the State Bauhaus as a school of reformist art in Weimar in 1919, it was only a short time later that the Lower Rhine region in Krefeld saw the dawn of a new period of Modernism. Appointed in 1922, Director Max Creutz (1876 – 1932) turned the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum into a platform for contemporary art and design again. Focusing on the avantgarde of the 1920s, the Kunstmuseen Krefeld are presenting a major exhibition, from their own collections, to mark the Bauhaus centenary year. Featuring highlights and big names from the collection, as well as some little-known works and aspects, the exhibition explores the many traces of the Bauhaus and its ideas that are evident in the collection.

Creutz cultivated his contacts with the Bauhaus and Walter Gropius and repeatedly presented Bauhaus masters and students in a variety of contexts. Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Gerhard Marcks, Johannes Driesch, Oskar Schlemmer, Johannes Itten, and Fritz Winter are all to be found at the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum. For a 1928 exhibition entitled “Color”, Kandinsky supplied educational color charts as illustrative material. In 1923, Creutz succeeded in acquiring the sample collection of the German Werkbund, the “German Museum for Art in Commerce and Industry”, from Karl Ernst Osthaus, bringing to Krefeld a different, mobile approach to educational work and permanently and prominently positioning the leading Bauhaus thinkers at the museum. “The Bauhaus and Krefeld engaged in particularly wide-ranging exchange, a process that continued to have an impact into the 1970s. Besides the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, knowledge was also shared above all between the textiles industry, the different design schools in Krefeld, and the Bauhaus. Johannes Itten, Georg Mueche, and Gerhard and Elisabeth Kadow served as a bridge between Krefeld, as a site of learning and production, and the Bauhaus. It is these diverse links that we now wish to showcase in the collection exhibition”, says Kunstmuseen Krefeld Director Katia Baudin.

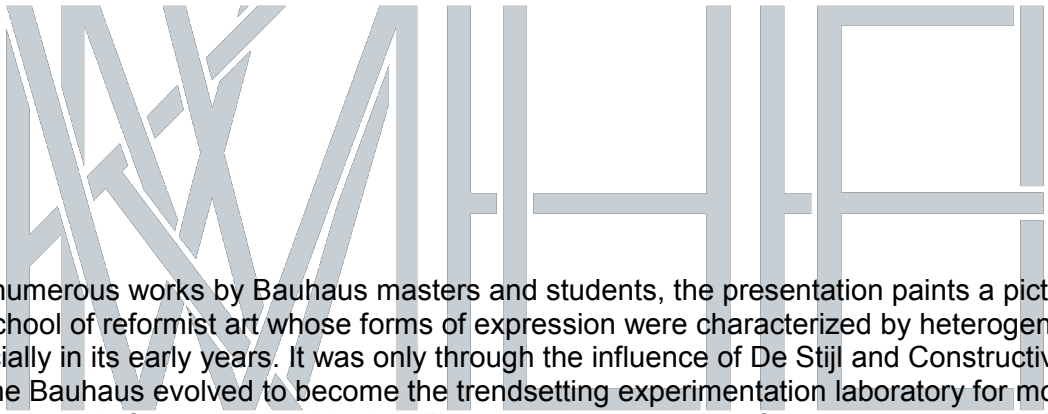
“Today’s collection features numerous ties to the historic Bauhaus, its trailblazers, main protagonists, and influences”, explains Curator Dr. Sylvia Martin. “They range from the works of many Bauhaus people – even if not all were active while the school was in operation – to works of contemporary art that clearly show Bauhaus influences and impulses”, adds Curator Dr. Magdalena Holzhey.

Kunstmuseen Krefeld

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With numerous works by Bauhaus masters and students, the presentation paints a picture of this school of reformist art whose forms of expression were characterized by heterogeneity, especially in its early years. It was only through the influence of De Stijl and Constructivism that the Bauhaus evolved to become the trendsetting experimentation laboratory for modern design that it is famous as to this day. The extensive collection of geometrically abstract art of the 1920s illustrates this influence.

Pioneers like the German Werkbund and the reformist efforts of the Art Nouveau movement are showcased, as is the educational impact of the Bauhaus, as evident in famous schools such as the Ulm School of Design and Black Mountain College in North Carolina, not to mention the Krefeld Werkkunstschule. Highlights from the collection, which include paintings by Josef Albers, Wassily Kandinsky, Piet Mondrian, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, and others, are presented alongside unknown works and aspects of the museum's history – such as the aforementioned color charts that Wassily Kandinsky arranged to be produced for educational purposes for the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum in 1928, and the large-format Rhythm 23 film by the leading cinematic pioneer Hans Richter.

Starting with Josef Albers, the influential Bauhaus teacher, and presenting the visionary ways in which the school, as a laboratory of Modernism, combined art, architecture and everyday design, thematic spaces open up in no particularly strict order to chart the history of the Bauhaus from the early twentieth century up to the present day. A role is played here by aspects such as the reception of Modernism, architecture as a societal utopia, the relationship between stage and body, play and technology, textile and abstraction. In this way, the Kunstmuseen Krefeld tell the story of Modernism from the chronological perspective of their own collection.

With works by:

Josef Albers, Max Bill, Jasmina Cibic, Sonia Delaunay, Theo van Doesburg, Lyonel Feininger, Werner Graeff, Hans Richter, Johannes Itten, Elisabeth Kadow, Gerhard Kadow, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Eva Kot'átková, Le Corbusier, Gerhard Marcks, Almir Mavignier, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Piet Mondrian, Georg Muche, Robert Rauschenberg, Robert Rotar, Oskar Schlemmer, Henry van de Velde, Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart, and many more

At **Studio 2**, a participatory platform for art education at the KWM, children and adults can immerse themselves in Bauhaus teaching, central features of which were new methodologies and a generally experimental approach. One particular role was played by the preliminary course, which was initially run by Johannes Itten and later by Josef Albers and László Moholy-Nagy. Studio 2 features a number of stations at which visitors can study and try out in practice the rhythm, form, material, and color experiments of the Bauhaus approach to teaching.

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Visitor's address

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Wilhelmshofallee 91-97
47800 Krefeld

Kaiser Wilhelm Museum
Joseph-Beuys-Platz 1
47798 Krefeld

Opening hours

Haus Lange Haus Esters
Tuesday, Thursday to Sunday 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Wednesday 3 – 9 p.m.

Kaiser Wilhelm Museum
Tuesday to Sunday 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

On the special holiday opening hours, see www.kunstmuseenkrefeld.de

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