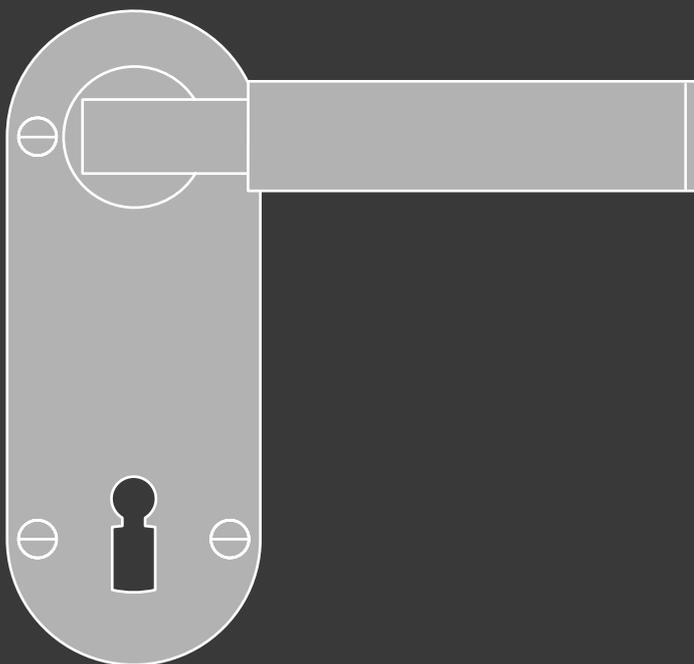
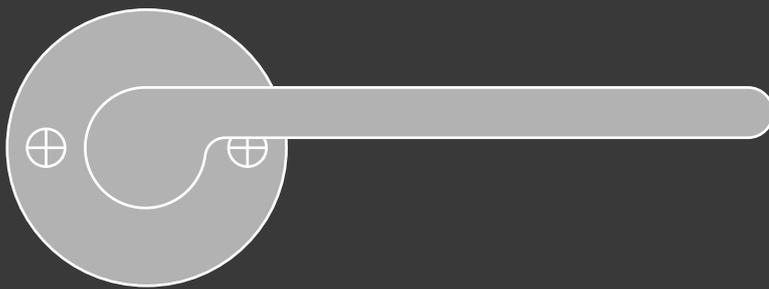
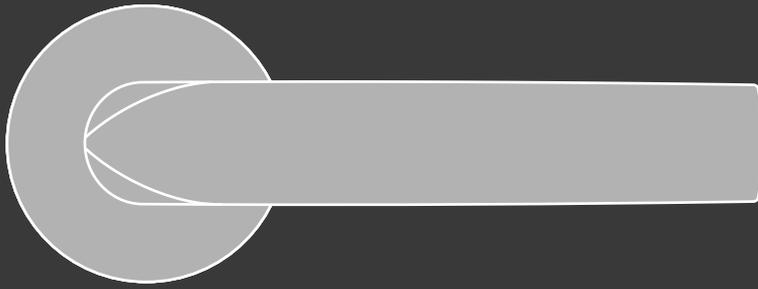


# FSB's 2019 Bauhaus Trilogy

Three icons revived



**100 Years of Bauhaus and the Three Lives of Things.** In 2019 the founding of the Bauhaus School in Weimar 100 years ago will be celebrated internationally. The range of the celebrations was affirmed in 2015 by the German Bundestag's decision asserting, "the Bauhaus anniversary is to be a national event of international radiance."

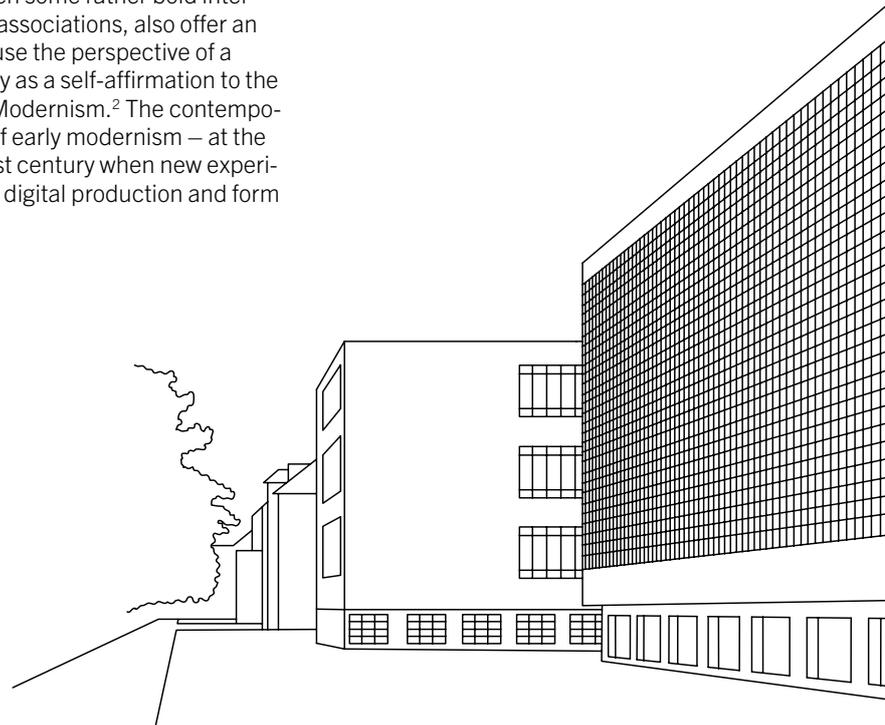
By Ines Weizman,  
translated by Elias F. Quijada Link

To that end, the government allocated a sum of nearly 70 million euros for the anniversary program as well as extensions and new development in the Weimar, Dessau, and Berlin bases of the Bauhaus. Yet while politicians praise the Bauhaus as being "Germany's most successful cultural export", its history finds it in less positive connotation, for it is not only the history of an institution that fought its way through a reformed, democratic Weimar Republic, against the pressures of conservative and rightwing tendencies, but rather also a history of (inner) migration, exile, and fleeing brought on by Hitler's rise to power and the shutdown of the Bauhaus in 1933. Protagonists, artworks, products, and documents ascribed to the Bauhaus were forced to go underground or scatter across the globe; meanwhile, buildings were built over, deconstructed, or demolished. Some artists and architects founded or reoriented schools in the west and east: Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer at the Harvard Graduate School of Design; László Moholy-Nagy the New Bauhaus in Chicago; Josef and Annie Albers at Black Mountain College; and Max Bill the Hochschule für Gestaltung, Ulm. Or they tested their practices and curricula in the Soviet Union, Africa, or Latin America against their respective native orthodoxies by opening a space for free thinking and imagination.<sup>1</sup> However, even in these new approaches they met restrictions. The path of the Bauhaus divided, losing its contours as well as its historiographers.

Reflections on the art and architecture school founded in April 1919 only some hundred meters away from the very same place where in that year the Weimar national assembly was established, lead not only to the works and ideas of the Bauhaus which were developed in the original Weimar, Dessau, and Berlin locations, but also to the bumpy path of a history in which the avantgarde and politically engaged educational center would be in different ways construed, praised, but also discredited and persecuted.

The call for an international celebration of the Bauhaus also promotes the further development, migration, and reception of the institution again within its historical context, with a mind on the implications of the time's political regime, to investigate them. In this sense, the range of festivities surrounding the Bauhaus, that both nationally and internationally have already found formats and even some rather bold interpretations and associations, also offer an opportunity to use the perspective of a 100-year history as a self-affirmation to the inheritance of Modernism.<sup>2</sup> The contemporary appraisal of early modernism – at the dawn of the 21st century when new experimental fields of digital production and form

grew – is surely only partially a result of historical analysis or cultural-political cues. Much more suggests the "revival" of the Bauhaus to be an end of grappling with the legacy of modernism, in that some original works remain preserved and presented (e. g. in museums, archives, or as memorials), while other specimens are proliferated as copies or further developed, reflected on, beloved, and ultimately received. The search for precedent (from today's perspective) is equally as fascinating as the search for posterity and subsequent administrators of the historical Bauhaus. Together the creators and their trustees were taken along with their documents and objects on internationally flung paths that often also lead to unclear tenures. The history of migration is therefore also the history of objects that



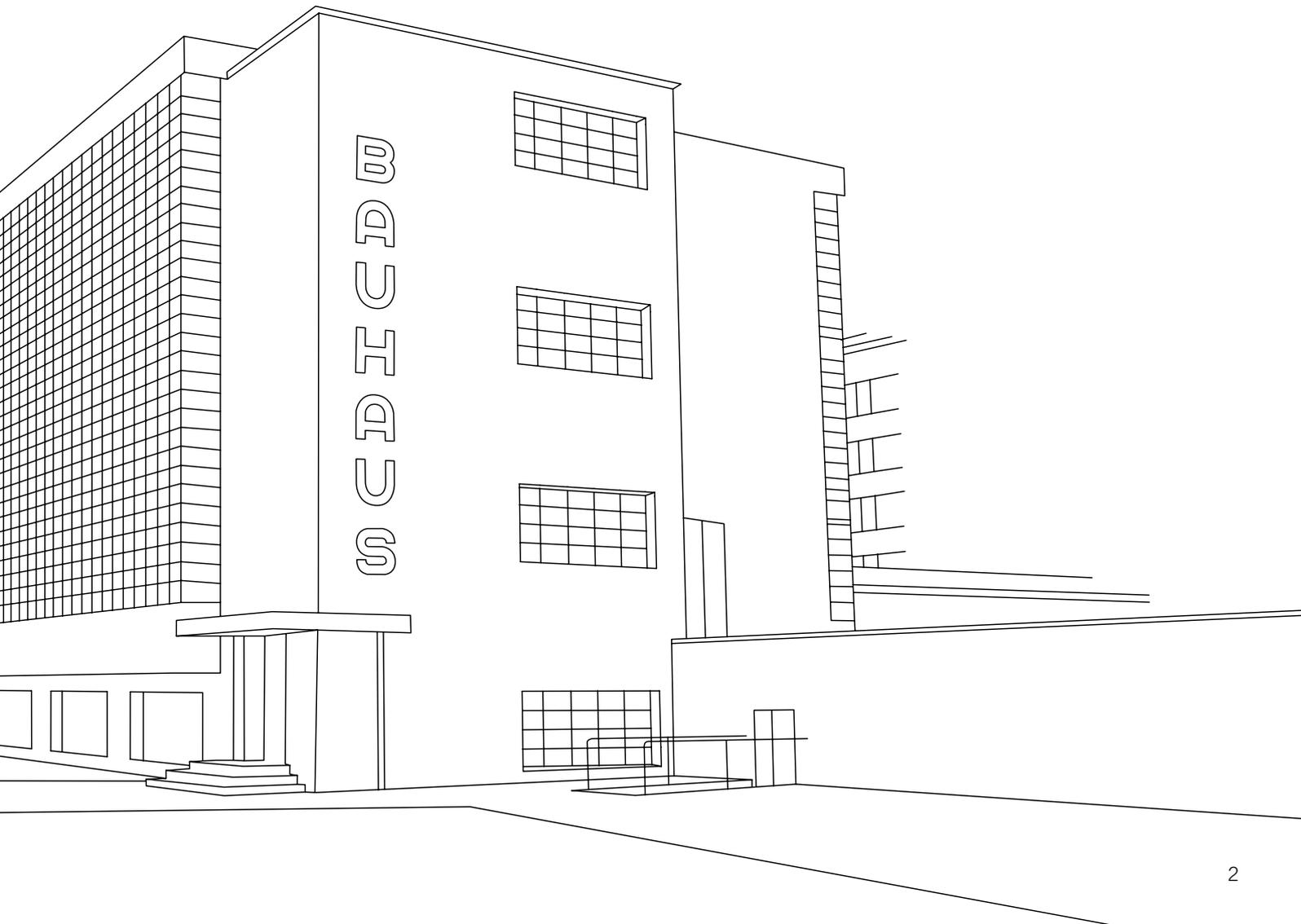
through new uses, holders, trustees, licensing agreements, legal disputes, the development of new products, and in the light of new research and the discovery of unknown works are constantly repositioned and appropriated. It is so today, in the internationally celebrated Bauhaus-year – thirty years after the end of the GDR – an opportunity to historiographically find a connection in the finely woven network of objects, ideas, and histories, one that truly binds the World Cultural Heritage Sites,

and in which the legacy not only on the anniversary but in the ever coming future is engaged.

The end of the GDR and the subsequent German reunification was tied to the opening of archives, private collections, and stocks as well as new opportunities to access objects and sources in the GDR Bauhaus locations in Weimar and Dessau, and in West-Berlin the Bauhaus Archive. Looking back on these 100 years of

Bauhaus thus also entails the collective reprocessing of this history, which made a plethora of new relationships of historical classifications, new fields of design in the arts and historiographical studies possible.

- 1 | Ines Weizman (ed.), *Dust and Data – Traces of the Bauhaus across 100 Years* (Leipzig: Spector Books, 2019).
- 2 | The architect Rem Koolhaas in 2014 already as curator of the International Architecture Biennale in Venice gave the exhibiting nations the assignment to reflect on the year 1914 and the impact of the First World War in their respective historical contexts on their architectural history. The context of the "Bauhaus-Year 2019", I would argue is founded in a similar way.



**The Three Lives of Things.** The Bauhaus had an impact extending far beyond its dissolution in 1933. A new mindset took hold at the Ulm Hochschule für Gestaltung in 1953, yet reflections upon the past were for decades hindered by the adversities of the Cold War. In the third life the Bauhaus is currently embarking on, its works are opening up scope for new insights, inspiration and developments.<sup>3</sup>

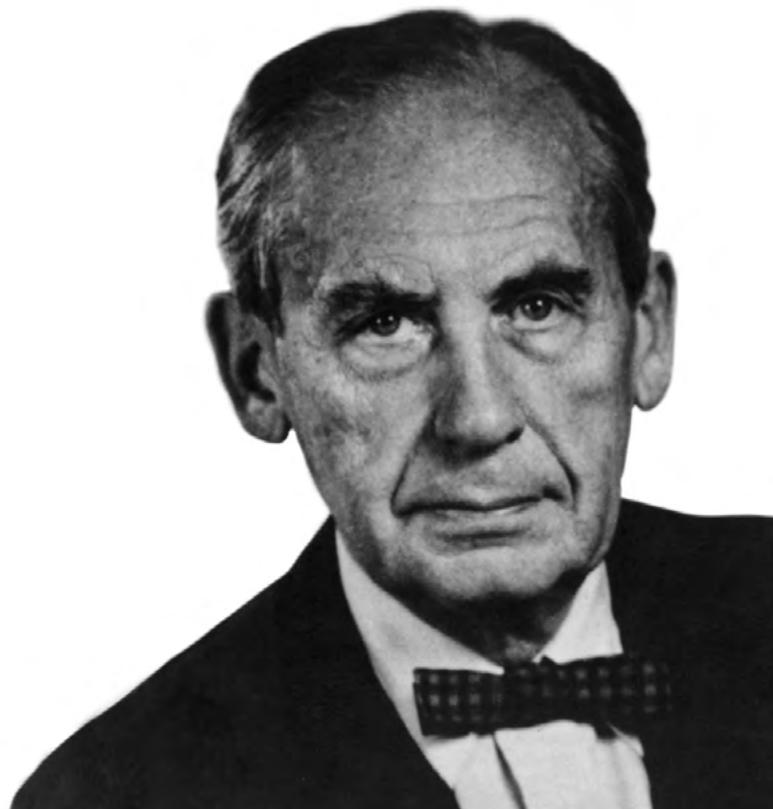
#### The first life

In 1919 Walter Gropius, the founding director of the Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar, called together a group of international avantgarde artists, and later architects, for an ambitious experiment of establishing an educational center based on the principle of the Gesamtkunstwerk, or total artwork, that in its manifesto declared architecture to be an “end to all creative activities.” But in Weimar an education in architecture could hardly be realized, because in 1925 the Bauhaus already was forced to leave Weimar due to the newly elected conservative-nationalist federal state government, which was skeptical of the universalistic and social-utopic ideals that pervaded the school. In 1932 they were forced to close the school in Dessau under the pressure of the ever-growing influence of the National Socialist Party. In this time of existential insecurity, the school had to continuously

adapt to new circumstances, was constantly called upon to reflect on its conceptual foundation, and to position itself politically. Against such adversity did Mies van der Rohe’s last attempt in 1933, to revive the school in Berlin, fail. At the Hitler-regime’s rise to power, many members and advocates of the Bauhaus, whose work was labeled “degenerate art”, felt forced out of Germany. After the war they could only slowly begin to pick up where they left off since the Bauhaus and its ideology was interpreted differently in West and East Germany.

#### The second life

In West Germany, it is not until the 1950s and 60s that Bauhaus Historiography finds significant material record in the founding of the Ulm Hochschule für Gestaltung in 1953, by Max Bill, Otl Aicher, and Inge Aicher-Scholl, the opening ceremony of which included a speech given by Walter Gropius. The consolidation of resources collected over years from donations and inheritances in art-historian and curator, Hans-Maria Wingler’s book, “Bauhaus. Weimar Dessau Berlin” helped associate artists of the Bauhaus to their works. This work took the form of an institution in 1960 with the founding of the Bauhaus Archive in Darmstadt. A building designed by Walter Gropius for this purpose would ultimately be built in West-Berlin in 1964.





The buildings of the Ulm Hochschule für Gestaltung on Kuhberg Hill, designed by Max Bill

In contrast, an open discussion of Bauhaus history as such was not possible in the GDR due to the suspicious gaze of cultural bureaucrats until the mid-70s. The first GDR head of state, Walter Ulbricht was publicly outspoken against the Bauhaus. The avant-garde and free thought that drove students of the Bauhaus, as well as the fact that too many protagonists of the school, including its two directors, sit in the capitalist West, and its third director, Hannes Meyer, returned from the Soviet Union and Mexico – yet unrehabilitated and staying in Switzerland – made it impossible for representatives of the state’s ideology to incorporate the Bauhaus. It was only under the new leadership that presided over the renovation and re-opening of the Bauhaus building in Dessau in 1976, that an in-depth investigation of Bauhaus history was possible, albeit short of comprehensive, with the rare exception of a personnel exchange across Eastern Bloc borders.

It is perhaps little-known that the reconstruction of the Bauhaus building in Dessau was an initiative overwhelmingly planned and executed by architects and professors of the Bauhaus University, Weimar, which in turn led to establishing the International Bauhaus Colloquium of 1976. The reopening of the Bauhaus building in Dessau and the subsequent invitation of international guests from the East and West to Dessau and Weimar marked an important moment in the since-grown, open discussion of the reception of the Bauhaus in what was once the GDR. Each of these congresses in Weimar every three or four years, of researchers, architects, and previous members of the Bauhaus, by their lectures and demonstrations tested what in those political atmospheres was allowed to be said and what was known of the remaining objects and people of the Bauhaus as well as initiatives for collections and monuments.

The collapse of the GDR and reunification of Germany opened new possibilities in the research of Bauhaus history. The historical Bauhaus became an important contact-point on which a reunited Germany could base its profile and present itself. The political map of history will reveal itself once again when in 2019, in Germany, three new Bauhaus structures are opened in Weimar, Dessau, and Berlin. Today, the Bauhaus-University, Weimar, is located in the historic building complex built 1904–11 by Henry van de Velde for the Grand Ducal Saxon School of Applied Arts and the Grand Ducal School of Arts and Crafts, in which the Staatliche Bauhaus was active from 1919–25.<sup>4</sup> As a university it is beholden to the place and inheritance of ideals of the Bauhaus. While the three leading cultural institutions, the Klassik Stiftung Weimar, the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, and the Bauhaus Archive Berlin, serve a different function with their extensive collections, each primed to exhibit them with their new constructions and extensions. Among the new constructions are the new Bauhaus Museum in Weimar by Heike Hanada, the Bauhaus Museum Dessau by addenda architects (González Hinz Zabala), and the Bauhaus Archive in Berlin by Staab Architekten.

3 | On my concept of the three lives of modernism see also: Ines Weizman, “The Three Lives of Modern Architecture: Wills, Copyrights and their Violations”, in Arrhenius, Lending, Miller, and McGowan (eds.), *Exhibiting Architecture. Place and Displacement* (Baden: Lars Müller Publishers, 2014), 183–96; and Ines Weizman, “Fahrenheit 2400° – The Second Life of Luis Barragán”, in Jill Magid (ed.), *The Proposal* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016), 136–48.

4 | The over-150-year long history of today’s Bauhaus-Universität ranges through the preceding institutions of the Weimar Bauhaus as well as its unquestionable successors in the late Weimar Republic, the school under National Socialism up through the postwar times, through its central role in construction in the GDR up to Reunification and its development to date.

Left: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius; by kind permission of the KOR Academic Picture Archive run by the Art History Institute at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main. Right: Wilhelm Wagenfeld Foundation.



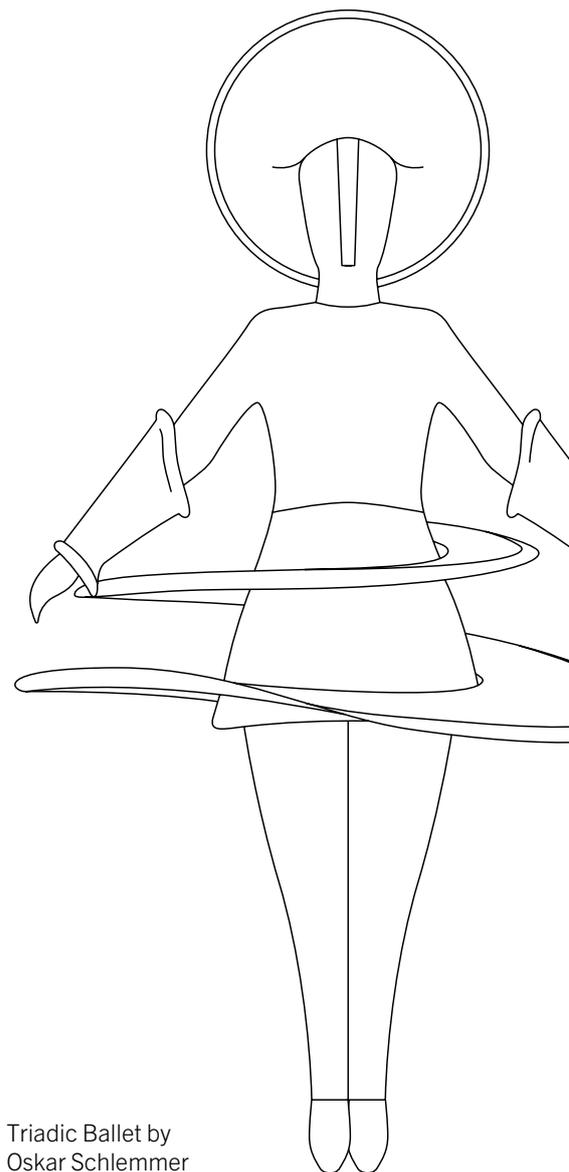
## The third life

As previously shown in that short riff on Bauhaus history, many facts and insights remain in the historical school and its subsequent institutions to be derived from research, and even in the 21st century it will be a challenge to reproduce the Bauhaus and its international historical impact. The digital era makes it possible to record and preserve art, design, and architectural history anew. The ballets and plays Oskar Schlemmer performed with his students in both Weimar and Dessau served to investigate the principles underpinning choreography and the relationship between space and figure. Three-dimensional costumes in a variety of fabrics and materials were developed drawing on the geometrical shapes of the circle, triangle and rectangle with which the Bauhaus experimented. Dancers concealed within such frequently rather voluminous and bulky apparel spatially re-enacted themselves through human motion, thereby turning dance itself into a process of formal discovery, into an aesthetic state conducive to new means of design.

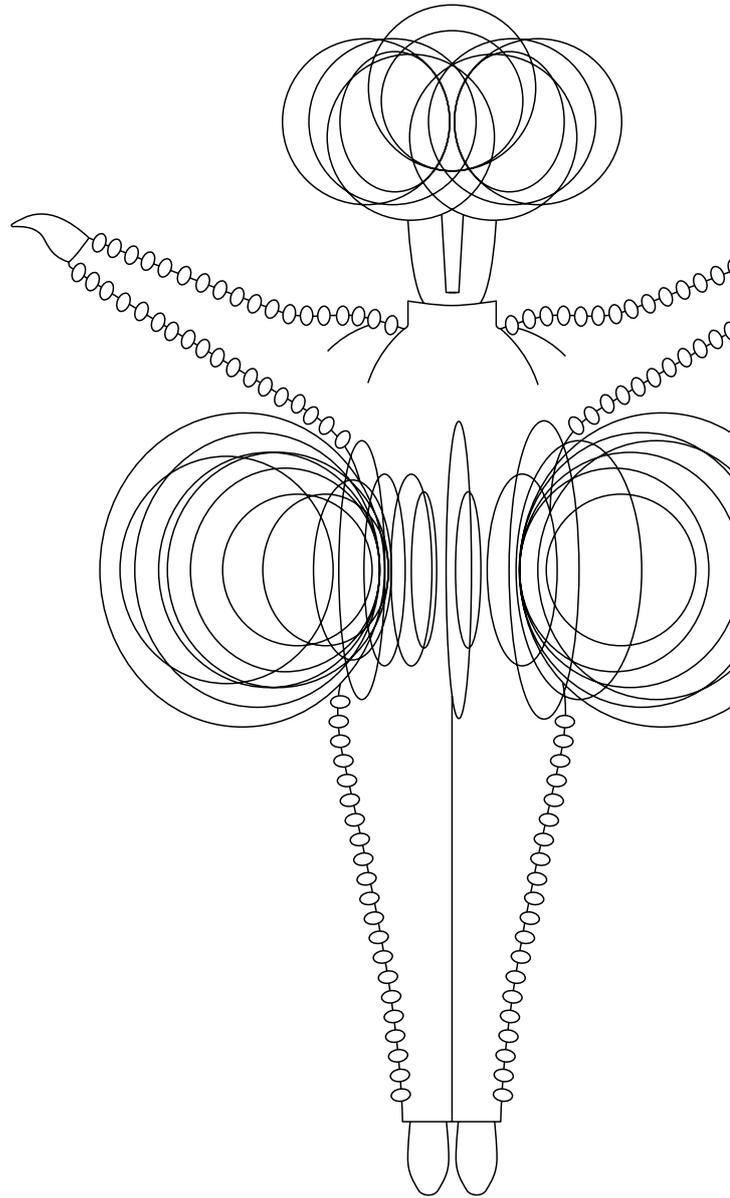
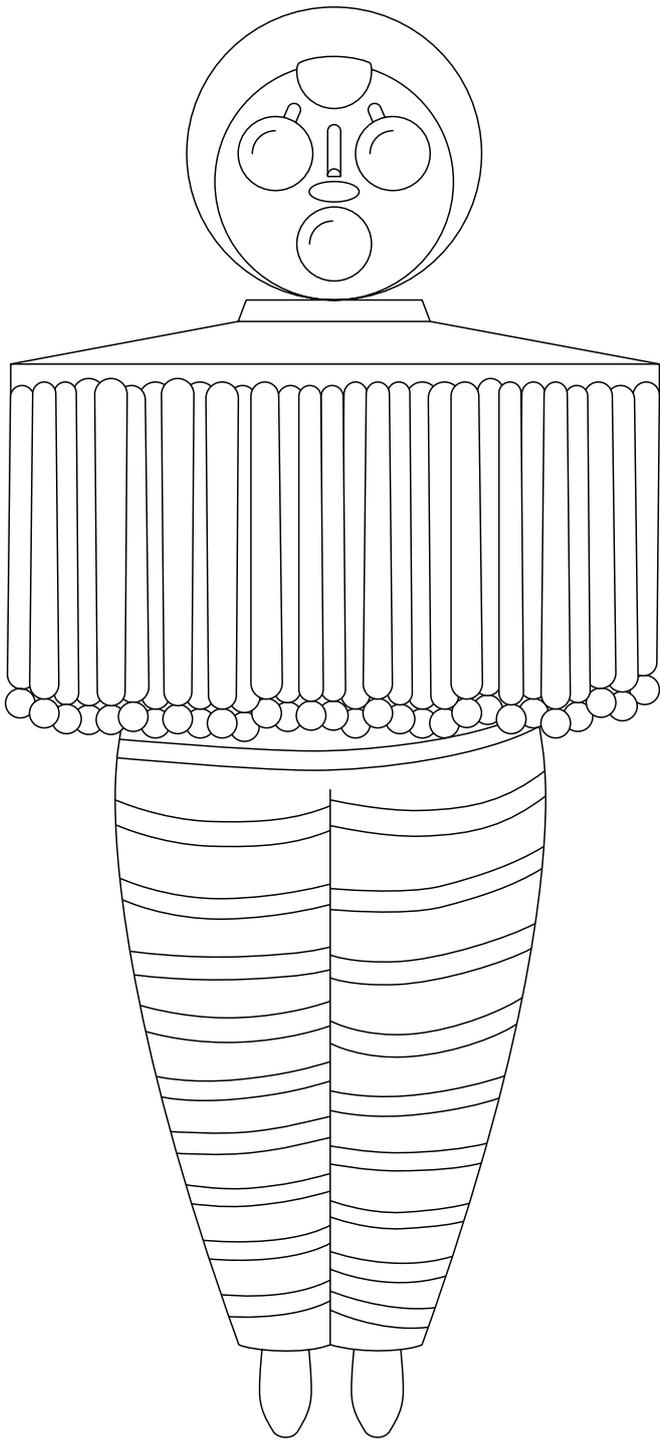
New technologies in detection, such as 3D-Scan, photogrammetric analysis, remote-sensing, or drones, can perceive what the naked eye (or a normal camera) never could, and enable new approaches to material objects and architecture. New recording and documentation techniques can be joined nearly seamlessly with methods of production and reproduction of objects, whether they be artworks, construction components, or architecture. It raises questions regarding authenticity, authorship, and copyright but also of revision and appropriation of history through new uses and ideas.<sup>5</sup>

Thus was a collective breath taken throughout the museum-world at the end of 2013, when the Bauhaus master Oskar Schlemmer's copyright expired seventy years after his death. For years collectors, art dealers, and auctioneers shied from exhibiting, selling, or auctioning works by Schlemmer. The artist famous for the Triadic Ballet could be dedicated no retrospective because Oskar Schlemmer's successors and his wife fought over the rights of ownership and handling of his inheritance.<sup>6</sup> Only after the expiration of the copyright could the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart show the comprehensive retrospective "Oskar Schlemmer: Visions of a New World." This example suggests the many works that remain inaccessible to the public, not because they are undiscovered or missing, but because families and private collectors keep them hidden. So, if previously it was the ideological interpretation or the impossibility of research over Cold War borders that hindered a comprehensive understanding of Bauhaus history, then here it is the works kept in the dark, those in their "second life", that obscure the history of modernism. It is only in the third life of things, when a work is freed of its author and trustees, when they become public domain, that they are free for new perceptions, inspirations, and new developments.

5 | Ines Weizman, *Documentary Architecture. The Digital Historiographies of Modernism*, *Faktur. Documents and Architecture*, Issue 1, Autumn 2018, pp. 6–25. (German version of the article in *Arch+*, Winter 2018/19).  
6 | Peter Raue, *Schlemmer vor Gericht*, *bauhaus 6*, periodical of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, January 2014, pp. 85–91.



Triadic Ballet by  
Oskar Schlemmer



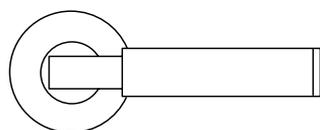
**From Bauhaus to Brakel.** We have Bauhaus practitioners to thank for some timelessly valid products. Their simplicity and fit-for-purpose beauty exemplify in equal measure the design aspirations pursued by FSB. We are now paying tribute to the originals with re-interpretations of door levers by Walter Gropius, Wilhelm Wagenfeld and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

### Between original and refinement

Just in time for the anniversary of the Bauhaus, the East Westphalian company presents under the title “FSB Bauhaus Trilogie” the redesign of three door handles and thereby looks back on a decade-long fascination with and development of the modern design aesthetic of the Bauhaus. Instead of copying the originals 1:1, the company was dedicated to sensibly rework the door handles to fit the needs of the buildings while paying homage to the formal characteristics of the designs.

The trilogy consists of the famous so-called “Gropius-Handle”; a door handle by the Bauhaus student, Wilhelm Wagenfeld, who developed this design from 1926-28 at the Staatliche Bauhochschule Weimar; and a door handle developed by the third director of the Bauhaus, Mies van der Rohe, of which he made different versions since 1928 for projects in Germany as well as after his move to the USA. The trilogy draws on historical complexities and characteristics of the Bauhaus of three different locations and its international history of migration.

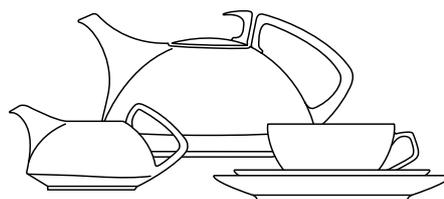
The Italian Designer Alessandro Mendini had already reworked the Gropius-Handle for FSB in 1986 by adding a circular engraving to one end and replacing metal parts of the handle with black and colored durohorn at the now celebrated “Türklinken-Workshops”. Mendini’s door handle FSB 1102 references a draft by Walter Gropius and Adolf Meyer from 1922 that they developed in their private studio for the “Haus am Horn”, the first legendary architectural Bauhaus project, realized at the Bauhaus



Door lever FSB 1102 by Alessandro Mendini

exhibit in Weimar in 1923. Maler Georg Muche’s draft of the building was meant to depict the ideal of a Gesamtkunstwerk, the interplay of art and craft. Masters and students of all faculties contributed item designs and furniture. Marcel Breuer introduced many works of carpentry including his Lattenstuhl and his famous women’s dressing table. László Moholy-Nagy and Carl Juncker developed various ceiling lights and lamps in the metal workshop, Alma Buscher and Erich Bendel drafted a play-room complete with toys and furniture, the weavers Gunta Stölzl, Martha Erps, Benita Otte, Agnes Roghé, and Lis Deinhardt created carpets, and the ceramic workshop produced receptacles from Theodor Bogler and Otto Lindig. The form of Gropius and Meyer’s door handles, the design principles of which were also meant for the window handles, followed the geometric abstraction and simplification experimented with at the Bauhaus. The circular, and in other drafts square rosette wraps around a curved metal bar with four faces, connected to a cylindrical grip.

The draft of Gropius and Meyer’s door handle was edited in 1922 by the Berlin company S. A. Loevy for a serial production, licensed and marketed under Walter Gropius’s name.<sup>7</sup> The simplicity of the design and ease of production lent itself to reproduction and use in the greater housing projects of the mid-20s in the Weimar Republic.<sup>8</sup> Door handle designs by Wagenfeld and Mies also appear in the Loevy company product catalogs up to 1933.<sup>9</sup>



TAC tea set by Walter Gropius

Wilhelm Wagenfeld, a student of Moholy-Nagy’s metal workshop, is among those Bauhaus members who stayed in Weimar after the Bauhaus moved to Dessau. The Architect Otto Bartning, who headed the subsequent Bauhaus school, the Staatliche Hochschule für Handwerk und Baukunst in Weimar from 1925–1930, hired Wagenfeld as an assistant and as of 1929 as head of the Metal workshop.

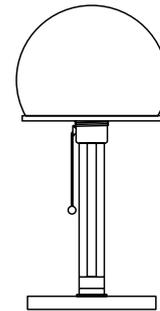


Table luminaire by Wilhelm Wagenfeld

While Wagenfeld’s famous 1924 lamp, with an opal glass shade, polished nickel-plated shaft on a dark, oxidized stand with a base of three metallic hemispheres, did not make it to industrial production, his door handle designed for the Bauhochschule was made in series.<sup>10</sup>

## The FSB Bauhaus Trilogy

The FSB designer Hartmut Weise reworked the Wagenfeld-handle in the 90s and also dedicated a door handle by Mies van der Rohe to the “FSB Bauhaus Trilogie 2019”, a design that is still a classic treasured by architects and users, but which needed to be adapted to new standards.

Mies developed different versions of his door handle for different projects. That includes not only buildings he realized in his time as director, such as the Haus Tugendhat in Bruno (1930) or Haus Lemke in Berlin (1932), but also later projects in the USA, while he taught at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, for example the Farnsworth House (1945–51) and the so-called “God Box” church on the institute’s campus (1952). Out of the many variations, in which he always incorporated the characteristic “Zeigefingerkuhle” (index-finger pit) that never fails to surprise the hand that grips it, Hartmut Weise chose the handle of Haus Lemke as his template. In reflecting on his work, Weise appreciates how Mies’s drafts show a deep understanding of form and materiality: “Mies knew that material and patina are tightly bound and how they can achieve a model that does not lose optical quality through use and gripping the edges, but rather becomes ‘more beautiful’ by means of design and intentional form.”<sup>11</sup> Weise occupied himself with the functional ergonomic moments of the handle, in the rounded curve of the flat handle and the grip on the inner wall, but also the defined and precise form of the edges.

The forefinger furrow that is prominent in the Haus Lemke door handle was maintained in the revision only as an idea. Just as the images and history of the original “Bauhaus” fade, here, hidden on the inner face of the handle, we find only a fine “touch” that connects us to the index finger of the brave and visionary protagonists of the 100-year history of the Bauhaus.

It is surely a fitting symbol, to bring us closer to this yet incomplete history and its broad network of comrades in art, design, architecture, industry, and politics with the door handle, to try to grasp it. The “FSB Bauhaus Trilogie 2019” is in that way a reencounter with and homage to the classics of the Bauhaus on its anniversary, but also a blaze for the further development of newer products in interplay with their designers, architects, and users.

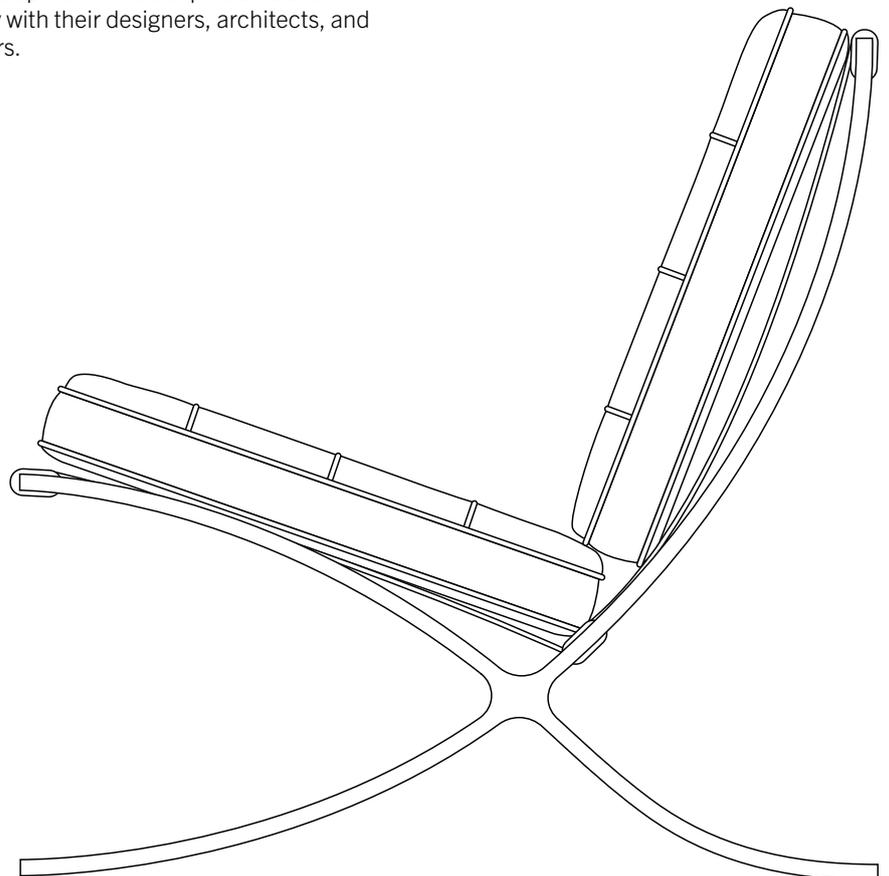
7 | Siegfried Gronert, *Türdrücker der Moderne – Eine Designgeschichte* (Köln: König, 1991), 20.

8 | It was simplistic enough however that the draft was used in a legal dispute between the S. A. Loevy company and Gropius as evidence of its uniqueness with regard to the intellectual property of the artistic aspect of the draft. The dispute arose as the Wagenfer company offered a line in 1928 with the title “Dessauer Bauhausdrücker” in their catalog. A definite infringement upon the Loevy company’s licensing right, the Berlin state court acknowledged this and forced production constraints on the Wagenfer company. Since Gropius himself disregarded the license agreement in that he engaged the Wagenfer company to fabricate the door handles of the Bauhaus in Dessau, it also came to a dispute between the Loevy company and Gropius. Though the Loevy company won the first instance, in the second instance Gropius’s right was recognized on account of his draft. On one hand it was decided the draft would be recognized as work in Thüringen where Gropius was employed as director of the Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar and not in Gropius and Meyer’s private studio; on the other hand, the drafts clear depiction of the door handle’s distinct function disqualified the claim to it being an original, functionless artwork. In this decision it is clear that copyright law was not adapted for the functionalism of early modernism on the rise to industrial serial production. See: Helmut F. Braun und Michael Dorrman (eds.) “Dem Deutschen Volke”: Die Geschichte Der Berliner Bronzezießer Loevy. *Zeitzeugnisse Aus Dem Jüdischen Museum Berlin*, Köln: DuMont 2003.

9 | The recognized Jewish family company S.A. Loevy that in 1930 celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary and was decorated with high political medal, became a victim to the antisemitic persecution after 1933. The company was “arianized” in 1939 and the family was forced to sell the company for a small sum. Most family members did not survive the concentration camps.

10 | Gronert, *Türdrücker der Moderne*, 20.

11 | Unpublished minutes of Hartmut Weise, Summer 2018.



Barcelona Chair by  
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

**FSB's 2019 Bauhaus Trilogy.** Right on cue for the Bauhaus centenary, we are presenting re-designs of three different door levers as our "FSB Bauhaus Trilogy", in the process looking back over several decades in which we have been gripped by the design aesthetic informing modernism and the Bauhaus whilst also taking it further forward.



# FSB 1102

Original design by  
Walter Gropius and Adolf Meyer

Original design



Re-design FSB 1102



Short backplate set with  
cut, visibly fixed back-plate

FSB 10 1102 with  
14 1425

Re-design by  
Alessandro Mendini, 1986



Door-lever set with  
angular, visibly fixed roses,  
optionally also with round  
roses

FSB 10 1102 with  
17 1795 / 17 1796

Plug-in handle for internal  
doors, optionally also as  
plug-in handle for windows



FSB 15 1102



# FSB 1021

Original design by  
Wilhelm Wagenfeld

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Original design



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Re-design FSB 1021



Door-lever set with  
round, visibly fixed roses

FSB 10 1021 with  
17 1790 / 17 1791

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Door-lever set with  
angular, visibly fixed roses

FSB 10 1021 with  
17 1795 / 17 1796



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Plug-in handle for internal  
doors

FSB 15 1021





# FSB 1267

Original design by  
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

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Original design



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Re-design FSB 1267 by  
Hartmut Weise



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Door-lever set with  
round roses

FSB 12 1267

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Plug-in handle for internal  
doors, optionally also as  
plug-in handle for windows



FSB 15 1267



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