

Press release

New Exhibition at the Bauhaus-Archiv: “New Bauhaus Chicago: Experiment Photography and Film”

Extensive photography show to celebrate 80th anniversary of the founding of American school succeeding the Bauhaus / Last exhibition in the Bauhaus-Archiv building before the museum’s modernisation and expansion

Berlin, 14 November 2017: The Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung is presenting the photography of Chicago’s New Bauhaus and the Institute of Design that emerged out of it in a major exhibition running from 15 November 2017 to 5 March 2018. This year marks the 80th anniversary of the Bauhaus successor institution that was founded by the avant-garde artist and former Bauhaus teacher László Moholy-Nagy in 1937 and developed into an important centre of photographic education in the US.

“We are presenting the most extensive exhibition on photography at the New Bauhaus and Institute of Design ever shown outside the US. It is based on the Bauhaus-Archiv’s unique holdings related to the legendary Chicago school, which feature multifaceted material stemming from the late 1930s to the 1980s,” explains Annemarie Jaeggi, Director of the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung. “It was possible to expand these once again through gifts made during preparations for the exhibition. I warmly thank all our donors for this.” Select loans from renowned cultural institutions in Chicago round off the presentation.

The exhibition provides deep insight into teaching practice as well as the range of teachers’ and students’ work in photography and film. Renowned fine-art photographers like György Kepes, Nathan Lerner, Arthur Siegel, Harry Callahan and Aaron Siskind shaped generations of photographers. Works by graduates like Barbara Crane, Joseph Jachna, Yasuhiro Ishimoto, Kenneth Josephson and Ray K. Metzker demonstrate how much their education remained a lifelong source of inspiration for them. The focus was on experimental approaches ranging from photograms to diverse variants of photography and all the way to the moving image.

Along with around 200 photographs and 20 films, the exhibition includes a great number of documents and publications, thus conveying the history and distinctive characteristics of the photography programme at the New Bauhaus and Institute of Design, which displayed numerous changes over the years, but also central constants. Situated within the Light Workshop, photographic education was initially a part of the interdisciplinary preliminary course. Light was seen and handled as an independent working material. This training aimed at using photography to enable students to give expression to their own creativity and acquire a self-assured formal gaze.

The kinship between the inquiries pursued by photography today and those at the Institute of Design is illustrated by independently developed, contemporary positions from Chicago, such as those of Doug Fogelson, Sonja Thomsen or Clarissa Bonet. The photography programme at the Institute of Design existed until 2001.

“New Bauhaus Chicago: Experiment Photography and Film” is the last exhibition in the current Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung before Berlin’s Bauhaus institution moves out of the museum building in the spring of 2018. In the coming years it will be modernised in keeping with its listed status and expanded through a new museum building.

This exhibition project is part of the preparations for the Bauhaus centenary in 2019 and is supported by the German Federal Cultural Foundation and the Federal State of Berlin.

A richly illustrated book will be published with contributions by Astrid Bähr, Stephen Daiter, John Grimes, Sibylle Hoiman, Kristina Lowis and Elizabeth Siegel.

Main sponsors: German Federal Cultural Foundation and the Federal State of Berlin

Partners: Goethe-Institut, American Embassy, Jugend im Museum e.V.

Catalogue: New Bauhaus Chicago: Experiment Photography, ed. by Kristina Lowis for the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung Berlin, 2017, 208 pages, c.180 illustrations in black and white and colour, available in German and English, published by Hirmer, ISBN: 978-3-7774-2938-0, retail price: € 39.90; museum price on site: € 29.00

Exhibition design: gewerkdesign

Programme of events

Every Saturday, 11 am – 2 pm: bauhaus_workshop

Open workshop for children, teenagers and adults, free admission

Every Sunday, 2 pm: bauhaus_tour

Guided tour of the exhibition, free of charge except for museum admission, booking: bauhaus.de/visit

Tues., 16 Nov, 6 pm: bauhaus_members

“Photography at the New Bauhaus”, the ID graduate and photographer Charles Swedlund talks with members (in English), booking: mitglieder@bauhaus.de

Sun., 19 Nov, 17 Dec, 21 Jan, 18 Feb, 11 am – 2 pm: bauhaus_family

Family workshop, children ages 5 and up: Children €6, adults €9, material €3, booking: info@jugend-im-museum.de

Sun., 26 Nov, 14 Jan, 18 Feb, 11 am: bauhaus_brunch

Brunch, admission and guided tour: €22, members €17, booking: bauhaus.de/visit

Fri., 26 Jan, 3.30 pm: bauhaus_special

Lecture by Keith F. Davis, Curator of Photography at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, limited number of participants, booking: bauhaus.de/visit

Fri., 23 Feb, and Sat., 24 Feb: bauhaus_special

International symposium on the Chicago photo school in context, event details will be announced soon.

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