

The Bauhaus – Moving forward **Joint statement from Berlin, Dessau and Weimar**

The directors of the three Bauhaus institutions in Berlin, Dessau and Weimar, Prof Dr Brigitte Franzen, Dr Barbara Steiner and Dr Annette Ludwig, affirm their mutual goal of promoting artistic freedom, openness and international responsibility. They represent the Bauhaus Kooperation and welcome a social alliance committed to the freedom of art and culture, as expressed by State Minister for Culture Wolfram Weimer in his recent “Bauhaus Manifesto”, and the “Dessau Declaration”, issued by the German *Länder*. The international attention and broad solidarity that these statements have elicited shows that the versatility of the Bauhaus and the abundance of its methods and design approaches still influence society 100 years later. Many of the achievements of modernism continue to shape everyday life today.

The Klassik Stiftung Weimar, the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation and the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung Berlin established the Bauhaus Kooperation Berlin Dessau Weimar in 2019. These three institutions represent an important chapter of German history. Located in former East and West Germany until 1990, they have been working closely ever since German reunification.

Three locations, one world heritage

It is impossible to reduce the Bauhaus to a uniform style or one-dimensional narrative. For this reason, it is a national cultural treasure. It stands for international collaboration, artistic freedom and the courage to question the status quo. As members of the Bauhaus Kooperation, we work together to present the Bauhaus in its versatility, creative richness and its contradictions beyond all borders.

The Bauhaus continues to inspire questions that directly impact us as a society: How do we want to live? How do we shape our living environment? How can exchange, design and experimentation deliver new solutions for our life?

The Bauhaus is not a rigid monument of the past; it is the wellspring of a global and dynamic movement. *“Over the decades, there have been countless new ‘Bauhäusler’ – through successor institutions, creative appropriation or conscious demarcation. The spectrum ranges from everyday items to visionary architecture. This enormous range – the persistent effort to probe the possibility of ideas and prototypical impact – is what keeps the Bauhaus alive around the world today. This creative wealth deserves to be defended as an essential pillar of our democratic culture,”* says Dr Barbara Steiner, director and chair of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation.

Yet this elemental freedom of art and our democratic culture are now coming under increasing pressure. According to Dr Annette Ludwig, director of the museums of the Klassik Stiftung Weimar, the events of Germany’s past illuminate the threats facing us today: *“It is no coincidence that the Bauhaus was founded in Weimar, where in 1923 the first highly-acclaimed Bauhaus Exhibition took place. At the same time, an upswell of nationalistic-reactionary voices began vilifying members of the Bauhaus. Even before the National Socialists seized power, more than 70 works of contemporary modernism were removed from the Weimar Castle museum. In 1937 over 450 works were confiscated – a massive bloodletting from which Weimar’s art collections could no longer fully recover. The ‘model case of Weimar’ sensitises us to comparable developments today.”*

In view of the expulsion of the Bauhaus from Weimar in 1925 and the subsequent forced closures under pressure from the Nazis – in Dessau in 1932 and in Berlin in 1933 – we see it as our obligation to help build a tolerant, humane and solidarity-based society and to strengthen a democratic culture. We see our task as one firmly anchored in a 21st century society which is multifaceted and shaped by many different cultures.

Prof Dr Brigitte Franzen underscores her commitment: *“I defend the Bauhaus against any and all forms of slander – it is a national cultural treasure. Its ideas and methods were developed in Germany and have since spread from here into the world. The Bauhaus is renowned worldwide for its basic premise of viewing art, craftsmanship, industry and society as a unit. When politicians decide what type of art is ‘German’ or ‘good’, they are effectively restricting the freedom of expression. Those who restrict art and culture are infringing on dignity and self-determination – being human means experiencing culture freely.”*

In the Bauhaus Kooperation Berlin Dessau Weimar, we work closely together. We dedicate ourselves to research and exhibition projects that extend far beyond regional borders. In our day-to-day work with the Bauhaus, its ideas, visionary concepts and practical approaches – but also with its societal upheavals and moments of failure – we search for new solutions to the challenges of the present day.

This commitment is concretely expressed at the three Bauhaus sites:

Weimar, the cradle of the Bauhaus, presents the world’s oldest Bauhaus collection, originally assembled by Walter Gropius. Based on the motto “The Bauhaus comes from Weimar”, the permanent exhibition in the newly constructed Bauhaus Museum in the Quarter of Modernism, which opened in 2019, addresses the fundamental question of how we want to live together. Special temporary exhibitions, such as “Forgotten Bauhaus Women” (2022), “Bauhaus and National Socialism” (2024) and currently “Bauhaus and Politics”, highlight the relevance of the Bauhaus to contemporary issues.

In Dessau, the centennial programme “To the Core. Bauhaus Dessau 100”, which is currently underway, highlights its historic legacy and its connection to environmental issues of the future. The foundation invites visitors to experience architectural modernism in the form of a unique network of historic Bauhaus buildings by former masters and students dispersed throughout the city.

Berlin is home to the world’s largest Bauhaus collection. Walter Gropius’ iconic Bauhaus-Archiv is currently being renovated and expanded by a new annex by architect Volker Staab. When completed, its campus will comprise a museum, research centre, meeting place, discussion venue, welcome centre and university for all. A place where contemporary thought and historical ideas converge, where memory and the future intersect. The Bauhaus-Archiv strives to be accessible to all with an interactive programme that makes a direct impact in society. It manages outreach projects in the Gropiusstadt, highlights the perspectives of young people in the “Young Bauhaus” programme, and with its series “Taking a Stand” invites the public to engage in critical thinking, reflection and discussion.

The Bauhaus Kooperation Berlin Dessau Weimar is united in its commitment to share the experience of the Bauhaus with the public. Not only do we preserve its legacy – we translate it into meaningful impulses for the present and future. We invite the public to discover the many different perspectives on location and help shape the relevance of the Bauhaus in the years to come.

An initiative of the
Bauhaus Kooperation

Contacts

Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung
Knesebeckstraße 1
10623 Berlin
www.bauhaus.de

Ulrike Andres
Head of Communication and Marketing

Christiane Caldari-Winkler
Press Officer
T +49 30 254 002 15
presse@bauhaus.de

Bauhaus Dessau Foundation
Gropiusallee 38
06846 Dessau-Roßlau, Germany
www.bauhaus-dessau.de

Domenik Pasemann
Head of Communication and Press Officer
T +49 340 6508 - 236
Pasemann@bauhaus-dessau.de

Klassik Stiftung Weimar
Burgplatz 4
99423 Weimar
www.klassik-stiftung.de

Elke Siedhoff-Müller
*Head of Communication, Public Relations,
Marketing, Press Officer*
T +49 3643 545-113
Elke.Siedhoff-Mueller@klassik-stiftung.de

Press kit: <https://own.bauhaus-dessau.de/owncloud/index.php/s/MFDpfycBQSyot4G>