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BAUHAUS ICONS

You Should Know



PRESTEL

01

»The ultimate aim of all creative activity is the building,« states Walter Gropius' Bauhaus manifesto. He saw building as a social, intellectual, and symbolic activity, a union of genres and vocations, the leveling of differences in status. The Gothic cathedral epitomized this.



- 1871 Born in New York on July 17
- 1887 Moves to Germany; studies at the College of Art in Hamburg
- 1888–94 With interruptions, studies at the Academy of Art in Berlin
- 1894–10 Draws caricatures for newspapers and magazines
- 1901 Marries the concert pianist Clara Fürst
- 1908–19 Painter and illustrator in Berlin
- 1913 Establishes a studio in Weimar
- 1919 Appointed to the Bauhaus; becomes a form master at the printing workshop up to 1925
- 1926 Moves to Dessau; becomes a master at the Bauhaus without the obligation to teach
- 1929–31 Establishes a studio in Halle
- 1933–36 Active in Berlin
- 1936 Travels to the USA
- 1937 Moves to New York
- 1944 Holds his first great retrospective at New York's Museum of Modern Art
- 1947 Elected president of the Federation of American Painters and Sculptors
- 1956 Dies in New York on January 13

LYONEL FEININGER

Cover of the manifesto

Feininger's Expressionist cathedral has three towers with star-topped spires, from which beams of light go out in various directions. The three spires stand for architecture, the arts, and the crafts. Naturally, architecture was represented by the central and tallest spire. The primacy of architecture was unquestioned, and the study of architecture was to stand at the center of education. The other arts and crafts were ancillary to it.

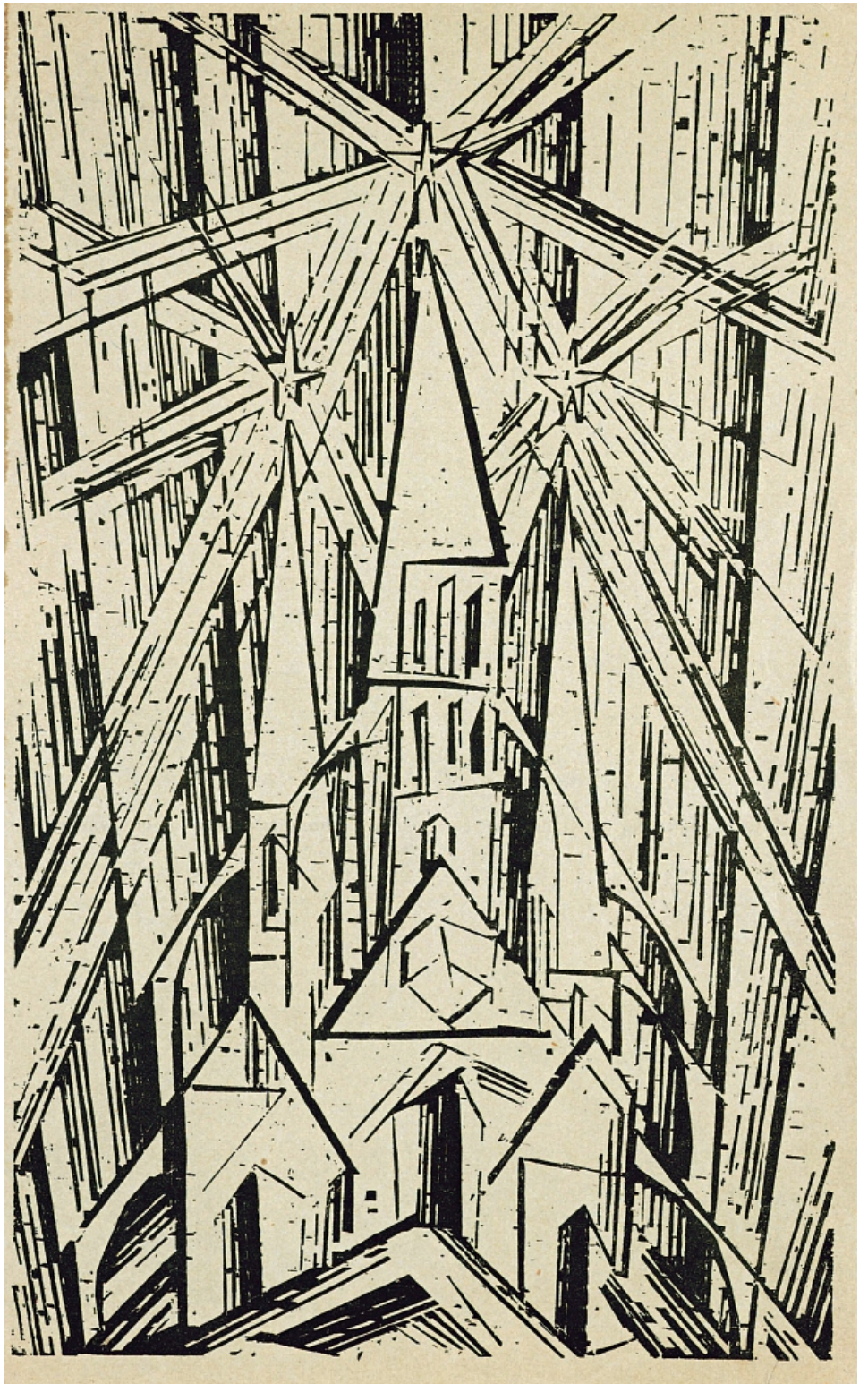
But, as so often, there was a world of difference between the vision and the reality, for though Feininger's visionary woodcut makes a clear affirmation, the training of architects played virtually no part in the early years of the Weimar Bauhaus.

In 1923, Gropius was able to mount the *International Architectural Exhibition*, which he had put together in the context of the Bauhaus exhibition—the first presentation of modern architecture in the 1920s—but the setting up of the study of architecture as a Bauhaus training program did not take place until the Bauhaus moved to Dessau.

Two versions: one goal

Even before Lyonel Feininger became the first teacher to be appointed by Walter Gropius, in the spring of 1919, and to begin his activity at the newly founded Bauhaus, he was given the task of supplying a programmatic illustration for the Bauhaus manifesto. But Feininger, whose print-making had just reached its first peak, was confronted by unexpected difficulties. He was not happy with the first version of his woodcut, and after several reworkings discarded it. For the second version he changed the format, explaining to Gropius in an accompanying note: »It was difficult for me to free myself immediately from the constraints exerted on me by the first design. You will understand this: in creative artistic work, this is always a particularly difficult matter. There is one good thing about this intermezzo: I have learned that in future I must be damned careful about the format before I tackle such a task again.«

This second version, a noticeably enlarged woodcut, finally became the model for the zinc plate used for printing. Feininger's famous cathedral on the cover of the Bauhaus manifesto is therefore not an original print, as has mostly been assumed up to now, but merely the reproduction of the woodcut, though its programmatic significance remains untouched by this fact.



Cover sheet of the Bauhaus manifesto, 1919, reproduction (zinc etching) after a woodcut, 30.5 x 18.7 cm (32 x 19.8 cm), Bauhaus Archive, Berlin

PROGRAMM

DES

STAATLICHEN BAUHAUSES

IN WEIMAR

Das Staatliche Bauhaus in Weimar ist durch Vereinigung der ehemaligen Großherzoglich Sächsischen Hochschule für bildende Kunst mit der ehemaligen Großherzoglich Sächsischen Kunstgewerbeschule unter Neuangliederung einer Abteilung für Baukunst entstanden.

Ziele des Bauhauses.

Das Bauhaus erstrebt die Sammlung alles künstlerischen Schaffens zur Einheit, die Wiedervereinigung aller werkkünstlerischen Disziplinen — Bildhauerei, Malerei, Kunstgewerbe und Handwerk — zu einer neuen Baukunst als deren unablässige Bestandteile. Das letzte, wenn auch ferne Ziel des Bauhauses ist das Einheitskunstwerk — der große Bau —, in dem es keine Grenze gibt zwischen monumentaler und dekorativer Kunst.

Das Bauhaus will Architekten, Maler und Bildhauer aller Grade je nach ihren Fähigkeiten zu tüchtigen Handwerkern oder selbständig schaffenden Künstlern erziehen und eine Arbeitsgemeinschaft führender und werdender Werkkünstler gründen, die Bauwerke in ihrer Gesamtheit — Rohbau, Ausbau, Ausschmückung und Einrichtung — aus gleich geartetem Geist heraus einheitlich zu gestalten weiß.

Grundsätze des Bauhauses.

Schweren
Kunst entsteht oberhalb aller Methoden, sie ist an sich nicht lehrbar, wohl aber das Handwerk. Architekten, Maler, Bildhauer sind Handwerker im Ursinn des Wortes, deshalb wird als unerläßliche Grundlage für alles bildnerische Schaffen die gründliche handwerkliche Ausbildung aller Studierenden in Werkstätten und auf Probier- und Werkplätzen gefordert. ~~Die eigenen Werkstätten sollen allmählich ausgebaut, mit fremden Werkstätten Lehrverträge abgeschlossen werden.~~

Die Schule ist die Dienerin der Werkstatt, sie wird eines Tages in ihr aufgehen. Deshalb nicht Lehrer und Schüler im Bauhaus, sondern Meister Gesellen und Lehrlinge.

Die Art der Lehre entspringt dem Wesen der Werkstatt:

Organisches Gestalten aus handwerklichem Können entwickelt.

Vermeidung alles Starren; Bevorzugung des Schöpferischen; Freiheit der Individualität, aber strenges Studium.

Zunftgemäße Meister- und Gesellenproben vor dem Meisterrat des Bauhauses oder vor fremden Meistern.

Mitarbeit der Studierenden an den Arbeiten der Meister.

Auftragsvermittlung auch an Studierende.

Gemeinsame Planung umfangreicher utopischer Bauentwürfe — Volks- und Kultbauten — mit weitgestecktem Ziel. Mitarbeit aller Meister und Studierenden — Architekten, Maler, Bildhauer — an diesen Entwürfen mit dem Ziel allmählichen Einklangs aller zum Bau gehörigen Glieder und Teile.

Ständige Fühlung mit Führern der Handwerke und Industrien im Lande.

Fühlung mit dem öffentlichen Leben, mit dem Volke durch Ausstellung und andere Veranstaltungen.

Neue Versuche im Ausstellungswesen zur Lösung des Problems, Bild und Plastik im architektonischen Rahmen zu zeigen.

Pflege freundschaftlichen Verkehrs zwischen Meistern und Studierenden außerhalb der Arbeit; dabei Theater, Vorträge, Dichtkunst, Musik, Kostümfeste. Aufbau eines heiteren Zeremoniells bei diesen Zusammenkünften.

Umfang der Lehre.

Die Lehre im Bauhaus umfaßt alle praktischen und wissenschaftlichen Gebiete des bildnerischen Schaffens.

- A. Baukunst,
- B. Malerei,
- C. Bildhauerei

einschließlich aller handwerklichen Zweiggebiete.

Die Studierenden werden sowol handwerklich (1) wie zeichnerisch-malerisch (2) und wissenschaftlich-theoretisch (3) ausgebildet.

1. Die handwerkliche Ausbildung — sei es in eigenen allmählich zu ergänzenden, oder fremden durch Lehrvertrag verpflichteten Werkstätten — erstreckt sich auf:

- a) Bildhauer, Steinmetzen, Stukkatöre, Holzbildhauer, Keramiker, Gipsgießer,
- b) Schmiede, Schlosser, Gießer, her,
- c) Tischler,
- d) Dekorationsmaler, Glasmaler, Mosaiker, Emallöre,
- e) Radierer, Holzschneider, Lithographen, Kunstdrucker, Ziselöre,
- f) Weber.

Die handwerkliche Ausbildung bildet das Fundament der Lehre im Bauhause. Jeder Studierende soll ein Handwerker lernen.

2. Die zeichnerische und malerische Ausbildung erstreckt sich auf:

- a) Freies Skizzieren aus dem Gedächtnis und der Fantasie,
- b) Zeichnen und Malen nach Köpfen, Akten und Tieren,
- c) Zeichnen und Malen von Landschaften, Figuren, Pflanzen und Stillleben,
- d) Komponieren,
- e) Ausführen von Wandbildern, Tafelbildern und Bilderschreinen,
- f) Entwerfen von Ornamenten,
- g) Schriftzeichnen,
- h) Konstruktions- und Projektionszeichnen,
- i) Entwerfen von Außen-, Garten- und Innenarchitekturen,
- k) Entwerfen von Möbeln und Gebrauchsgegenständen.

3. Die wissenschaftlich-theoretische Ausbildung erstreckt sich auf:

- a) Kunstgeschichte — nicht im Sinne von Stilgeschichte vorgetragen, sondern zur lebendigen Erkenntnis historischer Arbeitsweisen und Techniken,
- b) Materialkunde,
- c) Anatomie — am lebenden Modell,
- d) physikalische und chemische Farbenlehre,
- e) rationelles Malverfahren,
- f) Grundbegriffe von Buchführung, Vertragsabschlüssen, Verdingungen,
- g) allgemein interessante Einzelvorträge aus allen Gebieten der Kunst und Wissenschaft.

Einteilung der Lehre.

Die Ausbildung ist in drei Lehrgänge eingeteilt:

- I. Lehrgang für Lehrlinge,
- II. „ „ Gesellen,
- III. „ „ Jungmeister.

Die Einzelausbildung bleibt dem Ermessen der einzelnen Meister im Rahmen des allgemeinen Programms und des in jedem Semester neu aufzustellenden Arbeitsverteilungsplanes überlassen.

Um den Studierenden eine möglichst vielseitige, umfassende technische und künstlerische Ausbildung zuteil werden zu lassen, wird der Arbeitsverteilungsplan zeitlich so eingeteilt, daß jeder angehende Architekt, Maler oder Bildhauer auch an einem Teil der anderen Lehrgänge teilnehmen kann.

Aufnahme.

Aufgenommen wird jede unbescholtene Person ohne Rücksicht auf Alter und Geschlecht, deren Vorbildung vom Meisterrat des Bauhauses als ausreichend erachtet wird, und soweit es der Raum zuläßt. Das Lehrgeld beträgt jährlich 180 Mark (es soll mit steigendem Verdienst des Bauhauses allmählich ganz verschwinden). Außerdem ist eine einmalige Aufnahmegebühr von 20 Mark zu zahlen. Ausländer zahlen den doppelten Betrag. Anfragen sind an das Sekretariat des Staatlichen Bauhauses in Weimar zu richten.

APRIL 1919.

Die Leitung des
Staatlichen Bauhauses in Weimar:
Walter Gropius.

02

Johannes Itten was one of the most important figures of the early Bauhaus. He developed the famous preliminary course, while his charisma impressed and influenced a large number of his students. His ideas are still significant in many areas of design and art education.



- 1888 Born in Södern-Linden, Switzerland, on November 11
- 1904–08 Trains to be a teacher in Bern
- 1909 Attends the École des Beaux-Arts in Geneva
- 1910–12 Studies mathematics and science at the University of Bern
- 1913–16 Studies at the Stuttgart Academy of Art under Adolf Hölzel
- 1917 Founds private art school in Vienna
- 1919 Bauhaus appointment; director of the preliminary course until 1923
- 1921/22 Works as a form master in the metal workshop, the workshop for wood carving and stone sculpture, and carpentry workshop
- 1923 Moves to Switzerland
- 1926 Founds the Johannes Itten Modern School of Art in Berlin
- 1932–38 Works as the director of the Higher Vocational College for Textile Surface Art in Krefeld
- 1938–53 Director of the School of Art
- 1967 Dies in Zürich on March 25

JOHANNES ITTEN

Colored sphere

As early as 1916, Johannes Itten had opened a private art school in Vienna. Equally attracted to music and painting, Itten soon gained access to the circle of Alma Mahler, who was at the time married to Walter Gropius, later director of the Bauhaus. It was this contact that brought about Itten's appointment to the Bauhaus.

At the Bauhaus, Itten, together with Gertrud Grunow, founded the famous preliminary course, which revolutionized traditional art training. At first Itten also conducted several workshops, but from 1921 only those for metal, wall painting, and glass painting. For the early Bauhaus, Itten was, apart from Walter Gropius, the central personality, uniting educational theory, aesthetics, and esotericism. With his personal magnetism and his orientation to Asian philosophy as well as Mazdaznan teachings, he brought many students under his spell, but also made enemies. In his thought, as in his teaching, he manifested a holistic image of the world and of humankind, which attempted to integrate man's intellectual, emotional, and, not least, physical needs.

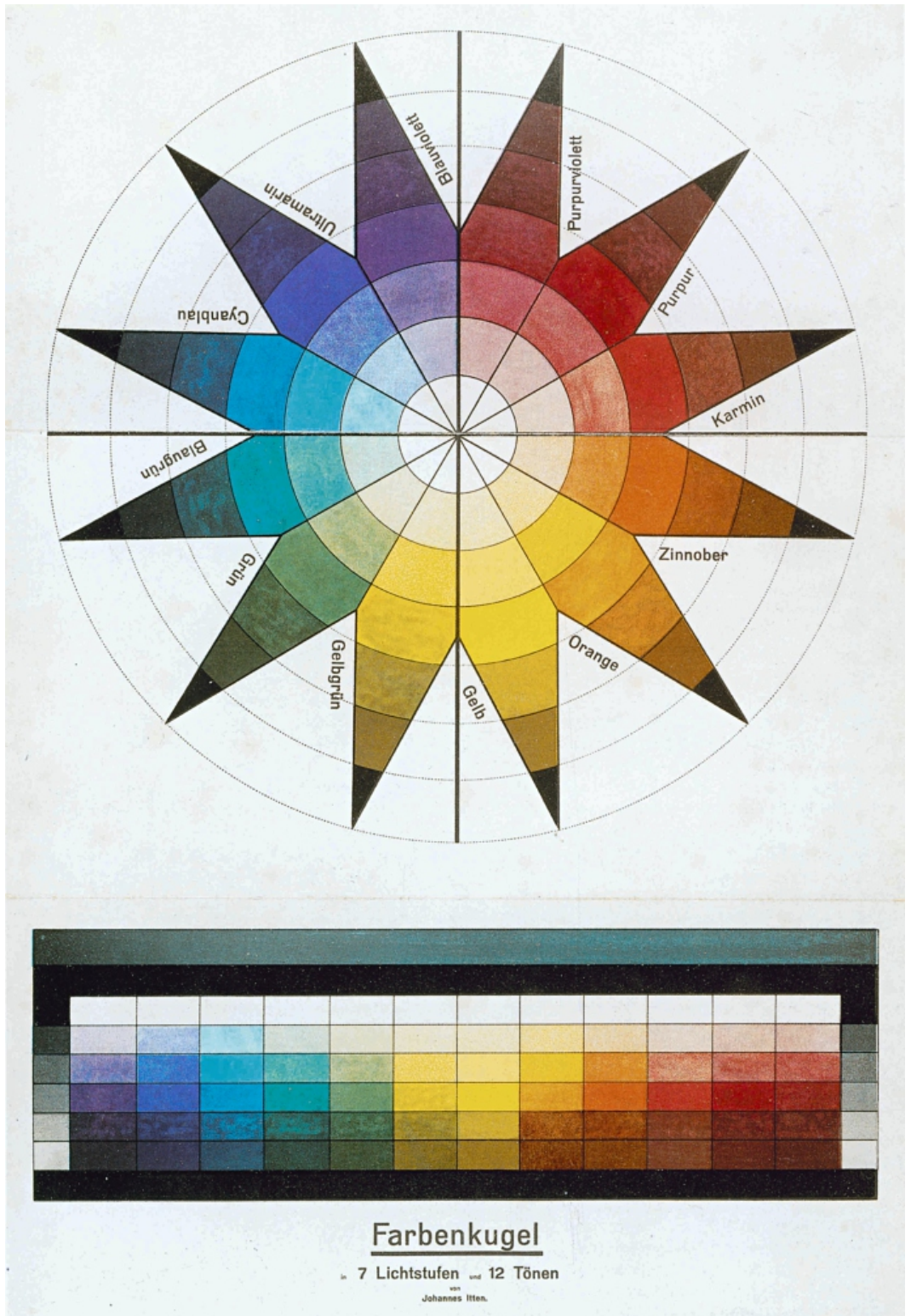
His educational program was at first entirely approved by Gropius. Both men wanted to follow new paths and to depart from the constricting academic traditions of artistic training. Later, however, conflict arose. Gropius was annoyed by the tendency, which seemed to him to be increasing, toward the sectarian, even the fanatical, among the students in Itten's circle. Itten on the other hand was troubled by Gropius' increasing orientation toward the needs of industry, which finally led in 1923 to Itten's spectacular departure from the Bauhaus.

Founder of a new theory of color

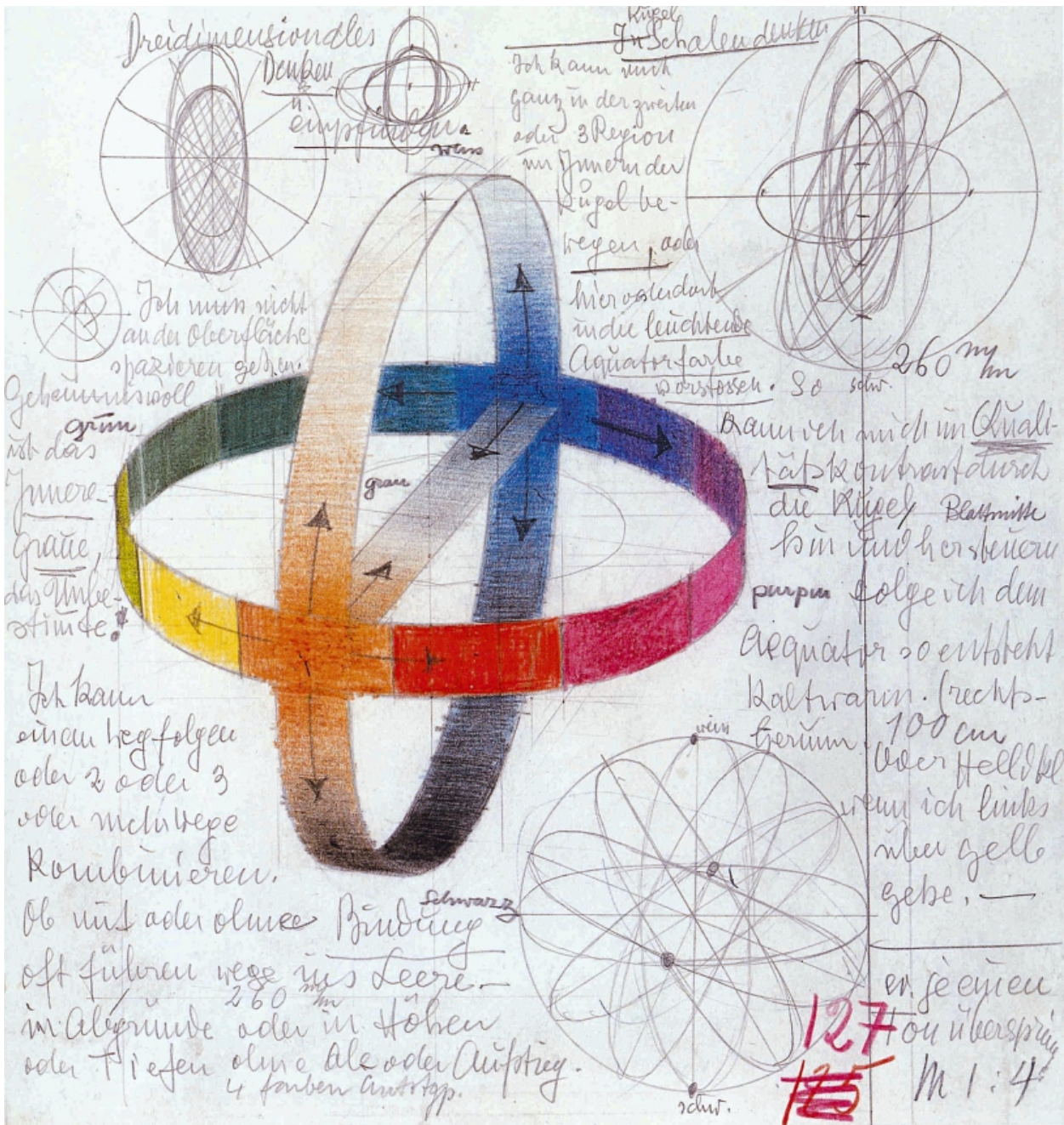
While at the Bauhaus, Itten laid the foundations for a new theory of color. An important preparatory work to his definitive *Art of Color*, which however was not published until 1961, was the preliminary course held at the Bauhaus called the *Analyses of Old Masters*. This was published together with the *Colored Sphere in 7 Levels of Light and 12 Colors* in the publication *Utopia* in 1921.

A sphere opened out into a star shows twelve colors and the effects of mixing in black and white. In the color star, the original color circle is still preserved; the circle ends where the star begins to open up its rays. Emanating from it are, in each case, three gradations to white in the center of the star and to black at the points. »I need not take a walk on the surface. What is mysterious is the inner gray, the indeterminate: I can follow one path or two or three or combine several paths ... In this way I can steer back and forth in the contrast of quality through the sphere ...«

At the central point of Itten's teaching, which largely relied on the little-known studies of the artist Adolf Hölzel, was the recognition and designing of color contrasts and the relationships between colors. He also describes the expressiveness and effect of the colors. In his »expressive theory of color« Itten goes on to assign specific characters and abstract geometric forms to individual colors. Today the contrasting types examined by him play a role not to be underestimated in the various areas of design, art, and architecture.



Colored Sphere in 7 Levels of Light and 12 Colors, 1921, lithograph, 47 x 32 cm, Bauhaus Archive, Berlin



Colored Circle, 1915, watercolor, 27.5 x 21.3 cm, Itten Archive, Zürich



Colored Sphere, 1919/1920, graphite and crayon on paper, 22.6 x 22 cm, Itten Archive, Zürich

03

Ida Kerkovius transformed traditional textile craft into experimental avant-garde art. Her work is dominated by neither object, nor figure, nor narrative, but by abstraction. Its artistic effect is created solely by the interplay of colors and geometric forms.



- 1879 Born in Riga (then part of the Russian Empire, now Latvia) on August 31
- 1899 Attends a private art school in Riga
- 1903 Studies under Adolf Hölzel in Dachau
- 1908 Resumes her study of painting, first at a private art school in Berlin, then at the Stuttgart Academy under Adolf Hölzel again
- 1920 Begins her studies at the Bauhaus with the preliminary course run by Johannes Itten; weaving workshop under Muche
- 1924 Returns to Stuttgart
- 1954 Awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany
- 1958 Appointed professor
- 1970 Dies in Stuttgart on June 8

IDA KERKOVIOUS

Wall hanging

Ida Kerkovius came to the Bauhaus as a skilled painter; among other things, she had studied with the artist Adolf Hölzel. At the age of forty-one she was at the time one of the oldest students. The few works of hers that are preserved show that she tackled the most diverse textile techniques.

In the beginning, the training of students in the textile workshop seemed more like an adventure. As early as September 1919, Walter Gropius had signed a contract appointing Helene Börner as a master of crafts—the *Course of Instruction in Crafts Training in the Textile Techniques* is probably to be attributed to her—but her abilities, particularly in weaving, were rather limited. And not only this: there was also a lack of simply everything; in June 1920, Walter Gropius, in his hour of need, even called upon the population of Weimar to donate remnants and textile waste to the Bauhaus. The shortage of materials, however, could be more easily overcome, by support from outside, than the lack of basic knowledge of classification and acquaintance with textile traditions. On the other hand, the students' joy in experimenting opened up new paths to them, leading to woven and knotted works in totally new patterns and forms.

The influence of Johannes Itten

The most significant stimuli for innovations in form resulted from the teaching of the visual artists. Up to 1921 it was above all Johannes Itten whose influence was clearly reflected in the textile work. Circle, square and triangle, the famous basic forms, but also the primary colors, played a great part here.

This is clearly to be seen in this appliqué work in felt by Ida Kerkovius. The pattern is built up from reflective symmetries, not necessarily with a correspondence between the color arrangements and the symmetries of form. The result for the observer is a multiplicity of connections and »reading possibilities.« The appliqué piece is built up from fifty individual squares of felt in a total of twenty different color shades. Additionally applied pieces of felt extend the repertoire of forms. The individual parts were joined up using a sewing machine, and the appliqué pieces were also sewn by machine. The experimental character of this piece is also evident in the lack of care to be noted in the graphic design and technical execution. Ida Kerkovius was less concerned about precise craftsmanship in sewing than about the artistic effect of the pattern and thus the total appearance of this wall hanging.

For the observer in the early 1920s a wall hanging of this kind appeared positively revolutionary, for up to this point in time decoration was predominantly representational, or at least based on representation. Abstraction, and thus the non-representational, which today is taken for granted, was then totally unfamiliar and new.



Wall hanging, 1921 (?), felt,
206.5 x 164 cm, Bauhaus Archive, Berlin

04

PETER KELER

Cradle

This cradle, consisting of basic forms and painted in primary colors, is not only a functioning piece of children's furniture. It is also a demonstration of the synesthetic correspondence between colors and forms taught by Wassily Kandinsky and Johannes Itten.

- 1898 Born in Kiel, Germany, on December 2
- 1914–16 Studies at the Technical College for Applied Painting in Kiel
- 1917–18 Serves in the military
- 1919–21 Studies at the College of Art in Kiel
- 1921 Begins his studies at the Bauhaus with the preliminary course run by Johannes Itten
- 1925 Opens his own studio for free and applied art in Weimar
- 1927–36 Works freelance in Dresden
- 1928–34 Active as an artistic assistant in the textile industry in Saxony; from 1930 active in the industrial production of PK seating at the firm of Albert Walde, Waldheim
- 1937–45 Active as a freelance architect in Berlin
- 1945 Appointed to the newly founded College of Architecture and Visual Arts in Weimar
- 1982 Dies in Weimar on November 11

The relative proportions are calculated with mathematical clarity: width corresponds to length. The outer diameter of the blue hoops which surround the equilateral yellow triangles is exactly equal to the distance between the two hoops. The rectangular side walls are approximately bisected at the top by an area of wickerwork which is itself divided into three squares by two vertical strips. The lower edges of the yellow triangles at the head and foot rest on a massive roundwood, whose circular cross-section corresponds to that of the blue hoops. Even the wedge-shaped mattress is part of the system of dimensional relationships.

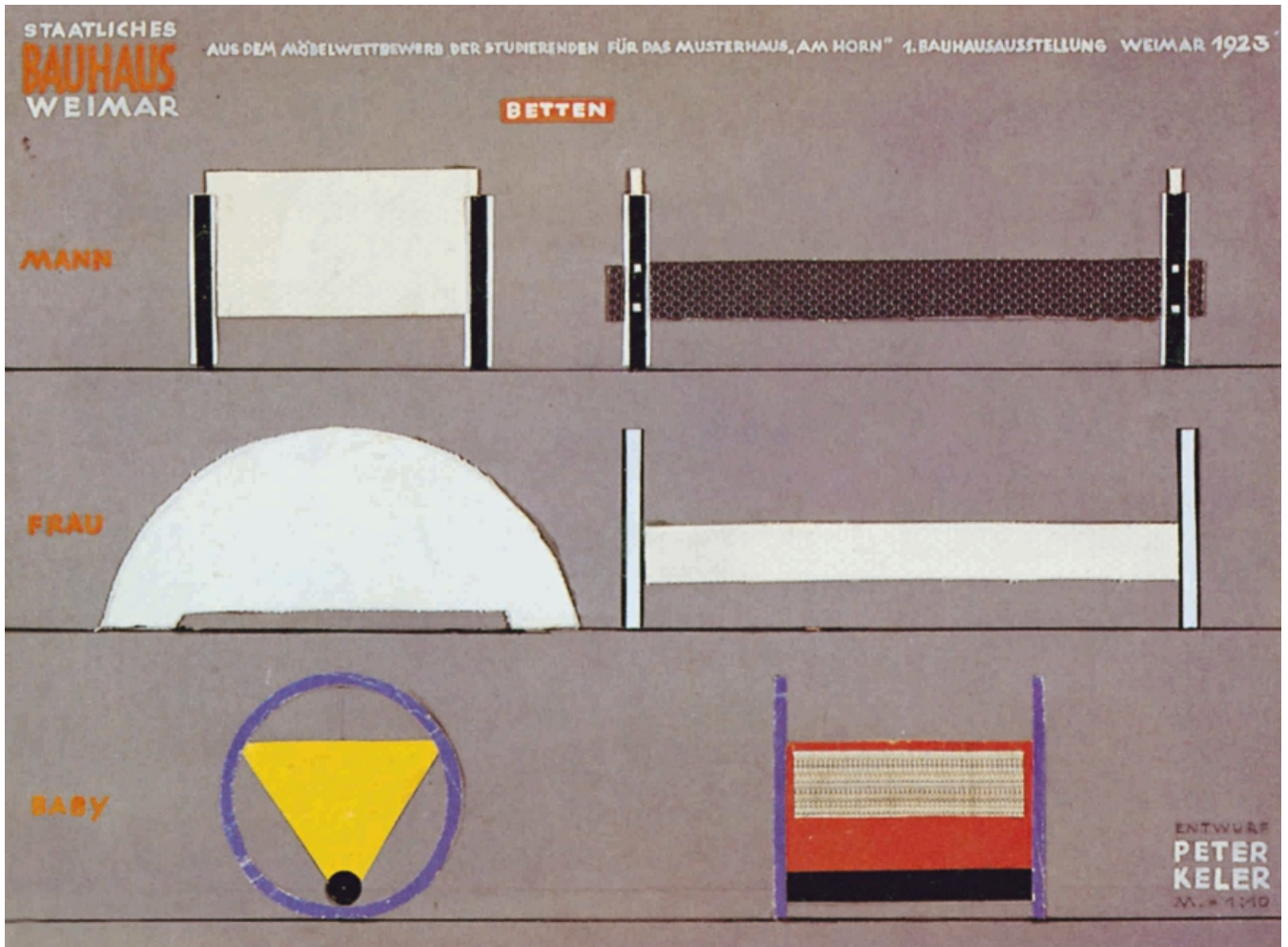
Colors and forms

The color scheme is derived from the synesthetic correspondence between colors and forms analyzed by Wassily Kandinsky and Johannes Itten in their teachings. Circle, square and triangle are assigned to their corresponding primary colors, in keeping with the Bauhaus dogma that the circle's obtuse angle heightens the depth of the color blue, the rectangular corners of the square belong to the hot/cold of red, and the acute-angled triangle corresponds to the »eccentricity« of yellow.

Although the design of the cradle is dominated by elementary forms and primary colors, its functional elements also play a highly important role. For example, the heavy wood ensures that the center of gravity of the cradle is lowered, preventing its toppling over, and the wickerwork on the sides, developed with the cooperation of the weaving workshop, serves as ventilation.

In its exemplary combination of colors and forms to create constructive elements of a functional object, the cradle also illustrates the influence of the Dutch De Stijl movement on the Weimar Bauhaus. It was first exhibited in the model Haus Am Horn at the great Bauhaus exhibition in 1923.

Peter Keler, who later designed a child's swing, a child's chair, and other pieces of furniture, also took part in 1923 in the groundbreaking, two-dimensionally striking wall design of a passage in the Bauhaus at Weimar.



Furniture designs for the man's bed, woman's bed, and child's cradle. From the students' furniture competition for the model Haus am Horn, 1st Bauhaus exhibition in Weimar, 1923, collage, 37.5 x 48.7 cm, Art Collections, Weimar