



Bauhaus geek

Description

Designed by Walter Gropius and built in 1925-6, the Bauhaus building in Dessau has undergone extensive restoration. Work was completed in 2006 (www.bauhaus-dessau.de). The influence of this design school on architecture, furniture, fashion, photography and education is well documented. No designer is immune from the Bauhaus effect, whether supporting or resisting its respect for the qualities of materials and commitment to unadorned functionality.

It's no wonder that **Steve Jobs** acknowledged the Bauhaus legacy as source of Apple's industrial design ethos – not just the white minimalism and the aim of simple, accessible functionality, but the sense of *playfulness* in both product development and in the final artefacts.

As homage to the Bauhaus legacy and the technological triumphs of the digital age, here are some images of the Dessau Bauhaus headquarters taken with my iPhone in April 2012 – deploying the 360 app and the iPhone's [HDR](#) function.







Principles of Bauhaus Production

Here are some highlights from Walter Gropius's 1926 short pamphlet "Principles of Bauhaus Production." The full text is available as a [PDF](#) from Dr Buszek's course website at Kansas City Art Institute.

Art rises above all methods; in itself it cannot be taught, but the crafts certainly can be. Architects, painters, and sculptors are craftsmen in the true sense of the word; hence, a thorough training in the crafts, acquired in workshops and in experimental and practical sites, is required of all students as the indispensable basis for all artistic production.

- The school is the servant of the workshop, and will one day be absorbed in it. Therefore there will be no teachers or pupils in the Bauhaus but masters, journeymen, and apprentices.
- The manner of teaching arises from the character of the workshop: Organic forms developed from manual skills.
 - Avoidance of all rigidity;
 - priority of creativity;
 - freedom of individuality,
 - but strict study discipline.
- Collaboration of all masters and students — architects, painters, sculptors — on these designs with the object of gradually achieving a harmony of all the component elements and parts that make up architecture.
- Constant contact with the leaders of the crafts and industries of the country. Contact with public life, with the people, through exhibitions and other activities.
- Encouragement of friendly relations between masters and students outside of work; therefore plays, lectures, poetry, music, costume parties. Establishment of a cheerful ceremonial at these gatherings.

For some Bauhaus party snaps see: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#).

The *other* Bauhaus



Painter and colour theorist Johannes Itten taught at the Bauhaus

in its period in Weimar, prior to its move to Dessau. He practiced meditation and his apparent [mysticism](#) was thought to be at odds with Gropius's bias towards industrial mass production. Itten's interests in meditation and alternative outlooks and practices provide a further parallel with the founder of Apple's flower-child sympathies. Eg, for Itten:

Colors are forces, radiant energies that affect us positively or negatively, whether we are aware of it or not. The artist in stained glass used color to create a supramundane, mystical atmosphere which would transport the meditations of the worshipper to a spiritual plane.

Isaacson says of Jobs's college years: Vegetarianism and Zen Buddhism, meditation and spirituality, acid and rock rolled together, in an amped-up way, the multiple impulses that were hallmarks of the enlightenment-seeking campus subculture of the era. And even though he barely indulged it at Reed, there was still an undercurrent of electronic geekiness in his soul that would someday combine surprisingly well with the rest of the mix (p.36).

! modernity is not all straight lines, sobriety and the technically rational.

References

- Isaacson, Walter. 2011. *Steve Jobs: The Exclusive Biography*. London: Hachette Digital. (See section 'A Bauhaus Aesthetic' in chapter 12.)
- Itten, Johannes. 1973. *The Art of Color: The Subjective Experience and Objective Rationale of Color*. Trans. E. von Haagen. New York: Wiley.
- Whyte, Iain Boyd. 2004. The Expressionist Utopia. In M. Hvattum, and C. Hermansen (eds.), *Tracing Modernity: Manifestations of the Modern in Architecture and the City*. 256-270. London: Routledge.

See [Bauhaus online](#). Also see [Countercultural values](#) on Steve Jobs, and [Panoptic man](#) on digital panoramas.

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Date Created

April 21, 2012

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