



View of the 'Haus am Horn', designed by Georg Muche for the major Bauhaus Exhibition of 1923, taken on January 14, 2019 in Weimar, eastern Germany. — AFP photos



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Bauhaus design turns 100 as disputes over its legacy churn



View of the reconstructed office of Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius at the Bauhaus University.



Students at the Bauhaus University work on their project in the ceramics workshop in Weimar.



View of a Bauhaus cradle designed by Peter Keler on display in a depot for the city's museums, in Weimar.

Bauhaus, the design school that left its mark on everything from teapots to tower blocks and iPhones to Ikea, marks its centenary this year, touching off a politically charged debate about its lasting impact. The influence of Bauhaus, created during the turbulent period between the world wars and finally chased out of Germany by the Nazis, can hardly be overstated. Its radical "form follows function" and "less is more" tenets have become so commonplace that the aesthetics of the modern world are unthinkable without them.

Weimar, with its winding cobblestone alleys and primly restored historical buildings, might seem like an unlikely ground zero for the bombshell launched by Walter Gropius with the school's founding on April 1, 1919. But the small city 250 kilometers (150 miles) southwest of Berlin has been an intellectual hive for centuries and is now at the center of Bauhaus commemorations around the country and spanning the globe. "Bauhaus is among our country's most globally influential cultural exports," President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said as he kicked off the celebrations this week.

He noted that when the movement was run out of Germany after Hitler rose to power in 1933, it touched off a diaspora that would end up spreading Bauhaus's gospel far and wide. The clean lines of the UN headquarters building in New York, Tel Aviv's "White City" of 4,000 apartment blocks with pearly facades, mass-market home furnishings and most smartphones owe a large debt to the Bauhaus vision.

'Unbelievably devastating consequences'

The design school, which also counts among its disciples Russian abstract painter Wassily Kandinsky and Swiss-born surrealist Paul Klee, had at its core the idea of making beautiful design accessible to all social classes. The reformist vision of the international group of men and women who practiced it was rooted in modernist thought and inspired by leaps in technological development after World War I.

"There was of course great suffering and horror after this mendacious war, which had such unbelievably devastating consequences," said Anke Bluemm, a curator with the Bauhaus Foundation in Weimar. "The artists came together to create a new forum for art with very utopian, idealistic ideas." Winfried Speitkamp, head of Weimar's Bauhaus University—which still uses the original campus to teach the school's hands-on principles to new generations—said the aim was nothing less than to build a new democratic society from the rubble of the kaiser's empire.

"They wanted to break with a very authoritarian, very military-oriented monarchy. But what should that look like?" Flat roofs, little ornamentation—the minimalist approach was intended to be more affordable and less steeped in dusty German tradition.

'Explosive debate'

Bauhaus's birth dovetailed in time and place with the start of the inter-war Weimar Republic, and it was their shared revolutionary spirit that made them targets of the



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Nazis. "It is typical for the far right that anything that challenges the homogeneity of the people and propagates openness and diversity is seen as dangerous," Speitkamp said. He said "only five years ago" the Bauhaus jubilee might have been just another staid anniversary. But at a time when Europe and countries around the world were again caught between clashing visions of cultural identity, the discussion around it had become "explosive".

"Do we want to continue going down the path of globalization, of free movement and cultural exchange? Or, as some nations are saying, do we need to make our borders stronger and define a nation by ethnicity?" "That is what the Bauhaus debate is also

really about." Speitkamp cited a controversy in the run-up to the anniversary in which leftist punk band Feine Sahne Fischfilet was meant to give a concert on the Bauhaus campus in Dessau, where the school was forced to move in 1925.

The gig by the group was hastily cancelled in October by the Bauhaus Foundation, citing "far-right threats" and a desire to steer clear of "political extremism—whether from the right, the left or elsewhere". The move was widely slammed as cowardly and blind to the movement's roots. Instead a Dessau theatre held the event, which passed off without incident, and the foundation later pledged to remain an "international, open and transparent place for societal debates in the spirit of the historical Bauhaus".

New openings

The Bauhaus year will be marked by the openings of grand new museums in April in Weimar and in September in Dessau—both cities in the ex-communist east, which has seen a surge in support for the far-right AfD party. A major expansion of Berlin's Bauhaus Archive, which holds the movement's largest collection, is due for completion in 2021. This week Weimar offered a sneak preview to a small group of journalists of the Haus am Horn, the first single-family home designed according to Bauhaus principles. The squat, boxy structure with innovations such as a prefabricated kitchen was completed in 1923. It is undergoing a thorough restoration and will open to the public in May, furnished with Bauhaus classics. — AFP



View of a Bauhaus teapot designed by Marianne Brandt on display in a depot for the city's museums, in Weimar.

'Better than ever,' Paris Jackson dismisses treatment report

Paris Jackson, the only daughter of late singer Michael Jackson, on Wednesday played down reports that she is undergoing treatment, saying she is "happy, healthy, and better than ever." Jackson, 20, said in an Instagram post that she had taken a break from work and social media. But she said, "The media is exaggerating" when it reported earlier this week that she had checked herself into a treatment facility for her "emotional and physical

health." "Yes I've taken a break from work and social media and my phone because it can be too much sometimes, and everyone deserves a break, but I am happy and healthy and feeling better than ever!" she wrote.

Jackson, who was just 11 years old when her father died suddenly in 2009, has spoken in the past of struggles with depression. In a 2017 interview, she said she slashed her wrists in a 2013 sui-

cide attempt. In the past two years, Jackson has forged a modeling career and made her feature film acting debut in the dark comedy "Gringo." Last year she formed a band called The Soundflowers. Her mother is Debbie Rowe, who was married to Michael Jackson for about three years. — Reuters



Paris Jackson

Banksy 'snow' pollution mural sold for over \$130,000

A mural by elusive British street artist Banksy depicting a child enjoying falling snow that is in fact pollution from a burning bin has been sold for over 100,000 pounds (\$130,000) to a British art dealer. From one side, the "Season's Greetings" mural on a concrete block garage in Wales shows a small boy with his tongue out to catch snow that, when viewed from another side, turns out to be ash from an industrial bin. "I bought it and it cost me a six-figure sum," John Brandler of Brandler Galleries, told Reuters by telephone. "I am lending it to Port Talbot for a minimum of two or three years. I want to use it as a center for an art hub that would bring in internationally famous artists to Port Talbot."

The mural appeared last month in the town on the edge of Swansea Bay, home to one of the biggest steelworks in the world. Brandler, 63, said the entire mural - on the corner of a garage - had to be moved in one piece. He

declined to give a specific price for the piece. When asked how he could afford such luxuries, he said: "I am an art dealer. I own several Banksys, I also own (John) Constable, (Thomas) Gainsborough, (Joseph Mallord William) Turner, I've got (urban artist) Pure Evil - I've got all sorts of art." "My hobby is my business. The last time I went to work was when I was 18," Brandler said.

Banksy, who keeps his real name private, has become the most famous street artist in the world by poking fun at the excesses of modern capitalism and lampooning hollow icons, slogans and opinions. Previous works include "Mobile Lovers" which shows an embrace between lovers who stare over each other's shoulders at their mobile phones and an abrupt warning near Canary Wharf in London that reads "Sorry! The lifestyle you ordered is currently out of stock." — Reuters

