

Harvard Art Museums

Fogg Museum
Busch-Reisinger Museum
Arthur M. Sackler Museum

Press Release

***The Bauhaus*, a comprehensive new digital resource, launched by the Harvard Art Museums**



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The Harvard Art Museums have unveiled a new online resource dedicated to the Bauhaus, expanding access to one of the first and largest Bauhaus collections in the world. *The Bauhaus* Special Collection, available at harvardartmuseums.org/collections/special-collections/the-bauhaus, supports understanding of and scholarship on the 20th century's most influential school of art and design, in addition to the school's extensive ties to Harvard University and the greater Boston area. The digital resource relates to a broader Bauhaus project that will culminate in a major exhibition and related programming across the Harvard campus in 2019 on the occasion of the centennial anniversary of the founding of the school.

"The Busch-Reisinger Museum's Bauhaus-related holdings make up nearly three-fourths of its total collection," said Lynette Roth, Daimler Curator of the Busch-Reisinger Museum at the Harvard Art Museums. "In light of the upcoming 100th anniversary of the school's founding, we wanted to

encourage the study of these collections and better understand the history and significance of Harvard's own Bauhaus legacy.”

This new online special collection gives access to the records of more than 32,000 Bauhaus-related objects in the museums' holdings, including paintings, drawings, prints, sculpture, photography, textiles, and other media. These are complemented by materials in the museums' archives, such as photographs, writings, and class notes. The resource features works by such prominent Bauhaus artists as Josef and Anni Albers, Marcel Breuer, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, and László Moholy-Nagy, and also includes the archives of artist and Bauhaus master Lyonel Feininger and the school's founder, Walter Gropius. Works by many lesser-known figures associated with the school and Americans educated in the Bauhaus model are part of the collection as well.

“We wanted to create a central place to organize the Harvard Art Museums' Bauhaus materials to help students, scholars, and the public find their way through the collections and discover new artists and objects,” said Robert Wiesenberger, the 2014–16 Stefan Engelhorn Curatorial Fellow in the Busch-Reisinger Museum at the Harvard Art Museums. “In short,” Wiesenberger added, “to make good on the founding promise of this being a study collection.” During his fellowship, Wiesenberger was charged with developing this online Special Collection, which he fully realized through deep research, careful cataloging, and coordination with the museums' web team.

About the Bauhaus

Created by architect Walter Gropius, the Bauhaus promoted collaboration across creative disciplines, and between artists, architects, and craftsmen, as part of a utopian project of designing a new world. Modernists such as Josef and Anni Albers, Feininger, Kandinsky, Klee, Moholy-Nagy, and Oskar Schlemmer taught in the school's various workshops, realigning hierarchies of high and low by embracing new technologies, materials, and media, and exploring cosmopolitan forms of communal living. Though the school officially existed for only 14 years (from 1919 to 1933, during the years of Germany's Weimar Republic), its influence has been far-reaching, extending into the ways we live, teach, and learn today.

Harvard Ties

A vast archive of Bauhaus material resides at Harvard. As Wiesenberger writes, “Both during and after the school's brief existence in Europe, Harvard was a key site for the reception, dissemination, and documentation of Bauhaus ideas through the work of its students, émigré faculty, and museum curators.”

The first U.S. exhibition of the Bauhaus, and the only one to appear during the school's life span, was organized by Harvard undergraduates in 1930. Gropius chaired the Department of Architecture at the Graduate School of Design from 1937 until 1952 and brought former Bauhaus student-turned-master Marcel Breuer to join the faculty. Josef Albers was also a regular presence. By introducing Bauhaus pedagogy—as well as practitioners—to Harvard, Gropius shaped a new generation of architectural modernists, such as I. M. Pei and Philip Johnson. This pedagogical legacy also informed the founding of Harvard's Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, where art practice is encouraged alongside theoretical study.

Gropius left his mark on campus with his Graduate Center at Harvard Law School, which opened in 1950 as the first modern building on campus. The complex of dormitories and a commons building (Harkness Commons) featured the art of some of Gropius's modernist allies and former Bauhaus colleagues, including Hans Arp, Anni and Josef Albers, and Herbert Bayer.

In the late 1940s, Gropius and Charles Kuhn, then curator of the Germanic Museum (now the Busch-Reisinger Museum) collaborated to form what was variously referred to as Harvard's Bauhaus study collection or Bauhaus archive. Gropius solicited gifts from his Bauhaus contacts, and works of art and archival material arrived in quantity.

Accessible Resource

The Bauhaus Special Collection aims to broaden awareness of both the Bauhaus and its afterlife in America, and at Harvard University in particular. Accessible by users of mobile and desktop platforms, all sections of the resource are navigable by a menu bar at the top of each page. The collection begins with a [chronology](#) of the school's activities in Germany and the United States. The [Holdings](#) section presents a new way of looking at the Harvard Art Museums' Bauhaus-related works, enabling easier access to online records of objects. Topics in this section group objects by different facets of the school, allowing a researcher to navigate the collections by media (painting and sculpture, photography, etc.), by discipline (architecture), and by theme, such as "The Bauhaus at Harvard," "Pedagogy," and "Typography," in order to discover new material. Bauhaus artists, as well as students of those artists (and in some cases, even students of students), are searchable, as are time periods, techniques/mediums, and more.

A section dedicated to Wiesenberger's essay "[The Bauhaus and Harvard](#)" provides an account of how the history of the Bauhaus is linked intimately with the history of Harvard, and how Cambridge and the greater Boston area became a hub for modernist design in America.

The Bauhaus Special Collection also includes a comprehensive list of Bauhaus-related archives and exhibitions held across Harvard and an extensive bibliography. An annotated map shows the locations of institutions and archives affiliated with the school in and around Boston, as well as architectural points of interest, including the Gropius House in Lincoln, the John F. Kennedy Federal Building, and many lesser-known projects. These resources should fuel future Bauhaus research and catalyze new engagement with the collection, particularly through the museums' Art Study Center.

As the Harvard Art Museums prepare for the 2019 Bauhaus exhibition, showcasing its collections and other related centennial events, the hope is that this Special Collection will serve multiple audiences. "It's amazing material," Wiesenberger said. "This resource makes these rich collections accessible to a wider audience."

Other Special Collections on the museums' website provide a comprehensive look at diverse areas of the Harvard Art Museums' holdings, including ancient Mediterranean and near eastern bronzes, photographs of the Gordon Ward Gahan Collection, the collection of photography and documentary items from Harvard's Social Museum (1903–1931), and the Busch-Reisinger Museum's collection of photography by Lyonel Feininger.

About the Harvard Art Museums

The Harvard Art Museums, among the world's leading art institutions, comprise three museums (the Fogg, Busch-Reisinger, and Arthur M. Sackler Museums) and four research centers (the Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, the Harvard Art Museums Archives, and the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis). The Fogg Museum includes Western art from the Middle Ages to the present; the Busch-Reisinger Museum, unique among North American museums, is dedicated to the study of all modes and periods of art from central and northern Europe, with an emphasis on German-speaking countries; and the Arthur M. Sackler Museum is focused on Asian, ancient, and Islamic and later Indian art. Together, the collections include approximately 250,000 objects in all media. The Harvard Art Museums are distinguished by the range and depth of their collections, their groundbreaking exhibitions, and the original research of their staff. Integral to Harvard University and the wider community, the museums and research centers serve as resources for students, scholars, and the public. For more than a century they have been the nation's premier training ground for museum professionals and are renowned for their seminal role in developing the discipline of art history in the United States.

The Harvard Art Museums' renovation and expansion, completed in 2014, builds on the legacies of the three museums and unites their remarkable collections under one roof for the first time. Renzo Piano Building Workshop's responsive design preserved the Fogg Museum's landmark 1927 facility, while transforming the space to accommodate 21st-century needs. Following a six-year building project, the museums now feature 40 percent more gallery space, an expanded Art Study Center, conservation labs, and classrooms, and a striking new glass roof that bridges the facility's historic and contemporary architecture. The new Harvard Art Museums' building is more functional, accessible, spacious, and above all, more transparent. The three constituent museums retain their distinct identities in this new facility, yet their close proximity provides exciting opportunities to experience works of art in a broader context. harvardartmuseums.org

Hours and Admission

Daily, 10am–5pm. Closed major holidays. Admission: \$15 adults, \$13 seniors (65+), \$10 non-Harvard students (18+). Free for members; youth under 18; Cambridge residents; and Harvard students, faculty, and staff (plus one guest). On Saturdays, from 10am–noon, Massachusetts residents receive free admission. Visit the [Plan Your Visit](#) page for information about other discounts and policies.

Exhibitions, Events, and News

Our Special Exhibitions Gallery presents important new research on artists and artistic practice, and our University Galleries are programmed in consultation with Harvard faculty to support coursework. Visit the [Exhibitions](#) page for information on current and upcoming installations. Visit the museums' [Calendar](#) to learn more about lectures, workshops, films, performances, special events, and other programs that are held throughout the year. Check out *Index*, our [multimedia magazine](#), to keep up with what's happening at the Harvard Art Museums.

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