

# Harvard Art Museums

Fogg Museum  
Busch-Reisinger Museum  
Arthur M. Sackler Museum

## Press Release

### Harvard Art Museums Mark Bauhaus Centennial with Expansive Exhibition *The Bauhaus and Harvard*

*Complementary exhibition "Hans Arp's Constellations II" features newly restored, site-specific work commissioned by Walter Gropius for the Harvard Graduate Center*



Herbert Bayer, American, *Design for a Multimedia Trade Fair Booth*, 1924. Opaque watercolor, charcoal and touches of graphite with collage of cut printed and colored papers on off-white wove paper. Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Gift of the artist, [BR48.101](#). © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Cambridge, MA  
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The Harvard Art Museums present *The Bauhaus and Harvard*, an exhibition of nearly 200 works by more than 70 artists, drawn almost entirely from the Busch-Reisinger Museum's extensive Bauhaus collection. The presentation coincides with the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Bauhaus—the 20th century's most influential school of art, architecture, and design—and highlights the unique connections between the school and Harvard University.

Featuring works by major artists, including Anni and Josef Albers, Herbert Bayer, Marcel Breuer, Lyonel Feininger, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, and László Moholy-Nagy, the exhibition presents rarely seen student exercises, iconic design objects, photographs, textiles, typography, paintings, architectural drawings, studies, sculpture, and archival materials. It explores the school's pioneering curriculum, the ways its workshops sought to revolutionize the experience of everyday life, the widespread influence of Bauhaus instruction in America, and Harvard's own Graduate Center (1950), designed by Walter Gropius's firm The Architects Collaborative.

The Bauhaus was founded in Weimar, Germany, in 1919 by merging the city's schools of fine and applied arts. Inspired by medieval craft guilds, the Bauhaus was organized into workshops arranged by material. It sought to eliminate hierarchies between artists and artisans and bring them together as equal partners in creating art, design objects, and environments. In 1930, Harvard hosted the first Bauhaus exhibition in the United States and became a center for Bauhaus activity in this country when the school's founding director, Walter Gropius, joined Harvard's architecture department in 1937. After World War II, with the aid of Gropius and many former Bauhaus artists living in the United States, including Anni and Josef Albers, Herbert Bayer, Lyonel Feininger, and László Moholy-Nagy, the Busch-Reisinger Museum established a Bauhaus collection—today the largest of its kind outside Germany.

"The Busch-Reisinger Bauhaus holdings began as a 'study collection' and a collaboration between the museum and artists to preserve the legacy of this extraordinary school," said Lynette Roth, Daimler Curator of the Busch-Reisinger Museum and Head of the Division of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Harvard Art Museums. "This incredible collection continues to grow and open up new research avenues for scholars and the centennial was the ideal time to highlight it for our broader audiences."

*The Bauhaus and Harvard* is curated by Laura Muir, Research Curator in the Division of Academic and Public Programs at the Harvard Art Museums, and is on display in the museums' Special Exhibitions Gallery from February 8 through July 28, 2019.

"This is the first major exhibition of the Busch-Reisinger Museum's Bauhaus collection since 1971," said Muir. "Presenting rarely seen material alongside familiar works, it emphasizes the collection's strengths as well as its diversity. By foregrounding the Bauhaus's famous preliminary course, collaborations within and between workshops, and the achievements of lesser-known figures, particularly female artists, it offers a fresh perspective on this historical collection, which has long played a key role in the legacy and reception of the Bauhaus in the United States."

A [video introduction](#) to the exhibition is viewable on the museums' digital magazine *Index* as well as on Vimeo (<https://vimeo.com/312979507>) and YouTube ([https://youtu.be/C\\_akMb0QCu0](https://youtu.be/C_akMb0QCu0)). A [print interview](#) with Muir is also available on *Index*.

*The Bauhaus and Harvard* is organized in three sections. The first and largest is devoted to material produced at the Bauhaus in Germany. Highlights include Lyonel Feininger's [Preliminary design for the Program of the State Bauhaus in Weimar](#) (the so-called Bauhaus manifesto), student exercises, major weavings by Anni Albers and Gunta Stölzl, Lucia Moholy's photographs of Gropius's Dessau buildings, and László Moholy-Nagy's [Light Prop for an Electric Stage](#). The second section examines the influence of Bauhaus pedagogy in the United States and features classroom exercises from three schools influenced by the Bauhaus curriculum: Black Mountain College in North Carolina, Brooklyn College in New York, and Newcomb College in New Orleans. The third section highlights the Harvard Graduate Center (now the Caspersen Student Center and its neighboring dormitories). Designed by Gropius's Cambridge-based firm The Architects Collaborative and completed in 1950, the complex was the first example of modern architecture on Harvard's campus and a realization of many Bauhaus ideas through its integration of art, architecture, and design. Original works and other furnishings were commissioned from leading modern artists, including some of Gropius's former Bauhaus colleagues. Herbert Bayer's stunning and recently conserved 20-foot mural [Verdure](#) (originally installed in the Mallory Smith Dining

Room) anchors a space that also includes studies for the commissioned art and textiles designed by Anni Albers.

A complementary exhibition in the adjacent University Research Gallery features another work from Gropius's Harvard Graduate Center. *Hans Arp's "Constellations II"* presents a room-sized wall relief created by Hans Arp (1886–1966)—the work's first public viewing in 15 years. Commissioned for the Graduate Center by Gropius, the relief was first installed in 1950 in a popular dining room in Harkness Commons (now the Caspersen Center). Heavy use of the dining room damaged the delicate surface of the relief, prompting Arp, in 1958, to rearrange the work's individual panels above table height. Subsequent painting campaigns transformed the relief's redwood finish to gray-blue, white, and back to natural.

With the cooperation of Harvard Law School, which transferred the relief to the Harvard Art Museums in 2017, objects conservation fellow Madeline Corona from the Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies undertook a yearlong project to restore the work to its original finish for the exhibition. *Hans Arp's "Constellations II"* is concurrently on display February 8 through July 28, 2019. The exhibition was curated by Melissa Venator, Stefan Engelhorn Curatorial Fellow in the Busch-Reisinger Museum (2016–19). More about the history and conservation of the relief can be read in an *Index* magazine [article](#) and in a forthcoming [digital tool](#) on the museums' website.

*The Bauhaus*, a comprehensive digital resource launched by the Harvard Art Museums in 2016, provides public access to the more than 32,000 Bauhaus and Bauhaus-related objects in the Busch-Reisinger Museum's collection. The online resource also shares scholarship on the Bauhaus and its legacy in the United States, including the school's extensive ties to Harvard and the Greater Boston area. Learn more about the launch of the resource in this [press release](#). Explore the site: [hvrd.art/bauhaus](http://hvrd.art/bauhaus)

A print publication inspired by *The Bauhaus and Harvard* and its related programming is due out in Fall 2020.

### **Bauhaus Programming at the Harvard Art Museums and Beyond**

Information about associated programming for *The Bauhaus and Harvard*, including an [opening celebration on February 7](#), film screenings, a [symposium on March 29](#), gallery talks, walking tours of the Harvard Graduate Center, and a related exhibition in the Lightbox Gallery by contemporary artist and opening night speaker Judith Raum, can be found at [harvardartmuseums.org/bauhaus](http://harvardartmuseums.org/bauhaus) (scroll to the Related Events section).

Please note: Tickets for Judith Raum's lecture-performance during the February 7 opening celebration are sold out, but visitors are still welcome at the event to see the exhibition, visit the museums' other galleries, and enjoy a reception after the talk. The lecture will be livestreamed on the museums' YouTube channel and archived there for viewing at any time. Please check [this page](#) on the evening of the event for the link.

Other Harvard institutions have organized exhibitions inspired by the Bauhaus centennial: *The Bauhaus at Home and Abroad: Selections from the Papers of Walter Gropius, Lyonel Feininger, and Andor Weininger* is on view from January 15 through April 6, 2019, in the Amy Lowell Room at Houghton Library; and *Creating Community: Harvard Law School and the Bauhaus* is on display from February 4 through July 31, 2019, in the Caspersen Room at Langdell Hall, Harvard Law School.

The [Goethe-Institut Boston](#) is promoting Bauhaus centennial events at a range of New England institutions, including [Radical Geometries: Bauhaus Prints, 1919–33](#) on view February 9 to June 23,

2019, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and *Arresting Fragments: Object Photography at the Bauhaus* on display March 28 to September 1, 2019, at the MIT Museum.

## **Credits**

Support for *The Bauhaus and Harvard* was provided by the Daimler Curatorship of the Busch-Reisinger Museum Fund, the Charles L. Kuhn Endowment Fund, and the Care of the Busch-Reisinger Museum Collection Endowment. Associated programming was made possible by the M. Victor Leventritt Fund.

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In addition, modern and contemporary art programs at the Harvard Art Museums are made possible in part by generous support from the Emily Rauh Pulitzer and Joseph Pulitzer, Jr., Fund for Modern and Contemporary Art.

## **About the Harvard Art Museums**

The Harvard Art Museums house one of the largest and most renowned art collections in the United States, and are comprised of 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 art, Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern art, 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 have a rich tradition of considering the history of objects as an integral part of the teaching and study of art history, focusing on conservation and preservation concerns as well as technical studies.

The Harvard Art Museums' 2014 renovation and expansion carried on the legacies of the three museums and united their remarkable collections under one roof for the first time. Renzo Piano Building Workshop preserved the Fogg Museum's landmark 1927 facility, while transforming the space to accommodate 21st-century needs. The three constituent museums retain their distinct identities in the facility, yet their close proximity provides exciting opportunities to experience works of art in a broader context. [harvardartmuseums.org](http://harvardartmuseums.org)

## **Hours and Admission**

Daily, 10am–5pm. Closed major holidays. Admission: \$15 adults, \$13 seniors (65+). Free for members; youth under 18; Cambridge residents (proof of residency required); all students; and Harvard ID holders (plus one guest). On Saturdays, from 10am–noon, Massachusetts residents receive free admission (proof of residency required). For further information about visiting, see [harvardartmuseums.org/plan-your-visit](http://harvardartmuseums.org/plan-your-visit).

## **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. [harvardartmuseums.org/visit/exhibitions](http://harvardartmuseums.org/visit/exhibitions)

Lectures, workshops, films, performances, special events, and other programs are held throughout the year at the museums. [harvardartmuseums.org/visit/calendar](http://harvardartmuseums.org/visit/calendar)

Check out *Index*, our multimedia magazine, to keep up with what's happening at the Harvard Art Museums. [harvardartmuseums.org/index-magazine](http://harvardartmuseums.org/index-magazine)

The Harvard Art Museums receive support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

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