

Bauhaus Pedagogy and the Paradigm Shift in the Visual Arts

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Rainer Wick (1986), in the subchapter "Bauhaus pedagogy in the context of art school reform", raises the discussion between the interpreters of the radical break with the tradition of this school, and Walter Gropius' argumentation of Bauhaus pedagogy in relation to certain traditions inherited from medieval lodges, workshops and Renaissance guilds, in the context of the art school reforms of the early twentieth century in Europe.

In this connection, this text shows a paradigm shift in the visual arts of which the Bauhaus is a part, imperceptible in discourses, but indisputable in the works of a model of Bauhaus artists that includes Gropius, Kandinsky, Albers, Moholy-Nagy, Mondrian, Malevich and Albers. The visual system of these works derives from a conception of art that is contrary to and incompatible with all tradition, but which is superimposed by the Bauhaus means of craftsmanship and engineering.

Keywords: visual studies and Bauhaus, divergence in visualization, media convergence in the visual arts, modern visual arts

INTRODUCTION

Rainer Wick (1986), in the subchapter "Bauhaus pedagogy in the context of art school reform", raises the discussion between the interpreters of the radical break with the tradition of this school, and Walter Gropius' argumentation of Bauhaus pedagogy in relation to certain traditions inherited from medieval lodges, workshops and Renaissance guilds, in the context of the art school reforms of the early twentieth century in Europe¹.

From this approach it is possible to assume that both the radical break and the heritage of the medieval lodges and Renaissance workshops may or may not have happened. We will try to clarify the content of these propositions, but the illustrations in the Bauhaus Book collection, edited by Walter Gropius and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy (1925-1930)², and those in the Bauhaus catalog 1919-1928, Museum of Modern Art, New York (1975) edited by Gropius and Alfred Barr, do not seem to show that the works created at the Bauhaus were modeled on Medieval or Renaissance works of art. However, it should be noted that one of the characteristics of Modernity is that artists such as Pablo Picasso began to take as a model works that were not of their time, as well as works that were not of their culture: Iberian sculptures, Catalan Romanesque, Greek art, works from the Ivory Coast, from the French Congo, from El Greco... with which sculptures like *Picasso's Carving of Fernande* (1906) or *Nude with raised arms* (1906), which are hardly identified as works by an artist of Modernity, paradoxically are works that contribute to define Modernity,

because such a completely finished transcultural phenomenon had hardly happened before (Jaques Pi, 2007 and Rabadan Villalpando, 2018).

From this apparently undisputed initial position, which perceives a revolution in contemporary art to the Bauhaus from the instant in which this pedagogy was named House of Creation -and not Academy-³; from the understanding of that fact of complete transformation in which the new cannot be referred to in the vocabulary of the old; and with the purpose of grounding more fully from visual studies the debate of reference, I will study the restructuring of perception in a body of works produced around the Bauhaus which, in principle, it is not difficult to suppose, will oppose the formal visual system prior to German Expressionism and Cubism, and which will later oppose German Expressionism and even Cubism.

The Bauhaus, as is well known, follows the approach of William Morris's *Werkbund*, which brings together art, morality, politics and religion under the symbol of the Gothic cathedral - the expressionist woodcut designed by Lyonel Fininger in 1919 - although through Herman Muthesius's *Deutsche Werkbund*, which integrates engineering with art. Walter Gropius implements this conciliatory notion of art, craftsmanship and industrialization in the post-war society at the Bauhaus (Bayer, Gropius, & Gropius, 1975). This supposed dual innovative and traditional possibility of the Bauhaus is a key part of the negotiation for increasing funding -according to the discourse given by Gropius- which makes this position essentially pedagogical and political (Wick, 1986). In this regard, Rainer Wick, through a consistent and extensive documentary research of history, politics, and ideology, with which he founds the studies on Bauhaus pedagogy, adopts a certain undefined position.

It is possible, however, to suppose that this dual innovative and traditional possibility is objectively manifested in the Bauhaus. The works are specific facts, arguments in themselves from which it is possible to deduce whether the conception of art accepted by the artistic community of the Bauhaus shares the paradigmatic change of the visual arts at the beginning of the last century; or whether it embodies the traditions inherited from the medieval lodges, workshops and Renaissance guilds to which Gropius makes reference in his discourse. In any case, artists like Kandinsky also thought that every work of art was a product of its time ⁴.

The coexistence of different paradigms, however, occurs, as in the first period of the Bauhaus when there were teachers hired by the Higher Institute of Fine Arts and the School of Applied Arts of the Grand Duchy of Saxony that preceded the Bauhaus, and teachers hired by this school in Weimar after its opening in 1919. Unlike the former, these were visual artists experienced in the avant-garde and revolutionary change of the early twentieth century, whose stroke was to articulate a paradigm that would decide their time and ours.

Another assumption, linked to the previous one, is that Bauhaus teachers who had not necessarily worked in workshops began to do so when approaching this pedagogical program. The work created by them, however, can only embody the vision of Modernity, even if it seems to contrast with Gropius' argument concerning certain traditions inherited from medieval lodges, Renaissance workshops, and guilds. In a comparative way, one can think that projects such as the *Triadic Ballet* or the Bauhaus in Dessau, whose creation brings together the specialties of craft teaching, form teaching, creation and design - from the pedagogical model of the Bauhaus - what they inherit is technique and organization, but the visuality of the work, conclusively, is none other than that of the radical rupture of the art of the beginning of the last century.

Rainer Wick, on the other hand, has raised a debate that compares an interpretative approach referring to works of art belonging to a visual field, with a discourse pronounced from a strictly textual order, and at a time when certain Bauhaus artists linked to European avant-garde precisely analyze in the pictorial field the reciprocal opposition of these fields⁵.

In that sense, this work starts from specific facts - the works of a model of Bauhaus artists: Gropius, Kandinsky, Moholy Nagy, Mondrian, Malevich, Albers - on the basis of which I try to deduce that, behind a sudden change of obvious formal visual Gestalt, there is a whole change of conception of art, and I suppose it is to that phenomenon that Wick ambiguously refers to when he talks about a *radical rupture*. The Gropius text, meanwhile, does not refer to works. The analysis presented in this paper is done in the context of visual studies, which makes it different from the image and discourse debate proposed by Wick.

Rainer Wick's Bauhaus pedagogy Pedagogy, however, does not make a visual analysis in his approach to the institution's pedagogical complex. He illustrated it with examples of works by students, Bauhaus teachers, and their predecessors, but does not examine the development of the visuality related to the theories under discussion. He has integrated the images of the works that illustrate his analysis as examples of documentary research, but the drama of visual change resulting from the integration of abstract and conceptual thinking during the first two decades of the last century, which was happening for the first time in the history of Western art, and which also runs through the Bauhaus, has become relatively visible in his study. When the time comes to consider the change in Johannes Itten, Wick even excludes his work prior to Cubism, thereby skipping the analysis of the rupture and thus the visual confirmation of the change: "The figurative paintings prior to 1912, -he says- can be overlooked" (Wick, 1986, p. 85).

In that sense, this study will address the change of *Gestalt*, visual-formal reference, from the examination of the works to theorize about the presence of the paradigmatic shift of the early twentieth century in the Bauhaus.

The Bauhaus and the Paradigm Shift at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

The radical rupture can be interpreted as a visual change from Gestalt in artistic creation derived from the deep transformation in the conception of art at the beginning of the last century; while the argumentation of Walter Gropius on the pedagogy of the Bauhaus is in the field of political language, in addition to the pedagogical; although I have opened the possibility of supposing that it has some transcultural dye, according to Modernity. In this sense, I propose to visually study a body of works by Bauhaus artists - including the work of Gropius - in order to explore to what extent these artistic practices are consubstantial with radical rupture, or whether, on the contrary, they derive from traditions inherited from medieval lodges, workshops and Renaissance guilds.

To make it clear that artistic practices and discourses come from different representational orders, we ask, for example, what happens when the radical transformation of visual art works from the beginning of the last century are contrasted with Walter Gropius' textual discourse on Bauhaus pedagogy? Does his architectural functionalist work contrast with his own discourse? Vasily Kandinsky's abstract painting, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy's experimentation with paintings made with light -as a model of examples of works made by teachers-; the technical drawings of Joseph Albers and the abstract tapestries or jewelry of Annie Albers -as examples of pieces created by students-; the suprematist paintings of Kasimir Malevich, and the neoplastic paintings of Piet Mondrian - among the artists invited to the Bauhaus - to what extent do they all derive from traditions inherited from medieval lodges, workshops and Renaissance guilds?

The concept of art changed completely and abruptly between 1907-1914 through the Western artistic community, which included several of the artists who were to join the Bauhaus at the end of the First World War. According to González García, Calvo Serraller and Marchán Fiz (2009)⁶, this school is incorporated extemporaneously to the avant-garde movement, but it is, in any case, inherent to the transformation introduced by the artistic community in relation to these movements. Thinking about the lack of synchrony with the avant-garde -even when it is completely grounded and reflection is necessary- may not have been the Bauhaus' underlying problem.

This avant-garde and innovative character probably motivated its incompatibility with the post-war society -and later with the National Socialist society- culturally formed in the traditions of the 19th century, divided into factions of those who could not assume the end of the conflict and those who, by contrast, aspired to live in a different way and, in that sense, understood the Bauhaus as part of this desire (Dorner, 1975). In the recent study by Elizabeth Otto and Patrick Rössler it is possible, for example, to address the case of Gunta Stölzl who, having been a Red Cross nurse, applies to the Bauhaus in 1919 with a portfolio that includes works of the horror seen in the conflagration (Otto & Rossler, 2019). And it is also conceivable to analyze the case, among the community of Bauhaus graduates, of Friedl Dicker and the art school for children, which she founded during her time in *Theresienstadt*, the concentration camp where she was confined prior to her transfer to *Auschwitz-Birkenau*, the extermination camp where in 1944 she was murdered in the gas chamber (Otto & Rossler, 2019, p. 175-261). The works created at this school followed the pedagogy learned by Dicker at the Bauhaus-according to Otto and Rössler; and according to Helga

Pollack, who was a child student of Dicker's at *Theresienstadt*, such pedagogy was the only thing that reminded her that she was still a sapien: "In those moments," Pollack declares, "I felt like a human being." This is evidence that their artistic practice was inconsistent with the social, as much as the fact that the conservation of those works had to be clandestine (Otto & Rossler, 2019, p. 235).

The Bauhaus staff of professors included artists from the avant-garde according to González García, Calvo Serraller and Marchan Fiz, but also artists such as Kasimir Malevich, invited by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy (Drutt, 2003), and Piet Mondrian, who must have left some trace of Suprematism and Neoplasticism, respectively. Mondrian's work was printed at *Werkstatt für Druckgraphik*, the lithography workshop of the Bauhaus in Weimar. Moholy-Nagy invited him in 1924 to write articles in the Weimar *Bauhausbücher* and he also writes about Mondrian (Joosten, 1998). All these artists belonged to the European artistic community and -in addition to the Bauhaus- they coincided in artists' workshops, gallery exhibitions, art spaces such as *Abstracte und Surrealistische Malerei und Plastik* (1929), Kunsthau in Zurich, which brings together van Doesburg, Vantongerloo, Kasimir Malevich, Lissitsky, Antoine Pevsner, Josef Albers, Moholy-Nagy, and Piet Mondrian, at the initiative of Giedion's curatorial work (Joosten, 1998).

The radical rupture analysis to which Wick refers is essential for the understanding of the Bauhaus, as much as it is for the study of the avant-garde. This rupture, in my opinion, is the articulation of a paradigmatic change whose effect is perceptible in the current design.

Rainer Wick (1986), in turn, analyzes how during the life of the Bauhaus time takes on an accelerated form and how the result of this evolution has found a new era for design pedagogy, on the one hand, or skepticism and rejection by society on the other:

In that short time period of only fourteen years, not only were developed the foundations of what we know today as <design>, but in this art school were developed and applied a new type of pedagogical concepts that after more than fifty years are still current in some aspects and that have led to a new academicism, which was and is contemplated with skepticism, criticism or even total rejection (p. 15).

He recognizes, on the one hand, that Bauhaus pedagogy is paradigmatic of design education for a significant span of time -Wick publishes his book at the end of the last century-; but on the other hand, he perceives the total rejection that indicates, let's remember, the persistence of incompatibility with a totally different community that inhabits a paradigm contrary to Modernity. Nicolaus Pevsner - during the seventy-fifth anniversary tribute to Walter Gropius at the Harvard Club of Boston- comparably expounds the paradigmatic articulation of twentieth-century architecture in terms that distinguish the revolutionary architect of the Fagus Factory (1911) from the normal architecture, based on that Gropius example, of the Harvard students:

[...] Walter Gropius is among the four or five pioneers of the twentieth-century architectural movement, but what is probably not so easily understood by the many young people I see in this room, is the tremendous effort that must have gone into creating it. You young people who are here, are very lucky. You are working in a language that is already accepted. They look very much like a designer of the Gothic or Georgian style. They can dilute the language or develop it, intensify it, humanize it and do all kinds of things with it, but the language already exists. When that building was lifted in Alfeld, the language had to be created and that would only have, of course, qualified a man for the highest honor this country can give to a foreign architect (Pevsner, 1958, p. 26).

These pedagogies, I suppose, can only be relative to the entirely new conceptions of art that were contemporary to the Bauhaus. In other words, the pedagogy and art of that institute are a segment of the epistemic and paradigmatic change of the visual arts at the beginning of the last century that, in its origin, caused a deep estrangement in those who had not assimilated the change of concept underlying the abstract,

conceptual schools and their possible combinations. We can think of the Bauhaus in relation to the revolutionary change in the visual arts that John Golding (1993) expresses in the following terms:

Cubism was probably the most important and undoubtedly the most complete and radical artistic revolution since the Renaissance [...] In fact, from a strictly visual point of view, it is easier to bridge the three hundred and fifty years that separate Impressionism from the High Renaissance than the fifty existing between Impressionism and Cubism. If we could forget for a moment the historical and social factors, a portrait by Renoir would seem to us closer to a portrait by Raphael than to a cubist portrait by Picasso (p. 21).

This revolutionary form of time has also been understood by other authors such as John Berger. In his analysis of Cubism, he not only perceives the revolutionary change between 1907-1914, but assumes that it establishes a theoretical framework within which artists have worked for more than fifty years:

I find it hard to believe that the most extreme Cubist works were painted more than fifty years ago -he said in 1969-. They are both too optimistic and too revolutionary for that. Perhaps in a way I am surprised that they have been painted. It would seem more likely that they were yet to be painted.

Do I make things unnecessarily complicated? Would it not be more helpful to say simply: the few great Cubist works were painted between 1907-1914? (Berger, 2001)

Even though most of the revolutionary artists experimented with Cubism, the search for more complete solutions led them to trace diverse displacements that configured new avant-garde movements. This is how Kandinsky's abstract painting (1911), the Dadaist plastic and cinematographic abstractions (1916-1921), Neoplasticism (1914), Suprematism (1915), and Duchampian Conceptualism (1912), among others, were articulated. The Bauhaus is not an avant-garde movement, it is a school, but it is a phenomenon consubstantial to this paradigmatic change. The group of movements represents an epistemic and paradigmatic change, as we have worked on it in another publication (Rabadan Villalpando, 2017). And as part of the artistic community in the West, the Bauhaus, five years later, is crossed by this revolution. The group of artistic practices changes the visual Gestalt completely (from 1907- 1915). The images begin to be shaped in a contrary and incompatible way in relation to the pictorial representations as they had been done until then. Each artist's work from one point seems to have been made by a completely different one. The phenomenon has sometimes been of such depth that teams of different researchers have even been created to study the works before and after this transformation of the same artist, with the result that art history has not fully analyzed the rupture and it is, in that sense, that something different can and should still be theorized (Rabadan, 2015).

Visual *Gestalt* change is not limited to painting, drawing, or stamping. It impregnates all visual artistic practices -photography, cinematography, sculpture, architecture...-.

In the Bauhaus the radical rupture crosses the creation of the preliminary course, of all the workshops -stone, metal, glass...-, of all the artisanal, artistic, design and architectural practices, because the way of knowing of each artist is a totality and the visual Gestalt is conceived as a structure integrated by a totality and not by a sum of isolated parts -according to the psychology of the Gestalt (Arenheim, 1981)-. The then new image system can be seen in H. Nösset's Chessboard (1925); Joseph Albers' stained glass window in Gropius' Sommerfeld House, Berlin (1922); in Merianne Brandt's coffee pots (1926); or in all manifestations of the Triadic Ballet - costumes, scenery, choreography...- by Oskar Schlemmer (Bayer, Gropius, & Gropius, 1975).

Western art stops adding knowledge to what was hitherto known as art and begins to create in the realm of new conceptions that imply a change of visual perception in more than one sense. Bauhaus pedagogy, which fundamentally aims to be technical and postulates that art cannot be taught -although Joseph Albers, in particular, as a student claims that it can be learned-; in any case, it is essentially influenced by abstract

art, although it is feasible to see that Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, in addition to creating *Light Space Modulator* (1930) (Moholy-Nagy, 2020): an electrically mobile and luminous sculpture that he otherwise filmed to configure an abstract film work *Ein Lichtspiel Schwarz Weiss Grau* (1928-1930), he also experimented on the visual-textual aspect - comparable to the work of Marcel Duchamp - when he issues telephone instructions to create a pictorial work (Ulrich Obrist, 2014).

These works would hardly have been recognized as art by visual artists prior to the reference break if they had not acquired the new artistic insights; the same can be thought of Malevich's suprematist Black Square (1915), which must have been contrary, perhaps indecipherable, in the eyes of the professors of the Higher Institute of Fine Arts and the Grand-Ducal Saxon School of Arts and Crafts who remained at the Bauhaus.

I have previously reviewed how art studies to a greater degree tend to specialize in the analysis of normal changes and to a much lesser degree in the study of the more problematic revolutionary changes, which renders invisible a fundamental part of the phenomenon (Rabadan, 2015). Rainer Wick (1986), for example, does not consider what in his terms is specifically the radical break, but, when working on Johannes Itten's work, proposes to "overlook" his works prior to 1912, even though, in order to reason out the background of Bauhaus pedagogy, he had enunciated that, in a digression, he was going to expound the stages of artistic training from the Middle Ages to the 19th century: "[...] to be able to locate the Bauhaus and its pedagogy in a broader historical context" (p. 53). The span extension justifies the radical rupture-medieval cathedral debate, but it does not address the change from the old to the new as a fundamental part of the artistic phenomenon of the beginning of the last century.

Visuality of Radical Rupture in the Bauhaus

The visual analysis of works of art is one of the foundations based on which it is possible to determine whether the pedagogy of the Bauhaus was consubstantial with the radical change in art at the beginning of the 20th century or whether, in contrast, it is linked to the traditions inherited from medieval lodges and Renaissance guilds, according to the polemics of Rainer Wick - in part from Gropius' lecture. This study considers that works of art are theory, which is the determinant of their formal visual perception. In this sense, the restructurings in the perception of the works that we will see are the indicators of theoretical changes in the visual arts. All of which is susceptible to theorization by art studies.

The Bauhaus was influenced by the work of Walter Gropius, Vasily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Kasimir Malevich and Piet Mondrian, who were among the artists who shaped the crucible of a complete change in the conception of art at the beginning of the last century and, in their pedagogical work, the students of this school -such as Josep and Anni Albers- were taken as models; and from successive schools such as Bauhaus Chicago Art Institute, Black Mountain College, or the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University where, for example, Mexican architect Jorge González Reyna, director of the National School of Architecture of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (1961-1964)⁷ was trained under the supervision of Gropius. The statement made by Gropius about the inheritance of medieval and Renaissance traditions, however, is not out of the question since these artists worked in the workshops of glass, wood, textiles... and provided designs for craftsmanship and industry. They designed works for craft and industrial workshops even after their time at the Bauhaus, such as the *Mexican B Chair* (ca. 1940) by Josep Albers (Albers, 2020).

We will not analyze all the artists, but we will consider enough of them to form a model of analysis, with the purpose of evidencing the paradigmatic change with which I will give an answer to the main assumption of this work. I will not analyze here cubist artists such as Pablo Picasso or George Braque, nor the conceptualist Marcel Duchamp -whose contribution is necessary to understand the change- because the learning that the artistic community could have had from his work was not in the realm of the school. Cubism, however, is displayed at the Bauhaus, the conception of *collage* was a must-have method there; but Marcel Duchamp's concept of ready-made, in particular, was not compatible with the artisanal conception of art; nevertheless, technical drawings, which began to be seen as work by Duchamp in 1913⁸; were paradigmatic for works by Bauhaus artists such as *Study for Glass Construction*, Frontal, (1927); *Study*

for Tenayuca (ca. 1940); *Study for Monte Albán* (1941), all by Joseph Albers (*The Josef & Anni Albers Foundation*, 2019), which may lead to further studies.

FIGURE 1
WALTER GROPIUS AND ADOLF MAYER, FAGUS FACTORY (1911)



Walter Gropius' argumentation about Bauhaus pedagogy, the traditions inherited from medieval lodges and Renaissance guilds, is a parliament that can hardly be contrasted with the works of radical rupture - architectural or non-architectural - and particularly with his own work, without also referring to texts closer to the construction of the Fagus Factory - the work through which Gropius affirms himself as an architect of Modernity: "Observations on the Architecture of the Spanish Castle of Coca in Segovia" (1908), "Concerning the essence of the different artistic will in the East and the West" (1910), and "Program for the constitution of a limited company for the construction of houses on a unitary artistic basis" (1910).

Gropius, in collaboration with Adolf Mayer, had designed the Fagus Factory (1911), with which they had started to model their work on an entirely new theoretical framework of architecture. As a collaborator of Peter Behrens, Gropius had learned from the canonical example of functional architecture, the AEG Turbine Factory (1910) (Gropius, 1925 and Wick, 1986), with which Behrens opposes the preceding ornamental Art Nouveau architecture.

As Pablo Picasso had studied, among other models, Catalan Romanesque sculpture and African sculpture - a method not usual in artistic creation prior to 1906 - Gropius analyzed in 1908, in counterpoint, ancient Eastern architecture and Western Indo-Germanic Baroque in the castle of Coca in Segovia, based on Alois Riegl's conception of artistic will, and writes what is also perceivable in the visual Gestalt of the Fagus Factory, that in Muslim architecture every limitation must be perceptible in a visual field that does not give way to empty spaces and that every surface has its own light intensity and that the silhouette is important:

The succession of dimensional terms is: 0, point; 1, line; 2, plane; 3, body and space. With each link in this chain, the evidence of perception decreases while the demands on subjective intellectual capacity increase. The objective of the Western artistic notion was to increase the dimensions; that of the Eastern, on the other hand, was to reduce them. (Gropius, 1910, p. 98).

The dualistic analysis of Muslim art and Indo-Germanic baroque art is similar to the reasoning that led Malevich to the purification of the Suprematist form, as we will see below.

FIGURE 2



Kandinsky (1901). *Red church*.
Kandinsky (1913). *Untitled*.

Kandinsky had made one of the fundamental contributions to revolutionary change, before joining the Wchutemas in the Soviet Union and the Bauhaus in 1922. Among the first times that it happens in Western painting, he had visualized the abstraction. Probably because of this he was invited as a teacher of both institutions and his principles are manifested in the pedagogical program of the Bauhaus, which is clearly understood by Rainer Wick.

However, what Wick has overlooked in his research on Bauhaus pedagogy is the source episode of Kandinsky's change of perception, without which the Russian painter would not have been able to perceive abstract painting in 1910. Fourteen years earlier he had interpreted the matter of impressionist painting concerning the dissolution of the representation of objects. From a perspective formed exclusively in Russian realist painting, Kandinsky suddenly sees the exhibition of impressionist painting in Moscow in 1896, and it is then that the problem comes to him as he writes in *Rückblicke* [Reminiscences]:

Previously, I had known only realistic art, in fact only Russians and I had often remained standing for a long time in before the hand of Franz Liszt in the portrait by Repin's... And suddenly, for the first time, I saw a picture. That it was a Haystack, the catalog informed me. I did not recognize it. I found this nonrecognition painful, and thought that the painter [Claude Monet] had no right to paint it so indistinctly. I had a dull feeling that the object was lacking in this picture.

And I noticed with surprise and confusion that the picture not only gripped me, but impressed itself ineradicably upon my memory, always hovering quite unexpectedly before my eyes, down to the last detail. It was all unclear to me, and I was not able to draw the simple conclusions from this experience. What was, however, quite clear to me was the unsuspected power of the palette, previously concealed from me, which exceeded all my dreams. Painting took on a fairy-tale power and splendor. And, albeit unconsciously, objects were discredited as an essential element within the picture. I had the overall impression that a tiny fragment of my fairy-tale Moscow already existed on canvas. (Kandinsky, 1913, p. 363).

Kandinsky experimented with impressionist painting *Red Church* (1901) (State Russian Museum of St. Petersburg; National Council of the Consortium of Museums of the Valencian Community, 2002), and more extensively worked in the field of German Expressionist painting (Kandinsky W. I., 2020), in which, along with Paul Klee, Franz Marc, August Macke, Gabriele Münter, and Alexey von Jawlensky, he was one of that movement's key figures *Der Blaue Reiter* [*The Blue Rider*] (1911-1914). In 1896 he raised the

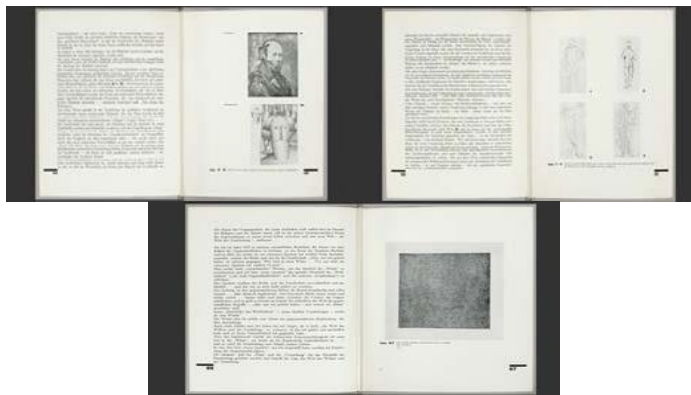
question about the future of painting with the dissolution of objects, but it was not until 1910 that he began to discover the answer to this question during an unusual restructuring of the perception of his own work, also according to his own statement about the event:

[... and suddenly I saw an indescribably beautiful picture, pervaded by an inner glow. At first, I stopped short and then quickly approached this mysterious picture, on which I could discern only forms and colors and whose content was incomprehensible. At once, I discovered the key to the puzzle: it was a picture I had painted, standing on its side against the wall (Kandinsky, 1994, p. 369).

Kandinsky's watercolor on paper, *Untitled* (1913), (Kandinsky V. S., 2020) is a work inconsistent with his Impressionist painting, in such a way that it is not possible to establish a direct relationship based on the different visual *Gestalt* of each of the paintings, even though they were created only twelve years apart.

At the Bauhaus, Kandinsky was in charge of the mural painting workshop and taught courses related to analytical drawing. This teaching was marked by a materialistic approach focused on the analytical-synthetic relationship of the formal system of the image and the study of color, which was understood only as part of the form. Kandinsky had been influenced by the color theory of Goethe -who had based psychology on the perception of color-. The *theory of form* was basically supported in *Punkt und Linie zu Fläche [Point and Line on the Plane]* No. 9 Bauhausbücher, 1926, and did not reflect the color theory of the Impressionists, nor one of the color theories of the Post-Impressionists.

FIGURE 3
KASIMIR MALEWITSCH. DIE GEGENSTANDSLOSE WELT. BAUHAUSBÜCHER 11. 1927.
P. 14-15; 11-12; 66-67



Kasimir Malevich (1927). Die Gegenstandslose Welt [The abstract world].

Only when the conscious habit of seeing the little caches, Madonnas, and Venuses in the images disappears, we will witness a purely pictorial work of art.

Kazimir Malevich.

Five of the artists in the model described in this chapter are included among the authors of the *Bauhausbücher*.

Die Gegenstandslose Welt [The abstract world] No. 11, *Bauhausbücher*, 1927, by Malevich contains two texts: "Die Gegenstandslose Welt" [The Introduction to the Theory of Elements Additional to Painting] and "Suprematismus" [Suprematism]. The first exposes a counterpoint theory of provincial, urban, and applied art. In the images, as an example of the former, appears what from my perspective was unavoidable: Cézanne's Self-Portrait (1880-1882) -a post-impressionist painting-, in contrast with Malevich's cubo-futurism urban work, which may represent the beginning of the paradigmatic change that for this Russian

artist culminated with the *Suprematist Black Square* (1915). Here it is logical to think that if a temporal fold were possible in which we could present Malevich's *Black Square* to Cézanne, without the acquisition of the theory of painting that led to the paradigm shift, Cézanne would not have been able to recognize it as a painting. For this it would have been necessary to acquire the new theory of art and, based on it, to restructure perception, since Suprematism is to stop adding knowledge to what until then was known as painting:

[...] critics and the public complained: <Everything we had loved was lost. We are in a desert.

What we have in front of us is nothing more than a black square on a white background!>

And they were looking for <crushing words> to drive away the symbol of the desert and to find again in the <dead square> the favorite image of <reality>, <real objectivity> and <moral sensibility> (K. Malevich, 1984, 386).

On the other hand, leaving the horizon -that is to say, painting as a representation of objects- leads him to the extraordinary discovery of space by contrast with the pictorial plane of representation:

Suprematism, then, opens new possibilities for art, since, with the cessation of the so-called <consideration through correspondence with the objective>, it becomes possible to transport to space a plastic perception reproduced on the plane of a painting. The artist, the painter, is no longer bound to the canvas, to the plane of painting, but is able to transfer his compositions from canvas to space (Malevich, 1984, p. 395).

This innovation shocked the OGPU (Joint State Political Directorate) and the members of the Moscow Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, to which Malevich had been associated since 1910. He was soon denounced because of his "formalist" work and questioned about his work and

activities abroad - he had previously been in Warsaw, and later in Germany as a guest of Laszlo Moholy Nagy at the Bauhaus to work on some art publications (Drutt, 2003, p. 111). Malevich was dismissed from the Institute and imprisoned. He stopped painting abstractions and began a period of abstract and figurative combinations...⁹

FIGURE 4
JOSEF ALBERS. BAVARIAN MOUNTAIN SCENE III. 1919
JOSEF ALBERS. MOUNTED GRID. CA. 1921



Josef Albers (1919). Bavarian Mountain Scene III. Josef Albers (1921). Mounted grid.

When Josef Albers began his studies at the Bauhaus in 1920, he had already worked in the field of German Expressionism *Sandgrube I* (1916), and in the field of Cubism *Self-Portrait* (1917) *Ostring IV* (ca. 1917), as can be seen in the catalogues raisonné of The Josef & Anni Albers Foundation. This means that he was experiencing a radical change in the context of the visual arts when he chose to study at the Bauhaus. During the first three and a half years he should have been trained in the preliminary course, instruction on problems of form, and craft instruction in workshops; and he should have concluded with internships in

construction and design, in accordance with the Bauhaus curriculum (Bayer, Gropius, & Gropius, 1975). Josep Albers was a professor at this school, at Black Mountain College in North Carolina (1933-1949), director of the Department of Design at Yale University School of Art and professor at Harvard Graduate School of Design, but unlike other artists covered in this chapter, he was a student at the Bauhaus. In that sense, he differed from the original Bauhaus pedagogy that postulated the impossibility that art could be taught directly, because Albers critically responded that it was feasible to learn and develop it (Wick, 1986). In this way he developed amid a radical or revolutionary change in Western art, which Lux Feininger perceived in the pedagogical field: "[...] from the didactic and methodological points of view, Albers modified 'in such a way the conception of this [preliminary] course that, apart from the name, nothing remained of that time,'" Feininger stated (Wick, 1986, p. 144). These terms evidence that in the early twentieth century there has been a paradigm shift in the visual arts, because they experienced a non-cumulative episode -the change of conception of the preliminary course according to Albers is a segment of this revolution-.

At the same time, the cubist image system runs directly through the work produced by Albers in the stained-glass workshop: *Fensterbild [Window Image]* of 1921. It has been classified at the Hirshhorn Museum as geometric abstraction. However, in this painting, in addition to the knowledge of the materials and the handcrafted creation of the object, the discovery of analytical Cubism becomes visible, which - according to the catalogue raisonné *The Cubism of Picasso*, by Pierre Daix and Joan Rosset (1979) - begins in 1912, when this painter born in Malaga places an imitation wood paper on the canvas instead of representing it. Josef Albers uses as a base a printed paper on which he has fixed the pieces of glass and metal found. In this regard, Paul Klee -who was a professor of form teaching in those years- will surely have seen how, in this combination, Albers has ceased to represent the visible, to make the visible (Klee, 2009).

Based on the catalogues raisonné of The Josef & Anni Albers Foundation, it is possible to see that he stops accumulating knowledge about the theory of graphic or pictorial representation in works such as *Figure* (1919) or *Babarian Mountain Scene (III)* (1919). From that moment on, it is possible to see a complete change of formal visual Gestalt in his work. Then he chooses, in accordance with the alternatives of the Bauhaus, the stained-glass workshop, suitable for *collage* and abstractions of those years *Gitterbild [Mounted Grid]* (ca. 1921); *Park* (ca. 1923); *Scherben im Gitterbild [Fragments in Grid]* (ca. 1921) (works that in reality may be stained glass and not their representations); a work in which nothing seems to have remained of that time, according to Feininger's expression. From a certain point in time Albers' work looks like the work of a different artist, but what we see is that there has been a restructuring in the perception of this single artist. The change of image system of Josef Albers is reflected in all his work -painting, drawing, stamping, typography, design, and architecture-.

When we say that the Bauhaus began in 1919 we refer to the pedagogical project, because the artists, the works, what is predominantly understood as art, which is the determining factor of the pedagogical project, began to be developed the previous decade in a paradigmatic change of which the Bauhaus is a fraction. Rainer Wick (1986), for example, stated that Henri van de Velde's choice of Gropius as director of the Bauhaus was due to the experience, he had with the AEG factory in Behrens. The 1920 Gropius statement was part of the projection of a new entrepreneurship for fundraising, rather than an analysis of the changing conception of art and architecture. Such comprehensive studies on the writings of Walter Gropius published in 2019, such as the one compiled by Joaquín Medina Warmburg, reveal a set of documents whose objective was aimed at the realization of projects, in addition to those dedicated to the analysis of the development of art and architecture:

In addition to pursuing the public dissemination of personal convictions and aspirations, his writings and lectures were the means to achieve objectives as immediate and diverse as the adhesion of businessmen and manufacturers to cultural initiatives, the defense of educational projects in political decision-making guilds or the recruitment of acolytes for ventures into avant-garde art.

The Bauhaus pedagogical project changed the training of students as much as that of teachers. The artistic community of this institution continued to be close to the creation of models for crafts and industry, but through the new conceptions of modern art as it is possible to see from previous restructurings in the perception of the selection of Bauhaus teaching and student artists.

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ENDNOTES

1. This refers to the discourse of July 9, 1920, in Langtag, Turingia.
2. Walter Gropius and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy edited the Bauhausbücher [Bauhaus Books] series (1925-1931) that published fourteen titles by Bauhaus teachers and guest artists such as Paul Klee, Pädagogisches Skizzenbuch [Pedagogical Drawing Block] (1925); Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Malerei, Fotografie, Film [Painting, Photography, Film] (1927); Kandinsky, Punkt und Linie zu Fläche [Dot and Line on the Plane] (1929); J. J. P. Oud, Holländische Architektur [Dutch Architecture] (1929); Kasimir Malevich Die Gegenstandslose Welt [The abstract world] (1927); Walter Gropius, Bauhaus, Bauten, Dessau [Bauhaus Dessau Creation] (1930) (Bauhausbücher, 2020).
3. "[...] [Walter Gropius] accepted the designation by deleting the word 'Academy', replacing it with the new word 'Bauhaus'." The textual meaning of Bauhaus is house of construction" (Read, 1958, p. 20).
4. "The attempt to relive past artistic principles can produce, at best, works of art that are like a dead child before the birth. For example, we cannot at all feel and live internally like the ancient Greeks. Efforts to implement Greek principles of sculpture, for example, will only create Greek-like forms, but the work will forever remain inanimate" (Kandinsky, 1986, p. 21).
5. "In Western painting from the 15th to the 20th centuries, I believe, two principles have prevailed," says Michel Foucault when analyzing the work of Klee, Kandinsky -both Bauhaus professors- and Magritte. "The first one affirms the separation between plastic representation (which implies similarity) and linguistic reference (which excludes it). It is made to be seen through similarity, it is expressed through difference, in such a way that the two systems can neither intertwine nor mix. There must be subordination: either the text is dominated by the image [...]; or the image is dominated by the text [...] However, it matters little the sense of subordination or the way in which it is prolonged, multiplied and inverted: what is essential is that the verbal sign and the visual representation never occur at the same time" (Foucault, 1989, p. 47-48).
6. Regarding the anachronism of the Bauhaus with respect to the avant-garde González García, Calvo Serraller, Marchan Fiz analyze the following: "Of course, neither in its origins nor in its subsequent development did the Bauhaus personify the artistic avant-garde. Since its creation, it arrived late to Dadaism and radical expressionism in Berlin, although it was nourished by both movements, especially the latter, in its first stage in Weimar (Bauhaus Manifesto). He took the constructivist train at full speed and on the sly, under the unacknowledged influence of Dutch neoplasticism via Th. Van Doesburg and the hustle and bustle of the Düsseldorf Congress (of 1922). It came later to the theses of Russian productivism, when the latter was already dying out and, in any case, after the Berlin exhibition at the end of 1922 [...] It is also true that since 1925, in Dessau, it gives space to all the trends of the time, as can be seen in all the titles published by its publishing house in Munich, A. Langen: P. Mondrian, Th. Van Doesburg or P. Oud for the Dutch; K. Schwitters, Tzara, Hausmann or Arp for the Dadaists, Marinetti for Futurism or A. Gleizes for his ambiguous Cubism" (Gonzalez Garcia, Calvo Serraller, & Marchan Fiz, 2009, p. 353-354).
7. Gonzalez Reyna also organized the International Congress of Architecture in Mexico City, which was attended by Walter Gropius, Buckminster Fuller, Mies van der Rohe, Alvar Alto, among other internationally renowned architects.
8. Eight works catalogued by the Philadelphia Museum of Art with the following numbers: 85. Erratum Musical (1913); 86. La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même. Erratum Musical (1913); 87. Broyeuse de chocolat (1913); 88. Machine célibataire 1° en plan et 2° en elevation (1913); 89. La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même (1913); 90. Combat de Box (1913); 91. Studies for the Bachelors (1913); 92. Perspective Drawing for the Water Mill Wheel (1913); 93. Cimetière des uniformes et livrées (1913) (The Museum of Modern Art; Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1989).

9. “Malevich’s art outlived such pessimism and decades of government repression, as well as the artist’s own descent into self-doubt, which at the end of his career led him to abandon abstraction for a kind of Italian realism only tenuously connected to his previous concerns” (Drutt, 2003, p. 28).

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