

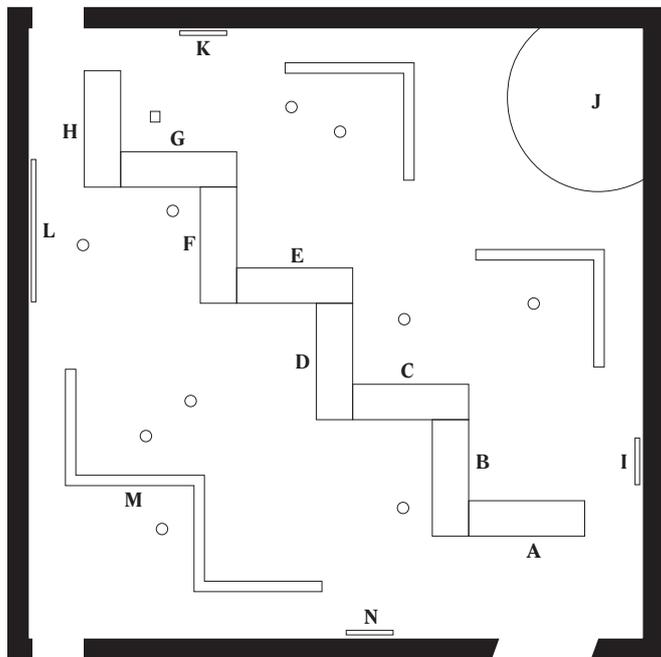
Exhibition Guide

BAU [SPIEL] HAUS

March 22–June 16, 2019

NEUES MUSEUM
State Museum for Art
and Design Nuremberg

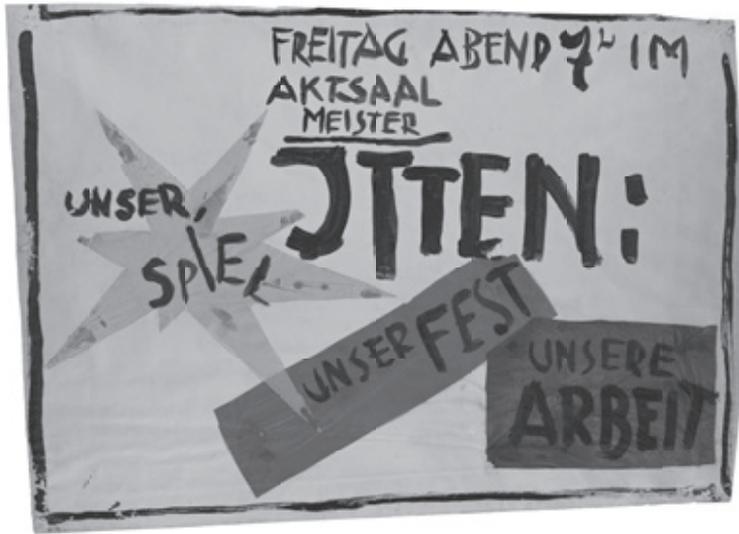
Exhibition Hall



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Introduction



Rudolf Lutz, *Our Game, Our Party, Our Work* (replica), 1919

With the exhibition *BAU [SPIEL] HAUS*, featuring over a hundred works spanning more than a century, Neues Museum joins many other institutions around the world to celebrate the centenary of the founding of the Bauhaus. Historical objects are juxtaposed with contemporary works, creative spaces from the Bauhaus period are confronted with their current equivalents.

The show builds a bridge between the cultures of play and experimental techniques at the Bauhaus and comparable approaches in contemporary design workshops and innovation labs.

The exhibits are divided up into nine areas, not following a chronology and not as separate units, but understood as dialogically linked sections with fluid transitions. In spite of the visual analogies, different worlds collide here, raising questions about the potential and the scope of play. The show looks at the factors that enhance creativity and innovation, and at the relationship between analogue and virtual worlds.

With its selection of exhibits, the exhibition puts forth the proposition that the playful culture at the Bauhaus was a key stimulus for many of these “play zones”, creative spaces and experimental methods that have been set up and praised as catalysts for creativity



View into the exhibition, 2019

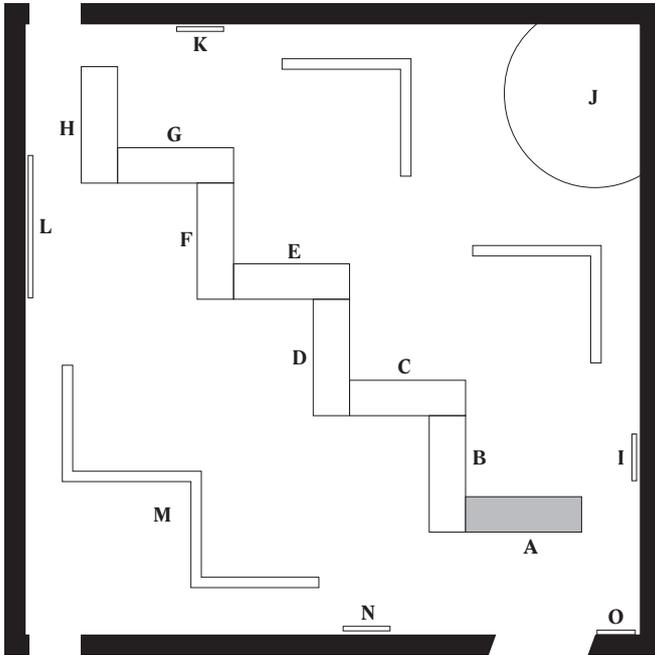
worldwide. The school's motto – play becomes a party, the party becomes work, work becomes play – has been taken to heart by today's “innovation economy”.

The ability of “Homo Ludens” (humankind as a playful species) to use play to develop not only individual skills, freedom of action and independent thinking, but also social behaviour, has been recognized and harnessed both at the Bauhaus and by today's creative centres.

This exhibition guide takes a few exhibits from each section and attempts – in outline form and with no claim to address the various topics in full theoretical depth – to help visitors grasp the arguments of the show's curators Prof Thomas Hensel and Dr Robert Eikmeyer.

The New York artist Liam Gillick designed the exhibition display, which can be read as a reference to the principle of a construction kit. Using existing elements of the museum's own system of partition walls, he has created a new form and spatial structure. The resulting zigzag table recalls the paper folding classes in the preliminary course at the Bauhaus taught by Josef Albers, once again bridging the gap between past, present and future.

A Kaleidoscope



A1 Rudolf Lutz, *Our Game, Our Party, Our Work (replica)*, 1919/2019, digital print

A2 Walter Gropius, Lyonel Feininger, *Manifesto and Program of the State Bauhaus in Weimar*, 1919, woodcut and gravure

A3 Zometool, *Creator 3*, 2018, colored plastic

A4 Johannes Itten, *Letter to Anna Höllering (replica)*, 1919/2019, digital print, 2 pages

A5 Kurt Schmidt, *Bauhaus Exhibition Postcard No. 19*, color lithograph on cardboard

A6 Laurie Simmons, Peter Wheelwright, *The Kaleidoscope House*, 2001, plastic, colored plexiglas

A7 Clive Wilkinson Architects, *TBWA\CHIAT\DAY Los Angeles*, (1998), digital print

A8 Paul Reubens, *Pee-Wee's Playhouse: The Complete Series (opening sequence)*, 1986–90, video, 2:26 min

A9 The LEGO® Group, *LEGO® Architecture Billund House*, 2017, colored plastic

A10 Bruno Taut, *Dandanah (replica)*, 1920/2003, colored glass building blocks

A11 Fröbel *Cube*, ca. 1850, wood (see picture: *Class Room of a New York Kindergarten / B4*)

A12 Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack, *Pedagogical Dollhouse*, 1924, plywood, laquer

The first section of *BAU[SPIEL]HAUS* presents the entire range of themes of the exhibition's nine areas, offering insights into different worlds of play. Documents, printed matter, toys, dolls' houses, models and a film shed light on the show's various dimensions and frames of reference, opening up a many-faceted, imaginary network linking play, history, education, politics, society and architecture.

The poster designed by **Rudolf Lutz** proclaiming *Our Game, Our Party, Our Work* (1919/2019) was made to announce the inaugural lecture by **Johannes Itten** (1888–1967) who was appointed by Walter Gropius as one of the first teachers at the Bauhaus in Weimar. The programmatic slogan puts play first, pointing to one of the Bauhaus's central concerns: to merge play and life in its teaching. In Itten's *Letter to Anna Höllering* (1919/2019), the triad of play, work and life is also emphasized. As a fascinating teacher, Itten played a vital role in shaping the “preliminary course” at the Bauhaus.

“The ultimate aim of all creative activity is building!” This is the first sentence of the *Manifesto and Program of the State Bauhaus in Weimar* (1919) written by **Walter Gropius** (1883–1969) and illustrated by **Lyonel Feininger** (1871–1956). Feininger's woodcut depicting a radiant church can be understood as a spatial metaphor and symbol for the reunification of art and craft. The translucent open system of flying buttresses also links to the mason's guilds involved in the construction of gothic cathedrals, where different arts and crafts worked together.

Bruno Taut (1880–1938) was an architect whose thinking and work were grounded in the complex links between play and architecture. At the time of the “Glass Chain” group (“Gläserne Kette”),

his vision of architecture centred on glass as a material, giving rise to an approach based on openness and transparency. Like the educational reformer Friedrich Fröbel a century earlier, Taut drew inspiration from the oldest form of glass – crystal. With their geometrical forms and their ability to refract light, crystalline structures were a kind of natural model. The coloured glass blocks of Taut's elementary game *Dandanah* (1920/2003) also stand for his (pedagogical) belief that the architect's most important task is to “awaken the need to build”.¹

The *Kaleidoscope House* (2001) created by the artist and photographer **Laurie Simmons**, in cooperation with the architect **Peter Wheelwright**, also offers a play of light and colour. With this modernist take on the dolls' house, Simmons points to the potential for changing living situations (fixed spaces, roles and behaviours), encouraging people to playfully discover new forms of dwelling. The theme of light also appears indirectly in the construction kit *Zometool Creator 3* (2012). Various elements can be used to build objects with grid structures. The kit refers to the geodesic domes of **Richard Buckminster Fuller** (1895–1983) – spherical dome constructions with triangular modules as their basic unit – bringing this architectural design into the world of toys.

The photograph of the interior of the building *TBWA\CHIAT\DAY Los Angeles* by **Clive Wilkinson Architects** shows the exact opposite: at the headquarters of this American advertising agency, large “play zones” have been installed for the company's staff. The Bauhaus goal of combining work and play is adopted here by today's working world in a rather different way.

Resembling something built using hugely enlarged Lego bricks, the Danish architect Bjarke Ingels designed the Lego experience centre in Billund (Denmark), where children and adults can play and build with 25 million Lego bricks. A “reconstruction” of this actual building was put on the market as a Lego kit by **The LEGO® Group** as the **LEGO® Architecture Billund House** (2017).

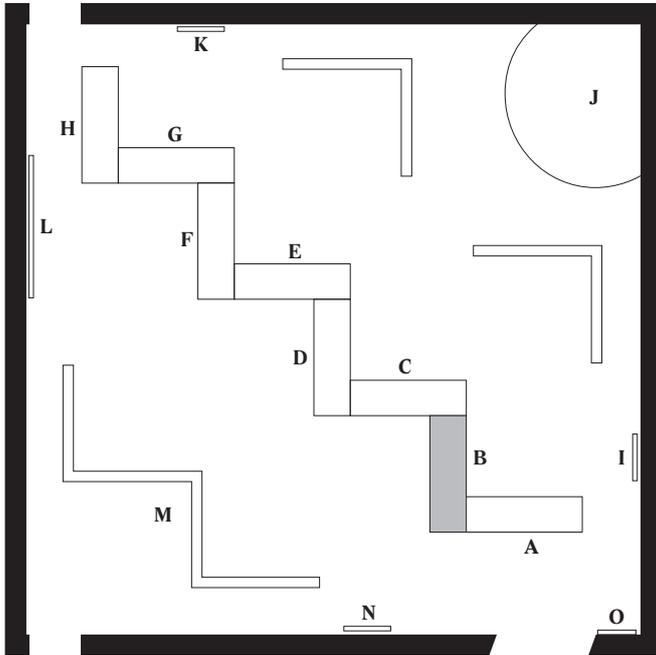
In the context of aids for teaching about shapes and colours, as well as educational toys, **Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack** (1893–1965) created the **Pedagogical Dollhouse** (1924). What was innovative about this design was the variable architecture and the fact that it used a modular construction principle, anticipating the mass production of prefabricated architectural modules. The individual spatial elements (small wooden boards and rails) could be arranged in an endless succession of new ways. Painted mainly in primary colours, the elements can be used to try out the spatial effect of warm and cold colours.

The objects positioned at the corners of the individual sections act as “hinges” between adjacent sections. In this sense, the *Pedagogical Dollhouse* leads into a section dealing with the playful use of space. (CM)



Laurie Simmons and Peter Wheelwright, *The Kaleidoscope House*, 2001

B Spaces



B1 Maria Montessori, Color Tablets in Polished Wooden Boxes,
ca. 1907, painted wood

B2 Maria Montessori, Construction Set for Geometrical Forms,
ca. 1915, wood

B3 Public Montessori Kindergarten Goethehof Vienna (replica),
ca. 1930/2019, digital print

B4 Unidentified New York Kindergarten Classroom (replica),
1899/2019, digital print

B5 Group Activity with the First Gift in an Unidentified New York Kindergarten, 1899/2019, digital print

B6 Montessori School Class in Berlin-Wilmersdorf, in: Dorothy Canfield Fischer: *Eine Montessori-Mutter*, Stuttgart 1927, book

B7 Isometric Projection of a Playroom (replica), 19. C/2019, digital print

B8 Michael Siebenbrodt, Haus Am Horn. A Construction Kit,
2018, model sheet, cardboard

B11 Toy closet by Alma Siedhoff-Buscher for Haus Am Horn,
used by Joost Siedhoff and Karin Schlemmer, 1925, photograph

B12 Toy Closet with Child, ca. 1925, photograph

B13 Childrens' Furniture in the Jugendfürsorge-Ausstellung Weimar, 1924, photograph

B14 Childrens' Furniture in the Jugendfürsorge-Ausstellung Weimar, 1924, photograph

B15 Hans Brockhage, Erwin Andrä, *Rocking Car*, 1950, painted wood

B16 Umbo (Otto Maximilian Umbehr), Josef Albers and Students of his Preliminary Course during a Group Critique, Bauhaus Dessau (replica), 1928-29/2019, digital print

B17 Post-it, removable page markers, 2019, colored paper

B18 Maria Montessori, *Language Box with Paper Strips in Various Colors*, ca. 1915, cardboard and colored paper

B19 Puppet Theatre, Model from the Dessau Bauhaus, in: *Kunstausstellungshalle am Marientor*, exhibition guidebook "*Das Spielzeug*", July 3–September 19, exhibition catalogue and ticket

B20 The Museum of Modern Art New York, *Art for the Family*, New York 1954, book

B21 Alma Siedhoff-Buscher, *Small Ship-Building Game* (12 pieces), 1923, painted wood

Which spatial conditions must be given in order to facilitate play, learning and social experience? How should these spaces be designed? And conversely, how can play itself be used to create spaces that promote creative thinking and action, as well as communication and interaction?

The cut-out sheet *Haus Am Horn. A Construction Kit* published by **Michael Siebenbrodt** in 2018 refers to the model house built by the Bauhaus in Weimar in 1923. Based on the principle of “honey-comb building” the resulting spatial concept consisted of a central living space with small rooms branching off it, referred to by Gropius as a “construction kit writ large”.

Alma Siedhoff-Buscher (1899–1944) worked with Erich Brendel to design the “children's room” for *Haus Am Horn* for the Bauhaus Exhibition in 1923. The room was fitted with poly-functional children's furniture and her toy designs drew great public interest.

“The toys and play cupboard are clear expressions of the pedagogical principle of the Bauhaus: creative self-occupation as the basis of elementary life expression. The play cupboard is divided up in such a way that the matching large play blocks are movable, allowing them to be used as ‘benches’, ‘tables’, ‘houses’, ‘stables’, etc.. One double-sized block is fitted with small wheels, allowing it to be used as a ‘train’. One of the cupboard doors has an opening in it and can be fixed in place with a hook, allowing it to be used as a puppet theatre.”²

The film made specially for this exhibition shows – almost 100 years later – Siedhoff-Buscher's son Joost Siedhoff “playing” in his former childhood bedroom (see p. 51). Replicas of individual items of furniture from *Haus Am Horn* are presented at the foot of the museum's spiral staircase.

The multi-use *Rocking Car* (1950) by **Hans Brockhage** (1925–2009) and **Erwin Andrä** (born 1921) obviously refers back to the furniture of Siedhoff-Buscher and other Bauhaus designs. The toy can be used both as a vehicle and as a rocking chair.

The world-famous educational reformer **Maria Montessori** (1870–1952) also developed her anthropologically-based educational theory with regard to infancy and children's time at primary school. Montessori's holistic approach to education acknowledges children as individuals with the right to free development and independent ideas and actions.

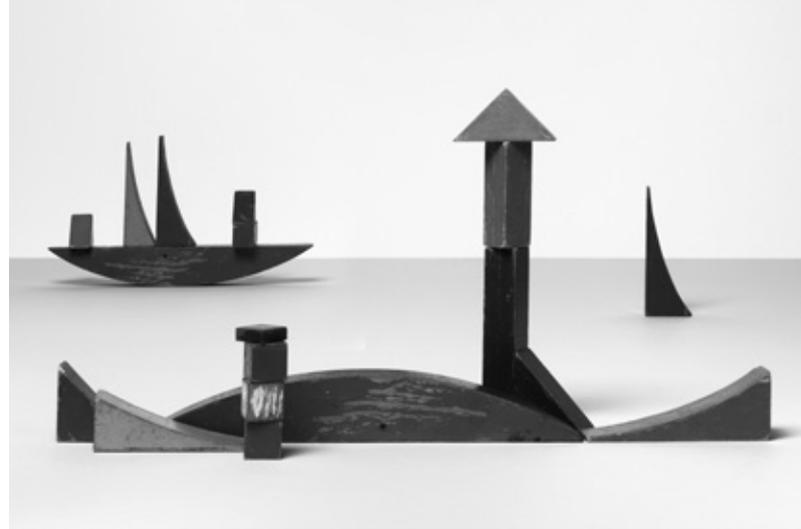
She wanted to create spaces that allowed children to have experiences of their own and to control the way they dealt with learning situations. The photographs of various Montessori kindergartens show that the social aspect of learning and playing was an indispensable part of her educational practice, an approach that included an emphasis on the principle of mixed age groups.

For Montessori, individual development and the emergence of an independent personality were the uppermost goals of education.

To support and encourage this, she developed teaching materials for different age groups. The *Color Tablets in Polished Wooden Boxes* (ca. 1907), for example, are intended to teach about colours and their effects. The *Language Box with Paper Strips in Various Colors* (ca. 1915), on the other hand, is used to store sentence and word cards. Having been introduced to the different kinds of words, the idea is that children will be able to intuitively identify and assign each kind of word on the basis of the various coloured cards. Today, both children and adults use *Post-it notes* in very similar ways in all manner of work settings.

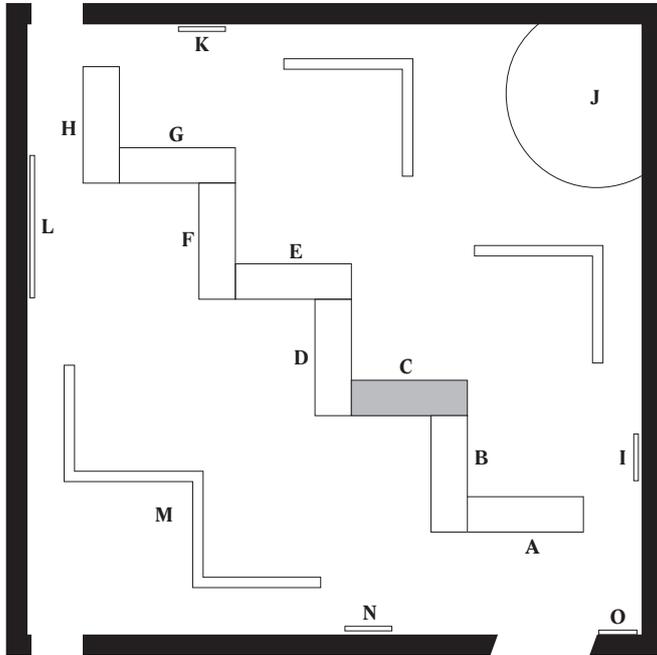
Originally consisting of 21 blocks, of which twelve have survived, the *Small Ship-Building Game* (1923) by **Alma Siedhoff-Buscher** can be played alone or in a group. All of its components, wooden

blocks in bright colours, are cut from two lengths of wood without waste. As the name suggests, the toy is based on a specific object, but it also allows children to develop free forms. (CM)



Alma Siedhoff-Buscher, *Small Ship-Building Game* (12 Pieces), 1923

C Ignition Tools



C1 Wichard Lange (Ed.), *The Pedagogy of the Kindergarten: Friedrich Fröbel's Thoughts about the Child's Play and Play Objects*, Berlin 1862, book

C2 Friedrich Fröbel, *Fröbel Gift 1: Six Yarn Balls with Strings*, ca. 1850, wool, string

C3 Friedrich Fröbel, *Fröbel Gift 2: Sphere, Cylinder, Cube, with Wooden Box*, 1850, wood, string

C4 Spalding, *NBA Silver Basketball*, 2017, rubber, synthetic leather

C5 Alma Siedhoff-Buscher, *Throw Dolls* (replicas by her daughter), 1924/1990s, wood, raffia, fabric

C6 Lyonel Feininger, *The Town at the End of the World* (houses and train, 12 pieces), ca. 1929, carved and painted wood

C7 Hasbro, *Nerf Gun*, 2018, plastic, foam

C8 NBC & MoMA, *Through the Enchanted Gate*, 1952, television series

C9 Georg Weidenbacher
Wooden Fantasy Animal "Frog", 1926, painted wood and iron
Draft for the Wooden Fantasy Animal "Yellow Snail", 1924/28, paper, graphite, tempera

C10 Renate Müller, *Flying Kids* (3 of 7 parts), 1990, burlap, leather, wood, cotton cord

C11 Georg Weidenbacher, *Draft "Oriental Scene"*, 1926, paper, graphite, water color

C12 Hermann Finsterlin, *Style Game* (9 basic architectural types, 95 pieces), 1922, painted wood

Games have the potential to invite or to exclude. Games can be a catalyst, causing a spark to be struck and passed on. This section brings together objects from a wide range of historical periods, places and milieus, all of which have one thing in common: they are meant to trigger communication and interaction, as well as stimulating creative processes. This also means new forms of and possibilities for dialogue, as well as communication strategies for different target groups: children, teenagers and adults.

The source and inspiration for many objects in this exhibition was provided by the theory and teaching practice of **Friedrich Fröbel** (1782–1852). The founder of the first kindergarten (in 1840) was especially keen to stress the importance of early childhood for human development. On the basis of natural phenomena and laws, Fröbel developed many toys and exercises like the Play Gifts designed to teach children about the laws of nature, such as regularly recurring observable events (symmetries, uniformities, repetitions). The focus here was on experiences with nature and basic geometrical forms (circle, square, cube, cylinder).

Fröbel Gift 1 (ca. 1850) consists of six soft coloured balls made of wool, intended mainly for babies and infants. The size of the balls means that even small children can get their hands round them. The subsequent Play Gifts are increasingly differentiated in their shape, offering building blocks that can be taken apart and put back together in more and more different ways.

Fröbel Gift 2 (1850) consists of three solid volumes made of wood – a sphere, a cube and a cylinder. Picked up individually, they

offer experiences of stability, movability and combinability. In the matching wooden holder, the solids can be fixed and set in motion, creating new shapes.

The **Throw Dolls** designed in 1924 by **Alma Siedhoff-Buscher** (1899–1944) were one of the most successful Bauhaus products: dolls with flexible, soft bodies, with clothes made of crocheted yarn, tousled straw-like hair made of raffia, their heads, hands and feet made of simply painted wooden balls. Besides this free design, their novelty lay in explicitly encouraging children to play with them by throwing them back and forth. Social interaction, movement in space, and the resulting stimulation of perceptive capacities were key elements of this toy that was unusual for the time. In 1926, the indestructible and functional dolls became the only Bauhaus product to receive a German patent.

The **Flying Kids** (1990) by **Renate Müller** (born 1945) take a similar approach. The idea for this toy came during preparations for an international design seminar at the Bauhaus in Dessau in the autumn of 1990. The colours of the individual elements can also be linked to Müller's engagement with Fröbel's design theory, following the principle of clear identifiability and the differentiation of perception, addressing all of the senses. The aim was to promote the experience of grasping, in every sense of the word.

In a very different and questionable way, another “toy” has been adopted for use in the adult world: **Nerf Guns** (2018) made by **Hasbro** are used in managerial circles to release tension and vent pent-up emotion and aggression, thus keeping staff creativity flowing.

When the Bauhaus was founded in Weimar in 1919, Walter Gropius appointed **Lyonel Feininger** (1871–1956) as its first master. In keeping with his holistic philosophy, the painter and graphic artist composed his first fugue in 1921 and he also made toys. The small figures he carved and painted himself – people, houses, churches, trains – correspond naturally with his paintings, watercolours and sketches. *The Town at the End of the World* (ca. 1929), which he referred to as a “dream world”, is the work of an artist who saw the border between play and art as a fluid one.

The Nuremberg artist **Georg Weidenbacher** (1905–1984) also borrowed the Bauhaus aesthetic to create toys with primary colours and basic shapes. As early as 1926, his *Wooden Fantasy Animals* were presented in the Nuremberg exhibition “Das Spielzeug” alongside various wooden objects by Alma Siedhoff-Buscher. Weidenbacher's *Draft “Oriental Scene”* (1926) for his wooden toys offers a visual analogy to the brightly coloured *Style Game* (1922) by **Hermann Finsterlin** (1887–1973).

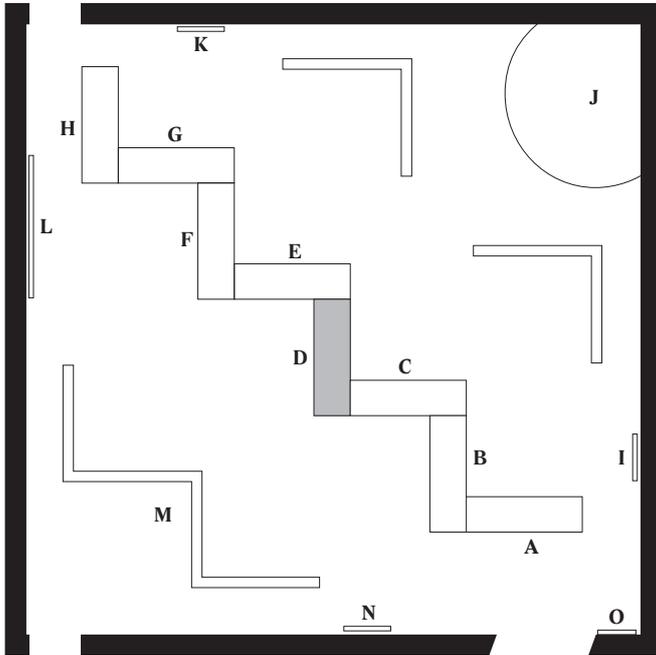
Compared to *Fröbel's Gifts* and Otto Lilienthal's *Anchor Stone Building Blocks* with their strictly geometrical parts, the formal vocabulary of the *Style Game* (1922) represents a different development. A painter, graphic artist and “utopian architect”, Finsterlin was in close contact with the Bauhaus, as well as being a member, together with Walter Gropius, Bruno Taut and others, of the famous “Glass Chain” group of architects.

Both in his architectural designs and in his toys, he experimented with different aesthetics: the clear, geometrical idiom of

the Bauhaus is combined with expressive elements, sometimes strongly natural in character, creating an additional charge.

The 95-part construction kit *Style Game* – assembled here into nine basic architectural types – can be used to make a pyramid, a mosque, a church or a Roman colosseum, as well as free, abstract forms and imaginary buildings – providing a link to the section on architecture. (CM)

D Building Blocks



D1 The LEGO® Group, *LEGO® Serious Play*, 2018, colored plastic

D2 *LEGO® Serious Play Workshop*, 2017, YouTube clip, 1:46 min

D3 Edward Wiebé, *The Paradise of Childhood. A Practical Guide to Kindergartners*, London, Liverpool 1862, book

D4 Friedrich Fröbel, *Fröbel Gift 5: Wooden Geometric Shapes with Wooden Box*, after 1850, wood

D5 The LEGO® Group, *LEGO® Cusoo Minecraft, Micro-World – The Forest*, 2012, colored plastic

D6 Ursula Eason, Patrick Dowling, *Vision On*, 1964–76
YouTube clip from a television show for children with hearing impairments, 3:29 min

D7 Richard Gary Garvin, *Hommage an Walter Gropius: Bauhaus Dessau* (replica), 2015/2019, plastic building blocks, replica by Mario Ruf, Maximilian Höfer, Marco Schaper

D8 Walter Gropius, *Draft for the Design of a “Friedrich-Fröbel-Haus”*, published in *Kindergarten Magazine*, 1925, book

D9 Pixel Press, *Bloxels*, 2016, plastic grid element of the video game

D10 Thomas Hawranke, *the grid, the lib and the best of all possible worlds*, 2019, 3 channel video installation, vinyl matt, electronic pieces, 7-inch-displays

D11 Nintendo, *Super Mario Maker* (incl. amiibo 8-Bit Mario collection figure and artbook) (Wii U), 2015, Level-Editor-video game

D12 Josef Hartwig, *Bauhaus Chess Set*, 1924, pear wood, natural and stained black

This section explores the connections between the development of toy construction kits (since ca. 1800) and that of modern architecture. At the same time, it points to a fundamental two-way relationship between play and architecture.

Various toys with modular structures show how the underlying geometrical forms have become established and evolved over the centuries. Historical playthings are shown alongside (broadly speaking) contemporary toys, with Lego bricks playing a central role.

Founded in 1932, the Danish company of LEGO® can be seen as a successor to the *Anchor Stone Building Blocks* of the nineteenth century (see p. 35). Now made out plastic with studs, the bricks produced by the world's largest toy company are no longer aimed at children alone, produced instead for all age groups. In the mid-1990s, for example, *LEGO® Serious Play* was developed by The LEGO® Group specially for adults. As suggested in the YouTube video *LEGO® Serious Play Workshop* (2017), the game is used above all by companies, organizations and teams to increase creativity, improve interaction and communication, or as a tool for resolving conflicts. Here the potential of play is deliberately linked with business strategies.

The *LEGO® Cuusoo Minecraft, Micro-World – The Forest* (2012) kit by The LEGO® Group, on the other hand, refers to the video game Minecraft. This is an open-world game with no predetermined objective. Drawing on the aesthetic of movies, the emphasis is on exploring and discovering parts of a world (here the forest with caves, etc.), taking them apart and putting them back together again. With its very small bricks, this miniature toy comes surprisingly close to a pixel aesthetic.

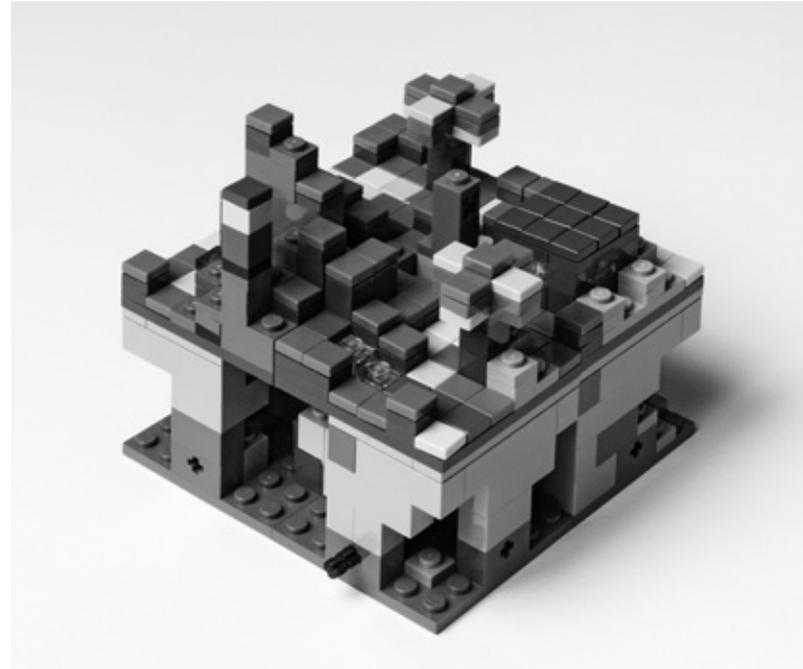
In 2015, out of admiration for the Bauhaus, **Richard Gary Garvin** used 4000 Lego bricks (without instructions from LEGO®) to create his *Hommage to Walter Gropius: Bauhaus Dessau*, a replica of the Bauhaus building (here a version from 2019). The Bauhaus in Dessau was built in 1925/26 to plans by Walter Gropius and is considered an “icon of modernism”.

In 1925, Gropius honoured the educationalist Friedrich Fröbel with his *draft for the design of a “Friedrich-Fröbel-Haus“* – an extensive complex of buildings that was conceived of as a kindergarten, youth home, and institute for teaching and research and whose architectural idiom counts as a precursor to the Bauhaus in Dessau. This design makes clear that Gropius not only engaged deeply with Fröbel's educational theory, but also with his insights and achievements in the fields of mathematics, systems theory and geometry. Finally, a lack of political and financial support caused the project to fail.

With their ergonomic qualities, the toys created by **Friedrich Fröbel** (1782–1852) aim for abstract, sensory communication. His system of *Play Gifts*, each building on the previous ones, stands out from the construction kits of the time above all on account of its reduced form and manageable number of elements. Furthermore, Fröbel associated these elementary construction kits with his pedagogical goal of teaching a harmonic relationship to the whole via sharing and combination. Compared to the *Fröbel Gifts* described above, *Fröbel Gift 5* enables far more differentiated constructions. The 39 building blocks (21 cubes plus 6 large and 12 small triangles) can be assembled into abstract or figurative forms or symmetrical patterns, so-called “forms of beauty”. A special challenge to the creativity of those playing involves combining all 39 blocks into a single shape.

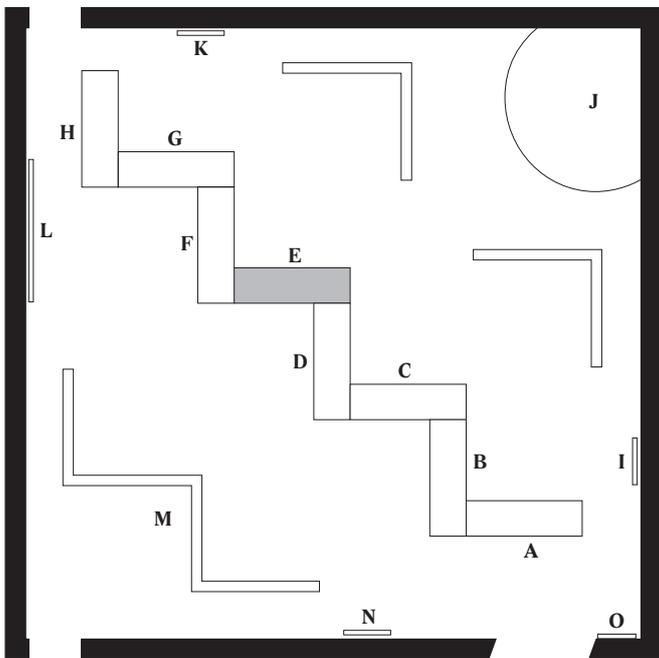
The game of the digital age is the computer game. Compared with analogue games, especially board games where the players can see the whole playing surface, computer games have to be explored gradually, during play. In his installations, the media artist **Thomas Hawranke** analyses the mechanisms of computer games; his three-channel video installation *the grid, the lib and the best of all possible worlds* (2019) presents a kind of research-based media practice, showing the complexity of such modular game worlds' design and structure and of the rules that govern them. For all their differentness, however, there are correspondences between these digital worlds and Fröbel's grid-based world of play and experience. Structural similarities become visible.

The *Bauhaus Chess Set* (1924) designed by **Josef Hartwig** (1880–1955) is one of the best-known and most successful Bauhaus products. The pieces are radically reduced to abstract shapes. Produced in three versions, the chess set was first presented to the public at the 1924 Spring Trade Fair in Leipzig and has been considered a Bauhaus icon ever since. When designing the pieces, Hartwig did entirely without figuration, ornament or other decoration. Instead, he used simple geometric shapes to represent the function of the individual pieces and the structure of the game. Compared to free, interaction-based games, chess is a game of strategy. Each move is determined, there are no accidents, and the hermetic board pattern is inhabited by a hierarchic cast of characters. (CM)



The LEGO® Group, LEGO® Cusoo Minecraft, *Micro-World – The Forest*, 2012

E Furniture



E1 Johannes Itten, *Stool for the Itten School*, 1928, wood

E2 Max Bill, Hans Gugelot und Paul Hildinger, *Ulm Stool*, ca. 1954, wood

E3 Gustav und Otto Lilienthal, *Anchor Stone Building Blocks*, 1920/30, wood, stone, paper

E4 Gustav Hassenpflug, *Modular Furniture*, 1949, book

E5 Walter Gropius, Fred Forbát, *Models of Serial Houses* (replica from Bauhaus Album No. 4), 1922–23/2019, digital print

E6 Walter Gropius mit Fred Forbát, *Serial House and Model Bricks of the Standardized Components* (replica from Bauhaus Album No. 4), 1922/2019, digital print

E7 Van Bo Le-Mentzel, *Affordable DIY Furniture*, Berlin 2012, book and *Berlin Stool* (prototype), 2010, wood, screws

E8 Sophie Bernauer, *Transfoamer*, 2018, cellulose, black paint, 1:6 scale model from the #playbauhaus workshop (Pforzheim University) with Van Bo Le-Mentzel at Vitra Campus, 2018

E9 James Hennessey, Victor Papanek, *Nomadic Furniture 1*, New York 1974, book

E10 Ken Isaacs, *How to Build Your Own Living Structures*, New York 1974, book

E11 Hans Gugelot, *Children's play Furniture* (3 pieces), 1954, wood

E12 Donato D'Urbino, Jonathan De Pas, Paolo Lomazzi, Giorgio DeCurso, *Chica Demountable Child's Chair*, 1971, plastic

“By good design, we mean the natural form of a product, developed out of functional and technical requirements, that fully serves its purpose while also being aesthetically pleasing.” (Max Bill, 1949)

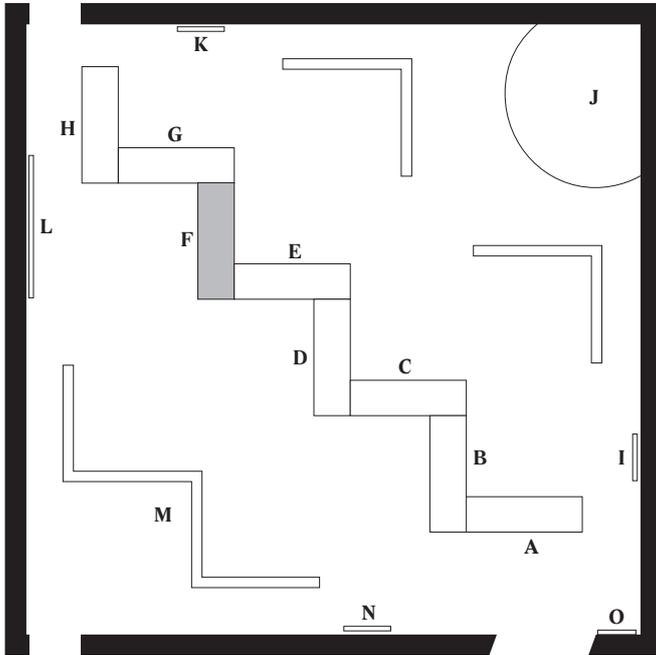
The field of furniture is characterized by aspects of modularity and functionality that were stressed as design concepts at the Bauhaus, especially in the Dessau period; but they can already be observed in the *Models of Serial Houses* published by **Walter Gropius** and **Fred Forbát** in the Bauhaus albums of 1922/23. These ideas influenced many design principles, including those that promised users more freedom in the use of their furniture. This section of the exhibition is supplemented by the *Transfoamer*, an obscure foam construction recalling the monolith from Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. It was created in 2018 in a design workshop on the subject of play furniture with **Van Bo Le-Mentzel** at the Vitra Campus.

In order to situate the *Transfoamer*, it is useful to follow a line of formal development that begins with the *Anchor Stone Building Blocks* in 1920. The brothers **Gustav** (1849–1933) and **Otto Lilienthal** (1848–1896) wanted to develop a construction kit that would be closer to the actual reality of building materials than Fröbel's toys, leading to the *Anchor Stone Building Blocks*. These blocks in the colours red, yellow and blue, made of a compressed and fired mix of sand, whiting and linseed oil, correspond to the materials brick, sandstone and slate. Their defining features are their extremely precise manufacture, without studs or joints, their smooth surface, and the way they stick together purely due to their structure. The *Anchor Stone Building Blocks* count as the ancestor of all later building kits.

This genealogy continues with the *Stool for the Itten School* from 1928: having left the Weimar Bauhaus in 1923, the controversial teacher Johannes Itten ran his own design school, also known as the “little Bauhaus”. The stool is a compact wooden cube with carrying slits, meaning it is formally related to the *Ulm Stool* (1954) by **Max Bill** (1908–1994). This famous design object from the Ulm School of Design, a successor institution to the Bauhaus, consists of just three boards and a bar. The stool is uncompromisingly functional and practical. Depending on how it is rotated, it can be used as a side table, stool or transport box. In his book *Affordable DIY Furniture* (2012) the above-mentioned Van Bo Le-Mentzel returns to this idea of a practical stool in his *Berlin Stool*, realizing it as a do-it-yourself model that can be made out of four boards and few screws by anyone, without craft skills.

Such “basic” do-it-yourself construction techniques are described by James Hennessey and Victor Papanek in their book *Nomadic Furniture* from 1974; the same year, Ken Isaacs published *How to build your own Living Structures*. Modular and especially self-determined building had many advocates at this time. This is also the link to the stackable furniture by **Hans Gugelot** (1954) and the plastic elements of the *Chica Demountable Child's Chairs* that can be used as chairs and as a ladder system. (MW)

F Architectures



F1 Wolfgang Döring, *Capsule Houses*, 1969, plastic on coated chipboard

F2 Rudolf Lutz, *Cubic Sculptural Study* (replica), 1920–21/2019, digital print

F3 Kisho Kurokawa, *Nakagin Capsule Tower* (model M 1:180), 1972/2019, plastic 3D print, in cooperation with Prof. Yves Ebnöther, Dept. of Computer-Generated Object Design, Design Faculty, Nuremberg Technical University

F4 Jones, Partners: Architects, *PRO/con: Burning Man Tower* (2003), digital print

F5 Plaspi, *The Little Großblock Builder*, ca. 1970, different kinds of colored and transparent plastics

F6 NBBJ, *Amazon Sphere: Designing an Icon*, 2017/18, digital print

“The ultimate aim of all creative activity is building!”
(Walter Gropius, 1919)

A link between furniture and architecture is made by modular ***Chica Chairs*** (1971): the stacked plastic components can be broken down into their coloured elements or used to build ladder-like towers, creating an intermediate object. On the one hand, they are practical items of furniture, but on the other they are also manifestations of an architectural principle.

In this section, the ***Kapselhäuser*** by **Wolfgang Döring** (born 1934) are a central exhibit. In 1969, the architect planned a modular housing project made of three-metre cubes that were to

be connected depending on the spaces required. The model is minimalistic, with no ornamentation, and strongly recalls the abstract plaster studies produced in design classes at the Bauhaus in Weimar. The *Cubic Sculptural Study* by **Rudolf Lutz** (1921), for example, already possesses the modularity and plain white aesthetic of Döring's design.

The *Nakagin Capsule Tower*, built by the Japanese architect **Kisho Kurokawa** in Tokyo in 1972, seems to quote this design. At this time, Kurokawa was one of the Metabolists, an architectural movement that was active far beyond Japan's borders and that viewed cities as living, breathing organisms. This idea gave rise to the Nakagin: the building consists of two central cores containing the staircases and the supply shafts. The individual living capsules are attached to these cores using steel clamps. Although each capsule has just 7 square metres of floor space, it offers all the features of an apartment with areas for sleeping and working, as well as kitchen and bathroom facilities. The idea was that capsules could be added and removed as required, and old capsules could be replaced by more technically up-to-date models.

This concept of modular building also finds artistic expression in the container tower designed by the American architect **Wes Jones** using his *PRO/con* architecture system for the annual avant-garde art festival *Burning Man* in Nevada in 2003.

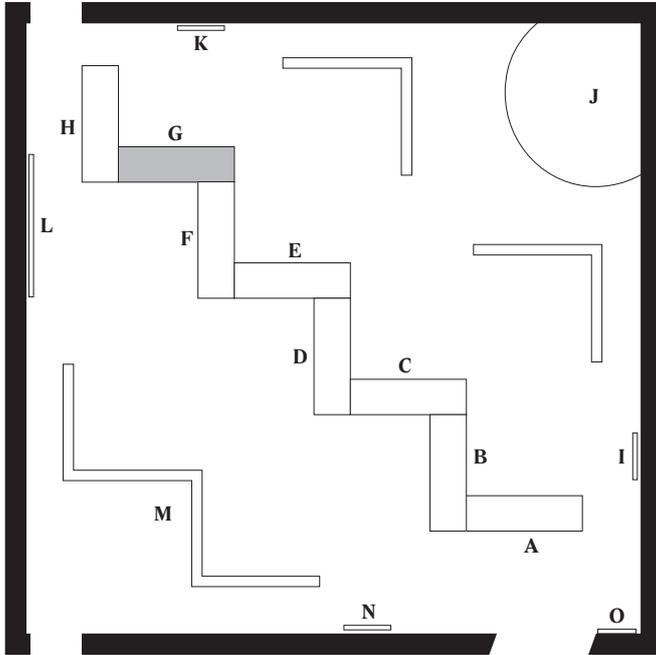
An educational equivalent is found in the *The Little Großblock Builder* by **Plaspi**. This is a construction kit from the 1970s from East Germany that can be used to assemble specific types of prefabricated concrete slab buildings.

In January 2018, the glass *Amazon Spheres* by **NBBJ** architects were inaugurated in Seattle. In these greenhouses planned as workplaces, the Internet company collects and preserves exotic plants from around the world. The highly complex steel exoskeleton follows bionic loadbearing lines, giving it a more organic appearance than Buckminster Fuller's purely geometric geodesic domes. (MW)



Wolfgang Döring, *Capsule Houses*, 1969

G Networks



G1 Bruno Taut, *Model of the Bruno Taut Glass Pavilion for the Werkbund Exhibition Cologne 1914* (replica 1992/93), wood, glass a.o.

G2 Bertha von Marenholtz-Bülow, *Theoretical and Practical Guide of Fröbel's Educational Theory*, Kassel 1887, book

G3 Joseph, Myers & Co., *The Cork Model Maker* (based on Fröbel's concept), 1855, wood, cork

G4 Gustav Hassenpflug's Construction of Wooden Sticks for Josef Albers' Preliminary Course, In: Herbert Beyer, Walter Gropius, Ilse Gropius: *Bauhaus 1919–1928*, New York 1959, book

G5 Gustav Lilienthal, *Wooden Tower and Model Kit*, 1888, wood, metal clips

G6 Farkas Molnár, *Card for the Kite Festival*, 1922, lithograph on cardboard

G7 Neues Museum and Kuratoren, *Marshmallow-and-Spaghetti-Challenge*, 2019, sugar, starch, durum wheat

G8 Steve Baer, *Zometoy* (configuration by Clark Richert), 1972, painted wooden tiles and plastic spheres

G9 Joan Grossman, *Drop City*, 2012, video, 6:26 min

G10 Clark Richert, *Cuboctahedron*, 1972, injection molded polyethelene

G11 Clark Richert, *6,4,3 aperiodic*, 1972, injection molded polyethelene

G12 *Architecture lesson by Buckminster Fuller at Black Mountain College*, ca. 1948, photograph

G13 *Fuller and Students hanging from the Necklace Dome*, digital print

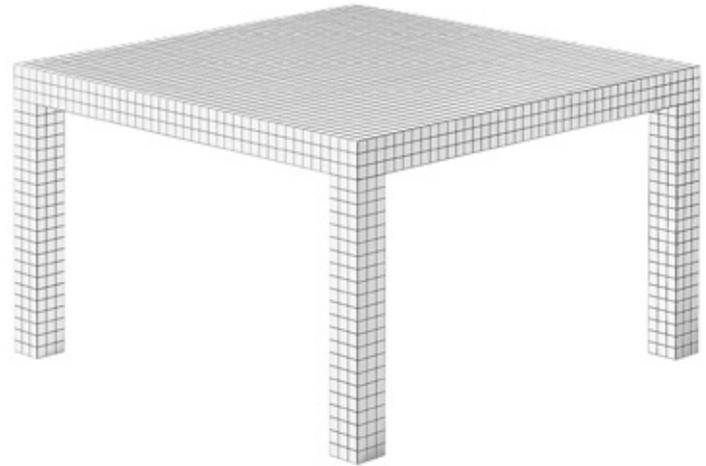
For the Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne in 1914, the architect **Bruno Taut** (1880–1938) designed the *Glass House* that resembled a religious building and later achieved international renown. As well as its original intended function as a promotional pavilion for the glass industry, the building stands as a kind of (utopian) symbol for the various reform movements that emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century. The *Glass House* symbolizes the zeitgeist of wishing to unite nature, art and technology. The idea of the original Glass House, that the reflective facets of the dome would create a space of experience, is merely hinted at in the *Model of the Bruno Taut Glass Pavilion for the Werkbund Exhibition Cologne 1914* (replica 1992/93).

The dissolution of architecture into abstract structures and light is the main theme of this section. These structures can be read as a powerful image of the Bauhaus. The ideas of the design school, whose activity was limited to just fourteen years, live on today in a worldwide network of scientific, artistic, academic, educational and social actors who discuss and pursue the school's visions.

On the one hand, the *Turmbaukasten* by **Gustav Lilienthal** is a stylized building, and on the other an abstract framework, which may be one of the reasons why Walter Gropius found this toy so fascinating. Its dematerialized glass facades, like those of the Bauhaus building in Dessau, seem to float in space as abstract patterns of lines. A similar structure can be found in **Steve Baer's** *Zometoy* from 1972, a complex molecule made of coloured rods and nodes. By contrast, the alternative dwellings at the artists' commune *Drop City* were based on the Fuller Domes developed at Black Mountain College, even if they sometimes look like brightly

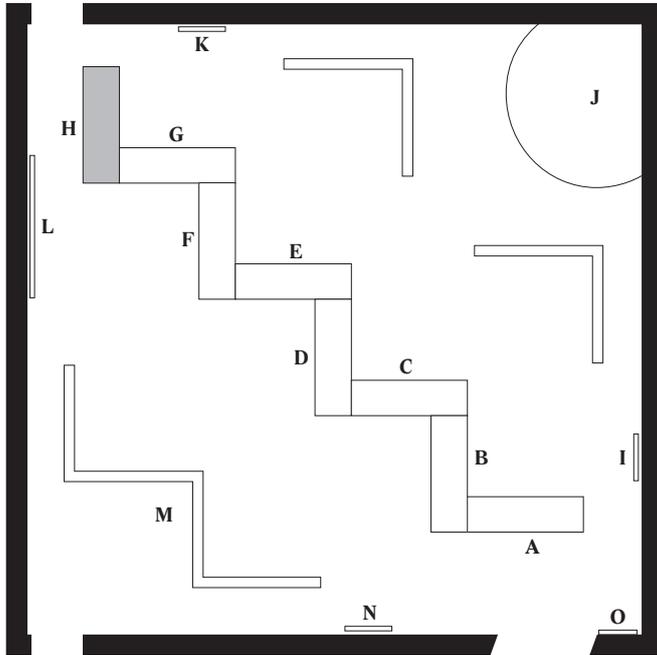
coloured patchwork tents. The story of this commune, that was located in Colorado and existed from 1965 until the early 1970s, provided part of the inspiration for T. C. Boyle's novel of the same name.

The object providing a transition to the final section is the *Quaderna 2600* table designed by the architects at Superstudio. (MW)



Superstudio, *Quaderna 2600*, 1970

H Tabula Rasa



H1 Superstudio, *Quaderna 2600*, 1970, plywood and plastic laminate, printed with black squares

H2 The LEGO® Group, *LEGO® Architecture Studio*, 2014
white plastic bricks, book

H3 Brendan Powell Smith, *The Brick Testament: Stories from the Book of Genesis*, Philadelphia 2013, book

H4 Steiger's Kindergarten Folding-Table, in: *Steiger's Kindergarten Catalogue* (Nachdruck), London 1900/2015, book

H5 Richard Buckminster Fuller, *Geodesic Dome* (replica), 1985, metal, white laquer

H6 Philips, *Inspirational Spaces*, 2019, film clip, 0:15 min

H7 Diego de Saavedra Fajardo, *Idea Principis Christiano-Politici*, 1660, book

H8 Kursty Groves & Will Knight, *I Wish I Worked There! A Look Inside The Most Creative Spaces In Business*, Hoboken 2010, book

H9 Naef Spielzeuge (after Alma Siedhoff-Buscher), *Bauhaus Building Game* (22 pieces), 2019, wood, white laquer

H10 Alma Siedhoff-Buscher, *Sketch for the Toy Closet*, Isometrie M 1:10 (replica), 1923–26/2019, digital print

H11 Google, the search engine's homepage, 2019, screen

The next section “Tabula Rasa” stands for the empty blackboard, the blank page, and thus for a fresh creative start – what the exhibition's curator Thomas Hensel calls the “potentiality of all things”. The first exhibit in this section is the *Quaderna 2600* table by **Superstudio**, an immaculate white cube segment onto which is printed an all-over grid of lines. The grid stretching off endlessly in all dimensions stands for a unique and radical vision of architecture: the world is one great blank sheet of squared paper, and everything we do is a creative act on this white display. In this way, the “grid” becomes an idea of freedom, a world that can be appropriated and shaped by humans via their own creative processes. And this notion was also present in Bauhaus teaching, when Johannes Itten, László Moholy-Nagy or Josef Albers conducted free experiments with form and colour in their preliminary courses, or based stage shows on invisible grids in which the characters moved.

For this reason, a central exhibit here is the white structural model of a *Geodesic Dome* by **Richard Buckminster Fuller** (1895–1983). This universal thinker developed such constructions as early as 1948 at Black Mountain College with students and the former Bauhaus master Josef Albers. Its loadbearing system made of rods and nodes can translate polygonal geometric forms into robust domes measuring many metres across. In spite of the rods being just a few centimetres thick, they are self-supporting and capable of bearing heavy loads.

In the middle of this section lies a small book from 1660, *Idea Principis Christiano Politici* by **Diego de Saavedra Fajardo**. In this collection of short essays, the Spanish diplomat gathered

principles for the education of a prince. The chapter on musical training is illustrated with pictures of an empty canvas and a painter's palette.

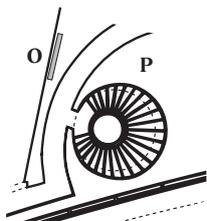
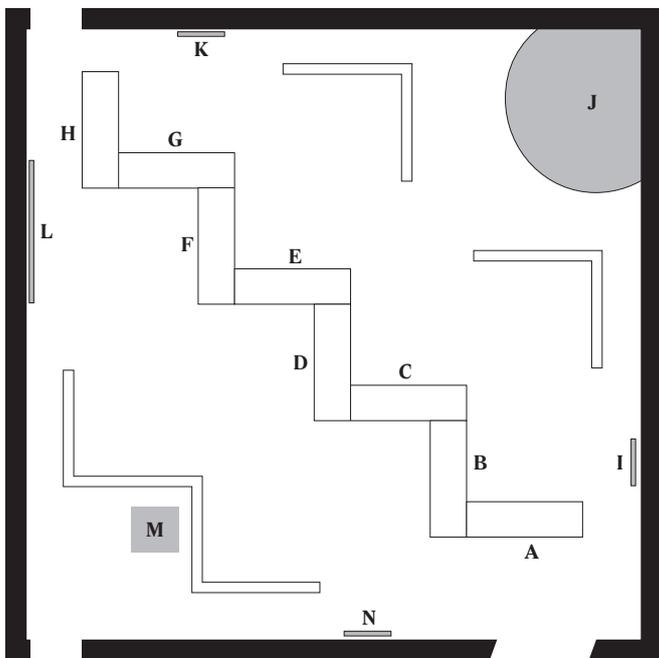
Contrasting with this is a book that is both far older and far more recent: **Brandon Paul Smith** rebuilt the creation story using Lego. His *Lego Genesis* creates everything out of a void of building bricks, turning the whole world into one huge construction kit.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, this idea was introduced to the educational institutions of the time by **Steiger's Kindergarten Folding-Table**. In 1900, the London company offered a grid-patterned table top on which to play with figures.

The historical *Kleine Schifffbauspiel* (1923) by Alma Siedhoff-Buscher is shown here in a white edition from the **Bauhaus Building Game** (2019), highlighting just the basic forms.

The last object at the end of the zigzag table is the homepage of the **Google Search Engine**. Whereas the exhibition began with a many-coloured kaleidoscope of materials and surfaces, now every physical property has been subtracted: the homepage has no physical age, no traces of wear and tear, no predefined size and no weight; apart from the writing, it is white and has no elements other than the search box that opens the gate to billions of webpages in a matter of milliseconds. In this way, the desktop is swept clean, while at the same time being extended into infinity. (MW)

I-O Resonances



I Gunta Stölzl after a design by Anni Albers, *Black White Gray*, 1927/1964, woven silk and cotton

J1 Yto Barrada, *Tree Identification for Beginners Curtain*, 2017, cotton, silk, linen, natural dyes

J2 Yto Barrada, *Tree Identification for Beginners*, 2017, 16mm 16mm digital video, 36:00 min

K Goshka Macuga, *To the Son of Man Who Ate the Scroll*, 2019 video, 10:14 min

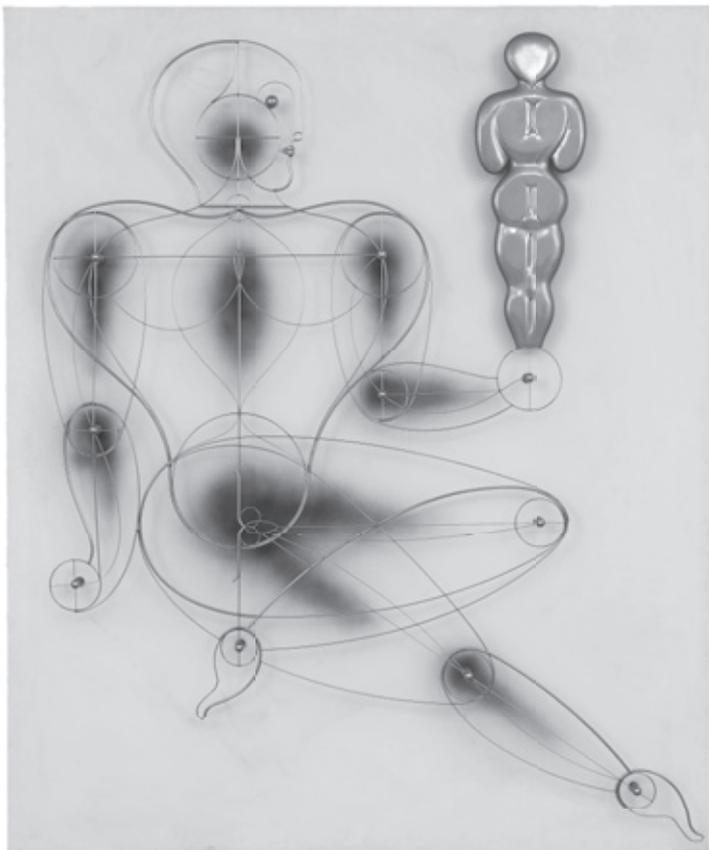
L Eva Grubinger, *Untitled (Problem #6)*, 2018/19, polished stainless steel, braided rope

M Neues Museum Nürnberg, *T124/Toy Closet/in Use*, 2019, video, 5:36 min, executive producers: Robert Eikmeyer & Eva Kraus, Neues Museum Nürnberg

N Oskar Schlemmer, *Homo (mit Rückenfigur)* (replica), 1930–31/1970, steel wire, nickel elements, zinc cast on painted white wooden board with linnen overcoat

O Olaf Nicolai, ... *PARTY ... GAME ... WORK ... PARTY ... GAME ... PARTY ... WORK ... GAME ...*, 2019, plexiglas, LEDs, font: Nicolai. A New Font (2002)
(Upper floor gallery)

P Alma Siedhoff-Buscher, *Poly-functional Children's Furniture*, 1923, replica (foyer)



Oskar Schlemmer, *Homo (mit Rückenfigur)* (replica), 1930–31/1968

Homo (mit Rückenfigur) (1930–31/1968) by Oskar Schlemmer (1888–1943) refers to the notion of a “New Man” that was widespread in the 1920s and that was a central theme in Schlemmer's work as an artist. The focus was on creating a new, liveable world based on new principles that would also form a counter-model to the recent horrors of World War I.

The Bauhaus master worked in different artistic disciplines, but movement was always an important aspect – as can be seen in the wire sculpture *Homo (mit Rückenfigur)*. Within the frame defined by the joints of the large figure, all manner of forms and contortions of the body are thinkable. Schlemmer's work is not a toy, however – the figure's movement only takes place in the viewer's imagination. This human figure reduced to its basic elements carries another one: humankind itself is the creator and designer of the “New Man”; humans have control over themselves and their lives.

The film *T124/Toy Closet/in Use* (2019) was made specially for *BAU [SPIEL] HAUS*, creating a special link between the Bauhaus era and the exhibition. With replicas of play furniture for children designed by the Bauhaus artist Alma Siedhoff-Buscher, a room is created that is then visited and played in by the artist's son, who is now over 90 years old. The installation of the various items of furniture follows a historical photograph and the toys spread around the “children's room” are also based on designs by Siedhoff-Buscher. Her son Joost, who as a child played in this interior, sets off on a journey in time. He finds cut-out sheets developed by his mother, stacks building blocks he played with in the sandpit as a child, and throws raffia dolls.

Parts of the original *Kleines Schiffbauspiel* and two *Throw Dolls* reconstructed by Alma Siedhoff-Buscher's daughter also feature in the exhibition. In the film, as a homage to his mother, Joost Siedhoff also reads a text she wrote about her vision of the ideal setting for children's play, a subject to which she devoted herself so intensively.

Untitled (Problem #6) (2018/19) by **Eva Grubinger** (born 1970) is a puzzle blown up to monumental proportions. The shapes of the metal parts recall the use of basic geometrical shapes as design elements at the Bauhaus. As in Oskar Schlemmer's *Homo (mit Rückenfigur)*, the movement of this object only works in the imagination. The viewer cannot untangle the "problem" in reality, but only try to solve it in his or her mind: a finger exercise becomes a purely mental task. Such extreme enlargement of playthings refers to a phenomenon that resonates with various architectural elements in the show: Richard Buckminster Fuller's model of a geodesic dome, for example, seems to find itself hugely scaled up in the architecture of the *Amazon Spheres*. What comes across in Buckminster Fuller's work as a playful experiment becomes, in Amazon's open-plan offices, a design element for real, usable architecture. This process, as well as the issue of size and its consequences, is given an artistic interpretation in Grubinger's work, offering the viewer food for thought.

A contemporary take on the theme of the "New Man", also present in Oskar Schlemmer's *Homo (mit Rückenfigur)*, is seen in the video work **To the Son of Man Who Ate the Scroll** (2019) by **Goshka Macuga** (born 1967). A robot, made to resemble the artist's partner, recites a litany of epoch-making texts from various periods of

human history. In Macuga's work, too, the image of a "New Man" plays a part – the focus here, however is not on freedom and emancipation, but on the question of the possibility of replacing humans by machines. The robot's face, gestures and expressions are deceptively real, creating the initial impression of a living being. Only in the full view, that also shows the figure's more crudely fashioned body, is the illusion deconstructed. With this work, Macuga questions the consequences of using such machines that increasingly resemble humans. Because it is not just a matter of visual replication – artificial intelligence, too, has long become a key focus of research. Can humankind be replaced?

Tree Identification for Beginners Curtain (2017) by **Yto Barrada** (born 1971), consisting of an installation and an accompanying video, also uses the film medium. In a darkened room, viewers watch the artist's engagement with the biography of her mother. She came to the United States from Morocco in the 1960s at the time of the Vietnam War and decolonization. Her stay in the country, as part of a state-run programme, confronted the then student with complex experiences. In *Tree Identification for Beginners*, Barrada reflects on these experiences in a kind of collage that combines historical sound recordings with moving images. The artist translates history into film sequences that work, among others, with elements of the teaching techniques of Maria Montessori. Many-layered content is translated into simple images and simple forms are used as communicative elements. This use of basic forms as design elements also plays a part in the design of the curtain, whose echoes of triangle, circle and square recall the typical formal idiom of the preliminary courses at the Bauhaus.

The rug design *Black White Gray* (1927) by **Anni Albers** (1899–1994), that was rewoven by the artist **Gunta Stölzl** in 1964, forms a counterpoint in terms of colour to Barrada's installation. Albers taught weaving at the Bauhaus and worked as a textile artist. With its formal structure and colour palette, *Black White Gray* creates a link to the design theory of the Bauhaus. Clear rectangular forms and monochrome fields of colour appeared in both furniture and architectural designs from the Bauhaus, such as Johannes Itten's stools or the Bauhaus building in Dessau (included in the exhibition as a LEGO® model). There is also a more distant visual link to the computer game installation *the grid, the lib and the best of all possible worlds* that stands on a base plate with a squared grid pattern. Seen from afar, the *Bauhaus Chess Set* corresponds with the rug design – for the chess pieces, whose original board has not survived, the rug forms an associative backdrop.

... **PARTY ... GAME ... WORK ... PARTY ... GAME ... PARTY ... WORK ... GAME** (2019), the work made specially for *BAU[SPIEL] HAUS* by **Olaf Nicolai** (born 1962), creates many-layered links between the Bauhaus era and the present day, offering a contemporary take on the guiding principle laid down by Bauhaus master Johannes Itten in his 1919 inaugural speech: work becomes a game, the game becomes a party. In his installation with its constantly changing formations of illuminated fields of colour, the words game, work and party are transformed and their typography abstracted – this engagement with typography can be read as a further reference to the Bauhaus.

The typeface used by Nicolai, *Nicolai. A New Font* (2002), was first used for a reedition of a text by the poet Paul Scheerbart (1863–

1915), whose writing on the importance of glass and light in architecture featured in quotations running round Bruno Taut's Glass House (on display in the exhibition as a model in the “Networks” section). Nicolai created the typeface as part of an exhibition project on the theme of utopia, during which he worked with a type designer, highlighting the collaborative aspect of Nicolai's artistic process. In ... **PARTY ... GAME ... WORK ... PARTY ... GAME ... PARTY ... WORK ... GAME**, the typographic elements, mounted in Perspex boxes, are connected to specially programmed LEDs. One hundred years later, the work connects back to Itten's inaugural lecture “*Our Game, Our Party, Our Work*” at the Bauhaus in 1919. (SR)

Notes



Lyonel Feininger, *The Town at the End of the World* (houses and train, 12 pieces), around 1929

1. Bruno Taut in a letter of 5 October 1920, in: *Whyte/Schneider* 1986, p. 172, quoted from: Matthias Noell, “Des Architekten liebstes Spiel: Baukunst aus dem Baukasten”, in: *figurationen* No 1/04
2. László Moholy-Nagy, quoted from Joost Siedhoff / Michael Siebenbrodt: “Aus Tagebüchern, Dokumenten und Briefen 1922 bis 1944”, in: *Alma Siedhoff-Buscher. Eine neue Welt für Kinder*, exhibition catalogue, Stiftung Weimarer Klassik und Kunstsammlungen/Bauhaus Museum, Weimar 2004, p. 55

Loaning Institutions

Bauhaus Archiv Museum für Gestaltung, Berlin; BBC; Buckminster Fuller Institute; Clive Wilkinson Architects; Deutsches Architekturmuseum, Frankfurt am Main; fluid archives, Karlsruhe; Friedrich-Fröbel-Museum, Bad Blankenburg; Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg; Gildar Gallery, Denver; Hamburger Bahnhof Museum für Gegenwart Berlin; HfG-Archiv/Museum Ulm; Hochschule Pforzheim, Institute for Human Engineering & Empathic Design (HEED); Klassikstiftung Weimar; NBC & MoMA; New York Public Library; Norman Brosterman Collection, Courtesy of Elyse & Lawrence B. Benenson; Pace Gallery; Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Hamburg, Beirut; Galerie Polaris, Paris; Philips; Renate Müller Spielzeug + Design, Sonneberg; Sammlung Hahn, Kranichfeld; Sammlung Joost Siedhoff, Potsdam; SAP; Sophie Bernauer; Spielzeugmuseum Nürnberg; Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, 1974 Schenkung durch die Erben Finsterlins; TH Nürnberg; The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation; Thomas Hawranke; Thomas Müller, VS Möbel; Van Bo Le-Mentzel; Werkbundarchiv – Museum der Dinge, Berlin; Zanotta S.p.a., Nova Milanese

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