



– Information Sheet

ahoi herbert!

bayer and modernism

8 May – 2 August 2009



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Exhibition Facts

Exhibition Title: **ahoi herbert! bayer and modernism**

Exhibition Period 8 May until 2 August 2009

Press Conference 7 May 2009, 10 am

Opening 7 May 2009, 7 pm

Exhibition Locality Lentos Art Museum Linz, 11 Exhibition Rooms on the Upper Floor

Exhibits around 400 Works

Idea, Concept Dr. Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, Lentos Art Museum Linz

DI Bernhard Widder, Vienna/Linz

Co-Curators, Exhibition Designer:

Mag. Lucas Horvath, Vienna (Chapter Morocco)

Mag. Dominika Glogowski, Vienna (Chapter Japan)

DI Friedrich Schmidmair (Exhibition Designer)

Catalogue „ahoi herbert! bayer und die moderne“, edited by Lentos Art Museum Linz at *Bibliothek der Provinz*, Weitra 2009. With articles by Peter Baum, Herbert Bayer, Andrea Bina, Brenda Danilowitz, Magdalena Droste, Dominika Glogowski, Helmuth Gsöllpointner, Martin Hochleitner, Lucas Horvath, Toni Maraini, Stella Rollig, Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, Friedrich Schmidmair, Alexander Schug, Bernhard Widder. Numerous colour pictures, p. 516. German only (English articles in accompanying publication). Price: € 39,-.

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info@lentos.at, www.lentos.at

Opening Hours daily 10 am-6 pm; Thur 10 am-9 pm

Admission € 6,50, reduced € 4,50

Guided Tours Thursday 7 pm

Saturday 4 pm (except July and August)

Sunday 11 am and 4 pm

Period: 1 hours, Meeting point: Lentos Cash, Costs: € 3,-

Guided Tours with the Curators (Period 60-90 Min., Costs: € 4,-) german only

Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller: 14.5., 6 pm; 4.6., 6 pm; 2.8., 11 am

Bernhard Widder: 9.5., 4 pm; 20.6., 4 pm; 23.7., 7 pm

Press Mag. Nina Kirsch, Tel. +43(0)732/7070-3603; nina.kirsch@lentos.at

Available for discussion at Press Conference:

Stella Rollig, Director Lentos Art Museum Linz

Dr. Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, Curator

DI Bernhard Widder, Curator

ahoi herbert! bayer and modernism

8 May until 2 August 2009

A high point of the exhibition year 2009 at the Lentos Art Museum Linz is an extensive show, covering 12 rooms, about Herbert Bayer, the famous Bauhaus artist originally from Upper Austria.

This exhibition endeavors to spread out Herbert Bayer's oeuvre in all its colorful diversity and to make it possible to experience the thematic lines crossing through his work over the course of decades, from photography, drawing, painting, all the way to designed landscape.

The development and the history of modern art will be illuminated with examples of work by Herbert Bayer and his prominent colleagues, friends and contemporaries. Many interconnections resulting from Bayer's stirring biography will be shown for the first time: Bayer's influence on Moroccan modernism, his universal work in New York, California, Paris, Japan and Mexico, and his contacts and friendships with many artists (Albers, Klee, Moholy-Nagy, Marcel Breuer and Walter Gropius) and various art scenes of the international avant-garde of the twentieth century.

Bayer's work at Bauhaus from 1921 to 1928 is one of the focal points of the exhibition. In addition, the famous architecture room that was set up by Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Marcel Breuer at the Deutscher Werkbund exhibition in Paris 1930 will be partially reconstructed.

Herbert Bayer was closely linked with the predecessor institution of Lentos, the New Gallery of the City of Linz, for decades. Following a generous donation from his widow Joella Bayer in 2006, Lentos now has 135 works from all the periods of his work, the biggest Bayer collection of any Austrian museum. Together with numerous loaned works from throughout Austria and abroad, these works form the core of the exhibition.

Herbert Bayer, who was born in 1900 in Upper Austria and died in 1985 in Santa Barbara, California, is regarded as one of the major artists of the development of international, modern art in the 20th century. In the course of his almost 60-year career, he created an extensive oeuvre that is almost unique among modern artists, comprising nearly all forms of expression of visual art and its related fields: drawing, painting, printmaking, tapestry; typography and graphic design; experimental and documentary photography. From 1946 on, he worked in his new home country, the USA, for decades as an architect and designer of landscapes and sculptures.

Biography Herbert Bayer

b. april 5, 1900 in haag am hausruck, austria – d. september 30, 1985 in santa barbara, california, usa

childhood and adolescence in upper austria, khevenhüller grammar school in linz

1919 apprenticeship with the architect georg schmidhammer in linz

1920-21 assistant to the architect emanuel margold in darmstadt, mathildenhöhe artists' colony

1921-25 studies at the bauhaus in weimar under itten and kandinsky

1923-24 stay in italy with sepp maltan, the artists earn their keep as "lüftlmaler" (al fresco painters)

1925-28 appointment as a teacher and head of the "printing and advertising" workshop at the bauhaus in dessau, introduction of the use of small initial letters, development of own typefaces, e.g. "bayer universal"

1928-38 lives and works in berlin as a painter, photographer, graphic and advertising designer (including post as the art director of the paris "vogue" and "die neue linie" magazines; director of the dorland advertising agency)

1929 one-man show at the MAERZ artists' club in linz

1930 design of the german "werkbund" in paris and in

1931 the "baugewerkschaften" with walter gropius, marcel breuer and lászló moholy-nagy in berlin

1933-38 design orders for NS propaganda postures and leaflets in germany

1937-38 defamed with a painting in the "degenerate art" exhibition

1938 emigration to new york. several exhibition designs for the museum of modern art in new york

1939 lectureship at black mountain college, north carolina

1945 art director at dorland international

1946-74 lives in aspen, colorado, works as architect and design consultant for the aspen institute for humanistic studies, the container corporation of america (CCA) and the atlantic richfield oil company (arco)

1961 one-man show at bauhaus archive in berlin

1962 chapel of the circle diamond ranch picacho, new mexico

1963 exhibition at the neue galerie der stadt linz

1968 installation of the "articulated wall" for the mexico olympics, one-man show at the museum für angewandte kunst, vienna

1973 awarded an honorary doctorate by the graz university of technology. design of the "double ascension" sculpture for the arco plaza in los angeles

1974-75 retrospective of graphic print work at the bauhaus archive in berlin

1975 moves to montecito in california

1976 retrospective at the neue galerie der stadt linz. design for the fountain sculpture in front of the brucknerhaus in linz (1977)

1977-78 travelling exhibition of photographic work in the usa

1980 founding exhibition of the herbert bayer archive at the denver art museum

1982 and 1987 travelling exhibition of the bauhaus archive berlin. 1987 in the upper austrian landesgalerie

in **2000**, to mark the 100th birthday of the artist, the upper austrian landesgalerie, the neue galerie der stadt linz and the schloss starhemberg in haag hold comprehensive presentations from his complete oeuvre.

in **2006**, following the death of bayer's widow joella (d. 2004), together with the bauhaus archive, the denver art museum and the santa barbara museum of art, the lentos kunstmuseum linz receives a 50-work endowment from the estate of the artist.

with some 135 items from all creative periods, the lentos kunstmuseum linz disposes over the largest and most significant collection of work by the artist in Austria.

Accompanying Texts

room 2

the whole time, i drew and painted landscapes, houses and trees, but my dream of one day being able to study at the academy of fine arts in vienna was shattered by the early death of my father ... the begin of my career as a designer was formed by my apprenticeship in the arts and crafts workshop of the architect g. schmidhammer in linz. here, i came into contact with some of the problems that would later form a focus of my interests. i heard names such as gustav klimt and egon schiele, and learned something about the architect josef hoffmann and the "werkbund". as i lacked possibilities for personal development in an austrian provincial town, in 1919 i moved to darmstadt, in order to work for emanuel margold, an architect of the viennese school, in the artistic colony on the mathildenhöhe.

herbert bayer, visuelle kommunikation/architektur/malerei, ravensburg, 1967

room 3

my early years at the bauhaus in weimar were to prove an experience of fundamental importance to my subsequent work ... the bauhaus is not a historically closed and perfected movement. it changed the world of art, design and architecture and in its basic ideas continues to function as a creative force ... my main interest as a young master was typography and soon turned to new developments in the field of "visual communications" ... for me, the abstract art with which i came into contact in the bauhaus opened up the world of pure, elementary forms and colour.

herbert bayer, visuelle kommunikation/architektur/malerei, ravensburg, 1967

"... In my long life I have only loved two people with all my heart, Herbert and Julie. Luckily, I had many close and dear friends, people of heart and goodwill. Herbert always was a genius and will receive his place in the global history of art. I feel very fortunate to have experienced a brief part of his youth and design ..."

Letter from Irene Bayer-Hecht to Herbert Bayer's brother Theo, dated 1979

bauhaus

what is the bauhaus?

the bauhaus is an answer to the question as to what training an artist requires in order to fulfil a role in the age of machinery.

how did the bauhaus idea originate?

as a school, which became the most important and influential institution of its type in the current age.

where?

in germany, first in weimar, then in dessau.

when?

from 1919 until closure by the national socialists in 1933.

who were the teachers?

walter gropius, the founder and first director, feiningger, klee, kandinsky, itten, marcks, mucche, moholy-nagy, schlemmer, albers, bayer, breuer, schmidt, scheper, stölzl, and others.

what did they teach? architecture, interior design, painting , sculpture, photography, film, theatre, ballet, industrial design, ceramics, metalworking, weaving, advertising, typography and, above, thinking in terms of modern design.

bauhaus catalogue, museum of modern art, new york, 1938, published by herbert bayer, walter gropius and ise gropius

room 4

bayer's daring exhibition presentations are concerned with the truncated structures of the extended view. he continually investigates the possibility of "expanding the field of vision."

"an exhibition can be compared to a book, to the extent that the pages of a book move in front of the eyes of the reader, while at an exhibition, during the process of looking, the visitor moves from exhibit to exhibit ..."

herbert bayer, aspects of design of exhibitions and museums, in: curator magazine iv/3, 1961

room 5

during my years in berlin, i continued to experiment in the photographic field, especially with regard to photomontage, a technique well suited to the intermingling of objectivity and fantasy, especially when linked to advertising psychology insights.

herbert bayer, visuelle kommunikation/architektur/malerei, otto maier verlag ravenburg, 1967

room 6

"now that i have left this country, it is clear to me that as far as my work is concerned, the past 5 years have been virtually lost. i have understood that there is no possible bond between german national socialism and the world in which my life must move. at every step, i found myself in opposition. the depressing intellectual oppression, subservience and mendacity. the isolationism with regard to events outside germany. the repulsive tone of the press and public opinion. the rape of personal initiative. the mixing of the private with politics. the negative aspects of the character of the german people, which have surfaced in such violent form. the shameful racial policy. and above all, the annexation of my homeland austria by the nazis. that cut me to the quick.

herbert bayer's diary 1938

herbert bayer, kunst und design in amerika 1938-1985, hrg. eckhard neumann, bauhaus-archiv berlin 1986

“Degenerate Art” – A painful chapter in European art history

Modern art was first attacked in Germany as early as 1933 through so-called “exhibitions of shame.”

Then on July 19, 1937, the travelling “Degenerate Art” exhibition was opened in Munich. On display, were some 650 works by 120 artists, which had been confiscated by Goebbels’ State Ministry of Propaganda from 32 German museums. All in all, over 16,000 artworks from the collections of these museums were adjudged to be “degenerate”.

Herbert Bayer was represented at the exhibition with his *Landscape in Tessin* from 1924, which was confiscated from the Museum Folkwang in Essen. To date, the painting is regarded as lost. The works in the exhibition were deliberately hung in a jumbled and crowded manner. Bayer’s *Landscape* was positioned directly above the floor next to a floral still life from Christian Rohlf and with the famous figures from Oskar Schlemmer above.

Pictures by modern artists, including masterpieces by the German expressionists, the Dadaists and in particular, the “Bauhaus communists” were mocked with abusive slogans. The purchase prices, which had assumed horrendous proportions due to inflation, were listed and denounced as “waste” with the rider, “Paid for by the taxes of German working people”.

In addition, headlines were used for the purposes of discrimination, classification and overloading. The intention was to consolidate the concept of an enemy and to negate works of art as worthless through confused hanging and the stating of prices. The diffuse lighting served to underline the desired impression of chaos.

Three Austrian artists were included in the “Degenerate Art” exhibition; Herbert Bayer (b.1900 Haag/Upper Austria), Raoul Hausmann (b.1886 Vienna) and Oskar Kokoschka (b.1886 Pöchlarn/Lower Austria).

Among others, the Bauhaus masters Kandinsky, Schlemmer, Klee, Feininger and Itten, who can all be classified as abstractionists, were presented under the motto, “Crazy at any price” and in the catalogue section “The ultimate in stupidity or impertinence, or both!” In the exhibition guide, graphics from Kokoschka and Paul Klee were compared with a drawing from a mental patient, in order to arouse disgust in the viewer. Here, Herbert Bayer’s painting was not mentioned.

The Nazi press spoke of, “A mortuary full of suicides, lunatics, cripples and stupefied alcoholics”. The aim was to expose modern art as a swindle and the product of madness and inability. Entrance to the exhibition was free, but forbidden to young people.

Over two million people saw the touring exhibition, which also made guest appearances in Salzburg and Vienna. Thus, by a twist of ironic, historical fate, the “Degenerate Art” exhibition remains to date the most visited exhibition of modern art ever held.

Well over 1,000 pieces of “degenerate” art failed to survive the National Socialists’ “clean-up operation”, having been burned in the courtyard of the Berlin Fire Service’s main fire station in March 1939. The end of the artistic avant-garde in Germany and Austria had arrived.

Provenance research at the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz

At the request of the City of Linz, research into the provenance of the Gurlitt collection has been going on for many years. The municipal administration published an initial report on this research in 1999 and the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz continued the systematic examination of its collection. In 2007, a working group was established at the behest of the mayor of Linz and the municipal administration director with responsibility for the city's museums. In May 2009, a female portrait by Gustav Klimt from the Lentos collection was returned to the heirs. The Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz is making every effort to achieve the most comprehensive definition possible of the provenance of its collection

room 8

i clearly understand that the places where decisive events occur are the big cities. however, my preference for a smaller community, that retains a comprehensible scale, and in which one can live in constant contact with nature, prompted me to begin a new and different life. apart from that, it is nonetheless important for a modern artist to feel the rhythm of the production centres and, even in the age of rapid transport, he or she must accept many disadvantages and obstacles upon leaving a metropolis.

herbert bayer, visuelle kommunikation/architektur/malerei, ravenburg, 1967

my ideas are now generally understood and appreciated by both the executive management and the workforce at arco (atlantic richfield company). i am regarded as being of the same rank as the top managers. this is a position that i always wanted a designer to achieve, as only in this way can he or she be a useful and efficient member of our society.

herbert bayer, unpublished letter to john mccormick, 1978

room 9

walter saw people without jobs, a town that was becoming a ghost town, and he saw a need to rebuild. walter had a vision. he always had a vision.

elizabeth paepcke, wife of walter paepcke

room 10

mexico is really the promised land of abstract art, because here it is thousands of years old.

josef albers

JAPANESE IMPRESSIONS

In August 1955, the Japanese architect Kenzo Tange requested Herbert Bayer to undertake the layout design of Katsura. Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture, a publication about the imperial Katsura residence in Kyoto, which was built in the 17th century. Bayer's intensive involvement with Japanese art and culture culminated in 1960 with a five-week stay in the land of

the rising sun. As the keynote speaker at the World Design Conference (WoDeCo) in Tokyo, he received an opportunity to meet leading Japanese designers and architects such as Yusaku Kamekura, Kenzo Tange, Junzo Sakakura or Kiyoshi Seike (again). During a subsequent trip to the Kansai region he also visited important centres of Japanese (art) history such as Nara, Kyoto, Kurashiki, the Ise shrine and the Katsura Villa (twice).

The impressions gathered by Bayer over the years with regard to Japan flow subtly into his work and in the Moon and Structure series, the architectonic elements used with increasing frequency in his paintings of the 1950s, are juxtaposed with rounded forms. Enso, the circle as perfect symmetry, is not only part of Zen Buddhist philosophy and calligraphy, but also permits associations with the Katsura residence and the poetic significance of its moon observation platforms. These have the main purpose of allowing a view of the moon, or its reflection in a pond, a motif with which Bayer came into contact through the Katsura publication. Upon his return from Japan and influenced by his experiences, Bayer turned to traditional feudal architecture for inspiration as expressed in three-dimensional projects such as Roswell Walk Through Garden (1962). The interpretative Gates series dating back to the mid-1960s also shows affinities to Japan and the entrances to Shinto shrines. In 1971, Bayer went back to Japan for the purpose of a Bauhaus retrospective in Tokyo.

Dominika Glogowski

room 11

in the arid region of the high atlas in morocco one sees many gates. there are gates without walls, which mark the entrance to a town. on the plains one finds gates where no one lives; coloured structures consisting in the main of a large arch flanked on both sides by smaller arches for people. there is nothing in front of or behind the gate. it is like a mirage or a lonely symbol that humankind has placed in this endless, naked landscape. perhaps it marks a frontier that would otherwise be invisible ...

herbert bayer

Bayer in Tangiers and the Moroccan avant-garde

Between 1966 and 1974, Bayer paid regular visits to Morocco, where he worked in his house in Tangiers and took trips to study the local pictorial culture on the interface between art, architecture and landscape. Bayer's visits also coincided with the emergence of a post-colonial avant-garde in Morocco, which at the time was unique in the Arab World. Within a brief period, on the basis of research into their Berber- dominated inheritance and a decolonialisation theory, a small group of fine artists developed a specifically modern language of form with 'a regional character, which as a result of activities in the public domain, publications and urban design, permeated many areas of life. The centre of the movement was formed by the Casablanca Art Academy. The teaching methods at this school, which allocated equal importance to all visual media, and experimental and

research-oriented teamwork between the students and staff, demonstrated parallels to the pedagogic approach of the Bauhaus. Here, the universal ambitions of the early modern coalesced with the endeavours of artists such as Farid Belkahlia, Mohamed Melehi und Ahmed Cherkaoui, who were attempting to create a self-determined, post-colonial culture on a regional basis. For Bayer, these sojourns far removed from his clients resulted in a recapitulation of his previous work and thus initiated a completely new creative phase.

room 12

... a symbol of our times is a lack of direction and the loss of a binding basis for understanding. we have splintered during the search for an order over and above purely materialistic goals. today, the mosaic of our pictorial statements consists of many fragmentary assertions of great diversity and contradiction. a comprehensive concept for the search for truth and order cannot be defined with regard to art as a whole, however the testing of every visual possibility could result in a new synthesis and thus the development of meaningful forms of pictorial expression ...

herbert bayer, 1967

the political situation in the germany of the 30s prompted me to emigrate to the united states. conditions in new york during the war years were also far from ideal and in spite of the hospitality of this country, a new arrival had to first adjust to the new way of life and learn to comprehend a changed environment, which was often not easy. during my efforts to gain a solid foothold, i was occasionally forced to make regrettable concessions to the taste of my clients, especially with regard to advertising agencies. However, i look back with pleasure upon the fruitful teamwork with the museum of modern art.

herbert bayer, visuelle kommunikation/architektur/malerei, ravensburg, 1967

Press Images



1. Herbert Bayer
Polychrome warm and cool, 1970
Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz
© VBK, Wien, 2009



2. Herbert Bayer
Selfportrait, 1932
Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz
© VBK, Wien, 2009



3. Herbert Bayer
Good Night Marie, 1932
Lentos Kunstmuseum
Linz, Donation Herbert
Bayer
© VBK, Wien, 2009



4. Herbert Bayer
Photo: Berko Studio,
Aspen, Estate Helene
Meinhart (b. Bayer)



5. Herbert Bayer in front of his fountain
sculpture next to the Brucknerhaus Linz, 1977
Photo: Peter Baum



6. Herbert Bayer, Alexander Schawinsky, Walter Gropius, 1933
b/w Photo by Ise Gropius (?)
© Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin



7. Herbert Bayer
Suspended Secrets, 1979. Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz.
© VBK, Wien, 2009



8. Herbert Bayer, Universal Lettering in
„Offset-Heft“, 1926, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin



9. Herbert Bayer
Anderson Park, 1973, Sculpture „Großer
Wagen“ by Mathias Goeritz
Aspen Institut, Aspen Meadows
Photo: B. Widder



10. Herbert Bayer
Kiosk for Newspaper
Disposal, 1924, Bauhaus-
Archiv Berlin
© VBK, Wien, 2009



11. Herbert Bayer
Four intersected circles, 1970/26
Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz,
Donation Herbert Bayer
© VBK, Wien, 2009



12. Herbert Bayer
 „Adrianol-Emulsion“, Advertising
 Poster, 1935
 Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz,
 Donation Joella Bayer
 © VBK, Wien, 2009



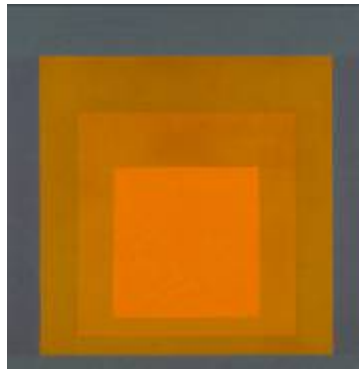
13. Herbert Bayer
 „Arbeitsfreude durch grüne
 Werkhöfe“, Advertising Poster,
 around 1937
 Galerie Fricke, Berlin
 © VBK, Wien, 2009



14. Herbert Bayer
 Bird with Egg, 1928
 Collection Britt Bayer, Denver/Colorado
 © VBK, Wien, 2009



15. László Moholy-Nagy
 Composition, 1922/23
 Osthaus Museum Hagen
 Photo: Kühle
 © VBK, Wien, 2009



16. Josef Albers
 Study for Homage to the
 Square, Glowing Center, 1963
 Josef Albers Museum Bottrop
 © VBK, Wien, 2009



17. Wassily Kandinsky
 Little Dream in Red, 1925
 Kunstmuseum Bern, Donation
 Nina Kandinsky
 © VBK, Wien, 2009



18. Paul Klee
 Wirewalker, 1923
 Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz
 © VBK, Wien, 2009



19-22.
 Exhibition Views
 Lentos Art Museum Linz
 Photos: maschekS.

