Bauhaus Now!

Buxton Contemporary, University of Melbourne

26 July – 20 October 2019

Exhibition curated by Ann Stephen

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Cover image
Mikala Dwyer and Justene Williams, Mondspiel / [Moon Play] 2019 (details), mixed-media installation comprising performance; video (with performance by Philipp Adams and Deanne Butterworth); thistle garden; painted coffins; welded and painted sculpture with crystals; rocking theremin sculptures; painted wooden sculptures; wall painting; fabric banners; sculpture, fabric and clay on scaffold; acrylic, collage and fabric tassels on canvas. Courtesy of the artists; Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne; Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney

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Buxton Contemporary respectfully acknowledges the Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri peoples of the Eastern Kulin Nation, on whose land this book was produced. We acknowledge their ancestors and Elders, who are part of the longest continuing culture in the world.

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The overall project has its origins in a major, and again pan-institutional, Australian Research Council Discovery Grant. This exhibition coincides with the publication by Melbourne University Publishing and Power Publications of that project’s major outcome: Bauhaus Diaspora and Beyond: Transforming Education Through Art, Design and Architecture, edited by Prof Philip Goad, Dr Ann Stephen, Prof Andrew McNamara, Prof Harriet Edquist and Prof Dr Isabel Wünsche. Bauhaus Now! is, in other words, an excellent example of how exhibitions at university art museums can powerfully leverage academic expertise and enhance student learning while maximising public engagement with both.

As implied by the above, there have been many contributors to this exhibition. In particular, I would like to thank our many partners and supporters who, in addition to the institutions already named, include the Centre of Visual Art at the University of Melbourne, the Goethe-Institut and the Australia Council for the Arts. The exhibition features works held in public and private collections across Australia, and I acknowledge the many lenders who have generously made these available to us, including the National Gallery of Victoria, the Geelong Gallery, the University of Sydney and the Ian Potter Museum of Art at the University of Melbourne. I also thank all of the artists who have contributed new and existing work to the exhibition: Michael Candy, Peter D Cole, Christopher Handran, Shane Haseman, Rose Nolan, Elizabeth Pulle and Jacky Redgate. I am also deeply appreciative of the major commitment Mikala Dwyer and Justene Williams have made to this show from the very beginning and the extraordinary new work that they have developed for the occasion.

I thank the members of the Buxton Contemporary Committee for their ongoing support, as well as the museum’s dedicated and highly professional staff Melissa Keys, Katarina Paxeta, Kate Fitzgerald and Ashlee Baldwin; the Visitor Services team and Anatoli Pitt in particular for his helpful assistance on this project. Prof Susan Best of Griffith University joined Dr Ann Stephen to make an invaluable contribution to the catalogue, while Dr Nathan Hollier, CEO of Melbourne University Publishing, and Prof Eva Forgács of ArtCenter College of Design in Pasadena, California, delivered expert and engaging addresses on the opening night. I also thank our exhibition opening partners, Four Pillars Gin and Dody Oliver Catering.

Finally, I thank Dr Ann Stephen for combining acute curatorial insight with deep art historical knowledge to produce a remarkable and memorable exhibition that attends to the Bauhaus centenary with the nuance that it both deserves and requires.

**Bauhaus Diaspora and Beyond: Transforming Education Through Art, Design and Architecture**

**Bauhaus Now!**

**Director’s foreword**

— Ryan Johnston

Buxton Contemporary presents the exhibition **Bauhaus Now!** to mark the centenary of the Bauhaus, arguably the most important, and certainly the best-known, art and design school of the 20th century. Operative during the complex and increasingly regressive political climate of inter-war Germany, the Bauhaus was both peripatetic and short-lived. Political pressure forced it to move twice, first from Weimar to Dessau and then to Berlin, before the Nazi Party closed it permanently almost immediately upon assuming power in 1933, just fourteen years after the school was founded. Most of its faculty left Germany in the years that followed (if they hadn’t already), resettling in locations including the United Kingdom, United States, Israel and Australia. Yet despite, or perhaps even because of, this compact cycle of enforced reinvention and dispersion, the Bauhaus has since exerted a remarkable sphere of influence.

While relatively few of its students became artists of note, the Bauhaus changed the course of Western arts education dramatically. It is frequently cited as inaugurating a paradigmatic shift from the academic, talent-focused training model rooted in observation and imitation to a new creativity-focused pedagogy premised on invention and the pursuit of medium specificity. As art historian Thierry de Duve, among others, has observed, countless art schools around the world were subsequently founded on versions of the Bauhaus pedagogical premise, and its implications and assumptions continue to underlie, or even haunt, curricula internationally to this day (including in Australia).1

At the same time, the Bauhaus’s design legacy – spanning everything from architecture to furniture to urban planning – is perhaps even more profound. Indeed, architectural historian Mark Wigley has recently, if provocatively, gone so far as to argue that the Bauhaus’s concept of a ‘good’ or ‘total’ design ‘divorced from politics’ did much to inaugurate our present ‘global economy wherein capital and biology have become the very medium of design’.

In making this case, Wigley argues that no product exemplifies this Bauhaus aesthetic ideology as much as the Apple iPhone, the smooth and seamless finish of which both anaesthetises and belies its design-led ‘radical transformation of our body, brain and planet’.2 Given the enduring influence of the Bauhaus on both pedagogy and praxis, combined with the fact that this centenary comes at a time when, as many have already noted, the global political climate is not without parallels to that of 1919, the importance of revisiting the school on this occasion exceeds mere celebration. And under these circumstances it is, I think, entirely appropriate that this centenary be both commemorated and interrogated via an exhibition that incorporates historical artworks by Bauhäuslers with works by contemporary artists and students reimagining their legacies, and that is staged at a museum located within an art school.

**Bauhaus Now!** has been curated by Dr Ann Stephen, Senior Curator of the University Art Gallery and Art Collection at the University of Sydney, and, much like the Bauhaus itself, it has interdisciplinary and cross-institutional collaboration at its core. It draws on the research and expertise of colleagues at the University of Melbourne, University of Sydney, RMIT University, Queensland College of Art – Griffith University, Queensland University of Technology and Jacobs University, Bremen. Exhibition contributors span disciplines, including visual art, dance, music, architecture, design and horticultural science. Student participation has been integrated into coursework and workshops across multiple institutions, resulting in lantern-making classes and a public parade through Melbourne’s CBD with visual art, design and fashion students; a practical unit on Bauhaus-inspired toy design undertaken by Master of Architecture students; and the performance of a newly commissioned composition by dance students.

**Director’s foreword**

Ryan Johnston
Notes
(3) Ibid. As Wigley observes, Apple CEO Steve Jobs was deeply influenced by the Bauhaus from the early 1990s. This is a connection also made literally in Bauhaus Now! by Rose Nolan’s small sculpture (iTunes Museum (2019) [constructed from iPhone packaging] and conceptually in Mikala Dwyer’s description of her and Justene Williams’ work (centred on a living thistle garden) as evoking ‘the festering unconscious, repressed Bauhaus’. Mikala Dwyer in Ray Edgar, ‘Bauhaus Now celebrates the messy side of design’s 100-year-old upstart’, The Age, 26 July 2019, https://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/bauhaus-now-celebrates-the-messy-side-of-design-s-100-year-old-upstart-20190722-p529hv.html, accessed 27 July 2019.

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Ann Stephen

Bauhaus Now!

In its centenary year the Bauhaus has assumed the status of a global brand, and has even been dubbed by some critics a ‘Bauhaus virus’. These critics argue that its ‘viral success’ depoliticises as ‘the Bauhaus object serves no particular lifestyle other than the global marketplace itself’. However, the Bauhaus’s after-image continues to haunt education across art, design and architecture. Remarkably, the short-lived pedagogical experiment in a devastated Germany has sown seeds still generative today. Yet for contemporary artists to imagine alternative narratives to that of canonical Bauhaus design involves a return to the original idea of the school, whether to revive its abandoned Utopias, to rescue those exiled and expelled, or to recover ephemeral and overlooked projects. Then, its ideas may come back to life as something between a resurrection and a wake.

Take the carnivalesque aspects of the early Weimar years recalled by former Bauhaus student Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack:

There was a kite festival, when we marched in procession through Weimar to the top of the hill, with hundreds of school children. There were lantern festivals when lanterns made in the workshops were carried through the streets at night. There were dances nearly every Saturday, when we wore fantastic masks and costumes prepared by the theatre group.

Play and experiment were at the core of Bauhaus teaching, beginning with Johannes Itten’s Vorkurs (preliminary course), which focused on the study of materials and colour theory. Students began with sensitising exercises inspired by Itten’s adherence to the Mazdaznan cult.

Bauhaus Now! began with a lantern parade led by art students through the centre of Melbourne, from one art school to another. The artist Mikala Dwyer, along with her Mondspiel / [Moon Play] collaborator, Justene Williams, had held a lantern-making workshop with painting, sculpture, fashion and design students and artists from the Victorian College of the Arts – University of Melbourne (VCA), RMIT University and the Queensland College of Art – Griffith University (QCA). Dwyer described the workshop as ‘our attempt at reanimating the memory ghost of the actual dynamic of education, doing the Mazdaznan exercises to begin as Itten did … The living dead / the dead living’. In an era when art education is dominated by the ‘high performance culture’ of competing universities, such collective interdisciplinary actions outside the studio suggest the vividness of liberated play. After the parade the lanterns were installed in one long gallery as part of the exhibition.

Among Itten’s students were the two Bauhäuslers exiled to Australia, the renowned Hirschfeld-Mack and, later, the unknown Gertrude Herzger-Seligmann. Their work forms the archival spine of this exhibition. The few Bauhaus treasures that Herzger-Seligmann brought across the world included a dog-eared copy of Paul Klee’s Pedagogical Sketchbook (1925), which she translated for her later lectures, and a set of postcards for Bauhaus festivals, made by Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Oskar Schlemmer and others.

In 1924, while at the Bauhaus, Hirschfeld-Mack designed a coloured spinning top, as both a toy and a tool for demonstrating the optical principle of mixing colour. Later, in Australia, he made many versions of his Colour Chord orchestra (one of which is on display), which enabled untutored and disabled children to play music based on colour.

Playing is the most natural and purest expression of the child’s creative ability … learning through direct experience rather than being taught creates discovery and rediscovery of methods … the driving forces are intuition, imagination and fantasy.

The idea of fostering a child’s imagination through ‘pedagogically useful toys’ has a long tradition that extends from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Friedrich Fröbel, Rudolf Steiner and Maria Montessori on to the Bauhaus through such students as Hirschfeld-Mack, Alma Siedhoff-Buscher and Friedl Dicker-Brandeis. Such reformers saw creativity as crucial to the development of children and adopted their ideas for teaching, therapy and experimental practices from theories on childhood development drawn from psychology and psychoanalysis. For the exhibition, architectural historian Philip Goad challenged his students to develop a series of Bauhaus-inspired prototype toys. On a low display shelf accessible to the very small are books, puzzles and games, including two large-scale knights from Josef Hartwig’s Bauhaus chess set and spinning tops inspired by Hirschfeld-Mack’s colour-study tops displayed at Melbourne’s Gallery A in 1961.

Outside of lantern parades and toys, how might contemporary artists reimagine a relationship to this legendary school and its renowned artists, designers and architects?
correspondence to the work of Itten's students. Nolan's ten white speculative models – some made more than ten years ago – are placed across four tabletops, of the same type that students use in the VCA studios, where she studied three decades earlier.

Other artists in this exhibition channel colour theory. Kandinsky developed a theory of correspondence between colour and shape based on a 1923 investigation that he undertook with colleagues and students, among them Hirschfeld-Mack. Hirschfeld-Mack developed a series of charts and colour wheels to accompany Kandinsky's colour course and seminar, as well as delivering his own. (A series of these Bauhaus colour charts is included in the exhibition.) Based on a survey, Kandinsky proposed matching the three primary colours to the three primary forms in the following pairs: yellow–triangle, blue–circle and red–square. There were dissenters, however, with Klee and Schlemmer favouring different combinations.

Ten years ago, Peter D Cole set about undoing such a system in miniature multiples. In *Elemental landscape* (2009–19), some fifty individual constructions, like small geometric signs on stalks, play games with Kandinsky's primary system. Red squares, blue discs and yellow triangles jostle to be seen among orange ovals, red diamonds, green rectangles, pale blue rhomboids and an occasional negative square or circle. In the riot of enamel paint, like a test for the colourblind, all kinds of fugitive correspondences and contrasts are possible.

The interdisciplinary field of projected coloured light was an offshoot of Bauhaus ideas developed by Hirschfeld-Mack, László Moholy-Nagy and Kurt Schwerdtfeger. The 21st-century legacy of their kinetic experiments sees the focus turned onto multimedia light performances. Take Michael Candy's reconstruction of Hirschfeld-Mack’s *Farbenlichtspiele* (Colour-Light Play) of 1923, a machine for interactive play. The original apparatus had movable parts made of metal.

In her recent *Bauhaus weaving series* (2018), Elizabeth Pulie comes close to homage, intersecting art with questions of gender and material studies. Pulie has studied Herzger-Seligmann's jacquard weaving swatches for furnishing fabrics that she expertly produced in Sydney from the late 1930s on. Having worked primarily as a painter, Pulie taught herself to weave on a hand loom in a deliberate procedure of amateur self-education, creating a series of five body-referring works from recycled clothing. To bear witness to the process-based approach she strapped a camera to her body to record the slow accumulative transformation created by passing rags through the horizontal–vertical grid structure of the loom. In a sense her work can be seen as a response to the challenge of media specificity, using the criteria of one media (painting) to define the parameters of another (weaving).

As the Bauhäsler Anni Albers observed, 'by playing with material amateurishly' and 'unburdened by any consideration of practical application', the weavers on the antiquated hand looms developed an 'unprejudiced attitude towards the materials'.

Like Pulie, Rose Nolan scavenges cast-off consumer packaging for the fabric of her speculative and witty architectural models. 'I started making a set of constructions', she recalls, 'then in 1995 I removed all the colour and they became very aerodynamic, still wall-based but also connected to the floor. Then they became like three-dimensional architectural models, a playful response to International Style mid-twentieth century architecture yet made from domestic materials and on a domestic scale.'

In his preliminary course on material studies, Itten encouraged his students to discover 'a whole new world' by rummaging 'through the drawers of thrifty grandmothers, their kitchens and cellars ...' and ransacking 'the workshops of craftsmen and the rubbish heaps of factories and building sites'. Other exercises involved the study of three-dimensional form using basic elementary geometric shapes, which Itten insisted were abstract rather than architectural designs. While Nolan traces a lineage from the revolutionary projects of Soviet constructivism and suprematism, in fact her process of configuring a series of imaginary constructions out of waste materials has an uncanny visual correspondence to the work of Itten's students.
coloured glass and light globes that were projected onto a screen, accompanied by sound. The art historian Andrew McNamara assisted Candy in developing the reconstruction. As McNamara explains, the inspiration for the original was sparked accidentally at the Bauhaus in June 1922 when viewing shadow plays performed by Bauhaus student Schwerdtfeger, assisted by fellow student Josef Hartwig ... he noticed a replaced acetylene lamp had doubled the amount of shadows on a translucent paper screen and, due to this chance effect, a ‘cold’ and ‘warm’ shadow became visible. The idea struck Hirschfeld-Mack of multiplying the sources of light and projecting them through coloured glass in order to achieve more complex colour–light projections accompanied by sound. The result, he proclaimed, was ‘a new mode of expression’ featuring a ‘mobility of coloured light sources’... It was as if abstract painting had left the frame to become three-dimensional as well as animated."  

Candy’s version allows for various levels of interactivity, from the casual museum visitor who turns the handles to manipulate the lights, to musicians who improvise on the play of colours.

Also drawing on the idea of historical reconstruction, Christopher Handran responds to László Moholy-Nagy’s iconic modernist sculpture Light prop for an electric stage (1922–30), titling the new work Light space replicator (2018). The original was a pedagogical tool for the study of light and reflection, which Moholy-Nagy variously used as an iconic piece of kinetic sculpture and as a prop in his 1930 film Ein Lichtspiel: Schwarz Weiss Grau (A lightplay: black white grey). Handran imagines his Replicator standing ‘in the wake of the modernist pairing of utopianism and industrialisation’ yet made by ‘re-purposing mass-produced “junk shop” products, including a back scratcher, fidget spinners, kitchen utensils, pet toys, and even a unicorn headband’.

Other Bauhaus experiments with colour, light and photography have been reprised by Jacky Redgate. As the artist explains, ‘it is the Bauhäusler Florence Henri’s work that intersects with my interest in Mondrian’. In the late 1920s, Henri brought Bauhaus ideas back to Paris and introduced them to Piet Mondrian’s circle. Henri’s photography used prisms and mirrors in order, as her teacher Moholy-Nagy explained, to exploit ‘the ambiguities of present-day optical creations’.

Redgate builds up a photographic image through repetitive flashes with a ‘machine’ that is nothing more than a board covered in variously sized circular mirrors, which she bombards with light. Over the last decade she has conjured up multiple variations of such images in the series Light throw (mirrors). The first, made from the accumulated effects of light bounced off many small mirrors, is quite dark and moody. The series of four new monochrome works in the exhibition, entitled Light throw (mirrors) fold (2018–19), comprises works in the three primaries and a black-and-white version. These each have a larger vertical format with the rebounding flashes illuminating two symmetrical hinged panels, one white, the other coloured. The metallic paper on which the analogue photographs are hand-printed intensifies the effects. Like a secular altar to light, Redgate’s hypnotic abstraction recalls the claustrophobic intensity of Henri’s photography.
Shane Haseman eliminates the primaries altogether in a new performance entitled *Triadic dance of the Secondaries* (2019), having already appropriated the grammar and title of Oskar Schlemmer’s Bauhaus theatre work for his first work, *Triadic dance of the Primaries* (2005). Initially Haseman had three performers — each dressed in a primary colour and bearing on their backs a geometric shape not exactly following Kandinsky’s preferred scheme of yellow triangle, red square and blue circle — stalking the artist, in Napoleonic dress, who infiltrated their ‘triadic dance’. For the new work, dance students — dressed in white except for coloured socks in either orange, green or purple and a matching small square sewn into each shirt — perform to a flute solo under the control of a ‘Master’ figure in black. The Master has a whistle, which he blows with some force to surprise and halt the dancers. Yet that hold on power is tenuous, as evident from Haseman’s score: ‘The goal is to be Master, and once Master, to hold this position for as long as possible … the Master’s movement is self-possessed. S/he is still and stately with back turned to the approaching Secondaries and decisive in movement when turning to look. Turning is strategic and aims to surprise. It occurs at unexpected times and intervals, from both the left and right side of the body.15

The title of ‘Master’ for the artists who headed up each workshop was agreed upon at the Weimar Bauhaus Council in 1919. Significantly, it was Schlemmer and Lothar Schreyer in the theatre workshop who unsuccessfully argued for the rejection of all titles. At the time there was no mention of gender politics, with outstanding students, among them women such as Gunta Stötzl in the weaving workshop and Marianne Brandt in the metal workshop, ascending from apprentice to Master. By the 1990s, initially through studies of the weaving workshop, gender analysis came to inform accounts of the internal politics of the school. As T’ai Smith has observed, ‘weaving occupied a feminised status at the Bauhaus institution in many ways, but primarily because its materials and practices were considered subordinate to the more fundamental practices of form and colour theory … or the functionalist logic of architecture’.16

Haseman turns Schlemmer’s original avant-garde choreography into a schoolyard power game, with all the menace of *Lord of the Flies* undermining the harmonic balance of the original triad. As the dance score explains, ‘The movement of the Secondaries is stealthy. They aim to move without being seen, or, to remain still whilst being seen. Secondaries may draw on horse gait: walking, trotting, pacing, galloping, cantering, and ambling. Each Secondary moves as an individual and attempts to devise a winning tactic; however, they may also strategise with the others.’ This new *Triadic dance* embodies the dialectical ambivalence at the heart of Bauhaus modernism: its curriculum of rational theories and functional structure is open to collapse and disharmony, perhaps even prey to the magical/mystical thinking of child’s play.

All of these contemporary artists, among many others, offer possible ways to reimagine the Bauhaus. The media of art and design have multiplied to such an extent that interdisciplinarity, expanded practices and technological innovations are now commonplace in most art schools. Possibly the Bauhaus continues to haunt contemporary art education because students today face similar contradictory impulses to create order and to play. To leave the final words to Hirschfeld-Mack, who saw the urgency to reconcile such a rupture, ‘our future demands human beings who have the logical and truthfully working brain of an engineer and, at the same time, [can] develop the soul and mind of the artist’.17

Notes


3. Johannes Itten practised an ascetic form of orientalist mysticism known as Madsazan that swept through Germany in the early twenties. By 1922 Itten was in open conflict with Walter Gropius’s plan for the school, which had been forced by economic and political pressure to become more production-oriented. Itten resigned in March 1923.

4. Mikala Dwyer, email to the author, 10 June 2019. The lantern workshop was held at RMIT University 17–21 June 2019, then the lanterns were paraded along Sauchiehtan Street to St Kilda Road on 15 July, where they were installed at RMIT, VCA and QCA, with presentations from Justene Williams (QCA), Philip Gooij (University of Melbourne), Mark Shorter and Claire Lambe (VCA) and Julian Gould (RMIT).

5. The term Bauhauüler became the customary designation among fellow Bauhaus students and faculty by which to identify themselves; it more or less aligned with the official status of being a Bauhaus student, staff member or, sometimes, a close associate.


7. The title was selected from a class that the professor Philip Gooij concluded his Master of Architecture students in semester 1, 2019, at the Melbourne School of Design, University of Melbourne.


13. Email from the artist, 16 May 2019.


A live thistle garden grows at the heart of Mondspiel / [Moon Play], a new collaborative work by Mikala Dwyer and Justene Williams. The thistle embodies the regenerative possibilities of those cast out as weeds, for, originally a native of Southern Europe through to Asia, it is now found throughout the world. The fluff of thistledown is picked up by the slightest breeze and blown over long distances to seed in the wilderness—a fitting metaphor for the Bauhaus diaspora that is the central theme of this work.

The thistle garden is visited by the lost souls of five Bauhäuslers, resurrected via video, to perform various zombie dances. All these elements are loosely drawn from the early Weimar years of the Bauhaus, when the forces of mystical occultism were at their height before being expelled from the school by its director, Walter Gropius, who sought to establish links with industry. We describe below some of the major sources that the artists have pillaged, raided, misquoted and reworked for a new Mondspiel / [Moon Play].

A. Distel-bild 1924

The thistle garden is inspired by Paul Klee's Distel-bild [Thistle picture], which is not a botanical painting but a hallucinatory vision of expulsion from the Bauhaus ‘garden’. Its mysterious allegorical vision can be linked to the many references to thistles in Bauhaus literature. It was painted in 1924, a time of significant change at the Bauhaus following the departures of Johannes Itten and Lothar Schreyer. Schreyer was the first director of the Bauhaus theatre workshop. Itten had developed the Vorkurs (preliminary course) and became a charismatic figure at the school, combining sensory awareness with the occult spiritualism of the Mazdaznan cult, which put him in open conflict with Gropius’s plans.

One clue to the symbolic importance of the thistle in the early days of the Bauhaus comes from Itten’s instructions to his students as part of his sensitising exercises. He required them to viscerally connect with the thistle in order to draw. As he explained,

In front of me is a thistle. My motor nerves feel a jagged, rapid movement ... I can draw a proper thistle only if the movement of my hand, my eyes and my mind correspond exactly to the intense pointed, prickling, painful form of a thistle: which means—character of movement equals character of form. This is the main statement of our whole research.

A kind of corporeal empathy is strikingly evoked in this description: the nervous system, hand, eye and mind respond to the spiky form of the thistle in order to represent it correctly. Far from the rational accounts of modern art and design now associated with the legacy of the Bauhaus, here intense feeling guides the drawing method. That exercise guided one of Itten’s students, Friedl Dicker-Brandeis, to incorporate a thistle in the design of Itten’s manifesto for the 1920 magazine UTOPIA. Curiously, the thistle also links to Marian culture: its common names are the Marian thistle, Mary thistle and Saint Mary’s thistle. Distel-bild is the only Klee painting held in Australia and is paired in this exhibition with a later thistle work by the Australian Bauhäusler Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack. In Dwyer and Williams’ installation, it is not just the seed of the thistle that is dispersed: different Marys and the fecund maternal also proliferate—not the Madonna and child but the artists themselves as well as the daughter of one of the artists. In one of the video performances, the child, dressed as a butterfly, draws gestural strokes with chalk, which are doubled into a hypnotic dance.

B. Mondspiel 1922–23

The title of the new collaboration, Mondspiel / [Moon Play], also comes from the irrational, spiritual strand of the Weimar Bauhaus, being the title of a stage play written by Schreyer in 1922 and performed at Bauhaus Week in April 1923. At its premiere, Bauhaus students protested about the play as, in typical avant-garde fashion, it had no plot and little movement. Schreyer’s response to the protest was to resign from the Bauhaus.

The play had just two characters: Saint Mary in the Moon and a male Moon Dancer bearing a shield, each concealed by a huge mask scaled to cover the entire body. Schreyer described the aerial choreography taking place between his two archetypes thus:

The large full-bodied mask of Mary was surrounded by a large ring high above the spectators, as if it were floating. The figure of Mary was mounted as a half-sculpture, partly from plaster, partly from papier-mache
painted with bright colours. The large circle in which the figure floated was mobile. She moved over the dancer of the moon mask [who] ... squatted under the great, gently swinging circle of Mary in the moon. The big dance shield that he carried and moved was like a large eye.4

These characters are conceived by Dwyer and Williams as cosmic apparitions of love. The climax is reached when Mary joins with the Moon Dancer. Schreyer’s original score was based on the ‘generation of aural stimuli’; Williams’ sonorous body is another expression of merger and union: a choir made up of figures who appeared on opening night dressed in vibrant costumes and roped loosely together, creating tight and loose bundles of bodies.

C. The Bauhäuslers

Central to the installation are videos presenting five Bauhäuslers. One by one, the performers appear in costume. The costumes completely envelop and transform these performers into a Bauhaus cast of characters: Master Itten and four of his students, Alma Siedhoff-Buscher, Friedl Dicker-Brandeis, Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack and Gertrude Herzger-Seligmann. Except for Siedhoff-Buscher, all left Germany in the 1930s with the rise of National Socialism, the latter two exiled to Australia. Their careers started in similar circumstances at the Bauhaus but ended very differently. This theatrical presentation borrows from the staging of the 1924 Mechanical cabaret by Bauhaus students Kurt Schmidt, Friedrich Wilhelm Bogler and Georg Teitscher, the latter deported to Australia for two years during the war.

Master Itten

Johannes Itten (Switzerland 1888–1967) taught the preliminary course at the Bauhaus between 1919 and 1923. He described how he began each day:

I brought my classes to mental and physical readiness for intensive work through relaxing, breathing and concentrating exercises ... I made the students stand and trace a circle with the arm until the whole body was in a relaxed, swinging motion. This exercise was carried out with the left and the right arm, first singly and then together, in the same and in opposite directions. Thus the circle was experienced as an evenly curved line in continuous motion. Then followed concentration on the circle as form; it had to be felt without moving the body. Only then followed drawing the circle on paper.6

The painstaking production of geometric form with various movements of the body is an intriguing prelude to actually drawing the figure. In other words, circles are made with the body first, felt in the body as a kind of after-image and only represented after that. The movements also serve to create an open and relaxed state for art making. Both mind and body are engaged in this form of art education. Itten appears in the video in a golden monkish robe, recalling the otherworldly photograph of him at the Bauhaus in which he looks like a strange sorcerer with a distant gaze, his shaven head partially framed by the spokes of his projected colour star.
Bauhäusler Alma

Alma Siedhoff-Buscher (Kreuztal 1899 – Frankfurt 1944) entered the Bauhaus in 1922. In the following year, she designed the furniture and toys for the children’s room in the Am Horn house and participated in Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack’s ‘Colour-Light Plays’ for the major Bauhaus exhibition of that year. Among the children’s toys she created was the Small Ship-Building Game. In the exhibition, Dwyer and Williams have scaled up this construction toy and painted it with blackboard-black so that its diminutive coloured shapes now appear as part play furniture, part minimalist installation.

Bauhäusler Friedl

Friedl Dicker-Brandeis (Vienna 1898 – Auschwitz 1944) studied at the Bauhaus from 1919 to 1925. Later, when interned at Theresienstadt (a way station to the Nazi extermination camps) she taught art classes for children, helping them to engage with their circumstances through self-expression. Her drawing The deer (1925), for a children’s toy constructed from simple geometric shapes from the toy kit Phantasius, is the inspiration for the rocking reindeers by Williams. On the antlers are theremins, musical instruments that do not require physical contact with a player. These instruments add another dimension of play to these diminutive rocking creatures.

Dicker-Brandeis’s costume draws on her work with children, presenting her as a winged insect in homage to a famous poem written by Pavel Friedmann, a young man interned at Theresienstadt. Friedmann contrasts some of the aesthetic pleasures still open to him in the ghetto with a poignant knowingness about his last experience of a butterfly:

For seven weeks I’ve lived in here,  
Penned up inside this ghetto.  
But I have found what I love here.  
The dandelions call to me  
And the white chestnut branches in the court.  
Only I never saw another butterfly.

That butterfly was the last one.  
Butterflies don’t live in here,  
in the ghetto.7

Bauhäusler Gertrude

Gertrude Herzger-Seligmann (Frankfurt 1901 – Sydney 1977) attended the Bauhaus from 1922 to 1924, gaining skills in both the weaving and metal workshops. She was pragmatic about aesthetics, believing that ‘jewellery is 90 percent engineering’. Her postwar diaries record the traumatic internal life of an exile. At a low point she wrote, “GH. Hold out a little longer ... so lonely! Passed jewellers shops, no love for jewellery whatsoever!” One sculptural element of the installation, titled Gertrude, pays homage to a missing design by Herzger-Seligmann for her Southern Cross, a small brooch of gold and diamonds arranged in the form of the constellation. Dwyer renders the design
as a distressed constructivist frame bearing rock crystals and propped up by stilts. It is fitting that here the constellation is associated with diasporic artists, hopefully shaking loose some of its recent racist accretions and connotations.

Bauhäusler Hirsch

Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack (Frankfurt 1893 – Sydney 1965) attended the Bauhaus from 1919 to 1925, first as a student and then in the print workshop, though he is most renowned for his experiments with his Farbenlichtspiele (Colour-Light Play). At the closure of the Weimar Bauhaus in January 1925 he wrote in protest to the government, ‘We, the members of the Staatliches Bauhaus, are leaving the Bauhaus at the same time as the leading men, who are being forced to depart. We will promote the ideas of the Bauhaus by active participation in other locations.’ These were prophetic words as over the next four decades he propagated Bauhaus ideas in progressive schools in Germany, the UK and, after being freed from internment, in Australia. In the video, the dancer Phillip Adams performs as Hirschfeld-Mack in a flashing moon-suit costume.

D. Totenhaus 1920–22

The work of Schreyer also forms the basis for the four painted coffins at the entrance to the installation. At the Bauhaus, Schreyer made two narrow coffins covered with intensely coloured, cubist ‘soul portraits’, which he called Totenhaus [death houses]. Made for himself and for his wife, Margarete, they were inscribed with the words ‘We live so as to die / We die so as to live’. Kandinsky likened them to Egyptian mummy portraits, ‘as figures living in death.’

**Notes**

(1) The germ of Mondspiel [Moon Play] comes from a project shortlisted for the Australian Pavilion at the 2019 Venice Biennale, conceived by artists Mikala Dwyer and Justene Williams and curators Susan Best and Ann Stephen.


(4) Lothar Schreyer, handwritten transcript, 1965, Sturm-Archiv, Zugang 1990, Kasten 2, Mappe 19, Marbach Archive, Germany. We are indebted to Dr Wiebke Gronemeyer for undertaking archival research in Germany on Mondspiel for this project.


**Images**

p. 25 Installation view, Bauhaus flap, with (left to right) Paul Klee, ‘Third picture (Distel-bild)’ 1924; Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack, Untitled 1920

p. 26 Performance et al, ZINT! [Dutch Choir Melbourne] 2019 (detail), Buxton Contemporary


p. 30 Installation view, Bauhaus flap, with Mikala Dwyer & Justene Williams, Mondspiel / [Moon Play] 2019 (detail)

pp. 32–33 Installation view, Bauhaus flap, with Mikala Dwyer & Justene Williams, Mondspiel / [Moon Play] 2019 (detail)

Projects
— Lantern Parade

Participants:
Carolina Arsenii
Tom Bass
Ciaran Begley
Honora Blaze Hudson
Hico Paw Bay Blute
Natalie Cowan
Sarah crowEF
Mig Dann
Tara Donny
Mikala Dwyer
Felicity Eccleston
Gina Gascoigne
Julian Goddard
Ceri Hann
Clint Ho
Natalie Houston
Victoria Jost
Anchua Keep
Robin Kingston
Reena Kire
Ryoko Rose
Karolina Koselski
Claire Lambe
Nathan Larkin
Annalise Lindberg
Jacqueline Matisse
Janno McLaughlin
Elnaz Mourizadeh
Kate O’Sullivan
Tricia Page
Lucy Parkinson
Robyn Phelan
Sharon Reidy
Mark Shorster
Elina Simbolon
E. Scarlett Snowden
Lauren Snowden
Ann Stephen
Fleur Summers
Jessica Tan
Kate Thomson
Siwat Visuthirugsiuri
Justene Williams
Jude Norters

Lantern Parade filmed and edited by The Huxleys
Thanks to Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne; RMIT University, Melbourne; Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Queensland; and, in particular, Mikala Dwyer, Justene Williams, Ciaran Begley, Philip Good, Julian Goddard, Ceri Hann, Fiona Hillary, Claire Lambe, Rose Lang, Grace McQuilten and Mark Shorter for their involvement in the lantern-making workshop.
Projects

— Thistle Garden

The Mondspiel / [Moon Play] thistle garden was made possible with the support of Tim Uebergang, Horticultural Curator, Sypee Garden, Property & Campus Services, University of Melbourne, and Steven Elefteriadis, Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences, BioSciences, University of Melbourne.

Images

pp. 36–39 Performance stills, Lantern Parade 2019 (details)

p. 41 Installation of the thistle garden, with Matlok Griffiths

pp. 42–43 Installation view, Bauhaus Now!, with Mikala Dwyer & Justene Williams, Mondspiel / [Moon Play] 2019 (detail)

pp. 44–47 Performance stills, Shane Haseman, Triadic dance of the Secondaries 2019 (details), Buxton Contemporary; (background) Elizabeth Pulie, #97 (Bauhaus weaving thread) 2018 (detail)

pp. 48–49 Installation view, Bauhaus Now!, with (left to right) Paul Klee, Thistle picture (Distel-Bild) 1924; Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack, Untitled 1930; Bauhaus toys 2019; Peter D Cole, Elemental landscape 2009–19

pp. 50–51 Installation view, Bauhaus Now!, with (left to right) Bauhaus toys 2019; Peter D Cole, Elemental landscape 2009–19

p. 53 Installation view, Bauhaus Now!, with vitrine containing (left to right) model of table designed by Gertrude Herzger-Seligmann (c. 1950), constructed by Sydney architect Bruce Eley; photograph of Gertrude Herzger-Seligmann by an unknown street photographer (c. 1940); photograph of Gertrude Herzger-Seligmann’s Southern Cross brooch; copies of the publication Bauhaus Diaspora and Beyond

p. 56 Installation view, Bauhaus Now!, with Mikala Dwyer and Justene Williams, Mondspiel / [Moon Play] 2019 (detail)
Projects
— Shane Haseman, Triadic dance of the Secondaries

Performance presentations took place on:

Thursday 25 July
Sunday 18 August

Artist:
Shane Haseman

Dancers:
Caroline Louise Ellis
Paul Simon Jackson
Susannah Keebler
Angela Valdez

Flautist:
Aawa White

Dance liaison:
Helen Herbertson,
Senior Lecturer in
Dance, Faculty of
Fine Arts and Music,
Victorian College of
the Arts, University
of Melbourne

Music liaison:
Mardi McSulle, former
Head of Woodwind,
Faculty of Fine Arts
and Music, Victorian
College of the Arts,
University of Melbourne
TRIADIC DANCE OF THE SECONDARIES

SCORING

Ritualism
A game for four dancers: three ‘Secondaries’ and one ‘Master’. The Secondaries are violet, orange, and green, and the Master, black. Violet wears all white, with violet socks and violet sewn-on square. Green wears all white, with green socks and green sewn-on square. Orange wears all white, with orange socks and orange sewn-on square. Master wears all black, with black running shoes.

Properties: whistle.

Accompaniment: flute.

Duration: forty minutes to one hour.

Structure
Performance play or interpret the game of Statues.

‘To begin, the Master stands facing the wall holding the Whistle. This location is determined by a small wall painting in which each secondary colour appears. The Secondaries stand at a determined location, behind and at a distance from the Master. The Secondaries move toward the Master in their idioms. When the Master turns, the Secondaries freeze. If the Master witnesses movement in any of the Secondaries, the Whistle is blown and the offending Secondary is returned to the baseline. If a Secondary reaches the Master unscathed, they replace the Master who then joins the Secondaries. The game recommences.

‘The game unfolds in three phases, comprising discrete themes:

1. The Ceremonial
2. The Mystical
3. The Human-Machine

The Fauve’s shifting tone, tempo, and phrasing alerts the performers to each transition. While the movement of each performer is improvised, an intuitive choreography should emerge that takes its cue from each phase.

INTERPRETIVE NOTES

Goal
The goal is to be Master, and once Master, to hold this position for as long as possible.

Secondaries
The movement of the Secondaries is stealthy. They aim to move without being seen, or, to remain still whilst being seen. Secondaries may draw on horse guards: walking, trotting, pacing, galloping, cantering, and ambling.

Each Secondary moves as an individual and attempts to devise a winning tactic; however, they may also strategize with the others.

The point is to be both part and whole; aware of oneself and others.

Master
The Master’s movement is self-possessed.

S/he is still and steady, with back turned, and in movement to be on the approaching Secondaries and decisive in movement when turning to look. Turning in strategic and aims to surprise. It occurs at unexpected times and intervals, from both the left and right side of the body.

Master holds the Whistle possessively. Master blows the Whistle successively.

Musical Sequence
Musical accompaniment sets the ambiance for each sequential phase.

‘The ceremonial is formal, civil, public, and self-aware. Ritual involves a warming of self-awareness, bordering on abandonment, either solemn or excited.

The human-machine is measured and repetitive, controlled and productive—purposeful. Dancers embody these ambiances through improvised movement.’
Projects
— Bauhaus Now! Toys

Toys were crafted by the following Master of Architecture students from the Melbourne School of Design at the University of Melbourne:

Joel Falconer, Puppets 2019 (After Paul Klee)
Jessica Wong, Mah Jong
Jack Swan, Platopüppen
Katja Wagner, Modular play textile
Harrison Brooks, Kinetic colour mixing
Yih Yiling Sen, Magic squares
Qun Zhang, Colour wheels
Dylan Morgan, Rubbish building game
Yifei Wang, Three ballerinas
Melissa Sze Yu Lai, Trommel doll (Drum doll)
Luci Trevaskis, Bauhaus mobile
Alexander Biernacki, Tastschach (Tactile chess)
Hugh Goad, Dunera boys
Catherine Roden, Luftweber
Stephanie Guest, Knights
Projects
—— Bauhaus Now! Film Program
Education Gallery, Buxton Contemporary,
University of Melbourne

Model and Myth 2009 by Kerstin Stutterheim
and Niels Bolbrinker
Saturday 3 & Sunday 4 August
Saturday 24 & Sunday 25 August
Saturday 21 & Sunday 22 September
Saturday 12 & Sunday 13 October

BauhausWORLD 2019 (3 parts) by Lydia Ranke
(1) The Code
(2) The Effect
(3) The Utopia
Saturday 10 & Sunday 11 August
Saturday 21 & Sunday 1 September
Saturday 28 & Sunday 29 September

Media-Art 2009: with films by Heinrich
Brocksieper, Viking Eggeling, Werner Graeff,
Kurt Kranz, Jana Richter, Kurt Schwardtfeiger
Saturday 17 August
Saturday 7 & Sunday 8 September
Saturday 5 & Sunday 6 October
Saturday 19 & Sunday 20 October

Stage and Dance 1: Oskar Schlemmer
Saturday 17 August
Sunday 8 September
Saturday 5 & Sunday 6 October
Saturday 19 & Sunday 20 October

Stage and Dance 2: Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack,
Keesley Rendinsky, Kurt Schmidt, Lothar Schreyer
Saturday 17 August
Saturday 7 & Sunday 8 September
Saturday 5 & Sunday 6 October
Saturday 19 & Sunday 20 October

Model and Myth, Media-Art, Stage and Dance 1 & 2
published and distributed by Absolut Medien;
bauhausWORLD distributed by Deutsche Welle

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of the Goethe-Institut

Projects
Mikala Dwyer & Justene Williams, Mondspiel / [Moon Play] 2019, video stills
# List of Works

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Elemental landscape</em></td>
<td>Born 1947 Gawler, South Australia</td>
<td>Peter D Cole</td>
<td>175 × 150 × 40 cm</td>
<td>Sydney; Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Cecil</em></td>
<td>Born 1922</td>
<td>Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack</td>
<td>185 × 127 cm</td>
<td>The Fab/Marimekko House, Melbourne</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Secondaries</em></td>
<td>Born 1975 Geelong, Victoria</td>
<td>Christopher Handran</td>
<td>106.5 × 45 × 45 cm</td>
<td>Geelong Gallery, Victoria</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Triadic dance of the triad</em></td>
<td>Born 1968 Sydney</td>
<td>Jacky Redgate</td>
<td>28 × 9 × 9 cm</td>
<td>The Art of Living, Victoria</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Shadow of Melbourne</em></td>
<td>Born 1973</td>
<td>Renzo Piano Store</td>
<td>27.5 × 26.3 cm</td>
<td>Home Office, Victoria</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The New Muses</em></td>
<td>Born 1976</td>
<td>Elizabeth Pulie</td>
<td>116 × 195.5 × 32 cm</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The State of Eden</em></td>
<td>Born 1970 Sydney</td>
<td>Anna Schwartz Gallery</td>
<td>28 × 80 × 40 cm</td>
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