

BAUHAUS CONSTRUCT

Fashioning Identity, Discourse and Modernism

Edited by Jeffrey Saletnik and Robin Schuldenfrei

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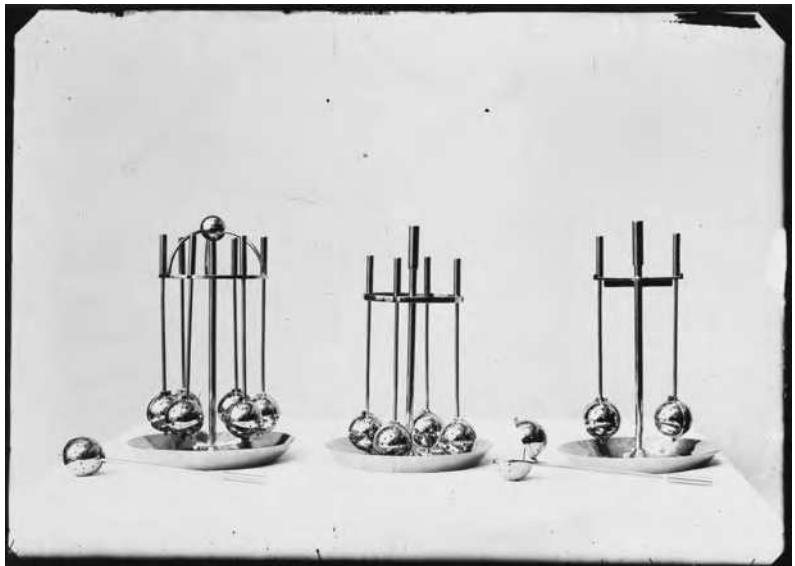
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Chapter 2

The Irreproducibility of the Bauhaus Object

Robin Schuldenfrei

Objects produced at the Bauhaus occupy an uneasy juncture between the canonical history of modern art and architecture, period culture, and issues such as the production and consumption of modernism.¹ In 1923, Walter Gropius articulated the aims of the Bauhaus with the proclamation, “art and technology—a new unity,” which advanced the use of new materials, more stripped-down forms, and a spare, functional aesthetic. His successor Hannes Meyer pronounced instead: “people’s needs instead of luxury needs”



2.1
Otto Rittweger
and Wolfgang
Tümpel, *Stands
with Tea Infusers*,
1924, German silver
(Photograph by
Lucia Moholy, 1925,
printed c. 1950),
gelatin silver print,
12.8 × 17.9 cm
(5¹/₁₆ × 7¹/₁₆ in)

(*Volksbedarf statt Luxusbedarf*)—but would he have been moved to make such a declaration if Gropius had successfully carried out his stated aims? The failure of Gropius’s Bauhaus to merge art and technology—to move from the production of individual, luxury objects to mass reproduction—is the subject of this essay. To be discussed are the objects produced under Gropius from 1923 to 1928, the period of his overtures to industry. This repertoire of specialized objects—including silver and ebony tea services, modern chess sets, and children’s toys, to name just a few canonical works—represents a paradigmatic example by which to examine the relationship between modernism’s discourse and its material results. Expensive in their day, original Bauhaus products are now art objects displayed in museum vitrines as individual works of art. Often hailed for the mythic merging of forward-thinking ideas and modern production techniques, they are asked to illustrate modernism’s unflinching belief in the powers of industry. And they are presented as objects of discourse, the material evidence of a series of debates on handcraftsmanship, machine production, and taste. This essay considers and contextualizes the ways in which the Bauhaus produced its modern objects and the extent to which, despite its egalitarian ideals, the school ultimately spoke to—and designed for—an elite. The products of the Bauhaus, ostensibly intended for mass production, were expensive, difficult to fabricate, and never sold on a widespread basis, reflecting the economic realities of producing and purchasing modern objects. Essential to this discussion is the problem of reproduction itself. Engaging Walter Benjamin’s essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility,” this chapter will recognize that, ideologically, the Bauhaus protagonists were willing to call the status of the objects the Bauhaus produced into question—to sacrifice their “aura” and status as “art” in order to achieve their mass reproduction; yet, in practice the Bauhaus was unable to do so.² This failure was due to the limits to the reproducibility of Bauhaus objects—themselves a product of their place in the Weimar social order that they also sought to transform.

Luxury Objects

Upon first glance the small teapot designed and executed in 1924 by Marianne Brandt at the Bauhaus evinces all of the concepts that modernism proclaimed—*Sachlichkeit*, functionality, hygiene, and the use of modern materials and construction methods (Figure 2.2).³ To all appearances it is a thoroughly modern object. Surface decoration has been eschewed in favor of pared-down, machine-like geometrical shapes that form the round lid, the semicircular handle, and the crossed base. But although it suggests machine production, it was laboriously hand-wrought in the Bauhaus

2.2
 Marianne Brandt,
 Tea Infuser and
 Strainer, 1924,
 silver, *Katalog der
 Muster*, Bauhaus
 GmbH, 1925,
 photomechanical
 print in black and
 orange inks on
 white paper (Graphic
 design by Herbert
 Bayer)



workshop at great cost. This diminutive pot's handle and knob are ebony, and it was only available in silver when ordered through the Bauhaus GmbH catalogue.⁴ Out of the numerous objects designed at the school, its presence among the other twelve products selected in 1925–1926 for inclusion in the product catalogue suggests that it was deemed representative of the Bauhaus. Yet, it could not be inexpensively mass-produced in these materials, nor was it intended to be; as the catalogue notes, it featured “exacting handcraftsmanship.” In any case, its smooth form and the meticulous joins of its body to its spout and base lacked the surface ornamentation that hid imperfections that occurred in cheaply produced factory goods of this period, resulting in an object that would have been very difficult to industrially fabricate with precision. Thus, it could be serially produced by hand in the metal workshop in limited quantities, but it was not—in form, material, or price—suitable for mass reproduction. It was, in short, a luxury object in need of an elite consumer—and not only one who could afford it, but one who understood both its modern form and its underlying ideas.⁵

Bauhaus goods were also highly legible expressions of affluence.

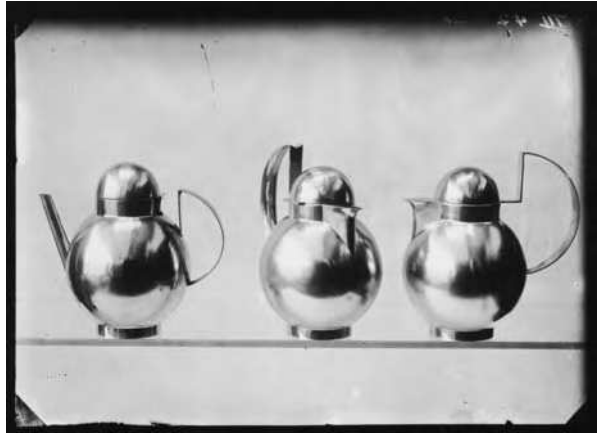
Though the Bauhaus proposed to utilize industry to make goods that even the masses could afford, it played to a privileged audience—especially members of the industrial and educated upper middle class (respectively the *Wirtschaftsbürgertum* and *Bildungsbürgertum*). Despite the rise of German industrialism, accompanied by the ascent of technical firms such as AEG, Siemens, and numerous smaller rivals, the objects produced by the Bauhaus were not items associated with the machine age, such as advanced electrical goods. Equally revealing, the school's products did not advocate an entirely new way of living, unlike designs of its contemporaries, such as Grete Lihotzky's mass-produced Frankfurt Kitchen of 1926 (a minuscule modern kitchen designed for maximum efficiency which limited the number of steps needed to perform tasks, following the scientific principles of Frederick Winslow Taylor) or Hannes Meyer's *Coop-Zimmer* (a radically pared-down single room supplied with standard elements to meet the absolute minimum needs for dwelling; see Figure 12.4, page 256). Gropius's stated aims for the workshops, from about 1923 onwards, reiterated the Bauhaus's desire to develop "standard types for all practical commodities of everyday use."⁶ And yet, given this charge, why were there no Bauhaus forks, an ordinary product that could be easily molded or stamped out in large quantities at low cost? Instead the school remained committed to producing the types of traditional, conventional objects—chess sets, tea pots, tea services, tea containers, ashtrays, and armchairs—that already had a place in upper-class homes (Figure 2.3).



2.3
Bauhaus vitrine,
Ausstellung
Europäisches
Kunstgewerbe,
1927, Grassi-
Museum, Leipzig

2.4

Above:
 Wilhelm Wagenfeld
 (designer;
 executed by
 Josef Knau),
 Kugelförmige
 Kannen (Sphere-
 shaped jugs),
 1924, silver-plated
 brass, German
 silver lids and
 hinges (Photograph
 by Lucia Moholy,
 1924, printed
 c. 1950)
Below: German
 Werkbund
 (designer
 unknown),
 Warenbuch silver
 jugs, c. 1915



Bauhaus objects employed a stripped-down vocabulary of forms while reducing applied ornament; the result was an object that was modern and yet familiar.⁷ One can see this process at work in Wilhelm Wagenfeld’s 1924 Bauhaus design for a set of small, sphere-shaped jugs, which rework some Werkbund *Warenbuch*-endorsed silver versions available at least as early as 1915 (Figure 2.4).⁸ The earlier jugs featured delicate, reed-covered handles and a hand-hammered arts and crafts finish; the Bauhaus counterparts were simplified and more geometric but had the same general form and function. Material costs were reduced in the Bauhaus versions by employing silver-plated brass and German silver—which, tellingly, maintained the appearance of real silver.⁹ But older, luxurious materials such as silver and ebony also remained part of the Bauhaus repertoire throughout the 1920s. A Bauhaus egg cooker from 1926 had an ebony handle, for example. A number of objects, such as Brandt’s teapot (ME 8) and tea service with water pot (ME 24), were advertised in silver, obviously a luxury material (Figures 2.2, 2.5). Already expensive because they were



2.5
Marianne Brandt,
Tea service with
Water pot, 1924,
silver with ebony
handles,
Katalog der Muster,
Bauhaus GmbH,
1925,
photomechanical
print in black
and orange inks
on white paper
(Graphic design by
Herbert Bayer)

handmade, objects in finer materials raised costs significantly, allowing quality to take precedence over the goods' accessibility to a broader public.

In other words, the Bauhaus did not reinvent products, but simply introduced known objects in new "modern" forms and occasionally new materials. It did not wish to alienate its potential consumers with modernism, but rather to accommodate their perceived needs and already articulated desires for a certain repertoire of goods, which were then given a modernist treatment. Under Gropius, even through the late 1920s, the school introduced very little that was unfamiliar, and relied on established, traditional luxury objects prevalent in the upper echelons of culture. Rather than overwhelm its audience with wholly new ideas and goods, the Bauhaus created its new market through consensualist means, remaining committed to designing the types of weighty, representative objects that the bourgeoisie might be enticed to buy.

In doing so, the Bauhaus appealed to what Benjamin described as the authority of traditional art objects, that is, the authority that they retained through their relationship to a tradition and in the context of established social rituals. Traditional *Kunstgewerbe* (decorative arts) objects such as the tea service with its array of accoutrements (tea infuser, water pot, creamer, sugar bowl) maintained this autonomous authority through their role in the customs that guided patterns of life in bourgeois homes. These social rituals continued to maintain a distance between the object and its user—the aura, the "unique apparition of a distance, however near it may

be”—that sustained traditional authority.¹⁰ Technological reproducibility, on the other hand, “emancipates the work of art from its parasitic subservience to ritual.”¹¹ For the Bauhaus to have engaged in successful mass reproduction of standard objects of everyday use, it would have been necessary that objects—rather than shoring up their withering aura through an appeal to tradition—instead be produced in such a manner that they successfully reached the masses.

Bauhaus goods were also prohibitively expensive. To put their prices in perspective, it is important to note that the average income for a working-class (*Arbeiter*) family in 1927 was about 64 Marks per week and for a white-collar (*Angestellten*) family, around 91 Marks per week.¹² Marcel Breuer’s “Wassily” chair, not in leather but merely in fabric, cost 60 Marks, around a week’s worth of wages for a worker.¹³ The silver Bauhaus cookie tin (*Keksdose*) cost 160 Marks, the teapot cost 90 Marks, and the five-piece tea service in German silver cost 180 Marks, three times a worker’s weekly wage (Figures 2.3, 2.5). As Bauhaus artist Otto Rittweger noted in 1926: “Today it is more difficult than ever for the vast majority of people who would like to possess such a [Bauhaus] service to actually afford one.”¹⁴ Comparatively, a non-Bauhaus, generic nickeled coffee set cost only 10 Marks. Bauhaus objects were not consumed by the masses; in 1925, even if they could have afforded a Bauhaus lamp, 81 percent of the inhabitants in Berlin’s working-class areas lived without electricity.¹⁵

Indeed, the start-up costs of mass production or the high projected sale prices often kept goods from ever being produced. On several occasions, Gropius commented that the costs for producing the objects were higher than what the market could bear and that the selling price of Bauhaus goods was artificially high in order to meet costs associated with balancing the Bauhaus budget and the purchase of raw materials in small quantities rather than in bulk.¹⁶ Objects from the metal workshop were especially unaffordable as both labor and material costs were high, but goods from the other workshops were also costly, and it was often the more expensive objects that were promoted. For example, there were two categories of Bauhaus chess sets: the standard version “intended for use” (*Gebrauchsspiel*), and the “luxury” version (*Luxusspiel*), which was made by hand or in small batches, using rare and costly types of wood.¹⁷ While the standard wood chess set was priced at 51 Marks, the walnut version cost 155 Marks.¹⁸ The *Luxusspiel* was marketed early on through a series of postcards, two of which featured the word *Luxus* prominently in the advertising copy (Figure 2.6).

Gropius had to contend with the accusation that the products of the Bauhaus were simply another form of expensive, artistic luxury



2.6
Postcard
advertising Josef
Hartwig's Bauhaus
chess set, 1924,
lithograph (Graphic
design by Joost
Schmidt)

similar to the output of other schools of arts and crafts (*Kunstgewerbe*).¹⁹ He was careful to articulate that the Bauhaus was involved in creating artistic objects within the present economic paradigm, but asserted early on that its work was not involved in “artistic luxury affairs” (*künstlerische Luxus-angelegenheit*).²⁰ László Moholy-Nagy, around 1928, conceived of a dialogue between a “well-meaning critic” of the Bauhaus and a “representative of the Bauhaus.” In it, the critic charges that Bauhaus objects have become luxury objects, accessible only to a few.²¹ To this, the representative of the Bauhaus replies that during the initial phases the objects were so expensive that only a few wealthy people were able to buy them, but that the luxury product itself was merely an intermediate link in the development towards becoming an object of everyday use.²² This intriguing line of reasoning—that the objects were part of an evolution from luxury to accessibility—does not appear to have gained wider currency. During Gropius’s tenure, a tension existed between concurrent realities: the production of serial objects by hand, the ideal of the prototype, and the desire for mass production. By never fully reaching the mass production stage, because of their cost and nature, the Bauhaus’s products ultimately remained luxury objects.

Following Benjamin’s formulation, the very act of the *mass* reproduction and dissemination of Bauhaus goods—rather than small, *serialized* production of multiple copies made by hand—would have allowed them to be brought out of the rarified realm of luxury and tradition:

It might be stated as a general formula that the technology of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the sphere of tradition. By replicating the work many times over, it substitutes a mass existence for a unique existence. And in permitting

the reproduction to reach the recipient in his or her own situation, it actualizes that which is reproduced.²³

The cost and exclusivity of Bauhaus objects were related to the fact that they were turned out in small batches, mainly to fill specific commissions, in a workshop system. As Benjamin observes,

In principle, the work of art has always been reproducible. Objects made by humans could always be copied by humans. Replicas were made by pupils in practicing for their craft, by masters in disseminating their works, and, finally, by third parties in pursuit of profit. But the technological reproduction of artworks is something new.²⁴

At the Bauhaus, the move to technological reproduction would have had to entail the object's overcoming of its tradition-grounded formal qualities so as to be determined instead by its inherent reproducibility; in Benjamin's words, "the work reproduced becomes the reproduction of a work designed for reproducibility."²⁵ Thus in terms of the Bauhaus project, the fact that Bauhaus objects were visually modern was less important than the fact that they were never reproduced in any significant numbers.

Bauhaus Modern on Display

In addition to the school building in Dessau, which not only housed the school but showcased its ideas, the nearby houses of the school's masters were on view and played a very public role in setting the context for Bauhaus objects, eliciting interest in the media and the public alike (Figure 2.7). Like the Bauhaus objects, Gropius's director's house and the three double masters' houses advertise an aesthetic of mass reproducibility but in fact are also an example of limited serial production. It is not insignificant that their inhabitants often referred to them as "villas"; they represented a rarified form of dwelling and were meant to function as lived-in showpieces for the school's theories and ideals, allowing the Bauhaus to exhibit the products of its workshops in an instructive and architecturally appropriate domestic setting.

Ise Gropius's diary charts an unending stream of important visitors representing an elevated, educated segment of the population—from trade organizations and cultural groups to politicians, modern architects, artists, cultural critics, period intellectuals, and professors.²⁶ Even a year after they had been completed, there seemed to be no indication that interest in the houses was waning, as Lyonel Feininger wrote exasperatedly to his wife in the fall of 1927: "What is going on here is beyond



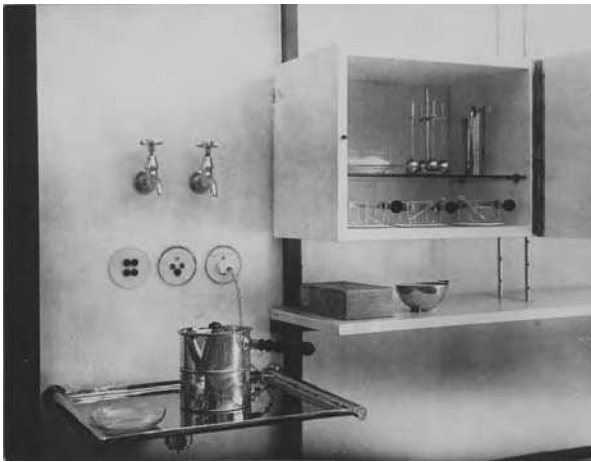
2.7

Above:

**Walter Gropius
(Architect),
Bauhaus Masters'
Housing, Interior
of Moholy-Nagy
House, Dessau,
1925–1926,**
gelatin silver print
(Photograph by
Lucia Moholy,
c. 1925)

Below:

**Tea corner in the
Gropius House,
Dessau, 1925–1926,**
gelatin silver print
(Photograph by
Lucia Moholy, 1926)



belief and almost beyond endurance. Crowds of idlers slowly amble along Burgkühnauer Allee, from morning to night, goggling at our houses, not to speak of trespassing in our gardens to stare in the windows.”²⁷ According to Dessau Mayor Fritz Hesse, between 1927 and 1930 the Bauhaus buildings received over 20,000 visitors.²⁸ This indicates that their modern design and contents were not quickly assimilated into the general culture but remained objects of fascination.

The director’s house, in particular, functioned as an “exhibition house,” playing a very public role. As Feininger wrote to his wife, “Gropius’s house, of course, is miraculous. The furniture and the entire setup are intended as representative.”²⁹ The house boasted an appliance-filled kitchen with labor-saving conveniences, such as an automatic soap-infused sprayer for the dishes, an early clothes washer, and a centrifuge dryer. But these devices were for the hired help, an expected domestic arrangement

for a couple of their social standing. Period films celebrating the house depict a uniformed maid at work while Ise Gropius drinks tea with friends in the living room “tea corner” (Figure 2.7). Serviced by hot and cold running water and an electric tea kettle, it aptly illustrates the merging of bourgeois habits and precious objects with modern technology and convenience, with little pretense towards universal application. The dining room featured Bauhaus furniture made out of costly nickel-plated tubular steel, an adjustable plate warmer, and other electrical appliances that could be plugged in directly to the floor outlets conveniently placed in the center of the room, adjacent to the table. A fan installed in the living room was connected to the central heating system behind the wall, so that warmed, but fresh, air could be brought in during the winter. Gropius’s 1930 book *Bauhausbauten Dessau* acknowledged that this feature, like many others in the house, was an extravagance, and predicted that “today a lot still functions as luxury, that will be the norm the day after tomorrow!”³⁰ At a time when modern architects looked to mass production for interior fittings, and when mass-produced, plain porcelain sinks were readily available, Gropius’s bathroom featured a luxurious richly marble-veined double sink, flanked by glass-lined walls. The *Bauhausbauten* book erased the marble veining from the sink to make it appear more industrial and less luxurious. Perhaps tellingly, Gropius employed a chauffeur and his house was the only one with a garage. Generally, the house was not portrayed for what it really was—a prohibitively expensive design for the powerful director of the Bauhaus.

Productive Operations

As early as April 1922 and continuing into 1923, the Bauhaus masters and Gropius had discussed the necessity of organizing the workshops into a productive operation (*Produktiv-Betrieb*), and indicated that they viewed the school itself as a locus of productive operations (*Produktiv-Apparat*).³¹ Gropius envisioned products from Bauhaus prototypes, reproduced via methods of standardization and large-scale sales as the only way that goods could be offered at a reasonable price.³² The Bauhaus’s embrace of an industrial means of production was the result of external political and economic as well as internal pressures. This proposed shift in the activities and overall orientation of the workshops, clearly articulated by Gropius, was founded on an astonishingly immodest premise: to sway the industrial powers of 1920s Germany.³³

Although factory production was the stated desire after 1923, throughout the entire history of the school, small orders were filled for specific patrons in response to requests via correspondence and personal

visits to the Bauhaus.³⁴ From small objects to furnishings for entire apartments, original pieces were produced, not just in the Weimar period as might be expected, when original crafts were the mainstay, but throughout the Dessau period too.³⁵ Students were expected to spend a specific number of hours in their chosen workshop with a portion of that time devoted to formal instruction and the acquisition of technical skills, but orders for Bauhaus goods also had to be filled. A general lack of production capacity in the workshops due to labor, financial, and materials shortages, meant that orders were constantly delayed or only partially supplied.

In 1924 the Bauhaus manager Emil Lange wrote Gropius a long letter containing recommendations for making the workshops economically sound.³⁶ Lange does not suggest reviewing the overall design process, the internal production costs, or whether the products were appealing to potential buyers; to the contrary, he expresses frustration with the caprice of buyers and the unpredictability in their ordering patterns, apparently showing little acumen about the market and tools of selling. This lack of attunement to consumer desire was a continual problem. But more importantly, the Bauhaus continued to be oriented toward workshop production rather than to what successful mass reproduction would have had to entail.

During 1924 and 1925 the Bauhaus took important measures to shore up its finances and implemented some basic operations to organize its fairly autonomous workshops into a more comprehensive entity for the purposes of selling designs. The first mention of a "Bauhaus-AG" appears in conjunction with the possible uses of profits from the school's 1923 exhibition.³⁷ In January 1924, Gropius began lengthy proceedings with the government over the founding of a separate Bauhaus company, the Bauhaus GmbH.³⁸ In a long meeting on 18 February 1924 Gropius laid out plans for an economically feasible Bauhaus corporation, discussing its relationship to the workshops, provisions for student employment, and payment—either by piecework or wages.³⁹ At this stage, the general plan was not to outsource production to other companies, but rather to internally organize the labor and productivity of the workshops according to what Gropius called the "free market" (*freie Wirtschaft*). An agreement template was drawn up that gave the Bauhaus GmbH the rights to all objects made at the school and stipulated that the designer was not to make similar objects on his own.⁴⁰ In return, the company would pay for every approved design and give the designer up to 30 percent of the resulting profits.⁴¹ The company hired a business manager, Walter Haas, to act as a conduit between the Bauhaus and industry, to market the prototypes designed in the workshops, and to oversee the reproduction of objects. The Bauhaus printed up stationery and invoices for the GmbH, which was legally a separate entity.

Under the aegis of the Bauhaus GmbH, the school began to organize its products into one comprehensive sales catalogue, known as the *Katalog der Muster*.⁴² There are two versions. A single sheet, probably designed by Moholy-Nagy, appeared with just four selected products, perhaps those viewed as most marketable. A multi-page, orange and black version, designed by Herbert Bayer with photographs by Lucia Moholy, appeared in November of 1925 (Figures 2.2, 2.5). This catalogue was a loose-leaf booklet, organized by workshop, in which each product or product group could be removed and function as a stand-alone information sheet. A separate price list, which could be periodically updated, possibly accompanied it. The objects could be ordered individually from the Bauhaus GmbH, although the hope was for mass production through the company itself.

Presented as single objects on individual leaflets, the products in the *Katalog der Muster* are not offered as part of a comprehensive Bauhaus collection, in that the objects are organized by workshop rather than by use or intended room. The images project the clean, clutter-free ideal of modernism, but the design also reflects the straightforwardness of standard product catalogues of the period. There is a careful estrangement of the objects from their surroundings. The images, through their coldness and detachment, highlight the alluring, surface qualities of the individual objects rather than their potential for use.

Whereas in an earlier period the workshops had been guided by an ideal of working in tandem to create an integrated interior—as took place in the 1920 Sommerfeld House or the Haus am Horn exhibition house in 1923—the *Katalog der Muster* represents a shift to the pursuit of the single object, or type-object, for wider production. As Gropius stated unequivocally, the workshops' mandate was to create standard types for practical commodities. Yet the objects selected for the catalogue represent some of the school's most elite objects and arguably many of its least practical ones—a full silver tea service, the tea container and tea balls, the chess set, and several ashtrays which, among other objects, would not have been easily stamped out or otherwise mass-produced by machine. Furthermore, several designs note "most exacting" (*genaueste*) or "finest craftsmanship" (*feinste Handarbeit*), calling into question whether some of the objects in the catalogue were ever intended for mass production. The "Inventory of Work and Ownership Rights of the Workshops," made prior to the move to Dessau, serves as a good indication of what the Bauhaus had produced by April of 1925, and lists the objects that it theoretically could have selected from when assembling the *Katalog der Muster*.⁴³ Simpler, arguably more easily mass-producible objects on the

list, such as tablecloths, pillows, scarves, or drapes being produced in the weaving workshop, are notably absent from the catalogue.

Another method by which the Bauhaus sought to draw German industrialists to its goods was through participation in trade shows, especially the twice-yearly Leipzig Trade Fair, at which the school exhibited objects regularly from 1924 to 1931, selling goods and taking orders to be filled by the workshops.⁴⁴ As with the *Katalog der Muster*, the Leipzig activities underscore the ambiguity of the Bauhaus's program: the products represented elite, one-off goods to be sold for profit as well as prototypes intended for mass production. In 1927, four years after Gropius's turn to industry, the Bauhaus was selected to represent Germany at the *Ausstellung Europäisches Kunstgewerbe* (European Applied Arts Exhibition), held in conjunction with the regular Leipzig fair (Figure 2.3). Chosen not as a producer of modern, rational goods intended for industry but rather for their fine craftsmanship, the handmade, luxurious nature of the goods comes to the fore. Bauhaus objects, including a hammered, silver-lined fish poaching dish, were put on display in the same room as Meissen porcelain and other expensive goods made in Germany. This conjunction illustrates the Bauhaus's difficult position of trying to be modern while existing within the context of *Kunstgewerbe*, the applied arts, with the skilled training in the traditional crafts that it required. The workshops continued to occupy an unclear position between their role as producers of the unique art object and as designers of prototypes for mass reproduction.

Although industrial production and the formation of an alliance between the Bauhaus and industry was a carefully articulated goal, even an underlying principle, which Gropius reiterated in speeches and writings and which is implied in the "industrial" aesthetics of the objects, there is little evidence beyond the *Katalog der Muster* and trade fair exhibitions that clear steps toward the formalization of relations with industry were taken.⁴⁵ As years passed, the situation began to appear dire, as Moholy-Nagy admitted in 1928: "Designs for vessels and appliances, with which we have been occupied for years, have so far not been sold to industry."⁴⁶ Outside visitors, such as art theorist Rudolf Arnheim, similarly noted: "Certainly the Bauhaus has not yet come so far as to be able to supply industry with conclusively standard patterns."⁴⁷ A contract finally materialized in 1927 with the metalworks factory Paul Stotz AG of Stuttgart to manufacture and distribute the glass lamp, although it was not fulfilled.⁴⁸ Later, relations with the manufacturers Körting & Mathiesen and Schwintzer & Gräff brought lighting to the market in significant numbers for the first time in the Bauhaus's history.⁴⁹ In the end, only four workshops were ever able to deliver models to industry—carpentry, weaving, metal, and wall

painting—and Gropius’s ideal of working closely with manufacturers never materialized.⁵⁰ Only three firms began negotiations during his tenure; the rest came during that of his successors, mainly Hannes Meyer.

Practically speaking, Bauhaus objects were not mass-produced in any number, nor picked up by industry in general. It is important to differentiate between objects that were genuinely mass-reproducible and the visual propagation of an idea of modern, reproducible products. This idea of paring objects down to their essences appealed to students and masters at the Bauhaus as a visual and conceptual task—though outside the school the objects met with limited success. Bauhaus objects did not transform function but rather attempted to distill the object’s essential function, as in the visually pared-down tea extraction pot which was refined until it poured well (Figure 2.2). Yet, designed to make a very strong cup of tea, its contents needed to be diluted with hot water from yet another vessel—resulting in the proliferation, rather than reduction, of household objects. What remained important to the Bauhaus, if not the consuming public, was the aesthetic of simple, machine-like forms, the elevation of function, and the *idea* of mass reproduction.

Buyers, in any case, were skeptical. Even though Gropius stressed that the Bauhaus workshops were addressing the “necessities of life of the majority of people” and viewed the home and its furnishings as “mass consumer goods,” and though the school wanted to limit designs to “characteristic, primary forms and colors, readily accessible to everyone,” the masses themselves did not embrace the modern goods.⁵¹ Convincing them to value a teapot’s severe reduction in form and decoration for its attendant Bauhaus ideology was arguably as much of a hindrance as its price tag. These objects were not received with wide enthusiasm outside an elite of left-wing artistic and intellectual circles, the members of which understood the principles of the school and its objects, or what was sometimes termed the “*Intellektuell-Sachliches*”—even among those who could afford them.⁵² A list of workshop commissions completed in 1926 notes mainly avant-garde art galleries as patrons.⁵³ Photographs of industrialists’ interiors, for example, reveal homes amply laden with modern paintings and sculpture yet virtually no modern design objects. Surprisingly, modern interiors, such as those by Marcel Breuer, do not feature Bauhaus objects on their tables or shelves with any frequency either.⁵⁴ It is very difficult, outside of its *own* buildings and photographs, to find the products of the Bauhaus in domestic settings. As Grete Lihotzky, in her important 1927 essay “Rationalization in the Household,” ends her devastating critique: “Years of effort on the part of the German Werkbund and individual architects, countless articles and lectures demanding clarity,

simplicity, and efficiency in furnishings, as well as a turn away from the traditional kitsch of the last fifty years, have had almost no effect whatsoever.”⁵⁵ Other sources, too, indicate that Bauhaus objects were estranged from public taste; according to a critic for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* the Bauhaus was “even further from the general taste of the public than the Werkbund.”⁵⁶ The legacy of the Bauhaus’s products lies more with an idea and a few canonical objects than with any widespread material reality or mass adoption of modern objects.

Production/Reproduction

How then should these issues of production figure in the assessment of the Bauhaus’s significance? Should the Bauhaus be viewed as an entity that failed to produce objects that *buyers* wanted to consume or that *manufacturers* wanted to produce? Should Bauhaus objects be understood as unique, authentic works of art—which may be their historical fate, judging by their scarcity and their status in art museums today? Walter Benjamin’s postulation that “what withers in the age of the technological reproducibility of the work of art is the latter’s aura” is useful for reflecting on the status of these objects within the conditions of production of their time.⁵⁷ The status of art and art objects, including objects intended for use, in such an age was precisely the question that Gropius faced at the Bauhaus. As proclaimed by his slogan “art and technology—a new unity,” his emphasis was on both *art* and *technology*, and specifically their relation to each other.

The nineteenth-century heritage of *Kunstgewerbe* and its post-World War I revival shaped the school’s earliest incarnation, which explicitly attempted to recover that heritage via the high-quality art object of the craftsman. This heritage continued to shape subsequent activities at the school, although Gropius carefully sought to elude what he termed “dilettantism of the handicrafts” (*kunstgewerblichen Dilettantismus*).⁵⁸ Simultaneously he worked to counter the “ersatz” and low-quality products of an industrializing Germany. The potential for degradation of Bauhaus designs through the reproduction process was of continual concern to Gropius, who offered the reassurance that a decline in the quality of the product’s material and construction, as a result of mechanical reproduction, would be countered by all available means.⁵⁹ Gropius thus sought to mass-produce well-designed objects by industrial methods without ever wholly freeing the school from the *Kunstgewerbe* legacy of the design of the singular work of art produced in small numbers. According to Benjamin’s theory, given the reality of small batches in the workshops, these objects would

have safeguarded their own, autonomous authority, grounded in tradition, and resisted being taken up and appropriated by the masses. However, a loss of aura and authority would necessarily have resulted if the Bauhaus had succeeded in factory mass reproduction.

These issues of production and reproduction of art, architecture, and objects were a subject of period concern among theorists and critics, such as Benjamin and the architectural critic Adolf Behne, artists such as Moholy-Nagy, and architects such as Gropius.⁶⁰ Each had different, specific ideas, but the terms and the overarching concern—the relationship of the authentic art object to the modern means of production—formed an important commonality of period discourse. In his 1917 essay, “The Reproductive Age” (*Das reproduktive Zeitalter*), Behne argued that, unlike with earlier authentic artworks, technological reproduction caused the essential effect—*Wirkung*—of the original to be lost, and yet the aesthetic values of the work of art were transferred to the reproductive process itself.⁶¹ Moholy-Nagy’s 1922 essay “Production-Reproduction” went further, specifying the goal of making reproductive processes useful for creative activities.⁶² Benjamin identified the loss of authenticity and aura and the turn to mass reproduction as inevitable consequences of the modern transformation in conditions of production, which nonetheless bore great artistic and political potential, while Moholy-Nagy, and the Bauhaus generally, actively endorsed mass reproduction as an art practice.

Perhaps the Bauhaus should be assessed in terms not of production, but of reproduction—the stage at which it failed most visibly to realize its aims.⁶³ As Gropius shifted the emphasis of the Bauhaus towards mass reproduction, along with other basic operations he instituted, he was reacting not to a change in the availability of industrial technology, but rather to a change in ideas about process. In an attempt to broaden consumption, the Bauhaus needed to move from concentrating on *production* (where it arguably did well, generating many functionally and aesthetically successful designs in a relatively short period of time) to *reproduction*. As this examination has shown, reproduction, as both a practical process and a theoretical construct, is precisely where a material and economic failure took place; at the same time, theoretical signification can be read from this historical episode.

In evaluating the Bauhaus, it is the emphasis laid on the process of reproduction that is important and imbued with social significance in the context of the period. As K. Michael Hays has pointed out, Benjamin’s analysis reveals that as one approaches those mediums that are inherently multiple and reproducible, not only does the authenticity of the object, its here and now, lose its value as a repository of meaning, but also the

reproductive technique *as procedure* takes on the features of a system of signification. Meaning arises from the multiple forces of social practice rather than the formal qualities of the auratic art object.⁶⁴ Thus the potential significance of the Bauhaus project under Gropius lies less in the objects themselves that were produced than in the Bauhaus's grappling with the problem of reproducibility. The members of the Bauhaus saw their larger project not just as art practice but as a part of *social* practice, as Moholy-Nagy wrote: "We hope that from the inspirations of the Bauhaus, such results will come forth as will be useful to a new social order."⁶⁵ This social function, for Benjamin and for the Bauhaus, occurred when the art object was reproduced in such a way that what it would lose in aura it would make up for by reaching society at large, becoming available for its use. For Benjamin, the social function of art was revolutionized as soon as the criterion of authenticity ceased to be applicable to artistic production.⁶⁶

The actual objects designed by the Bauhaus, however, were not consonant with what was needed to achieve its goals for reproduction, as their elite qualities stymied the social project. In their relationship to society, the object-types the Bauhaus produced—such as silver tea services—were insufficient; their luxury character limited their reproducibility, perhaps equally as much as their costly fabrication and materials. As a result of this disjunction, Bauhaus objects can be read as material indices of the social problematic of mass reproducibility.

Benjamin pinpoints the transformation that occurs in the modern age from the autonomous authority of the art object itself to its social determination by its inherent technological reproducibility. That Gropius's Bauhaus embraced mass reproduction as a system and a goal is meaningful even if it was unable to realize this goal to any significant, material degree. As Josef Albers noted, "The greatest success of the Bauhaus was to win over and interest industry. We realized this aim only to a small degree."⁶⁷ Indeed, the *idea* of a relationship with industry remained the Bauhaus's greatest achievement, even if it was hardly realized. The Bauhaus inserted itself into this system of signification through the ideal of reproduction, and it was willing to sacrifice the auratic or authentic qualities of its objects to do so. An essential legacy of Bauhaus objects is the mythical aspiration of good design for the masses, achieved through an alignment with industrial production. And meaning can be derived from this ideal even if it never occurred at the level of actual Bauhaus products. Through their very failure as objects of reproduction and mass consumption, the products of the Bauhaus paradoxically retained both their authenticity and their aura, for, in an age of mechanical reproduction—that is, of the definitive withering of aura—an individual Bauhaus object, such

as a Brandt teapot, remains a work of art. To acknowledge this by conceding these objects' elite, luxury status, however, calls into question the received, mythological account of the Bauhaus's contribution to the trajectory of modernism. It also re-poses the question of what designing objects for mass reproduction—and socially transformative use by society, by the masses—might entail.

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Notes

- 1 For related discussion of these concerns, see especially Frederic J. Schwartz, "Utopia for Sale: The Bauhaus and Weimar Germany's Consumer Culture," in *Bauhaus Culture: From Weimar to the Cold War*, ed. Kathleen James-Chakraborty (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 115–38; and Anna Rowland, "Business Management at the Weimar Bauhaus," *Journal of Design History* 1, no. 3–4 (1988), 153–75.
- 2 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, vol. 3, 1935–1938 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 2002), 101–36. Benjamin composed this essay in the autumn of 1935; the version used here is the 1936 second version which the editors note represents the form in which Benjamin originally wished to see the work published. A third, revised version remained unfinished at Benjamin's death and was published posthumously. See also Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 2008).

When Benjamin makes his famous proclamation, "What withers in the age of the technological reproducibility of the work of art is the latter's aura," he immediately follows it with: "This process is symptomatic; its significance *extends far beyond the realm of art*" (emphasis added, 104). He begins his essay, in a similar vein, with Marx, noting that it "has taken more than half a century for the change in the *conditions of production* to be manifested in *all areas of culture*" (emphasis added, 101). In the essay, Benjamin largely discusses this process as it manifests itself in images and film. However it is clear throughout that the significance of the phenomena he explicates is not limited to these areas of culture alone; Benjamin also specifically addresses architecture, literature, medicine, music, and coins. Moreover, Benjamin uses a number of different terms to refer to his subject, not only "artwork" (*Kunstwerk*), but also object of art (*Gegenstand der Kunst*), object (*Objekt*), thing (*Sache*), all of which have been predominantly translated as "artwork," perhaps contributing to a common perception that Benjamin is only talking about the visual arts.

The distinct importance of architecture at a late stage in Benjamin's discussion—which brings it into particular proximity with film and makes "the laws of its reception ... the most instructive" in relation to new forms of mass participation in art—lies in the fact that buildings are received in a twofold manner: by perception and by use (120). The significance of

Benjamin's essay for understanding the problem of the reproducibility of Bauhaus objects will hang precisely on the potential for technologically reproducible objects to make themselves available for mass use.

On production and reproduction in architecture and art, see Beatriz Colomina, ed., *Architectureproduction* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), especially K. Michael Hays, "Reproduction and Negation: The Cognitive Project of the Avant-Garde," 153–79; Charles W. Haxthausen, "Reproduction/Repetition: Walter Benjamin/Carl Einstein," *October* 107, no. 47 (winter, 2004): 47–74; Esther Leslie, "Walter Benjamin: Traces of Craft," *Journal of Design History* 11, no. 1 (1998): 5–13; and Andrew Benjamin, ed., *Walter Benjamin and Art* (London: Continuum, 2005). For contacts between Walter Benjamin and Moholy-Nagy during the latter's years at the Bauhaus—and Moholy-Nagy's influence upon Benjamin—see "Walter Benjamin and the Avant-Garde," in Frederic J. Schwartz, *Blind Spots: Critical Theory and the History of Art in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), especially pp. 42–50.

In other writings Benjamin devotes sustained attention to domestic objects as part of the same constellation of themes also found in the "Work of Art" essay. See, for example, "Louis-Philippe, or the Interior," section 4, "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, vol. 3, 38–9, and June 8 entry in "May–June 1931," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, vol. 2, 1927–1934 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 1999), 479–80.

- 3 *Sachlichkeit* presents difficulties in translation; it could be translated as "factualness" or "objectiveness." As Rosemarie Bletter has pointed out, the term simultaneously suggests the "world of real objects" and that of "conceptual rationalism." See Bletter, introduction to Adolf Behne, *The Modern Functional Building* (Santa Monica: The Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1996), 48.
- 4 A nearly identical version, MT 49, was available from the Bauhaus in brass or red brass with a silver-plated interior and a silver strainer, but it was not among the chosen objects featured in the *Katalog der Muster*. Klaus Weber, curator at the Bauhaus-Archiv/Museum für Gestaltung, notes that there are presently only seven known period examples of this teapot. Correspondence with author, 9 March 2009.
- 5 This was also the case for the other objects featured in the Bauhaus catalogue, as well as for the overwhelming majority of the products of the Bauhaus in this period.
- 6 Walter Gropius, "Bauhaus Produktion," *Qualität* 4, no. 7–8 (Juli/August 1925): 130. Translation from a nearly identical version of the essay in Hans Maria Wingler, *The Bauhaus: Weimar, Dessau, Berlin, Chicago*, ed. Joseph Stein, trans. Wolfgang Jabs and Basil Gilbert (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976), 110. Gropius continued to recall this purpose long after leaving: "The creation of standard types for the articles of daily use was their main concern. These workshops were essentially laboratories in which the models for such products were carefully evolved and constantly improved." Walter Gropius, "Education Toward Creative Design," *American Architect and Architecture* (May 1937): 28.
- 7 For invaluable research on the entire span of production in the Bauhaus's metal workshops and their main artisans, see Klaus Weber, ed., *Die Metallwerkstatt am Bauhaus* (Berlin: Kupfergraben Verlagsgesellschaft, 1992).
- 8 The 1915 Werkbund *Book of Wares (Warenbuch)* was a selection of domestic German goods that met the Werkbund's design standards. See Heide Rezepa-Zabel, *Deutsches Warenbuch Reprint und Dokumentation: Gediegenes Gerät fürs Haus* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 2005).
- 9 German silver, or *Neusilber*, as it was called in German, had the appearance of silver but was a surrogate made of an alloy of copper, zinc, and nickel.
- 10 Benjamin, "Work of Art," 104–6.

- 11 Benjamin, "Work of Art," 106.
- 12 *Die Lebenshaltung von 2,000 Arbeiter, Angestellten-, und Beamten-Haushaltungen: Erhebungen von Wirtschaftsrechnungen im Deutschen Reich von Jahre 1927–1928*, Einzelschriften zur Statistik des deutschen Reichs, no. 22 (Berlin: R. Hobbing, 1932). Specific industries paid significantly less; for example, a male spinner in the textile industry earned 44 Marks per week in 1927, while a female spinner earned 28 Marks per week and unskilled workers earned even less. Statistischen Reichsamts, *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich* (Berlin: Verlag von Reimar Hobbing, 1930). For the day-to-day struggle on this wage, see Deutscher Textilarbeiterverband, ed., *Mein Arbeitstag, Mein Wochenende. 150 Berichte von Textilarbeiterinnen* (Berlin: Textilpraxis Verlag, 1930), 187–9; and "Die Misere des 'neuen Mittelstands'" *Die Weltbühne* 24, no. 4 (22 January 1929): 130–4.
- 13 Standard-möbel catalogue, 1927, n.p., Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin.
- 14 Otto Rittweger, *Vivos Voco* 5, no. 8–9 (1926): 293–4; translated in *Posthumous Works Designed While Living: Metallwerkstatt Bauhaus 20's/90's*, ed. Bruno Pedretti (Milan: Electa, 1995), 34–5.
- 15 *Die Grundstücks- und Wohnungsaufnahme sowie die Volks-, Berufs- und Betriebszahlung in Berlin im Jahre 1925* (Berlin, 1928), table 8; quoted in Nicholas Bullock, "First the Kitchen: Then the Façade," *Journal of Design History* 1, no. 3–4 (1988): 188.
- 16 For example, see Dr Necker and Walter Gropius, "Bericht über die wirtschaftlichen Aussichten des Bauhauses," 19 October 1924, typed manuscript, pp. 1–2, Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin.
- 17 Anne Bobzin and Klaus Weber, *Das Bauhaus-Schachspiel von Josef Hartwig* (Berlin: Bauhaus-Archiv, 2006), 17–21.
- 18 Ausstellung "Die Form," 1924, exhibition checklist with prices, Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin.
- 19 For example, the Czech architect and critic Karel Teige chastised the Bauhaus early on for its emphasis on the crafts: "Today, the crafts are nothing but a luxury, supported by the bourgeoisie with their individualism and snobbery and their purely decorative point of view." Karel Teige, Stavba (1924); translated in *Bauhaus, 1919–1928*, ed. Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius, and Ise Gropius (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1938; reprint, Boston: Charles T. Branford Co., 1952), 91.
- 20 Walter Gropius, Weimar, to Staatsminister Greil, 11 November 1922, p. 2, Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin. Unless otherwise noted, translations are the author's own.
- 21 László Moholy-Nagy (presumed), "Dialogue between a Well-meaning Critic and a Representative of the Bauhaus, Weimar-Dessau," c. 1928; translated in Krisztina Passuth, *Moholy-Nagy* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 400. The identity of the author of this document has not been conclusively established; the document is in the possession of Moholy-Nagy's daughter, Hattula Moholy-Nagy and presumed to be written by Moholy-Nagy.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 401.
- 23 Benjamin, "Work of Art," 104.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 102.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 106.
- 26 Ise Gropius, *Diary*, Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin.
- 27 Lyonel Feininger, Dessau, to Julia Feininger, 2 October 1927, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge; translated in Lyonel Feininger, *Lyonel Feininger*, ed. June L. Ness (New York: Praeger, 1974), 158.
- 28 Fritz Hesse, *Von der Residenz zur Bauhausstadt* (Hannover: Schmorl & von Seefeld, 1963), 238.
- 29 Lyonel Feininger, Dessau, to Julia Feininger, 6 August 1926, Houghton Library; translated in Feininger, *Feininger*, 152.
- 30 Walter Gropius, *Bauhausbauten Dessau* (München: A. Langen, 1930), 112.
- 31 Protokoll, Sitzung der Meister und Werkstättenleiter des Staatlichen Bauhauses, 7 April 1922, Weimar, Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin; Protokoll des Bauhausrates, 22 October 1923, in *Die*

- Meisterratsprotokolle des Staatlichen Bauhauses Weimar 1919 bis 1925*, ed. Volker Wahl (Weimar: Verlag Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 2001), 319. "Produktiv-Betrieb" can also be translated as "productive company," but it is not clear from the original context if a company is specifically meant at this early date.
- 32 Gropius, "Bauhaus Produktion," 135; translated in Wingler, *Bauhaus*, 110.
- 33 Walter Gropius, "Education Toward Creative Design," *American Architect and Architecture* 150 (May 1937): 28. Although this was written years later, it succinctly captures the direction of this period: "The aim of this training was to produce designers who were able, by their intimate knowledge of material and working processes to influence the industrial production of our time."
- 34 Word of mouth and personal recommendation between customers accounted for much of this small-scale work, such as a request for a silver tea caddy from Herr Architekt Bernard in December of 1924 and an order from Herr Regierungsrat Döpel in January 1925 for a silver pin "like the one the metal workshop had made for the kindergarten teachers." Rowland, "Business Management," 154.
- 35 The archives of the Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau hold original records, including letters, bills of sale, and drawings of commissions. Notable Dessau commissions include Erich Dieckmann's work for Hinnerk and Lou Scheper in 1925, which included chairs, stools, tables, desks, cupboards, and bookshelves; Dieckmann's designs for the home of Pauline Schwickert; and Breuer's furniture and kitchen cabinetry for the Wohnung Ludwig Grote at the Palais Reina in Dessau of 1927. For a full range of rare photographs of interiors, see Christian Wolsdorf, *Bauhaus-Möbel: eine Legende wird besichtigt/Bauhaus Furniture: A Legend Reviewed* (Berlin: Bauhaus-Archiv, 2002).
- 36 Emil Lange to Gropius, Weimar, 16 February 1924, typescript, Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin.
- 37 Protokoll, Formenmeister-Besprechung, 18 October 1923, in Wahl, *Meisterratsprotokolle*, 319. Originally the minutes were written with "GmbH," which was then struck out and replaced with "AG," possibly indicating some question of what designation the company should have. AG, for Aktiengesellschaft, is a public limited company, while GmbH, or Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung, represents a limited liability company.
- 38 Wahl, *Meisterratsprotokolle*, 520–1.
- 39 Protokoll der Sitzung des Bauhausrates, 18 February 1924, 20 February 1924, in Wahl, *Meisterratsprotokolle*, 323–4. The meeting lasted 3½ hours.
- 40 Vertrag zwischen dem Bauhaus und Bauhausangehörigen, n.d., typescript, p. 1 verso, Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin. Several designers, when they left the Bauhaus, continued to fill orders for their designs personally, notably Josef Hartwig, who continued to produce his famous chess set. This document was designed to prevent this in the future.
- 41 Protokoll der Sitzung des Bauhausrates, 18 February 1924, 20 February 1924, Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar. The "Work Plan of the Metal Workshop" (c. 1925–1926) also codifies payment, noting that either a single-payment compensation or royalties will be paid for models used in series production. Translated in Wingler, *Bauhaus*, 111.
- 42 This small catalogue lacks a formal name in the literature, and even the Bauhaus Archive has not reached a consensus on what to call it. In the Bauhaus exhibition and accompanying catalogue, *Das A und O des Bauhauses: Bauhauswerbung: Schriftbilder, Drucksachen, Ausstellungsdesign*, Ute Brüning refers to it as the "Katalog der Muster," while Klaus Weber in *Die Metallwerkstatt am Bauhaus* refers to it as the "Musterkatalog der Bauhausprodukte." In the period, the journal *Bauhaus* referred to a page from it as a "prospectus page" (*Prospektseite*) of the Bauhaus GmbH. *Bauhaus*, no. 1 (1926): 6. Because the title page of the loose-leaf sheets that make up the catalogue states, "Katalog der Muster," that title will be used here. In English it has been translated as "Catalog of Designs" (Schwartz, "Utopia for Sale," 124) and "Bauhaus Sample Catalog" (collection accession file, Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum).

- 43 Reproduced in Wingler, *Bauhaus*, 98–101.
- 44 For more on the role of trade shows in the display and sale of Bauhaus objects in the Weimar period, as well as efforts by the Bauhaus to bring early goods to market, see Rowland, “Business Management,” especially pp. 163–7.
- 45 The basic plan of the Bauhaus to produce machine prototypes rather than the standard fare of a regular school of applied art was also reported in countless newspaper articles. For a typical example, see Dr Grote, “Das Weimarer Bauhaus und seine Aufgaben in Dessau,” *Anhaltische Rundschau*, 11 March 1925: 1.
- 46 László Moholy-Nagy, “Eine bedeutsame Aussprache: Konferenz der Vertreter des Bauhauses Dessau und des Edelmetallgewerbes am 9. März 1928 in Leipzig,” *Deutsche Goldschmiede-Zeitung*, no. 13 (1928): 123.
- 47 Rudolf Arnheim, “Das Bauhaus in Dessau,” *Die Weltbühne* 23, no. 22 (31 May 1927): 921; translated in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, ed. Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 451.
- 48 *Bauhaus*, no. 4 (1927): 5. It was also reported that a related catalogue was in production. However, this relationship appears to have been short-lived, as the lamp division folded, causing the Bauhaus to begin anew in the search for a manufacturer. See Ise Gropius, *Diary*, 30 November 1927, 205–6.
- 49 A new contract for lighting came through in February of 1928, as noted in Ise Gropius’s diary (10 February 1928, 224). In the July 1928 issue, *Bauhaus* announced that both lighting companies Körting & Mathiesen and Schwintzer & Gräff were producing Bauhaus designs. See “Industrie und Bauhaus,” *Bauhaus*, no. 2–3 (1928): 33. For a full account of the Bauhaus’s relationship with Körting & Mathiesen and the line of modern lighting produced by the company from Bauhaus prototypes, see Justus Binroth et al., *Bauhausleuchten? Kandemlicht! Die Zusammenarbeit des Bauhauses mit der Leipziger Firma Kandem/Bauhaus Lighting? Kandem Light! The Collaboration of the Bauhaus with the Leipzig Company Kandem* (Leipzig: Grassi Museum, Museum für Kunsthandwerk Leipzig; Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2002). This arrangement, while fulfilling Gropius’s aims for the school, did so in an anonymous manner, because except for one mention in 1931, Körting & Mathiesen did not acknowledge the association of its Kandem line with the Bauhaus until its 75th anniversary, in 1964; see Ulrich Krüger, “Leutzsch Lighting: On the Collaboration of Körting & Mathiesen AG in Leipzig-Leutzsch with the Bauhaus in Dessau,” in Binroth, *Bauhausleuchten?*, 11.
- 50 Christian Wolsdorff, “Bauhaus-Produkte: Zusammenarbeit mit der Industrie,” in *Bauhaus Berlin: Auflösung Dessau 1932, Schließung Berlin 1933, Bauhäusler und Drittes Reich*, ed. Peter Hahn (Weingarten: Kunstverlag Weingarten, 1985), 183. The pottery workshop also began to make contacts with—and supply models to—industry (porcelain and stoneware) but did not accompany the Bauhaus to Dessau, and ceased to exist.
- 51 Gropius, “Bauhaus Produktion,” 130; translated in Wingler, *Bauhaus*, 110.
- 52 Like *Sachlichkeit*, “Intellektuell-Sachliches” presents difficulties in translation; it could be translated as “intellectual factualness” or “intellectual objectiveness.”
- 53 *Bauhaus*, no. 1 (1926): 3.
- 54 Among the hundreds of photographs of Berlin interiors, both known and anonymous dwellings, at the Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin, there are relatively few modern interiors, and in these interiors, Bauhaus domestic objects are in scant evidence, while Breuer’s tubular steel chairs and Bauhaus furniture are fairly common. For example, the Breuer-designed apartment interior for Edwin Piscator, 1927, featured Bauhaus furniture and lighting fixtures but not its other products.
- 55 Grete Lihotzky, “Rationalisierung im Haushalt,” *Das neue Frankfurt*, no. 5 (1926–1927): 120; translated in Kaes, Jay, and Dimendberg, *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, 463.
- 56 Fritz Wichert, “Ein Haus, das Sehnsucht weckt,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 10 October 1923.

- 57 Benjamin, "Work of Art," 104.
- 58 Gropius, "Bauhaus Produktion," 135–6; translated in Wingler, *Bauhaus*, 110.
- 59 *Ibid.*, 136.
- 60 Benjamin was a member of artistic and architectural circles in Berlin and was certainly conversant with key concepts of the day. He was part of a group that met often at Hans Richter's house, which included Raoul Hausmann, Tristan Tzara, Frederick Kiesler, and Hans (Jean) Arp, which would launch the magazine *G* in 1923, led by Richter, Lissitzky, Van Doesburg, and Mies.
- 61 Arnd Bohm, "Artful Reproduction: Benjamin's Appropriation of Adolf Behne's 'Das reproduktive Zeitalter' in the *Kunstwerk-Essay*," *The Germanic Review* 68, no. 4 (1993): 149. Cf. Adolf Behne, "Das reproduktive Zeitalter," *Marsyas* (1917): 219–25.
- 62 Moholy-Nagy, "Production-Reproduction," *De Stijl*, no. 7 (1922): 97–101; translated in Passuth, *Moholy-Nagy*, 289.
- 63 The slippage in this essay between the terms "mass production" and (mass) "reproduction" reflects this problem: to speak of mass production is really to speak of mass *reproduction*—as Benjamin's essay illuminates—but the standard usage of the former term highlights the tendency to conceive it in the terms of production alone.
- 64 Hays, "Reproduction and Negation," 163. Emphasis original.
- 65 Moholy-Nagy, "Dialogue"; translated in Passuth, *Moholy-Nagy*, 400.
- 66 Benjamin, "Work of Art," 106.
- 67 Josef Albers, "Thirteen years at the Bauhaus," in *Bauhaus and Bauhaus People*, ed. Eckhard Neumann (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1970), 171.