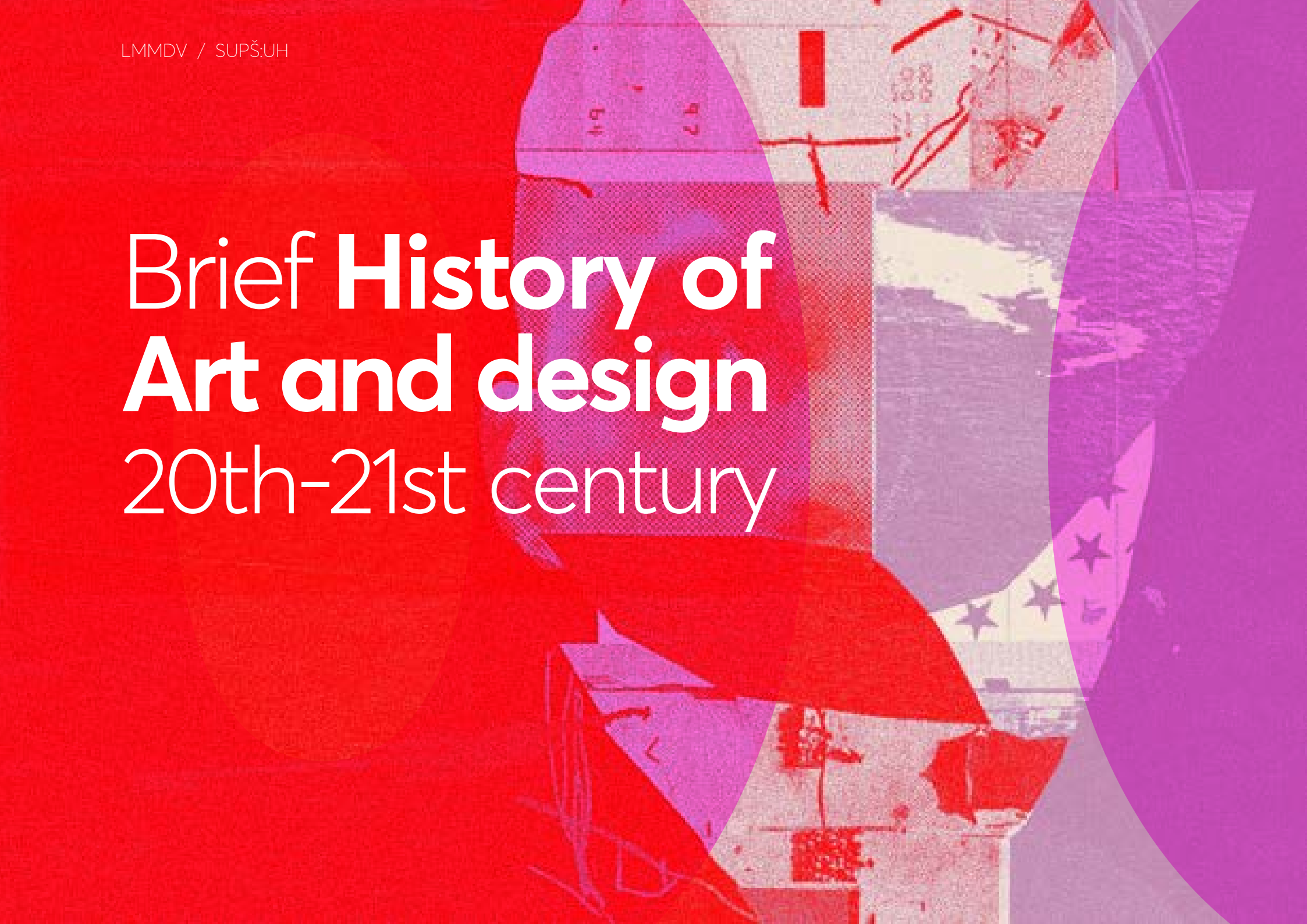


Brief **History of Art and design** 20th-21st century

The background of the slide is a complex, abstract collage. It features a large, solid red shape on the left side. Overlaid on this and the rest of the slide are various geometric and organic shapes in shades of purple and magenta. There are also faint, stylized patterns and textures, including what looks like a grid or a map-like structure in the upper right, and a series of stars in the lower right. The overall aesthetic is modern and artistic, reflecting the theme of the presentation.

- 01** Bauhaus Movement and International Modernism (1919–1960)
- 02** Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism (1930–1960)
- 03** Pop Art and Pop Design in the Space Age (1955–1970)
- 04** Minimalism and Brutalism (1950–1980)
- 05** Conceptual and Radical Design and Art (1965–1980)
- 06** Street Art, Graffiti, and Urban Design, Feminist Art Movement and Social Design (1970–1980)
- 07** Postmodernism in Art and Design (1980–2000)
- 08** Installation, Performance (1990–nowadays)
- 09** New Media Art (1990–nowadays)
- 10** Global Contemporary Art and Design (2000–nowadays)

BRIEF HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN 20TH & 21ST

Bauhaus Movement and International Modernism

(1919-1960)

"DESIGN IS THINKING MADE VISUAL."

Bauhaus aimed to merge art with practical design.

Bauhaus Movement and International Modernism

(1919-1960)



Co-funded by
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LIEPĀJAS MŪZIKAS,
MĀKSLAS un DIZAINA
VIDUSSKOLA



SUPŠ:UH



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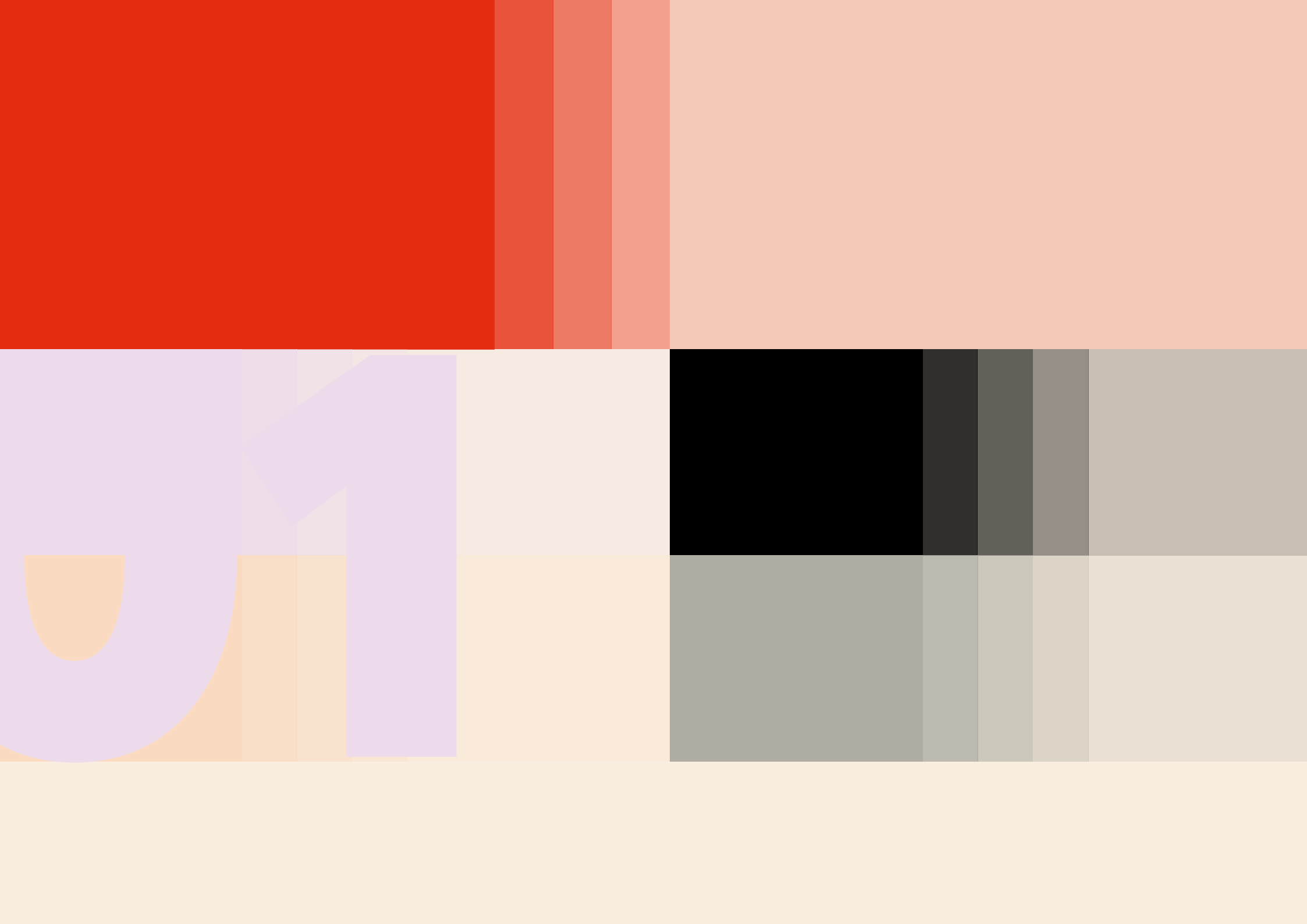
Implemented from 1.04.2024. till 31.03.2026. by coordinator MIKC "Liepājas Mūzikas, mākslas un dizaina vidusskola" (Latvia) and project partner Střední umělecko průmyslová škola Uherské Hradiště (Czech Republic), total project budget is 60 000 euro.

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Introduction

Historical Background of Bauhaus and International Modernism

The Bauhaus movement emerged in Germany in the early 20th century, founded in 1919 by Walter Gropius in Weimar. This innovative school of architecture and design aimed to unite art and technology, creating designs that were functional and aesthetically pleasing. The term "Bauhaus" translates to "building house," signifying a focus on the architectural aspects of design.

The movement was a response to the chaos of World War I and the rapid changes in society brought about by the Industrial Revolution. The Bauhaus philosophy emphasized functionality, simplicity, and the unity of art and design, advocating that design should be accessible to everyone. This radical approach was a departure from the traditional art world, which was often seen as elitist and disconnected from everyday life.

In addition to Gropius, early Bauhaus influences included the Arts and Crafts Movement, which emphasized handmade quality and craftsmanship, and De Stijl, known for its abstract art and geometric forms. These influences laid the groundwork for Bauhaus's revolutionary approach to art and design, which sought to synthesize various disciplines, including architecture, industrial design, graphic design, and textiles.



Early Bauhaus building in Weimar

Reasons for Existence

The establishment of the Bauhaus stemmed from the desire to address the challenges of modern life. Industrialization transformed society, and there was a growing need for functional, affordable design. The Bauhaus aimed to respond to this need by emphasizing design principles that were efficient and effective. It sought to bridge the gap between artists and manufacturers, allowing for the integration of artistic values into everyday objects.

Moreover, the Bauhaus served as a cultural response to the upheaval in Europe following World War I. It reflected a yearning for renewal and a break from the past, advocating for new ways of thinking about art, architecture, and society as a whole. The movement resonated with the growing interest in modernist principles across Europe and North America.

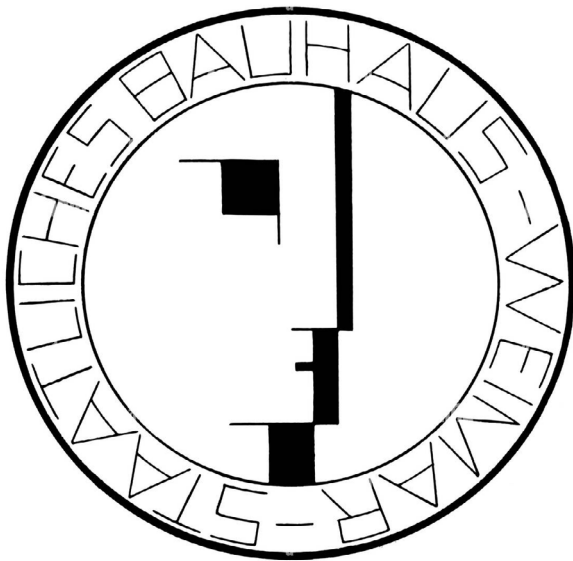
In the broader context, the Bauhaus was part of a larger modernist movement that sought to redefine the role of art and design in society. This included the rejection of traditional styles and the embrace of new materials and technologies, which had significant implications for architecture, visual arts, and industrial design.

International Modernism

While the Bauhaus primarily focused on Germany, the principles of modernism spread internationally, influencing architects and designers worldwide. **International Modernism** emerged as a broader movement that sought to redefine architectural and design practices through a universal approach. It emphasized simplicity, minimalism, and functionality while maintaining a sense of harmony with the environment.

The principles of **International Modernism** can be observed in various architectural styles, such as the International Style, which became prominent in the 1920s and 1930s, characterized by flat roofs, smooth facades, and open floor plans. This style was heavily influenced by Bauhaus philosophy and had a lasting impact on architecture globally.

This section will explore the various aspects of the Bauhaus and International Modernism movements, detailing their key figures, notable buildings, and lasting impacts on design today.



Bauhaus logo

Bauhaus Origins

Founders and Influences

The Bauhaus was founded by Walter Gropius in 1919 in Weimar, Germany, with the aim of revolutionizing art and design education. Gropius's vision combined art, craft, and technology, advocating for a new approach to education that integrated theoretical knowledge with practical skills. He believed that the future of design lay in collaboration among artists, craftsmen, and industrialists.

Influences on the Bauhaus included earlier movements such as the Arts and Crafts Movement, founded by William Morris, which emphasized craftsmanship and the beauty of handmade objects. Additionally, the De Stijl movement, led by artists like Piet Mondrian, contributed a focus on geometric forms and primary colours, influencing Bauhaus's visual language.

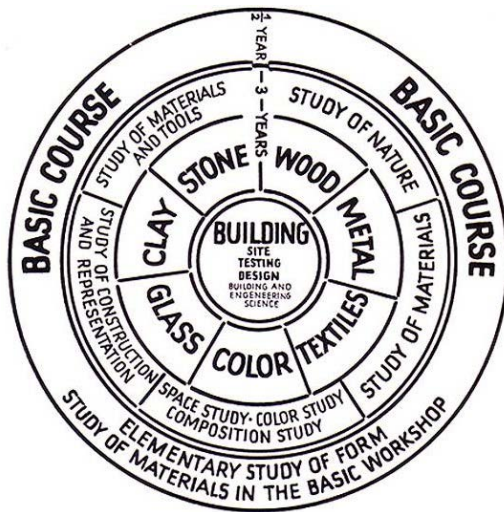
In its formative years, the Bauhaus attracted a diverse group of influential artists and thinkers, including Hannes Meyer, who succeeded Gropius as director and shifted the focus towards social responsibility in design, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who later played a critical role in shaping modern architecture.



Core Principles of Bauhaus

The core principles of Bauhaus can be summarized as follows:

- / **Functionality:** The design must be practical and serve its purpose effectively. Objects should be designed with the user in mind, ensuring they enhance everyday life.
- / **Simplicity:** A minimalist approach, avoiding unnecessary ornamentation. The goal was to create beauty through form and function rather than decorative elements.
- / **Integration:** Merging different artistic disciplines, including architecture, graphic design, furniture, and textiles. The Bauhaus promoted a collaborative environment where artists and craftsmen could work together.
- / **Mass Production:** Designing objects that could be mass-produced to ensure accessibility to a broader audience. The Bauhaus aimed to create designs that could be manufactured efficiently, making good design available to everyone.



The Bauhaus also emphasized the importance of education, believing that artists and designers should be trained in both theoretical and practical skills. This led to the development of a comprehensive curriculum that included workshops in various disciplines, fostering a hands-on approach to learning.

Bauhaus core principles

Key Bauhaus Figures

Walter Gropius (1883-1969)

As the founder of the Bauhaus, Gropius's influence shaped modern architecture and design. He believed in a holistic approach to architecture that integrated function, structure, and aesthetics. Gropius advocated for using modern materials such as steel, glass, and concrete, which became defining characteristics of modernist architecture.

Gropius's key projects include the Bauhaus Building in Dessau and the Fagus Factory in Alfeld, both celebrated for their innovative designs and use of materials. His philosophy extended beyond architecture to encompass the social responsibilities of design, advocating for a vision of architecture that served the community.



Gropius's Bauhaus Art school building in Dessau

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969)

A prominent architect known for his "less is more" philosophy, Mies led the Bauhaus after Gropius and emphasized open spaces and minimalism in his designs. He is famous for buildings such as the Seagram Building in New York and the Farnsworth House in Illinois. Mies's work exemplifies the International Style, characterized by simplicity and a focus on structural expression.

Mies's approach to design was rooted in the belief that architecture should respond to the needs of its inhabitants while being rooted in the surrounding environment. His contribution to modern architecture is profound, influencing generations of architects.



Seagram Building, NY

Paul Klee (1879-1940)

A painter and influential teacher at the Bauhaus, Klee's work combined abstraction with expressive elements. His teaching emphasized the importance of colour and form in artistic creation, encouraging students to explore their creativity. Klee's art often featured whimsical forms and a playful use of colour, challenging traditional boundaries between art and design.

His contributions to the curriculum helped shape the artistic philosophy of the Bauhaus, influencing students like Anni Albers and Josef Albers, who became significant figures in textiles and colour theory, respectively.



Paul Klee Colour Theory

Marcel Breuer (1902-1981)

An architect and furniture designer, Breuer is best known for his innovative use of tubular steel in furniture design, particularly with his Wassily Chair. His work at the Bauhaus emphasized functionality and modern materials, creating pieces that were both elegant and practical.

Breuer's architectural projects include the St. John's Abbey in Minnesota and the UNESCO Building in Paris, where he applied Bauhaus principles to create harmonious and functional spaces.



Wassily Chair

Bauhaus in Design

Key Buildings

The Bauhaus school itself was an architectural experiment, evolving through several locations:

- / Bauhaus Building in Dessau (1926) – Designed by Gropius, this building embodies the principles of functionality and modernism. It features an open floor plan and extensive use of glass, symbolizing transparency and accessibility.
- / Bauhaus Masters' Houses (1925-1926) – A series of homes for Bauhaus instructors, showcasing modern residential architecture. These houses were designed to reflect the principles of the Bauhaus, with an emphasis on simplicity, functionality, and integration with nature.
- / Gropius House (1938) – Located in Lincoln, Massachusetts, this house exemplifies Gropius's architectural philosophy and is one of the first examples of modernist design in the U.S.



Gropius's house, Lincoln

Trends in Bauhaus Design

Bauhaus design emphasized:

- / **Furniture Design:** Innovative pieces that merged functionality with aesthetics, such as the Cesca Chair and Marcel Breuer's furniture. These designs often utilized modern materials and techniques, reflecting the industrial age.
- / **Graphic Design:** The use of geometric shapes and sans-serif fonts in posters and publications. The Bauhaus advocated for the integration of design and typography, with notable contributions from designers like Herbert Bayer.
- / **Architecture:** The movement's architectural style influenced public buildings, schools, and residential buildings.

[Bauhaus in 7 Minutes:
Revolutionary Design Movement Explained \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y69wOKg6yp4)

International Modernism

Bauhaus design emphasized:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y69wOKg6yp4>

While the Bauhaus primarily focused on Germany, its ideas spread globally, influencing various architectural and design movements. Key regions that adopted these principles include:

- / **United States:** The International Style emerged in the 1920s and 1930s, characterized by glass and steel structures. Architects such as Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson were instrumental in introducing this style to American architecture. Notable buildings include the Glass House (1949) by Johnson and the Crown Hall (1956) by Mies at the Illinois Institute of Technology.
- / **Scandinavia:** Countries like Sweden, Denmark, and Finland embraced modernist principles, emphasizing functionality and simplicity. Architects such as Alvar Aalto and Hans Wegner incorporated organic forms and natural materials into their designs, creating harmonious relationships between buildings and their environments.
- / **Latin America:** The International Style found expression in cities like Brazil, where architects like Oscar Niemeyer embraced bold forms and curves. The National Congress of Brazil in Brasília (1958) showcases Niemeyer's innovative use of concrete and modernist principles.

International Modernism

International Modernism is marked by several defining characteristics:

- / **Use of New Materials:** Emphasis on steel, glass, and concrete, allowing for innovative structural forms and open spaces.
- / **Functional Design:** A focus on practicality, with designs that prioritize usability over ornamentation.
- / **Minimalism:** An aesthetic that values simplicity and clarity, often utilizing clean lines and geometric forms.
- / **Integration with Surroundings:** A commitment to harmonizing buildings with their natural environment, creating a seamless relationship between interior and exterior spaces.

These characteristics established a framework for architects and designers to approach their work in a manner that prioritized both form and function, leading to the development of iconic structures worldwide.

Prominent International Modernist Architects and Designers

Le Corbusier (1887-1965)

These characteristics established a framework for architects and designers to approach their work in a manner that prioritized both form and function, leading to the development of iconic structures worldwide.

1. **Stilts:** Supporting columns elevating the building above the ground.
2. **Flat Roof:** A functional rooftop space.
3. **Open Floor Plan:** Flexible interior layouts.
4. **Horizontal Windows:** Expansive views and natural light.
5. **Free Facade:** A non-load-bearing exterior that allows for greater design freedom.



Villa Savoye

Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959)

An American architect who developed the Prairie School and later the concept of organic architecture, Wright emphasized designs that were in harmony with humanity and the environment. His famous work, Fallingwater (1935), seamlessly integrates with its natural surroundings, utilizing cantilevered structures that extend over a waterfall.

Wright's Guggenheim Museum (1959) in New York is another iconic design, featuring a unique spiral ramp that contrasts with the traditional museum layout. His innovative approach influenced the development of modern residential architecture, prioritizing open spaces and natural light.



Fallingwater

Alvar Aalto (1898-1976)

Finnish architect Aalto was known for his humanistic approach to architecture, blending functionality with natural forms. He believed that buildings should respond to the needs of their users while being integrated into their environment. Notable projects include the Finlandia Hall (1971) and the Villa Mairea (1939), both showcasing his distinctive style that combined modernism with organic elements.

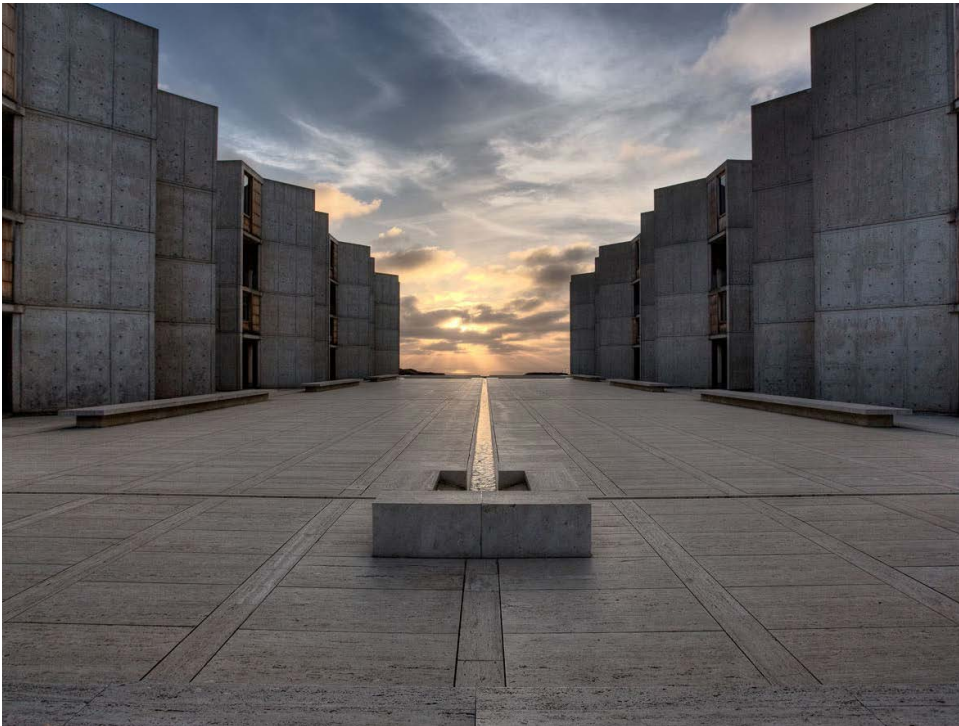
Aalto's furniture designs, such as the Paimio Chair, exemplified his commitment to creating functional, aesthetically pleasing pieces that complemented his architectural vision. His work continues to inspire architects and designers today.



Finlandia Hall

Louis Kahn (1901-1974)

An influential American architect known for his monumental and monolithic structures, Kahn focused on the relationship between light, space, and material. His notable works include the Salk Institute (1965) in California and the Kimbell Art Museum (1972) in Texas. Kahn's use of materials such as concrete and brick, along with his emphasis on natural light, created inspiring spaces that elevated the experience of architecture.



Salk Institute

Impact on Product and Furniture Design

Key Products and Designs:

An influential American architect known for his monumental and monolithic structures, Kahn focused on the relationship between light, space, and material. His notable works include the Salk Institute (1965) in California and the Kimbell Art Museum (1972) in Texas. Kahn's use of materials such as concrete and brick, along with his emphasis on natural light, created inspiring spaces that elevated the experience of architecture.

- / **Bauhaus Furniture:** Emphasizing materials like steel and wood, these designs were both innovative and functional. The Wassily Chair, designed by Marcel Breuer, is an iconic example, showcasing the use of tubular steel in furniture design.
- / **Textiles and Fabrics:** Artists like Anni Albers contributed to textile design, creating woven fabrics that combined functionality with artistic expression. Albers emphasized the importance of texture and colour in her work, which has influenced modern textile design.
- / **Graphic Design:** The Bauhaus's approach to graphic design emphasized typography and layout, with a focus on simplicity and clarity. Designers like Herbert Bayer introduced new typographical styles and layouts that became foundational for modern graphic design.



Annie Albers' rug

Modern Product Design Trends

Today, many design brands draw inspiration from Bauhaus principles, emphasizing minimalism, sustainability, and user-centred design. Brands like Muji and IKEA incorporate these ideals into their products, focusing on creating functional and affordable design solutions for everyday life.

The influence of Bauhaus can also be seen in tech product design, where companies strive for sleek and user-friendly interfaces that prioritize functionality without unnecessary complexity.

How Bauhaus and Modernism Shaped Today's Design

Present-Day Impact

The influence of Bauhaus and International Modernism can be seen in contemporary architecture, product design, and graphic design. The principles of minimalism and functionality are widely embraced, evident in modern homes, furniture, and consumer products.

Contemporary architects continue to reference Bauhaus ideas, creating buildings that reflect the movement's principles of simplicity, harmony, and integration with the environment. This is evident in the work of architects like Tadao Ando, whose designs often feature concrete and glass in a minimalist aesthetic.

Moreover, in the realm of product design, companies focus on creating functional, user-friendly products that minimize waste and embrace sustainability. The emphasis on designing for the user experience is a direct reflection of Bauhaus ideals.

Present-Day Impact

Modern brands continue to adopt Bauhaus principles, creating functional yet aesthetically pleasing products. Tech companies often focus on minimalistic designs that prioritize user experience. For instance, the design of smartphones and tablets reflects the Bauhaus philosophy of combining form and function in a seamless manner.



One World Trade Center, NY

In architecture, buildings like the One World Trade Center in New York City and the High Line exemplify contemporary applications of modernist principles, with their focus on transparency, open spaces, and integration with the urban landscape.



[The International Style \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

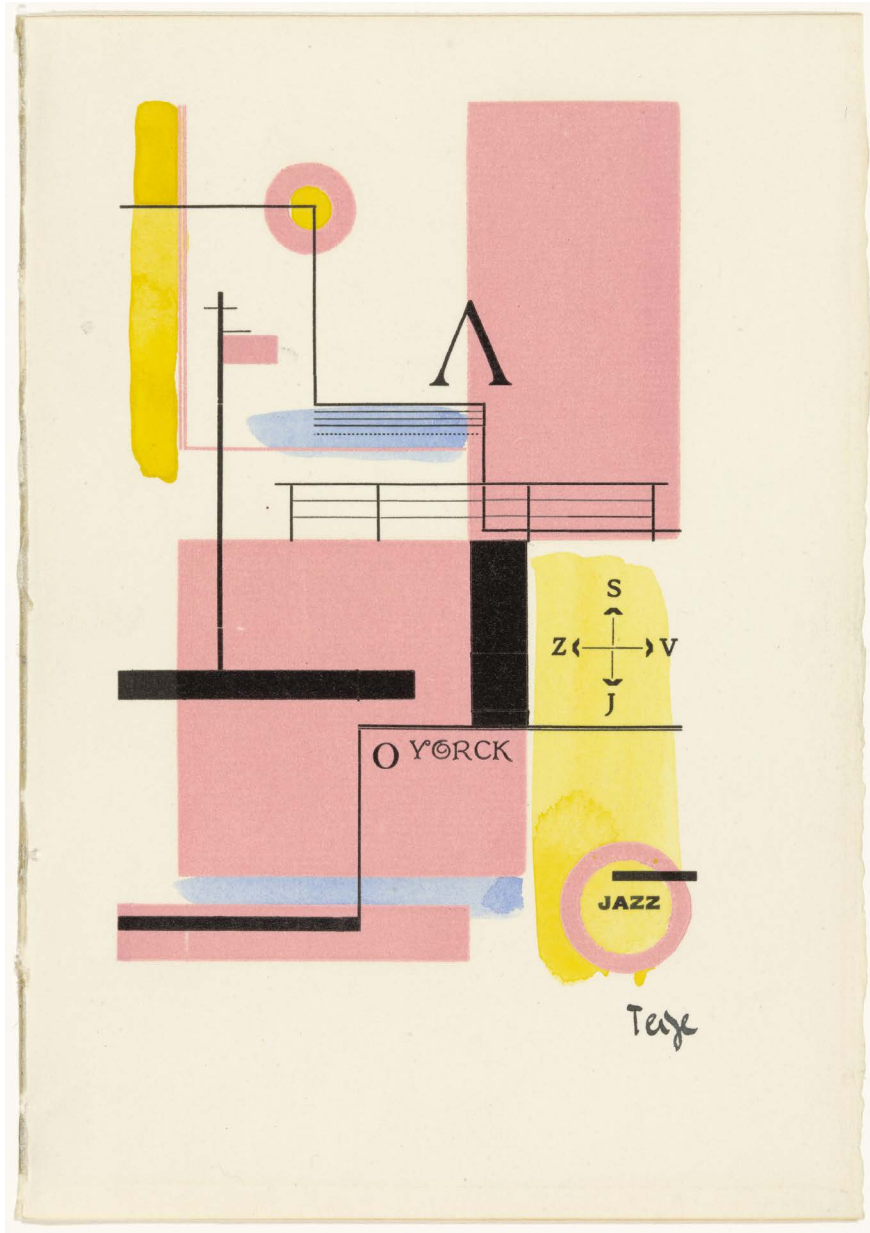
Conclusion

Summary of Influence and Relevance Today

The Bauhaus and International Modernism movements have left an indelible mark on design and architecture. Their emphasis on functionality, simplicity, and the integration of art and technology continue to inspire and shape contemporary practices. The ideals championed by these movements remain relevant as we navigate the challenges of modern living, pushing us to create designs that are not only beautiful but also serve a purpose.

As society evolves, the need for innovative, sustainable design solutions becomes increasingly important. The Bauhaus legacy inspires a new generation of designers and architects to embrace creativity, explore new materials, and prioritize user experience in their work.

In an era of rapid technological advancement and global connectivity, the principles of Bauhaus and International Modernism serve as guiding philosophies, reminding us of the power of design to enhance our lives and address the complexities of the world we inhabit.



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Product Design of Le Corbusier and Alvar Aalto

Le Corbusier's Product Design

Historical Context and Philosophy

Le Corbusier was a pioneer of modernist architecture, but his approach extended beyond buildings to furniture and urban planning, reflecting his 'machine for living' concept. He believed in functional, mass-produced designs that catered to the needs of modern living, with an emphasis on simplicity and utility.

Key Designs

Modern brands continue to adopt Bauhaus principles, creating functional yet aesthetically pleasing products. Tech companies often focus on minimalistic designs that prioritize user experience. For instance, the design of smartphones and tablets reflects the Bauhaus philosophy of combining form and function in a seamless manner.



1. **LC4 Chaise Longue (1928):** Designed with Charlotte Perriand and Pierre Jeanneret, the LC4 is an icon of modern design. Its adjustable frame and minimalist, tubular steel structure embody Le Corbusier's vision of blending comfort with industrial efficiency.
2. **LC2 and LC3 Armchairs (1928):** These compact, cubic designs reflect his ideal of 'sitting machines,' offering comfort and style through
3. **LC2 and LC3 Armchairs (1928):** These compact, cubic designs reflect his ideal of 'sitting machines,' offering comfort and style through



LC6 Table (1928): A dining table with a steel base and a glass top. The LC6 blends industrial materials with sleek, modernist form, balancing robustness and elegance.

Key Designs

Modern brands continue to adopt Bauhaus principles, creating functional yet aesthetically pleasing products. Tech companies often focus on minimalistic designs that prioritize user experience. For instance, the design of smartphones and tablets reflects the Bauhaus philosophy of combining form and function in a seamless manner.

Alvar Aalto's Product Design

Design Philosophy

Alvar Aalto was known for his organic and human-centered approach, contrasting with the industrial lines of many of his contemporaries. His designs aimed to blend functionality with nature, creating products that harmonize with human needs and the environment.

Key Designs



Stool 60 (1933): Perhaps Aalto's most famous product, this simple yet innovative three-legged stool represents his mastery of bending plywood. Aalto's technique allowed for the mass production of high-quality, affordable furniture. Its timeless design continues to be produced today.



1. **Paimio Chair (1931-32):** Designed for the Paimio Sanatorium, this chair exemplifies his organic design principles. Made from plywood, it provides comfort through its flowing, natural curves, a stark contrast to the rigid lines of Bauhaus-inspired furniture.
2. **Savoy Vase (1936):** One of Aalto's most famous designs, the vase features flowing, organic shapes. It's made of glass and showcases his fascination with organic forms and nature.
3. **Armchair 406 (1939):** This chair is made from bent laminated wood and webbed linen, balancing comfort and simplicity. Its lightweight, airy design remains a classic example of modern Scandinavian furniture.

Comparison and Legacy

Approach to Materials

Le Corbusier favoured industrial materials like steel and leather, reflecting the machine age's impact on design. In contrast, Aalto used natural materials like wood and incorporated organic forms, emphasizing warmth and humanity.

Impact on Modernism

Both designers contributed significantly to modernism, but their approaches differed. Le Corbusier's designs were more industrial, while Aalto embraced a softer, more natural aesthetic. Their products, especially furniture, have left a lasting legacy in both high-end design and mass production.

Bauhaus and International Modernism in Czechoslovakia

Historical Context

Czechoslovakia, established in 1918 following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, became a vibrant centre for modernist thought and design in the early 20th century. The new nation was characterized by its diverse cultural influences, blending Slavic traditions with Western European modernism. This cultural environment created fertile ground for the Bauhaus movement's ideas, which found resonance in the work of Czech architects and designers.

The Bauhaus's emphasis on functionality, simplicity, and the integration of art and technology deeply influenced Czechoslovak modernism, leading to a unique interpretation that reflected local cultural and social contexts. Czechoslovak architects and artists adopted and adapted these modernist principles, contributing significantly to the broader narrative of international modernism.

Reasons for Modernist Adoption

The adoption of modernist principles in Czechoslovakia was driven by several factors:

- / **Political Changes:** The formation of a new democratic state fostered a sense of optimism and a desire to break from traditional forms of art and architecture. Modernism represented a forward-looking vision for society.
- / **Industrialization:** Rapid industrialization provided new materials and technologies, prompting architects to explore innovative design solutions that aligned with modern manufacturing techniques.
- / **Cultural Exchange:** The Czechoslovak avant-garde movement, along with connections to influential figures in Germany and elsewhere, facilitated the exchange of ideas and artistic practices.

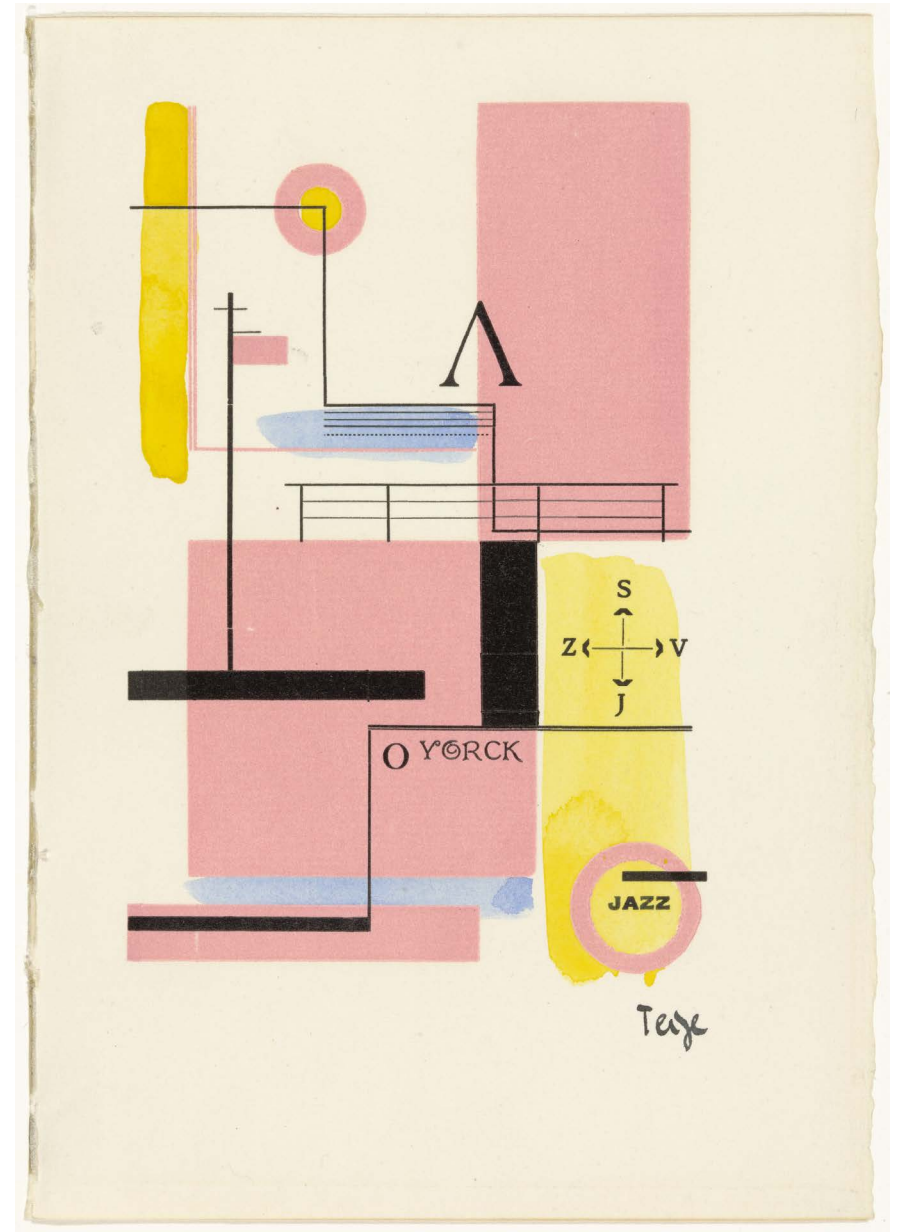
Czechoslovak modernism emerged as a distinctive movement, characterized by its integration of local materials, historical references, and the overarching principles of international modernism.

Key Figures in Czechoslovak Modernism

Karel Teige (1900-1951)

A prominent architect, designer, and theorist, Karel Teige was a key figure in the Czechoslovak avant-garde movement. He championed modernist architecture and design, advocating for the integration of art and technology. Teige was influenced by the Bauhaus and was instrumental in promoting its ideas within Czechoslovakia.

His writings, including *The Disruption of Space* and *The New Architecture*, emphasized the importance of functionality and simplicity in design. Teige's work extended beyond architecture to graphic design and typography, where he applied modernist principles to create visually striking publications.



Karel Teige's design work

Josef Gočár (1880-1945)

An influential architect and designer, Josef Gočár was known for his innovative approach to modernist architecture. His work is characterized by a unique synthesis of traditional Czech elements and modernist principles. One of his notable designs is the Grand Hotel Praha (1909), which showcases a blend of functionalism and Czech national style.

Gočár was also involved in the Czechoslovak National Theatre, where he contributed to the design of its interiors. His work demonstrated a commitment to integrating architecture with local culture and identity, making him a significant figure in the Czechoslovak modernist movement.



Grand Hotel Praha

Vladimír Karfík (1901-1990)

Karfík was a prominent architect known for his functionalist designs that emphasized practicality and aesthetics. He was influenced by the Bauhaus and applied its principles to create buildings that met the needs of modern urban life. One of his most recognized works is the Zlin Administrative Building (1930), which exemplifies modernist ideals through its clean lines and efficient use of space.

Karfík's approach to architecture also included a focus on urban planning, advocating for designs that enhanced the quality of life in cities. His work contributed significantly to the development of modern architecture in Czechoslovakia.



Zlin Administrative Building

Bohuslav Fuchs (1895-1972)

A significant figure in Czechoslovak architecture, Fuchs was known for his functionalist designs and contributions to public buildings. His notable works include the Czechoslovak Pavilion at the 1925 International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris, which showcased Czechoslovakia's modernist achievements.

Fuchs emphasized the importance of light and space in his designs, creating buildings that were both functional and aesthetically pleasing. His influence extended beyond architecture to teaching, where he inspired a new generation of architects in Czechoslovakia.



Villa in spa town of Luhačovice

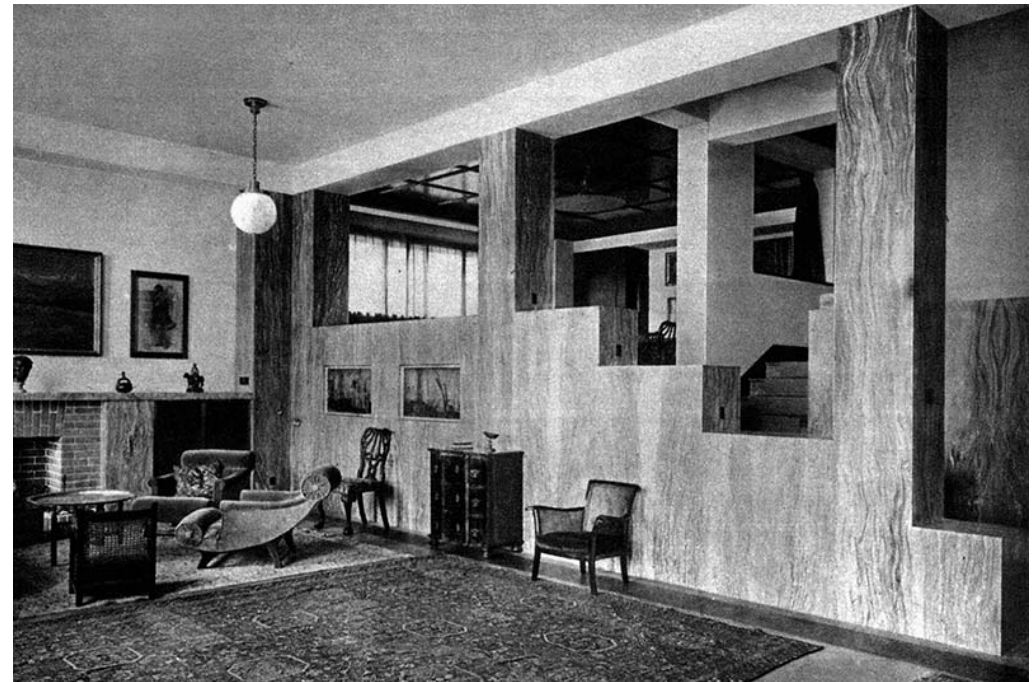
Key Buildings and Projects

Functionalist Architecture

Czechoslovakia became known for its functionalist architecture in the 1920s and 1930s, characterized by a rejection of ornamentation in favour of simplicity and practicality. This architectural style was seen as a response to the needs of modern society, providing efficient and affordable housing solutions.

Villa Müller (1930)

Designed by architect Adolf Loos, Villa Müller is a prime example of functionalist architecture in Czechoslovakia. The villa's design emphasizes spatial organization and the use of light, showcasing Loos's belief that form should follow function. The interior features innovative design elements that highlight the relationship between space and human experience.



Villa Müller

The Baťa Skyscraper (1938)

Located in Zlín, the Baťa Skyscraper was designed by architect Vladimír Karfík and serves as a symbol of Czechoslovak modernism. The building reflects the principles of functionalism with its clean lines and efficient use of space. It was one of the first skyscrapers in Europe and represented the ambitions of the Baťa shoe company, showcasing modern production methods and corporate identity.

The building's design includes open office spaces and large windows, promoting a sense of transparency and connection to the environment.



Baťa Skyscraper

Public Buildings and Cultural Institutions

Czechoslovak architects applied modernist principles to public buildings, creating spaces that reflected the ideals of democracy and social responsibility..

The Czech Radio Building (1933)

Designed by architect Jaroslav Rössler, the Czech Radio Building in Prague exemplifies the integration of modernist principles into public architecture. Its design features a bold, geometric facade and a focus on functionality. The building's purpose as a broadcasting centre aligns with the modernist vision of serving the public through accessible information and communication.



Czech Radio Building

The National Gallery in Prague (1945)

Originally designed by architect Alois Dryák, the National Gallery underwent several transformations over the years, reflecting changes in architectural trends. The modernist expansion of the gallery highlights the importance of integrating contemporary design with historical context, creating a space that fosters cultural exchange and artistic expression.



National Gallery in Prague

Artistic Movements and Contributions

Czechoslovak Constructivism

Constructivism, influenced by Russian avant-garde artists, found a unique expression in Czechoslovakia. Artists like Karel Teige and František Kupka explored new artistic forms that combined functionality with aesthetics, focusing on abstract geometric shapes and innovative materials.

František Kupka (1871-1957)

A pioneering painter and one of the first abstract artists, Kupka's work is characterized by its exploration of colour and form. His paintings, such as "Disks of Newton", reflect the principles of constructivism, emphasizing the relationship between colour and movement. Kupka's influence extended beyond painting to graphic design, where he applied modernist principles to create visually striking works.



František Kupka's Disks of Newton

The Czechoslovak avant-garde movement

The avant-garde movement in Czechoslovakia played a crucial role in shaping modernist thought and practice. Artists, writers, and designers came together to challenge traditional norms and explore new creative avenues. The Devětsil Group, founded in 1920, was instrumental in promoting modernist principles across various artistic disciplines.

The group's focus on integrating art with everyday life reflected the Bauhaus ethos, advocating for a democratic approach to culture that emphasized accessibility and engagement.



Devětsil Group magazines

Education and Modernist Ideals

Architecture Schools and Education

The establishment of modernist architecture schools in Czechoslovakia played a vital role in promoting the principles of Bauhaus and International Modernism. Institutions such as the Czech Technical University in Prague and the Brno University of Technology embraced modernist pedagogy, encouraging students to explore innovative design solutions and collaborative practices.

The Brno Exhibition Grounds (1928)

The Brno Exhibition Grounds, designed by E. D. A. (Emil) Králíček, showcased modernist architecture through pavilions and exhibition spaces. The event highlighted the importance of design in promoting industry and culture, reflecting the aspirations of a modern Czechoslovak state. The exhibition grounds served as a platform for showcasing contemporary design and architecture, fostering a spirit of innovation.



Brno Exhibition Grounds

International Modernism in Latvia

International Modernism in Latvia refers to the influence and adaptation of global modernist ideas in the country during the early and mid-20th century. It was also deeply inspired by broader European trends such as Bauhaus, Functionalism, Constructivism, and other avant-garde movements.

Porcelain and ceramics workshop Baltars (1925–1928)

Was a notable porcelain and ceramics workshop founded in Riga, Latvia, in 1924, and it became an important part of the Latvian modernist movement. Romans Suta ((1896–1944), Aleksandra Beļcova (1892–1981) were the leading figures behind Baltars. Suta, a painter and graphic artist, was the primary visionary of the workshop. The workshop is known for its innovative approach to porcelain art, blending avant-garde design with local cultural themes. Baltars represented a key moment in Latvian applied arts, where modernist principles were applied to the creation of everyday objects, making art accessible and functional.



Romana Sutas „Kāzas”, 1928. Porcelain



Aleksandra Beļcova, 1928. porcelain

<https://kulturaskanons.lv/archive/baltars-porcelans/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8d9g1_YXKaA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=us3pWBsqswk>

Ansis Cīrulis (1883–1942)

Was a visionary Latvian artist and designer whose work bridged the past and the present, creating a visual language that celebrated Latvian heritage while embracing modernist ideals. His designs, whether in graphic arts, interiors, or applied arts, are remembered for their artistic depth, cultural symbolism, and innovative style, making him a central figure in the history of Latvian modernism. Cīrulis's ability to adapt and modernize traditional Latvian motifs ensured that his work remains both historically significant and relevant to contemporary audiences.



Ansis Cīrulis castle

<https://kulturaskanons.lv/archive/rigas-pils-zale/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DpYn_QD-a5Y

Architecture in Latvia

Functionalism or the Modern Movement

Functionalism was the defining style throughout the 1920s and 1930s architecture. It is also referred to as the Modern Movement (MoMo), New Objectivity, International Style, or Avant-garde, and in some countries, it's even known as the "Bauhaus Style." In Latvia, the first buildings reflecting functionalism, or the Modern Movement, appeared in Riga around 1926–1927, only a few years after the earliest examples of this style emerged in Europe. One of the pioneers and most prolific masters of this new style was civil engineer Teodors Hermanovskis.

Single-family homes, as well as small multi-family houses with no more than four apartments, became a driving force behind the development of functionalist architecture around the late 1920s and early 1930s. By 1939, more than 500 such buildings had been constructed.

Functionalism has left a strong mark not only on the architectural face of Riga but has also influenced nearly every city in Latvia, as well as rural areas. This style can be found in the works of almost all architects from Latvia's first period of independence.

One of the most vocal advocates for functionalist architecture in Latvia was Aleksandrs Klinklāvs. Among his most notable buildings is the Tērvete Sanatorium (1930–1934, in collaboration with architect Ansis Kalniņš) – a large, unusually modern structure for its time, uniquely situated in the Latvian countryside.



Riga. Twin building at Ojārs Vācietis Street 13/13a. 1931.
Architect: T. Hermanovskis.



Riga. Rental building with shops and cinema at Zemitāns Square 2. 1933.
Architect: T. Hermanovskis.



Tērvete. Sanatorium. 1930–1934.
Designed by A. Klinklāvs and A. Kalniņš.

World War II temporarily halted construction activities, but unlike World War I, it did not create a rupture in the stylistic development of architecture. Throughout the postwar period, there was a continuation of pre-war stylistic trends in architecture. The neo-eclectic tendency also persisted worldwide, reflected in the architecture of many administrative and other public buildings. Particularly characteristic of this continuation of neo-eclecticism was the so-called "socialist realism" or Stalin-era architecture in the Soviet Union and its satellite states.

Many cultural centres and cinemas built during that time followed a similarly orthodox classical "template."

The Modern Movement or Functionalism continued to dominate worldwide architecture after World War II, but in the Soviet Union, the natural progression of architecture was obstructed by barriers and directives imposed by the highest echelons of power, enforcing the "socialist realism" format.



Riga. Spilve Airport, Spilves Street 1. 1954.
Designed by S. Vorobjovs. Interior and general view.



Riga. VEF Culture Palace,
Ropažu Street 1. 1951–1960.
Designed by N. Semencovs.



Liepāja. Pedagogical Institute
on Lielā Street 14. 1957.
Architect: A. Aivars.

- / **The primary focus was placed on constructing residential buildings based on standardized, mass-produced designs.** This approach was less about creating high-quality living environments and more about producing liveable square meters. Entire districts were developed, and around the historic centres of Riga, Liepāja, Daugavpils, and other cities, new residential complexes, known at the time as "micro-districts," emerged.
- / **Significant public buildings, such as shopping centers—known at the time as department stores—and schools, were also constructed based on frequently repeated standardized designs.** Identical department stores, designed by architect Velta Samtiņa, were built in Alūksne, Sigulda, Jēkabpils, Krāslava, and other locations. The designs for these buildings were developed by a team led by architect Kārlis Plūksne.
- / **In the 1960s, thousands of tall box-like buildings with minimally articulated facades clad mainly in metal and glass sprang up around the world.** This architectural aesthetic, inspired by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and seen as an artistic ideal at the time, was also reflected in several high-rise buildings in Riga. One of the first was the Hotel "Latvija" (now Reval Hotel Latvija) on Elizabetes Street 55 (1967–1978, architects Artūrs Reinfelds, Aija Grīna, Valters Maike, and Ilmārs Paegle). Similarly, the volumes of the Daile Theatre and the former "Rīgas Modes" building on Brīvības Street 49/53 (1965–1969, partially renovated in 1997) were designed in line with this principle.

Unlike pre-war functionalism, most post-war modernist buildings were constructed without consideration for the objective developmental patterns of specific locations, historical building codes, and cultural traditions. In the 1970s and 1980s, many historic city centres saw the emergence of architecturally interesting and professionally designed structures that, however, did not match the scale of the existing environment or were otherwise incompatible with the surrounding context.



Rīga. Hotel "Latvija" at Elizabetes Street 55. Built 1967–1978, architects A. Reinfelds, A. Grīna, V. Maike, and I. Paegle. Renovated 2000–2001 by architects V. Sarma, J. Norde, and J. Poga.



Rīga. Dailes Theatre at Brīvības Street 75. 1966–1976. Architects: M. Staņa, I. Jākobsons, H. Kanders, and others.

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Students' Tasks :

1. BAUHAUS MANIFESTO REIMAGINED

Task: Students work in groups to create a modern version of the Bauhaus manifesto, incorporating current societal and technological trends.

EXERCISE:

- Provide students with a copy of the original Bauhaus manifesto.
- Ask them to analyse its key ideas (functionality, simplicity, interdisciplinary work).
- Each group updates the manifesto to reflect today's design values, like sustainability and digital innovation.

Goal: Enhance critical thinking and teamwork while exploring the relevance of Bauhaus principles in contemporary design.

2. INTERNATIONAL MODERNISM DESIGN CHALLENGE

Task: Groups design a modern piece of furniture, architecture, or product inspired by both Bauhaus and International Modernism principles.

EXERCISE:

- Students first research Bauhaus and International Modernist designs (like Marcel Breuer's furniture or Le Corbusier's architecture).
- Each group sketches a design that combines form and function, simplicity, and modern materials.
- Have them create a model (physical or digital) and present their design to the class, explaining how it reflects the movement.

Goal: Encourage practical design thinking and creativity, while linking historical design to modern needs.

3. DEBATE: BAUHAUS VS. INTERNATIONAL MODERNISM

Task: Divide students into two groups—one defending Bauhaus principles and the other advocating for International Modernism.

EXERCISE:

- Each group researches their assigned movement, including key figures (like Walter Gropius for Bauhaus or Ludwig Mies van der Rohe for International Modernism) and iconic works.
- During the debate, they argue over which movement has had a more significant influence on contemporary design.

Goal: Develop argumentation, public speaking, and research skills while deepening understanding of both movements.

4. BAUHAUS PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT

Task: Students explore Bauhaus photography techniques by creating a photo series that captures "form follows function" in their surroundings.

Exercise:

- Introduce students to Bauhaus photographers like László Moholy-Nagy.
- Ask them to find and photograph objects or architecture that emphasize simplicity, geometry, and function.
- Groups present their photo series, explaining how their images reflect Bauhaus ideals.
- Goal: Foster creative expression, understanding of Bauhaus design principles, and photography skills.

5. RECREATE BAUHAUS AND INTERNATIONAL MODERNISM BUILDINGS IN 3D

Task: Students collaborate to create 3D models (digital or physical) of famous Bauhaus or International Modernism buildings.

Exercise:

- Each group selects a building, such as the Bauhaus Dessau or Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye.
- They research the building's features, construction, and design philosophy.
- Using materials like paper, cardboard, or design software, they construct a 3D model and present it to the class.

Goal: Develop spatial thinking and modelling skills while gaining a deeper understanding of architecture.

6. BAUHAUS AND MODERNISM IN FASHION DESIGN

Task: Students design a fashion collection inspired by Bauhaus and International Modernism.

Exercise:

After studying Bauhaus-inspired designs (like those of Anni Albers) and modernist fashion, students create sketches for a collection.

- Focus on simplicity, geometric patterns, and practical functionality in their designs.
- Groups present their fashion sketches and explain how they reflect the Bauhaus and modernist aesthetics.

Goal: Blend fashion design with historical movements, encouraging creativity and an understanding of form and function.

7. BAUHAUS TYPOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

Task: Students create their own typefaces inspired by Bauhaus typography.

Exercise:

- Introduce students to Bauhaus fonts like Herbert Bayer's "Universal."
- Groups collaborate to design a typeface that follows the Bauhaus principle of simplicity and legibility.
- They create posters using their font, showcasing how it can be used in modern graphic design.

Goal: Develop graphic design skills and a practical understanding of how Bauhaus influenced typography.

