

Echoes of Bauhaus Photography Cast Long Shadows

Curatorial Statement

As we celebrate the totality of Bauhaus achievements during the centennial, we realize that the Bauhaus was the most effective export of the 20th century German culture. This exhibition, the third in a series of four, focuses on Bauhaus photography of 14 mostly California-based photographers who meet the broad criteria of the Bauhaus style and the core ideas underlying of the Bauhaus movement.

Echoes of Bauhaus Photography Cast Long Shadows can be traced to the founding in Weimar, Germany and beyond. In 1919, Walter Gropius founded the school with a vision of bridging the gap between art and industry and combining crafts and fine arts. The Weimar Bauhaus years ended due to chronic financial difficulties and the next reincarnation takes roots in Dessau. That is also time when László Moholy-Nagy enters into the picture (1926). He is recognized as a pioneer who advocates unlimited experimentation with the photographic process. It leads to several breakthroughs, such as the invention of the photograms and photo collages. By placing objects on photographic paper and exposing them to light, an entirely new art form emerges.

After the dramatic closure by the Nazis of the Berlin Bauhaus School in 1933, members of the school has no choice but to migrate to the United States where the conditions favored artists for their unconventional practices. Moholy-Nagy arrives in Chicago and transports and transforms the idea of the Bauhaus into The Chicago Institution known as the New Bauhaus (1937/38), the School of Design (1939-1944), later, Institute of Design until 2001.

The New Bauhaus has gained the reputation of the most important photography program in the US and was the seminal place for the education of the modern artist-photographer. As a relatively new medium, photographers are identified with the new vision as advanced by a new technology and bold transformation. The early achievements of the 20th century and The New Bauhaus aesthetics and techniques have made a lasting global impact that has spread throughout the world and remains relevant to this very day.

In Echoes of Bauhaus Photography, the exhibiting artist-photographers draw their inspiration not only from the short-lived experiment of Bauhaus School that lasted in Germany for 14 years, but inject new life into the medium with the New Bauhaus Vision. In this show, the old Bauhaus and the new are joined by the spirit of unlimited experimentation, creativity, and invention. The featured works point to images that reflect mastery of capturing light and shadows, photo documentation, photograms that are exposed to the sun and moon, photomontages, double exposures created with digital tools, and artworks that use light as a medium.

Among the inventions, you will come across the “intentional misuse of scanning,” a technique that involves placing objects on a rotating platform in front of the camera while the system is operated in rollout mode so that the image sensor remains stationary. In these situations, the movement of the subjects interacts with the sequential recording of the image to create fantastic virtual objects.



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Curatorial Statement (Continued)

In sum, Bauhaus @ 100 is a cause to perpetuate experimentation and safeguard the freedoms to create that are at the core of the Bauhaus teachings and its legacy. After all these years, one marvels at the adventurous spirit of explorations and the plethora of technical innovations that define Digital Age and continue to inspire us.

Featured Artists:

Elisabeth Ajtay
Rachelle Bussieres
Antonio Cortez
John Csongradi
Kadet Kuhne
Terri Loewenthal
Phillip Maisel
Camila Magrane
Douglas McCulloh
Sonia Melnikova-Raich
Suzy Poling
Ron Saunders
Theodora Varnay Jones
Sally Weber

Hanna Regev
Curator