

Gunta Stölzl - The Development of the Bauhaus Weaving Workshop, 1931

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The Development of the Bauhaus Weaving Workshop

Gunta Stölzl

The transfer to Dessau brought the weaving workshop, as well as all the other workshops and departments, new and healthier conditions. We were able to acquire the most varied loom systems (Kontermarsch, shaft machine, Jacquard loom, carpet-knotting frame) and in addition our own dyeing facilities. The aim of the general education was to loosen up the student and to provide him with the broadest possible base and with a direction for a systematic approach to his work.

From now on, there begins a clear and final distinction between two areas of education that initially were fused with each other: The development of functional textiles for use in interiors (prototypes for industry) and speculative experimentation with materials, form, and colour in tapestries and rugs.

Functional textiles are necessarily subject to accurate technical, and limited, but nevertheless variable design requirements. The technical specifications, resistance to wear and tear, flexibility, elasticity, permeability or impermeability to light, fastness to colour and light, etc., were dealt with systematically according to the final use of the material.

The aesthetic qualifications, the demand for beauty, the effect of woven fabrics in a room and the feel of it, are much more difficult to define objectively. Whether lustrous or flat, whether soft or severe, whether strong or subdued in texture, whether coloured brightly or softly, all this depends on the kind of room, its functions, and not least of all on individual needs.

The tool of the weaver - the material, colour, and the weave - are subject to constant technical improvement. Wool, silk, cotton, the synthetic fibers (cellophane) are continuously being improved by better breeding and cultivating methods, mechanical treatment (process of spinning, refinement), new scientific inventions, and by new dyeing methods. The vitality of the material

forces people working with textiles to try out new things daily, to readjust time and again, to live with their subject, to intensify it, to climb from experience to experience in order to do justice to the needs of our time □. Experience shows that we are advancing along useful paths: The cultural influence of our work on the textile industry and on other workshops is clearly in evidence today. Those who have been trained by us are now occupying top positions in mechanical weaving mills and workshops and also in schools.

Only active participation in solving the changing problems of life and home makes it possible to keep the educational and cultural work of the Bauhaus weaving workshop vital and progressive. Woven fabrics in a room are equally important in the larger entity of architecture as the colour of the walls, the furniture and household equipment. They have to serve their □purposes□, have to be integrated, and have to fulfil with ultimate precision the requirements we place on colour, material, and texture. The possibilities are unlimited. Understanding of and feeling for the artistic problems of architecture will show us the right way.