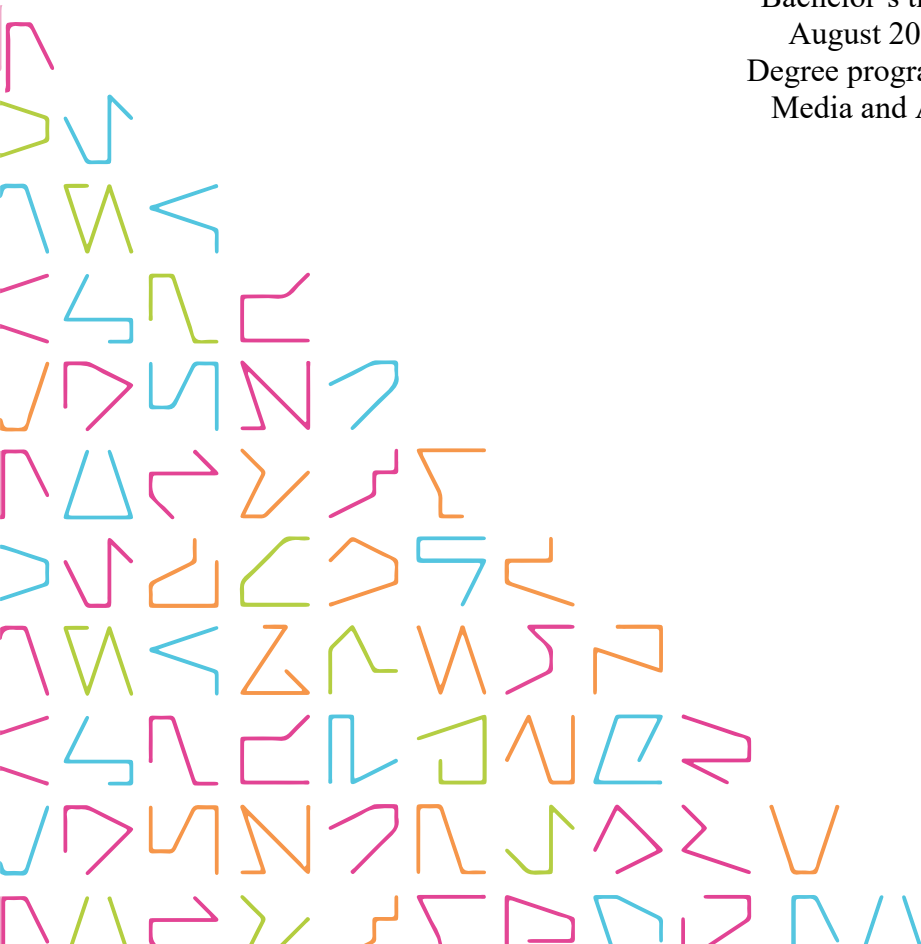


Cosmic Being
From theory to practice

Mohammed Mustafa

Bachelor's thesis
August 2018
Degree programme
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ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Media and Arts

Mohammed Mustafa
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Art theory has long been recognized as playing an important role in understanding art practice and building up critical thinking that can so valuably influence an artist's practice. Art theory is perceived as the nature of art, the definition and statement for any art movement.

This thesis focuses on Bauhaus theatre as an art theory. The case study then explores how to transfer that theory into a fine art practice. The implementation of this practice was divided into two parts, one focused on photography and the other on graphic design. From Chapter Five to Chapter Eight, the discussion of this case study, Cosmic being: from theory to practice, is presented.

This study drew largely on the analysis of various works of literature including but not limited to the following: *The Letters and Diaries of Oskar Schlemmer* (1990) edited by Tut Schlemmer; *The Theatre of the Bauhaus* (Gropius & Wensinger 1979), a collection of essays written by Oskar Schlemmer (Schlemmer 1979), Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, and Farkas Molnár; and *Dance the Bauhaus* (2016) edited by Torsten Blume.

Bauhaus, with its fascinating mechanization of the stage and the human figures thereon, has not disappeared; its influence exists in theatres and performances across the world, most notably in the use of video techniques in the theatre, and the use of technology and multimedia as integral elements of stage performances. As an art theory, Bauhaus theatre furthermore serves as powerful inspiration, which—as demonstrated in this thesis—is applicable to numerous other fine art practices.

Key words: Bauhaus theatre, Oskar Schlemmer, dance theatre, German theatre, art theory, art practice

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1 INTRODUCTION

A house is a machine for living and a forest is a forest. Hence, courage and clarity break ground into the sixth dimension. This gives a new scope to your imagination; can you feel it? Stand up, it's time for resurrection. We prefer to perform fantastic theatre, or we dance! Ah, you have never undergone the Bauhaus dance? You are still an ordinary earthworm, you still have not been able to solve the Shakespearean riddle of To Be or Not To Be – nothing and infinity. Have you ever been able to comprehend it in the enlightened moments of your existence? We dance the whole night through. We also work the whole night through, if we have not finished during the day. (Xanti Schawinsky 1924, quoted in Blume 2016)

The purpose of this thesis is firstly to discuss how the art theory of Bauhaus theatre can be transformed into a fine art practice, and secondly to present the findings of a practical case study (Cosmic being: from theory to practice, hereinafter referred to as Cosmic Being), which demonstrates this transformation.

One rarely hears the term *Bauhaus theatre*; or if one does, Bauhaus is immediately associated with the architectural movement. However, Bauhaus was about more than just architecture. Bauhaus theatre, which was developed by Oskar Schlemmer, was the first theatre movement obsessed with technology, and Bauhaus theatre artists were the first to develop light modular, for example, on the stage, and to incorporate light installations as well as the use of projectors and videos into stage performances. The way they used technology has inspired modern theatre, wherein the use of video and visuals has become widespread, often playing an integral role in a performance.

The choice of the Bauhaus theatre as the topic of this thesis was based upon the author's personal interest in theatre, visuals and geometric design. The thesis consists of two parts: firstly, the theoretical, which is based on research of various reading materials, and secondly, the practical that is based on the application of the principles of the Bauhaus theatre into art form. The practical project entitled Cosmic Being consists of two phases: first, photography, wherein the artist captured a choreographed dance body movement in a series of frames using strobe lighting; and second, graphic design, the postproduction phase which involved the specific application of colours, shapes and layout as inspired by the Bauhaus design.

One of the most intriguing questions concerning the Bauhaus theatre is how this barely known movement has influenced modern theatre and inspired many directors since to think or think differently about viewpoint and composition on the stage. The deeper one looks into Bauhaus, the more one realizes how revolutionary this movement was: It opened a wide road for visual, sound and light experimentation on the stage, and most importantly introduced the concepts of viewpoint and composition. This last point is nowhere to be found in any of the writings of the Bauhaus artists, but it was integrated into Bauhaus stage work and performances and became part of their distinctive style and technique.

Viewpoints amount to an unwritten, non-verbal language between actors in a performance: the connection between the actors on the stage, how they interact, the relation between their movement and the space (Bogart & Landau 2005). A viewpoint is also the individual interpretation of a feeling, or a reaction to a sudden movement or sound made by another actor. Composition is how the viewpoints connect to the space, how all the elements of a performance work in harmony within the place. How many times have we seen a performance with a huge stage design, yet we feel that the stage is calm and uncrowded? That is the purpose of composition: to bring everything into the right place, with the precise movements.

While specifically applied to the theatre, the abovementioned elements draw an artist's attention to the aesthetic value of the human body in an artistic composition, and in the Bauhaus theatre, it was the comprehensive nature of how this value of the human body—a cosmic being—was recognized and used that was so particular. This thesis explores these defining principles of the Bauhaus theatre art theory, eventually putting them to the test through application in an entirely different form of art.

2 THE HISTORY OF BAUHAUS

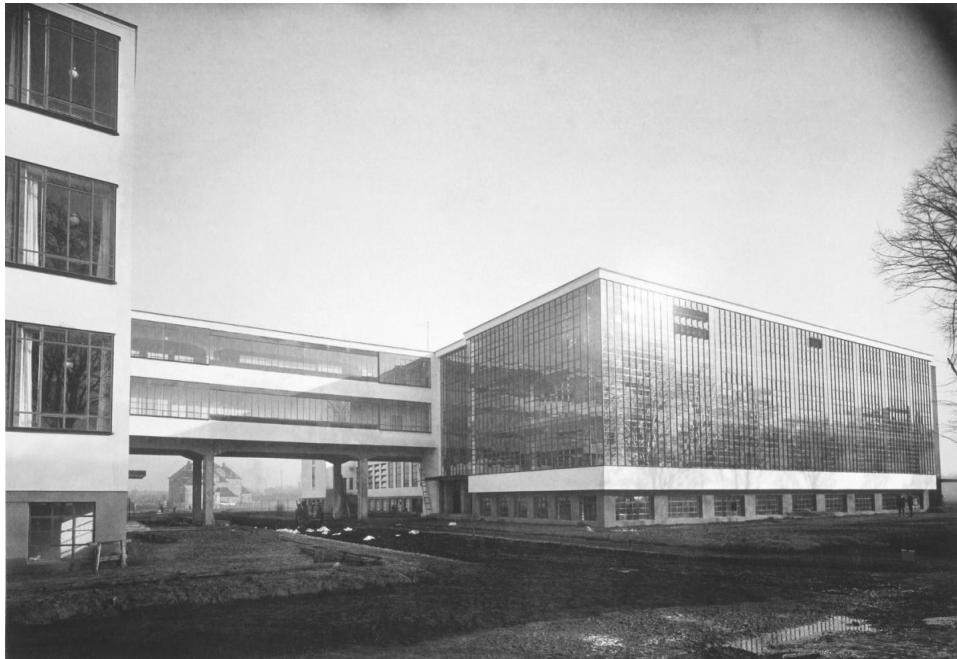
2.1 Bauhaus as art school

Bauhaus literally means building house. The movement was established in the city of Weimar, Germany in 1919 by the German architect Walter Gropius. Its objective was to radicalize and renew the image of architecture, to reflect the unity of all art forms. Gropius' vision was to combine the disciplines of sculpture, architecture and painting. Following the Bauhaus theory, students who came from different artistic backgrounds had to follow mandatory foundational courses in colour theory and material studies. These courses were taught by well-known visual artists such as Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky and Josef Albers.

In 1925, the Bauhaus moved from Weimar to Dessau, where Gropius designed a new building to house the school (see picture 1). This building contained many features that later became hallmarks of modernist architecture, including a steel-frame construction, glass curtain wall and asymmetrical pinwheel plan, and within it were distributed studio flats, classrooms and an administrative space for maximum efficiency and spatial logic.

Gropius stepped down as director of the Bauhaus in 1928, succeeded by the architect Hannes Meyer. Meyer maintained the emphasis on mass-producible design and eliminated parts of the curriculum. Additionally, he stressed the social function of architecture and design. Under his leadership, photography and advertising gained particular prominence. However, in the increasingly right-wing political context of the Weimar Republic in 1930, Meyer was dismissed and replaced by the architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

Mies redirected the focus of Bauhaus on architecture again, but due to political instability he relocated the school to Berlin in 1930, where it operated on a reduced scale. In 1933, the Gestapo closed the Bauhaus. (Lekach, M. 2016. Know your design history: The Bauhaus movement. Read 26.3.2018. <https://en.99designs.de/blog/design-history-movements/know-your-design-history-the-bauhaus-movement/>).



PICTURE 1. The Bauhaus building in Dessau, designed by Walter Gropius, 1925

2.2 Bauhaus as theatre

Alongside their success in the field of architecture, Bauhaus was also known for their performing art and theatre work. Bauhaus theatre might not be as widely known as Bauhaus architecture, but the innovation and creativity demonstrated within the theatre workshop elicited the expression of considerable talent among teachers and students involved and resulted in revolutionary developments in stage design.

Dance and body movement were the focal point in the Bauhaus theatre, as established in Oskar Schlemmer's Bauhaus dance workshop that was in operation between 1923 and 1929. This workshop/project was divided into the following sections:

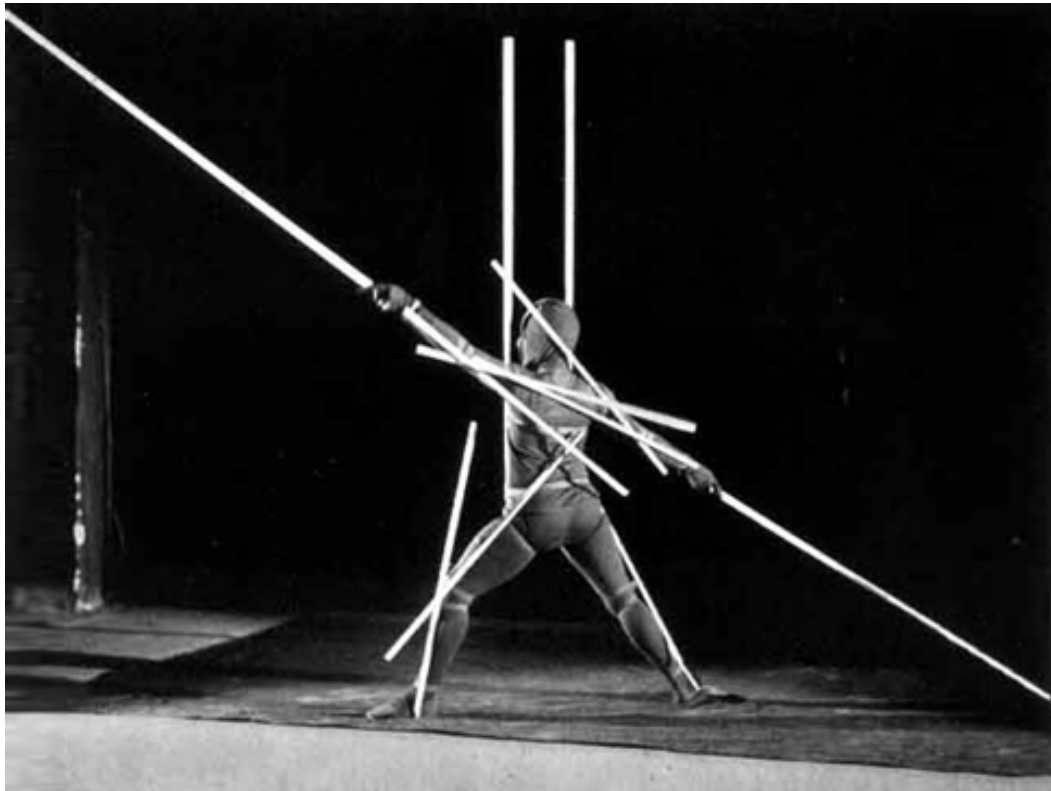
- Bauhaustänze (Bauhaus dance)
- Formentanz (form dance)
- Tanz in Glas (dance in glass)
- Tanz in Metal (dance in metal)
- Stäbetanz (stick dance)
- Raumtanz (space dance)

All of these sections were combined together under the name *Triadisches Ballett*, or the Triadic Ballet. Schlemmer presented the Triadic Ballet on stage for the first time in 1922. The idea behind the performance was to express the development of physical and material

movement in space, that is to say on stage. Pictures 2 and 3, for example, show the reformation of the human body, the weight of the body on the stage, and physical movement. Bauhaus artists were fascinated by the idea of using the stage for spatial art. This work inspired a new conceptualization of architecture as spatial art. It also resulted in experimental stage workshop performances and inspired many of the theatre space (stage) designs that were subsequently presented by Bauhaus artists. While many of the Bauhaus artists such as László Maholy-Nagy, Kurt Schmidt and Xanti Schavinsky developed their own stage designs to create the idea of a mechanical stage, Schlemmer used masks and costumes to draw reflections on the age of the machine and abstraction.



PICTURE 2. Oskar Schlemmer's space dance (Photo: Erich Consemüller; The Charnel-house 2013)



PICTURE 3. Oskar Schlemmer's stick dance (Birringer 2013)

3 ART FIGURE, NEW MAN

One further approach taken by Bauhaus artists that has had a huge influence on modern theatre is that of altering the human body. Bauhaus artists never considered the human body as a subject; rather, they treated it as an object, one of the material elements on the stage. They reformed that object, reshaped it, reproduced it, modernized it, and it became a dancing art figure. “New man,” said Schlemmer, “ought to be able to dance, a dance man” (Schlemmer 1971). This ideology was not only espoused by Bauhaus teachers and students, but also by many of the avant-garde artists of the day.

Bauhaus artists have always considered the human body as the main object on the stage, and they reshaped that body using graphic sculpture, ambiguous structure and figural constriction. Consequently, this method caused distortion in the human body. The body distortion technique became a metaphor and statement that the body is youthful, active and modern, hence, the concept of the modern human being, the new man. To take this notion or statement further, there followed a series of analytical approaches to the human body, which resulted in a representation of the human body as a geometric pattern. Moreover, the machine-age conception of man based on sign and time added a rhythmic element to the human body or art figure.

In 1925, Schlemmer introduced the term *art figure* (*Kunst figure*). His principles relating to this figure are divided into four categories:

1. costume, which alters the shape of the human body;
2. technical organism, which reflects the movement of the human body;
3. articulated puppet, which denotes the function and way of behaving of the human body; and
4. figure de-materialization, which allows physical expression.

The idea of the art figure had awakened artists’ fascination in automatous, circulated puppets and machine men. The “art figure, it represents a fusion of human being and mechanical figure” (Blüme 2016, 20).

At first glance, the art figure in its masks and costume embodies the concept of masculinity, the masculine man, the machine. However, under this masculine transfiguration is hidden a provocative representation of a different sexual orientation and gender. For example, in the gay burlesque (figure 1), Schlemmer uses two male dancers. One is dressed up in blue and brown with a sharp-cut outfit. The colours and shape indicate the masculine

workman or labourer. However, the other male dancer is dressed in pink and wears a bubble-shaped outfit, which could be interpreted as a skirt.

The human-machine relationship was put on stage in the Bauhaus theatre. It was a novelty; however, it has been noted that the Bauhaus theatre provides evidence that there are limits to how automated we, as humans, want to become, at least in terms of artistic production: While the reduced time spent on banal domestic chores might be undeniably attractive, few would really be interested in seeing a theatre play produced entirely by machines (Wilk 2013).



FIGURE 1. Gay burlesque, Triadic Ballet (snapshot taken from the Triadic Ballet Video)

4 MECHANICAL STAGE

Another innovation implemented by Bauhaus that made its impact on modern theatre was changing the very purpose of the stage. The idea of the mechanical stage was inspired by a dance performance, the mechanical ballet directed by Kurt Schmidt, wherein dancers danced behind geometrical shapes, moving like a machine, with very precise and strictly controlled movements. Bauhaus artists and students took that notion further and developed what we know now as the mechanical stage. This stage crosses the boundary between the stage and the audience. It engages the visual attention of the audience and in order to evoke their anticipation for what is to come in the performance, the stage works like a camera to bring certain movements, certain actions into focus. As its name implies, technical devices were built to allow the stage to rotate, spin and go back and forth. The most influential mechanical theatre designs that emerged from the Bauhaus were Gropius' total theatre (figure 2), Farkas Molnár's U-theatre (figure 3) and Andor Weininger's spherical theatre (figure 4).

The idea of the total theatre was developed in 1927 by Walter Gropius. The aim was performing cinema on an animated stage. The animated auditorium gave the audience the feeling of being part of a big and dynamic scenario. The theatre conceived as an architectural machine changed the form and role of the stage. The mechanical theatre intentionally blurred the boundary between the audience and the stage, which means that the audience viscerally feel anticipation for what is about to happen, not by taking part in the action but by watching, and this anticipation via observation is evoked by animated theatre. In other words, the animated auditorium was conceived of like a 3-D movie that offers the audience the sense of being physically immersed in the action.

The main differences between the Bauhaus mechanical theatre and other theatre genres are as follows. First, Bauhaus aimed to overcome the separation between audience and the stage, unlike other theatres, wherein that separation is still visibly maintained. Second, Bauhaus, via animated theatre, was able to interact with the audience through deliberately highlighting the focal point of the action. However, other theatres reform this concept by using what is known as *interaction*, where the actors interact directly with the audience by asking direct questions, or choosing a random audience member to come up on stage, etc.

A clear example of the mechanical stage is found in the summer theatre (kesäteatteri) in Pyyrikki, located in the city of Tampere, Finland. In this theatre, the auditorium spins around, allowing it to function as a camera panning. This gives the director the artistic freedom not to concentrate strictly on one scene only at any given moment; rather (s)he has the use of deep stage, proscenium stage and centre stage.

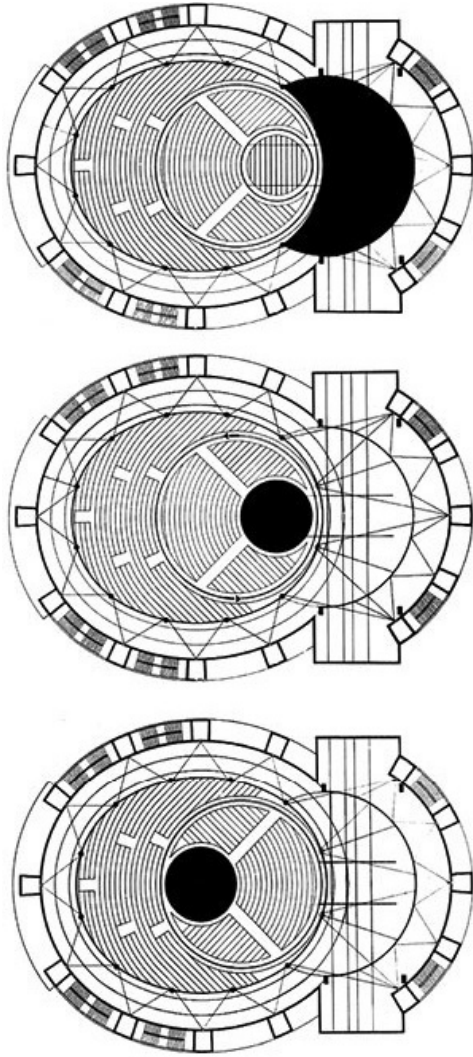


FIGURE 2. Total theatre by Walter Gropius (Blume 2016)

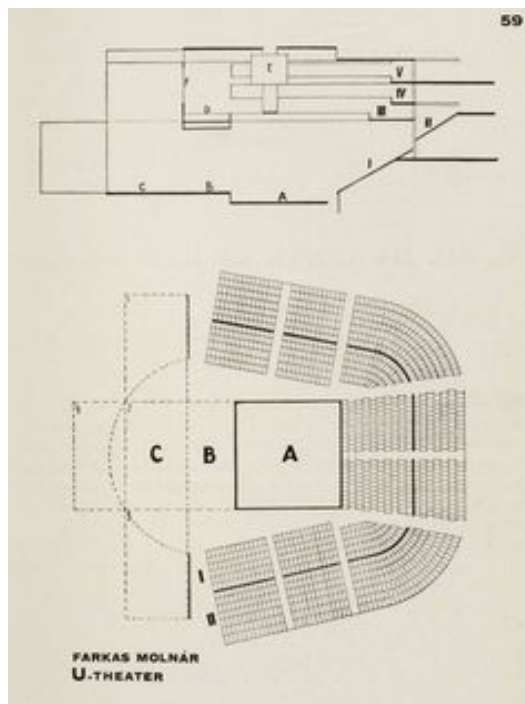


FIGURE 3. U-theatre by Farkas Molnár (Blume 2016)

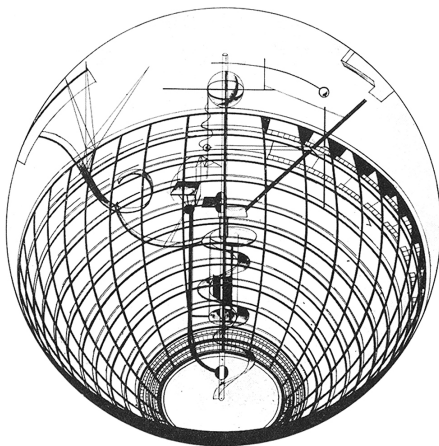


FIGURE 4: Spherical theatre by Andor Weininger (Blume 2016)

5 COSMIC BEING: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Theory has always been central to the study and practice of aesthetics and remains the preoccupation of the philosophy of art. The avowed concern of art theory is the determination of the nature of art, which can be formulated into a definition. This definition is construed as the statement of the necessary and sufficient properties of art, while the statement purports to be a true or false claim about the essence of art, what characterizes and distinguishes it from everything else. Each of the great theories of art—Formalism, Voluntarism, Emotionalism, Intellectualism, Intuitionism, Organicism—converges on the attempt to state the defining properties of art (Weitz 1956).

This case study has been undertaken to closely examine the Bauhaus theatre principles and approach through practical application. The plan was to put this practice on stage as performance art, particularly in terms of the dance figure, to conduct a study of motion, body and composition. However, in the end, this has not been possible to realize for the following reasons: first, lack of funding to cover renting an appropriate venue, costumes, equipment, etc.; and second, lack of time to direct, compose music and do the necessary preparations for the visual art and effects. Due to these factors, the author came to the conclusion to implement the practice of Bauhaus through the media of photography and graphic design.

Oskar Schlemmer dedicated an entire course of study to “the man”, seeing the man as a cosmic being—a psychological whole, a world of totality—rather than merely “an objective motif”. This view of man was doubtless the most powerful spur to his impassioned and tireless effort to evolve a valid artistic form for man as he saw him in and from his time. (Schlemmer 1971.)

In Schlemmer’s attempt to adapt man to the physical space of the stage, he turned to dance because the dancer “obeys the law of the body as well as the law of space. He follows his sense of self as well as his sense of embracing space” (Schlemmer 1971, 3–4, according to Raison 1940, 56). Schlemmer felt that man’s emotion and reason altered his body’s “true” mechanical movements and that dance, because of its integral relationship to the physical space in which it is performed, was the means by which these true (that is to say intuitively inspired) movements could be freed. (Raison 1940).

In order to deform and reform the human body, one has to understand how man as a cosmic being works, his movement, organs, figure, mind, etc. From that notion, the author's practical project, Cosmic Being, was born. The title was inspired by Schlemmer's own journey of understanding the man as an entity, and the project is one that picks up where Schlemmer left off in his study of the man, but through the visual media of photography and graphic design.



FIGURE 5. Bauhaus stage dramatic gesturing (Gropius & Wensinger 1979), inspiration for the Cosmic Being art project

Cosmic Being looks at the man as representative of the whole of society, life, and not as an object, true to the Bauhaus theatre principles; thus, normality, standardization, the standard notion of beauty is deformed, and the artist creates beauty. In this project the author broke the normative and standard image of beauty: the model, photographed while dancing, was a big man, with a large body whose physique contradicts that of the typically slim and flexible athletic figure. In this way, the author wanted to explore the following

questions: What will this body tell us when it moves across the stage? What will this body convey in his movement? Will this body be able to reflect emotion, reflect beauty?

Dance is rhythmic movement whose purpose, as expressed by Aristotle in his seminal work on dramatic theory, *Poetics*, is “to represent men’s characters as well as what they do and suffer” (Mackrell 1999). Thus dance is a physical expressive art form that is shaped by sequences of movement, rhythmic movement. These movements constitute the communicative language between performers and audience. In order to communicate using this physical language, one has to be aware of and master the basic physical requirements. For example, in order to speak Finnish, one has to learn the alphabet and pronunciation. The physical requirements are essentially having a body that is prepared and capable of making the movements required. One can achieve this by first stretching and exercising; secondly developing keen awareness of time and space; and thirdly keeping soft focus, relaxing the eyes in order to make use of one’s peripheral vision and be able to observe as many elements of the surroundings as possible (Bogart & Landau).

These physical requirements are just the alphabet. One cannot speak a language properly, however, without also learning its grammar, the rules dictating how the letters and words are to be used in sequence to create meaning. Thus, the dancer should also study and practise the following factors relating to the different ways one can move one’s body:

- Tempo: how fast or slow is the movement
- Duration: time between the starting and finishing points of a movement or sequence
- Kinaesthetic response: how fast or slow your spontaneous reaction is to movements around you
- Repetition
- Topography: how you move, how much space the movement takes, and the environment (including all contextual aspects that can affect the sequence of movement such as surface, architecture, etc.)
- Gesture: specific physical movements, expressing thought, emotion and ideas

After taking into consideration the grammar, one is able to create a sequence of movements with some sort of significance. These movements come together to represent a non-verbal art piece. Such grammar is clearly identifiable in Schlemmer’s direction of the

Triadic Ballet, wherein there is great precision in the tempo and duration of movement sequences, and clear composition in terms of the topography.

In design, such grammar can be understood in terms of colour, shape, typography and composition, all principles that held great importance in the work of the Bauhaus artists. These elements are demonstrated in the second, graphic design part of this project. Below (figure 6) is an example of the type of work intended for the graphic design part.

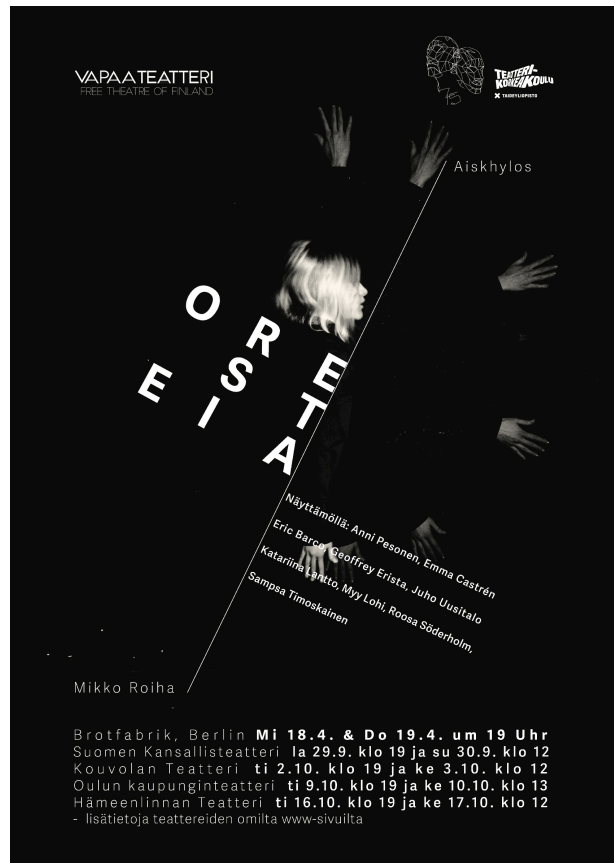


FIGURE 6. Poster for the production of *Oresteia* at the theatre academy in Helsinki, designed by the author

In the case of Cosmic Being, the author deliberately chose to work with a non-dancer, a man in his mid-40s whose body contradicts the typical physical requirements. The author wanted to explore the possibilities of a body's ability to communicate using the language of dance if the alphabet as defined above has not been mastered. Imagine, for example, a Finnish man who knows no other language than his own mother tongue. Put him in another country, for instance, Jordan, and ask him to go into a shop and communicate with the person at the counter. Now, the Finnish man is trapped in a circle of limited communication circle, dependent on the direction of the person who puts him in this situation.

The only thing that occupies the Finnish man's mind is how to survive in such a situation, just like the model in *Cosmic Being*. He suddenly found himself in a theatre space surrounded by black canvases, trying to absorb the author's direction in order to communicate. How correct was the model's communication was not the goal of this experiment. Rather, it was to see how possible it would be for the body to express, and the artist to direct, capture and represent harmony between the body and its new environment as well as the model's inner feeling of confusion and disturbance. Herein lies the central experiment of *Cosmic Being*: how to represent man as a whole, as a totality with regard to his environment. The results of the experiment prove that it is indeed possible (see Appendix).

6 PHOTOGRAPHY

As previously mentioned, the implementation of the thesis project was ultimately unable to include a stage work to demonstrate the aesthetic of the Bauhaus theatre. The only viable option was to use the visual arts of photography and graphic design instead, attempting to involve geometry, composition of objects, movements, and the human body in one frame, in one shot.

At the beginning of this thesis, a clear definition for the Bauhaus theatre, its principles and its aesthetic was attempted. No concrete, fixed definition for the Bauhaus theatre and its aesthetic exists, partly due to lack of research and written material on the topic. It can however be argued that, simply put, the Bauhaus theatre is about composing different elements on stage thereby creating and maintaining harmony and balance. In this sense, the aesthetic of Bauhaus does not differ at all from the general aesthetic of visual art; thus, the medium of photography serves well for composing an image that adheres to the Bauhaus principles.

The author's starting point in the implementation of *Cosmin Being* was to focus on movement, one of those elements critical to understanding man as a cosmic being. Using the visual rather than performance arts, the greatest challenge, however, was finding a way to convey movement, to represent the human body as an art figure, and to bring the dynamic of motion to the image. The model was asked to perform a series of movements that were choreographed and directed by the author, and in doing so, to integrate with the space, to be part of the space. However, when these movements were captured into an image, many of the essential elements of his performance were missing, and the dynamic of the movement became completely static.

Photography came into existence a significant amount of time before the Bauhaus was born, and its developments have been phenomenal from the first invention of the camera obscura, or pinhole image, till the modern-day digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) cameras. Such a history encompasses a lot of experimentation, especially with the subject of motion and movement. The author drew on this history, and decided to apply an old photography technique called *strobe effect* in order to convey the critical element of dynamic movement and motion. A stroboscope, initially invented in the 1830s, is an instrument that provides intermittent illumination of a rotating or vibrating object in order to study

the motion of the object or to determine its rotary speed or vibration frequency. A machine part, for example, may be made to appear to slow down or stop; the effect is achieved by producing illumination in very short, brilliant bursts that always occur when the moving part is in the same phase of its motion. (Encyclopedia Britannica).

Special lighting effects and techniques, such as strobe lighting, were no strangers to the Bauhaus, in whose theatre productions stage lighting was used not to imitate natural light, but rather for its own aesthetic value, colour and form, as with any other element of the composition on stage. In the case of the reflected-light compositions, moving, illuminated colour provided the play's very action. (Raison 1940).

Using the strobe effect technique, it is possible to use one object (i.e., the human body) and multiply its movements on the designated composition, thus creating the author's desired effect. The technique made it possible to capture the dancer's movement in a single frame, or a single shot creating a mechanical motion that reflect Schlemmer's own words: "as for myself, I am for the body-mechanical dance, the mathematical dance" (Schlemmer 1971). For example, in figure 6 in the previous chapter, the model was waving her arm up and down in a semi-circular motion - creating a precise and mechanical movement- by using the strobe flash set at a specific speed, it was possible to clearly capture the hand movement in the photographic image.

Cosmic Being was entirely implemented employing this technique at the theatre space (Pier 9) in Neuköln, Berlin. The author and the model/performer spent their evenings in complete darkness to achieve the final results.

7 GRAPHIC DESIGN

As has been demonstrated, the Bauhaus artists sought to combine art, craft and technology in the implementation of their ideas. Unsurprisingly then, this movement has greatly influenced the field of graphic design, especially in the mid-20s, and again after the Second World War, from the mid-40s.

What has made the Bauhaus approach in poster design widely inspirational is precisely the same aesthetical approach they applied in the theatre: composition, space, geometry, minimalism in addition to the element of typography, which has become key in Bauhaus poster design. “We owe much to this ragtag German design school that persevered throughout a tough time of social and political upheaval to leave one of the biggest stamps on art, architecture and design in the 20th century,” states Maya Lekach in a blog on the history of design (Lekach 2016).

In Chapters Two to Four of this thesis, the artistic principles of the Bauhaus’ dance/theatre have been thoroughly explored, principles which the author has endeavoured to represent through photography and graphic design in the practical case study, *Cosmic Being*. In this chapter, a detailed discussion is presented of the author’s use of colour, shape and typography in attempting to complete this practical case study of Bauhaus.

1. Colour

In the example below (figure 7), the author used a black and white photograph by Tom Hegen to demonstrate the principles of graphic design: space, colour and shapes. The design focused on using primary colours to create a duotone effect inspired by the colour palette of Bauhaus posters from the 1920s. This moreover creates a balance between the objects in the image. However, positive was inverted to negative and vice versa, as evidenced by the yellow colour inside the circle and the red colour inside the green triangle. This effect helps the viewer to stay in focus and not get lost by the various elements in the poster.

2. Shapes

Shapes are another important element in the Bauhaus aesthetic. By using shapes such as triangles, squares and circles, they were able to deform the normative shape of a human being notably through the use of masks and costume design. The use of shapes in stage design emphasizes the architectural and industrial (me-

chanical) background, vision and aspirations of the Bauhaus artists. In the example below the picture has been split using triangles and a circle. The circle emphasizes the head and torso of the dancer, while the dark green triangle highlights the lower part of the body. By using simple shapes, the image of the body has become stronger, bolder and more majestic. At first glance, the viewer might even mistake the human body for that of a horse.



FIGURE 7. Demonstration of shape and colours, designed by the author

3. Typography

Moholy-Nagy is famous for his concept of *typo-photo*, the synthesis between photography and typography, which can be considered the inception of modern-day graphic design (Moriarty 2016). Typography was used in many different forms in Bauhaus design—vertical, horizontal, wrapped around objects, etc.—which has greatly influenced subsequent trends in poster design. An example can be seen in figure 8 below.

In figure 7 the use of typography is not as bold and informative as it should be. Besides the title (The Body is Larger than the Man), there is no additional information to give the viewer. Referring instead therefore to figure 5 as an example of the use of typography, you can see that the poster is a design for the theatre academy in Helsinki. As in the previous example, the photograph was split into two diagonal parts. On the left is the title, bold, in large font with nothing immediately surrounding it that might distract from its weight. In order to ensure visual balance, the names of the actors on the right are on the same horizontal line on which the title ends, aligned in the opposite direction. The typography here is bolder and occupies 70% of the poster. The aim here is to use text as a form of art whilst at the same time being informative.

Example of Bauhaus layout and typography



FIGURE 7. Example of Bauhaus poster design layout and typography: Poster for the 1923 Bauhaus Exhibition in Weimar (Poster design: Joost Schmidt; Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, according to Bauhaus100 2017)

8 CONCLUSION

The Bauhaus school emphasized a strong understanding of basic design, especially in the principles of composition, colour theory and craftsmanship in a wide array of disciplines. Because of the Bauhaus belief in the oneness of the artist and the craftsman, their courses taught students to eliminate the ideas of the individual and instead focus on the productivity of design. (Harimurti 2008.)

As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, the focus has been on the transformation of art theory—in this case, that of the Bauhaus theatre—to practice. In order for the author to apply the theory into art form, he had to understand the history of the Bauhaus theatre and the development of its theory therein. Hence, he was able to capture the vision, and from the vision emerged the design and eventual implementation of his own practical case study, *Cosmic being*: from theory to practice.

The theory of the Bauhaus theatre is centred on the principles of body movement, shapes, composition, costumes, design and typography. The implementation of this theory into practical art form could employ any art medium as long as the understanding of these core principles is reflected in the final work. Within the history of the Bauhaus school itself, for example, Bauhaus started as an architectural movement, which then developed into an art form which came to include theatre. Therein Schlemmer used the human body as movable architecture on the stage, remaining true to the original guiding principles of the Bauhaus movement at its outset. Similarly, *Cosmic Being* applied carefully chosen photographic and graphic design techniques to combine all the fundamental elements of Bauhaus theatre theory into a two-dimensional image.

Bauhaus theatre revolutionized the concept of stage and set design by introducing, for example, the mobile mechanical stage, an intervention that has seen lasting influence in the world of the theatre ever since. Moreover, they reshaped the human body and introduced man as an art figure. As Bauhaus movement approaches the 100th anniversary of its inception in January 2019, this case study offers an overall understanding about the core principles and aesthetic behind the Bauhaus movement, a movement that has inspired the author—along with many others—as an artist in photography, graphic design, stage acting and stage directing for many years and continues to do so.

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APPENDIX

- Cosmic Being Art Project



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Art concept by
Mohammed Moe Mustafa
Performing by
Mohammed Al Ghaq

