

From Social Democratic Experiment to Postwar Avant-Gardism

The project *bauhaus imaginista*, which takes the cosmopolitan Bauhaus as its point of departure in order to question the school's legacy from a trans-historical and transnational perspective on the occasion of the centenary of its founding, would be negligent if it did not address the artist group referenced by its title, the *Mouvement Internationale pour un Bauhaus Imaginiste* (International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus, or IMIB), founded in 1953 by Danish artist Asger Jorn together with a handful of French and Italian colleagues. Many of the theoretical and artistic positions advocated by the IMIB were developed dialectically in response both to the historical Bauhaus and the reconstitution of a Bauhaus-inspired pedagogical program at the Hochschule für Gestaltung (HfG) in Ulm, the school developed by Bauhaus Dessau alumni Max Bill and sanctioned by American authorities as a project to renovate postwar Germany's Nazi past. The legacy of the IMIB and the HfG are both central to the history of how Bauhaus ideas were refashioned in Europe after the Second World War, serving, alternately, as the ideological basis for one of the last manifestations of emancipatory European avant-garde ideas and the manifestation of interwar Functionalist design concepts, now aligned with capital markets and internationalist state power.

Born in 1914 on the Jutland Peninsula of Denmark, Jorn is a figure whose work and ideas mirror many of the concerns articulated in the journal concerning the influence of non-western design and craft methodologies, the development of an appropriate artistic pedagogy for the contemporary world that might reflect or bring to bear a revolutionary overturning of capitalist society and, finally, a reconsideration of the intrinsic relationship between art and architecture. The second oldest of six children born to two school teachers with a fundamentalist Christian background, as a youth Jorn was influenced by the teachings of N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783–1872), the Danish writer and seminarian who revolutionized established notions of the proper role of education, taking the view that universities, rather than training learned scholars, should educate its students for active participation in society and popular life. Grundtvig's most lasting legacy is his advocacy of the folk high school (*folkhøjskole*), a community-based institution where he imagined non-compulsory education would lead to heightened creativity within the society at large.¹

Jorn began to paint in his teenage years, but elected to attend the Vinthers Seminarium, a teacher-training college in Silkeborg. Nicola Pezolet, the Québécois art historian who has studied Jorn's work and the postwar Europe cultural context extensively, writes that "As early as the 1930s, Jorn's understanding of the role of art was inextricable from his left-wing political engagement and his desire to develop collective forms of cultural creation linked to an

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emancipatory project of popular education.”² While at college he came under the influence of the trade unionist Christian Christensen, with whom he became close friends, subsequently joining the Silkeborg branch of the Communist Party of Denmark and publishing expressionist-influenced woodcuts and lithographs in local leftwing journal sold to support labor struggles.

Despite Silkeborg’s relative isolation, Jorn did encounter the currents of European avant-garde thought via Bauhaus-affiliated artists and architects encountered on visits to the Danish capital—namely, the architect and Communist militant Edvard Heiberg (for a time a professor of architecture at the Bauhaus under Hannes Meyer) and the painter Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen, a former pupil of Vassily Kandinsky at Bauhaus Dessau, founding member of the Danish modernist group *Konkrektion* and author of *Symboler i Abstrakt Kunst* (Symbols in abstract art). Published in 1933, this small illustrated book modeled after the didactic “Bauhaus books” of Kandinsky and Paul Klee “examined the emergence of various cultural symbols in abstract art forms,”³ also introduced Surrealist automatism practices to a Scandinavian audience. Pezolet writes that:

“It was through his exposure to Petersen and journals like *Linien* (The Line) that Jorn developed his singular understanding of the Bauhaus. Based on the information available to him in Denmark, Jorn imagined this school as a community opposed to bourgeois values, dedicated simultaneously to theoretical and artistic experimentation, the development of alternative lifestyles, and political activism. Jorn also thought of the Bauhaus as an internationalist network that fostered the conditions for a vast cross-pollination of progressive artistic tendencies and pedagogical methods, as the school welcomed educators from diverse countries and backgrounds. He always focused more on the Bauhaus as a multifaceted experimental artistic center, as opposed to a market-oriented trade school that fostered collaboration among architects, abstract artists, and product designers working toward a democratic mass distribution of the amenities of consumption.”⁴

In 1936 Jorn abandoned his teaching job and drove his BSA motorcycle to Paris in pursuit of a more cosmopolitan art education. Hoping to study with Kandinsky, he arrived to discover that the aging artist was no longer accepting new students. Subsequently, he enrolled in Fernand Léger’s Académie d’Art Contemporain. Through Léger, Jorn met Le Corbusier, who commissioned the aspiring artist to produce a mural, *Les Moissons* (The harvest season), for the large-scale temporary structure he designed as part of the 1937 Paris World Exposition, the Pavillon des Temps Nouveaux, in the process becoming close friends with the young Chilean Surrealist Roberto Matta, who also was employed in Le

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Corbusier's atelier. He also familiarized himself with Surrealist writings (particularly on architecture) and was inspired in particular by the crepuscular 1938 International Exhibition of Surrealism at the Beaux-Arts Gallery in Paris, which allowed him to "envision the possibility of a radically nonutilitarian architecture, one that prefigured a future society liberated from the bourgeois ethos championed by Le Corbusier and his supporters."⁵

Jorn returned to Denmark in 1938, and soon distances himself from both of his early mentors. He was especially critical of Le Corbusier's elitism and theoretical rigidity, and in his critical stance towards the architect one finds the seeds of his larger critique of architecture in particular and functionalism in general. But current events delayed this articulation. During the German occupation of Denmark he participated in the Danish resistance as a member of the Helhesten group, over the course of the war developing an optimistic notion that "a vast, active, and democratic collaboration among everyday people, professional and amateur artists, and architects" would come to fruition after the war, as would a "more complete kind of socialist democracy."⁶ This last hope was quickly disappointed, as it became increasingly clear that the American Marshall Plan would reinstall orthodox market capitalism on the European continent.

After the war Jorn began to chafe under the strictures of party communism and soon broke with the Communist Party of Denmark (although he did not officially renounce his membership until the mid-1960s), pursuing his interest in collective forms of art-making and developing expressive, collaborative modes of action alongside occasional architectural experimentation (mostly in the form of mural-making) outside a party context. He also returned to his interest in architecture, in 1948 publishing an article in a Danish journal titled "What is an Ornament?," resulting from a visit he had taken to Djerba, Tunisia, a trip one might surmise was partially taken in emulation of Paul Klee. Among the illustrations to Jorn's essay, one juxtaposes a horsetail (also known as snakegrass or puzzle grass) and a minaret, in which one can see his various architectural and artistic influences coming to fruition—Klee's primitivism and his fascination with the Danish architectural historian Erik Lundberg's comparative approach to architectural history. In the essay he writes: "... the nature of art is not to imitate the external forms of nature (naturalism) but to create natural art. Natural sculpture which is true to its material will be identical to nature's forms without seeking to imitate."⁷



Asger Jorn, *Tunesisk drøm* (Tunisian dream), 1948, oil on canvas, 45 x 60 cm
Museum Jorn, Photo: Lars Bay, 0001/1987, © Donation Jorn, Silkeborg / VG Bild-Kunst,
Bonn 2019.

That same year Jorn also returned to Paris, where he founded the international artist group COBRA, together with Christian Dotremont, Karel Appel, Joseph Noiret, Constant and Corneille. In the straightened conditions of postwar France, Jorn and his Cobra colleagues lived on food rations and forsook more materially ambitious architectural experiments for poetry and painting. The work of the COBRA group is notable for its fervent amateurism, which mixes expressionistic execution with an embrace of amateurism and collectivism,⁸ a severe if nascent critique of the status of the art object-as-commodity, and a deep skepticism towards the ideological complicities of state and institutionally sanctioned forms of art-making. In this spirit the group conducted several mural-making experiments, undertaken in a spirit of total financial and ideological independence. "We were able to paint exactly whatever we wanted," he wrote in 1952, after COBRA had been dissolved, "and in the way we wanted, without having to put up with the mind-numbing censorial policy that necessarily accompanies paid projects." Of equal importance: "the paintings were executed using the kind of inexpensive techniques which ensure that they will not remain in place for all eternity,"⁹ a wholehearted embrace of the processual aspect of art creation and an implicit critique of the monumental tendencies indulged in by fascists and liberal democracies alike.

In 1951 Jorn returned to Silkeborg, impoverished and seriously ill with tuberculosis. His months-long convalescence in a sanatorium contributed to the break-up of the COBRA group, relations among whom, in any case, had become less amicable after Jorn's marriage to Matie van Domselaer. Upon his release, Jorn and his family relocated to a Swiss sanatorium in Chésières, Switzerland. There he read of Max Bill's plans for the new Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm (HfG), a school modeled after the Bauhaus, in the *British*

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Architects' Yearbook, where Bill had placed a promotional article to attract prospective students and teachers:

“Experienced artists and theoreticians, young men and women with bold, alert and eager minds, will be invited to Ulm: some to teach or to pursue their experimental work, others to learn from these. But we are confident that all who come to us will be imbued with the same whole-hearted ambition of joining co-operatively in a great and disinterested endeavour. I hope we shall not disappoint the hopes that have been placed in us and be able to establish a new international home for the old Bauhaus ideals, where the youth of all nations can find a propitious environment for the free development of its creative faculties.”¹⁰

Excited by the possibility of participating in a new democratic pedagogical experiment and in pursuing his interest in fusing art and architecture, he wrote to Bill, inquiring about the role of art at Ulm and expressing his desire to secure a teaching position. As Nicola Pezolet recounts, Jorn’s understanding of the Ulm school program was founded on his youthful, romantic misconception of the Bauhaus as a *Volkshochschule*, dedicated to community education in the spirit of social democratic experimentation rather than a *Kunstgewerbeschule* (arts-and-crafts school) or *Technische Hochschule* (professional technical school), the sort of institutions dedicated to training student in marketable technical and aesthetic skills. “These (the former) were the perfect conditions, Jorn thought, for the development of a new school dedicated to the creation of democratic collaborations among artists, architects, and everyday people, which he had sought since leaving Léger’s academy.”¹¹ In his reply, Bill enclosed a brochure for the school, but cautioned that the arts were understood differently at Ulm than at the historical Bauhaus. Jorn sent a second letter, enclosing a copy of the COBRA magazine and offering to organize a collaboration between the school and his circle of “free” artists. Bill rebuffed this suggestion, and in a later letter wrote:

“In Ulm, we consider art as the foundation of all the things we make here. But by ‘art’ we do not understand any kind of ‘self-expression,’ but just art. We do not agree with most of what the COBRA group or similar groups do, because these experiments have, in our opinion, already been done and superseded a long time ago. In Ulm, we will deal with much more extreme, new, and generally more current questions of design (*Gestaltung*).”¹²

Herein lay the essential misunderstanding. While Jorn was proposing an update of his idiosyncratic understanding of the original Bauhaus

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ethos, one inflected by Danish social democratic institutional structures, Bill's intention was to set up a design school where his modernist notion of "kunst," or "gute Form"¹³ (good form), would be taken up by a new generation of industrial designers and architects. The correspondence¹⁴ between them is, as Regina Bittner points out, "an impressive testimonial to the cultural conflicts of those years, of the misunderstandings, irritations, and divergences that characterized the period."¹⁵ More than this, Jorn's aversion to International Style architecture and its rationalist ideology—adopted enthusiastically by the postwar corporate culture—found a new object for his derision. In a later letter to Bill, Jorn declared that if the HfG did not want to collaborate with the "free" artists, he would initiate an "Imaginary Bauhaus." Jorn began writing to his many friends and associates, at first with the intention of continuing his campaign against Bill, but soon saw that it was more interesting to set up an actual encounter among like-minded artists, architects and craftsmen. In a 1953 letter he wrote to Enrico Baj, a painter from Milan and founder of the Nuclear Art Movement, declaring the foundation of the Imaginist Bauhaus: "(A) Swiss architect, Max Bill, has undertaken to restructure the Bauhaus where Klee and Kandinsky taught. He wishes to make an academy without painting, without research into the imagination, fantasy, signs, symbols—all he wants is technical instruction. In the name of experimental artists I intend to create an International Movement For An Imaginist Bauhaus."¹⁶ Baj signed on, bringing with him Sergio Dangelo and two French art critics,¹⁷ Michel Tapié and Charles Estienne, the following spring invited Jorn to relocate to the Italian coastal town of Albisola, an internationally recognized center for ceramics and site of the ceramics factory of the Futurist Tullio Mazzotti, known as "Tullio d'Albisola"¹⁸ (designed, fortuitously, by Bauhaus alumni Nikolay Diulgheroff).



Asger Jorn in Alba, 1955.

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The Italian seaside had a salutary effect on Jorn's health, and with renewed vigor he set about designing a stationary for the *Mouvement International pour un Bauhaus Imaginiste Contre un Bauhaus Imaginaire* (IMIB)—a further dig at the HfG, now declared to be imaginary for its exclusion of autonomous art—and together with Baj and Dangelo organized an “encounter” of free artists to be held over the summer. At this “International Ceramics Congress,” Jorn and his colleagues succeeded in attracting several internationally recognized artists and poets and, as Pezolet recounts, “thanks to Mazzotti's offer of his industrial kilns, artists, locals, and children produced dozens of richly decorated ceramics and clay sculptures,” subsequently exhibited outdoors.”¹⁹

In a text Jorn would write several years later he announced that the Bauhaus, had merely provided an answer to the question, “What kind of ‘education’ do artists need in order to take their place in the machine age?” The IMIB, on the other hand, was “the answer to the question *where and how* to find a justified place for artists in the machine age. This answer demonstrates that the education carried out by the old Bauhaus was mistaken.” Jorn concluded, indicating a disavowal of his earlier pedagogical interests: “We are abandoning all efforts at pedagogical action and moving toward experimental activity.”²⁰

But the IMIB was also a project that Jorn could use to continue his polemics against Max Bill's functionalist discourse while simultaneously raising awareness of the IMIB. With the help of Mazzotti, he succeeded in placing the group's work in the tenth Milan Triennial, thus giving the group broader exposure and providing Jorn with an opportunity to confront Bill in person, who was slated to give the triennial's keynote address on the topic of the social relevance of industrial design in the context of the ongoing Marshall Plan. His speech, predictably, focused on the virtue, in the context of postwar reconstruction of designing and producing simple everyday objects. After Bill had finished, Jorn read his text, “Contre le fonctionnalisme” (first published in 1957), which, in effect, was an excoriation of Bill's good design program and its basis in Western rationalism.

Jorn began by stating what he perceived as the essential problem: the justification of the present evolution of art and technology, from the perspective of the “free artist,”²¹ a position from which the truth claims he would proceed to make were considered mutually insoluble and multiple, “a complementary system of mutually contradictory truths,” in accordance with the latest in science and philosophy—by which Jorn meant Niels Bohr—necessitating the calling into question of received knowledge and history, specifically the legacy of the Bauhaus. “Scientific doubt is expressed by analysis, but artistic doubt is expressed by action. It is up to us to do everything that cannot be done; to not do any of the things that we are obliged to do by tradition and dogmatism; to unmask false anxieties, false assurances, false luxuries and false usefulness; and to organize the results of our experiments in accordance with these aims. Man and society ceaselessly create for themselves new

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obligations and new taboos, and modern technology is currently the greatest source of this evolution.”

Jorn proceeded to criticize Le Corbusier and the historical Bauhaus as outmoded since, although revolutionary in their original iteration and “one of the bases of the revolution that is presently beginning” (on account of their having espoused a doctrine of the unity of form and function, and a conviction that an object is an expression of the structure utilitarian form possesses when the outcome of a harmonic unity of technique and function), these suppositions were based on classical philosophy and logic. It was now necessary to “renovate” these philosophical foundations. European technical and architectural theorists, had done nothing new since the before the war, tied as they were to this functionalist dogma, whose concept had, in the hands of Bill, become predictable and fixed. (In a telling aside, Jorn accused abstract art of “blinding” these theorists, perhaps alluding to the prevalence in Europe of exhibitions featuring American Abstract Expressionists sponsored by the U.S. State Department and other, more dubious, sources). Technique, function and aesthetics (identified by Jorn as coextensive with structure, form and presentation), whose symmetrical relationship was the basis of Functionalism, were for Jorn a mutually contradictory aspects of the character of an object. He proposed to invert this influential syntactical hierarchy by placing aesthetics first rather than last. The aesthetic aspect of a thing, on the other hand, was its external, immediate and directly communicative effect on our senses outside of utility or some notion of integral harmony.

What was needed, according to Jorn, was a new dialectical understanding of “systems of complementarity,” a notion borrowed from Bohr, that might aid in articulating a more dynamic conception of form, one where the aesthetic character of an object was considered as a primary fact rather than an afterthought. The value of the free artist was to affect, to shock through the unexpected, the contradictory, paradoxical, oxymoronic, antinomial: “To be an artist of an aesthetic character, a false artist, a deceiver, an imaginist, means that one is capable of making something that cannot be made, that one can do the impossible. In aesthetics, the impossible does not exist. The new is always impossible, a deception, because the possible is the known.” Functionalism had once possessed this quality of novelty, hence aesthetic surprise, but familiarity had negated this characteristic: “the Functionalists ended up creating a world that was increasingly regularized, ordered, rationalized and stabilized.” Counter-functionalism would favor a more organic changeable conception of design, one in which Bill’s eudaemonistic notions of design would be replaced by a concern for the ludic, the exuberant and, eventually, “a more advanced stage of functionalism, a synthesis that would offer a richer understanding of nature and account for the psychological and ludic decorative impulses repressed by modernist architect.”²²

The basic question Jorn proceeded to pose on behalf of free artists and the people at large was at once social and political: how to avoid “total automatism, a transformation of our intelligence into an

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instinctive and standardized reflex,” leading to a general deadening of receptivity or *Einfühlung* to the world at large—a problem that could not be solved by “babbling about defending free enterprise or a dying individualism, nor by opposing socialization.” The task of retaining desire (sovereignty) under the postwar era’s new historical conditions was one shared by free artists and technicians alike, and this undertaking, accomplished through aesthetic experimentation, was anathema to Bill, Jorn claimed, who sought only symmetry, harmony, elegant mathematical precision, and a form of education that would liberate the individual from their personality (here a direct dig at what he saw as the enervating pedagogic project of HfG Ulm), whereas Jorn thought the personality the individualistic part of humankind.



Asger Jorn (right) at the Munich Conference of the SI, 1960.



Asger Jorn (left) playing guitar with Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio at the Munich Conference of the SI, 1960.

It is unnecessary to summarize Jorn’s talk in its entirety. The reader is free to access it through the link provided below. But it is worth noting, a consideration central to *bauhaus imaginista*’s overall project, that Jorn had identified not only that a dialectical appreciation of form might lead to a re-evaluation of functionalism’s original innovation (as a novel approach to world-making), but something else that is the larger object of his polemical evisceration of Bill’s functionalist project: functionalism’s own etiolation was a product not only of its standardization, but its own dialectical encounter with hegemonic political and economic forces, its ideological capture and instrumentalization by capital and empire, emblemized by the development of HfG Ulm in the name of antifascism and under the patronage of the American occupation authority.²³ Meanwhile, Jorn’s faith in the avant-garde artistic project (evidenced in his speech by Jorn’s privileging Dada and Surrealism as both manifestations of a transformative dialectical aesthetic over Constructivism, which had become “insipid and exhausted” thanks to a cessation of contradictions within it, and remained in its old position). This faith in the avant-garde project would lead to his membership in the Situationist International and his eventual break with the group once it became clear Guy Debord had ceased to consider art a revolutionary activity. Retrospectively, Jorn’s position appears overly romantic, if sympathetic in its naiveté. Meanwhile, that the functionalist impetus of the Bauhaus would continue to evolve and transform outside Europe, through intermingling in different postcolonial or countercultural cultural contexts, or that HfG Ulm would itself come to play a pivotal role in this project in its role in developing the Indian National Institute of Design, was not something Jorn could have known. In any case, the engagement of Bauhaus alumni in the various postcolonial contexts in which they engaged was itself mostly in its infancy in the early 1950s, a time before the noise of what Franz Fanon called the “coming combat” of decolonization had become audible to the Western world.

The following summer, Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio, a chemist, leftwing “thinker” and maker of experimental paintings and the Turin University philosophy student Piero Simondo met Jorn at an exhibition they put on in Abisola. That fall, Jorn met with the pair in Alba, visiting Gallizio’s studio in an old convent. This became the Experimental Laboratory of the IMIB. While Jorn’s passionate

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temperament was less than amenable to Simondo's penchant for methodological rigor, he shared Gallizio's vision of the artist as one committed ethically to mankind, as well as an interest in archaeology, nomadism and pop culture.

In the following year, Jorn traveled regularly between Alba, Abisola, Paris and Silkeborg, while Gallizio experimented with painting materials informed by his chemistry training, and the other IMIB affiliates conducted a variety of researches and "experiments" on topics ranging from architecture and music to automatism. A consummate networker, the small Italian cohort was soon joined by Constant, the Dutch architect and former member of COBRA, and quickly made contact with artists, film-makers and theoreticians associated with the Lettriste International (LI). In July 1956, the first and only issue of the IMIB's journal, *Eristica*, was issued—featuring, among other articles, photographic documentation of the International Ceramics Meeting of 1954—and in September Jorn and the then-Lettriste Guy Debord, whom Jorn had met in Paris in 1954, organized the First World Congress of Free Artists in Alba, at which the ideological foundation for what was to become the Situationist International began to be developed. The following year the IMIB officially fused with the SI at a meeting in Cosio, Italy. In 1961 Jorn amicably quit the SI, one of the few departees not to be publicly censured by Debord. In the last decade of his life Jorn traveled extensively, pursuing a variety of projects, notably the Scandinavian Institute of Comparative Vandalism, which saw him returning to the early influence of Erik Lundberg's comparative architectural history. He died in Denmark in 1973.

Asger Jorn's texts on the Imaginist Bauhaus can be accessed here:

<http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/asger-jorn/index.htm>

The authors are indebted to Nicola Pezolet's account of the IMIB offered in "Bauhaus Ideas: Jorn, Max Bill and Reconstruction Culture," which appeared in *October* 141 (Summer 2012), an issue dedicated to the work of Asger Jorn.

- 1 Into the present day Danish *folkehøjskole* typically offer short-term courses to working people focused on personal development rather than professional training.
- 2 Nicola Pezolet: "Jorn, Max Bill and Reconstruction Culture," *October* 141, Summer 2012, p. 88.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 89.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 90.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 92.
- 6 *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 95.
- 7 Asger Jorn cited in Peter Wollen: "Situationists and Architecture," *New Left Review* No. 8, April 2001, p. 124.
- 8 At the start of World War Two he had claimed in the *Helhesten* journal that the future of art was kitsch and praised amateur landscape paintings as "the best art today": an approval that was to be realized in his defacements of found landscapes in his later Modification Painting work.
- 9 Asger Jorn: "The Inherent Potential of Mural Painting," in: *Fraternité Avant Tout*, O10 Publishers, Rotterdam 2011, p. 252.
- 10 Max Bill: "The Bauhaus Idea: From Weimar to Ulm," *Architects' Year Book* 5, 1953, p. 32.
- 11 Pezolet: "Jorn, Max Bill and Reconstruction Culture," p. 100.
- 12 Unpublished letter from Max Bill to Asger Jorn (14 January 1954), Jorn Museum archives, Silkeborg, included in translated form in Nicola Pezolet's text: "Jorn, Max Bill and Reconstruction Culture," p. 101. In his text, Pezelot translates Bill's sentence in the German—"aber wir verstehen unter kunst nicht irgendwelche 'selfexpression' sondern *wirklich* (authors' italics) kunst" as "But by 'art' we do not understand any kind of 'self-expression,' but rather objective (*wirklich*) art." But in his letter Bill, as noted above, did not write *wirkliche kunst*, which could translate as "objective art," but rather "*wirklich*" ("really"), a filler word to emphasize that in Ulm art is only considered as art. However, in the paragraph following, Pezolet writes: "*Wirklich*

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- Kunst*, as mentioned in Bill's letter to Jorn, should be understood as *gute Form* or good design (see footnote following), a modernist concept Bill had been promoting since 1949 via public conferences and a travelling exhibition of the same name sponsored by the Swiss Werkbund. *Gute Form*, as described by Bill, was the search for a 'valid gestalt' or 'essential simplicity.'" Given that Bill's reprint of *Die gute Form (Das Werk: Architektur und Kunst* 44, Nr. 4, 1957, pp. 138-40) is introduced as a brochure explaining the basics of correct design (*richtige Formgebung*), one can see that Pezolet's mistaking "really" for "objective" is actually not so far-fetched.
- 13 The term "Die Gute Form" is derived from a book of the same name by Max Bill (Winterthur 1957), which contributed significantly to the dissemination of the catchword.
- 14 The letters from Max Bill to Asger Jorn can be accessed here: <http://kunsthalloslo.no/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Jorn-Bill.pdf>
- 15 Regina Bittner: "On Behalf of Progressive Design - Two Modern Campuses in Transcultural Dialogue"; <http://www.bauhaus-imaginista.org/articles/2950/on-behalf-of-progressive-design>
- 16 Asger Jorn: letter to Enrico Baj, December 1953. Quoted by Stewart Home in: *The Assault on Culture: Utopian Currents from Lettrism to Class War*, AK Press, Stirling 1991, p. 24.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Karen Kurczynski: *The Art and Politics of Asger Jorn. The Avant-Garde Won't Give Up*, Routledge, New York 2016, p. 120.
- 19 Ibid., p. 104.
- 20 Asger Jorn: "Notes on the Formation of an Imaginist Bauhaus" <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/bauhaus.htm> (Accessed 11 July 2019).
- 21 All subsequent quotations from Jorn's talk are from the published version of "Against Functionalism," 1957. <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/asger-jorn/functionalism.htm> (Accessed 11 July 2019).
- 22 Pezolet: "Jorn, Max Bill and Reconstruction Culture," p. 106.
- 23 In her text on the postwar renovation of the ADGB Trade Union School in Bernau undertaken, initially, by the GDR architect Georg Waterstradt, Anja Guttenberger includes the following comment, which is especially illuminative of the battle between East and West to lay claim to the ideological right to continue the project of the historical Bauhaus at the beginning of the 1950s. "Already in March 1950," Guttenberger writes, "Inge Scholl was striving to found a school based on the idea of '... continuing the tradition of the Bauhaus Dessau in a form that corresponded to our present day situation.'" (Inge Scholl in a letter to Federal President Theodor Heuss, 29 March 1950, cit. in: Bober 2010, p. 25.) In 1952, the US High Commissioner for Germany John J. McCloy secured the financing for the foundation of such a school. When finally, under the influence of Gropius, the Americans recognized the Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm (HfG) as the official successor of the Bauhaus—with former Bauhaus student Max Bill as director—the chosen name for the school directly referenced the Bauhaus in Dessau (*bauhaus.hochschule für gestaltung*), making it impossible for the GDR, in the antagonistic climate which settled over Europe after the war, to claim the Bauhaus and its progressive cultural politics for itself." (Anja Guttenberger: "The Extension Buildings of the ADGB Trade Union School in Bernau - Documents of the Formalism Debate in the GDR," <http://www.bauhaus-imaginista.org/articles/5748/the-extension-buildings-of-the-adgb-trade-union-school-in-berna>)

MICHAEL BAERS

Michael Baers received his PhD from the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in 2014. Since 2010 his work has focused on the cultural outcomes of conflict irresolution in the Middle East and North Africa.

IRIS STRÖBEL

Iris Ströbel is a text and image editor who studied cultural studies. Her editorial projects occupy the fields of contemporary art, film, architecture and their interfaces.
