

AdA

ARCHIV DER AVANTGARDEN

STAATLICHE
KUNSTSAMMLUNGEN
DRESDEN

CONDITIONS OF WORKING AND LIVING

AdA

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ARCHIV DER AVANTGARDEN

The Archiv der Avantgarden (AdA), an archive of 20th-century avant-garde art, contains approximately 1.5 million artworks and other objects, making it one of the most comprehensive collections of its kind. Collector Egidio Marzona began to amass the archive in the late 1960s and continued in the decades that followed. The archive holds paintings and drawings, sketches and prints, furniture and design objects. Above and beyond this, a dazzling concentration of photographs, correspondence, manuscripts and manifestos, artist records (vinyl) and films, primary and secondary literature and further material document the artistic activity of the entire century in Europe, but also far beyond its borders. The AdA helps trace the artistic ideas and numerous radical utopias of the century and brings to light the amazing interconnectedness of artists. The holdings of the archive provide a wealth of information and serve

as a basis for research. Researchers and interested parties from both Germany and abroad are invited to work in and explore the AdA. Temporary exhibitions and a varied programme of events, with lectures, discussions and workshops, illustrate and probe the phenomenon of the 20th-century avant-garde. From October 2017 until April 2018, four exhibitions—essays—at the Japanisches Palais illustrate and probe the phenomenon of the 20th-century avant-garde.

Reprise and Repetition
10/10/2017, 6:30 p.m.

Methodologies of Teaching and Learning
21/11/2017, 6:30 p.m.

AdA *Conditions of Living and Working*
17/01/2018, 6:30 p.m.

Following the Instructions
27/02/2018, 6:30 p.m.

THE CONNEXIONIST HUMAN

The archive looks at utopias of the last century that were driven by the desire for profound transformation in the social dynamic, and are now part of an endless debate, not about the past, but about the potential path into a future full of freedom and autonomy—or its impossibility.

In “Conditions of Working and Living,” the fda traces a few chapters of the narrative of this discussion, through selected documents, journals, and photographs from the collection. Throughout the 20th century, various movements sought strategies for dealing with the rules of the game, what it meant to be productive and live in a community, to change it, or discard it. Art, culture, and its institutions (such as museums and archives) were also part of this radical game; sometimes, as protagonists, they claimed this entire space, while at other

times they found themselves the losers. In their essay “The New Spirit of Capitalism,” first published in France in 1999, the sociologists Luc Boltanski—brother of the French conceptual artist Christian Boltanski—and Ève Chiapello propose a new way to look at the conditions of work and life. They show how, in this new century, globalised capitalism uses new information and electronic technologies: “The central figure of this net-shaped universe is the ‘connexionist’ [the networked human], adaptable and flexible, active and autonomous, ‘his own leader’: ‘the connexionist human is characterised by his communicative abilities, his user-friendly nature, his open and curious mind.’ In the new value system, the manager’s creative intuition supplants the functionary’s rationality, with its hierarchical rigidity and planning-obsessed sluggishness. Much of their research investigates the language of management, and for that purpose they have digitally analyzed thousands

of textbook pages. [...] The hour of the lean company has come—post-Fordist, even postmodern—the hour of disguising exploitation by exclusion (often portrayed as an error in production, an interruption of the connection.) Far from irreversible liberation and the acquisition of personal autonomy, this development is inextricably linked to certain conditions: ‘In a connexionist world, the distinction between private life and professional life tends to diminish under the impact of a dual confusion: on the one hand, between the qualities of the person and the properties of their labour-power; and on the other, between personal ownership and, above all else, self-ownership and social property, lodged in the organisation,’” summarises the philosopher Daniel Bensaid, one of the leaders of the 1968 Paris student uprisings.

What can the methodologies of the Bauhaus and the Deutscher Werkbund tell us about these issues? Which direction should we take? The archive offers no answers, but raises many exciting questions.

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QUOTIDIAN PERSPECTIVES

A continuous programme of discourse accompanies the activities being held in the AdA, interacting with and supplementing them, illuminating the themes from various scientific and quotidian perspectives. The events focus on experiencing the themes and objects with the senses, and reflecting upon them in a research-oriented way.

The AdA's discussion program considers equally the role of collecting, archiving, and exhibiting, and presents individual collection objects within the frame of 'Object Talks.' Further parts of the programme include not only scientific formats such as workshops, but public discussions, readings, and lectures. People of all ages and ethnicities—especially from Dresden and the region—are invited to attend.

AdA 17/01/2018, 6.30 pm

LECTURE WORK IN TV SERIES:
RAINER WERNER
FASSBINDER'S »EIGHT HOURS
ARE NOT A DAY«
(1972/73)

PROF. DR. TANJA MICHALSKY,
DIRECTOR OF BIBLIOTHECA
HERTZIANA –
MAX-PLANCK-INSTITUT
FOR ART HISTORY, ROM

JAPANISCHES PALAIS

Language: German

Such American series as “The Sopranos,” “Mad Men,” “Six Feet Under,” or “Breaking Bad,” have accustomed us to the fact of taking television series of so-called high-quality TV seriously, aesthetically, and are no longer encountered under the rubric of early evening programmes as products of a conservative mass media. Today’s series are considered the successors of 19th-century serial novels, which enabled the development of complex storylines over long periods of time, allowing characters to transform within a broader social fabric, and thus dealing with socially relevant issues beyond simple, serial-based schemas. In the 1970s, Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s “Eight Hours Are Not a Day” stood out, because it does not simply attempt to point out and lay blame for social grievances, but uses artistic means to show general audiences an intergenerational proposal for self-determined living and working together. The series explicitly addresses the conditions and possibilities of alienated

and self-determined work, as well as the artistic “work” of analyzing social and political grievances with aesthetic means.

Tanja Michalsky Studied art history, philosophy and German studies in Trier and Munich. Doctorate at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, 1995-2000 Research Assistant at the Art History Institute of the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University, Frankfurt a. M., 2002-2004 Scholarship for Habitation in Dutch Landscape Painting through the Lise-Meitner-Program. 2004/05 Research Professor at the Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America at Columbia University, New York. 2005-2007 University lecturer in Frankfurt a. M., since April 2007 Professor at the Berlin University of the Arts. Appointed in October 2014 as scientific member of the Humanities and Social Sciences Section of the Max Planck Society, and director of the Bibliotheca Hertziana.

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06/02/2018, 6.30 pm

OBJECT TALK ON
TYPEWRITERS
RENDEZVOUS WITH
ERIKA & CO. —
THE MODERN DESIGN
OF TYPEWRITERS
MADE IN GDR
GÜNTER HÖHNE,
JOURNALIST, BERLIN

JAPANISCHES PALAIS

Language: German

Dresden's Erika typewriters retained their charm for over half a century, developing their reputation as reliable office workers. Forcibly taken over by the Robotron Combine in the GDR around 1979, the Erika model family was an important fixture in the Western export business for a long time. From 1987's annual typewriter production at Robotron alone, 300,000 were delivered to France and the Benelux countries, nearly 600,000 to the FRG, and one million to the Middle East, with an Arabic keyboard. Not only for their reliable functionality were these technical series products in worldwide demand, but also because of their unique, graceful design.

Günter Höhne, design journalist and book author from Berlin, knows the stories of the device's design developments under specific cultural, material, and technical conditions, and can name the names of the manufacturers, the successful models, and their designers.

Günter Höhne Journalist for radio, television and press, focusing since the early 1970s on everyday and product culture of the 20th and 21st centuries. 1984–1989 Editor-in-chief of the GDR trade journal for industrial design, Form + Zweck, publications on East German design history starting from 1945, such as “Das große Lexikon DDR-Design” [The Big Dictionary of GDR Design], Cologne 2008. 1993 honors with the “Bremen Prize for Design Journalism,” and 2007 with the award for excellence of the “Lilienthal Designpreis” of Mecklenburg Vorpommern.

AdA REORDER

*CONDITIONS OF
WORKING*

“Business economist Guido Fischer began his 1928/29 winter semester lectures at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich with a verse by the young workers’ poet Leo Grob, expressing the monotony of the factory worker.

Blow for blow and blow for blow and
blow for blow and blow for blow.

Grip by grip and grip by grip and
grip by grip and grip by grip.

Step by step and step by step and
step by step and step by step.

Move by move and move by move
and move by move and move by move.

Step by step and step by step and
step by step and step by step.

Grip by grip and grip by grip and
grip by grip and grip by grip.

Blow for blow and blow for blow and blow
for blow and blow for blow. —————

Everyday — sameaction — — withoutsense — — .

Act of madness!’

For Fischer, the 'dehumanization of modern work and all economic life' was a fact. He regarded the general attitude towards the economy of the late 1920s as a result of the 'materialist philosophy that largely fulfilled the past century.'"

The poem "Voices from the Rhythm of Work" by the forgotten poet Leo Grob prefaces the first chapter ("Capitalism and Mammonism") in Guido Fischer's lecture anthology.

Rudolf Fischer: *Licht und Transparenz. Der Fabrikbau und das Neue Bauen in den Architekturzeitschriften der Moderne* (2012) [*Light and Transparency. Industrial building and Neues Bauen in Architecture magazines of Modernity*], quoted after: Guido Fischer: *Mensch und Arbeit. Ihre Bedeutung im Modernen Betrieb* (1929) [*Man and Work. Their Significance in Modern Company*].

"Today, in this age of technology, people are reluctant to remember that machines have been around for quite some time, that the potter's wheel, for example, is also a machine. What is new is that man has allowed himself to be subjugated by the machine, which has multiplied, transformed, and improved at a frightening pace, precisely because of this tempo, since he did not find time to handle every new form in a hurry

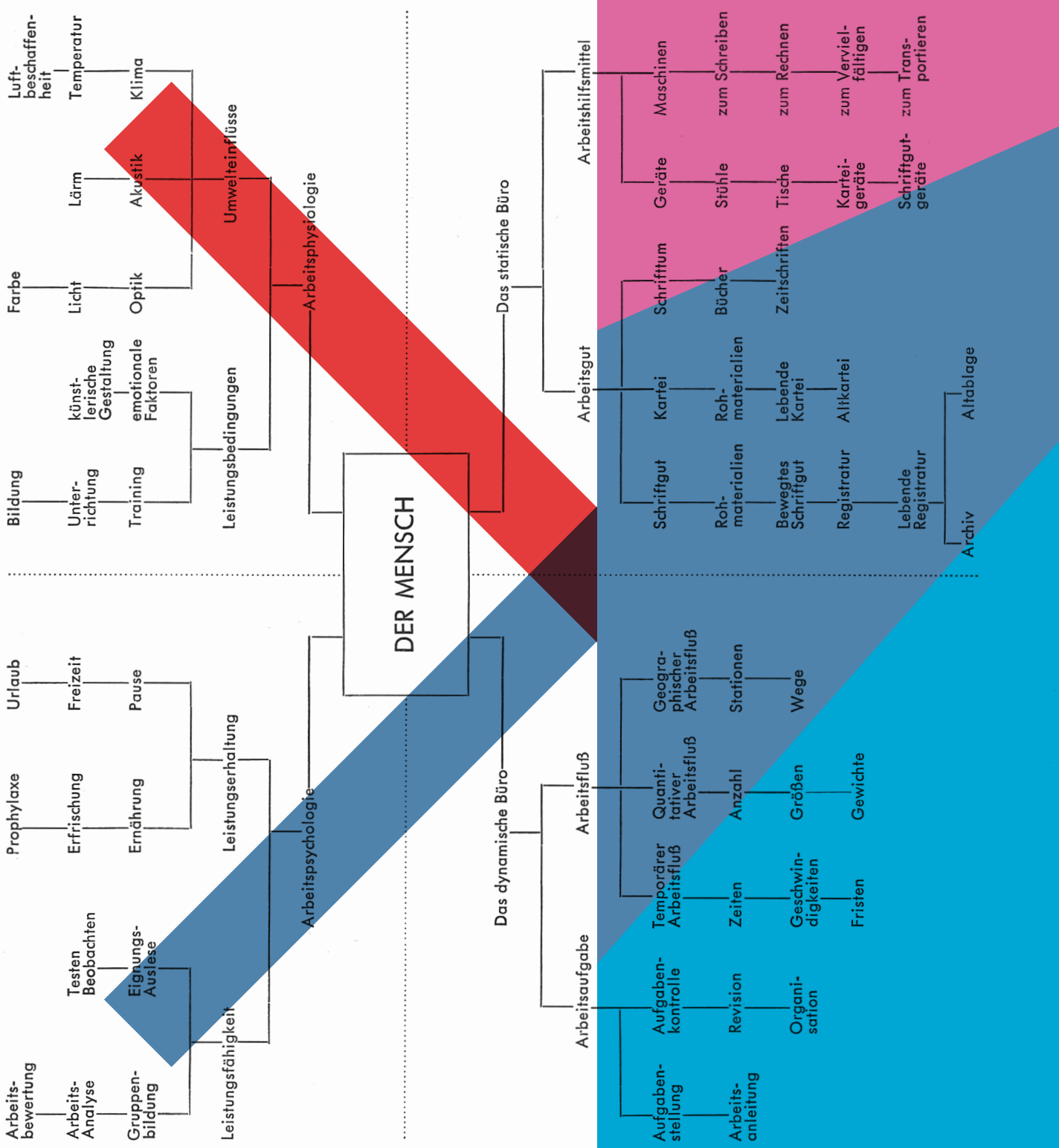
There is no fixed boundary between tool and machine. Humans can create quality work with the tool or machine as soon as they have mastered it. That's what matters.

Hence, it is not the machine itself that makes some work inferior, but the inability to use the machine properly. For my part, I would like to acknowledge a degree of dispassion as the right of machine work; the mode of production, the nature of the forms, in short the whole nature of the machine, seem to me to require accuracy to a far greater degree than in manual labour. But if we overcome the superstition that exactness in itself is the essential aim of labour, then even in machine work there will still be space for small but highly effective differences, and one would like to believe that all the more will be the case, the more, as I said earlier, the machine becomes a tool in the hands of man.

After all, a sentimental point of view derived from observation may perhaps briefly express itself: that as little as the machine itself may be called new and pernicious, mass production and the division of labour cease to scare the civilized man when he tries to regard their harmful impact as the consequence of unhealed childhood diseases.

So mass operation and division of labour are nothing, as it seems to me, which in themselves would be destructive, but the fact that the goal of 'quality work' is forgotten, and that industry as a whole does not regard itself as a supporter of our cultural community, but as a Mistress of the present. Rule of force and scattered regionalism in modern form!

Theodor Fischer: *Opening speech at the 1st Annual Meeting 1918* From: Deutscher Werkbund (1958). *50 years German Werkbund: commissioned by the German Werkbund published by the Landesgruppe Hessen, edited by Hans Eckstein* [*Deutscher Werkbund: 50 Jahre Deutscher Werkbund*].



In its upper half, the diagram names general concepts referring to all types of work; in its lower half, it gives terms specific to office work. The terms of the left side of the scheme are largely influenced by prophylactic and educational measures, while the right side, more by technical and organizational concepts.

“Mental Strain: An [...] assertion claims that office or administrative work is essentially mental work, which evades technical rationalisation per se. That would only be correct if it were intellectual-creative work. But it is mainly mental work in the nature of a combination of considerations with given and established factors that result from the individual’s work task. Thinking requires the activation of consciousness. The degree of consciousness activation can vary with different office activities.

[...]

Environmental impact: Thinking requires concentration. The environment of a working person strongly influences their capacity for concentration. Those who need a strong, possibly full activation of consciousness to do their job must not sit in a troubled environment that prevents concentration. Otherwise, they become overstrained or apathetic; both conditions prevent the unfolding of their capabilities. The environment—in this case, the office space—must meet these crucial demands regarding the health of the working person, and thus the preservation of his disposition for performance. The optical conditions of light and colour, acoustic influences of noise, and climatic conditions of temperature and air quality must be regarded as labour and concentration-influencing factors.”

Ekkehard Schnelle: *Bürohaus und Büroarbeit*
[*Office Building and Office Work*],
in: *bürobauplanen* (1958).

“For some years, being obliged on occasion to answer the question “What are you working on?” I was embarrassed to have to say, “A book of political economy.” Coming from me, this venture was disconcerting, at least to those who did not know me well. (The interest that is usually conferred on my books is of a literary sort and this was doubtless to be expected: One cannot as a matter of fact class them in a pre-defined genre.) I am still

annoyed when I recall the superficial astonishment that greeted my reply; I had to explain myself, and what I was able to say in a few words was neither precise nor intelligible. Indeed, I had to add that the book I was writing (which I am now publishing) did not consider the facts the way qualified economists do, that I had a point of view from which a human sacrifice, the construction of a church or the gift of a jewel were no less interesting than the sale of wheat. In short, I had to try in vain to make clear the notion of a “general economy” in which the “expenditure” (the “consumption”) of wealth, rather than production, was the primary object. My difficulty increased if I was asked the book’s title. The Accursed Share: It might be intriguing, but it wasn’t informative. Yet I should have gone further, then, and affirmed the desire to lift the curse that this title calls into question. Clearly, my project was too vast and the announcement of a vast project is always its betrayal. No one can say without being comical that he is getting ready to overturn things: He must overturn, and that is all.

Today the book is there. But a book is nothing if it is not situated, if criticism has not determined the place that belongs to it in the common movement of ideas. Again, I find myself faced with the same difficulty. The book is there, but at the moment of writing its preface I cannot even ask that it be given the attention of specialists in a science. This first essay addresses, from outside the separate disciplines, a problem that still has not been framed as it should be, one that may hold the key to all the problems posed by every discipline concerned with the movement of energy on the earth—from geophysics to political economy, by way of sociology, history and biology. Moreover, neither psychology nor, in general, philosophy can be considered free of this primary question of economy. Even what may be said of art, of literature, of poetry has an essential connection with the movement I study: that of excess energy, translated into the effervescence of life. The result is that such a book, being of interest to everyone, could well be of interest to no one.

[...]

As I considered the object of my study, I could not personally resist the effervescence in which I discovered the unavoidable purpose, the value of the cold and calculated operation. My research aimed at the acquisition of knowledge; it demanded coldness and calculation, but the knowledge acquired was that of an error, an error implied in the coldness that is inherent in all calculation. In other words, my work tended first of all to increase the sum of human resources, but its findings showed me that this accumulation was only a delay, a shrinking back from the inevitable term, where the accumulated wealth has value only in the instant. Writing this book in which I was saying that energy finally can only be wasted, I myself was using my energy, my time, working; my research answered in a fundamental way the desire to add to the amount of wealth acquired for mankind. Should I say that under these conditions I sometimes could only respond to the truth of my book and could not go on writing it?

A book that no one awaits, that answers no formulated question, that the author would not have written if he had followed its lesson to the letter—such is finally the oddity that today I offer the reader. This invites distrust at the outset, and yet, what if it were better not to meet any expectation and to offer precisely that which repels, that which people deliberately avoid, for lack of strength: that violent movement, sudden and shocking, which jostles the mind, taking away its tranquillity; a kind of bold reversal that substitutes a dynamism, in harmony with the world, for the stagnation of isolated ideas, of stubborn problems born of an anxiety that refused to see. How, without turning my back on expectations, could I have had the extreme freedom of thought that places concepts on a level with the world's freedom of movement? It would serve no purpose to neglect the rules of rigorous investigation, which proceeds slowly and methodically. But how can we solve the enigma, how can we measure up to the universe if we content ourselves with the slumber of conventional

knowledge? If one has the patience, and the courage, to read my book, one will see that it contains studies conducted according to the rules of a reason that does not relent, and solutions to political problems deriving from a traditional wisdom, but one will also find in it this affirmation: that the sexual act is in time what the tiger is in space. The comparison follows from considerations of energy economy that leave no room for poetic fantasy, but it requires thinking on a level with a play of forces that runs counter to ordinary calculations, a play of forces based on the laws that govern us. In short, the perspectives where such truths appear are those in which more general propositions reveal their meaning, propositions according to which it is not necessity but its contrary, "luxury," that presents living matter and mankind with their fundamental problems. [...]

Georges Bataille: Preface to "*The Accursed Share*" (1949), in: *The Accursed Share. An Essay on General Economy*.

CONDITIONS OF LIVING

“we look at the daily routine of each person living in the house and this gives the function diagram for father, mother, child, infant, and other occupants. we examine the interactions between the house and its occupants and the world outside: postman, passer-by, visitor, neighbour, burglar, chimney-sweep, washerwoman, policeman, doctor, charwoman, playmate, gas inspector, tradesman, nurse, and errand boy. we examine the ways in which human beings and animals are related to the garden, and the reciprocal effects that human beings, pets, and domestic insects have on one another. we calculate the annual fluctuations in the temperature of the soil and with these data work out the loss of heat through the floors and the depth of the foundation blocks.—[...]

we calculate the angle of the sun’s incidence in the course of the year and in relation to the latitude of the site, and with this knowledge we determine the size of the shadow cast by the house in the garden and the amount of sun admitted by the window into the bedroom. [...]

the new house is a prefabricated unit for on-site assembly and, inasmuch, an industrial product and a work of specialists: economists, statisticians, hygienists, climatologists, industrial engineers, standards experts, heat engineers...and the architect?... he was an artist and has become a specialist in organisation!

the new house is a social enterprise. it gets rid of partial unemployment in the building industry during the off-season, and it does away with the odium attaching to unemployment relief projects. by putting housework on a rational basis it saves the housewife from slavery in the home, and by putting gardening on a rational basis it saves the householder from the dabbling of the small gardener. it is primarily a social enterprise because, like every DIN standard, it is the standardised industrial product of a nameless group of inventors.

moreover, as one of the final forms in which the welfare of the nation is to be realized, the new housing estate is a purposefully organised work which engages the energies of all and in which co-operative effort and individual effort join forces in a common cause. this estate is modern not because of flat roofs or a vertical and horizontal division of its façades but because of its direct connection with human existence. in it the tensions of the individual, the sexes, the neighbourhood and the community and the geophysical relationships have been deliberately patterned.”

[From bauhaus, Vol. II, No. 4, 1928]

Translated from the German by D.Q. Stephenson.

From: Hannes Meyer, Buildings, Projects, and Writings. (1965)

“Because good form, in the sense we generally use the word today, derives from the Bauhaus. The Bauhaus designed standards that enabled industrial mass production. But, standardised production no longer has any individuality whatsoever. It is difficult to tie personality traits to such objects, or make orientation patterns that relate to the personalities of those concerned. Bauhaus concepts can only be justified if they are seen as a contradiction to the arbitrariness of historicism (today, one would say department store culture.) The historical feigning of a level of appearance that can no longer be reconciled with the individual’s social life has been subjected to a due, and of course correct, criticism by Bauhaus concepts. The Bauhäusler did not stop at this criticism, but for their part wanted to establish a kind of positive program to change the forms of our lives, in the political sense as well. They went so far as to say that all social differences, all class differences could be eliminated, if all people had access to the same concepts of living or of objects. They tried to make these concepts affordable for all, or at least for as many as possible. But of course that’s just the same kind of deception beneath department store culture: the difference between the appearances, and actual social life. After all, with everything we know about social conflicts, you cannot imagine that you can grind out social differences by creating a uniform living environment for all people.

[...]

‘Basic needs of living’ does not mean imposing minimal requirements on objects, but making oneself and others an offer to identify. However, because we’re no longer supported by traditional cultural behaviours, those who actively seek to work out a social environment of their own must know something about the function of the objective world, regarding the formation of subjectivity, and of individuality, to get to the necessary orientation. Only a few members of society have this knowledge. ‘Good form’ campaigns can help a bit, because in the expansion of their repertoire, the supply shift in the shops

can reach even those who mostly compulsively consume department store culture. The debate is still essentially taking place between two extreme positions: on one hand, the pathetic functionalism of the Bauhaus, with its social utopia; on the other hand, the arbitrariness of department store culture. For my part, I believe development has a tendency towards making historical formal languages free again—not to fool people into thinking they can still furnish their homes in the style of the Classicism from around 1800, but because people learn more and more to make distinctions, to recognize the connection between the living forms of a society, and the modes of appearance in which this life takes place.”

Bazon Brock: *Über Grundbedürfnisse [On Basic Needs] (1973)*, in: *Rat für Formgebung, Grundbedürfnisse im Wohnbereich. Bundespreis Gute Form '73 [Council for Shaping, Basic Needs in Living Area. Bundespreis Gute Form '73]*.

“Why does a person need an apartment? In the exhibition Profitopolis [Note: Exhibition of the Deutsche Werkbund: ‘Profitopolis — oder Der Mensch braucht eine andere Stadt’ in Neue Sammlung, Munich, 1971/72] the urban planner Josef Lehmbrock put it this way:
‘Man needs his own space, in which he is free and secure, and can do whatever he likes, free from others’ control, protected from wandering eyes, unthreatened by noise, with unpolluted air, with light and sun and a view...
Or, from the perspective of the inhabitants:...to eat, to sleep, to wash, to be warm, to party, to watch television, to play, to romp around, to make noise, to be master in their own houses, to do homework, to own furniture for showing off, to cook, to wash the dishes...in short, to feel good about being at home. All of these statements—that of the planner, and that of the residents—indicate the range of what man expects from his home, and what needs to be given space. [...]
Today, we demand: ‘A dwelling should not only provide a minimum of living space to safeguard biological existence, but enable man to freely develop his personality.’
We therefore regard it as a natural requirement that a home first meets elementary physical needs; in addition to protection from the weather, this includes the opportunity to sleep undisturbed, to eat, to communicate, to raise children, and to surround oneself with things that one needs and likes. The demand for free personal development belongs to the immeasurable, but still fundamental, needs of life, the restriction of which affects our physical and psychological well-being. On concrete conditions and opportunities for self-realisation, which are closely related to the individual’s socio-economic situation, we will go into detail later.

The most essential basic needs of living are:

- Pursuit of security and protection,
- Desire for stability and familiarity,
- Quest for a spatial framework offering the possibility of self-realisation,
- Need for contact and communication,
- the desire for self-expression (demonstration of social status).”

Michael Andritzky und Ingrid Wenz-Gahler:
Wohnbedürfnisse (1979), in: Michael Andritzky und Gert Selle, *Lernbereich Wohnen. Didaktisches Sachbuch zur Wohnumwelt vom Kinderzimmer bis zur Stadt* [*Lernbereich wohnen. Didactic non – fiction book on the living environment from the nursery to the city*], Vol. 1.

IMPRINT

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