

Press release

A building within a building – The new Bauhaus Museum Dessau brings together the future and the modern age under a hovering black box

"A black box in a glass shell" – this is how architect Roberto González describes the new Bauhaus Museum Dessau, designed by his firm *addenda architects*. It takes statics to the edge of magic: Inside, a concrete cube hovers, apparently weightlessly. The black structure is suspended five metres above the visitors' heads, held aloft by just two staircases. Lighting solutions by Zumtobel present the exhibits in the proper light, while the lighting for the area beneath them can be flexibly adapted to the respective use of the space.

Dornbirn, 02 October 2019 – To this day, three former areas of activity are pilgrimage sites for designers and architects searching for traces of the Bauhaus: Founded in Weimar in 1919, the Bauhaus art school moved to Dessau in 1925, spending its most successful years there before moving to Berlin in 1932 for another year. In all three cities, a new museum building is being constructed to celebrate the [100th anniversary of the art school's foundation](#). The Berlin Bauhaus Archive will have a new exhibition building by 2022, Weimar has had a new Bauhaus Museum since the beginning of the year – and on 8th September 2019, a new home for the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation's collection was opened in the form of the Bauhaus Museum Dessau.

The new building, at the most important historical site, is an independent structure, which is deliberately not affiliated with the former school building distinguished as a UNESCO world heritage site. The museum is located in Dessau city park, right in the heart of the city. It was designed by a young architecture firm from Barcelona, whose concept was selected from over 831 submissions. [Addenda architects](#) (Roberto González, Anne Hinz, Cecilia Rodríguez, Arnau Sastre and José Zabala), is a collaborative studio with an interdisciplinary background. The team comprises designers who originally worked in a range of creative and cultural areas and are therefore particularly able to adapt to the specific context. After all, the Bauhaus too was a place where a community of designers from across the globe could come together. And it represented interdisciplinary work and a craft tradition.

The young architects did not want to quote history. Yet the museum does features all sorts of Bauhaus. "But not in the sense of Mies van der Rohe's 'Less is more'. For us, 'More with less' was more important," explained Roberto González. "In our building, it's all about proportion, positioning and space. In the right combination, it is clear that you can achieve an outstanding result with just a few resources." The new building is to offer 1,500 square metres of exhibition space for the collection – without daylight and with optimal climatic conditions for the exhibits. The concept also required an area for flexible use, which can be used as a space for events or changing exhibitions. The two functions could barely have been separated more consistently than they were by addenda

architects. Five metres above the floor, a 100-metre-long and 18-metre-wide room structure is suspended as a black box. Inside, it accommodates the second largest Bauhaus collection in the world, comprising around 49,000 objects. Of these, over 1,000 exhibits are featured in the "Versuchsstätte Bauhaus. The collection" exhibition. Light is fed into the black box with general light planning by [Lichtvision Design](#), exhibition lighting by [ENVUE HOMBURG LICHT](#) and solutions by Zumtobel. Zumtobel, as the exclusive lighting partner, supplies all lighting solutions and collaborated closely with the responsible architects, exhibition designers and lighting designers during the planning and implementation phases.

The planners from Lichtvision Design placed particular emphasis on supporting the clarity and stringency of the architectural design. "The light planning creates a serial, industrial, flexible and linear base structure in the area of the ceiling," explained Carla Wilkins from Lichtvision Design. The [TECTON](#) light is a continuous-row lighting system, which, thanks to its flexible and wide-ranging components, can be adapted to any lighting task – including electrotechnical special solutions. It was possible to implement the general, emergency and exhibition lighting with just one system. On the ground floor, linear light inserts provide diffused and democratic light. In individual areas, single spotlights supplement the continuous row, creating accents and supporting orientation. "By minimising the stylistic element in the lighting technology, attention is shifted to the room itself, creating a platform for the varied use of the newly created Bauhaus space," said Carla Wilkins.

The exhibition lighting for the scenography of the collected works, designed by [chezweitz](#), was planned by ENVUE HOMBURG LICHT. Staged light, or rather directed light, plays a particularly important role here. The [ARCOS](#) spotlight system is specifically tailored to use in a museum context. It provides accented, precise and authentic staging of the exhibits and exhibition architecture. The innovative LED lighting, combined with customised reflectors and selected optics, generates a unique light quality for subtle presentation with translucent, white and coloured materials. With ARCOS, light in Dessau becomes a tool for the perfect staging of art and design. "The black box room recedes into the background and, because of its dark walls, seems almost non-existent – all scattered light is absorbed," explained Urs Schreiner from ENVUE HOMBURG LICHT.

[Beacon modules](#) were also integrated in anticipation. These small, stationary radio broadcasting stations take future applications of the museum into account, such as digital museum guides, mobile navigation through the exhibition or customised information systems about the exhibits. The parallel installation brings two technologies together in one property – even if the Internet of Things will only be incorporated in the museum at a later date. The adaptability of the installed light system is another important requirement. For, since there is no fixed use of the open community space beneath the exhibition cube, the lighting must also be dynamically adaptable – for presentation situations, workshops or temporary installations.

The ground floor is a consistent contrast to the black box. Anyone who enters the open space on the ground level experiences a "magical moment," as Roberto González describes it. "Suddenly you're right in the middle. There are no more limitations. Everything appears open, transparent and fluid." And the important thing is: the openness works in both directions. Not only is the visitor behind the glass façade standing perceptibly right in the city centre, but the building itself also influences the urban context. On one side, it creates a connection to the green park and, on the other side, to the city centre. The architects from Barcelona would actually have liked to have left the space under the hovering box open, but: "We are in northern Europe, where there's a lot of rain and it can get very cold. That's why we constructed a kind of winter coat made of glass."

The positioning in the centre of Dessau was a deliberate decision; the new building is intended to attract fans of the Bauhaus to the city. And the location in the city park was also deliberate. What the park loses in terms of area, is in part given back by the rooftop garden, which becomes a fifth façade, with the plants helping to optimise the building in terms of the climate. The result is maximum openness, flexibility and consistent functionality.

The new Bauhaus museum was opened on Sunday, 8th September 2019 and was a highlight of the 100th anniversary of Bauhaus. For the first time, the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation's collection is fully represented – and the museum, as an independent, contemporary location, will supplement and connect the Bauhaus buildings in Dessau in equal measure.

All details about the event are available [here](#).

Captions:
(Photo credits: Zumtobel)



Image 1: "A black box in a glass shell" – this is how architect Roberto González describes the new Bauhaus Museum Dessau, designed by his firm *addenda architects*.

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About Zumtobel

We are passionate about designing and producing the highest quality of light. Our work is driven by the knowledge that the right light can create the right environment for people to thrive when tailored to their individual needs. Guided by a unique design approach, we continuously push our boundaries in search for perfection through unique and timeless design. As we develop the next generation of lighting, we build on our family heritage to refine the aesthetics of light and shape the lighting of tomorrow. With a special blend of passion, grace and avant-garde ideas, we turn light into an experience and remain committed to the goal of improving the quality of life through light. Zumtobel is a brand of the Zumtobel Group AG with its headquarters in Dornbirn, Vorarlberg (Austria).

Zumtobel. The Light.**About Bauhaus Museum Dessau and the planning team**

The Bauhaus Dessau Foundation is an artistic-scientific foundation with the mission of preserving and passing on the ideas and themes of the Bauhaus. The Foundation's work is historically reflective and simultaneously investigates the present-day relevance and contemporary potentials that may be derived from the Bauhaus legacy for the 21st century. The years which the Bauhaus spent in Dessau from 1925 to 1932 are regarded as the heyday of the school founded in Weimar in 1919. The current heritage, which yields the spectrum of the Foundation's work, is accordingly extensive.

Architects: addenda architects, Barcelona

Exhibition designer: chezweitz, Berlin

Project management: Teamproject, Berlin

General lighting light planning: Lichtvision Design, Berlin

Exhibition lighting light planning: ENVUE HOMBURG LICHT, Berlin

Building services: Inros Lackner, Rostock