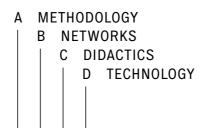
EXPLORATIONS IN ARCHITECTURE



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98	MAS UD Master of Advanced Studies in Urban Design [ETHZ]
141	ALICE Atelier de la conception de l'espace [EPFL]
182	DFAB Architecture and Digital Fabrication [ETHZ]

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DIDACTICS Historical Case Study

STRUCTURE AND CONTENT FOR THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT: THE HOCHSCHULE FÜR GESTALTUNG ULM. 1953-1968

Tilo Richter

Hochschule für Gestaltung (HfG) Ulm was considered one play a decisive role in shaping in the coming years. of the most important international centers for the design lasting influence on the education of designers.

hans and Helene Nonné-Schmidt. The first classes were back into teaching. held in the Volkshochschule, while on Oberer Kuhberg According to some of the faculty, in the 1960s the the building for the new institute was being constructed teaching was becoming increasingly subject to scien-Bauhaus pupil Max Bill.

Walter Gropius spoke of a "continued, organic develop- Horst Rittl, sociologist Hanno Kesting and industrial ment" of the Bauhaus, and the new institute was even designer Bruce Archer advocated a strictly analytical sometimes referred to as "Bauhaus Ulm." However, in methodology quite distinct from their colleagues' oriencontrast to the legendary Bauhaus of Weimar, Dessau tation toward industrial practice. In the mid 60s, internal and Berlin, the teachers and students at Ulm thought conflicts around the pedagogical orientation of the HfG of themselves less as artists and individualists than as intensified, and were increasingly accompanied by industrial designers, the ones whose task it was to form public criticism. The institute's closure in 1968 was the and to sustain what Aicher termed the "culture of civi- result of multiple factors: a lack of political support led lization." Education at the HfG consisted of one year of to the elimination of necessary financial subsidies from basic study and three years of specialization, in product the government of Baden-Württemberg, which also had design, visual communication, construction, information not been able to offset the considerable debts of the (until 1964) or film (beginning in 1961). A main objective Scholl Foundation. Gui Bonsiepe, a designer who had common to all subjects was sensitizing students to received his diploma from Ulm in 1959, said of the insticultural and social issues, and scientific and scholarly tute in the year of its closing, "Although the HfG did not approaches accompanied the design process. In the meet a heroic end, the hope at its beginning was indeed classrooms, workshops, studios and dormitories designed heroic. The HfG should not be measured by what it achieved, by Bill, the cooperative efforts of students and faculty but by what it was prevented from achieving." from around the world reflected the pedagogical approach of the HfG: design, scholarship, and society were BIBLIOGRAPHY tightly interwoven, and life and work formed a unique • Curdes, Gerhard. HfG Ulm: 21 Rückblicke. Bauen – Gemein-

orientation towards the Bauhaus had become the subject *Unyielding Modernity.* Berlin: Verlag Ernst & Sohn, 2003.

• Maldonado, Tomás: "Design Education." In *Education of* of controversial discussions. The younger instructors Vision, edited by Gyorgy Kepes, 122–135. New York: George called for a modified curriculum that would make greater Braziller, 1965.

use of science and theory. Tomás Maldonado, an Argentinian who had previously taught in Italy, became an opponent of Bill, and Bill left the HfG in 1957 as a reaction to the impending change of course. At the International Exposition in Brussels in 1958, Maldonado gave an impassioned speech on the conceptual reorien-From its founding in 1953 until its closure in 1968. The tation of the HfG—the "Ulm model"—which he would

From that time on, under a council of directors, the of industrial products. Not only did graduates of the HfG institute at UIm became more closely allied with the become key players in contemporary product design, but production of industrial goods. The new symbiosis of the pedagogical concept developed at Ulm has had a design and industry was, for example, evident in the products of Max Braun AG, the renowned manufacturer In 1949 Inge Scholl, Otl Aicher and Hans Werner of electrical household appliances. Braun's department Richter began to configure an institute at Ulm that was of product design, developed by Fritz Eichler, cooperequally oriented toward politics, science and the hu- ated closely with the HfG, as did Dieter Rams ("Mr. Braun"). manities. Education in politics and the comprehensive Several of the HfG faculty did design work for Braun design of the environment, both in structure and content, directly, such as Hans Gugelot (who designed the SK4, would establish and reinforce humanistic ideals and "Snow White's Coffin," with Dieter Rams), Inge Scholl democratic thought-nothing less than a "new culture." and Otl Aicher (Corporate Design). As quickly and in-During its initial year, the faculty included former Bauhaus tensively as new design ideas flowed into production, instructors Josef Albers, Johannes Itten, Walter Peter- so the experience and knowledge gained there was fed

according to the designs of founding director and former tific premises. Maldonado and those who had supported him in the dispute around Aicher and Gugelot now became When Bill's school buildings were opened in 1955, the target of opposition. Lecturers such as mathematician

- schaft Doktrinen. Ulm: Verlag Dorothea Rohn-Klewe, 2006.
- Krampen, Martin, and Günther Hörmann. Die Hochschule für As its first director, Max Bill primarily influenced Gestaltung Ulm – Anfänge eines Projektes der unnachgiebigen the early years of the HfG. Already by the mid 50s, the Moderne = The Ulm School of Design - Beginnings of a Project of

HOCHSCHULE FÜR GESTALTUNG ULM Tilo Richter

Max Bill with Ray and Charles Eames at Ulm, 1955 (Photo: Ernst Hahn)

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- Inge Aicher-Scholl and Walter Gropius at the opening of the HfG campus, 1955 (Photo: Ike and Hannes Rosen
- Photo studio at HfG, 1957 (Photo: Wolfgang Siol)
- HfG campus buildings by Max Bill, 1955 (Photo: Wolfgang Siol)
- Tomás Maldonado teaching, 1966 (Photo: Roland Fürst)
 - Students room in the "Wohnturm" at HfG campus, 1958 (Photo: Wolfgang Siol)











