

The Case of Corona Krause: Textiles as a Spatial Apparatus

Crossing between the production of textiles intended for both bodily and spatial wrapping, Corona Krause's contribution to the terrain of modern textiles appears diversely rich. Alumna of the Bauhaus State School in Weimar, and later director of the weaving workshop at the Arts and Crafts School in Hannover, Krause belongs to the wider group of modern artists whose biographic and professional profile remains obscure, but recently cogent due to new archival acquisitions. Not only does this paper aspire to elucidate the thread of the artist's practice, stressing the need to unknot and retie modern historiographies, but it also anticipates drawing attention to the overlooked role of dress in the attentively orchestrated interior spaces produced in the early decades of the twentieth century. In so doing, it employs oral histories, archival material and observations, as well as writings of key figures of the Weaving Workshop in Weimar and sets out to provide a complex interpretation of the artist's little-known oeuvre. The contextualisation of the female body and dress within the interdisciplinary spatial production of that time, anticipates influence on a broader discussion on issues of disciplinary relevance and exchange, as well as of female representation and engagement, which was at that time valid, yet volatile.

Keywords: Bauhaus, Weaving Workshop, Corona Krause, simultaneity, modernity

Textile artworks held a pivotal role in the spatial experiments promoted by the Bauhaus State School (*Staatliches Bauhaus*) and were included in seminal interior spaces therein produced in the early years of the 1920s. In the light of the total work of art (*Gesamtkunstwerk*) concept, textiles were elevated to integral elements of interior architecture, equal to the rest of the domestic elements, namely pieces of furniture, ceramics and lighting. For the *Haus Sommerfeld* (1920–21) –the first architectural commission upon the School's establishment– for instance, Dörte Helm had created a large-format appliqué curtain,¹ in the dimensions of 2.10 by 2.60 meters, so as to conceal a wide wall opening in its interior (Fig. 1). The curtain echoed the geometrical patterns of the woodcarvings that Joost Schmidt had applied on the house's interior surfaces, as well as the ones that featured on its parquet floors. The interior architecture of the *Haus am Horn* (1922–23), which reached completion a few years later for the first Bauhaus exhibition in Weimar (1923), similarly incorporated site-specific textile artworks. The floor of its living room was covered by a carpet designed by Martha Erps-Breuer that aligned with the visual identity of its neighbouring fittings designed by Marcel Breuer and László Moholy-Nagy (Fig. 2). It was in the case of another space on display during the 1923 exhibition, however, that the contribution of textile design to interior architecture was expressed at its most evident.

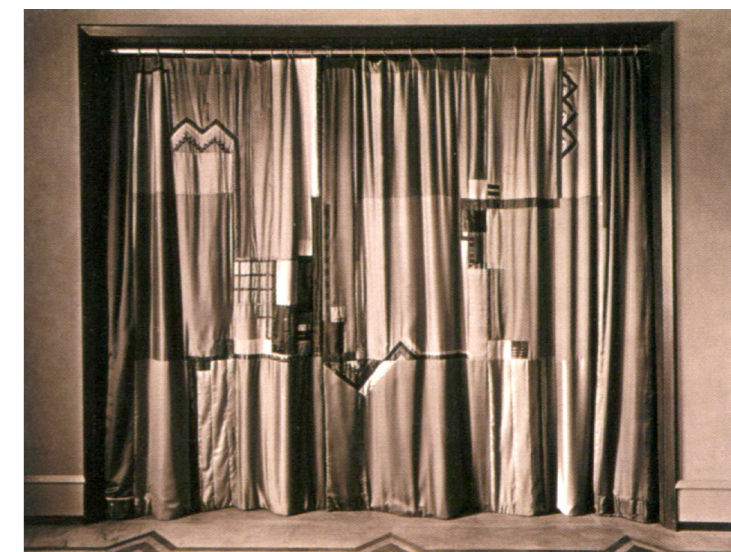


Fig. 1. Dörte Helm, Curtain with *appliqué* technique for the Haus Sommerfeld (1920–21).

Published in *Dörte Helm am Bauhaus in Weimar* (Weimar: Freundeskreis der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, 2009), s.p., Exhibition catalogue.

¹ The catalogue of an exhibition on Dörte Helm at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar (18 July – 6 September 2009), provides valuable insights into the body of her work. See Dörte Helm, *Am Bauhaus im Weimar* (Weimar: Freundeskreis der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, 2009), Exhibition catalogue.



Fig. 2. Martha Erps-Breuer, Carpet for the Haus am Horn (1923). Published in Juliette Desorgues et al. (eds.), *Bauhaus: Art as Life* (London: Walther König, 2012), 89.

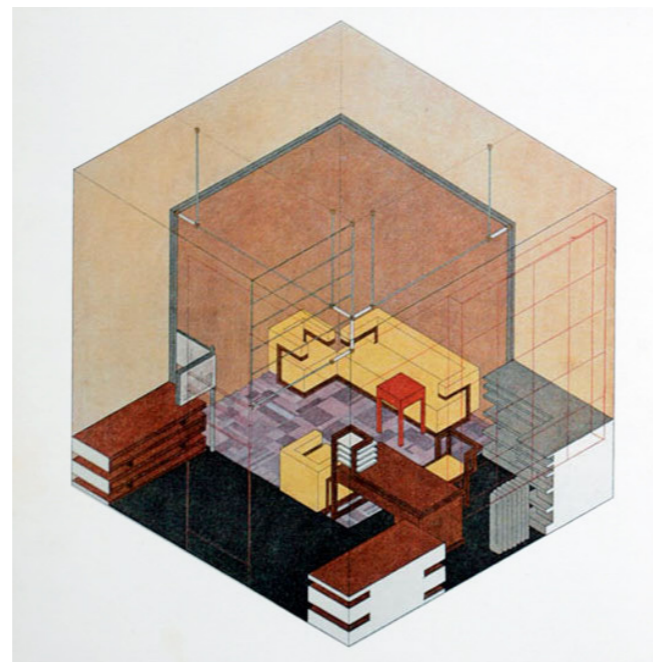


Fig. 3. Walter Gropius, The Office of the Bauhaus Director Weimar (1923). Published in Magdalena Droste and Jeannine Fiedler (eds.), *Experiment Bauhaus: Das Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin (West) zu Gast im Bauhaus Dessau* (Berlin: Kupfergraben, 1988), 82.

Apropos the *Direktorzimmer Bauhaus* in Weimar (1923) (Fig. 3), not only did woven elements –namely the knotted-pile carpet by Gertrud Arndt and the silk wall hanging by Else Mögelin– articulate the room's linear and spatial continuity, but, also, the diverse functional spaces were attentively 'interwoven',² as if both two- and three-dimensional elements had been 'stitched' together in an homogeneous space. The interrelation between textiles, furniture and other interior space elements could be ascribable to the visions of Walter Gropius for the 'complete building', as defined in his 1919 Bauhaus manifesto, in which architecture would converse with sculpture and painting. Meanwhile, its expression could, to a large extent, be attributed to the work of the Weaving Workshop. Through close collaborations with

2 'Even more than the furnished interiors of the *Haus am Horn*, the director's office made all of the Workshop's products – textiles, graphics, furniture, lighting – integral parts of a radical spatial experiment. Inspired not only by De Stijl extensions of space through linear continuities but also by Wright's technique of weaving one space into another, the office layered both space and spatial perception through line and colour, through the suggestion of boundaries and wrapping spaces, and through functional zoning'. Barry Bergdoll and Leah Dickerman, *Bauhaus 1919–1933: Workshops for Modernity* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2009), 49.

the Carpentry Workshop³ and a perpetual dialogue with art and craftsmanship, the Workshop had a vivid and active presence in the majority of interior spaces produced.

It was to this environment of osmotic alliance between products of architecture, fine art and craftsmanship that Corona Krause⁴ was introduced in Spring 1923, as a student of the preliminary course (*Vorkurs*) at the Bauhaus. Krause was born on 16 August 1906 –to a German consul, Friedrich Krause, and his wife, Isolde Morrison– in Coronata, Genoa. A textile artist, who had engaged in artisanal workshops on the craft of weaving prior to her inscription at the Bauhaus, Krause would later go on to make her own contribution to the wider map of modernist textile artworks in Germany. She was also an artist who had contributed a winning entry to a competition by the Junkers factory for aircraft upholstery designs,⁵ who went on to initiate her own independent practice and who became largely involved in pedagogic activities – first at the Arts and Crafts School in Halle (Burg Giebichenstein Kunsthochschule) and then at the respective School in Hannover.

Aiming to shed light on the artist's little-known artistic profile, the present article focusses on her stay at the Bauhaus, in the period between 1923 and 1925, and sets out to situate it within the wider cross-disciplinary debate of that period between interior space and textiles. It explores how her interaction with the pre-eminent figures of the School, and her involvement in its diverse activities, laid the foundation for her further creative professional practice. Consequently, it discusses selected artworks, currently found in the family archives and the collection of the *Sammlungsarchiv* at the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation (Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau), which are attributed to the artist and were created in the course of, and after, her educational stay at the Bauhaus. Emphasis is placed on a dress, which is included in the archival collection of her work and is estimated to date back to the late 1920s. As this paper considers how the dress alludes to materials and techniques promoted by the Weaving Workshop of the Bauhaus State School in Weimar, it aspires to understand the role of bodily attire in its extensive definition, within a wider context of holistic domestic environments produced by the School, as well as in reference to the artistic practices taking place at that time and, in terms of artistic production, later on as well.

3 This collaboration also led to a simultaneous approach to interior space elements such as pieces of furniture. 'Later collaborations between the two Workshops in Dessau', Weltge notes, 'would result in the cohesive unity of fabric and chair and would be advertised with technical specifications including the elasticity of the material'. See Sigrid Wortmann Weltge, *Bauhaus Textiles: Women Artists and the Weaving Workshop* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 58.

4 The research project with the working title Corona Krause – Hermann "Sven" Gautel. "Le chaînon manquant" is being undertaken by the grandson of Krause, Jakob Gautel.

5 The information on Krause's participation in the competition established by Junkers –the German aircraft and aircraft engine manufacturer based in Dessau– was provided by Jakob Gautel during our phone discussion on November 23, 2015.

A Weaver's Formation: From the Visual to the Tactile Canvas

From April 1923 until her enrolment at the Weaving Workshop the following year, Corona Krause attended the preliminary course of the Bauhaus School in Weimar, during which she delved into experiments with watercolour, nude painting and typography, as the extent of her portfolio suggests. In that year, László Moholy-Nagy had succeeded Johannes Itten⁶ at the helm of the course, having had significant impact on the formation of the Bauhaus weavers. Given that the succession was still recent, traces of Itten's influence on the weavers' practice were still evident. For instance, textile artworks of that period still drew upon elementary forms combined with primary colours – features that were characteristic of Itten's theory and teaching. Paul Klee also served as an influential figure for the Weaving Workshop practices in those days. Through his design theory courses, he prompted the weavers to experiment further with woven textiles that featured geometrical patterns, alongside a combination of colourful layers and stripes. A pencil sketch in Krause's portfolio – bearing the title 'Master Klee' and depicting Paul Klee's profile – reveals his informal bonds and close connection to the Bauhaus weavers and students of the School. In a broader context, the preliminary course of the Bauhaus comprised a platform of experimentation with materials, essential to the later engagement of students with weaving – one branch in a broad variety of handicrafts explored at the School.⁷

Among the pen drawings, watercolours and graphic works which Krause produced during the preliminary course of Moholy-Nagy, a balance study (*Gleichgewichtsstudie*) is found: it is entitled 'Floating Plastic, Illusionistic (*schwebende Plastik, illusionistisch*)' (1923) and survives through a silver gelatin print of 1955 located at the Bauhaus-Archiv in Berlin (Fig. 4). Comprising rectangular parts of solid wood and plastic that balance on a delicate spiral body, it refers to a sculptural piece which seemingly challenges gravity. Krause's limited reputation to this day could be presumably accredited to this sculptural artefact, given that László Moholy-Nagy had included it in his 1938

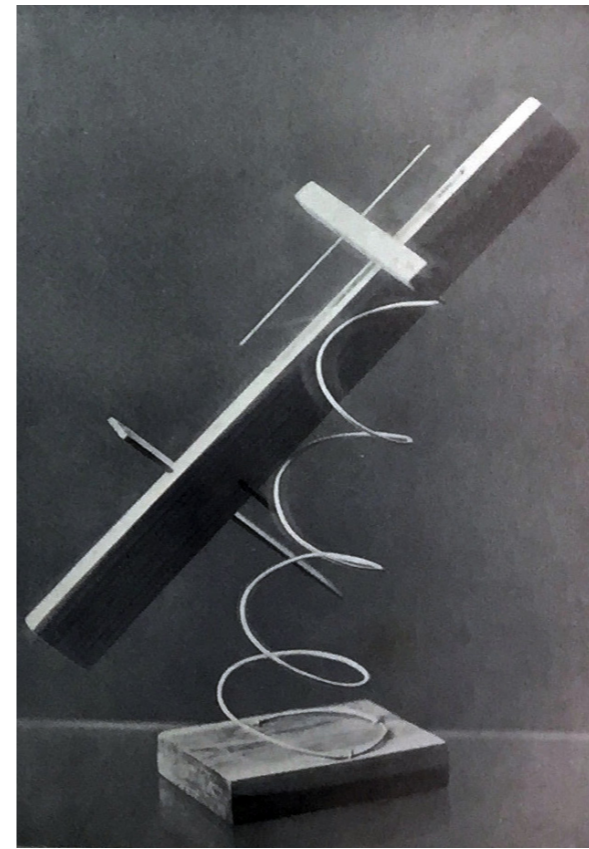


Fig. 4. Corona Krause, *Floating Plastic: Illusionistic* (1924), Photograph: Eckner, Weimar. Published in László Moholy-Nagy, *Vision in Motion* (Chicago: Theobald, 1965), 125.

book *The New Vision. From Material to Architecture*.⁸ Arguably, the principal characteristics of this study would later be incorporated into Krause's textile artefacts, which although they had not received an equally broad attention as the 1923 study, they bore a vivid interest in the interpretation of geometry, abstractness and balance.

'Miss Korona Krause, you have been preliminarily accepted in the Workshop,' announces a letter addressed to the artist on 4 July 1924, signed by Walter Gropius. It indicates that 'admission shall be made on August; until then, you are on leave of absence.'⁹ This document is the earliest surviving form of correspondence between Krause and the Weimar School, directed in those days by Gropius, and marks the beginning of her studentship at the Weaving Workshop, at the age of eighteen. From within a female terrain of creativity, integral to the Bauhaus State School, Krause would produce various artefacts that ranged from domestic furnishings, tablecloths, pillow cases and blankets, to women's and children's apparel.

A study in watercolour, coloured pencils and pencil on paper – dating back to 1924 – comprises a composition with circular segments and lines, while it is testament to the weaver's

6 Johannes Itten had an ongoing interest in textiles and the origins of his relationship with textile design can be traced back in the period between 1923 and 1926, a time when he founded the Ontos Workshops for handweaving, together with Gunta Stölzl. Later on, his contribution to art textile practice would be complemented by his appointment as Director of the Advanced School of Textile Art (*Höhere Fachschule für textile Flächenkunst*) located in Krefeld in 1932. See Karin Thönnissen, *Johannes Itten und die Höhere Fachschule für textile Flächenkunst in Krefeld* (Krefeld: Van Acken, 1992) and Ernest W. Uthemann (ed.), *Johannes Itten 1888–1967: Alles in einem – Alles in sein* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2003).

7 'There were studies of materials that we could fool around with in our own studios. These were necessary in order to familiarize us with the materials of any one of the Bauhaus Workshops, for after the *Vorkurs* it was mandatory that we learn a handicraft'. Eckhard Neumann (ed.), *Bauhaus and Bauhaus People* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993), 41.

8 See Lutz Schöbe, "Sind Sie an Textilien interessiert?," Bauhaus Online, <http://bauhaus-online.de/magazin/artikel/sind-sie-an-textilien-interessiert>, (accessed November 29, 2015), and "Corona Krause," Bauhaus Online, <http://bauhaus-online.de/atlas/personen/corona-krause> (accessed November 29, 2015). More recently, the balance study by Corona Krause received renewed attention after the incorporation of its 1924 photographic documentation, produced by Lucia Moholy, in the exhibition *Bauhaus: Art as Life* exhibited at the Barbican Art Gallery in London (3 May – 12 August 2012). For a catalogue of the exhibits see *List of objects proposed for protection under Part 6 of the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 (protection of cultural objects on loan)*, <http://www.barbican.org.uk/media/upload/art/bauhauslistofloansforprotection.pdf> (accessed November 29, 2015). More recently, Krause's work has been included in the exhibitions *Bauhaus: The Art of the Students – Works from the Collection of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation* (October 19, 2013 – January 26, 2014, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Galerie der Stadt Remscheid) and "Big Plans! Modern Figures, Visionaries, and Inventors. Applied Modernism in Saxony-Anhalt 1919-1933" (4 May 2016 - 6 January 2017, Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, exhibited throughout Saxony-Anhalt). See also Matina Kousidi, "The Thread of Corona Krause, beyond the Bauhaus," in *AIS/Design: Storia e Ricerche*, Special issue *Italian Material Design: Imparando dalla Storia*, no. 4, November 4, 2014, <http://www.aisdesign.org/aisd/il-filo-di-corona-krause-oltre-il-bauhaus> (accessed September 12, 2017).

9 Krause's correspondence with the Bauhaus is located at the Sammlungsarchiv of the Bauhaus Foundation in Dessau.



Fig. 5. Corona Krause, No title, Watercolour composition (1924). Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau. Published in <www.bauhaus100.de/en/past/people/students/corona-krause> (accessed September 12, 2017)

experimentation with forms prior to the undertaking of weaving practices.¹⁰ Part of a set of three watercolour drawings revealing a wider experimentation with colours, rhythm and forms, this study also reveals the influence of Moholy-Nagy's visual experiments on Krause's formation (Fig. 5). For the majority of Krause's surviving artworks in the field of weaving, painting and drawing techniques were incorporated into

the preparation process, hence evidencing the intimate relationship between pictorial and textile arts. Both the documented and surviving artworks of that period bear evidence of the presence of pictorial textiles, featuring mainly of striped or plaid patterns, thus reinforcing the connection to the abstract artistic canvases of the Bauhaus painters. Following Sigrid Wortmann Weltge, instructions from the master painters, including Itten, Klee and Moholy-Nagy, were fundamental in shaping the weavers professional lives.¹¹

'A floor part can form part of the overall composition of a room and as much can function as a spatially determining element', Bauhaus weaver Gunta Stölzl –the artist who held a determining role

for the Weaving Workshop's activities from 1920– describes, 'but it can just as well be conceived as a self-sufficient "thing in itself" which, in its formal and colouristic language can treat some two-dimensional visual theme'.¹² Indeed, during the Weimar era of the Weaving Workshop, the emphasis was placed on artistic expression, reflecting in this way the instruction and the design philosophies of the master painters. For instance, a tablecloth, measuring 2.42 m by 0.88 m and featuring a striped, abstract weaving style, although undated, bears resemblance to Krause's studies during the Bauhaus preliminary course, and, more precisely, to the intersecting linear patterns illustrated in her experimentation with watercolour and typography.¹³

On the one hand, textiles were regarded as visual compositions of flat planes, emphasising their aesthetic, visual value. On the other, as their practical, functional role began to emerge, they were perceived as three-dimensional objects. Yet, Corona Krause and her co-students –Anni Albers, Benita Koch-Otte and Else Mögelin– would approach weaving in a thoroughly experimental way; they would re-evaluate craftsmanship and technique following modern means, whilst embracing the emerging needs of their time. The collection of thread swatches compiled and collated by Krause is indicative of thorough research into the blending of natural with artificial materials. This exploration led to the combination of threads innovative at that time, namely aluminium, cellophane and plastic threads, with wool, silk or cotton.¹⁴ 'The women increased their scientific experimentation,' Magdalena Droste writes, noting that 'systematic experiments with new materials – cellophane, artificial silk, chenille, for example' had been inherent to the Weaving Workshop curricular synthesis, even prior to Hannes Meyer's directorship.¹⁵ It could then be asserted that Corona Krause's thread sample is part of the wider investigation into materiality promoted by the Workshop in the early 1920s.¹⁶ 'The work must now be carried out in an experimental way', Albers wrote in her 1924 text

12 Gunta Stölzl, *Offset: Buch und Werbekunst*, (Leipzig: Bauhaus, 1926), series Bauhaus-Heft, vol. 7; Julia Engelhardt and Frank Whitford (eds.), *The Bauhaus: Masters and Students by Themselves* (London: Conran Octopus, 1992), 234.

13 The table cloth is part of the Corona Krause's family-owned collection, which is currently hosted at the Sammlungsarchiv of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation.

14 'Why do we continue to concern ourselves with weaving rather than look for entirely new materials which have the same qualities as woven fabric: which can be dyed, are elastic, can be made to any size, are easily divisible, soft, and above all economic, but which do not depend on the painstaking and, in spite of the extreme technical complications, formally restricted process of weaving? One day such a new artificial material will certainly exist. But that is a task for the chemical industry and the university laboratories. Once this material has been invented and can be economically produced, weaving for us will have finished.' Helene Nonne-Schmidt, "Das Gebiet der Frau im Bauhaus," *Vivos voco* 5, no. 8–9 (August – September 1926), cited upon Engelhardt and Whitford, *Students by Themselves*, 256.

15 Magdalena Droste, *Bauhaus 1919–1933* (Cologne: Taschen, 1993), 184.

16 This combination was characteristic of the Bauhaus weaving practices at that time, as in the case of Anni Albers –Krause's co-student– and her renowned curtain for the auditorium of the Federal School (*Allgemeinen Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundeschule*) in Bernau. Featuring a mix of cotton chenille and cellophane threads woven on cotton warp, the employed materials of this silvery stage curtain were meant to insulate sound and reflect light, respectively.

10 It also reveals the impact of Moholy-Nagy's artistic character on Krause's work, as this is reminiscent of one of his artworks produced one year earlier. See Maria Wegener and Wolfgang Werner, *László Moholy-Nagy zum 100. Geburtstag: Bilder, Aquarelle, Graphik, Protogramme der 20er Jahre* (Berlin: Kunsthandel Wolfgang Werner, 1995), Exhibition catalogue.

11 Weltge, *Bauhaus Textiles*, 10. For posterior explorations into painting and weaving, apropos of the Bauhaus, see also "Die Geburt der Abstraktion aus dem Geiste des Textilen," in Markus Brüderlin et al. (eds.), *Kunst und Textil: Stoff als Material und Idee in der Moderne von Klimt bis Heute Herausgegeben* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2014), 119–40, and Christian Wolsdorff, "Wir waren halt die Decorativen im Sternenbanner Bauhaus," in Friedrich Meschede et al. (eds.), *To Open Eyes: Kunst und Textil vom Bauhaus bis heute* (Bielefeld: Kerber, 2013), 60–81.

'Bauhaus Weaving' ('Bauhausweberei') that featured in the 1924 special issue of the magazine *Junge Menschen* dedicated to the Bauhaus in Weimar. Drawing attention to the need to regain full contact with the employed material, after the rise of mechanisation, she went on to explain that the role of weavers at that time was to bridge the generated gap between the weaver and the employed material.¹⁷

And as the Bauhaus was an attempt not at a dictatorial stance over obedient 'subsidiary bodies' but was rather, a multiplicity of heads and aspirations,¹⁸ the weavers held in their entirety an important role in articulating the turmoil of their times through artefacts of functional, aesthetic and utilitarian importance. The concept of modern textile design would be expressed in multiple ways as the weavers would develop prototypes and designs addressed to the industry and pave the way for contemporary textile design. Under the educational instructions of Georg Muche, the Master of Form, and Helene Börner, the Master of Craft, Krause produced works influenced by the realms of art, craft and new technologies. In line with the spirit of the Weaving Workshop in those days, Anni Albers, Krause's co-student, would indirectly inform the materialistic thesis of Gottfried Semper. Through the concentration on materiality, technology and functionality, a culture of artistic upholstery, wall hangings and designs for the textile industry would come to life, attributing the origins of a unique and innovative body of work to the 'moving images' produced at the Workshop.¹⁹ In turn, Albers herself would expand on the methodological shift in the Workshop's practices:

It was a curious revolution when the students of weaving became concerned with a practical purpose. Previously they had been so deeply interested in the problems of the material itself and in discovering various ways of handling it that they had taken no time for utilitarian considerations. Now, however, a shift took place from free play with forms to logical composition. (...) The whole range of possibilities had been freely explored: concentration on a definite purpose now had a disciplinary effect.²⁰

17 'Only the work by hand, with its slow process, allows any type of experiment, allows a complete formal creation, technique and material', Albers writes, as 'only in this way we can understand the industry as mechanical craft – we can work for the industry, because we have understood the substance' (Annie Albers, "Bauhausweberei," *Junge Menschen* 5, no. 8 (1924), 188.

18 Oskar Schlemmer's affirmation from his diary, June 1923 (translation by the author). Walther Scheidig and Klaus G. Beyer, *Bauhaus Weimar 1919–1924: Werkstattarbeiten* (Leipzig: Edition Leipzig, 1966), 5.

19 Markus Brüderlin, "Zur Ausstellung: Die Geburt der Abstraktion aus dem Geiste des Textilen und die Eroberung des Stoff-Raumes," in Brüderlin et al., *Kunst und Textil*, 14-45, here 35 (translation by the author).

20 Anni Albers, "The Weaving Workshop", 1938 in Engelhardt and Whitford, *Students by Themselves*, 234.

Dress, More Than Meets the Skin

This new 'range of possibilities' concerning textiles, which Albers illustrated in her writings, was to be applied to a wide range of surfaces from walls to furniture to female bodies, introducing new dynamics between the spatial and the corporeal realms. Despite the prominent position of textile artworks in the interior spaces orchestrated by the different departments of the Bauhaus School,²¹ the element of dress, however, held a subordinate, nearly obscure, role. It mainly pertained to the ephemeral sphere of costume design, apropos both the Stage Design Workshop directed by Oskar Schlemmer and the informal festivities that traversed the Bauhaus calendar.²² In both cases, dress represented a fertile terrain for experimenting with the distortion of the bodily silhouette, through the donning of voluminous, geometrical costumes and the exploration of the body's overall visual and tactile appearance through the adaptation of peculiar materials such as metallic wire, foam or natural hair.²³ Dress emerged as a continuation and integral part of the spatial environment in which it was being hosted, framing the aesthetic character of these isolated moments in the School's life span.

Wassily Kandinsky's appearance in traditional 'lederhosen', in celebration of the acquisition of the German citizenship in 1928,²⁴ the original, imaginative costumes of the Bauhaus parties, 'inhuman, or humanoid, but always new',²⁵ the renowned costumes of Oskar Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet* (*Triadisches Ballett*), or even Johannes Itten's outfit, which comprised a red-violet, high-buttoned

21 'Simpler, arguably more easily mass-producible objects on the list, such as tablecloths, pillows, scarves, or drapes being produced in the Weaving Workshop, are notably absent from the catalogue.' Jeffrey Saletnik and Robin Schuldenfrei (eds.), *Bauhaus Construct: Fashioning Identity, Discourse and Modernism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 49.

22 The role of dress and costume design in the Bauhaus School has been described in few studies from the past decades, among which Ute Ackermann, "Bauhaus Parties – Histrionics between Eccentric Dancing and Animal Drama," in Jeannine Fiedler and Peter Feierabend (eds.), *Bauhaus* (Potsdam: Ullmann, 2007), 126–39; Juliet Koss, "Bauhaus Theater of Human Dolls," *The Art Bulletin* 85 (2003), 724–45; and Farkas Molnár, "Life at the Bauhaus," in Timothy O. Benson and Éva Forgács (eds.), *From Between Two Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910–1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2002), 462–65.

23 Klee also recalls that 'one colleague, for example, by the name of Pascha, had a long mane that came down all the way to his shoulders, like the Beatles today. One day, in full public view, he was shorn of his adornment. But more important [sic.], Pascha artfully made this hair the central point of one of his studies of materials.' Neumann, *Bauhaus People*, 41.

24 Kathleen James-Chakraborty (ed.), *Bauhaus Culture: From Weimar to the Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 110.

25 'The greatest expenditures of energy, however, go into the costume parties. The essential difference between the fancy-dress balls organized by the artists of Paris, Berlin, Moscow and the ones here at the Bauhaus is that our costumes are truly original. Everyone prepares his or her own. Never a one that has been seen before. Inhuman, or humanoid, but always new. You may see monstrously tall shapes stumbling about, colorful mechanical figures that yield not the slightest clue as to where the head is. Sweet girls inside a red cube. Here comes a winch and they are hoisted high up into the air; lights flash and scents are sprayed.' Farkas Molnár, "Life at the Bauhaus" 1925, in Benson and Forgács, *Between Worlds*, 465.

uniform and gold-rimmed glasses²⁶ and was influenced by the Mazdaznan philosophy with which he became acquainted in the period between 1923 and 1926, are a few of these moments. Apart from the peripheral and exaggerated manifestations of attire in the School, a part of the surviving Bauhaus dresses refers to sartorial creations of quotidian use, explicitly associated with the textile artists of the Weaving Workshop.²⁷ Most famously, the dress produced by Lis Volger in 1928 survives through the renowned black and white picture of Enrich Consemüller,²⁸ in which a female figure leans back on a B3 club chair designed by Marcel Breur, while looking at the camera through a painted metallic mask designed by Oskar Schlemmer. Approximately one-meter long so as to end just above the knee, Volger's dress was made of cotton and artificial silk threads and comprised a discreet striped pattern. Despite the pivotal role that dress held in the scenography of this picture, the production of female attire at the Weaving Workshop held an obscure role. Juliet Koss writes:

Her Bauhaus environment has encased and absorbed her: chair, dress, head. She is clearly female, but her slim body, ovoid head, and the pared-down fashions of the Weimar New Woman all suggest androgyny, reproducing the effect of Schlemmer's padded dolls from the other side of the gender divide. (...) That the figure cannot be identified, rather than detracting from the documentary value of the photograph, certifies a central feature of Bauhaus life: the defining presence of the doll seemingly female and certainly anonymous.²⁹

In the extensively cited Consemüller frame, dress arises as both a sartorial and a spatial element: it is part of the interior environment that hosts and 'absorbs' the concealed woman, whilst hinting at a male-female ambiguity, cogent on different levels at the Bauhaus. Apart from raising awareness on the gender issues at the School, dress is equated here to a commodity that anchors the female self to its modern context, engaging –as textiles did– in a 'practical purpose'. It is into this framework of dress as a commodity that a sartorial piece of Corona Krause can be integrated (Fig. 6), comprising, together with Volger's dress and one of Margaretha Reichardt,³⁰ the dress collection currently stored at the archives of the Sammlungsarchiv of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation.



Fig. 6. Corona Krause, Female dress (ca. 1927). Courtesy of Bauhaus Dessau Foundation (photo Library).

In their entirety, the dresses kept at the archives of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation are stripped from any excessive element of ornamentation and echo the simplicity, geometrical abstractness and functionality of the rest of the textile artefacts produced at the Workshop. In particular, Krause's dress features a soft linear pattern, a straight A-line form and a length of approximately 1,10 m. Given its minimalistic form and loose shape, it allowed for the free movement of the female body, in a similar way as the dresses of Reichardt and Volger. The addition of a line of buttons and a large pleat on its front side, however, differentiate the dress aesthetically from the other two artefacts and are potentially the elements that reveal a later date of origin than the years of Krause's Bauhaus formation. Following the archive listing, the dress is attributed chronologically to the year 1927, a time when the artist assisted with teaching at the Burg Giebichenstein Kunsthochschule (Giebichenstein Artistic Highschool) in Halle. Yet, its similarity to the rest of the surviving dresses is remarkable, not only in terms of pattern and form, but also in terms of composition, therefore reflecting the firm influence Krause's stay at the Bauhaus had on her subsequent work.

The Burg Giebichenstein Kunsthochschule in Halle, located approximately fifty kilometers south of Dessau, was established in 1915 with architect Paul Thiersch appointed as its first director. Described as a more traditional, craft-oriented institution than the Bauhaus, it followed the principles of the Deutscher Werkbund (German Association of Craftsmen) and comprised various thematic workshops that ranged from metalwork and ceramics to bookbinding and pottery. Weaving was also part of the School's curriculum and in view of this, several former members of the Bauhaus Weaving Workshop in Weimar saw an opportunity to move to Halle instead of following the relocation of the Bauhaus School to Dessau. Among these members was Benita Koch-Otte, a former co-student and close friend of Krause, in whose steps Krause was about to follow. 'When the Bauhaus moved to Dessau and embraced technology and industry,' Weltge writes, Koch-Otte 'joined an exodus of anti-industrialist artists, accepting an offer

26 Felix Klee's recollection of the director of the Vorkurs, Johannes Itten. Neumann, *Bauhaus People*, 40.

27 Sporadic approaches towards quotidian female attire from within the School, would be associated with Bauhaus alumni, such as Ré Soupault and her multifaceted transformation dress [see Manfred Metzner (ed.), *Ré Soupault: Das Bauhaus – die heroischen Jahre von Weimar* (Wunderhorn: Heidelberg 2009)] or as Wassily Kandinsky and his 1919 designs for female dresses [see Sigrid Wortmann Weltge, *Bauhaus-textilien: Kunst und Künstlerinnen der Webwerkstatt* (Zürich: Stemmler Verlag, 1993), 50].

28 See Juliet Koss, *Bauhaus Theater*, 731–2; Magdalena Droste and Ludwig Manfred (ed.), *Das Bauhaus Webt: Die Textilwerkstatt am Bauhaus* (Berlin: Grete Häusler Verlag, 1998).

29 Juliet Koss, "Bauhaus Theater of Human Dolls," 724–45, here 731–2.

30 On Margaretha Reichardt see Barbara Rausch (ed.), *Grete Reichardt: Textilgestaltung* (Weimar: Kunstsammlungen zu Weimar, 1977), Exhibition catalogue; and *Margaretha Reichardt (1907–1984), Textilkunst* (Erfurt: Angermuseums Erfurt, 1994), Exhibition catalogue.

from Gerhard Marcks to head the Weaving Department at Burg Giebichenstein'.³¹ The school in Halle focused on the cross between artistic excellence and craftsmanship, small-scale production and tradition, and in this context, a female dress of a more decorative, artisanal character – such as Krause's sartorial piece that survives in the Bauhaus Dessau archives – could be produced.

The dress consists of natural threads, accentuating in this manner its intention as an utilitarian, personal object that would align with the extensive quest for functionality. At the beginning of the 1920s, Lilly Reich in her text entitled 'Questions of Fashion' ('Modefragen'), published in 1922 discusses the changing character of dress in those days, highlighting its quotidian, but also contextual significance. More precisely, she explains that:

Clothes are objects of use, not artworks. They are subject to the requirements of the day. And yet clothes can produce metaphysical effects through their inherent orderliness, their peace and restraint, their coquettish gaiety and liveliness, their playful grace, their healthy simplicity, and their dignity. (...) But this service that fashion can provide must adhere to the necessities of life and reflect the requirements of the time: fashion must have discipline.³²

Dress could thus be regarded as a symbolic and tangible manifestation of new ways of being within clothing and, by extension, within space. The tendency, as these pieces of female attire reveal, was for dress to become one of the 'standard types for practical commodities',³³ following the respective mandate of the Bauhaus Workshops. The small number of Krause's surviving sartorial designs, in combination with the rest of the remaining dresses at the Bauhaus Dessau archives, may hold the key to the inclusion of dress in the orchestration of the aesthetic character of a given space. Across the borders, similar intersections between spatial, textile and dress design were underway, through the case of artists that their work crossed the boundaries between dress, textile, spatial and stage design, such as Paul Poiret, Sonia Delaunay and Lyubov Popova.

Meant to align with the modern requirements for a freed female silhouette, which were accompanied by visions for the liberation of women's social position, the dresses kept at the Bauhaus Dessau archives have considered in-depth the versatile needs of women at that time. Seen as a continuation of the dresses of Reichardt and Volger, Krause's creation can be regarded as a vehicle of modern

concepts of enveloping the body, alongside a sense of anatomical comfort and hygiene. In tune with the changing role of women in those days, the dress addressed the necessities of the body in a way comparable to the dress-reform movement that had preceded and had similarly drawn attention to new appreciations of the female anatomy and its movement. Similarly, the weavers of the Bauhaus realised that the application of historicist fabrics could only be applied partly to modern products and pieces of furniture, identifying the need for replacing anachronistic modes of attire; 'the present, of which they were so much a part, provided a challenge to which they responded with enthusiasm'.³⁴

For Corona Krause, as for the entirety of the Bauhaus female weavers who addressed both the terrains of female attire and interior space, textiles were considered to be inextricable parts of the architectural scenography, in line with the guidelines and holistic visions of their male instructors. For them, textiles were regarded as functional, timeless elements, rather than as changeable, ephemeral accessories, as they adequately corresponded to the rising changes in the wider interior, sociocultural and temporal environment. They can therefore be appreciated as pivotal quotidian artefacts, rather than as mere accessories, equally important to the spatial composition as pieces of furniture and domestic objects. Krause's artworks comprised a thread, which associated the various means of enveloping the human body with modern ways of artistic and material expression, with her educational stay at the Bauhaus being the foundation and starting point of the complex 'weave' of her life course.

Crossing between the production of textiles intended for clothing and those designed for the coating of domestic elements, Krause's contribution to modern textile design has been broad. The breadth of her portfolio, and its association with distinguished artists of that historical context, sheds light on the need to unknot and retie modern historiographies of the Bauhaus State School, and in particular of the distinct members of the Weaving Workshop. As the artist's profile remains obscure, despite the significant impetus she gave to the field of modernist textiles, questions arise regarding issues of gender, female representation, and publicity that have influenced historical narratives. Krause's case could be understood both as an isolated case of a Bauhaus alumna that demands further investigation, and also in relation to the wider terrain of the art of weaving in Germany at that time, but also as part of a wider group of artists who although active members of the Bauhaus School, produced work that remains under-explored. The present paper has attempted to lay the basis for further scholarly initiatives on the subject, drawing awareness to the broader, and highly relevant, topics of female representation and inclusion, artistic production and craftsmanship, cross- and interdisciplinary practices, within and beyond the boundaries of the Bauhaus loom.

31 Weltge, *Bauhaus Textiles*, 60.

32 Lilly Reich, "Modefragen," *Die Form: Monatsschrift für gestaltende Arbeit* 1, no. 5 (1922), 7–9; Robin Schuldenfrei, "Introduction," in "Questions of Fashion by Lilly Reich," *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 21, no. 1 (2014), 102–20, here 120, <http://www.west86th.bgc.bard.edu/translated-text/questions-of-fashion-reich.html> (accessed July 4, 2017). On Lilly Reich see also: Sonja Günther, *Lilly Reich 1885–1947: Innenarchitektin Designerin Ausstellungsgestalterin* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1988); Matilda McQuaid and Magdalena Droste (eds.), *Lilly Reich, Designer and Architect* (New York: Museum of Modern Art 1996), and Esther da Costa Meyer, "Cruel Metonymies: Lilly Reich's Designs for the 1937 World's Fair," *New German Critique* 76 (1999), 161–89.

33 Saletnik and Schuldenfrei, *Bauhaus Construct*, 49.

34 Weltge, *Bauhaus Textiles*, 44.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my appreciation to the members of the MoMoWo research project for initiating this conference-workshop event. My sincere thanks are due to artist Jakob Gautel –grandson of Corona Krause– for his valuable insights, to Nina Schönig at the Bauhaus Archives in Berlin, to the Library and Archives of the Bauhaus Foundation in Dessau. The support of the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences has been indispensable for the development of this paper.

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