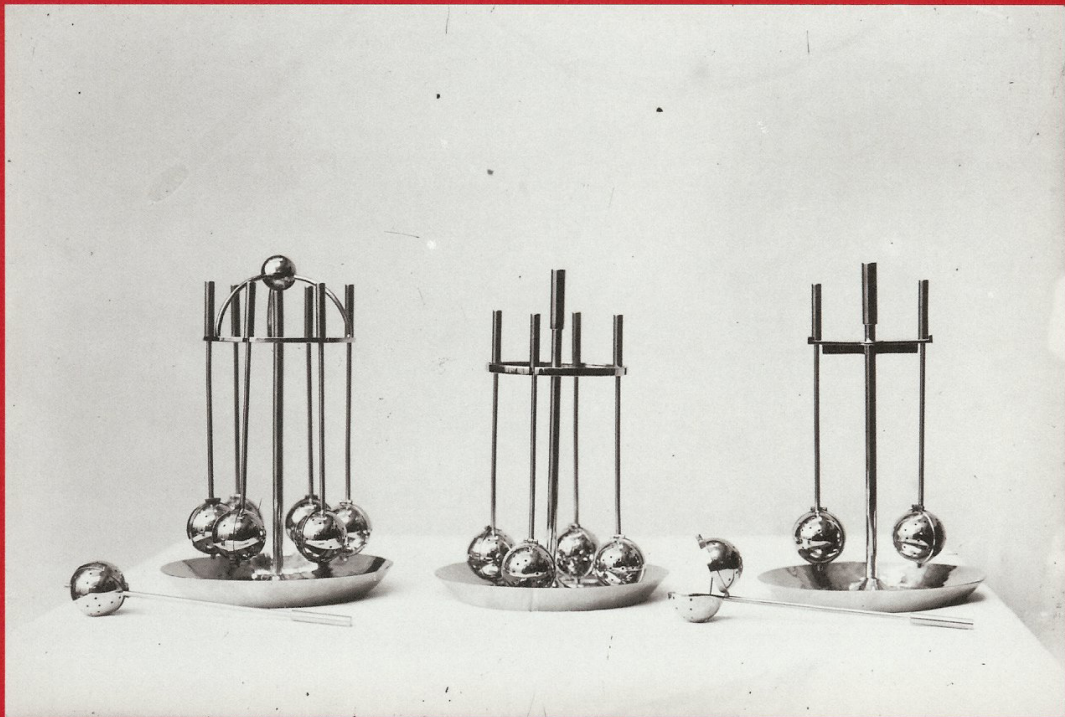


# HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY



MAY 2013



# Images in Exile: Lucia Moholy's Bauhaus Negatives and the Construction of the Bauhaus Legacy

Robin Schuldenfrei

This article argues that photographs of the Bauhaus – its architecture and design objects – taken by Lucia Moholy played a key role in establishing the school during the short period of its existence, but that they took on heightened significance in exile, during the post-war period in which the Bauhaus's legacy was solidified. As Bauhaus members fled Germany in the 1930s, what they were able to take with them formed a disproportionate part of their oeuvre thereafter; what was no longer extant was often lost to the footnotes of history. Lucia Moholy was forced to leave behind her entire collection of original glass negatives in Berlin when she escaped into exile in 1933. What followed – in which the negatives she thought lost became the core of the visual archive deployed by Walter Gropius in the subsequent narration of the Bauhaus – demonstrates the exigencies of exile, especially the lacunae created by objects left behind upon emigration, and how photography as a medium became crucial to the later reception of the closed school and what had been produced there. By examining this constellation of circumstances, this article illuminates shifts in notions of authorship and in the signification of objects. It argues that processes of meaning-formation for exiled artists of the Bauhaus were closely tied to the power involved in the ability to reproduce photographs, specifically Lucia Moholy's photographs, and for the importance of the photograph as a stand-in for that which was no longer accessible or extant.

**Keywords:** *Lucia Moholy (1894–1989), Walter Gropius (1883–1969), László Moholy-Nagy (1895–1946), glass negatives, Bauhaus photography, Bauhaus architecture, Bauhaus design, exile, World War II*

Lucia Moholy's photographs of the Dessau Bauhaus building, masters' houses and Bauhaus products, taken between 1924 and 1928, formed an essential part of the Bauhaus's documentation during its years of operation – and they played an inestimable role in the construction of the Bauhaus's legacy, which was largely formed after the school was closed in 1933 and its protagonists had gone into exile. Although Lucia Moholy was neither a pupil nor faculty at the Bauhaus, one might see her as a crucial member and collaborator during the period when her then-husband, László Moholy-Nagy, taught there. The crisp black-and-white images themselves have earned a place in the history of photography, as representative of the *sachlich* (objective) photography of the 1920s. During the years of divided Germany, when foreign scholars and professors had little access to the Bauhaus's buildings in Dessau, Moholy's iconic images of the school – made just after its completion, before the grass had a chance to grow – continued to be those through which generations of art history and architecture students were taught.<sup>1</sup> These images, which carefully documented the school building and the masters' houses, widely reproduced in their day and beyond,

I would like to acknowledge the collaboration with Jeffrey Saletnik on the initial research of this essay's subject matter, beginning in 2008 for the conference 'Bauhaus Palimpsest: The Object of Discourse' held at Harvard University Art Museums (14–15 March 2008) and published subsequently in the 'Introduction' of *Bauhaus Construct: Fashioning Identity, Discourse, and Modernism* London: Routledge 2009. For invaluable assistance with the later research, I would especially like to thank Sabine Hartmann and Wencke Clausnitzer-Paschold at the Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin, and Laura Muir at the Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University, all of whom responded to multiple queries concerning their collection's objects and documents and gave generously of both their time and expertise. I would like to express gratitude to the Institute of Art and Visual History at the Humboldt University, Berlin, for its support. This essay has also benefitted from the assistance and thoughtful suggestions of John Ackerman, Michael Berkowitz, Kerstin Flasche, Louis Kaplan, Elizabeth Otto, Rolf Sachsse, Pepper Stetler and the audience members at the conference 'Entfernt. Frauen des Bauhauses während der NS-Zeit – Verfolgung und Exil'. A shorter version of this article appeared in German as 'Bilder im Exil: Lucia Moholy's Bauhaus-Negative und die Konstruktion des Bauhaus-Erbes', in *Entfernt. Frauen des Bauhauses während der NS-Zeit – Verfolgung und Exil*, ed. Inge Hansen-Schaberg, Wolfgang Thöner, and Adriane Feustel, Munich: Richard Boorberg Verlag, Edition Text + Kritik 2012, 251–73. Unless otherwise noted, translations are the author's own.

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1 – Rolf Sachsse's two books on the photography of Lucia Moholy remain the most authoritative and significant: Rolf Sachsse, *Lucia Moholy*, Düsseldorf: Marzona 1985; and Rolf Sachsse, *Lucia Moholy: Bauhaus Fotografin*, Berlin: Museumspädagogischer Dienst Berlin/Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin 1995. On Lucia Moholy's Bauhaus photography, see also: Lucia Moholy, 'Das Bauhaus-Bild', *Werk*, 6:55 (1968), 397–402; Lucia Moholy, *Marginalien zu Moholy-Nagy: Dokumentarische Ungereimtheiten / Moholy-Nagy, Marginal Notes: Documentary Absurdities*, Krefeld: Scherpe Verlag 1972; Rolf Sachsse, 'Notes on Lucia Moholy' and 'Architectural and Product Photography', in *Photography at the Bauhaus*, ed. Jeannine Fiedler, London: Dirk Nishen 1990, 24–33 and 184–203; Rolf Sachsse, 'Lucia Moholy, oder: Vom Wert der Reproduktion', in *Das Neue Sehen: Von der Fotografie am Bauhaus zur Subjektiven Fotografie*, ed. Rainer K. Wick, Munich: Klinkhardt & Biermann 1991, 91–105; Rolf Sachsse, 'Die Frau an

Figure 1. Lucia Moholy, *Bauhaus Building by Walter Gropius* (architect), view from Southwest, glass negative, 1927 (digital photograph by Norbert Schropp, 2012). Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, © 2013 Artists Rights Society, New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

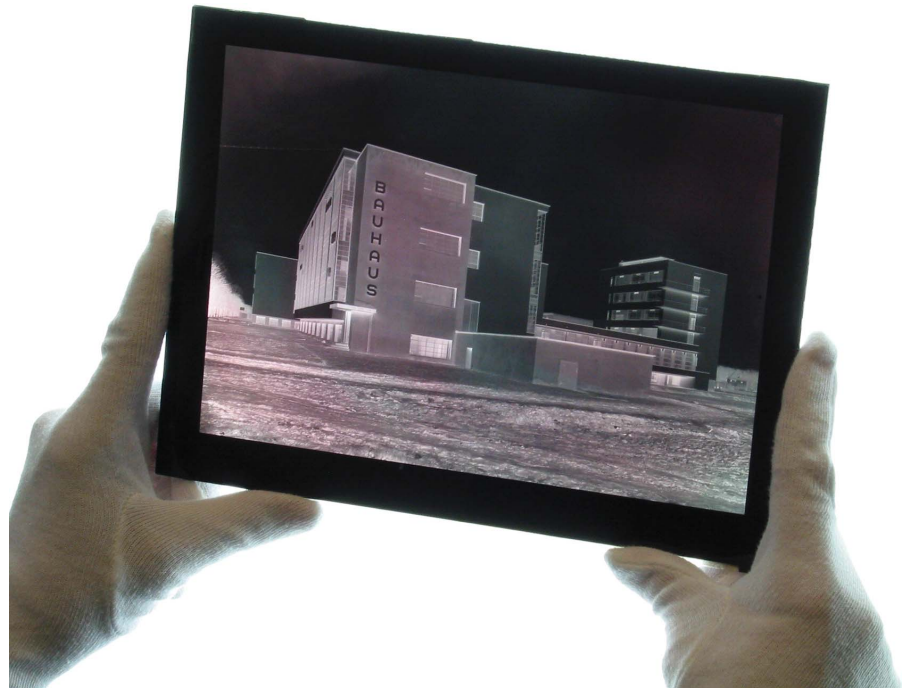


Figure 2. Lucia Moholy, *Bauhaus Building by Walter Gropius* (architect), northeast view, gelatin silver print, 1926. Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, © 2013 Artists Rights Society, New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



seiner Seite: Irene Bayer und Lucia Moholy als Fotografinnen', in *Fotografieren hiess teilnehmen: Fotografinnen der Weimarer Republik*, ed. Ute Eskildsen, Düsseldorf: Richter 1994, 67–75; Anja Baumhoff, 'Zwischen Kunst und Technik: Lucia Moholy und die Entwicklung der modernen Produktfotografie', in *Klassik und Avantgarde: Das Bauhaus in Weimar 1919–1925*, ed. Hellmut Th. Seemann and Thorsten Valk, Göttingen: Wallstein-Verlag 2009, 169–84; Ulrike Müller, with the collaboration of Ingrid Radewaldt and Sandra Kemker, 'Lucia Moholy', in *Bauhaus Women: Art, Handicraft, Design*, London: Thames & Hudson 2009, 142–9; and Claire Zimmerman, 'Lucia Moholy', public lecture, Museum of Modern Art, 'Women and the Bauhaus Lecture Series', 6 January 2010, <http://www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/audios/188/1953>. I became aware of Zimmerman's lecture, which touches upon some of the same themes, after writing this article; Zimmerman highlights the criticality of images at the Bauhaus in presenting its multiple identities to the public, especially via architectural photographs of the main school building, and Lucia Moholy's role in that process – not only as photographer but as 'producer', as Zimmerman frames it, especially through Moholy's editorial and production work on Bauhaus publications. She also convincingly argues that Moholy's images were made for reproduction in the way in which they served 'pictorial goals' rather than aiming for technical perfection.

cemented these edifices in the history of architecture (figures 1, 2, 3, 4). This essay explores the life in exile of these images. By considering the circumstances of the separation of the negatives from Moholy – both she and they went into exile, at separate times and to two different places – and their eventual return, it interrogates the meaning of the role these photographs played for the Bauhaus's former members in creating the school's history for posterity. I argue that it was precisely due to the exigencies of exile, especially the lacunae created by objects left behind upon emigration, that photography as a medium became crucial to the later reception of the closed school and what had been produced there. But while other exiled protagonists were able to establish their reputations anew, often on the basis of the images, because of the inaccessibility of the negatives Moholy was denied this opportunity, even as photography through her work took on a role in the Bauhaus's myths that it had not been granted at the school under Walter Gropius's direction.

#### *Bauhaus Photographs*

Moholy's photographs are sophisticated images. She painstakingly composed them so that architectural lines were in sharp focus, underscoring the rectilinearity – or



Figure 3. Lucia Moholy, *Bauhaus Building by Walter Gropius* (architect), northwest corner of the workshop wing, gelatin silver print, 1927. Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, © 2013 Artists Rights Society, New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Figure 4. Lucia Moholy, *Masters Houses by Walter Gropius* (architect), northwest view, modern gelatin silver print (1994) from original glass negative, 1927. Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, © 2013 Artists Rights Society, New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

sometimes playing up the dynamic visual diagonals – of the buildings’ architecture. Blacks, whites and greys additionally defined the buildings, while shadowing was also carefully considered. Moholy’s photographs of the Bauhaus were multivalent tools, serving specific needs through seemingly straightforward shots that communicated basic information about the edifices themselves while simultaneously enunciating the buildings’ architectural innovations and Gropius’s architectural



2 – The building can no longer be experienced in this way because various restorations and renovations have replaced the original glass curtain wall, which was destroyed during World War II, with more modern variants. The original polished plate glass (Kristallspiegelglas), was an expensive, new glass developed in the 1920s that featured exceptional transparency and prevented visual distortions. For more on the glass of the Bauhaus building, see Monika Markgraf, 'The Glass Facades of the Bauhaus Dessau Building', in *Glass in the 20th Century Architecture: Preservation and Restoration*, ed. Franz Graf and Francesca Albani, Mendrisio, Switzerland: Mendrisio Academy Press 2011, 19–39.

3 – Claire Zimmerman's meticulous work on the visual implications of the architectural photograph for modernism, chiefly in the work of Mies van der Rohe, is especially helpful in light of the images under discussion here. See 'Photographic Modern Architecture: Inside "the New Deep"', *The Journal of Architecture*, 9:3 (Autumn 2004), 331–54. Through the famous photographs of the Tugendhat House, she traces various developments and distortions of its architecture (including what she terms the 'spatiality of photographic architecture') and convincingly argues that the post-war historical writing of architectural history was heavily influenced by photographic presentations of modern architecture, pointing out that 'architectural photographs continued throughout the 1920s, with little critical discussion in architectural circles, to be understood as metonyms of the buildings they depicted' (331–2 and 347). See also Claire Zimmerman, 'Tugendhat Frames', *Harvard Design Magazine*, 15 (Fall 2001), 24–31; and Claire Zimmerman, 'Modernism, Media, Abstraction: Mies van der Rohe's Photographic Architecture in Barcelona and Brno (1927–1931)', PhD diss., The City University of New York 2005.

4 – Moholy, *Marginalien zu Moholy-Nagy*, 61. 5 – *Ibid.*, 55. She goes on to lament that they had kept quiet about the extent and manner of their collaboration.

6 – The role that Lucia played in helping compose texts published under László's name alone, as well as her collaboration on his photographic oeuvre, is only being slowly acknowledged. For a discussion of the working relationship between László and Lucia, including the lack of attribution for her contributions, including her photography, see Moholy, *Marginalien zu Moholy-Nagy*; and Mercedes Valdivieso, 'Eine "symbiotische Arbeitsgemeinschaft": Lucia und László Moholy-Nagy', in *Liebe Macht Kunst. Künstlerpaare in 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Renate Berges, Cologne: Böhlau Verlag 2000, 65–85.

7 – Moholy-Nagy's ability to capture extreme views was aided by his use of a light, flexible Leica camera, purchased in the spring of 1925; in particular, the Leica newly allowed for the separation of the camera from the

ideals. For example, the dematerialisation of the Bauhaus building's corners, while physically and materially a provision of the steel and glass of their construction, is especially distinctly registered and remembered due to the angle and flat light of Moholy's photograph (figure 2).<sup>2</sup> The photographs are not neutral entities, but rather helped to express the modernist goals of the buildings' designer.<sup>3</sup>

It is important to note that in this period Lucia Moholy also collaborated actively on many of the photographic works, such as the photograms, for which László Moholy-Nagy is singly credited. It was a rich period of experimentation, in which the husband and wife built upon each other's ideas, resulting in a prodigious output of photographic and written work. The pair depended entirely on Lucia Moholy's darkroom and technical skills. She had begun training with a local photographer after her husband was appointed to his position at the Weimar Bauhaus in April 1923 and then attended the 'Principal Course in Reproduction Technology' at the art academy in Leipzig, which, notably, had opened a photography department as early as 1893.<sup>4</sup> Moholy set up her first darkroom upon moving into the masters' houses in Dessau with Moholy-Nagy in 1926. As Moholy later explained: 'The working arrangements between Moholy-Nagy and myself were unusually close, the wealth and value of the artist's ideas gaining momentum, as it were, from the symbiotic alliance of two diverging temperaments'.<sup>5</sup> As Moholy-Nagy's collaborator, she failed to receive credit for her contributions, but it was only upon their separation, when she was again on her own, that she regretted the secondary role that she allowed herself to take, although this was the norm at the Bauhaus and in Weimar German society generally.<sup>6</sup>

But Moholy-Nagy and Lucia Moholy also worked independently, and there are distinctive differences in their individual oeuvres, which can be perceived, for example, in photographs of the Bauhaus building. Moholy-Nagy's 1926–27 photographs of the Bauhaus balconies are extreme compositions, isolating the balconies and taken from the ground almost directly beneath them at an angle that produces a sensation of vertigo in the viewer. Often this sensation is accentuated by the inclusion of a silhouetted figure in what appears to be a precarious position, looming over the viewer. In these images, currents of New Vision (*Neues Sehen*) are deployed by Moholy-Nagy that almost force the viewer to see differently via photography.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, Lucia Moholy's straightforward images should be understood under the tenets of New Objectivity (*Neue Sachlichkeit*), in which she uses equally carefully crafted shots, devoid of figures, that seemingly strive to make the object they depict more comprehensible. Although the individual, repetitive Bauhaus balconies are among the most visually compelling aspects of the school building, often photographed by others from below in the manner of Moholy-Nagy, she does not feature them prominently in her photographs of the building; with the exception of one cropped image of a single balcony photographed straight on, balconies are only seen from afar in her photographs. Where Moholy-Nagy photographs of this period feature unusual angles, extreme heights or parts of wholes isolated to such an extent that the object is sometimes no longer discernible and becomes a series of abstract patterns, in Lucia Moholy's images, even where only a portion of an object or building is in view, the sense of its entirety is still conveyed.

Lucia Moholy's images of Bauhaus products, intended for the practical purposes of demonstrating the Bauhaus workshops' virtuosity and the (hoped-for) mass production of their objects, were similarly carefully composed, lighted and printed.<sup>8</sup> The products' modernity is underscored in the photographs themselves: in the shiny reflective surfaces, lit so that they gleam but do not over-reflect, in the clear lines, and in their staging against a neutral background, often on thick sheets of glass (figure 5). The images served as professional portraits of the objects themselves as individual works of art, in line with Moholy's simultaneous documentation of sculpture and other Bauhaus student output (figure 6). Moholy executed this extensive body of photographic work over the course of a number of years. There are no surviving documents to indicate that she was officially hired; it seems, rather, that she took up

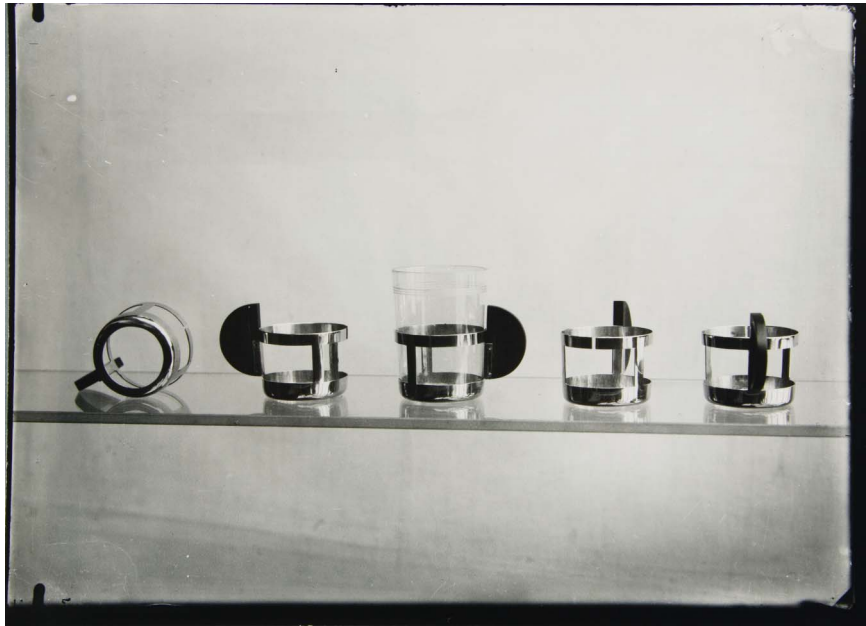


Figure 5. Lucia Moholy, *Tea Glass Holders by Max Krajewski* (designer), gelatin silver print, 1924 (printed by the Busch-Reisinger Museum, ca. 1950). Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Gift of Walter Gropius, BR50.107, Photograph: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College © 2013 Artists Rights Society, New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Figure 6. Lucia Moholy, *Two Table Lamps by Carl J. Jucker und Wilhelm Wagenfeld* (designers), gelatin silver print, ca. 1924–25 (printed by the Busch-Reisinger Museum, ca. 1950). Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Gift of Walter Gropius, BR50.86.C, Photograph: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College, © 2013 Artists Rights Society, New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

the task in oral agreement with Gropius and in support of the school. Not paid for her work, she kept the negatives and subsequently charged a small image-usage fee, at her discretion, to non-Bauhaus-affiliated users.<sup>9</sup> Copies were available at no charge to school members and for Bauhaus publications and other publicity measures.

The photographs played various roles within the Bauhaus during its operation. In-house, the object and architectural photographs were reproduced in the Bauhaus's newspaper and the Bauhaus book series, where Moholy also assisted the two editors, her husband and Gropius, in the editing, copy-editing and other production tasks. Certain photographs also doubled as illustrative materials for the school's sales catalogue, known as the *Katalog der Muster*, through which the Bauhaus GmbH marketed its products. Her photographs also served as publicity

photographer's body resulting in a new flexibility of viewpoint and the quick capture of images. See Rolf Sachsse, 'Telephon, Reproduktion und Erzeugerabfüllung. Zum Begriff des Originals bei László Moholy-Nagy', in *Über Moholy-Nagy, Ergebnisse aus dem internationalen László Moholy-Nagy Symposium Bielefeld, 1995, zum 100. Geburtstag des Künstlers und Bauhauslehrers*, ed. Gottfried Jäger and Gudrun Wessing, Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag 1997, 78–82; and Andreas Haus, *Moholy-Nagy: Fotos und Fotogramme*, Munich: Schirmer-Mosel 1978,

85–6. This was in contradistinction to the painstaking images produced by Lucia's cumbersome, large-format camera on tripod.

8 – For the move away from this earlier kind of straight forward descriptive photographing of whole objects in architectural space and the later interest, from 1928 onwards, in using photography to convey the tactility as well as the optical elements in pictorial reproductions of Bauhaus products, see T'ai Smith, 'Limits of the Tactile and the Optical: Bauhaus Fabric in the Frame of Photography', *Grey Room*, 25 (Fall 2006), 6–31.

9 – As she later reminds Herbert Bayer about her Bauhaus-era photographs, 'I took those photographs on my own account and my own responsibility, and have been entitled, in all cases, to claim fees for publication and other uses'. Moholy to Bayer, 2 April 1955, Bauhaus Archive, Berlin (BHA), Lucia Moholy Archive (LM Archive), Folder 'Spende Rolf Sachsse'. This enormous, time-consuming task executed by a Bauhaus wife was in keeping with the hard work, mostly unacknowledged and always unpaid, of many other Bauhaus wives in dedication to their husbands' pursuits and the school's causes. See, for example, Lucia Moholy's contributions to László Moholy-Nagy's oeuvre in Moholy, *Marginalien zu Moholy-Nagy* and the documentation of Ise Gropius's, and other wives', tireless assistance in Müller, *Bauhaus Women*, especially the entry 'Ise Gropius', 136–41.

10 – Baumhoff, 'Zwischen Kunst und Technik', 179. For more on product photography at the Bauhaus, see Rolf Sachsse, 'Architectural and Product Photography', in *Photography at the Bauhaus*, 184–203.

Figure 7. Lucia Moholy, *Kitchen Containers* by Theodor Bogler (designer), modern gelatin silver print (1994) from original glass negative, ca. 1924. Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, © 2013 Artists Rights Society, New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

material for the school, sent out for use by newspapers, art and architectural journals, and other publications.

Even products that were never put into production during the years that the Bauhaus was in operation, such as Theodor Bogler's storage jars, remain in the collective Bauhaus memory in large part due to the iconic images (figure 7). Beyond their function as documentation of Bauhaus products, they helped to set the artistic and visual standards for modern products in their time and subsequently, and for the ongoing legacy of the Bauhaus itself.

The images are didactic: through their objective-seeming, straightforward nature, the photographs visibly serve to underscore ideas about *Sachlichkeit* and mass production promoted by the school. Seriality, particularly, is visualised in images where several examples of a single object type were set up to allow multiple perspectives of the product encompassed within a single image.<sup>10</sup> Seriality was also implied in the photographs of multiplications and proliferations of single objects, sometimes aided by the doubling produced by projected shadows (figures 8, 9). Because only a limited number of these objects were produced (many only exist as a single prototype or as a small, hand-reproduced series), it is the photographs that give the objects an aura of mass reproducibility.<sup>11</sup> But they stop short of representing mass production itself: the number of exemplars remains limited – with a few exceptions featuring at most three to four single objects or views – and the Moholy photographs are entirely devoid of suggestions of industrialisation or the tools of manufacture. Images by other photographers who captured the Bauhaus workshop output, such as Erich Consemüller, also depicted a circumscribed number of goods available on view.<sup>12</sup> This is in stark contrast to the seemingly unending vertical stacks or diagonal rows of goods that *Neue Sachlichkeit* photographers, such as Albert Renger-Patzsch, used to illuminate factory products such as metal bathtubs or shoe lasts – although Renger-Patzsch's precise attention to the material, texture and structure of objects and architecture, especially as evidenced in the use of shadow and diagonal forms, is replicated in her work of the same period.<sup>13</sup> But during the short time the school was in operation and, certainly, following its closure, physical access to Bauhaus objects remained elusive. Moholy's photographs, then, served as points of visual access to Bauhaus objects and to the ideas they were meant to instantiate. They, in contrast to the physical objects depicted in them, were fully reproducible and able to circulate (in the objects' stead) as their designers originally intended.





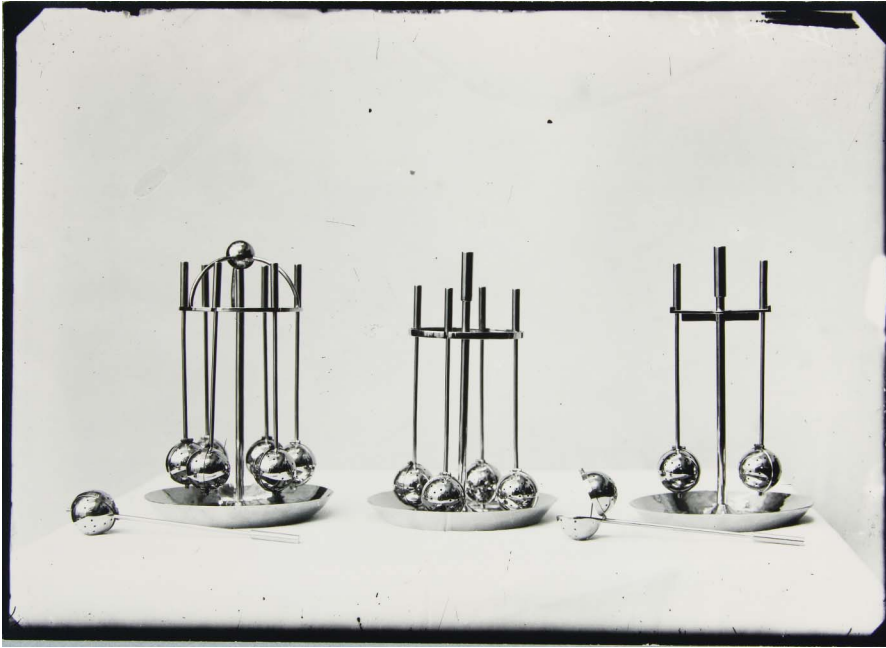


Figure 8. Lucia Moholy, *Stands with Tea Infusers* by Otto Rittweger (designer, executed by Wolfgang Tümel), gelatin silver print, 1925 (printed by the Busch-Reisinger Museum, ca. 1950). Harvard Art Museums/ Busch-Reisinger Museum, Gift of Walter Gropius, BR50.120, Photograph: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College, © 2013 Artists Rights Society, New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Figure 9. Lucia Moholy, *Tubular Steel Chairs (B33)* by Marcel Breuer (designer), modern gelatin silver print (1994) from original glass negative, 1928. Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin. © 2013 Artists Rights Society, New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

### Exile Photography

For the majority of her Weimar-era photographs Moholy used a large-format wooden camera mounted on a tripod with 13 cm×18 cm or 18 cm×24 cm glass plates, mainly Perutz dry plates.<sup>14</sup> When she and her husband left the Bauhaus, following the resignation of Walter Gropius in 1928, Moholy took all her Bauhaus negatives with her. Exile for so many *Bauhäusler* was an exercise in leaving art and possessions behind, in making difficult decisions, in trusting those who were to remain. László Moholy-Nagy was ultimately forced to leave metal constructions and early canvasses showing his development from representational to abstract painting with a housekeeper and her husband, who subsequently turned them to kindling wood and threatened to have him arrested for 'Kulturbolschewismus' (cultural bolshevism).<sup>15</sup> However, he was fortunate in that he was able to bring his furniture

11 – See Robin Schuldenfrei, 'The Irreproducibility of the Bauhaus Object', in *Bauhaus Construct: Fashioning Identity, Discourse, and Modernism*, ed. Jeffrey Saletnik and Robin Schuldenfrei, London: Routledge 2009, 37–60.

12 – Notable exceptions are Marianne Brandt's 1928 photomontage *me (Metal Workshop)*, which prominently features a photograph, by Brandt, of a towering stack of metal lampshades, and in later photographs, when the school was under the directorship of Hannes Meyer, which depict vitrines filled with rows of the same Bauhaus object such as for the 1930 Bauhaus travelling exhibition.



13 – See, for example, industrial products photographed in Renger-Patzsch's masterwork of *Neue Sachlichkeit* photography: *Die Welt ist schön: Einhundert Photographische Aufnahmen von Albert Renger-Patzsch*, ed. Carl Georg Heise, Munich: Kurt Wolff Verlag, 1928. For a discussion of how straightforward, *sachlich* photographs by Renger-Patzsch and others were used by early-twentieth-century German educational photographic archives for use for teaching and academic study and ways in which it led to the development of *Neue Sachlichkeit* as a style, see Pepper Stetler, 'The Object, the Archive and the Origins of *Neue Sachlichkeit* Photography', *History of Photography*, 35:3 (August 2011), 281–95.

14 – Lucia Moholy, 'The Missing Negatives', *The British Journal of Photography*, 130 (7 January 1983), 6. She also utilised 9 cm×12 cm photographic film stock in this period.

15 – Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, *Moholy-Nagy: Experiment in Totality*, New York: Harper Brothers 1950, 133.

16 – *Ibid.*, 67.

17 – Lucia Moholy forged links to important British academic figures, as well as titled nobility. She was probably a key figure in getting British patrons interested in Neubauer's case who then exerted external pressure on his behalf. For example, on 21 April 1934 the *London Times* published a letter by Princess Elizabeth Bibesco, daughter of former Prime Minister Herbert Asquith and wife of a Rumanian prince, calling for an international press campaign to save his life; likewise signers were sought among professors at Oxford and Cambridge for a petition asking for Neubauer's release. Peter Crane, *Wir leben nun mal auf einem Vulkan*, trans. Rolf Bulang, Bonn: Weidle Verlag 2005, 227–8. Elizabeth Fox Howard, an English Quaker, became involved with the effort to free several key political prisoners, and travelled to Germany on several occasions, including flying from England to Berlin to plead on behalf of Neubauer (whom she refers to as Dr T [note 78]). See Elizabeth Fox Howard, *Across Barriers*, Essex: Chigwell Press 1941, 65 and 71–8. For more on the circumstances of Theodor Neubauer's captivity and the intervention of patrons on his behalf, see Peter Crane, Elizabeth Fox Howard and Sonja Müller, *Theodor Neubauer: Lebensbilder großer Pädagogen*, Berlin: Volk und Wissen 1971. The author would like to acknowledge and thank Peter Crane for his generous sharing of information pertaining to Neubauer.

18 – Moholy to Heinrich Jacoby, 1 October 1947, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 120. Letter in German. Reprinted in Sachsse, *Lucia Moholy: Bauhaus Fotografin*, 81.

19 – Lucia Moholy, 'Summary of Events', February 1956, page 2, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 79.

and works such as the cumbersome *Lichtrequisit* (also known as the *Light Prop* and the *Light-Space Modulator*) on his peregrinations in Europe and then to the United States.<sup>16</sup> Gropius, too, was able to ship everything from Germany to the United States, including his model of the Bauhaus building and the custom-designed double-desk at which he and Ise worked. Lucia Moholy's loss of access to her negatives meant that she was not only barred from swiftly building upon her past work and reputation but also from utilising her expertise as a witness to those productive years at the Bauhaus, where she had been both a bystander and participant in that remarkable period of creativity.

That Moholy found herself in London in 1934 without her belongings, especially without her photographic negatives or any examples of her work, was a consequence of the circumstances under which she was forced to flee Germany. Following the disintegration of her marriage to Moholy-Nagy in 1929, she had entered into a relationship with Theodor Neubauer, a communist party parliament member and activist. It was in Moholy's apartment that Neubauer was arrested on 3 August 1933. She was never to see him again; he was imprisoned in the Zuchthaus Brandenburg prison, then at Esterwegen (a prison for political opponents where he was forced to do hard labour in the peat bogs), followed by the Lichtenburg and Buchenwald concentration camps. Released in 1939, he was arrested again in 1944 and executed in February 1945 in the Zuchthaus Brandenburg.<sup>17</sup>

After Neubauer's arrest, in accordance with the plan they had previously formulated, Moholy went immediately into exile, leaving her well-appointed apartment and its contents and taking practically nothing with her.<sup>18</sup> She fled first to Prague, then to Vienna and then via Paris to London, where she arrived in June 1934. In her haste, she was forced to leave behind the five hundred to six hundred glass negatives representing her entire photographic oeuvre to date in the care of her ex-husband, László Moholy-Nagy. Her negatives, or even one set of good prints, would naturally have been useful in establishing herself in England, for, as she noted, 'they not only showed the quality of my earlier work, but they also were my only tangible asset'.<sup>19</sup> Instead she found herself penniless, a foreign national in a country on the brink of war with the one she had just left.<sup>20</sup> Unlike many of her Bauhaus colleagues, whose roles at the school would become the basis for their post-Bauhaus careers in England, the United States and elsewhere, Lucia Moholy was forced to begin more or less anew in exile.

Fortunately for Moholy, her photographic work at the Bauhaus had also included the development of her skill in formal portrait photography, which she would now come to rely on. Unlike the candid snapshots popular at the Bauhaus, hers were formal undertakings with careful attention to the technical aspects – composition, lighting and background. In their artistic ambition they attempted to capture the character of the sitter and his or her artistic milieu. For example, her iconic photograph of her husband Moholy-Nagy, wearing what appears to be a machinist's coverall (*Monteuranzug*) over his crisp shirt and tie, presented an image of the *Monteur* or artist-constructor at work that played an important role in the development of his artistic persona.<sup>21</sup>

In exile in England, she built upon her Bauhaus portraits by taking photographs of prominent sitters: barons, lords, countesses, academics, literary figures (writers, publishers, editors) and politicians (figure 10). Predominantly taken in the time span 1935–38, most of these insightful, luminous portraits have entered the National Portrait Gallery collection in London. Although she had qualified as a German and English teacher, had studied art history and philosophy, and had significant experience as an editor and copy editor, in England the strict rules governing the employment of foreign nationals in the years leading up to World War II meant that Moholy was only able to obtain permission to set up as an independent photographer.<sup>22</sup> Through this work she was nonetheless able to assimilate quickly into English society and found success; her photographs were well liked by her eminent sitters. As the Countess of Oxford and Asquith wrote:

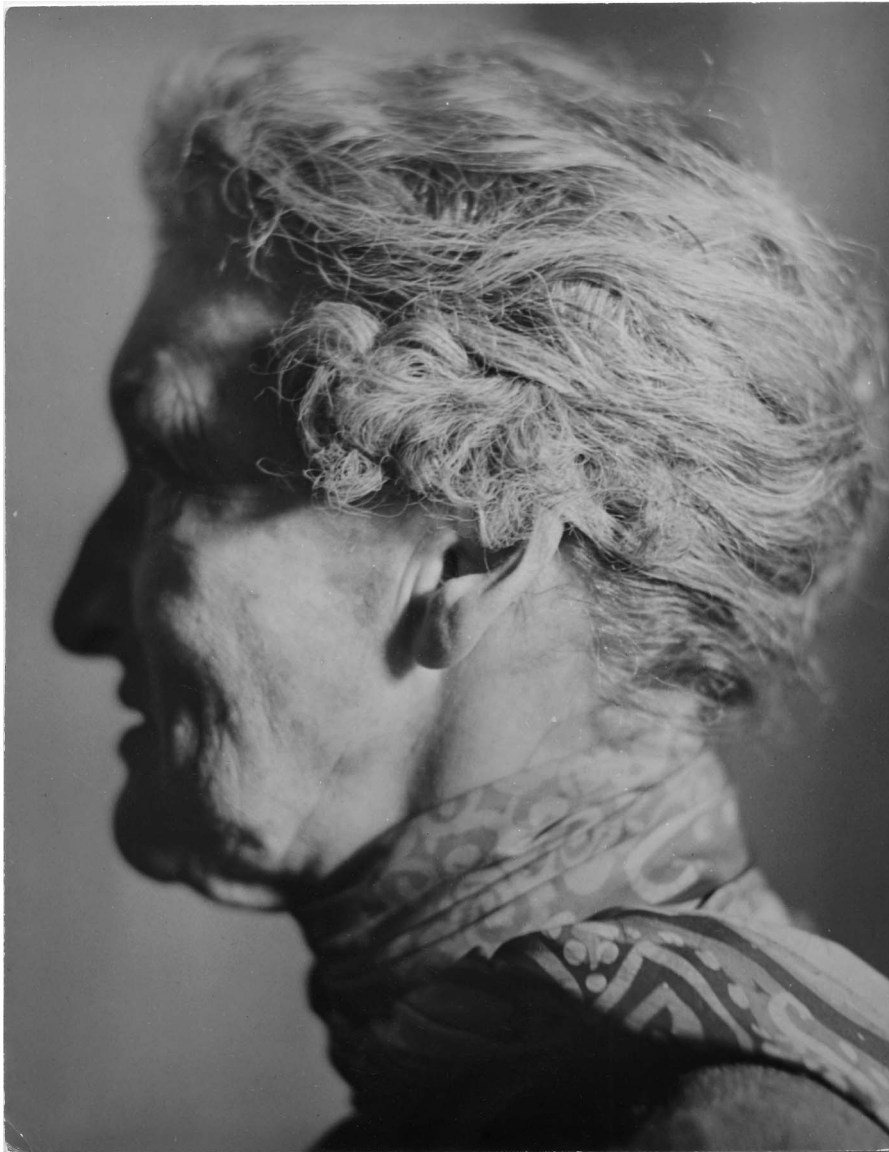


Figure 10. Lucia Moholy, *Portrait of Emma Countess of Oxford and Asquith*, gelatin silver print, 1935. Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, © 2013 Artists Rights Society, New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

I think your photographs quite wonderful, so do all my friends. They are different from the modern photography which goes in for what might be called 'beauty parlours'. Your photographs make real men and women, and will be contributions to the biography of great and famous people in the future.<sup>23</sup>

In this period she also compiled the photographs and wrote the text for her history, *A Hundred Years of Photography*, which was published in 1939 by Penguin Books.<sup>24</sup> She had begun research for it in 1929, while still teaching at the Itten School in Berlin. By 1930 she had developed a short concept paper, 'A Cultural History of Photography' (*Kulturgeschichte der Fotografie*) outlining her ideas for the book, followed, in 1932, by a more concrete expose.<sup>25</sup> In these two working papers, she described the project very specifically as a 'cultural history' of the medium, consciously rejecting a 'history of photography' and an 'art history of photography'. By 'cultural history' she meant both the development of a culture of photography in and of itself and a wider cultural life as reflected in photography (e.g. changes in taste, concepts of morality). In other preparatory documents she considers the way photographs represent or reflect society and, in turn, how they exert an influence upon that society.<sup>26</sup> She ruminates on the ways in which an economic situation might be mirrored in photographs, and whether this might be so in every age or only at certain junctures, concluding that photographs are an untrustworthy measure in that merely a selection of images is only ever available and therefore

20 – She did not, as was common in this period, receive any financial support from her former husband.

21 – Elizabeth Otto, 'Designing Men: New Visions of Masculinity in the Photomontages of Herbert Bayer, Marcel Breuer, and László Moholy-Nagy', in *Bauhaus Construct*, 183–204, esp. 188–90. On Moholy's portraits, see Matthew S. Witkovsky, 'Lucia Moholy Photograph of Georg Muche', in *Bauhaus 1919–1933: Workshops for Modernity*, ed. Barry Bergdoll and Leah Dickerman, New York: The Museum of Modern Art 2009, 236–41. While it does not affect the image Moholy-Nagy wanted to project, according to Lucia Moholy the garment was in actuality not a machinist's suit but a dark orange fishermen's coverall from Northern France, as noted by Sachsse, 'Telephon, Reproduktion und Erzeugerabfüllung. Zum Begriff des Originals bei László Moholy-Nagy', presented at the Internationales László Moholy-Nagy Symposium, Bielefeld, Germany, 1995.



22 – In May 1936 Moholy was given official permission to reside in England for a year and to open a private studio for photographic work on private commission, but she was not allowed to open a 'shop or business premises'. See letter from K. G. Davies, Private Secretary, Home Office to Herbert Samuel, 23 May 1936, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 129.

23 – Margot Oxford and Asquith to Moholy, 6 March 1936, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 56.

24 – Lucia Moholy, *A Hundred Years of Photography: 1839–1939*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1939.

25 – See 'Konzept einer Kulturgeschichte der Fotografie', ca. 1930 and 'Expose zu einer geplanten Kulturgeschichte der Fotografie', 1932, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 1. Excerpts are reprinted in Sachsse, *Lucia Moholy: Bauhaus Fotografin*, 76–7.

26 – 'Foto-buch', n.d., typescript, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 1.

27 – By Moholy's own representation, see BHA, LM Archive, Folder 131.

28 – Moholy, *Hundred Years of Photography*, 164.

29 – *Ibid.*, 165–6.

30 – For a contextual synopsis of these discussions via an analysis of texts by authors such as Josef Maria Eder, Helmut Gernsheim, Lucia Moholy, László Moholy-Nagy, Beaumont Newhall and Erich Stenger, see Claude W. Sui, 'Helmut Gernsheim: Pioneer Collector and Historian of Photography', in *Helmut Gernsheim: Pioneer of Photo History*, ed. Alfried Wiczorek and Claude W. Sui, Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz 2003, 27–34. See also Martin Gasser, 'Histories of Photography 1839–1939', *History of Photography*, 16:1 (Spring 1992), 50–60; and Matthew S. Witkovsky, 'Circa 1930: Art History and the New Photography', *Etudes Photographiques*, 23 (May 2009), 139–49. For a discussion of Moholy's *A Hundred Years of Photography* within the context of contemporaneous histories of photography, see the relevant sections of Miriam Halwani, 'Marginalien zur Geschichtsschreibung der Fotografie 1839–1939', PhD diss., Universität Hamburg 2010; and Miriam Halwani, *Geschichte der Fotogeschichte, 1839–1939*, Berlin: Reimer, 2012.

not broadly representative. Moholy also reflects on the ways in which photography functions as a means of reproducing reality (*Wirklichkeit*) and on whether photographs accompanying a text make the text more factual (*sachlich*). After examining new publications, she determines that photographs are no guarantee for objectivity, but rather too dependent on authorial choice and interpretation. She also theorises the subject–object relationship in the context of photography as well as the autonomy of photography, first questioning the character of photographs as *objects* themselves, subject to the influence of outside pressures, and then considering how they might move to become *subjects*, and, as such, exert an independent influence outward. The role of technology upon the medium is also contextualised by Moholy, who sees the development of photography running parallel with the advancement of other modern technologies.

However, as published, the resulting book *A Hundred Years of Photography: 1839–1939* was a consolidation of material packaged for a very general readership. Less a theoretical consideration of the place of photography in culture than a remarkably succinct technological and artistic history of the field, it encompassed developments and practices in the medium from the standpoint of the professional and the amateur photographer alike. The slim volume was just under 200 pages and priced at only six pence. In its initial two years about forty thousand copies of the book were sold.<sup>27</sup>

In the book Moholy provides descriptions of contemporary movements in photography that illuminate her own photographic practice. She thus characterises 1920s *Neue Sachlichkeit*, or what she also terms 'modern object photography', as an artistic move in photography in which 'the object, by being isolated from its natural surroundings, was endowed with a much greater importance than it originally possessed', arguing that as photography became more 'object-conscious' its objects became more 'self-assertive', granting significance to all of their details.<sup>28</sup> This sheds particular light on Moholy's Bauhaus photographic practice, indicating her awareness of the complexity of the object/photograph relationship in this work and the agency that the things represented could take on specifically via the photographs that reproduced them, something that would become more poignant in exile, as the Bauhaus objects depicted in Moholy's photographs took on increased significance through repeated reproduction. The image section of the book, which only contains thirty-five photographs in total, nonetheless elides the period from the 1900s to the 1930s without any photographs representing *Neue Sachlichkeit*, other developments that she describes occurring in the 1920s, or others' or her own work from that period – which, in any case, she would have been unable to reproduce. Although the photographs in the book appear grainy due to the inexpensiveness of the book, the reproductions were all made from originals housed in such institutions as the Victoria and Albert Museum, the London Science Museum and elsewhere, mainly in Great Britain, representing both the care she took in finding high-quality images and the limitations posed by publishing in this period.

She does, however, situate her new work by naming herself among other practitioners as part of a new, 'realistic' type of portrait photography and reproducing one of her recent commissions, the Countess of Oxford and Asquith from 1935 (figure 10). Seeing the two developments as aligned, she writes that the new direction in portraiture grew out of object photography in which 'not only the shape, delineation and expression of the human face, but the sculptural details of the head and the texture of skin, hair, nails and dress [...] became attractive subjects to the photographer'.<sup>29</sup> Although the book served to secure her as an authority on photography, she uses it only subtly as a podium to assert her own place – as photographer – in the history of photography and to further her own concurrent photographic career.

Although aimed at a lay audience, *A Hundred Years of Photography* was also notably an important contribution to the work of a circle of authors and photographers in the 1930s who were attempting to draw up histories of photography from multiple angles – aesthetic, technical, historical, cultural and theoretical.<sup>30</sup> Moholy-

Nagy's 1925 *Malerei, Photographie, Film*, which was an intellectual collaboration between Moholy-Nagy and Lucia Moholy and which relied heavily on Lucia Moholy's literary skills in German, was an important precursor to both the photographic discourse and to histories of photography of the 1930s.<sup>31</sup> *A Hundred Years of Photography* would influence practising photographers working in London, such as Helmut Gernsheim, who would go on to write extensively about the history and theory of photography.<sup>32</sup> Moholy's text furthered important discussions underway in this period concerning the role of photography as an independent art with its own creative process and photographic vision as a distinct form of seeing.

Commercially and critically, *A Hundred Years of Photography* was a success. As an exile who had only been in England for a few years, the accessibility and popularity of the book helped Moholy to establish herself as an expert on photography. A decade later, in 1948, this status was recognised with her admittance to the Royal Photographic Society.<sup>33</sup> Despite these successes, however, the strains of being in exile took their toll on Moholy, as they did on other *Bauhäusler* and normal citizens alike. One glimpses this only fragmentarily, from letters such as one she wrote to a potential patron in 1937 to postpone a portrait sitting:

All kind[s] of old suffering came back after this flu, and I had to fight them for several weeks, till at last it was found that I am not strong enough to get rid of these things here at present, and that I shall go to Switzerland for a few weeks. Well, this was rather a difficult problem, for not only is it a grave financial matter for me, but, being away, it means, in addition, losses of work. [...] In fact, I believe, there is some sort of wound on the bottom of the heart with such people as I am – and one has [to] try very hard to react normally again after all the worry of the last years. [...] Excuse, in addition to all the rest, please, my typing. Some days I am too nervous to write by hand.<sup>34</sup>

The perils of Moholy's existence were also made clear when her home in London was bombed in September 1940, and, once again, she was forced to flee on short notice, able to take only a few belongings with her.<sup>35</sup>

### *Multiple Exiles*

While in exile, a wide circle of former Bauhaus members leaned on each other for logistical help, companionship, reprieve from the constant challenge of exile and retreat to something like the normalcy of former times. In the United States, especially, former Bauhaus members visited each other for pleasure and on work pretences – continuing to collaborate on various projects and lecturing at one another's new institutional homes. In 1940, when World War II was in full force and London was often under severe bombardment, Moholy appealed to many of them to make a new start in the United States. Gropius agreed to serve as a reference in her pursuit of a position with MIT's library; during this period she was involved with the reproductive and preservation processes of microfilm. Moholy's brother – a successful playwright and screenwriter in Hollywood – attempted to sponsor her visa.<sup>36</sup> Moholy-Nagy endeavoured to help by offering her a position at the New Bauhaus in Chicago, by then called the School of Design; as Sibyl, Moholy-Nagy's second wife, wrote to Lucia:

You may be sure, that we shall do everything we can, to help you. But of course this is not very much. We shall send you a contract with the School of Design in Chicago, appointing you as teacher for photography and possibly history of art. [...] There will always be a couch for you to house you long enough, till you have found enough means to live on your own, and I may add that all of us shall be very glad, to tide you over as long as it is necessary.<sup>37</sup>

A week later the contract was sent. However, Moholy was turned down by US immigration officials on the grounds that she could not prove that her principal occupation in the past had been that of professor of photography but rather only that she was a practising photographer and writer.<sup>38</sup> Forced to stay in England, Moholy

31 – Moholy, *Marginalien zu Moholy-Nagy*, 55–6.

32 – Gernsheim knew Moholy in London; he met her in the late 1930s when she attended an exhibition of his photographs and came to know her work during subsequent visits to her studio. He cites her book as 'probably the first book on the history of photography' that he read. Helmut Gernsheim interviewed by Val Williams, 1995, *An Oral History of British Photography* © British Library, catalogue reference C459/66.

33 – BHA, LM Archive, Folder 133. She was made an 'Associate' of the Royal Society of Photography in May 1938.

34 – Moholy to Mrs Cavendish Bentinck, 23 February 1937, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 55.

35 – Letter, Lucia Moholy to László Moholy-Nagy, 16 November 1940, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 150.

36 – Franz Schulz, Affidavit of Support for Lucia Moholy, 7 October 1940, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 150.

37 – Sibyl Moholy-Nagy to Moholy, 7 July 1940, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 100. It is notable that almost all of the correspondence between members of the Bauhaus circle after leaving Germany was written in English. Although this was sometimes the result of a letter being dictated to a secretary, in most instances this was not the case. Writing exclusively in English, perhaps, reveals one of the ways in which Bauhaus members attempted to quickly assimilate in their new host countries. They may have also written in English to avoid the suspicion that they were enemy spies or to not draw attention to themselves as German-speakers, generally, by those encountering their mail. (Where correspondence was originally in German, this will be noted.)

38 – Eventually Moholy conceded defeat and remained in England. In 1959 she moved permanently to Switzerland, where she lived until her death in 1989 at the age of ninety-five.



39 – In this period in Britain many photographers would not publicly affirm their ties to Judaism or outright negate their Jewish heritage, yet the role that Jews played in photography is significant. See Michael Berkowitz, 'Beaumont Newhall and Helmut Gernsheim: Collaboration, Friendship, and Tension amidst the "Jewishness" of Photography', *Perspectives, Journal of the Woolf Institute* (Spring 2010), 17–21; and Berkowitz, 'Photography as a Jewish Business: From High Theory, to Studio, to Snapshot', *Eastern European Jewish Affairs*, 39:3 (2009), 389–400.

40 – Rolf Sachsse's dates indicate that Moholy was twenty when she left for Wiesbaden yet she states in the short biographic paragraph of *A Hundred Years of Photography* that she was eighteen. See Sachsse, *Lucia Moholy: Bauhaus Fotografien*, 12; and Moholy, *Hundred Years of Photography*, back overleaf.

41 – Sachsse, *Lucia Moholy: Bauhaus Fotografien*, 11.

42 – Donald Kuspit, 'Meyer Schapiro's Jewish Unconscious', *Prospects*, 21 (October 1996), 491–508.

43 – See correspondence spanning the period from 9 March 1936 to 13 June 1947 in BHA, LM Archive, Folders 129 and 130. She resided in England without a valid passport. See Moholy to Herbert Samuel, 19 October 1946, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 129. Moholy's application for naturalisation was submitted 12 September 1939; she was awarded British citizenship in June 1947, expedited through the intervention of Samuel, a powerful friend with connections to the British Home Office.

44 – See BHA, Lucia Moholy Archive, Sammlung Briefe Moholy-Karsten.

45 – On the negatives generally, see Moholy, 'The Missing Negatives', 6–8 and 18; and Sabine Hartmann, 'Anmerkungen zum fotografischen Nachlaß', in Sachsse, *Lucia Moholy: Bauhaus Fotografien*, 113–16.

Regarding the appropriation of the negatives by Gropius, see Jeffrey Saletnik and Robin Schuldenfrei, 'Introduction', in *Bauhaus Construct*, 1–9; Mercedes Valdivieso, 'Lucia Moholy, el ojo anónimo que retrató la Bauhaus', *La Balsa de la Medusa*, 40 (1996), 85–7; Valdivieso, 'Eine "symbiotische Arbeitsgemeinschaft"', 84 (endnote 40); and Müller, *Bauhaus Women*, 146–8. On the acquisition of the negatives by the Bauhaus Archive, Berlin in 1992, see Sibylle Hoiman, 'Lucia Moholy: Zur Geschichte ihres Nachlasses im Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin', *Special Delivery: Von Künstlernachlässen und ihren Verwaltern*, ed. Volkmar Hansen, Ulrike Horstenkamp and Gabriele Weidle, Bonn: Arbeitskreis selbständiger Kultur-Institute e.V. 2011, 170–81.

46 – Gropius's shipment reached him on 20 October 1937. Letter Gropius to Alfred Barr, 21 October 1937, Walter Gropius Papers (MS Ger 208), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

initially depended on the kindness of Quakers, who had helped her flee Germany and establish herself in London, and on fellow Czech exiles. She was soon integrated into a circle of British friends and professional colleagues, principally centred around Bloomsbury, where she lived, as well as the exiled Bauhaus community.

In London she also had contact with circles of photographers and those in photography-related fields, such as photojournalists, editors, agents and leaders of photographic documentation projects (such as activities sponsored by the Warburg Institute), a group that was predominately Jewish.<sup>39</sup> Within this context, and given the circumstances of her displacement, first willingly, from Prague to Wiesbaden, Germany (she left at age twenty and entirely supported herself), and later as a refugee, from Berlin to London, Moholy's Jewish background, even if she had been brought up in an entirely assimilated context, is not insignificant.<sup>40</sup> Of affluent, upper-class Jewish parentage, Moholy's birth certificate stated 'mosaischen Glaubens' literally, 'of Mosaic faith' i.e. Jewish, but she was brought up atheist and would otherwise negate her Judaism throughout her life.<sup>41</sup> Yet Donald Kuspit has noted that art critic Harold Rosenberg argued that 'anxiety about identity' was the most serious theme in Jewish life, while Clement Greenberg saw 'alienation' built into Jewish existence.<sup>42</sup> These themes, hardly unique to the assessments of these art critics, were indeed pressed again upon individual Jews with particular force by the events of the mid twentieth century, and they are also present in Moholy's biography, both metaphorically and also practically, if not necessarily ever as a direct consequence of her Jewish background: as a citizen of Prague born in 1894 she was of Austrian nationality, subsequently Czechoslovak (1918), and became Hungarian upon her marriage to Moholy-Nagy (1921). Following her divorce (1934) the Hungarian authorities refused to extend her passport, leaving her stateless and without a valid passport until she became a British citizen in 1947, a process she had begun in 1936.<sup>43</sup> In the post-war period, through her lawyer, Lucia Moholy filed a series of formal claims for compensation from the German post-war government for persecution under the Nazi regime, seeking recompense for her livelihood and the loss of her household goods left behind in Berlin. In a complicated, drawn out series of lawsuits, Moholy ultimately lost all claims, except one which resulted in a single payment of ten thousand Marks. In the lawsuit paperwork she excised her relationship with the communist Neubauer and based her claims and reason for fleeing on her Jewish status and her loss of employment when she was let go from Itten's art school, earlier that year, following election of the National Socialists.<sup>44</sup>

The Gropiuses arrived in England in 1934 and the Moholy-Nagys in 1935. In the shipment of their goods to England, the Moholy-Nagys had included a number of Lucia's belongings, including miscellaneous pieces of furniture, but not her negatives. The circumstances surrounding the loss of Lucia Moholy's Bauhaus-era negatives are particularly difficult to clarify.<sup>45</sup> Upon leaving Berlin, Lucia had stored her glass negatives with the Moholy-Nagys, who, in turn, brought them to Walter Gropius's house in Berlin. From there they were shipped to the United States with Gropius's belongings in 1937 and then stored in his basement.<sup>46</sup> Both the Gropiuses and the Moholy-Nagys had left England for the US in 1937 and Lucia subsequently remained in frequent contact with both couples. At the conclusion of the war, she wrote to Moholy-Nagy, only months before his death:

You remember that after I left, you and Sybil [*sic*] took care of my things, and among them were all my negatives [...]. You left them somewhere. Can you remember where? Perhaps they could be retrieved. [...] Was there anything else left behind which might be of value now? Did I not have some of your paintings also?<sup>47</sup>

Sibyl, apparently not knowing the negatives had been shipped to the United States, subsequently informed Lucia that Gropius's house had been fire-bombed during the war.<sup>48</sup> Thus, Lucia believed that her negatives had been destroyed, not knowing that a large portion of them had survived and were safe in the United States.

For Moholy, the subsequent, accidental tracing of her negatives' continuing existence started in June 1950 with a last-minute letter to Walter Gropius looking for generic Bauhaus photographs – because she did not have any of her own – to illustrate a lecture she was to give at the London School of Printing and Graphic Arts. She wrote:

I have been invited to give a talk on the Bauhaus on June 15 – only two weeks from today. I know it is very short notice, but if you or Ise could send me some photographs from which to prepare lantern slides, it would be a great help. [...] It is shockingly short notice, I know, do you think it worth trying just the same? What I should like are some two dozen pictures from various periods to give an overall picture for one 50 minute lecture to people who know nothing about it.<sup>49</sup>

She simultaneously sent a telegram with the plea: 'Can you airmail photographs or slides for my lecture Bauhaus 15th June uninformed audience. Apologies short notice Thanks Love Lucia Moholy'.<sup>50</sup> A cable from Gropius follows: 'Cannot send only original photographs suggest asking *Architectural Review* Sorry, (Signed) Walter Gropius'.<sup>51</sup> Gropius also replied by letter with a further explanation:

I was sorry that I couldn't help in the very short time to send you material over for a lecture on the Bauhaus. The few photographs I have are last copies which I cannot replace. The negatives, as far as I have them, have been given to the Germanic Museum for their newly built-up Bauhaus collection. It would have taken too much time to have copies made which would have reached you in time before your lecture. I hope that in spite of it it went all right.<sup>52</sup>

Moholy wrote back:

I really must apologize again for troubling you with the telegram about Bauhaus work. Of course I understand that you cannot part with your only copies even for a short time. I made many attempts to secure slides or photographs from all the likely organisations including the *Architectural Review*, but the total result is astonishingly poor. That is why I wired. However, I shall just have to manage, and make up by describing what I should have preferred to show.<sup>53</sup>

This short exchange between old friends leaves out crucial elements of what was to be revealed four years later. Gropius does not say that he is in possession of her negatives, only that he has photographic prints, and he does not say that the 'negatives' that he has promised to the museum were her negatives. Moholy's negatives, stored in his Lincoln basement, it transpires, were used by Gropius to make prints upon request, which were then given away by him, along with the permission to use them, without crediting Moholy.

That Bauhaus imagery was in such scarce supply in England after the war that Moholy had to ask Gropius underscores just how important Moholy's negatives were (and were increasingly to become) for establishing the Bauhaus legacy. Her images played a significant role in the 1938 large-scale exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, entitled *Bauhaus, 1919–1928*, whose catalogue became the standard text in English on the school. Post-war publications, both those about the Bauhaus and monographs on individual artists, such as Marcel Breuer, also frequently used her photographs.

This usurpation of her property put a significant strain on Moholy, a single woman trying to support herself; commenting later on the affair, she writes of her 'extreme poverty' in these years.<sup>54</sup> Recommencing her search for the negatives she recalled that during the war her 'mind was occupied with other, more acute worries. I began to feel the loss later on, increasing with the demand for lectures and articles which needed illustrating'.<sup>55</sup>

Forced to bypass crucial opportunities – invitations for lectures and articles continued to be extended to her throughout the 1950s – and as new publications with

47 – Lucia Moholy to László Moholy-Nagy, 19 July 1946, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 99.

48 – As Moholy recalls in a letter to Gropius: 'When I left, all my things i.e. books, pictures, household goods and negatives were in one place, and I know nothing about subsequent arrangements. When Moholy and Sybil [*sic*] came to London, some of my furniture and a few other odd things came along in their lift – but not unfortunately the negatives. I presume they were left behind on account of their weight, being glass. [...] It was of course impossible to do anything about it during the war years. When, later, I wrote to Moholy asking him about the circumstances, he was too ill to reply. When Sybil [*sic*] came to London on her way to Germany, I brought the subject up, and it was then that she said (I had never heard it before) that the negatives were moved to your place. And, she continued, as the house was bombed, the negatives, no doubt, have been destroyed.' Moholy to Gropius, 21 Jan. 1954, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 75.

49 – Moholy to Gropius, 1 June 1950, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 74. The Moholy-Gropius correspondence all occurred in English.

50 – *Ibid.*

51 – Cable, Gropius to Moholy, BHA, Archive Gropius, GS 19/1, Folder 469.

52 – Gropius to Moholy, 20 June 1950, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 74.

53 – Moholy to Gropius, 12 June 1950, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 74. The typescript for the lecture notes, telegraphically, at the conclusion: 'Slides – few – difficult to come by'. 'Lecture for the London School of Printing and Graphic Arts', 8, typescript with handwritten corrections, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 8.



good reproductions of her photographs began to emerge, Moholy began to sense that her negatives might have survived. She thus wrote again to Gropius in January 1954:

54 – Moholy, 'The Missing Negatives', 7.

55 – Moholy to Gropius, 21 January 1954, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 75.

I have been invited to collaborate, and in particular provide documentary material, for a series of articles on a subject close to our hearts: the relation between architecture, painting, sculpture, textiles, stained glass etc. and the entity [entirety] of the result achieved by their organised use, or in other words: team spirit. [...] It is therefore essential to [...] show what the Bauhaus has done.

[...] [I] should like to make another attempt at locating my own collection of documentary material, i.e. the considerable number of photographs (original negatives) which I took during my Bauhaus years. I wonder if there is anything you can recall, possibly from discussions with Moholy who took care of them when I left in 1933.

It did not occur to me to ask you earlier, or at any rate not until Sybil [*sic*] told me the negatives were stored in the house where you and Ise lived in Berlin. Is this correct? If so, can you remember when they were deposited there and, whether they were left there when you decided to come to England? Or were they moved elsewhere? [...]

So: if there is the slightest hope that my negatives may still be intact, I must do what I can to trace them. But how do I go about it? These negatives are irreplaceable documents which could be extremely useful, now more than ever. I am prepared to look into the matter myself, or request friends in Germany to do this for me. But I can do nothing unless I have a line to work on. Do you think you could advise me on this? I should be extremely grateful.<sup>56</sup>

56 – Ibid.

57 – Gropius to Moholy, 25 February 1954, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 75. Gropius had, in fact, already deposited the negatives with the museum by March 1950, as the curator writes to Gropius: 'I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your very generous gift of some two hundred negatives of Bauhaus material. These will prove of enormous value to us and I shall proceed with having the prints made in the near future. I understand you would like to have prints for your own record and I shall be very happy to send these to you'. Charles L. Kuhn to Gropius, 9 March 1950, Walter Gropius Papers (MS Ger 208). Houghton Library, Harvard University. Evidently the prints were not promptly delivered and Gropius, eager for the material, made the following request to the museum a year later: 'I wonder whether I could get copies of the negatives on Bauhaus production which you promised me when I handed all the negatives out to be stored in the Museum. I would highly appreciate having a set of these copies in my personal file'. Gropius to Kuhn, 23 January 1951, BHA, Walter Gropius Archive, GN Kiste Nr. 6, Folder 478. The museum did make copies which remain in the collection today, see figures 5, 6, and 8.

58 – Moholy to Gropius, 20 March 1954, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 75.

59 – Moholy consulted both international and copyright lawyers for assistance in first getting her negatives back from Gropius – before he will release them he wants her to sign a legal document negating her claims to any compensation in the years he held the negatives – and attempting to obtain compensation for her loss of their use. Gropius maintained that storing them and shipping them back would be compensation enough (although they are ultimately shipped back at Moholy's expense).

60 – Charles Aukin (Moholy's lawyer) to Gropius, 3 May 1957, BHA, Archive Gropius, GS 19/1, Folder 471.

It is ironic that it was in preparation for a lecture on Bauhaus 'team spirit' that Moholy discovered that news of the survival of her negatives had been withheld from her.

Gropius's reply, for the first time, seventeen years after bringing the negatives with him to the United States, finally, definitively informed Moholy that he was in fact in possession of them:

Long years ago in Berlin, you gave all these negatives to me. I have carefully kept them, had copies made of all of them and have given a full set of copies to the Busch-Reisinger Museum at Harvard which has built up a special Bauhaus Department which is steadily growing. I have promised them the original negatives with your name attached as soon as I do not need them any more myself. Both Ise and myself remember this clearly. You will imagine that these photographs are extremely useful to me and that I have continuously made use of them; so I hope you will not deprive me of them. Wouldn't it be sufficient if I sent you contact prints of the negatives? There are a great many, but I certainly understand that you want to make use of them yourself. Anyhow it will be a relief to you to know that they are in existence and in good shape. I have never left them out of hand.<sup>57</sup>

A number of letters between Moholy and the Gropiuses ensued. Moholy replied at length: she had never given the negatives away, and she was appalled that Gropius had promised them to a museum and was only now offering her contact prints, a paltry substitute that might have been proposed earlier, under circumstances that should have prompted the return of the negatives; she concluded by registering this betrayal as a 'shattering experience' by someone she had 'always considered one of my truest friends'.<sup>58</sup> Moholy then spent several years consulting a series of international lawyers.<sup>59</sup> In 1957, after three years of legal negotiations, Moholy ultimately received a large crate of negatives.<sup>60</sup> Today the Bauhaus Archive in Berlin has 230 of the 560 Bauhaus-era negatives she took, while 330 negatives, according to Moholy's own card catalogue, are still missing.<sup>61</sup>

### *Trust and Restitution*

In the context of exile and the circumstances of fleeing into exile, the issue of trust, in its multiple senses of meaning, takes on a special role. As Moholy wrote to Gropius:

You must have realised that my case was one of many hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people who had no alternative but to leave their belongings on trust (*zu treuen Händen*) with [i.e. in the trust of] someone whose position was less precarious than one's own. It was neither possible nor necessary to come to an understanding regarding the return of one's property, since to take care on trust firmly implies the obligation to return it to its owner as soon as circumstances permit. Surely you did not expect me to delay my departure in order to draw up a formal contract stipulating date and conditions of return? No formal agreement could have carried more weight than our friendship. It is this friendship I have always relied on, and which, also, I am now invoking.<sup>62</sup>

In reference to a claim from Gropius that she should be thankful he saved the negatives from bombardment in Berlin, and to his subsequent reluctance to return them, Moholy's lawyer wrote:

Do you believe that because you had the negatives which were entrusted to you sent to the U.S.A., and thus saved them from destruction in Germany, you had a good excuse for depriving her of their use [...]? Do you subscribe to the proposition that the fireman who puts out a fire in a house should keep as prize the treasures of the house?<sup>63</sup>

In times of emergency, under conditions of dictatorship or war and under the circumstances of exile, in particular, as the laws and norms of society lose their effect, individuals are forced more than ever to rely on trust and friendship to endure and counter hardship. Former members of the Bauhaus were no exception to this; to assist their colleagues still in Europe the Gropiuses set up a special 'Bauhaus Fund', while Mies, the Moholy-Nagys, the Gropiuses and the Bayers sent countless CARE packages and financial donations. As Sibyl commiserated in a letter to Lucia Moholy: 'The reports from England are very depressing and I would be very happy to send you whatever you need to supplement your obviously meagre diet. Please Lucia don't hesitate to let me know what you need'.<sup>64</sup> But when it came to the photographs Moholy had taken, with their indispensable role to play in the construction of the Bauhaus story, this rule gave way. Due to the circumstances surrounding this inaccessibility to her negatives, Moholy was also thrown into an oppositional position *vis-à-vis* her former Bauhaus colleagues and friends. This further loss of trust, friendship and the support of the exile network compounded the more tangible losses she suffered through this episode.

There was also an overall negative impact on her career, like that often suffered by exiles forced to leave behind important portions of their prior lives. As she wrote to Gropius:

all my negatives, those you have used more and others you may have used less, have been completely out of reach as far as I am concerned. Consequently I have been prevented from carrying out any requests, orders, commissions, projects and other activities depending on having access to my negatives and have suffered considerable harm in terms of loss of face and loss of income and potential income.<sup>65</sup>

The outsized role that her images played, in exile from her, in the growing attention paid to the Bauhaus, indeed compounded this isolation, separating her from a collaborative project in which she had been an important participant – even as the significance of her particular contribution now grew markedly.

Because she was not credited for her essential role in collaborative work with László Moholy-Nagy, these photographs represent the only contribution during the Bauhaus years that can be attributed to Lucia Moholy alone. This lack of acknowledgment was stinging. In the midst of the effort to retrieve them, she wrote:

Everybody, except myself, have used, and admit to having used my photographs [...] and often also without mentioning my name. Everyone – except myself – have derived advantages from using my photographs, either directly, or indirectly, in a number of ways, be it in cash or prestige, or both.<sup>66</sup>

61 – Sabine Hartmann, 'Anmerkungen zum fotografischen Nachlaß', 113.

62 – Moholy to Gropius, 30 October 1954, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 75. The letter is excerpted here as it appears in the original, in English with the German parenthetical '*zu treuen Händen*', a precise phrase for the safekeeping of objects in trust, added here in German as if to underscore to Gropius, by invoking his mother tongue, his responsibility to her.

63 – Charles Aukin to Gropius, 17 October 1956, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 79.

64 – Sibyl Moholy-Nagy to Lucia Moholy, 7 August 1947, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 100.

65 – Moholy to Gropius, 30 October 1954, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 75.

66 – Lucia Moholy, 'Summary of Events', February 1956, 8, BHA, Archive LM, Folder 79.



67 – Moholy also maintained a meticulous card catalogue of her images, with each image identified by number, size and subject. Despite its bulk, the card catalogue was of enough importance to her that it was among the few possessions she brought with her into flight. The card catalogue is available as part of the Lucia Moholy collection at the Bauhaus Archive, Berlin.

68 – After protest over the omission of her name in the photograph credits, Moholy was credited for the 1955 reprint translated into German, but only for thirteen images out of the forty-nine used.

69 – For an examination of the ways in which the exhibition neutralised the school's social and political history, in light of period political events and Gropius's own status as an exile, see Karen Koehler, 'The Bauhaus, 1919–1928: Gropius in Exile and the Museum of Modern Art, N.Y., 1938', in *Art, Culture, and Media Under the Third Reich*, ed. Richard A. Etlin, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2002, 287–315. Koehler points out the importance of recognising 'the extent to which the decisions made in 1938 by the organizers of the MoMA exhibition have had a lasting effect on the Bauhaus legacy' ('The Bauhaus', 309). See also Karen Koehler, 'Angels of History Carrying Bricks: Gropius in Exile', in *The Dispossessed: An Anatomy of Exile*, ed. Peter I. Rose, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press 2005, 257–80.

70 – Although the organisers, including Gropius himself, wanted the exhibition to cover the entirety of the school's history, they had to limit it to Gropius's tenure as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, despite multiple entreaties, refused to participate due to what Gropius, in a letter to Alfred H. Barr, Jr, cites as 'the difficulties in Germany'. As Gropius continues in the letter: 'We were eager to avoid any difficulties and to make the show as objective as possible. If we show anything of the period following my departure from the Bauhaus, there might result disagreeable situations which I do not want to face; and, without their [the other former directors'] cooperation, I do not feel entitled to describe their own intentions'. Gropius to Barr, 8 September 1938, BHA, Walter Gropius Archive, GN Kiste Nr. 6, Folder 249.

71 – 'Notes on the Reception of the Bauhaus Exhibition', MoMA, by Alfred H. Barr, Jr, 19 January 1939, BHA, Walter Gropius Archive, GN Kiste Nr. 6, Folder 249. However, Mary Anne Staniszewski argues that the show was perceived by the public, critics and the Museum itself as a failure. See 'The Bauhaus Debacle', in Staniszewski, *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1998, 142–52. In terms of popularising the school in the United States, helping its former members establish themselves in exile, and allowing certain protagonists such as Gropius, Bayer, Moholy-Nagy and Breuer to forge close ties to key people within MoMA, relationships

Indeed, in an era in which it was somewhat unusual to do so, especially in the context of the collaborative atmosphere and friendship circles of the Bauhaus, Moholy had always taken care to maintain her copyright over the images – asserting the relative autonomy of the photographic works from their subject matter. Until the point in which she lost control of them, all prints made from the negatives had been stamped with her name and her copyright on the verso. The negatives themselves were generally not marked, however, except for the negative's number, which Moholy sometimes wrote on the black tape around the glass negative's edges, as they were never intended to be separated from their owner.<sup>67</sup>

In the Weimar period she had been, for the main part, credited for her images when they were published – such as in the Bauhaus book *Die Bauhausbauten in Dessau (Bauhaus Building Dessau)*, which featured fifty-four of her images, or the 1926 inaugural issue of the *bauhaus* magazine, which prominently featured a photograph of the Bauhaus building by her on its cover. But in the post-1933 period, when she lost control of the negatives, her name began to disappear from the photograph credits. For example, Gropius's 1935 book, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*, omits all photograph credits, including hers. The 1938 Museum of Modern Art Bauhaus exhibition catalogue, *Bauhaus, 1919–1928*, despite the use of forty-nine images by her, does not include her name in its credits (whereas many other *Bauhäusler* are listed), even though most of the images had previously been published in the earlier Bauhaus book series and thus the photographs by Moholy were well known.<sup>68</sup>

Indeed, the MoMA exhibition, which took place only five years after the school's closure, played a particularly critical role in establishing its enduring legacy.<sup>69</sup> By focusing exclusively on the years of Gropius's own tenure, the show allowed him, very shortly after his arrival in the United States, to begin to construct a framework for the reception of the school and the work produced there.<sup>70</sup> The exhibition was a major success for the museum, at least as reported by Alfred H. Barr, Jr:

We were very doubtful whether the exhibition would be a popular success because of the complexity and difficulty of the subject. [...] To our surprise we were completely mistaken. We have had a far larger attendance at the exhibition than at any previous show in our present quarters.<sup>71</sup>

The exhibition design by Herbert Bayer featured many large-scale photographs by Moholy, likewise unattributed. In a room focusing on the Bauhaus workshops, for example, a few extant physical examples were on display (two vitrines of metal objects, two chairs and a chess set), but the most informative feature of the room was the rear-wall photographic mosaic of product designs from the furniture workshop (figure 11). As in the exhibition generally, because there were few available objects (most could not be shipped out of Germany or were not otherwise accessible), and especially in the case of large pieces of furniture, photographs served to fill the lacunae. Indeed, in a letter to Herbert Bayer, who was coordinating the loans, Gropius enumerated the materials in his possession that might be of use for the exhibition, noting that he had a great many original photographic plates of the Bauhaus buildings and workshop objects; in fact, 'so many that I haven't had the chance to view them all'.<sup>72</sup> (After the show closed, Gropius was anxious to get the photographs back in his possession, writing to the registrar: 'there are about 80 photographs which I sent to Mr. Bayer [for the exhibition] for which I received no receipt from you [...]. Will you please talk these over with Mr. Bayer, as almost all the items I have sent are unique and cannot be replaced'.<sup>73</sup>) Even the MoMA press release elaborated that photography compensated for the lack of objects: 'Under existing conditions in Germany it was not possible to bring more actual objects to this country for the exhibition,' pointing out that the show was 'supplemented by enlarged photographs'.<sup>74</sup> Of the photographic objects making up the furniture workshop mural, six images are likely by Moholy. They exhibit a documentary nature combined with a vitality that breathed life into the designs. Three-quarter

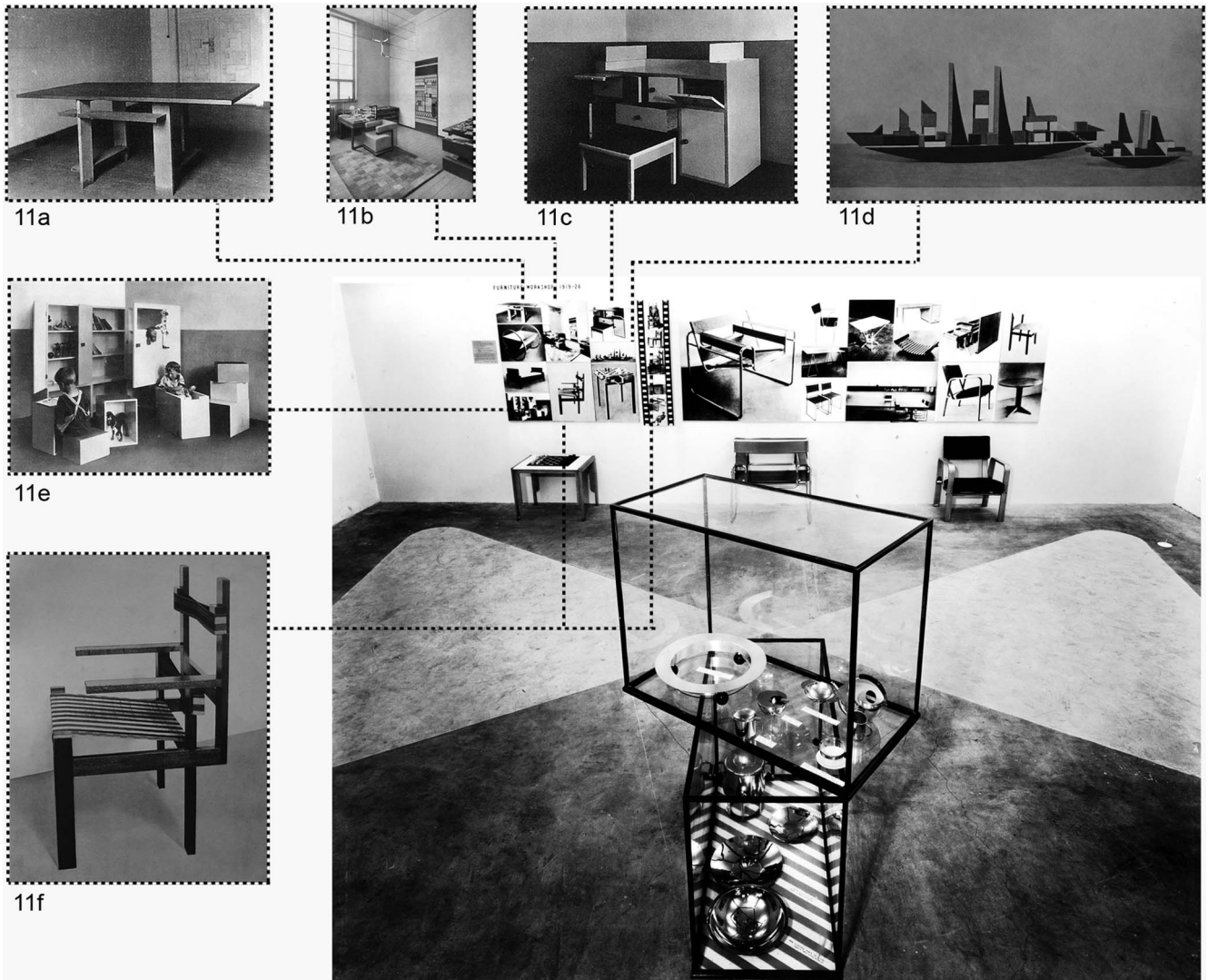


Figure 11. Soichi Sunami, *Installation view of The Bauhaus, 1919–1928*, Museum of Modern Art, gelatin silver print, 1938. © 2013 Artists Rights Society, New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. (a) Lucia Moholy, *Conference Table by Josef Albers*, ca. 1924. (b) Lucia Moholy, *Bauhaus Director's Office in Weimar*, ca. 1924. (c) Lucia Moholy, *Changing Table by Alma Buscher*, 1924. (d) Possibly Lucia Moholy, *Ship Toy by Alma Buscher*, ca. 1924. (e) Probably Lucia Moholy for Atelier Eckner, *Toy Cabinet by Alma Buscher*, ca. 1924. (f) Lucia Moholy, *Armchair (later titled TI 1a) by Marcel Breuer (designer)*, ca. 1924.

profiles were utilised for the furniture, creating 'portraits' that showed off the joinery and planes extending out into space, as evidenced in photographs of the Conference Table and Arm Chair (figure 11a, 11f). Gropius's office recedes into a one-point perspective that allowed for the maximum of furnishings to be glimpsed (figure 11b). All the various drawers are jauntily angled open to show the Changing Table's versatility (figure 11c), while children demonstrate the multitude of possibilities of the Toy Cabinet (figure 11e). The photographs on the wall do not function as mere illustrative material of what could not be shown in three dimensions, but rather convey these and other innovative aspects of the school's designs through distinctly photographic imagery – acting as equal pendants to the physical objects on display.

The accompanying catalogue, published in 1938, just before the outbreak of World War II effectively halted the publication of books on modern architecture, served as the most important text on the school until the translation of Hans Maria Wingler's magnum opus *The Bauhaus* appeared in 1969. Although there were also many other images that were not by Moholy in this richly illustrated catalogue, Moholy's photographs were of immense assistance in conveying the school's unique output, especially Gropius's architecture. On a two-page spread, for example, a mere five photographs by Moholy succinctly convey the most vital information about the

that would serve them well for the rest of their careers, the exhibition should be viewed as a success.

72 – Gropius to Bayer, 14 November 1937, BHA, Walter Gropius Archive, GN Kiste Nr. 6, Folder 247. Letter in German.

73 – Gropius to Dorothy H. Dudley, MoMA, 4 January 1939, 2, BHA, Walter Gropius Archive, GN Kiste Nr. 6, Folder 248.

74 – Press Release, *Bauhaus 1919–1928*, 3, BHA, Walter Gropius Archive, GN Kiste Nr. 6, Folder 248. Despite this statement, the same press release announced that 'about 700 individual items in wood, metal, canvas and paint, textiles, paper, glass and many other substances' were on exhibit (Press Release, 1).



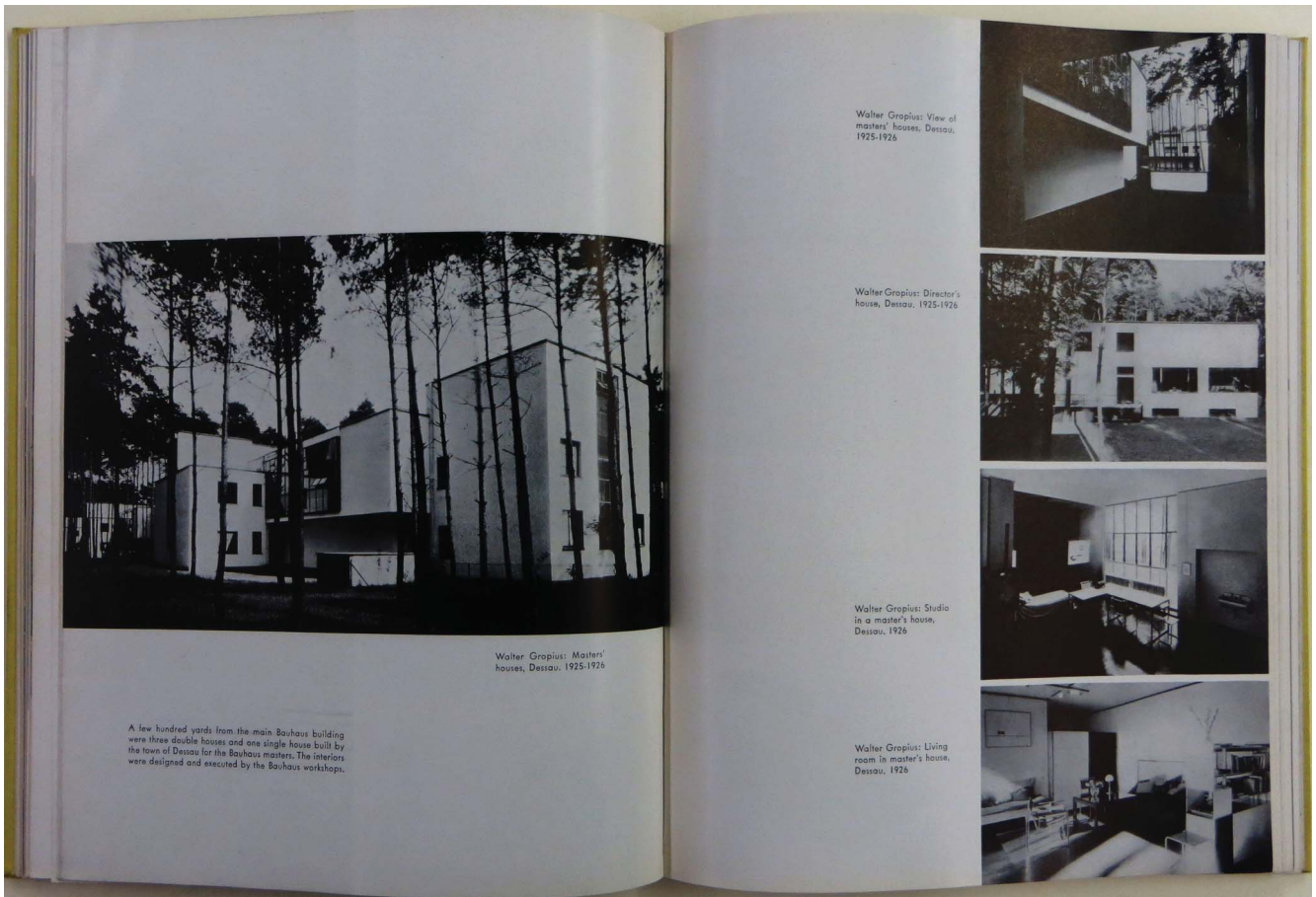


Figure 12. Lucia Moholy, unattributed photographs in the 1938 Bauhaus exhibition catalogue, from *Bauhaus, 1919–1928*, ed. Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius and Ise Gropius, New York: Museum of Modern Art 1938, 108–9. © 2013 Artists Rights Society, New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

masters' housing: key aspects are dynamically depicted, such as the striking siting of the houses in a grove of mature pines, the buildings' cubic forms, flat roofs, projecting cantilevers, modern materials, especially the expanses of glass, and the exceptionally light-filled interiors, replete with modern fittings and furniture (figure 12). The images themselves give an air of coherence, functioning remarkably well together, as can be seen in the way in which the two interior photographs' ceilings recede into nearly identical one-point perspective, with the furnishings also falling visually into line.

A survey of other Bauhaus literature demonstrates how important her images were in laying a foundation for the school's reception in its day and to the subsequent construction of its history through a heavy reliance on photographic evidence, in addition to textual description. These books span a wide swath of time: thirty-eight of Moholy's photographs appeared in 1925 in *Neue Arbeiten der Bauhauswerkstätten* (*New Work of the Bauhaus Workshops*), as part of the Bauhaus's own book series. Hans Maria Wingler's canonical *The Bauhaus: Weimar, Dessau, Berlin, Chicago* (first published in 1962 in German, 1969 in English) likewise featured thirty-eight of her images. More recently, the two catalogues produced in conjunction with the major 2009–10 international Bauhaus exhibition *Bauhaus 1919–1933: Workshops for Modernity* and *Bauhaus: A Conceptual Model* included ample Moholy images, discussed as artistic photography in its own right but also employed as straightforward vintage illustrative material. All of these sources credit Moholy.

In combination with the 1938 exhibition and its catalogue, the general books on the Bauhaus were immensely important in publicising the school beyond *avant-garde* art and architectural circles. The Bauhaus was a 'well-advertised' movement, noted one period reviewer in his estimation of the 1938 MoMA exhibition.<sup>75</sup> This

75 – Henry McBride, 'Attractions in the Galleries', *New York Sun* (10 December 1938), 11, cited in Staniszewski, *The Power of Display*, 151.

publicity provided a pedigree for the school's former members in their new exile contexts. In sum, Moholy's photographs depicted the architecture and output of the school in a dynamic and visually straightforward manner; at the same time, it was a function of their calculated virtuosity that they subtly advanced a stylised, idealised version of the Bauhaus, one that would become canonical precisely through their intensive use.

Once Moholy's negatives were back in her possession, she set to work seeking compensation for the multiple publications that had reproduced her photographs in the interim, for new books in process and for books being prepared for re-issue or translation, of which there were many in the 1950s and 1960s – such as the reissue of the Bauhausbücher series and the MoMA exhibition catalogue.<sup>76</sup> At this point she also attempted to charge modest fees for the use of her photographs in new publications, but she met with continual opposition. To Sigfried Giedion, who balked at paying a fee for his book *Walter Gropius: Work and Teamwork*, she alluded to the disadvantages she had endured due to Gropius's appropriation of the images:

It need hardly surprise you that I expect to be paid for my contributions as a matter of course. You know, and other people know too, that it is exclusively my work I have to rely on for my living. [...] While other former members of the Bauhaus built their continued successes on what pictorial records they had or could get hold of, I was debarred from making such use, and indeed any use, of my own photographs.<sup>77</sup>

Marcel Breuer also proved recalcitrant, stating bluntly:

While the publication fees you ask for are not worth a lot of correspondence and trouble, I could not, with the best will, create a precedent and recognize your rights, which I believe are non-existent. As far as consulting you before the photographs were published, again I feel that this is unjustified.<sup>78</sup>

To his publishers, Breuer retorted that he would not pay a fee, stating:

To check up on my own point of view in this matter I was in touch yesterday with Professor Walter Gropius [...] [who] completely confirmed my own stand in this matter, stating that Mrs. Moholy has no right whatsoever to demand such publication fees.<sup>79</sup>

Breuer's position is especially remarkable given that, during the Dessau years, it was Breuer who, against Gropius's wishes, had lobbied hard for designers to hold the rights to – and reap the profit from – copies made of their designs for furniture and other objects, arguing convincingly that other Bauhaus members, such as Klee and Kandinsky, retained ownership of their work.<sup>80</sup> This question of the relative individuality of artistic ownership and participation in a collaborative project – one that notably also sought to turn a profit through the marketing and sale of products of its workshops – was a very live issue at the Bauhaus.

Moholy's photographs were also distributed without her permission in Germany and abroad by the Franz Stoenner Archive.<sup>81</sup> Dr Stoenner was an art historian who had pioneered an early imaging service based in Berlin that provided prints and slides, predominately for educational and editorial use. Moholy only became aware of the archive's circulation of her images in the post-war period, although her images probably entered the Stoenner Archive's collection around 1927 and appear in a catalogue that was assembled by the Archive prior to 1932. Otilie Stoenner, widow of Franz Stoenner, concluded that Gropius himself must have contributed the print images that were used for reproduction and distribution purposes. The Moholy images in the Stoenner archive were not marked with – or distributed with – her name.<sup>82</sup>

Even into the 1960s, when the negatives had been returned to Moholy, Gropius continued to give out copies of her photographs to authors writing on the Bauhaus without naming her. For example, Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack apologised to Moholy

76 – Moholy also intended to author a book on the Bauhaus, taking pains to note that she had at her disposal ample material to richly illustrate it. For several variations of proposals sent to English and German publishers over a period of years between 1958 and 1963, see BHA, LM Archive, Folder 10.

77 – Moholy to Sigfried Giedion, 11 February 1955, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 76.

78 – Marcel Breuer to Moholy, 16 September 1958, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 68. This is in reference to Marcel Breuer, *Sun and Shadow: The Philosophy of an Architect*, Dodd, Mead & Company 1955.

79 – Marcel Breuer to S. Phelps Platt, Jr, Dodd, Mead & Company, 16 September 1958, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 68.

80 – See Magdalena Droste, 'The Bauhaus Object between Authorship and Anonymity', in *Bauhaus Construct*, 205–25; and Ise Gropius, *Diary*, BHA.

81 – There were, for example, vintage Moholy Bauhaus photographic prints stamped by Stoenner, imported and mounted on cardboard by a New York service (Rudolf Lesch Fine Arts Inc.) that were part of a large set of general art and architectural images circulated in the United States for instructional use in art schools and in art history departments. I am grateful to Elizabeth Otto for bringing the holdings of such prints at the State University of New York at Buffalo to my attention.

82 – When Moholy discovered that the Stoenner Archive was reproducing and selling her images and investigated further, she learned that prints and negatives in Stoenner's collection not previously destroyed by bomb, fire and water damage during the war had been removed from Berlin to Düsseldorf in July 1948 in a British airlift, but that all business documents and correspondence (which would have definitively clarified how her images entered the Stoenner archive) remained inaccessible in the Russian sector of Berlin. See Otilie Stoenner to Moholy, 28 July 1958, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 100.

83 – Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack to Moholy, 20 October 1964, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 86. (Hirschfeld-Mack is quoting letter, Gropius to Hirschfeld-Mack, dated 14 December 1962.)

84 – See Annemarie Jaeggi, *Fagus: Industrial Culture from Werkbund to Bauhaus*, trans. Elizabeth M. Schwaiger, New York: Princeton Architectural Press 2000, 107; and, more generally, the chapter entitled 'Fagus and Photography', 105–22. See also Annemarie Jaeggi, *Die Moderne im Blick: Albert Renger-Patzsch fotografiert das Fagus Werk*, Berlin: Bauhaus-Archiv/Museum für Gestaltung 2011.

85 – Gropius had already been circumspect about images in 1923, as he noted in a letter to Adolf Behne 'that he could not give photographs of the Bauhaus to Behne [who was preparing his important history of architecture, *The Modern Functional Building*] because he was already planning a "special publication" [his own Bauhaus series book *Internationale Architektur*] that "obligated" him not to release illustrations beforehand'. Rosemarie Haag Bletter's introduction to Adolf Behne, *The Modern Functional Building*, Santa Monica: The Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities 1996, 32.

86 – For a consideration of the inverse, the examination of an archival photograph as a modernist object, specifically its role as a generator of multiple meanings and narratives of the Bauhaus, and more broadly in representing modernist visuality itself, see Paul Paret, 'Picturing Sculpture: Object, Image, Archive', in *Bauhaus Construct*, 163–80.

for not knowing photographs were hers, and thus not crediting her in his book *The Bauhaus: An Introductory Survey*. He explained that in sending twenty-nine original Bauhaus photographs, Gropius had noted that they all came from his archive: 'so I have the right to decide about their publication. Please feel free to make use of them'.<sup>83</sup> Slowly, through her lawyer and with perseverance, reprints and new texts on the Bauhaus began to appear with her photograph credit and with modest usage fees paid to her.

#### Conclusion: Meaning-formation in Exile

During Gropius's tenure as director, photography was not granted official status at the school (that came only after Gropius's departure, in 1929, when Hannes Meyer engaged Walter Peterhans to teach there), but its role was more than documentary. Significantly, Gropius never formally acknowledged photography or granted it status as an independent artistic medium, although many of his colleagues were intensively working with it. As Annemarie Jaeggi has pointed out, Gropius was well aware of the significance of good photography; he was very selective about commissioning renowned photographers to capture his buildings and subsequently distributed certain sanctioned photographs from his personal archive to those writing about his work.<sup>84</sup> From an early point in his career Gropius utilised specific photographs to promote his built work, and already by the late 1920s and early 1930s a select range of images came to illustrate his ideas about modernism.<sup>85</sup> It is likely in this light that he came to see the Moholy photographs of his Dessau oeuvre as somehow 'his', especially after historical circumstances allowed the negatives to come into his possession. Perhaps, then, the best way to view his actions is not in terms of the ownership of the negatives (which he did not seem to perceive as Moholy's property), but, crucially, over what they showed, which is to say the Bauhaus and its buildings and output under his directorship – namely his own creation. Architectural authorship, in this way, extended to the photography of it. Not only did Gropius refuse to acknowledge Moholy's artistic agency in creating the images, he did not acknowledge the crucial role of photography in the history of the Bauhaus more generally, even as he was using it for his own ends. Gropius and his colleagues relied on photography to tell the story of the Bauhaus. And thus photography from the school, despite its lack of official recognition, contributed materially to the perception of the Bauhaus's modernism, then and today.

As the various *Bauhäusler* fled Germany throughout the 1930s, what they were able physically to take with them formed a disproportionate part of their oeuvre thereafter. What was no longer extant – unable to be displayed at the 1938 MoMA exhibition, for example – was often lost to the footnotes of history or only accessible through grainy reproduction images, especially in the immediate post-war period. Unlike writers, composers or similar types of creative exiles, for Bauhaus protagonists, photographic imagery had to stand in for art objects left behind. In exile, the role of images and their reproduction necessarily became even more outsized than they otherwise would have been. Especially where material art objects no longer played the role originally asked of them, processes of meaning-formation were transmuted: *object* – be it ash tray, painting, or building – regained its relevance in exile by means of *image*.<sup>86</sup> This potent image, standing for an unapproachable object – the Bauhaus school building in a divided Germany, for example – had a host of meanings formed around it, not only original ideas of new architecture in the 1920s but also the post-war ideologies about the school formulated by former *Bauhäusler* in exile during the Cold War. This image was often the last tangible asset, the last link, to the inaccessible or destroyed work. But what happens when the objects were, in fact, photographs themselves? Without the negatives, Moholy was also without the means of reproduction. Photographs often acted as a stand-in for works that many *Bauhäusler* no longer had access to (such as a large oil painting); thus photographs reproduced and circulated images of artworks as if they were the work itself, able to



further an artist's post-war reputation. Because her works were already images, Moholy – through the loss of her negatives – was singularly denied a chance at this transmutation of meaning and subsequent new meaning-formation.

Even more important was the photographic image for Bauhaus-designed objects that were intended for reproduction – objects like the individual tea infusers, which have become key signifiers of the Bauhaus project and its supposed aspirations to revolutionise modern life – but that did not achieve it, often due specifically to their conservative material properties (luxury materials, handwork, etc.). These objects became singularly reproducible in the photographs of them (figures 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). Indeed, it was their wide photographic reproduction that made the objects themselves seem like modern, mass articles – which is the way that they have been handed down to history in the Bauhaus myth that the photographs enabled Gropius to cultivate.

Importantly, the immortalisation of the Bauhaus took place in the post-war period, led in particular by Gropius as the school's founder and most powerful director and by former members generally. Gropius's position of power at the architecture school at Harvard gave him a pulpit from which to further strengthen the school's legacy. His generosity towards the Germanic Museum at Harvard, later named the Busch-Reisinger Museum, established a home for Bauhaus objects and collections at a time when they were not yet essential collectible items. His tireless work in maintaining the school's public profile after its closure – not letting it be forgotten as a brief example of Weimar-era art and politics – allowed him to instrumentalise its existence in a way that strengthened his own reputation and practice in post-war America, played a role in Cold War politics and helped build up support for modernism in American architecture. Other former Bauhaus members, too, considered a furthering of the Bauhaus's mission while in exile to be necessary and desirable, apart from what any of them stood to gain individually. As Herbert Bayer wrote to Moholy, he and Gropius had 'acted in good faith, making use of the photographs in Gropius's and Moholy[-Nagy]'s files for the benefit of the Bauhaus Movement'.<sup>87</sup> This bolstering of the Bauhaus legacy, in turn, helped launch the careers of Bauhaus members in exile.

The uneven power equation between Gropius, as former director of the Bauhaus and Head of the Architecture department at Harvard, and Moholy, with little wherewithal in London and rendered virtually anonymous without her negatives, was one that both were distinctly aware of. Gropius had, of course, long lost control of the Bauhaus buildings in Dessau, but he was to tighten control – to the point of usurping control – over its architectural image. Under the circumstances of exile and then the Cold War, not just the *images themselves* but the *means of their reproduction* became an oversized method of distribution and control, of power, of authorship, of ultimate signification.

Moholy's authorship was overwritten due to her loss of control over the negatives and thus over the means of their reproduction. This was a straightforward consequence, albeit one that need not have occurred had Gropius continued to insist on credit lines. But authorship was also overwritten in the way that the physical objects signified within the photographs – Bauhaus buildings and products – were given to act as more important referents than the media that carried them (glass negatives, printed reproductions). Although the power of the photographic image was well known and used to its full effect by Bauhaus members in the pre-war and post-war periods, ultimately the circulation of the *object* photographed took precedence over the authored *photograph* as object. Due to its inaccessibility, and precisely via these canonical photographs, the Bauhaus building more strongly signified itself, or, again as Moholy formulated it: isolating the object through photography was to endow it with greater significance than it previously possessed.<sup>88</sup> This was indeed in keeping with the attaining to 'self-assertion' of the objects of the photographs of *Neue Sachlichkeit* that Moholy herself had theorised in *A Hundred*

87 – Herbert Bayer to Moholy, 23 March 1955, BHA, LM Archive, Folder 66.

88 – Moholy, *Hundred Years of Photography*, 164.

*Years of Photography*, if also at odds with the becoming-subject of photographs that she had similarly contemplated.

Moholy's photographs, and Gropius's handling of them, contributed decisively to the development of the iconic status that Bauhaus objects have today. Notably Bauhaus products are often still viewed collectively as generic 'Bauhaus' objects, as Gropius desired that they be, rather than objects by specific designers (although Gropius did not erase designers' authorship as readily or thoroughly as Moholy's). This was done in the name of the Bauhaus, helping to secure its legacy, to all of its former members' benefit perhaps, except for one. However, the intention of this essay is neither to demonise Gropius nor to bring this story to light – Moholy herself published a guarded version in 1983 – but to use this episode to think about how notions of authorship are changed under conditions of exile, how photographs can be the most important means of communication for work no longer extant or accessible, and how their importance *as photographs* can as a result and, perhaps especially under such conditions, be overtaken by what they depict and what it comes to signify, by their subject matter and its photographically enabled properties of signification.

An exceedingly large part of the Bauhaus legacy, explicitly formulated in exile, was visual and in the form of photographs, especially photographs taken by Lucia Moholy. The very essence of her photographs – seemingly straightforward, clean, spare, *sachlich* – provided viewers with a picture of the school as Gropius desired to project it and, as he did, relying on them. The images served his goals in shoring up support for modern architecture in the United States in the nascent post-war period, when modernism was certainly not embraced with open arms by all Americans. These photographs created a highly legible, accessible image of the Bauhaus, both in its day and, more importantly, and to a far greater extent than anyone might have imagined when they were made, solidifying its place in history. Lucia Moholy's photographs were to remain essential to the Bauhaus's standing and reception. These images played a crucial role in processes of meaning-formation surrounding the school. And they did so largely in and through their multiple exiles – that is, on the various conditions that exile imposed on them and the ways these conditions affected and facilitated the functioning of the photographic art form.