

# Kibbutz and Bauhaus

In a large-scale exhibition, the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation shows for the first time how former Bauhaus students made a decisive contribution to modern kibbutz architecture in Palestine/Israel

The Kibbutz, this internationally unprecedented form of collective community, has its origins in the European youth movement and in the upcoming Jewish generation's Zionist vision of a new life in the Promised Land. Educated in Europe for hard, pioneering work to reclaim this land, they emigrated to Palestine. It was under these conditions that the first kibbutz was founded in Degania 100 years ago. The slogan of the collective is: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". The exhibition opens with a chronicle of the utopias and realities of this development based on specific kibbutzim.

Emerging architects and planners such as Richard Kauffmann and Samuel Bickles brought the ideals and methods of New Architecture from Europe to Palestine and had a lasting influence on the planning and design vocabulary of the kibbutzim. A new architecture for the new Israel, in a new land. Conversely, in the second half of the 1920s, upcoming architects such as Arie Sharon and Shmuel Mestechkin moved from Palestine back to Europe in order to further their studies. They went to the Bauhaus Dessau. The ideals of the kibbutz and the Bauhaus formed a unique synthesis. Other young Bauhaus students such as the architect Munio Weinraub found their way to Palestine as a result of Nazi persecution. Based on selected biographies, the exhibition reveals the life journeys of the Bauhaus students between Europe and the Orient.

The third part of the exhibition shows, with the aid of images, plans and furniture, how modern planning and architecture gives a structural pattern to the socialist Zionist model of society. This part of the exhibition is based on the Israeli entry for the Architecture Biennale 2010 in Venice, "Kibbutz – An Architecture without Precedents".

Today, the structural and spiritual future of the kibbutz is more uncertain than ever due to changes to the social framework and personal lifestyle aspirations. The exhibition closes with interviews conducted with inhabitants of the kibbutzim, who give diverse personal insights into these transformation processes.

The exhibition in the Bauhaus Dessau, which opens on 24th November 2011 under the auspices of the Israeli Ambassador to Germany Yoram Ben-Zeev and the Minister for Culture Bernd Neumann, shows the close spiritual connection between the kibbutz and the Bauhaus idea. The documents, plans, photographs and interiors on show give an impressive picture of the kibbutz designs. Also on show is the project "Beyond Eden", for which photographer Stephanie Kloss and political scientist Antonia Blau photographed 40 kibbutzim and conducted interviews with their residents. There, they found a fragmented picture of an immovable present, a utopian past and a collective-fragmented identity.

To accompany the exhibition, the film installation *Traces* by the Israeli filmmaker Amos Gitai will be shown in the Muche/Schlemmer Masters' House. This is based on Gitai's film *Lullaby to my Father* about his father Munio Weinraub, who studied at the Bauhaus and emigrated to Israel in 1934. The piece focuses on stages in Weinraub's life, from a Jewish shtetl in Galicia to Berlin, Dessau, Frankfurt am Main, Zurich and Palestine. In *Traces* as in his entire oeuvre, Amos Gitai explores the universal themes of migration, culture, exile and violence.

The exhibition is a cooperation project by the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem and the Museum of Art Ein Harod, Israel. It is sponsored by the Friede Springer Stiftung Berlin, the Saxony-Anhalt Arts Foundation and Lotto Toto GmbH.

Press tour and preview

The Bauhaus Dessau Foundation has organised a press tour from Berlin to Dessau for this exhibition. The bus leaves the Federal Press Office on Dorotheenstraße at 9.30 a.m. on 24th November. A preview of the Kibbutz and Bauhaus exhibition and the film installation *Traces* by Amos Gitai will begin at approximately 11 a.m. Reservations are to be made by 21st November 2011. Please contact Annette Barner PR at [annette-barner@t-online.de](mailto:annette-barner@t-online.de).

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