Bauhaus Construct
Fashioning Identity, Discourse and Modernism

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Chapter 8

Picturing Sculpture
Object, Image and Archive

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One of the noticeable tics in Bauhaus scholarship has been the obsessive categorization of the school's institutional history according to changes in its leadership, teaching staff, and program. There are competing accounts of the three stages, or the five stages, or sometimes the eight stages of Bauhaus development, each with detailed argumentation and supporting evidence. The cue for this art historical fetish for organizing, writing and rewriting the Bauhaus might be traced to the school itself, which from the outset trumpeted its own organizational and pedagogical structure, and then almost immediately proceeded to alter it in a continuous series of programmatic shifts and key personnel changes.

A provocative model for thinking about the progression of the Bauhaus, its workshops and the individual objects produced can be found, surprisingly, at the historical end of modernism in the serial practices of conceptual art, such as Sol LeWitt's 1974 Variations on Incomplete Open Cubes (Figure 8.1). A work in which "the idea becomes a machine that makes the art," Incomplete Open Cubes elaborates the possible variations of a single object, an incomplete cube. The parameters LeWitt set for the project included the requirement that each variant have at least one strut on each axis (height, length, width), so that the simplest variants have three parts and then become increasingly complex as additional struts are added up to the final, single, eleven-part variation. Another parameter called on the variations to be non-identical, which meant LeWitt could not simply rotate a given incomplete cube so that it appears different and then designate it as a new variant. Determining which cubes were truly
non-identical turned out to be particularly tricky. Oscillating between the logical simplicity of its premise and the obsessive, even irrational, complexity of its realization, Variations on Incomplete Open Cubes is a project that locates meaning not only in the elaborate process of unfolding the ultimate number of nonidentical variations of an incomplete open cube (the answer turns out to be 122), but also, unexpectedly, in the visually dazzling possibilities of their representation: as schematic drawings, miniature models, large-scale objects, photographs, an artist's book, in isolation, in subgroups, collectively and so on.²

LeWitt's combination of logical analysis and obsessive reworking provides an illuminating model for considering the Bauhaus and its histories. Could we, as part of an absurdist modernist game, discern and map out all the non-identical variations of Bauhaus directors, workshops and faculty like the three required axial struts of Incomplete Open Cubes? Like LeWitt's basic cube, the Bauhaus is something seemingly familiar and well understood, which when questioned and interrogated may unravel and multiply into an unknown number of new or little-considered possibilities.
If nothing else, LeWitt’s project points to the complexities that can be generated by a simple object.

This essay examines such a single, seemingly straightforward object from the history of the Bauhaus: an anonymous photograph of the stone sculpture workshop first published in the catalogue of the 1923 Bauhaus exhibition in Weimar (Figure 8.2). Familiar to scholars and students of the Bauhaus, yet little examined, this photograph does not present a palimpsest of accrued narratives over time, or twists and turns of historical reception. Rather, this photograph has been consistently understood as an illustration of the stone sculpture workshop and document of the objects pictured in it. Beginning with the catalogue of the landmark Bauhaus exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1938, the photograph of the stone sculpture workshop has been reproduced as stock image with little or no comment in dozens, if not hundreds, of Bauhaus books and catalogues as a visual supplement and archival witness testifying to the workshop’s existence. To the extent that this photograph has been interpreted at all, it has been for its documentary information about the specific sculptures depicted, most of which no longer survive. What follows here instead is
an exploration of the 1923 workshop photograph for its discursive as well as documentary operations. Strikingly attuned to the discourses of modernism, this seemingly marginal photograph reframes the program and problems of Bauhaus sculpture and suggests new interpretations of some of the individual objects it presents. Reconsidered as a modernist object with a complex and deliberate visual logic, this archival image generates multiple meanings and narratives, not just of the Bauhaus, its objects and histories, but of modernist visuality, media specificity and the vexing status of sculpture in modernity.

The 1923 Workshop Photograph and the Problem of Sculpture

The photograph of the stone sculpture workshop has its origins in the book produced for the 1923 Bauhaus exhibition in Weimar. Designed by László Moholy-Nagy, who had come to the Bauhaus earlier that year, Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar 1919-1923 includes brief sections for each of the workshops, which begin with a photograph of the workshop space itself, followed by images of individual objects by students and apprentices. As is the case with the other workshop images included in the catalogue, the photographer of the stone sculpture workshop remains unknown. Yet its selection for inclusion—likely the decision of Moholy-Nagy as the book’s designer and Schlemmer as the head of the workshop—makes it more than an arbitrary snapshot.

Presented as an informal cross section of the stone sculpture workshop and its activities, the photograph’s array of figurative and abstract objects in plaster and stone cleverly stages the workshop’s internal debates and the troubled status of sculpture at the Bauhaus. Beginning with the two objects that frame the image—Kurt Schwärdtfeiger’s Architectural Sculpture on the left and Oskar Schlemmer’s Abstract Figure (Free Sculpture G) on the right—the photograph maps the competing tendencies within the workshop between abstraction and figuration, as well as between architectural and free-standing sculpture. These sculptures mark a basic difference between the teaching of Johannes Itten, who headed the stone sculpture workshop from 1920 to 1922 and emphasized contrasts of form and texture, and Schlemmer’s lifelong commitment to the human figure. Moreover, these two framing sculptures delineate intersecting figurative and abstract axes across the image. The corner of Schwärdtfeiger’s Architectural Sculpture points diagonally toward the abstract objects clustered in the back right of the image, while the shoulder of Schlemmer’s sculpture draws our eye across the room toward his...
tall figurative relief in the back left. Near the center of the room, marking
the intersection of these diagonals, Otto Werner’s four-sided (and identi-
cally titled) Architectural Sculpture presents itself alternately as figurative
and abstract, an attempted synthesis of these competing visual modes.

Through its title Werner’s sculpture also declares the founding
ambition for the Bauhaus to reunify the arts and crafts under architecture.
Sculpture was not to exist independently as autonomous art, something
Walter Gropius had disparaged in the Bauhaus manifesto as “salon art” that
had lost its “architectonic spirit.” Rather, like other Bauhaus workshops,
the stone sculpture workshop had been established with the idea that it
would contribute to larger architectural projects. The hoped-for commis-
sions, however, did not materialize. As Schlemmer reported during a fac-
ulty meeting in December 1922, the sculpture workshops were held back
by a “lack of applied commissions”; Gropius also complained about the
stone and wood sculpture workshops, noting in October 1923 that “up to
now little has been achieved there.”

The largest commission for the stone sculpture workshop was the 1922 Monument to the March Dead, a memo-
rial for Weimar residents killed during the 1920 Kapp Putsch, designed by
Gropius and carried out by the master craftsman Josef Hartwig and stu-
dents in the stone sculpture workshop. Much of the workshop’s activity,
however, merely supported other areas of the Bauhaus, such as produc-
ing plaster models for the ceramics and theater workshops—including
the large oblong object behind the table in the back room of the workshop
photograph, part of a stage prop for Lothar Schreyer’s 1923 Moon Play—as
well as plaster architectural models for Gropius’ private commissions.

The two works in the photograph titled Architectural Sculpture
by Schwerdtfeger and Werner reflect the frustrated ambition of architec-
tural collaboration at the early Bauhaus. Not related to any commission,
both sculptures were made for the journeyman’s exam required of each
Bauhaus student following a three-year apprenticeship in one of the work-
shops. The act of naming alone, however, secures neither an “architectural”
function nor meaning for these sculptures, which remain independent
modernist objects, demonstration pieces intended for no particular site or
architectural project. In spite of their titles and the rhetoric of the Bauhaus
program, these objects are disconnected from any rooted function and
exemplify the homeless condition of autonomous modern sculpture, the
“salon art” that Gropius had hoped the Bauhaus would overcome.

If these objects cannot easily live up to the claims and aspira-
tions of their titles, the workshop space itself might be reimagined as their
aesthetic fulfillment. It becomes one of the tasks of the photograph to
forge the disparate objects of the stone sculpture workshop into a more
coherent program of Bauhaus modernism. It does so not by privileging the individual objects depicted, but paradoxically by obscuring and effacing them, undermining their autonomy and reframing them within a fantasy of architectural totality.

Almost all of the sculptures in the photograph are partly obstructed by other objects or cropped by the edges of the image. This fragmented view of the objects conveys a somewhat clichéd sense of a busy, crowded, workshop space. The center of the image is left largely open and the sculptures distributed to the sides. With the objects partially eclipsed and pushed to the periphery, the various sculptural facets and planes do not remain distinct in the photograph, but rather merge and blend with the walls and windows of the architectural space they fill. The tight sequencing of overlapping sculptures and reliefs, coming in from both the left and right edges of the image, defines and articulates the space of the workshop to such an extent that the sculptures seem to constitute the architecture rather than merely inhabiting it. Even those few objects that are not obscured, most notably Werner's Architectural Sculpture in the center right of the image, have an adjacency to other objects that works against their status as freestanding autonomous objects.

In this way, the workshop photograph provides a counter-narrative to the autonomous modernism embodied in so many of the actual sculptures. Rather than privileging individual objects, the photograph fragments the sculptures within a dense network of overlapping forms and facets, and recasts them in an approximation of the collaborative architectural totality that the workshop desired, but had yet to realize.

Architectural Reliefs and the 1923 Exhibition

When the workshop photograph was taken, in the spring or early summer of 1923, Schlemmer was intensely engaged in questions of architectural sculpture. Although Gropius had for some time been reorienting the Bauhaus toward the design of marketable objects and the imperatives of industrial production—a program he encapsulated during the 1923 exhibition with the pronouncement "art and technology: a new unity"—Schlemmer continued to embrace, more completely and for longer than any of his Bauhaus colleagues, the ideal of synthesizing painting, sculpture and architecture.

The 1923 exhibition provided a major opportunity for Schlemmer to demonstrate the possibilities of architectural reliefs and give purpose to the sculpture workshops. The previous fall he had remarked with a cautious optimism that "the trouble for the stone and wood sculpture
workshop(s) is that big commissions are lacking. Perhaps the exhibition will offer them—but only perhaps!" Given the task of redesigning the entrances and hallways of the Bauhaus buildings for the exhibition, Schlemmer wrote of the need "to raise painting and sculpture to the functions that they had in the great ages: part of architecture as space and well-creation."6 Echoing Schlemmer, Gropius clarified the intentions of the reliefs for the vestibule of the Art School building by explaining that "the wall panels will be sculpturally organized [plastisch gestaltet] and specifically so that they do not represent some kind of Renaissance-like inserted panels, but rather take on a functional significance for the entire space."7 The results of these plans were Schlemmer's elaborate series of figurative reliefs and murals in the stairwell and hallways of the workshop building, now known as the Van de Velde building, and Joost Schmidt's abstract geometric relief panels in the vestibule of the main Bauhaus building, the Art School building.

Schlemmer's and Schmidt's reliefs were met with decidedly mixed reviews. Rejected as applied decoration by such important critics as Adolf Behne, an early supporter of the Bauhaus, who, like Gropius, came to advocate a more rigorously functionalist design, these works failed to engender continued interest in architectural sculpture at the Bauhaus.8 Schlemmer too, despite the enormous energy he had put into his reliefs and murals, referred privately to the "relative disappointment" of this work.9 Indeed, the reliefs by Schlemmer and Schmidt were the last attempt by the sculpture workshop at architectural reliefs, which would have no place in the new Bauhaus building in Dessau.

Evidence of these projects is visible in the workshop photograph, which continues to be a useful source of archival information, particularly because both sets of works were later destroyed.20 Schlemmer's tall figurative relief in the back left of the photograph is the mold for one of his reliefs in the workshop building. The small relief just below it and to the right is likely a study for Schmidt's reliefs in the vestibule of the Art School building.

More than a record of these lost objects, however, the workshop photograph also speaks to the aesthetic and programmatic ambitions of Schlemmer's and Schmidt's architectural reliefs. Defining the space of the workshop through the dense patterning of overlapping sculptural forms and facets, the photograph in fact comes closer to Schlemmer's rhetoric of sculpture being "part of architecture and well creation" than do his reliefs. Similarly, the photograph's creation of an architectural space transformed by sculpture echoes Gropius' hope that Schmidt's reliefs result in "not some kind of Renaissance-like inserted panels" (which, although abstract, is precisely what they were) "but rather take
on a functional significance for the entire space. If the reliefs themselves were a disappointment, it is again the workshop photograph that succeeds in representing the programmatic ambitions of architectural sculpture at the 1923 exhibition.

So far this essay has addressed the 1923 workshop photograph largely in terms of the relationship of sculpture to architecture and the changing program of Bauhaus modernism. Yet, in addition to these struggles over the function of modernist sculpture, there are other crucial ways in which to understand this photograph. For one thing, the image's radical cropping can suggest significant reinterpretations of the individual objects it depicts. Moreover, the photograph's obfuscation of sight lines and overlapping of objects call attention to the physical, three-dimensional character of sculpture and the aesthetic and conceptual stakes of its photographic mediation. It is to these questions that we will now turn.

Oskar Schlemmer's *Abstract Figure*

The photograph of the stone sculpture workshop can be considered almost as a group portrait, with the sculptures and objects acting as the mecanomorphic analogues of the absent masters and students. Presiding over this group is Schlemmer's *Abstract Figure* (Figure 8.3). Often interpreted in terms of antique statuary and Schlemmer's ideas on three-dimensional sculpture, *Abstract Figure*′s precise geometries and mechanical rigidity have made it nearly emblematic of rationalist modernism in the 1920s, a classicizing ideal of machine-age beauty.

Yet the workshop photograph, certainly among the first commentaries on the sculpture, disrupts any sense of classical equipoise by cropping and slicing Schlemmer's figure on three sides, and thereby suggests a very different way of thinking about this object. In part because of its enlarged foreground position, *Abstract Figure* is most radically and violently affected by the photograph's cropping and fragmenting. Not only does the workshop photograph split Schlemmer's figure down the middle, in the top right corner it also sections out a quadrant from the nested geometry of the figure's head and helmet. The violation of the sculpture—sliced and bisected by the camera—calls attention to an aspect of the sculpture that has been overlooked, namely that *Abstract Figure* may be less a classically balanced figure of equipoise than a wounded body with prosthetic replacements, and a defensive armor protecting it from future damage.

As suggested by the photograph, *Abstract Figure* reveals its almost schizophrenic pose in its awkward combination of severe machined and soft biomorphic forms. One shoulder extends powerfully from the
figure in a broad sweeping curve, while the other is abruptly cut off. Round, bulbous forms contrast with sharply edged, planar surfaces, and two metal poles serve as prosthetic limbs to connect the body to its oversized base, itself a combination of abrupt angles and sweeping curves. This combination presents a confusion of subject positions that mix signs of man with machine, authority with vulnerability, and solidity with wholeness with a damaged and surgically invaded body.

In this sense Abstract Figure is emblematic of many of the contradictions of Bauhaus modernism. Both protected and devoured by the more rationalized machine aesthetic that would mark the Bauhaus in the coming years, Schlemmer’s sculpture enacts what Hal Foster has called “the double logic of the technological prosthesis that governed the machinic imaginary of high modernism: the machine as a castrative trauma and as a phallic shield against such traumas.”

If Schlemmer’s figure is an icon of machine-age beauty, then it is one that has as much in common with depictions of mangled World War I veterans (such as Ernst Ludwig Kirchner’s Self-Portrait as a Soldier or George Grosz’s Republican Automaton) as it does with the utopian geometries of international constructivism.

The radical cropping of the workshop photograph dislodges Schlemmer’s figure from its classical precedents and reframes it within a different modernist discourse. But it is not only the cropping that is relevant here. The workshop photograph further reinforces and elaborates the idea of Schlemmer’s Abstract Figure as damaged and wounded by pairing it with the rough-hewn verso of Kurt Schwitters’s marble Torso, which emerges just behind Schlemmer’s figure. The dark, jagged materiality of Schwitters’s figure resonates not only as a textural and tonal contrast with Schlemmer’s smooth white surfaces, but also now as guts and innards, turning Schwitters’s Torso into a grotesquely flayed doppelpfiger of Schlemmer’s cleanly machined forms.

The Space of Modernism

Like the photograph’s cropping of objects and obstruction of sight lines, this doubling, the figuring of recto and verso between Schlemmer’s Abstract Figure and Schwitters’s Torso, calls attention to the three-dimensional character of sculpture as a physical object and the potential problems of representing it from a single viewpoint. Beyond the workshop photograph, Schlemmer’s Abstract Figure appears a second time in the 1923 exhibition catalogue’s section on “independent paintings and sculptures,” where it is pictured both in wide profile from the side and in a narrow view looking
straight up the severed arm. A slightly later photograph of *Abstract Figure*, one that Moholy-Nagy included in his 1929 book *Von Material zu Architektur* (translated in 1932 as *The New Vision*) incorporates these two views, plus a third more distant profile from the back (Figure 8.3). Rather than the nightmarish doppelgänger evoked by the raw verso of Schwarzhaupt’s *Torso*, these views of *Abstract Figure* are presented as a spatially choreographed montage that, echoing the tradition of the Three Graces, constructs a rationalized, composite knowledge of the complete figure.

These two- and three-part views of Schlemmer’s sculpture highlight the object’s three-dimensionality and its changing profiles. Addressing this issue in a brief manuscript from January 1924, Schlemmer states:

> The essence of sculpture must of course be illustrated by means of three-dimensional sculpture, the purest form. ... It cannot be grasped in any given moment; rather it reveals itself in a temporal succession of vantage points and views. Since a piece of sculpture does not yield a total impression from one angle, the spectator is obliged to move, and only by walking around and adding up his impressions does he eventually grasp the sculpture. Thus any piece of plastic art which does not offer the viewer a series of surprises as he walks around it, but merely repeats one segment ... has no validity as sculpture.24
Schlemmer’s Abstract Figure is generally regarded as exemplifying these ideals based on its changing profiles and asymmetry, as well as the simple fact that it was completed only a half-year earlier. Yet it is hard to say that these separate views offer any real “series of surprises.” Each view of Abstract Figure, in fact, logically implies the other and a single view provides near-total knowledge of the overall form. (It takes the abrupt cropping of the workshop photograph to rupture this coherence.)

Schlemmer’s text, hardly radical, is among the many responses by early-twentieth-century artists and critics to the widely influential “concept of relief” advanced by the sculptor Adolf von Hildebrand at the turn of the century. In his treatise The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts, first published in 1933, Hildebrand argued that sculpture, although three-dimensional, achieves its artistic value through the visual impression of form rather than through the physical or tactile status of the object itself. “Only when [a three-dimensional figure] works as a plane, although still cubic,” he insisted, “does it acquire artistic form, that is, only then does it mean something to the visual imagination.”

While Schlemmer’s text advocates sculpture that produces a “series of surprises” as the viewer is “obliged to move” around the object, his Abstract Figure works differently. To a great extent it is consistent with Hildebrand’s dictum about successful sculpture, regardless of the number of different vantage points:

There will always be one view that presents and unites the whole plastic nature of the figure as a coherent surface impression, analogous to painting or relief. It signifies the actual visual notion that underlies the sculptural representation and to which the other views are subordinate or seen as a necessary consequence of the main view.

Within the photograph of the Bauhaus stone sculpture workshop, it is not Schlemmer’s figure but rather Werner’s Architectural Sculpture, with its four distinct carved sides, none of which logically or visually imply the other, which actually counters Hildebrand’s “concept of relief.”

An extended discussion of Hildebrand is outside the scope of this essay, but it is worth noting that The Problem of Form belongs to the elaborate art historical discourse opposing classicism and the Baroque, and pictorial versus spatial conceptions of art. For Hildebrand the “concept of relief” was a way of establishing and ensuring a clear separation of the ordered aesthetic space of art from the real space of objects and things. At stake in such a distinction was not just the understanding of antiquity and the history of art, but a profound fear and distrust of the material and
spectacular forms of contemporary popular culture, including photography as well as such phenomena as waxworks and panoramas. The separation of the aesthetic space of art from the real space of things is a core issue for modernist sculpture theory, and central to the complex relationship of sculpture and photography in the 1920s. It is noteworthy that unlike the communal space of the workshop photograph, the commensurate photograph of Abstract Figure in three views isolates the sculpture within a completely abstracted black space that removes the figure from any material surroundings and suspends it within an idealized space of modernist autonomy. This exemplifies one of the many ways that photography, through simple acts of lighting and cropping, could eliminate the external context and provide an abstracted visual field to explore forms and volumes freed from tectonic forces of mass, material and, by implication, architecture.

An interest in dematerializing the concrete physicality of sculpture and attempting to overcome its non-transcendent materiality is present in a great deal of modernist sculpture in the 1920s and the photography that engages it ambivalently. The central chapter of Moholy-Nagy's *The New Vision*, for instance, describes the development of sculpture in terms of the "the path from material-volume to virtual volume and from tactual grasp to visual, relative grasp." (Such ideas are not unrelated to Hildebrand's relief theory.) In the Bauhaus sculpture workshop by the late 1920s, now under the direction of Schmidt, photography would come to play a central role in the workshop's perceptual and kinetic experiments with form and volume. The photographic results of these experiments were used to represent the workshop in Bauhaus exhibitions such as the 1929–1930 *Bauhaus Wandererschau*. An installation photograph of the exhibition shows objects from other workshops displayed on walls and in vitrines, while a long panel labelled "sculpture department" presents a series of photographic experiments with the creation and perception of volume (Figure 8.4). Not illustrations or stand-ins for an absent object, these photographs are the sculptural objects.

The closely allied workings of sculpture and photography also certainly involve the reproducibility of their processes. In the 1923 workshop photograph the reproductive processes of casting and mold-making are evident in Schlemmer's tall relief in the back left, which is the mold for one of the reliefs he would create in the workshop building. The workshop photograph itself is known almost exclusively as a rephotographed image taken from its initial publication in the 1923 exhibition catalogue. Indeed it is in large part due to this logic of the copy that photography and sculpture
have such a densely intertwined and still largely unwritten history within modernist art.30

A final point about the 1923 workshop photograph is its plunging perspectival composition, which casts the sculptures to the sides and punctures straight through the two rooms of the workshop into the outdoor space beyond. This pictorial structure can be compared with a very different image from the sculpture workshop published in the journal Bauhaus in the fall of 1928 (Figure 8.5).

Identified as having been made in the sculpture workshop (renamed die plastische Werkstatt in 1925), this is not a studio view, but rather a mock-urban landscape filled with illuminated signs, mechanical devices, advertising kiosks and window displays. These objects bear very little relation to the conventional materials, genres, and modes depicted in the 1923 photograph. In place of the conventional materials of plaster and stone are now photography and photomontage; the genres of statuary, and relief have been replaced by illuminated advertisements and kinetic devices; and instead of the interior space of the 1923 workshop, this image addresses, as the caption states, the urban spectacle of “the square, the street, the shop-window as advertising theater.”
The two images mark very different moments of the Bauhaus in terms of the conception of modernity and the practice of sculpture. Yet, as radically different as the two images may be, they share a strikingly similar pictorial structure: a tightly framed perspective construction that organizes the seemingly casually arranged objects into the same rational, geometric space of Bauhaus modernism. This is true to such a degree that the two images could be overlaid almost seamlessly onto one another. The individual sculptures, objects and advertisements become interchangeable elements that fill identical compositional roles regardless of which picture they inhabit. While the materials, practices and ambitions of the Bauhaus sculpture program have changed dramatically in the five years between the two images, their pictorial order or scopic regime has remained largely unchanged. The comparison finally may remind us how carefully staged the 1923 workshop photograph is and that the many programmatic changes at the Bauhaus involved continuity as often as they did transformation.

All of these different readings of the 1923 photograph, and presumably others as well, derive from playing the photograph (its information, rhetoric, medium) against the larger idea of the Bauhaus and modernism (their histories, practices and legacies). This image, perhaps like many others, has been lingering on the periphery, continually reproduced in
the Bauhaus literature with little thought given to its operations, logic or meaning. That seems also the case with the sculpture workshop in general, which existed throughout the history of the Bauhaus but never had a stable or even coherent position within the school's program and pedagogy. The sculpture workshops remain just about the only area of the Bauhaus not to have been the subject of an extensive exhibition or historical reconstruction.

This essay ultimately asks whether the anonymous photograph, a piece of Bauhaus ephemera, may be both marginalia and an autonomous object, a modernist machine with its own immanent potential to generate histories and meanings. Like LeWitt's *Incomplete Open Cubes*, in which the fundamental questioning of a simple object unfolds into a dizzying series of forms and variations, the often seen but largely overlooked 1923 workshop photograph can produce an array of interpretive possibilities. Perhaps this exercise is not so far from what Rosalind Krauss once referred to as the "idiotic simplicity and ... extravagant cunning" of modernist visual logic. If so, this would be the same idiotic simplicity and cunning that can leave us blinded in the sea of LeWitt's *Incomplete Open Cubes*, where the simplest of objects can overwhelm us with a surplus of visuality.

Acknowledgments
Sections of this text appear in German translation in Anja Baumhoff and Magdalena Dostale, eds, *Mythos Bauhaus* (Berlin: Reimer Verlag, 2009). For their comments and suggestions, I thank Alina Payne, Jeffrey Salzberg and Robin Schuldenfrei. For assistance with images, special thanks are due to Magdalena Dostale, Sabine Hartmann and Amelia Welch. I am grateful for the financial support of the University Research Committee at the University of Utah.

Notes
3. LeWitt first exhibited the work in the form of 8-inch-tall modules in painted wood displayed on a platform backed by paired photographs and drawings of each variant. The work was also produced as an artist's book with isometric drawings and in 40-inch aluminum variations, as well as, several years later, a complete set of 24-inch models. For a nuanced and


6 Although not all of the objects can be firmly attributed, the works from left to right are: Kurt Schwitters’s Architectural Relief, Standing Figure by Oskar Schlemmer, the head of the workshop from 1922 to 1925; and a smaller abstract relief probably by Joost Schmidt. To the right of the opening to the back room is Schlemmer’s relief Head Figure with Accented Forms, above which sits a small unidentified geometric sculpture. Otto Werner’s Architectural Sculpture stands near the center of the room, next to which on the floor sits an unidentified abstract relief in glass and plaster possibly by Farkas Molnár, and behind that the pyramidial tower intended as a gravestone by Hansjörg Hoffmann-Lederer; the verse of a marble tablet by Kurt Schwitters; and, in the right foreground, Schlemmer’s plaster Abstract Figure (Free Sculpture G). The small works on the table in the back room remain unidentified. Behind the table, the standing rounded object is part of a stage prop from Lothar Schreyer’s Moon Play produced at the Bauhaus in 1923. The most accurate cataloging of the image is in Klaus-Jürgen Winkler, ed., Bauhaus-Alben 3 (Weimar: Verlag der Bauhaus-Universität, 2008), 206.

7 For the stone sculpture workshop, the individual objects included sculptures by Otto Werner and Kurt Schwitters that are also partially visible in the main workshop photograph and will be discussed below. Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar 1919–1923, 92–5.

8 From 1919 to 1924 there were separate workshops for stone sculpture and woodcarving, led first by Johannes Iton and Georg Muche, respectively, followed by Schlemmer, then from 1925 to 1932 a single experimental workshop for sculpture (plastische Werkstatt) led by Joost Schmidt.


12 Klaus-Jürgen Winkler and Herman van Bergeijk, Das Münchener-Denkmal in Weimar (Weimar: Verlag der Bauhaus-Universität, 2004). For the wood sculpture workshop, the exception was the house designed by Gropius and Adolf Meyer for the timber project Adolf Sommerfeld in Berlin, an all-wood structure for which the student Joost Schmidt, who would later lead a much transformed sculpture workshop in Dessau, made a series of decorative carvings.


15 Oskar Schlemmer, to the Council of Masters, 22 November 1922, in Wiegler, Bauhaus, 60.
17 Graphics to Henry van de Velde, 21 June 1923, Musée 38, Bauhaus Castle, Thüringenschloss Hauptstiftarchiv, Wernigerode.
20 Both Schlemmer's and Schmidt's works were later destroyed. See Herzogenrath, Oskar Schlemmer, 80, and Paul Paris, “Radin at the Bauhaus”, Center Arts Center Journal 3 (2002-2003): 197-204.
21 Originally called Freilegung, the name Abstract Figure has since become standard. See Karin von Murr, Oskar Schlemmer, vol. 2, Ölgemälde der Garüweil, Aquatelle, Pastelle und Pastellen (München: Prestel, 1979), 384.
24 During World War I Schlemmer saw active service first in France in 1914 before suffering a foot injury, and then Russia in 1915. In a diary entry on 20 March 1915, he writes: “What does the mighty chaos of war hold in store for me? A bullet through the chest... Will I be crippled? Will I lose my right hand, my right arm, my sight?” Tat Schlemmer, Letters and Diaries, 21.
25 Staatsliche Bauhaus Weimar 1919-1923, 199. The two images were published again on the cover of the journal Bauhaus 3, no. 4 (1929) on the occasion of Schlemmer's departure from the school.
26 Tat Schlemmer, Letters and Diaries, 148. Karin von Murr has helpfully corrected the misidentification of this text as diary entry; it is a separate manuscript: Karin von Murr, “The Art of Oskar Schlemmer,” in Arnold Lehmann and Brionne Richardson, Oskar Schlemmer (Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Art, 1986), 121, n. 50.
28 Perhaps the most significant response to Hildebrand was Carl Einstein, Niegerplastik (Leipzig: Verlag der Weissen Bücher, 1915; München: Kurt Wolff, 1920).
30 Hildebrand, Gesammelte Schriften, 256.
31 On these issues in relation to architecture, archaeology and the writing of art history,
particularly in relation to architecture, see Alina Payne "Portable Ruins: The Pergamon Altar, Heinrich Wolfflin, and German art history at the fin de siècle." Res 53/54 (Spring/Autumn 2008): 168–89.
32 Hidebrand, Gesammelte Schriften, 236, 240.
35 A vintage gelatin silver print used in the production of the 1929 catalogue survives in the archives of the Bauhaus University in Weimar; yet almost every reproduction of the image has been rephotographed from the 1929 catalogue.