



Now open

BAUBAU

A Play Space for Kids

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**GROPIUS
BAU**

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Press Release

“Perhaps children can tell us so much about their own world that it can also be a model for us?”

—Palle Nielsen

About BAUBAU

Playing, laughing, making noise, letting off steam, doing nothing – all in an exhibition venue! BAUBAU is a playspace for kids on the ground floor of the Gropius Bau, accessible free of charge. Artist Kerstin Brätsch has created a colourful space for children where more is allowed than forbidden, and which from now on will constitute a permanent feature of the exhibition hall. BAUBAU is starting as a pilot project and continues to develop and grow over the coming years both inside and outside the Gropius Bau – always in close collaboration with the children who use it.

BAUBAU playfully challenges what a museum or art institution should be. Structures and objects stimulate the imagination, along with a series of “loose parts” that children can freely use, assemble and take apart. There are no fixed guidelines here; everything is determined by the children’s own activities, which continuously transform the space. The multi-faceted interior was created by Kerstin Brätsch, who has been working as an Artist in Residence in a studio at the Gropius Bau since the beginning of the year. It is full of references and suggestions: elements from her own work – including marblings, paintings and stucco pieces – reappear here in various guises and new materials. Wallpapers, curtains, fabrics and seating furniture are populated by dinosaurs, fantastical creatures, termite mounds and abstract elements. With their bizarre, funny, perhaps somewhat eerie shapes and colours, they create an exciting setting for free play.

“What appealed to me about working on BAUBAU is the openness of play, the fact that play, like art, is purposeless. At the same time, play, like art, contains the poten-

tial to connect people across time, space and generations, allowing us to enter into exchange. My artistic practice is designed to accept and absorb external influences. That’s why I’ve often collaborated with other artists and artisans.

At BAUBAU, that happens in a completely different and exciting way: I create an outer shell, which I then hand over to children. By playing with their own ideas and imaginations, free of my intervention, they reinvent and develop my artistic impulses in unpredictable ways. BAUBAU is a dynamic space that will continue to grow both inside and outside the Gropius Bau.”

—Kerstin Brätsch

The pedagogical concept for BAUBAU is based on the principles of free play: here, children are given time, space and permission to follow their interests and needs. To that end, they are accompanied by “playworkers”, specially trained staff who create an environment in which children can freely discover themselves. Through their presence, the playworkers help to shape and support a safe play process.

“For a long time now, I’ve been dreaming of turning an exhibition space into an adventure playground. I am very excited that we are starting Kerstin Brätsch’s BAUBAU play space as a pilot that will continue to evolve in the coming months and years. Instead of trying to teach children about art, we’re doing it the other way around: adults have much to learn from the openness and freedom of children’s encounters with art.

Play serves as a model for how we can interact with one another in times of increasing social tension: openly rather than judgmentally, with each other rather than against each other, and always exchanging perspectives and points of view. At the same time, we hope that BAUBAU will serve as an invitation to many people with children who have not previously felt that our programme speaks to them.”

—Jenny Schlenzka, Director of the Gropius Bau

About Kerstin Brätsch

Born in Hamburg, Kerstin Brätsch lives and works in Berlin and New York. Her intensive study of painting began while she was a student at New York's Columbia University and the Berlin University of the Arts, where she studied under Lothar Baumgarten.

Kerstin Brätsch's nearly two decades of artistic creation can be understood as a pulsating cycle: her ideas and motifs move from one material to the next in a process of continuous evolution. At the heart of her work lies a desire to shake up conventional notions of what painting can be. In 2007, she founded DAS INSTITUT together with Adele Röder; since 2010, she's been collaborating with Debo Eilers under the name KAYA, working together with friends, colleagues and craftspeople. In her site-specific installations, she departs from the classic format of the exhibition space, bringing together her artistic impulses with life's more quotidian needs.

Her pieces *Fossil Psychics for Christa* (2019) at the Museum of Modern Art (New York), *MIMIKRY* (2022) at the Fridericianum (Kassel) and *MEMORY* (2021) at the Café du Parc at LUMA Arles, for example, all double as cafés. Encounter and exchange are also at the heart of her BAUBAU project, a permanent play space for children at the Gropius Bau.

Her works have been shown in solo exhibitions at the Ludwig Forum Aachen (2022), the Fondazione Memmo in Rome (2018) and the Museum Brandhorst in Munich (2017), among others. She has participated in important group exhibitions, including the 59th and 54th Biennale di Venezia (2022, 2011) at the Camden Arts Centre London (2020), the Deichtorhallen in Hamburg (2020) and the MoMA (2024, 2020, 2014). In 2020, Brätsch was awarded the Helen Frankenthaler Award for Painting by the Foundation for Contemporary Arts in New York and received the Peill-Prize from the Guenther-Peill-Foundation, in 2017 she received the Edward Munch Art Award from the Munchmuseet in Oslo. In 2019 she was awarded the Villa Romana Prize as KAYA together with Debo Eilers.

In October 2024, Kerstin Brätsch took up a Professorship in Painting/Drawing at the Hamburg University of Fine Arts (HFBK).

FAQ

Accessibility

How do we get into BAUBAU with a pram or pushchair – is there a step-free entry?

There is an entrance easily accessible with prams and pushchairs on the left side from the main entrance, marked by a sign. You can ring a bell and our staff will be happy to let you in. Please park the prams and pushchairs right next to the BAUBAU entrance on the ground floor.

What measures does BAUBAU have in place to ensure accessibility for all visitors?

BAUBAU is accessible and has a step-free entry to ensure that everyone can enjoy the space. For detailed information about accessibility at Gropius Bau, please view our Accessibility Information. Please note that the playrooms can sometimes be noisy. If you or the child that you are accompanying are sensitive to loud sounds, noise-isolating headphones can be borrowed. Please ask the playworkers for assistance.

On Site

Are there changing facilities?

Yes, there are changing facilities in the basement of Gropius Bau.

Is there space on site to eat something?

In the BAUBAU cloakroom you are welcome to eat and drink there, but please refrain from doing so in the playrooms for hygiene reasons.

What is the recommended age range for visiting this space?

The children who will enjoy this space the most are between the ages of 3 to 12. This is simply a recommendation – younger and older children can still enjoy the space.

Can we visit other exhibitions while the children are at BAUBAU?

Children may only enter BAUBAU when accompanied by an adult. Accompanying adults are responsible for supervising children for the duration of their visit.

Do we as accompanying adults also need to wear anti-slip socks?

No. If you want, you can wear regular socks. We kindly ask you to take off your shoes in the entry area and store them in the shoe racks provided.

Can we join the children playing?

BAUBAU is designed to foster a mode of free and unstructured play for children. While you are welcome to join the children, we encourage you to take a more observational role. This approach allows children to explore and play on their own terms, following their own ideas. By stepping back, you can support a more independent and imaginative play experience for the children.

Where should we as accompanying adults wait?

You are welcome to enter BAUBAU with the children and are encouraged to observe the children play. The space features various seating options, including foam elements designed by Kerstin Brätsch as well as seat cushions. In the entrance area of BAUBAU, there is a designated seating area for you to wait comfortably while the children play. You also have access to our free WiFi at BAUBAU.

Can an adult without children visit BAUBAU?

We created BAUBAU for kids. If too many adults visit while they are playing, it can change the feel of this space. We want to respect the privacy of children and their play so we prefer that no lone adults visit the space while play sessions are happening. However, between the hours of 18:00 to 19:00, you are welcome to visit BAUBAU without children.

Can we bring our own toys?

We kindly ask you not to bring personal toys or equipment to ensure a consistent and safe play environment for all children.

Can we bring home some of the loose parts or objects from BAUBAU?

We kindly ask you to not remove items from the play space.

What happens if an object breaks?

Please inform our staff if any equipment breaks. We will handle repairs or replacements as needed.

What types of equipment are available?

BAUBAU includes a variety of equipment such as abstract structures, designed walls and loose parts: open-ended material including cardboard, paper, fabric, rope, tape and many other items that encourage creativity and physical activity.

Will BAUBAU host workshops?

No, BAUBAU is primarily a space for free play.

Ticket Information

Do we need to book a time slot ticket in advance and pick up the ticket at the ticket desk?

You can simply visit us during the week. On weekends and public holidays, it is necessary to reserve a free time slot ticket in advance. Tickets are always available from Friday at 12:00 one week in advance. You will receive a digital time slot ticket and can proceed directly to the entrance of BAUBAU. Please note that the ticket loses its validity 30 minutes after the start of the booked time slot. In the event of a delay of more than 30 minutes, admission can only be granted if there is still free capacity.

Can we visit BAUBAU during the weekend or on public holidays without a time slot ticket?

On weekends and public holidays, it is necessary to reserve a free time slot ticket in advance.

I booked a time slot ticket but I'm running late. Can I stay longer?

Each time slot has a fixed duration of two hours, but you are welcome to book an additional slot if needed. Extensions are subject to availability. Please note that the ticket loses its validity 30 minutes after the start of the booked time slot. In the event of a delay of more than 30 minutes, admission can only be granted if there is still free capacity.

Can I cancel or change my booking?

Please cancel tickets that you no longer need so that other children can visit BAUBAU on that day. Simply reply to the order confirmation email in which you received your digital tickets and let us know. Changes to the booking are not possible, but you are welcome to book a new time slot ticket.

Can I bring an extra child with a single reservation?

We kindly ask you to reserve one ticket per child.

Inclusion

What initiatives does BAUBAU implement to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for all?

BAUBAU is wheelchair accessible and free of charge. We offer a variety of materials and elements that engage multisensory experiences, such as: **Sensory Balls**: Designed to stimulate touch and coordination; **Natural Elements**: Pine cones and other non-toxic items that are safe for exploration, including taste; **Free-Form Plastic Materials**: Non-toxic and safe for creative play; **Bean Bags**: Comfortable seating options for rest or quiet play; **Noise-Making Instruments**: Tools and objects that produce sounds to engage auditory senses; **Modular Spaces**: We have the option to create small, enclosed areas where children can retreat for a quieter, more private experience.

Is BAUBAU accessible for children with diverse abilities (physical, cognitive, etc.)? Are the playworkers trained to support children who need extra care?

We'd be happy to provide you with more details. Please reach out to us at inclusion@gropiusbau.de for specific information and assistance.

Safety and Supervision

Can we visit other exhibitions while the children are at BAUBAU?

Children may only enter BAUBAU when accompanied by an adult. Accompanying adults are responsible for supervising children for the duration of their visit.

How are playworkers trained?

Playworkers come with an educational background in pedagogy and have experience with children. They undergo specialised training to ensure they provide safe and engaging play experiences. In addition to their professional training and pedagogical expertise, they complete in-house training, which includes first aid, fire and evacuation procedures, child protection with the training team of Wildwasser and a specialised workshop on free play led by Dr. Suzanna Law from Pop-Up Adventure Play, an expert in the field.

Which measures is Gropius Bau taking to ensure that BAUBAU is safe?

The Gropius Bau upholds rigorous safety standards, encompassing child protection and risk assessment protocols and regular equipment inspections. A team of skilled playworkers is dedicated to maintaining a secure environment. Additionally, a child protection concept will be implemented in collaboration with the training team of Wildwasser.

Can we come to BAUBAU if a child is feeling ill on the same day?

We kindly ask you to refrain from coming to the space if your child is ill.

Can we take photos at BAUBAU?

Taking photos inside BAUBAU during play hours is strictly forbidden. Wednesday to Monday between 18:00 and 19:00, BAUBAU can be visited by everyone. In this period, you are welcome to take pictures of the space.

Concept und Context

Is BAUBAU an artwork?

BAUBAU is not an artwork; it is a dynamic play space designed by the artist Kerstin Brätsch specifically for children. This vibrant environment is intended to be an engaging area where children can explore and interact freely. Elements designed by the artist are available for this purpose. Together with loose materials, they can be used by the children according to their own ideas. These materials are meant to be reconfigured by the kids. The focus is on the process and not on the end result or the product. The space is designed to encourage spontaneity and creativity, embracing moments of chance. The play space should make it possible for the children to fully engage in their own imaginative processes. Kerstin Brätsch's design for BAUBAU incorporates elements from her own work, including marblings, paintings and stucco pieces that reappear at the play space in various guises and new materials.

What does free play mean?

Free play refers to unstructured, child-led play where children explore and create without specific guidelines or directions.

What is a playworker?

A playworker is a trained individual who supports and facilitates play, ensuring a safe and engaging environment for children.

Enquiries and Feedback

I would like to work as a playworker. Where can I apply?

We accept applications year-round at our job portal. In case of questions, please contact us at baubau@gropiusbau.de.

Is there an email to send feedback?

Yes, please send any feedback to baubau@gropiusbau.de.

Information and Contact

Press Images

A selection of press images is available for media coverage in our press section (gropiusbau.de/press). The images can be downloaded and used free of charge prior to and during the project period. Please note that images may not be cropped, over-printed or modified.

Login Details

Username: GBPresse
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Press Releases and Digital Press Kits
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Online

gropiusbau.de
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Opening Hours

Gropius Bau

Monday to Friday 12:00–19:00
Saturday / Sunday / public holidays 11:00–19:00
Closed on Tuesdays
24.12.24, 31.12.24 closed

BAUBAU

Monday to Friday 12:00–18:00
Saturday / Sunday / public holidays 11:00–18:00
Closed on Tuesdays
24.12.24, 31.12.24 closed

Recommended from age 3, open for all kids
(with an accompanying adult)

Tickets

Free admission, no registration required.
We recommend booking free tickets for weekends and bank holidays: gropiusbau.de/baubau

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