

# PRESS RELEASE

## The Gesamtkunstwerk in Design and Architecture

The history of modern design and architecture has displayed many attempts to embrace and merge different art forms and bring art into the framing of everyday life and the organisation of modern society, discussed as *total design* or *total architecture*. They were historically based on the romanticist idea of merging all art forms into a uniting and transgressing work of art, most associated with Richard Wagner's musical dramas and extensive writings. *The Gesamtkunstwerk in Design and Architecture* traces the developments and discussions of this idea from the Wagnerian romanticism over Jugendstil, Werkbund and ends at the Bauhaus School (1919-33) with some further discussion on role of the idea in Hitler's talks on culture in the Third Reich and in the US exile of the Bauhausler. It is striking, how this tradition had a profound influence among both progressive, left-wing and radical, right-wing artists and critics.

This utopian dream of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* or Total Work of Art was both thought as bringing unity to the people and bring art into everyday life of homes as well as factories and cities, even modern media, so the experiments stretch from music, poetry and drama to architecture, design, visual communication and city-planning.

There have been a handful of international publications on the idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk during the last fifteen years, however, mostly written from the scope of literature history and philosophy. None of them expand the focus far into architecture and design that no doubt represent the broadest and most influential experiments on the Gesamtkunstwerk, e.g. garden cities for workers and corporate identity design to the German AEG corporation, as this volume.

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### THE GESAMTKUNSTWERK IN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE. FROM BAYREUTH TO BAUHAUS

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