

BAUHAUS OF OUR FUTURE

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HOW DOES THE VISIONARY NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS
LEVERAGE THE HISTORICAL SYMBOLIC POWER OF THE
PROGRESSIVE 1919 BAUHAUS WHILE INCORPORATING
CULTURAL, ARTISTIC, AND POLITICAL REFORM APPROA-
CHES?

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ACRONYMS

BMWSB =	Bundesministerium für Wohnen, Stadtentwicklung und Bauwesen [Federal Ministry of Housing, Urban Development and Building]
EGD =	European Green Deal
EU =	European Union
EC =	European Commission
DG RTD =	Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
NEB =	New European Bauhaus
NEBA =	New European Bauhaus Academy

0. PROLOGUE



Figure 1: Bauhaus University, summer 2023, student exhibition, own photography, 2023.

PERSONAL RELEVANCE

Throughout my entire Bachelor's degree in Architecture, I had the opportunity to study at the Bauhaus University in Weimar. From my very first day, this historically significant institution captivated me, with its large studio windows and the asymmetrical solid stone staircase in the main building, which meticulousness was a testament to the skill of those it inhabits.

I found my initial vision of the Bauhaus institution reflected in my contemporary architectural education, but from the beginning, it was apparent, that this is about far more than the well-known ›Bauhaus design‹. Walter Gropius, pursued something more profound and more fundamental. Now, I was becoming part of that legacy and this special interdisciplinary collaboration. I worked alongside students from urban studies, media art, and civil engineering. Projects were rarely purely technical or purely design-driven; they formed a fusion of theory, practice, and experimentation. The education was deeply rooted in the historical avant-garde of the Bauhaus movement – a legacy that not only revolutionized design but also placed social responsibility and interdisciplinarity at its core. Here, I learned that architecture is more than just the design of buildings; it is a tool to influence societal processes, create sustainable solutions, and shape spaces that are accessible to everybody.

My commitment to environmental awareness, social inclusion, and artistic expression reflects this conviction. Architecture must be aesthetically and functionally interesting and provide answers to the critical questions of our time. Moreover, throughout the three years of my studies, I was given incredible freedom to deepen my interests and pursue individual approaches – reminiscent of the openness of the historical Bauhaus, which did not impose rigid solutions on its students but instead encouraged them to find their answers to architectural challenges.

The New European Bauhaus (NEB), a contemporary revival of Bauhaus ideals, has fascinated me since its inception in 2020. This interest stems not only from my place of study but also from my passion for German and European sustainability policies. The European Union is always at the center of discussions when it comes to tackling climate policy challenges such as the European Green Deal, and the implementation of sustainable energy and environmental strategies on an international

level. This unique alliance faces significant criticism and skepticism, as many parts of the population demand more radical action and greater initiative. In this context, the construction sector plays a crucial role, as a new mindset and a focus on sustainable building methods, materials, and lifestyles, it has the potential to contribute to global resource conservation ultimately supporting European sustainability goals.

This influence and the transformative change that comes with it have also been recognized by European politicians from various nations, which is why they initiated the New European Bauhaus. The goal is to establish these societal mindsets and sustainability approaches both regionally and internationally through architecture across different population groups and highlight their relevance in our future society.

Therefore, I see architecture not just as a technical discipline but as a tool for shaping a better future. For architects it is important to work exactly at this intersection: designing an architecture that not only carries forward the spirit of the historic Bauhaus but also paves the way for a new generation of sustainable and forward-thinking solutions. The Bauhaus of our future is rooted in my passion for sustainability policies and the artistic intervention from the historic Bauhaus, a combination that allows me to explore and critically examine the contrast between the Bauhaus's progressive reform agenda and the more symbolic appropriation of its legacy by the New European Bauhaus.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OBJECT OF STUDY - RELEVANCE

The green transition of our society, economy, and the construction sector is more relevant than ever, as the question of innovative materials and new design methods remains crucial, just as it was a hundred years ago. While solutions in the early 20th century revolved around cement and steel, today, research must focus more on nature-based materials and maximize digital fabrication design approaches. The NEB builds upon the principles of the historic Bauhaus, which revolutionized design, art, and architecture from 1919 up to the present day. Like its historical predecessor, it merges aesthetics, functionality, and sustainability but focuses clearly on contemporary ecological and social challenges. The NEB is not only focused on architectural solutions but also promotes an interdisciplinary approach that includes the economy, science, and civil society. Embodied knowledge and spatial experiences play a central role in shaping a sustainable and inclusive future.



Figure 2: Ursula von der Leyen (*October 8, 1958), 2024.

In »September 2020«¹, Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the European Commission, initiated the New European Bauhaus within the context of the European Green Deal (EGD), which is the EU's sustainability strategy aimed at making Europe climate-neutral by 2050. It includes measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, transition to renewable energy, promote a circular economy, and protect biodiversity. To drive this ambitious transformation – »no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050, economic growth decoupled from resource use, and no person and no place left behind«² – social and economic challenges are also taken into account.

»It becomes open to interpretation, standing at the same time for climate protection, economic success, and the pioneering role of Europe (as the avant-garde of green thinking).«³ The initiative's projects are reliant on the available financial resources and permittance of the EGD requirements. Nevertheless, like many others, Ursula von der Leyen does not merely see the NEB as a supplement to the European sustainability strategy but as the embodiment of its cultural and design dimension:

1 EUROPEAN UNION. *The New European Bauhaus*.

2 EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *The European Green Deal*.

3 VLOGGER. *The New European Bauhaus - A Fatal Affair?*, 6.

»If the European Green Deal has a soul, then it is the New European Bauhaus which has led to an explosion of creativity across our Union.«⁴
- Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

The NEB serves as a catalyst, aiming to drive the renovation wave within the EU and foster a future that prioritizes people and environmental consciousness.⁵ Together with the European Green Deal as the European Union's central strategy, the NEB intends to mutually reinforce the sustainable transformation of Europe. While the EGD provides the structural framework and invests in research and technological development, the NEB envisions a resource-efficient, participatory, and inclusive way of living by using the power of design, culture, and art.

The progressive Bauhaus values are experiencing a renaissance within the NEB.⁶ Therefore, it is important to take a critical look at the sustainability rhetoric and the principles of the NEB in the context of the historic Bauhaus values.

To better understand the relevance and impact of the New European Bauhaus today in context with the core values of the historical Bauhaus, it is essential to explore the following critical questions: Why is it particularly important today to consider Bauhaus's ideas in a contemporary and sustainable context? What challenges arise when applying historical Bauhaus principles to modern architecture, and how do these reflect in our built and social environment? Does the NEB, with its thematic focus, pursue different intentions than the historic Bauhaus? Has it been developed as a cultural branding for the European Green Deal? And how does this impact the perception and legitimacy of the initiative?

To avoid doubts and to strengthen the success of the NEB, it is crucial to understand the ideals and strengths of the original Bauhaus while simultaneously developing its core ideas through practical experiments in modern society. To do so, the Bauhaus philosophy must be critically examined in the NEB and its political context, which refers to its connection with EU goals like the European Green Deal, social inclusion, and sustainable development. It also involves the influence of EU institutions, funding structures, and top-down governance shaping how Bauhaus ideas are reinterpreted today. Walter Gropius founded the Bauhaus in 1919 in Weimar to unite art, craft, and industry, aiming to create new, functional, and socially just designs for modern society.

4 EUROPEAN UNION. *The New European Bauhaus*.

5 EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *Horizon Europe - New European Bauhaus Nexus Report*, 54.

6 OREB. *Wie viel Bauhaus steckt im New European Bauhaus*, 8, translated from German.

It emerged in response to the changes following World War I, with a vision of promoting a more democratic and future-oriented way of life through design and architecture. In contrast, the NEB was established as a cultural and design supplement to the Green Deal, to accelerate the transition to a climate-neutral future. The *Bauhaus of OUR future* aims to answer the question: *How did the visionary New European Bauhaus leverage the historical symbolic power of the progressive 1919 Bauhaus while incorporating cultural, artistic, and political reform approaches?* This academic study aims to bridge the gap by highlighting the discrepancy between the progressive reform stance of the Bauhaus and the rather superficial reference made by the NEB.

The NEB's ideological connection to the historic Bauhaus of 1919 has so far only been critically analyzed to a limited extent. While there are numerous publications on both the historical Bauhaus movement and the NEB's guidelines and goals, the initiative is primarily accompanied by various EU documents, reports, and institutional publications. These mainly approach the NEB from an institutional or architectural perspective, often avoiding a critical reflection on the program or analyzing it within the framework of cultural branding for the European Green Deal.

1.2 METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE

This study utilizes a literature review across a broad set of primary and secondary sources, including historical writings, interviews, and official documentation. While the Bauhaus is examined through archival materials, books, journals, and contemporary critiques, the analysis of the New European Bauhaus draws primarily on digital media due to its recent emergence. The historic Bauhaus provides access to the ideas of its teachers and the institution itself through numerous documented writings. These include a series of Bauhaus books by Gropius, Moholy-Nagy, and Klee, as well as Bauhaus journals covering exhibitions and workshops. There are many newspaper articles, critiques, and anthologies from that period that serve as strong secondary sources. Additionally, personal interviews with Walter Gropius from the 1960s are considered. In contrast, research on the New European Bauhaus mainly relies on online sources, speeches by politicians, and interviews. Given that the NEB is a relatively young project, the available body of research remains limited. Therefore, the documentation of the European Union and its funding programs provide key insights into the initiative.

Throughout the entire work, the individual aspects of both institutions – the reasons for their initiation, their relevance to the population, and their cultural and political reach – are critically examined and placed in

our present-day society. The aim is to question the institution of the NEB and to compare its ambitions and successes with those of the historical Bauhaus, which forms the foundation.

The introduction of the key priorities and principles of the NEB reflects on its significance to the EGD. By outlining the development of the initiative, a better understanding of its intentions and foundational elements is developed. Afterward, the NEB lighthouse project Creating NEBourhoods Together is used as an example to highlight the influence of the NEB on a regional level. This case study is interesting because it pursues a holistic neighborhood approach and focuses especially on the co-creative process, which is one of the key principles of the NEB.

This is followed by a thematic introduction to the historical Bauhaus, which focuses particularly on the institution's international impact, its influence on society, and its founding intentions within its political context. Cultural, political, and artistic processes often intertwine in the NEB and the historical Bauhaus, making a clear distinction difficult.

Subsequently, four significant aspects – the reasons for initiation, social and political reach, accessibility for the population and financing, design clarity, and identity – from both institutions are examined and evaluated. This comparative analysis helps uncover not only the differences between the two but also the broader significance of how cultural movements can shape and respond to their respective societal contexts.

A critical reflection is conducted to determine the extent to which the core values of the *Staatliche Bauhaus* are reflected in the NEB and whether they meet the societal and artistic requirements of the historical Bauhaus. The last part of this chapter focuses on the name branding and the legitimacy of the initiative. Finally, the conclusion provides a concise summary of the findings from both institutions and offers a broader outlook on the future development of the New European Bauhaus, which can evolve into a genuinely transformative cultural force, if it goes beyond political discourse, engages with the broader public, and secures real fundamental structural reforms.

2.0 THE NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS (NEB)



Figure 3: Logo, New European Bauhaus, 2020.

2.1 DESIGN PRINCIPLES, AMBITIONS AND SOCIETAL RELEVANCE

It is essential to first examine each institution separately, considering its distinct characteristics and particularities, to understand and analyze its diverse perspectives and aspects. By doing so, we can evaluate the historical Bauhaus's innovative approach to design, its social and political engagement, and its lasting influence on modern architecture and education. Similarly, examining the New European Bauhaus allows us to assess its contemporary relevance, how it aligns with current sustainability goals, and the potential challenges of adapting historical principles to today's socio-political landscape.

Following the announcement of the New European Bauhaus program in September 2020, various initiatives emerged to support the European Green Deal and make its principles tangible for every EU citizen through qualitative and positive experiences in everyday life. According to initiators, the NEB serves as a »bridge between the world of science and technology, art and culture to change our lives for the better⁷ and should be an »impulse for participatory and innovative processes.«⁸ In doing so, the NEB directly confronts the urgent challenge of climate change by promoting a sustainable, inclusive future rooted in cultural and architectural transformation.

However, the NEB is more than just another EU mission; it is a »co-creation space where architects, artists, students, engineers, and designers work together to make that happen. This is shaping the world we want to live in!«⁹ With this powerful statement, Ursula von der Leyen underscores the value and significance of the program for contemporary society. Intensive collaboration and cooperation among various disciplines were brought together to found the NEB, creating a livable, environmentally responsible future. On multiple levels, the program advocates for a transformation from global to local, positioning itself as a »source of comprehensive architectural, technological, rural, urban, and social transformation.«¹⁰

7 DOMINONI. *Design for Sustainability and Inclusion in Space*, 14.

8 VLOGGER. *The New European Bauhaus - A Fatal Affair?*, 8.

9 VON DER LEYEN. *State of the Union*.

10 EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *Horizon Europe - New European Bauhaus Nexus Report*, 6.

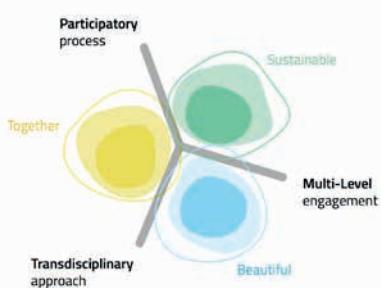


Figure 4: New European Bauhaus, three fundamental pillars, 2020.

Three fundamental pillars – »sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusion¹¹ – support this »multilevel approach, from global to local, place-based policies, a participatory social diversity engagement, and integrated cross-disciplinary professions¹², and all projects must integrate them. »This tripartite structure of the NEB program strongly recalls the Vitruvian triad of Firmatas, Utilitas, and Venustas¹³ formulated by the Roman architect Vitruvius to define the essential principles of architecture. Solidity, utility, and beauty embrace the durability, user-friendliness, and aesthetic quality of a building, thereby intersecting with the core principles of the NEB.

There is no doubt that transdisciplinary collaboration significantly influences the co-design process, enabling the collective development of a sustainable and inclusive future – one that is also »beautiful for our eyes, minds, and souls.¹⁴

2.2 ORGANIZATION AND FUNDING

The New European Bauhaus is organized as a decentralized and interdisciplinary initiative of the European Commission (EC). It operates on multiple levels and involves various actors working collaboratively toward the realization of its objectives. »It refers to the cultural and creative industries of our present day.¹⁵ Consequently, it does not have a fixed headquarters. However, the coordination of funding is managed by the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD) of the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium.¹⁶ Additionally, NEB Labs, partner networks, and pilot projects are distributed across different European countries engaged in the initiative's implementation. Each project maintains distinct networks and contact points, which are determined independently by the respective countries and project initiatives. For instance, in Germany the *Bundesministerium für Wohnen, Stadtentwicklung und Bauwesen* [Federal Ministry of Housing, Urban Development and Building] (BMWSB) plays a key role in strengthening cross-sector collaboration and fostering various networks.¹⁷

The funding for the New European Bauhaus primarily comes from EU funding programs and specific financial mechanisms of the EC aimed

11 NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS. *New European Bauhaus Compass*, 3.

12 ERRICO, BISOGNI, LEVI. *The New European Bauhaus at a local and regional level*, 8.

13 OREB. *Wie viel Bauhaus steckt im New European Bauhaus*, 13.

14 DOMINONI. *Design for Sustainability and Inclusion in Space*, 14.

15 VLOGGER. *The New European Bauhaus - A Fatal Affair?*, 8.

16 EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *Horizon Europe - New European Bauhaus Nexus Report*, 2.

17 BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR WOHNEN, STADTENTWICKLUNG UND BAUWESEN. *Neues Europäisches Bauhaus*, translated from German.

at sustainability and innovation. Notably, the European Green Deal mobilizes investments for sustainable initiatives, including Horizon Europe, the EU's flagship research and innovation program, which also finances projects within the NEB framework.¹⁸ This funding supports a wide range of initiatives related to research and development in sustainable architecture, the circular economy, and social inclusion. Horizon Europe is financed through the EU budget, which is contributed by the member states. The total budget allocated for Horizon Europe for the period 2021-2027 amounts to approximately €95.5 billion.¹⁹

2.3 PRIZES AND AWARDS FROM THE NEB

In addition, the NEB annually grants various awards and prizes across different categories, such as sustainable construction, circular economy, social inclusion, and innovative materials. These awards recognize both emerging ideas (New European Bauhaus Rising Star) and implemented projects (New European Bauhaus Awards) that contribute to Europe's ecological and social transformation.²⁰ The contemporary relevance of these topics and the program's recognition across Europe are leveraged to honor both established professionals and young talents. Award recipients not only receive financial support but also gain access to a platform for further networking and visibility at the European level.

2.4 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INITIATIVE IN A SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

To consider the NEB in its political context, one must examine the economic policy orientation of neoliberalism within the European Union, which has increasingly promoted market liberalization, deregulation, and privatization since the 1980s.²¹ The EU relies on »free trade«²², competitiveness, and »unrestricted capital mobility«²³, mainly through the single market and fiscal rules such as the Stability and Growth Pact. Critics argue that this policy exacerbates social inequality, as state intervention is limited, social benefits are often cut, and improvements in the political landscape are necessary. Over time, it has become clear that neoliberalism is less and less able to formulate a plausible growth model or a clear socially inclusive perspective.²⁴ Despite numerous

18 EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *Horizon Europe*, 1.

19 *ibid.*

20 EUROPEAN UNION. *The New European Bauhaus*.

21 WISSEL. *Krise, Staat und Radikalisierung des Neoliberalismus*, 10, translated from German.

22 HERMANN. *Neoliberalism in the European Union*, 2.

23 *ibid.*

24 WISSEL. *Krise, Staat und Radikalisierung des Neoliberalismus*, 10.

new social initiatives, such as the European Green Deal, the EU remains economically market-oriented.

The New European Bauhaus also aligns with the EU's neoliberal strategy, as it focuses on market-driven solutions for ecological and social challenges. Instead of direct state investments in affordable housing or infrastructure, the NEB promotes public-private partnerships, innovation incentives, and competitiveness in the construction industry. Through its targeted economic policy orientation, it serves as a soft governance tool that steers sustainable construction via market mechanisms rather than prioritizing direct regulatory measures or public housing programs. At the same time, it remains merely a complement for achieving the ambitious objectives of the EGD. In doing so, it follows the EU's neoliberal logic of fostering innovation and growth through market mechanisms rather than state intervention. While these strategies aim to stimulate sustainable growth, they risk prioritizing competitiveness and profitability over inclusivity, affordability, and long-term environmental responsibility. This tension questions the extent to which true systemic change can be achieved within a neoliberal framework.

In this context, the initiative has been continuously evolving since its inception in September 2020, with its most significant developments highlighting the interdisciplinary approach of architecture and design in addressing the urgent demands of sustainability and social justice. With over 600 official partner organizations across the European Union, the initiative has the potential to reach millions of citizens.²⁵ It brings together individuals from diverse backgrounds, including the fields of art and design, the cultural and creative industries, heritage institutions, educators, scientists and innovators, businesses, local and regional authorities, and civic initiatives.

On January 18, 2021, the six-month co-design phase of the NEB began, fostering the exchange of ideas and public participation.²⁶ This phase provided a framework for interdisciplinary collaboration among various stakeholders, including citizens, architects, artists, and scientists, to refine and concretize the vision of the NEB.

In the following April, the first major NEB conference took place, serving as a key milestone in promoting the initiative and its objectives.²⁷ During this conference, the inaugural NEB Prizes for 2021 were awarded to recognize innovative projects and ideas that had already put

25 DOMINONI. *Design for Sustainability and Inclusion in Space*, 15.

26 ERRICO, BISOGNI, LEVI. *The New European Bauhaus at a local and regional level*, 7.

27 EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *New European Bauhaus - Beautiful, Sustainable, Together*, 3.

the NEB principles into practice. This event represented a significant opportunity to deepen the dialogue among different interest groups and highlight successful real-world examples.

Another significant step took place on May 4, 2022, when the first NEB lighthouse projects were announced.²⁸ These projects spread across Europe, were selected to receive financial support from the EU. To provide better guidance for projects and initiatives, the NEB Compass was published in November as a guide to the fundamental values and principles of the New European Bauhaus.²⁹

The New European Bauhaus Report from January 2023 provided an initial assessment of the initiative's progress and challenges, outlining how far the implementation of NEB goals had already advanced.³⁰ The report highlighted both successes and the need to further expand the vision and anchor it more deeply in various European regions. The built examples under the initiative served as evidence of its effectiveness and its significant contribution to the Green Deal.

Finally, in July 2024, the New European Bauhaus Investment Guidelines were introduced. These guidelines are designed to help public and private actors make the right investment decisions in alignment with the NEB's goals.³¹ They provide guidance on financing projects that prioritize sustainability, aesthetics, and social inclusion, thereby ensuring the long-term impact of the NEB in Europe. The idea of a sustainable, transdisciplinary Europe is no longer just a wish but has become a reality through this initiative launched in 2020. It is important to continue viewing it as an ongoing process that allows space for new proposals and improvements. The goal is to grow together and set further ambitions.

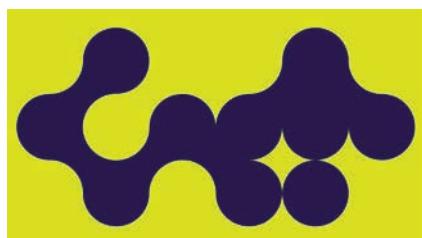


Figure 5: Logo, Creating NEBourhoods Together Neu-Perlach, 2022.

2.5 CASE STUDY - CREATING NEBHOURHOODS TOGETHER

2.5.1 Influence of the NEB in Germany

The New European Bauhaus has inspired many architectural projects in Germany that implement the principles of sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusion in various contexts. In addition, official partner organizations and the German federal government support the NEB initiative with financial resources, which can be requested via a national contact point.

Projects such as the sustainable restructuring of opencast mining areas in Saxony-Anhalt or the New European Bauhaus Academy (NEBA) represent the values of the NEB in different ways and areas. In Saxony-

28 EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *New European Bauhaus - Beautiful, Sustainable, Together*, 3.

29 NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS. *New European Bauhaus Compass*, 4.

30 EUROPEAN UNION. *The New European Bauhaus (About the initiative)*.

31 *ibid.*

Anhalt, the focus is on the economic, ecological, and social challenges of structural change in the region, which is defined by lignite mining and as an industrial region.³² NEBA aims to reach »three million professionals by 2030« through compact courses and further training in the construction sector to improve regional expertise and promote local access to educational opportunities in the areas of sustainable construction and design. »The transition of all the projects is just as much a cultural and a social transition as a green one: this is the key idea that the New European Bauhaus wants to explore.«³³

The diversity of NEB projects in Germany reflects the broad application of NEB principles, ranging from urban transformation projects and rural development initiatives to cultural and social programs. These projects contribute to creating sustainable and inclusive living spaces while enriching the European Green Deal with cultural and social dimensions.

2.5.2 Transdisciplinary and inclusive design focus of the reference project

The Creating NEBourhoods Together project in Neuperlach, Munich, is one of »six lighthouse projects³⁴ of the European Commission as part of the New European Bauhaus and is also the flagship project in the Federal Republic of Germany. During 3 years and with funding from »5 million€«³⁵ it aims to transform the Neuperlach district together with citizens, creatives, and experts into a future-proof, sustainable, integrative, and aesthetically pleasing neighborhood. It is fascinating because it pursues a regional neighborhood approach and focuses on the co-creative process with the inhabitants of the city.

Neuperlach, with around 65,000 residents, is the largest post-war urban expansion area in West Germany and faces a variety of social, urban, and structural challenges.³⁶ These include aging residential and office buildings in need of renovation, neglected open spaces, and an unemployment rate higher than the citywide average. However, the district boasts several strengths, including a strong social bond among its multicultural population, extensive green spaces, and a separate network of pathways for pedestrians and cyclists. The project is being implemented by a consortium led by the City of Munich and runs from October 1, 2022, to March 31, 2025 and aims to leverage and further develop these potentials.³⁷

32 HELLER. #NeueBauhäusler, *Gesucht: Ideen, die unser Leben bessermachen*, translated from German.

33 NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS. *New European Bauhaus Compass*, 3.

34 BORGGMANN, LUCE. *Creating NEBourhoods together*, 10.

35 BORGGMANN, HELLSTERN, ZOCH. *NEBourhoods for tomorrow*, 183.

36 BORGGMANN, LUCE. *Creating NEBourhoods together*, 10.

37 CITY OF MUNICH, DEPARTMENT OF URBAN PLANNING AND BUILDING REGULATIONS. *Creating NEBourhoods Together Neuperlach*, 5.



Figure 6: WeOn GmbH, Creating NEBourhoods Together Neuperlach, Nesting Stool (Nisthocker), 2024.

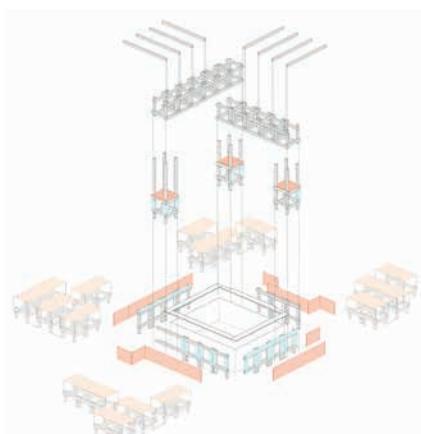


Figure 7: Concept drawing, Creating NEBourhoods Together Neuperlach, Nesting Stool (Nisthocker), 2024.



Figure 8: Creating NEBourhoods Together Neuperlach, The NEBourhoods Pavilion, 2024.

The city was planned according to valuable tree populations and large meadow areas characterize to the concept of a structured and open city, featuring generous open spaces and green corridors. Through its connection to ecologically valuable green spaces, the district offers great potential for biodiversity promotion and the application of Animal-Aided Design in renovations, new constructions, and the maintenance of open spaces.³⁸ Key measures of this multi-level approach include the development of sustainable mobility projects, community energy initiatives, and the support of start-ups that contribute to improving quality of life and climate protection. One example is the NEBourhoods Pavilion from the Bavarian start-up *WeOn GmbH*, which serves as a dynamic space for events, workshops, and exhibitions.³⁹ The modular wooden structure is foldable, easy to transport, and adaptable to different user needs. At the same time, it is available free of charge for associations to provide a multipurpose space, making it available a meeting spot for co-creation and innovation activities.⁴⁰ The NEBourhoods Pavilion exemplifies how adaptable spaces can foster community engagement and collaboration among residents.

2.5.3 Success and criticism

The close connection to the New European Bauhaus is evident in the project's alignment with NEB principles and its funding by the European Commission. Neuperlach serves as a testing ground and a practical example of how NEB goals can be implemented in an established urban environment. It connects various disciplines – architecture, urban planning, sociology, and technology – and utilizes interdisciplinary collaborations to develop innovative and transferable solutions for sustainable urban development.⁴¹ It addresses not only local challenges but also serves as a model for other European cities facing similar urban problems, while showing them many different approaches to solve those. One of the project's strengths lies in the intensive involvement of the local population and the use of existing potential.⁴² Now, that the project has been successfully completed on March 31, 2025. German architect Elisabeth Merk emphasizes that »This principle of co-responsibility has created a new quality for me that I would also like to see in further projects in Munich and in other European cities.«⁴³ Through the cooperation of citizens, administration, business, and science, innovative solutions are to be developed that make the European Green Deal tangible and bring it closer to society. However,

38 JAKOBY, PINTARITS. *Animal-Aided Design TOOLBOX*, 5.

39 BORGGMANN, HELLSTERN, ZOCH. *NEBourhoods for tomorrow*, 28.

40 *ibid.*

41 BAVARIAN RESEARCH ALLIANCE, CITY OF MUNICH, DEPARTMENT OF URBAN PLANNING AND BUILDING REGULATIONS. *Creating NEBourhoods Together Neuperlach*.

42 BORGGMANN, LUCE. *Creating NEBourhoods together*, 10.

43 BORGGMANN, HELLSTERN, ZOCH. *NEBourhoods for tomorrow*, 8.

challenges for future projects could lie in the coordination of the various stakeholders and in securing long-term funding. The role of the NEB national contact points should therefore be better defined and a central NEB funding program should be set up that local and regional initiatives can access as a source of investment. Furthermore, specific NEB Compass indicators need to be better defined to help project promoters develop their projects to a higher standard.

3. THE STAATLICHE BAUHAUS WEIMAR

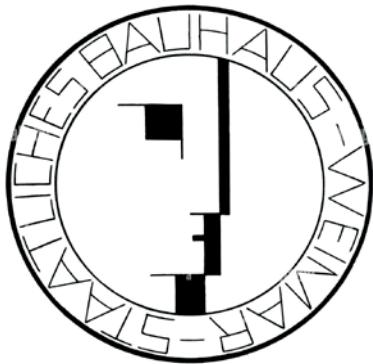


Figure 9: Logo, The Staatliche Bauhaus Weimar, 1919.

3.1 RELEVANCE AND COMPLEXITY OF THE INSTITUTION

This overview of the NEB provides deeper insights into the Bauhaus institution and highlights the differences and parallels in cultural, artistic, and political aspects. With the founding of the Bauhaus and Walter Gropius' famous manifesto in Weimar in 1919, a new creative form of teaching developed that combined art, craftsmanship, and technology to create a new, functional, and aesthetic formal language for architecture and design. The concept of this comprehensive aesthetic education aimed to »abolish the hierarchy between ›high‹ and ›low‹ arts and also to bring the different genres in ›building‹ back to unity.«⁴⁴ The Bauhaus spirit was created! This carries the basic attitude and ideals of the Bauhaus movement within it and is passed on and held on to by its teachers, students, artists, and architects.

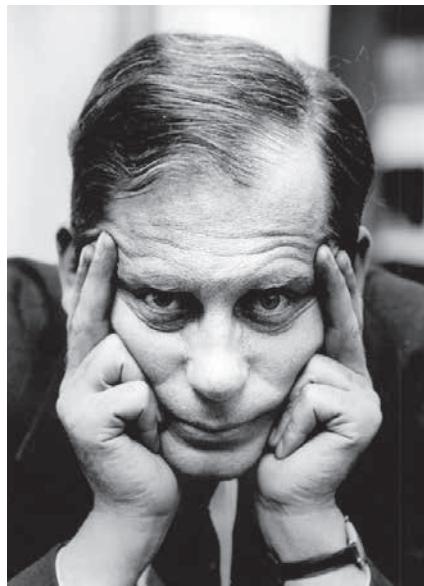


Figure 10: Walter Gropius (* May 18, 1883 - † July 5, 1969), 1930.

3.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTITUTION IN A SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

The history of the Bauhaus is closely intertwined with the history of the first German Republic. With the end of World War I, Germany experienced a period of renewal, and a parliamentary democracy was established.

In 1919, the Bauhaus as the »Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung«⁴⁵, was initiated by architect Walter Gropius as an art school in the same city where the first election to the German National Assembly had taken place. For the first time, women were allowed to vote, radical parties were excluded, and there was a secret and direct voting system.⁴⁶ This period, marked by economic crisis, political instability, and social transformation, defined the entire Weimar Republic. Amid these circumstances, Walter Gropius sought to establish the Bauhaus as a new way of design and learning, one that not only unified the arts and crafts but also embraced social responsibility. For Gropius, building, as an

44 PRANG. *Paul Klee und Wassily Kandinsky als Bauhauslehrer*, translated from German.

45 GROPIUS. *Walter Gropius - im Gespräch mit Friedrich Luft*, minute 00:10:50, translated from German.

46 BAYER, GROPIUS, GROPIUS. *Bauhaus, 1919-1928*, 11, translated from German.

»all-encompassing art of design«⁴⁷, had lost its value and should be revived through the art school to educate independent artists.

This idea was revolutionary, as it abolished the separation between fine art, architecture, and craftsmanship and aimed for the »transformation of all artistic disciplines.«⁴⁸ Gropius was guided by the reform movements of the pre-war period, in particular the principles of the Werkbund movement and Art Nouveau, but wanted to develop a more modern, industrial design language. The social aspiration of the Bauhaus was to contribute to the improvement of life for all through functional and affordable design. This free, experimental atmosphere and the participation of women in the workshops and teaching units were particularly special.

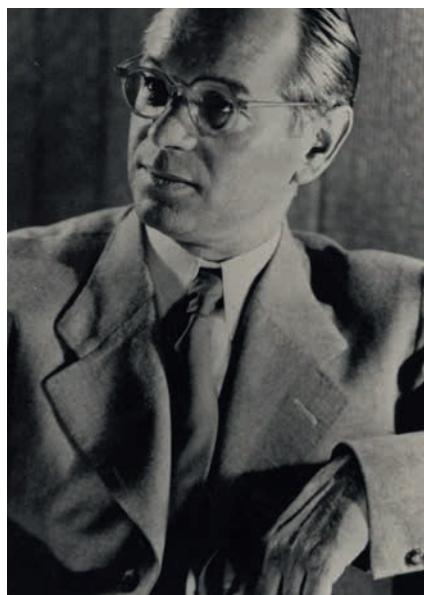


Figure 11: Johannes Itten (* November, 11, 1888 - † March 25, 1967), 1930.

The first years after the foundation in Weimar were characterized by a pure joy of experimentation, which was particularly evident in Johannes Itten's »Elementary Form Lessons.«⁴⁹ He encouraged students to engage with basic forms and materials in an open, exploratory manner, which laid the foundation for the training.

This free way of thinking and acting was a major change in society, which is why the Bauhaus also had to assert itself against political opposition from conservative parties. Initially, social democratic forces were in power in Weimar and supported the Bauhaus, but as conservative and nationalist parties gained strength, criticism grew and a »National socialist wave«⁵⁰ hit the institution. The Bauhaus was seen by many as too modern, too international, and politically suspect. Under pressure from the political and economic situation, Gropius moved away from the strongly craft-based initial phase and now emphasized the connection between art and industry.

The most important Bauhaus exhibition in 1923, which took place under the motto »Art and technology – a new unity«, presented the principles of the school and its innovative design practice to a wide audience.⁵¹ In general, the Bauhaus festivals served as a creative form of expression and promoted interdisciplinary exchange between masters and students. They were a mixture of art, theater, music, and dance, reflecting the experimental and avant-garde attitude of the Bauhaus school. At the same time, they strengthened the sense of community and collegial cohesion. Despite these efforts, the Bauhaus continued to come under political pressure. After the state elections,

47 GROPIUS, GRUNOW, KLEE, KANDINSKY. *Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar 1919-1923*, 7, translated from German.

48 GROPIUS. *Bauhaus Manifest/o*, 2, translated from German.

49 GROPIUS, GRUNOW, KLEE, KANDINSKY. *Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar 1919-1923*, 10.

50 GROPIUS. *Walter Gropius - im Gespräch mit Friedrich Luft*, minute 00:15:27, translated from German.

51 MEYER, STRO. *Bauhaus Dessau Architecture*, 30.



Figure 12: László Moholy-Nagy (* July 20, 1895 - † November 24, 1946), 1930.



Figure 13: Hannes Meyer (* November 18, 1889 - † July 19, 1954), 1928.

in which right-wing parties won the majority in Thuringia, financial support was cut. »In 1925«⁵², the Bauhaus was forced to leave Weimar and moved to Dessau, where it could continue under better conditions.

There, it developed into the leading institution for modern design and architecture, with training geared more towards industrial production and mass production. Important teachers such as László Moholy-Nagy, Paul Klee, and Wassily Kandinsky shaped the teaching but were later often replaced if they did not fit in with the new pedagogical educational line at the Bauhaus, which led to bitter controversies with the older generation of artists in Weimar.⁵³

Gropius resigned as director in 1928 and his successor Hannes Meyer strengthened the school's social focus.⁵⁴ Under his direction, more social housing projects were undertaken, but because of political tensions, he was replaced in 1930 by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who focused more strongly on architecture.

In 1932, increasing pressure from the National Socialists forced the closure of Dessau and the Bauhaus moved to Berlin. There it only existed as a private school until 1933, when it was finally closed by the Nazis.⁵⁵ Many Bauhaus members emigrated and spread the ideas worldwide, allowing the Bauhaus to continue to have an international impact despite its end in Germany.

52 BAYER, GROPIUS, GROPIUS. *Bauhaus, 1919-1928*, 15, translated from German.

53 *ibid.* 20.

54 MEYER, STROB. *Bauhaus Dessau Architecture*, 10.

55 *ibid.* 20.



Das Endziel aller bildnerischen Tätigkeit ist der Bau! Ihn zu schmücken war einst die vornehmste Aufgabe der bildenden Künste, sie waren unablässliche Bestandteile der großen Baukunst. Heute stehen sie in selbstgenügsamer Eigenheit, aus der sie erst wieder erlöst werden können durch bewußtes Mit- und Ineinanderwirken aller Werkleute untereinander. Architekten, Maler und Bildhauer müssen die vielgliedrige Gestalt des Baues in seiner Gesamtheit und in seinen Teilen wieder kennen und begreifen lernen, dann werden sich von selbst ihre Werke wieder mit architektonischem Geiste füllen, den sie in der Salonkunst verloren.

Die alten Kunstschulen vermochten diese Einheit nicht zu erzeugen, wie sollten sie auch, da Kunst nicht lehrbar ist. Sie müssen wieder in der Werkstatt aufgehen. Diese nur zeichnende und malende Welt der Musterzeichner und Kunstgewerbler muß endlich wieder eine bauende werden. Wenn der junge Mensch, der Liebe zur bildnerischen Tätigkeit in sich verspürt, wieder wie einst seine Bahn damit beginnt, ein Handwerk zu erlernen, so bleibt der unproduktive „Künstler“ künftig nicht mehr zu unvollkommener Kunstübung verdammt, denn seine Fertigkeit bleibt nun dem Handwerk erhalten, wo er Vortreffliches zu leisten vermag.

Architekten, Bildhauer, Maler, wir alle müssen zum Handwerk zurück! Denn es gibt keine „Kunst von Beruf“. Es gibt keinen Wesensunterschied zwischen dem Künstler und dem Handwerker. Der Künstler ist eine Steigerung des Handwerkers. Gnade des Himmels läßt in seltenen Lichtmomenten, die jenseits seines Wollens stehen, unbewußt Kunst aus dem Werk seiner Hand erblühen, die Grundlage des Werkmäßigen aber ist unerlässlich für jeden Künstler. Dort ist der Urquell des schöpferischen Gestaltens.

Bilden wir also eine neue Zunft der Handwerker ohne die klassentrennende Anmaßung, die eine hochmütige Mauer zwischen Handwerkern und Künstlern errichten wollte! Wollen, erdenken, erschaffen wir gemeinsam den neuen Bau der Zukunft, der alles in einer Gestalt sein wird: Architektur und Plastik und Malerei, der aus Millionen Händen der Handwerker einst gen Himmel steigen wird als kristallenes Sinnbild eines neuen kommenden Glaubens.

WALTER GROPIUS.

Figure 14: Bauhaus Manifest/o, Page 1, Walter Gropius, Weimar, 1919.

PROGRAMM DES STAATLICHEN BAUHAUSES IN WEIMAR

Das Staatliche Bauhaus in Weimar ist durch Vereinigung der ehemaligen Großherzoglich Sächsischen Hochschule für bildende Kunst mit der ehemaligen Großherzoglich Sächsischen Kunstgewerbeschule unter Neuangliederung einer Abteilung für Baukunst entstanden.

Ziele des Bauhauses.

Das Bauhaus erstrebt die Sammlung aller künstlerischen Schaffens zur Einheit, die Wiedervereinigung aller werkästhetischen Disziplinen — Bildhauerei, Malerei, Kunstgewerbe und Handwerk — zu einer neuen Baukunst als deren unablässliche Bestandteile. Das letzte, wenn auch ferne Ziel des Bauhauses ist das Einheitskunstwerk — der große Bau —, in dem es keine Grenze gibt zwischen monumentalener und dekorativer Kunst.

Das Bauhaus will Architekten, Maler und Bildhauer aller Grade je nach ihren Fähigkeiten zu tüchtigen Handwerkern oder selbständigen schaffenden Künstlern erziehen und eine Arbeitsgemeinschaft führender und werdender Werkkünstler gründen, die Bauwerke in ihrer Gesamtheit — Rohbau, Ausbau, Ausschmückung und Einrichtung — aus gleich geartetem Geist heraus einheitlich zu gestalten weiß.

Grundsätze des Bauhauses.

Kunst entsteht oberhalb aller Methoden, sie ist an sich nicht lehrbar, wohl aber das Handwerk. Architekten, Maler, Bildhauer sind Handwerker im Ursinn des Wortes, deshalb wird als unerlässliche Grundlage für alles bildnerische Schaffen die gründliche handwerkliche Ausbildung aller Studierenden in Werkstätten und auf Probier- und Werkplätzen gefordert. Die eigenen Werkstätten sollen allmählich ausgebaut, mit fremden Werkstätten Lehrverträge abgeschlossen werden.

Die Schule ist die Dienerin der Werkstatt, sie wird eines Tages in ihr aufgehen. Deshalb nicht Lehrer und Schüler im Bauhaus, sondern Meister, Gesellen und Lehrlinge.

Die Art der Lehre entspringt dem Wesen der Werkstatt:

Organisches Gestalten aus handwerklichem Können entwickelt.

Vermeidung alles Starren; Bevorzugung des Schöpferischen; Freiheit der Individualität, aber strenges Studium.

Zunftgemäße Meister- und Gesellenproben vor dem Meisterrat des Bauhauses oder vor fremden Meistern.

Mitarbeit der Studierenden an den Arbeiten der Meister.

Auftragsvermittlung auch an Studierende.

Gemeinsame Planung umfangreicher utopischer Bauentwürfe — Volks- und Kultbauten — mit weitgestecktem Ziel. Mitarbeit aller Meister und Studierenden — Architekten, Maler, Bildhauer — an diesen Entwürfen mit dem Ziel allmählichen Einklangs aller zum Bau gehörigen Glieder und Teile.

Ständige Fühlung mit Führern der Handwerke und Industrien im Lande. Fühlung mit dem öffentlichen Leben, mit dem Volke durch Ausstellungen und andere Veranstaltungen.

Neue Versuche im Ausstellungswesen zur Lösung des Problems, Bild und Plastik im architektonischen Rahmen zu zeigen.

Pflege freundschaftlichen Verkehrs zwischen Meistern und Studierenden außerhalb der Arbeit; dabei Theater, Vorträge, Dichtkunst, Musik, Kostümfeste, Aufbau

Umfang der Lehre.

Die Lehre im Bauhaus umfaßt alle praktischen und wissenschaftlichen Gebiete des bildnerischen Schaffens.

A. Baukunst.

B. Malerei.

C. Bildhauerei

einschließlich aller handwerklichen Zweiggebiete.

Die Studierenden werden sowohl handwerklich (1) wie zeichnerisch-malerisch (2) und wissenschaftlich-theoretisch (3) ausgebildet.

1. Die handwerkliche Ausbildung — sei es in eigenen allmählich zu ergänzenden, oder fremden durch Lehrvertrag verpflichteten Werkstätten — erstreckt sich auf:

- a) Bildhauer, Steinmetzen, Stukkaturen, Holzbildhauer, Keramiker, Gipsgießer.
- b) Schmiede, Schlosser, Gießer, Dreher.
- c) Tischler.
- d) Dekorationsmaler, Glasmaler, Mosaike, Emaille.
- e) Radierer, Holzschnieder, Lithographen, Kunstdrucker, Ziselöre.
- f) Weber.

Die handwerkliche Ausbildung bildet das Fundament der Lehre im Bauhause. Jeder Studierende soll ein Handwerk erlernen.

2. Die zeichnerische und malerische Ausbildung erstreckt sich auf:

- a) Freies Skizzieren aus dem Gedächtnis und der Fantasie.
- b) Zeichnen und Malen nach Köpfen, Akten und Tieren,
- c) Zeichnen und Malen von Landschaften, Figuren, Pflanzen und Stillleben,
- d) Komponieren,
- e) Ausführen von Wandbildern, Tafelbildern und Bilderschreinen,
- f) Entwerfen von Ornamenten,
- g) Schriftzeichnen,
- h) Konstruktions- und Projektionszeichnen,
- i) Entwerfen von Außen-, Garten- und Innenarchitekturen,
- k) Entwerfen von Möbeln und Gebrauchsgegenständen.

3. Die wissenschaftlich-theoretische Ausbildung erstreckt sich auf:

- a) Kunstgeschichte — nicht im Sinne von Stilgeschichte vorgetragen, sondern zur lebendigen Erkenntnis historischer Arbeitsweisen und Techniken.
- b) Materialkunde,
- c) Anatomie — am lebenden Modell,
- d) physikalische und chemische Farbenlehre,
- e) rationelles Malverfahren,
- f) Grundbegriffe von Buchführung, Vertragsabschlüssen, Verdingungen,
- g) allgemein interessante Einzelvorträge aus allen Gebieten der Kunst und Wissenschaft.

Einteilung der Lehre.

Die Ausbildung ist in drei Lehrgänge eingeteilt:

I. Lehrgang für Lehrlinge.

II. " " Gesellen.

III. " " Jungmeister.

Die Einzelausbildung bleibt dem Ermessen der einzelnen Meister im Rahmen des allgemeinen Programms und des in jedem Semester neu aufzustellenden Arbeitsverteilungsplanes überlassen.

Um den Studierenden eine möglichst vielseitige, umfassende technische und künstlerische Ausbildung zuteil werden zu lassen, wird der Arbeitsverteilungsplan zeitlich so eingeteilt, daß jeder angehende Architekt, Maler oder Bildhauer auch an einem Teil der anderen Lehrgänge teilnehmen kann.

Aufnahme.

Aufgenommen wird jede unbescholtene Person ohne Rücksicht auf Alter und Geschlecht, deren Vorbildung vom Meisterrat des Bauhauses als ausreichend erachtet wird, und soweit es der Raum zuläßt. Das Lehrgeld beträgt jährlich 180 Mark (es soll mit steigendem Verdienst des Bauhauses allmählich ganz verschwinden). Außerdem ist eine einmalige Aufnahmgebühr von 20 Mark zu zahlen. Ausländer zahlen den doppelten Betrag. Anfragen sind an das Sekretariat des Staatlichen Bauhauses in Weimar zu richten.

Figure 16: Bauhaus Manifest/o, Page 3, Walter Gropius, Weimar, 1919.

3.3 DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND AESTHETICS

To understand the institution's influence on society and architecture, it is important to engage with Bauhaus's design principles. These principles have had a lasting impact on modern architecture, design, and art. Functionality, minimalism, radical reduction, industrial production, and the close relationship between art and technology remain central elements of modern design today.

A fundamental principle was the maxim *›form follows function.‹*⁵⁶ This meant that the design of an object or building should be directly derived from its purpose and construction. Superfluous ornaments or decorative elements were avoided as they offered no functional value. Instead, a straightforward design language characterized by simple geometric shapes dominated. Clean lines, symmetrical structures, and a reduced color palette contributed to a timeless aesthetic.

Walter Gropius wanted to remove the traditional separation between artists, architects, and craftworkers to develop aesthetic and functional products for industrial mass production.⁵⁷ This led to the development of modular concepts and standardized production processes for furniture or modular systems. The idea that design should not only be aesthetic but also flexible and adaptable was a revolutionary undertaking for society. As was the use of modern materials, which were not only used as functional building materials but also deliberately emphasized in their materiality.

Besides interdisciplinary collaboration, the university also pursued a social responsibility: design should not be reserved for an elite, but should reach broad segments of the population. The Bauhaus followed a democratic design philosophy aimed at making architecture and everyday objects accessible to all people.⁵⁸ This social aspect was particularly emphasized by Hannes Meyer, who focused on designing buildings and products according to the genuine needs of society. Standardization and industrial production were deliberately used to make affordable housing and everyday items accessible to many people.

56 GROPIUS, GRUNOW, KLEE, KANDINSKY. *Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar 1919-1923*, 15, translated from German.

57 GROPIUS. *Bauhaus Manifest/o*, 1.

58 GROPIUS, GRUNOW, KLEE, KANDINSKY. *Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar 1919-1923*, 7, translated from German.

3.4 TEACHING CONCEPT, PEDAGOGY AND FORMATI-MASTERS OF THEIR TIME

From the very beginning, the teachers envisioned the Bauhaus to be more than just a new type of art academy. This collection of all artistic creations into unity and this reunification of all artistic disciplines was unique and was pushed to the maximum.

Young people were to try out a new way of living and working together and use these ideas to influence society in a positive way.⁵⁹ The aim was to provide students with a holistic education that also included their private lives. On the other hand, they wanted to create a new world through the unification of different disciplines, which would bring aesthetic objects and buildings into the life processes of modern man. In his speech at the first exhibition of Bauhaus student works in June 1919, Gropius shared his vision and the future influence of the institution: »No large spiritual organizations, but small secret, self-contained associations, lodges, conspiracies that guard a secret, a core of faith [...] will emerge until a general, large, supporting, spiritual-religious idea condenses again from the individual groups.«⁶⁰

The teachers were the ›masters‹ and the students the ›apprentices‹, yet a strict separation was avoided to strengthen the sense of community.⁶¹ Special festivals and celebrations were always organized together and were an integral part of the education.

The entire curriculum was heavily influenced by the original six-month preparatory course by Johannes Itten, in which students were meant to develop basic artistic and craft skills.⁶² From 1923, László Moholy-Nagy took over the elementary course and shifted the focus more towards technology and photography, underscoring the modern and experimental approach of the Bauhaus. The Bauhaus elementary course was a model for the sustainable use of existing knowledge. Walter Gropius embraced the principle of ›back to the basics‹: materials and tools had to be understood first before new creations could be made.⁶³

A key component of the preparatory course was material study, which aimed to familiarize students with the specific properties of various materials such as paper, plaster, fabrics, wood, and glass through touch and experience. This led to a fusion of craft and art, combined

59 Ibid. 17.

60 GROPIUS. *Rede zur ersten Ausstellung von Schülerarbeiten des Bauhauses im Juni 1919*, translated from German.

61 GROPIUS. *Bauhaus Manifest/o*, 2, translated from German.

62 GROPIUS, GRUNOW, KLEE, KANDINSKY. *Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar 1919-1923*, 10, translated from German.

63 GROPIUS. *Bauhaus Manifest/o*, 3, translated from German.

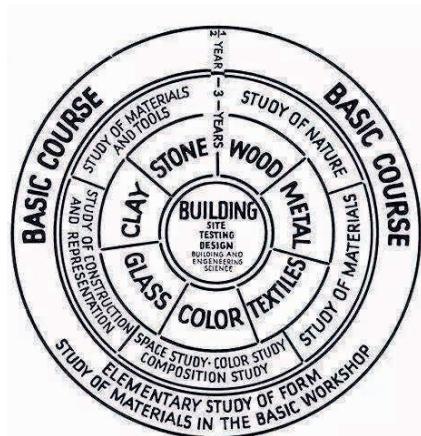


Figure 17: The Bauhaus curriculum wheel diagram, 1922.

with openness to new materials and technologies. Sculptural composition studies in the »laboratories«⁶⁴ were designed to awaken the students' creative abilities and stimulate their imagination. Johannes Itten supplemented his teaching with detailed nature studies and structural and compositional analyses of old masterpieces. This approach fostered creativity and experimentation, focusing on the sensory and emotional experience of design rather than strictly technical or functional considerations. With exceptional pedagogical skills, he encouraged students and inspired them to think freely. In his preliminary course, he demanded that students break away from academic conventions, explore materials independently, and express their inner emotions through form and color.

Students could then specialize in various workshops (e.g., wood, metal, textiles, printing) according to their interests, with individuals who offered practical solutions being particularly encouraged. In this »cell of preparation«⁶⁵, the apprentices had to discover and consolidate their craft skills »through practical work.«⁶⁶ A central challenge was to translate the creative wealth of the apprentices into designs that could be produced. While some workshops, such as the weaving and printing workshops, were skeptical about the mechanical production process, the students gradually recognized the advantages of serial production, which, however, did not compete with industry and crafts but rather represented a new development factor for them.⁶⁷ The Bauhaus teaching approach had a clear vision: to find creative, innovative solutions for the needs of modern society.

64 GROPIUS, MOHOLY-NAGY. *Neue Arbeiten des Bauhauswerkstätten*, 7, translated from German.

65 GROPIUS. *Walter Gropius - im Gespräch mit Friedrich Luft*, minute 00:12:47, translated from German.

66 GROPIUS, GRUNOW, KLEE, KANDINSKY. *Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar 1919-1923*, 8, translated from German.

67 GROPIUS, MOHOLY-NAGY. *Neue Arbeiten des Bauhauswerkstätten*, 8, translated from German.

4. COMPARISON UNDER CULTURAL, ARTISTIC AND POLITICAL ASPECTS

The following section examines four exemplary comparative aspects to explore the cultural, artistic, and political dimensions of the two institutions, highlighting both their differences and similarities. These aspects are based on the information obtained in the previous chapters and are understood as an evaluation.

4.1 REASONS FOR INITIATION

First, the reasons for the initiation of the Bauhaus and the NEB show how architecture and design react to social challenges and illustrate how historical and current crises affect creative visions. Decisive motives and values are important to justify and establish these institutions.

The New European Bauhaus was created as a complement to the European Green Deal and is, therefore, not an independent, revolutionary movement or university like the historic Bauhaus. In the NEB, architects, artists, and researchers take on the role of masters by conveying the values. On the other hand, EU citizens take on the role of students. Similar to the Bauhaus, they are actively involved in shaping the future of the NEB. Instead of placing art and architecture at the center, the NEB uses these disciplines as tools to promote sustainable solutions for the built environment, bring together diverse stakeholders, and unite aesthetics and environmental awareness. This decentralized organization enables local actions and local identities in different places at the same time but weakens the collaborative, centralized development of ideas. As there is no main building or location, the NEB lacks a strong physical identity that could serve as a symbol and landmark. This makes the visibility, coherence, and long-term institutional anchoring of the initiative more difficult.

As a political program of the EU Commission for the European environmental and social agenda, the NEB serves as a social transformation and mediator between policy, research, and practice, without being artistic or architectural avant-garde itself.

In contrast to the NEB, the Bauhaus was founded as a central institution and school for art and crafts to develop an uniform, modern design language with the unification of various crafts. These values of natural

development formed the core themes of Walter Gropius' vision and were not interpreted as additional tools. In response to industrialization, the aim was to create functional and aesthetically reduced designs to explore new production methods and the democratization of design. Through its central organization with a fixed location – initially in Weimar, later in Dessau and Berlin – the Bauhaus offered a clear identity and became an important hub for artistic and architectural innovation. Politically, the Bauhaus reflected the democratization of design, whose ideological experimental foundations were shaped by the Weimar Republic.

4.2 SOCIAL AND POLITICAL REACH

Secondly, this aspect reflects the global dimension of both design movements and recognizes the change over time. The comparison also illustrates how different artistic movements establish themselves geographically and socially when they have different starting points and political influences. It plays a crucial role in shaping how the Bauhaus and the NEB are understood and received. The study helps to contextualize both initiatives not only as design initiatives but also as political instruments.

The NEB is inherently a political institution as it is a direct extension of the European Green Deal and the EU's broader sustainability and innovation agenda. It reflects certain economic and neoliberal governance models within the EU, as it relies heavily on private-public partnerships, market orientation, and economic efficiency. It promotes innovation and solutions that are both sustainable and market-compatible, often leading to a stronger role for the market in solving social and environmental problems. In addition, the NEB is supported by EU initiatives and funding programs that contribute to the creation of growth and competition within a neoliberal framework. This places responsibility for change not only on the state, but also on private actors and market mechanisms.

Through its orientation as a Europe-wide and global program, the NEB promotes international cooperation and uses digital platforms to enable broad participation. Particular emphasis is placed on promoting craft, environmental, and aesthetic innovations that are rooted locally but can also have a global impact.

As the EU provides political support for the NEB, it plays a central role in implementing the political agenda. Financial support and visibility at the European level give the NEB a significant reach and presence, which is also its greatest dependency. The institution is always dependent on European and political structures and cannot function and act alone. In addition, the political situation in Europe influences the

effectiveness of NEB projects and can cause difficulties in their implementation.

The ideological reach of the Bauhaus is unique, as its ideas had an influence far beyond the borders of Germany, although it was formed in Germany and was severely restricted by political repression. Due to the exile of many Bauhaus members to America, Israel, and Brazil and thus also the Bauhaus spirit, which was neither bound to a place nor to a time, the ideas were able to live on worldwide after the dissolution of the school in 1933. This maximized the institution's influence even decades after its closure. In an interview in 1965, Walter Gropius was already aware of this strength and power: »The Bauhaus is an idea of method that can be applied just as vividly today as it was thirty years ago. The approaches to this in our artistic work at the Bauhaus have created preparations for this.«⁶⁸ The dissemination in exile, during the rise of fascism, and the international reception led to the Bauhaus being regarded as one of the most influential art movements of the 20th century. In the USA in particular, the Bauhaus influenced the »International Style«, which has shaped modern architecture and design to this day. The 100th anniversary in 2019 showed how relevant its ideas still are today. The way the Bauhaus core values were celebrated reflects today's renewed interest in design as a tool for addressing global design challenges.

4.3 ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE POPULATION AND FUNDING

Thirdly, the accessibility for the population examines the different media of communicating and how these have changed through digitalization. Closely linked to the media representation are the financial resources, which determine the scope and style of public engagement. It reveals their underlying structures, motivations, and degrees of independence. The aim is to discuss other accessible ways of transferring knowledge and involving global communities in design processes.

The NEB is a platform for public participation in shaping the built environment through workshops, competitions, and digital networks. It »follows a long tradition of metaphors intended to enable European citizens to identify with the common project«⁶⁹ and aims to reach an international audience by leveraging digital advances. However, its impact is limited, as many projects are local and not widely accessible. Sustainable construction methods are often not affordable for all regi-

68 GROPIUS. *Walter Gropius - im Gespräch mit Friedrich Luft*, minute 00:11:10, translated from German.

69 VLOGGER. *The New European Bauhaus - A Fatal Affair?*, 3.

ons, especially economically weaker countries. EU funding for construction projects is distributed through institutions, leading to high bureaucratic hurdles. This favors large institutions over smaller players, potentially hindering the NEB's influence and feasibility.

The financial focus of the historic Bauhaus is more in the background, as this institution was a center for the teaching of modern design and architectural language, which was primarily shaped by leading teachers such as Gropius, Kandinsky, and Moholy-Nagy. Here, knowledge and ideas were passed on through art and design schools, teaching programs, manifestos, magazines, and exhibitions. Nonetheless, the Bauhaus and everything it stands for is a free spirit that can be found and developed in every person who comes into contact with it. It is a continuous process that is still establishing itself and expanding today. The practical aspects were made visible and accessible to the entire population through built projects and products by apprentices and masters. It was physical objects such as furniture, statues, and buildings that brought the Bauhaus spirit to life. As an independent institution, the Bauhaus initially acted independently, but political developments, such as the rise of National Socialism, had a significant impact on its work, as the Bauhaus found it difficult to position itself.

4.4 DESIGN CLARITY AND IDENTITY

Finally, comparing design clarity and identity is essential to understand how design principles and societal values have evolved and to identify shared or diverging design approaches from both institutions.

While the Bauhaus strove for a revolutionary reorientation of design and architecture, the NEB often remains vague in its design and methodological guidelines. It does not define a clear aesthetic or technological guideline but unites various sustainability initiatives under a common umbrella. This gives the impression that it is more of a political campaign than a design movement. It is often criticized for its lack of radicalism and visionary clarity. Without a strong visual and conceptual direction, the NEB could run the risk of remaining a non-committal rallying point for sustainable ideas.

In contrast to the NEB, the Bauhaus of 1919 developed a concise design language that is still recognizable today. However, it is important not to reduce the Bauhaus to a specific style, as its core lies in the institution's experimental spirit. The design language was characterized by clarity, functionality, and a reduction to the essentials and influenced various trends such as Minimalism and Mid-Century Modern in the long term.

4.5 THE BAUHAUS LABEL

The New European Bauhaus bears a name that raises high expectations. This specific act of naming, is a conscious tool deployed to control the collective imaginaries of societies.⁷⁰ This deliberate choice of name builds on the positive characteristics of the historic Bauhaus to transfer them into a contemporary context. However, although both institutions bear a similar name, their histories and motivations are fundamentally different. If the individual components of the institution's name are broken down, it is easier to react to their meaning before they are reunited in an overall picture.

The term »new« clarifies that current societal challenges such as sustainability, digitalization, and social justice play a significant role in architecture and design. While the historical Bauhaus faced the challenges and approaches of its time, the NEB emphasizes ecological building methods, local materials, and participatory processes. This modern approach demonstrates that the NEB aims to drive contemporary change without neglecting the aesthetic and social values of architecture.

In its »European« dimension, the NEB remains closely tied to the EU. Through financial support and political interactions related to the Green Deal, the initiative is firmly anchored in Europe, though its global influence remains limited. This sets it apart from the historical Bauhaus, which, despite its German origins, evolved into a global movement.

The term »Bauhaus« reveals the greatest discrepancy, as the historic Bauhaus revolutionized architecture, art, and design with a radical creative and ideological reorientation. Walter Gropius did not apply for trademark rights for the Bauhaus name, because trademark protection was not common practice for cultural or educational institutions at the time.⁷¹ The Bauhaus saw itself as a reform school and artistic movement, not as a commercial brand. The focus was on artistic ideas, not on marketing. The NEB, on the other hand, is less an aesthetic movement than a political and social program. Although it promotes interdisciplinary collaboration and experimental approaches, a creative upheaval of the kind once triggered by the Bauhaus is not yet in evidence. By choosing its name, the NEB network strengthens itself through a globally established brand that evokes positive and striking associations for a large number of people. At the same time, however, high expectations are placed on the movement, as it must live up to this significant name. In contrast, the historical Bauhaus in 1919 first

70 VLOGGER. *The New European Bauhaus - A Fatal Affair?*, 3.

71 DEUTSCHES PATENT- UND MARKENAMT. DPMA Walter Gropius.

had to fill its name with meaning and attribute social and artistic relevance to it. This freedom from existing associations allowed Bauhaus members to develop radically new ideas without having to conform to preexisting concepts or expectations. This approach is what made its revolutionary concept particularly expressive. While the Bauhaus thus triggered a revolution in art, architecture, and design, the NEB builds upon already proven concepts and focuses on their further development.

5. CONCLUSION

To put it in a nutshell, the New European Bauhaus adopts many principles of the historic Bauhaus but has not yet achieved its revolutionary impact. The analysis has shown that the NEB deliberately draws on the symbolic appeal of the historic Bauhaus to legitimize its visionary agenda. The legacy of the avant-garde is interpreted selectively – above all as a synonym for innovation, interdisciplinarity and social change. It seeks to establish cultural, artistic, and political reform approaches in society in its own way and has the potential to transform sustainable building and design across Europe if it gains deeper structural anchoring beyond short-term projects. »We will not be able to design our way out of a climate crisis by simply quoting a historical formula. What we need is a transformation of our ethics of life.«⁷² This quote criticizes, that merely referencing the Bauhaus legacy is not enough to address today's urgent challenges. It calls for a deeper, value-driven transformation – one that goes beyond aesthetics or historical inspiration and rethinks the way we live, build, and relate to the environment.

Beyond local implementation, questions arise about European identity and the global reach of the NEB. Integrating its principles into building regulations and urban development strategies could lead to a fundamental change where sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusivity become the standard. However, this remains an ongoing process.

While the historic Bauhaus strengthened into an international movement, the NEB could emphasize European values such as circular economy, inclusion, and regional building culture. Yet, for it to be more than just a political EU initiative, it must establish itself as a genuine social movement. Anchoring the NEB's ideas within political institutions is insufficient; they must also resonate with the broader public. If successful, the NEB could become a long-term driving force for sustainable architecture and societal change. Whether it can achieve a comparable artistic and social impact as the Bauhaus depends on whether it transcends political programs and becomes a true cultural movement.

However, it remains uncertain whether the NEB can retain the radical, innovative power and resilience of its namesake. While the historic Bauhaus asserted itself against resistance and revolutionarily broke with traditions, the NEB's deep embedding in political structures presents both advantages and limitations. The NEB remains a fascinating yet contradictory project that holds both potential and challenges. Its

72 VLOGGER. *The New European Bauhaus - A Fatal Affair?*, 2.

long-term impact will depend not only on visionary ideas but above all on the political and economic willingness to drive forward far-reaching structural reforms in Europe's built environment. In this sense, the NEB's success depends not on repeating past models, but on fostering a new ethical foundation for design and society. However, it is certain, that it has the potential to write its history and reinterpret Bauhaus values in a contemporary context.

6. EPILOGUE

Engaging with both the historical Bauhaus and the New European Bauhaus turned out to be more than a university paper – it became a personal journey into the foundations of my architectural mindset. As the research progressed, I encountered new layers of complexity that gradually shaped a more nuanced and critical perspective on the NEB. My academic years at the Bauhaus University in Weimar played a key role in this process. There, I didn't just learn about architecture; I experienced a unique culture rooted in the original Bauhausgeist. It is a place where creativity meets responsibility, where disciplines intersect, and where critical reflection is encouraged as part of everyday learning. That spirit has left a lasting impression on me.

During my research, I became increasingly aware of how strongly architecture is intertwined with political structures, social ideals and economic conditions. It is always about power, politics and ideology. The New European Bauhaus takes up central ideas of the historical Bauhaus, but often remains stuck in the symbolic space. The claim to bring about social change through design is there, but it still requires structural depth and courageous political decisions.

If the NEB is to succeed, it must be more than just a cultural label for the EU. It needs an open dialog with civil society, an honest examination of power relations and the courage to think beyond the familiar. Because only if design is once again understood as a tool for social renewal can the Bauhaus of the future become a reality.

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8. FIGURES

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FIGURE 1: Bauhaus University, summaery 2023, student exhibition, own photography, 2023.

SPRENGER. own photograph, 2023.

The *summaery* is the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar's annual summer exhibition, where students from all faculties present their projects, designs, and research to the public. It's a four-day event full of exhibitions, performances, installations, and discussions that showcase the university's creative and interdisciplinary spirit.

FIGURE 2: Ursula von der Leyen (* October 8, 1958), 2024.

EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY. EPP Lead Candidate Multimedia Content.

URL: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/eppofficial/53645721810/>.

Ursula von der Leyen is a German politician who has been serving as the President of the European Commission since 2019, and was re-elected for a second term in 2024.

FIGURE 3: Logo, New European Bauhaus, 2020.

NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS. New European Bauhaus Compass, 1.

The initiative's logo visually embodies the three core values of the NEB, symbolizing the integration of sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusion in shaping a greener and more equitable future.

FIGURE 4: New European Bauhaus, three fundamental pillars, 2020.

NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS. New European Bauhaus Compass, 2.

This gives a more detailed explanation of the logo.

FIGURE 5: Logo, Creating NEBourhoods Together Neuperlach, 2022.

BORGmann, HELLSTERN, ZOCH. NEBourhoods for tomorrow, 17.

The logo represents the initiative's commitment to transforming Munich's Neuperlach district into a model of sustainable, beautiful, and inclusive urban living. The design embodies the core principles of the New European Bauhaus by integrating aesthetics, environmental sustainability, and community collaboration.

FIGURE 6: Creating NEBourhoods Together Neuperlach, Nesting Stool (*Nisthocker*), 2024.

BORGmann, HELLSTERN, ZOCH. NEBourhoods for tomorrow, 47.

It is a multifunctional piece of furniture designed for flexible use in public spaces. Inspired by animal-aided design, it also serves as a potential nesting place for birds, linking human-centered design with urban biodiversity.

FIGURE 7: Concept Drawing, Creating NEBourhoods Together Neuperlach, Nesting Stool (*Nisthocker*), 2024.

BORGmann, HELLSTERN, ZOCH. NEBourhoods for tomorrow, 46.

It is a multifunctional piece of furniture designed for flexible use in public spaces. It shows the different construction parts and the focus on disassembly.

FIGURE 8: WeOn GmbH, Creating NEBourhoods Together Neuperlach, The NE-Bourhoods Pavilion, 2024.

BORGmann, HELLSTERN, ZOCH. NEBourhoods for tomorrow, 28.

It is modular and sustainable structure that serves as a central meeting point for community events and dialogue.

FIGURE 9: Logo, The Staatliche Bauhaus Weimar, 1919.

LOGO! - BILDERGALERIE. 100 Jahre Bauhaus. URL: <https://www.zdf.de/kinder/logo/bauhaus-jubilaeum-100.html>.

The logo of the Staatliche Bauhaus Weimar, created in 1919, was designed by Herbert Bayer and features simple, modernist typography that reflects the Bauhaus movement's focus on functional design. It marked the institution's departure from traditional academic forms, emphasizing clarity, abstraction, and the integration of art and technology.

FIGURE 10: Walter Gropius (* May 18, 1883 - † July 5, 1969), 1930.

METALOCUS. Walter Gropius, Founder and First Director of the Bauhaus. URL:

<https://www.metalocus.es/en/news/walter-gropius-founder-and-first-director-bauhaus>.

Walter Gropius was the founder and first director of the Bauhaus in 1919. His vision laid the foundation for the Bauhaus as a leading force in modern architecture and design, influencing global architectural practices.

FIGURE 11: Johannes Itten (* November 11, 1888 - † March 25, 1967), 1930.

BAYER, GROPIUS, GROPIUS. Bauhaus, 1919-1928, 21.

Johannes Itten was a Swiss painter and a key art teacher at the Bauhaus from 1919 to 1923, known for his emphasis on color theory and expressive painting techniques. He taught the preliminary course.

FIGURE 12: László Moholy-Nagy (* July 20, 1895 - † November 24, 1946), 1930.
BAYER, GROPIUS, GROPIUS. Bauhaus, 1919-1928, 21.

László Moholy-Nagy was a Hungarian artist and a teacher at the Bauhaus from 1923 to 1928, where he pioneered experiments in typography, photography, film, and lighting design.

FIGURE 13: Hannes Meyer (* November 18, 1889 - † July 19, 1954), 1928.

100 JAHRE BAUHAUS. UNESCO Welterbestätte Bauhaus. Erweiterung Um Die Architektur Von Hannes Meyer. 2017. URL: <https://bauhaus100.uni-weimar.de/en/news/news-post/titel/unesco-welterbestaette-bauhaus-erweiterung-um-die-architektur-von-hannes-meyer/>.

Hannes Meyer took over the management of the newly founded construction department at the Bauhaus in Dessau and became its second director from 1928 to 1930. His leadership focused on socially responsible architecture, emphasizing functional design and the integration of architecture with the needs of society.

FIGURE 14-16: Bauhaus Manifest/o, Walter Gropius, Weimar, 1919.

GROPIUS. Bauhaus Manifest/o.

Outlines the foundational principles of the Bauhaus school, calling for a unity of art, craft, and technology to create functional, aesthetically harmonious designs.

FIGURE 17: The Bauhaus curriculum wheel diagram, 1922.

GROPIUS, GRUNOW, KLEE, KANDINSKY. Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar 1919 - 1923. 1923, 10.

The Bauhaus curriculum wheel diagram, visually represented the innovative and interdisciplinary approach to education at the Bauhaus school, especially of the preliminary course.



AR2A011 Architectural History Thesis

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