

## The Bauhaus in Ural

When we start talking about the Bauhaus, one of the most influential art school of the 20th century appears in our mind. Until the present day, the Bauhaus is the synonym of utopian place for Avant-garde artists during radical political changes. Today, the Bauhaus is one of the most inspirational educational establishment in the fields of architecture, art, and design.

The Bauhaus was an unique school, in which the formation of idealistic principles was influenced by such areas as expressionism, constructivism, as well as the ideas of the British Arts and Crafts Movement.

The Bauhaus was founded by Walter Gropius as a school of arts in Weimar in 1919. Bauhaus was a combination of crafts and arts, and it was a new concept opposed to the traditional academic studying process. The uniqueness of the school was the collaboration of the professional skills, which were studied by masters - craftsmen, and aesthetic inspiration emanating from artists.

The Bauhaus existed from 1919 to 1933, which, on the one hand, was not so long, but on the other hand, it had a very intense and dynamic life, leaving behind a world architectural and social heritage.

After closing the Bauhaus, some of its members left Germany and emigrated; others continued to work successfully in Germany.

Little known information, that it was a relationship between the Bauhaus and the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s, which determined the formation of the Soviet architecture at the time of industrialisation.

In the early 1930s, 39 specialists from the Bauhaus, both masters and graduates, came to work in the Soviet Union. Everyone had their own reason. Some adhered to the same political and ideological direction as the government of the USSR, some were forced by the economic crisis in Europe.

From the Soviet side, the significant experience was gained in the issues of mass construction, which was used in social construction during the first five-year plans. For the Bauhaus, the Soviet Russia was the place where the primary principal of the school could have been put in practice - to work for society and the people. For them, it was a journey into the happened Utopia, which many young people wanted to see in Germany.

According to the agreement in 1930, German architect and town planner from Frankfurt am Main, Ernst May, formed his group of architects and highly qualified specialists from Germany and went to the Soviet Union to build new cities and villages. It was not by chance that Ernst May was chosen as the engineering chief of the project of construction social architecture. He had already successfully experienced urban design as a main architect of Frankfurt am Main.

Members of May's group were specialists from Bauhaus, including Fred Forbat and Johannes Niggemann, Dutch architect Mart Stam and his colleague from the magazine ABC Contributions on Building, Hans Schmidt, and also the first female architect in Austria, Margarete Schutte Lihotzky, who designed the Frankfurt kitchen. The primary goal for May's group was to share their experience and learn Soviet architect in the accelerated method of project development.

Ernst May and his team were responsible for the important construction projects of housing developments for Kuznetsk, Prokopievsk, Nizhnii Tagil, Orsk, Leninkan, Makaevka,

Shcheglovsk, Chibinogorsk, and Magnitogorsk, which was the most important of May's commissions.

German architects and engineers used the same methods that were used to construct a new social area in Frankfurt for planning and creating the Magnitogorsk. But the classification of the Soviet working force was practically absent. Runaway peasants, ex-prisoners, and children formed the working brigades.

My final project shows the connection between the Bauhaus and architecture, built in the Magnitogorsk. I decided to divide the project for two parts.

First, I went to Dessau in Germany to explore the Classic Bauhaus.

Dessau is a city in Germany on the junction of the rivers Mulde and Elbe. Bauhaus moved here in 1925 after it had been forced to close in Weimar. Walter Gropius started building three different complexes in Dessau: school building, Masters' Houses and «village» Törten Estate. Also later was built Steel House by Georg Muehe and Richard Paulick in 1927. The five houses with balcony were built on behalf of the "Spar- und Baugenossenschaft Dessau" (Dessau Savings and Building Society) by the Bauhaus architecture department, directed from 1927 by Hannes Meyer, who later became director of the Bauhaus. The Kornhaus, a restaurant and pub, was erected in 1929–30 on the banks of the Elbe near the steamship pier, and commissioned by the city of Dessau and the Schultheiss-Patzenhofer Brewery.

After thorough research on Bauhaus I stopped my view on Lucia Moholy – as reflection of Bauhaus school in photography. Her photos of the Bauhaus building, the Masters' Houses and the Bauhaus range of products lastingly have shaped the image of the art school to this day. The visual fascination of her images inspired me on photography during this project.

After that I went to Magnitogorsk to photoshoot the first social city there.

Magnitogorsk is a city named after the Magnetic Mountain, a deposit of iron ore that still uses in manufactory. The first city was planned and design by Ernst May group. May offered to build in Magnitogorsk apartments for families and communal homes at the same time. There should be small, but well-furnished new apartments. It supposed to extend village houses, first - of brick, then - of concrete and blocks, made in a simple and functional style of the bauhaus; the facades should be painted in red, orange or ocher. In residential areas should located various institutions: nurseries, kindergartens, schools that were located near houses. There also should be dining rooms, clubs, libraries and cultural centres. This was to promote a socialist sense of community, even in a spatial sense.

The socialist city (Sotsgorod) is an unique architectural complex in the left-bank part of the district, a monument to socialist town planning. German urban planners proposed line building for the first quarter of Magnitogorsk. This was a great progress compare to the previous - location of the facades of buildings were directed to the street.

Sotsgorod in Magnitogorsk was build by using plans and schemes of May's group. Ernst May and some other German specialist already left USSR when the construction of Sotsgorod had started.

The first Sotsgorod in Magnitogorsk is limited by the streets of Mayakovsky, Kirov, Tchaikovskay and other Pushkin. Its feature is in a grouping of buildings around public centers - gardens. Pionerskaya street is a main line in this quarter. Nowadays on the left and right side of the street are five well-preserved four-floor houses made of concrete, also painted in warm colors. Between the houses are spacious areas with green sites.

In the first Socgorodok in Magnitogorsk, the biggest problem is the dilapidated state of communications, roofs, and facades. During the last years, the houses were partially repaired within the framework of the federal support program, but the situation of building conditions has not changed: you can still see the abandoned, destroying buildings.

While I was shooting I have tried to keep the same aesthetic atmosphere like I have done in Dessau.

Initially, I wanted to make a comparison between these two cities. After I analysed the result of both photo shooting, in Dessau and Magnitogorsk, I came to realisation that the work looked like a comparison of «perfect building condition» and «terrible building condition». In order to avoid this situation I have decided to make a double side book. One side presented the Bauhaus in Dessau, the other side is about the Bauhaus in Magnitogorsk. Therefore, in each part of the book can be seen features of architecture, at the same time preserve the aesthetics of Bauhaus.

The reason why I have decided to make this book and have chosen the Bauhaus theme is attempt to pay attention to the situation in Magnitogorsk. The international movement for the protection of the architectural and social heritage of the Bauhaus in the Ural is becoming increasingly popular. Their work is reflected in reports, publications, exhibitions, slide films, and collections of scientific works. However, until now, it did not have official support for state institutions and it is not include protection against cultural heritage.

In future I want to continue to work with theme of Bauhaus in Ural using archives and historical documents, different texts, interviews. As a result it could be a book which could attract the attention to the endangered heritage of the Bauhaus.