

Hilberseimer: Infrastructures of Modernity (Dessau, 27–29 Oct 21)

Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, Oct 27–29, 2021

Deadline: Feb 28, 2021

Clarissa Seidel

Hilberseimer: Infrastructures of Modernity

International conference

Ludwig Hilberseimer (1885–1967) is regarded as a leading theorist of modern architecture, especially of functional urban design. This image continues to influence today's view of the architect, urban planner, and teacher. His later development, which had its starting point at the Bauhaus Dessau from 1928 onwards, received little attention for a long time. Only in recent years, has the diversity of Ludwig Hilberseimer's oeuvre been examined anew: his art criticism in *Sozialistische Monatshefte* in the 1920s, the emotional intensity of his early years in exile in Chicago, and the ecological urbanism of his late creative phase.

Surveys of the work of Ludwig Hilberseimer were published in issue number 27 (1986), edited by Vittorio Gregotti, of the journal *Rassegna* and in the volume *In the Shadow of Mies: Ludwig Hilberseimer; Architect, Educator, and Urban Planner* (1988) more than thirty years ago. The international conference *Hilberseimer: Infrastructures of Modernity* attempts to discuss the totality of Hilberseimer's work in its breadth and relevance to the present.

The annual theme of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation in 2021 is "Infrastructure." As a key concept of the modern era, infrastructure is closely connected to diverse cultural, social, political, and not least architectural and urban phenomena. In the framework of the conference, infrastructures serve as the leitmotif; they reveal the paradigmatic character of Hilberseimer's work for the first half of the twentieth century.

Infrastructures of the City

In his theoretical writings, Hilberseimer developed an infrastructural logic for his urban concepts. Whereas in *Grossstadtarchitektur* (1927, translated as *Metropolis-architecture* in 2012), he was still focused on solving infrastructural problems by means of vertical layering, in his Chicago years he interwove the city and the country into a new unity.

Infrastructures of Authorship

Ludwig Hilberseimer was one of the most distinguished authors at the Bauhaus and among the modern architects. He relied on publishing infrastructures: As editor of *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, he was part of the art and avant-garde circle of Berlin in the 1920s. In Paul and Lola

Theobold, publishers in Chicago, he found partners who documented his writing process in lavishly designed books.

Aesthetics of Infrastructure

The early urban planning drawings of Ludwig Hilberseimer were usually misunderstood as designs. Yet Hilberseimer himself characterized them in *Grossstadtarchitektur* (1927) as schemes and compared them to a grammar. Over the years, Hilberseimer refined the representations of his drawings, he increasingly moved away from the architect's traditional means of rendering towards an infrastructural aesthetic of the planner.

The organizers of the international conference *Hilberseimer: Infrastructures of Modernity* welcome proposals for contributions on these and other related themes. Please send your proposal (max. 300 words) and information on your biography and research interests by 28 February 2021 to: hilberseimer@bauhaus-dessau.de.

In a two-year research project (2020–22), supported by the Ministry of Economics, Science, and Digitalization of the State of Saxony-Anhalt, a team of researchers will produce a historical, critical edition of Ludwig Hilberseimer's *The New City* (1944). Building on that, an *Intermezzo* on Ludwig Hilberseimer will open as a special presentation at the Bauhaus Museum Dessau during the conference, on the evening of 28 October 2021. The head of this project is Dr. Florian Strob, the research associate in the directorate of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation (strob@bauhaus-dessau.de).

The Bauhaus Dessau Foundation is a non-profit foundation under public law. It is institutionally funded by the German Federal Commissioner for Culture and the Media, the State of Saxony-Anhalt, and the City of Dessau-Rosslau.

The international conference "*Hilberseimer: Infrastructures of Modernity*" is supported by the Ministry of Economics, Science, and Digitalization of the State of Saxony-Anhalt.

Reference:

CFP: *Hilberseimer: Infrastructures of Modernity* (Dessau, 27-29 Oct 21). In: ArtHist.net, Dec 15, 2020 (accessed Jun 4, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/24136>>.