



Student's Name:

Student Number:

Dublin Institute of Technology
Faculty of the Engineering and Built Environment
School of Construction
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Module:	Principles of Furniture and Joinery Design
Lecturer:	Jennifer Byrne
Year:	2

I declare that the work contained in this submission is my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save to the extent that such work has been cited within the text of this submission.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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Introduction

In this report I will be giving an account of a designer's, (Eileen Gray), work and her history. When this project came up in class I was very enthusiastic and interested in finding out how the design of furniture and joinery was accomplished in the past. When I was allocated the furniture designer Eileen Gray I was delighted as I knew she was Irish. I was able to research the history of an Irish designer and reflect on her famous pieces and designs.

History of Eileen Gray

Eileen Gray was an Irish furniture designer and architect and a pioneer of the modern movement in architecture. She was born on the 9th of August 1878 near Enniscorthy in co. Wexford. From an early age Eileen's artistic interests were encouraged from her father, James McLaren Smith, who was a painter.

Eileen Gray spent most of her youth living between family homes in Ireland and South Kensington in London. It was in London where Gray attended the Slade School of Fine Art, a world renowned art college, where she studied painting. Here she became friends with Jessie Gavin and Kathleen Bruce, a magical sculptor.

With these friends, early into the 1900, Eileen moved to Paris where she continued her studies at the art schools Academie Julian and the Academie Colarossi. In 1905, due to her mother's illness, she settled back in London.

After her drawing and painting courses becoming less satisfying, Gray came across a lacquer repair shop in Soho, London where she was shown the fundamentals of lacquer work. The owner had many contacts in the lacquer industry. When Gray once again moved back to Paris she met one of these contacts, Seizo Sugawara. Sugawara, from Japan, was well known for his decorative lacquer and from his teachings Gray improved her lacquer work skills.

Eileen Gray held her first exhibition of decorative panels at the Salon des Artistes Decorateurs. From this Gray earned odd commissions for her work but it wasn't until 1917, just after World War 1, until she made her big break. She was given the job of decorating an apartment in the Rue de Lota. Here she designed most of the furniture, carpets and lamps, and installed lacquered

panels on the walls. This is where Gray designed her famous Bibendum chair for. Art critics favorably reviewed this apartment and saw it as very innovative. With Gray's confidence building she decided to open up a small shop in Paris, known as Jean Desert. This was to allow her to exhibit and sell her work.

Soon afterwards Gray was persuaded by a friend and architect, Jean Bodovici, to turn her interests towards architecture. In 1924 she and Bodovici began work on a house known as the E-1027 in southern France. The famous E-1027 table which is well known was designed by Gray for this house.

In the early 1930s Gray designed and furnished herself a new home, known as Tempe a Pailla, situated just outside Menton in southern France. This is evidence that Gray was a modernist architect.

Gray was forced to evacuate France during World War II. As a result of the war her flat in Saint-Tropez had sadly been blown up and the E-1027 had been looted. She returned to Paris and lived an isolated life. Continuing to work on new projects, Gray had now been almost forgotten by the design industry.

At the age of seventy, Gray began to lose her sight and hearing, yet she still managed to continue perfect when she turned a run-down shed in Saint Tropez in a holiday home.

Eventually at an amazing age of 98, Eileen Gray died in her apartment in Paris in the year 1976.

She was a talented furniture maker and had an eye for precision as seen in her modern architecture. A women who produced fine furniture which are now modern furniture classics and are still being reproduced.

In 2009 a dragons armchair made by Gray was auctioned and sold for a whopping 21.9 million euros.

(wikipedia.com)

(archiseek.com)

The following are of some photos of Eileen Grays Work:



Dragon Chair

(outrageousluxury.com)



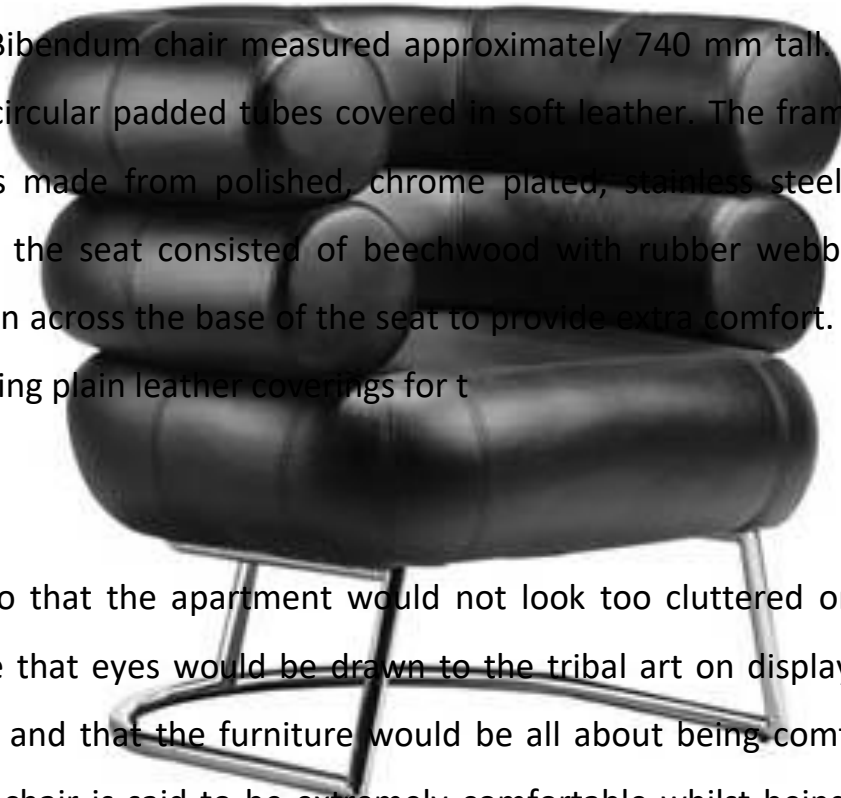
Decorative Panels produced by Gray

(eileenmoylan.com)

The Bibendum chair

Eileen Gray' Bibendum chair was one of the 20th century's most recognizable furniture designs. The chair was designed for lounging in and socializing for Madame Mathieu Levy. Gray produced this masterpiece when commissioned to re-design Levy's apartment on Rue de Lota in Paris.

This innovative piece took four years for Gray to produce. Upon completion in 1921 the Bibendum chair measured approximately 740 mm tall. It consists of two semi-circular padded tubes covered in soft leather. The frame which was visible was made from polished, chrome plated, stainless steel tubing. The framing of the seat consisted of beechwood with rubber webbing that was inter-woven across the base of the seat to provide extra comfort. Gray made a point of using plain leather coverings for t



his chair so that the apartment would not look too cluttered or messy. Her ideas were that eyes would be drawn to the tribal art on display around the apartment and that the furniture would be all about being comfortable. The Bibendum chair is said to be extremely comfortable whilst being ergonomically correct.

The chair was designed for the room in Paris so that it looked inviting and made you want to come sit down. It in itself was said to be different and never seen before. At the time the originality was amazing.

The art critics loved the chair and reviews in papers and magazines exclaimed that it was a "triumph of modern living".

As Gray didn't patent her work, the Bibendum chair is being reproduced today and would sell for approx £2300. (wikipedia.com)

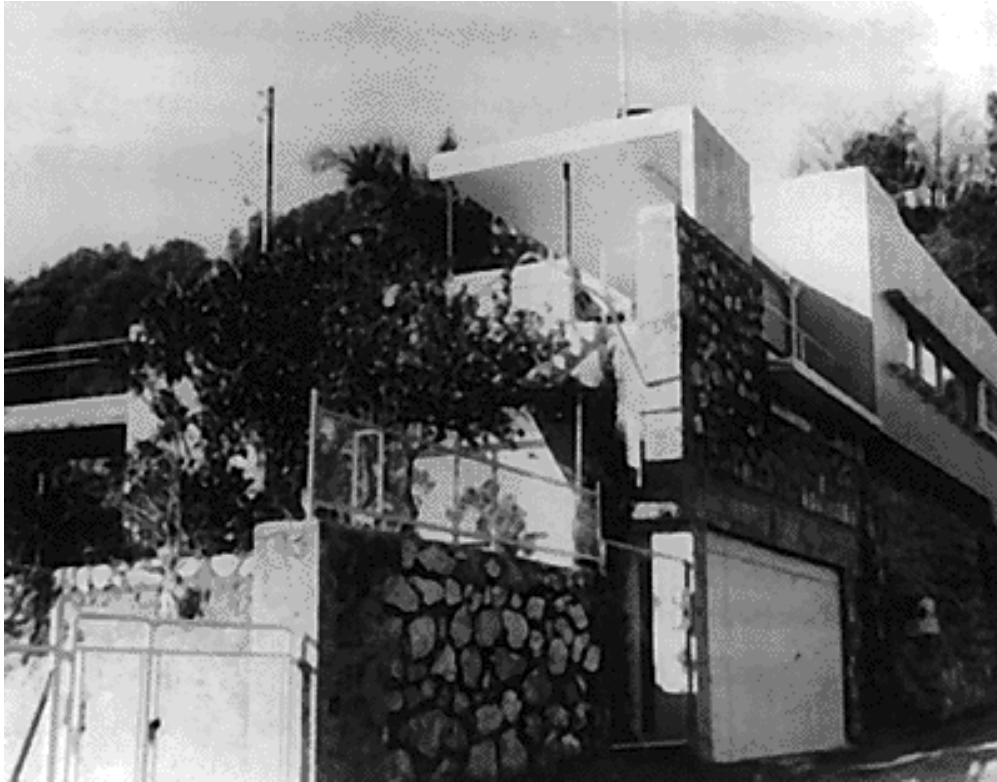
The 'Tempe a Pailla' House

In the late 1920's and early 1930's, Eileen Gray designed and furnished herself a new home, situated just outside Menton in southern France. This is another icon of modernist architecture which Gray has produced. It was a place designed for her to dwell and work, a place which she could constantly change with multi-purposed furniture.

As Gray always challenged herself, she built this house on existing structures. The house was designed like a ship. She accomplished this by using forms that were long and narrow, many decks for views and levels for storage. The views were of the city and the sea and were more visible from the many balconies and large windows which Gray positioned around the house. The women also liked her privacy and enjoyed her space. This can be viewed on the plans of 'Tempe a Pailla' on her choice of where she positioned her rooms. The bedrooms and courtyard were tucked away at the back of the house, revealing a tranquil view of the distant mountains. Gray designed each room with regard to where she would receive the most sunlight. She even incorporated a way in which she could control the light in certain rooms.

([wikipedia.com](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tempe_a_Pailla))

The following is a picture of the 'Tempe a Pailla' house:



(flickr.com)



(multimania.fr)

The E-1027 House

The E-1027 was designed by Eileen Gray along with her friend Jean Badovici between 1926 and 1929. Its use of a holiday home was a showpiece of modern architecture and furniture. The name of the house is a code. E for Eileen, 10 for J, the 10th letter of the alphabet, and following this 2 for B and 7 for G. Gray was responsible for most of the design and for overseeing the building process while Badovici provided inspiration and assisted in technical matters.

The E-1027 was built on an isolated stretch of the French Riveara overlooking the bay of Monaco. They chose to build on this for its beautiful views. Wishing to build a house which interacted with the natural elements, Gray developed the design to incorporate a relationship with the sun, wind and sea. Every room has a balcony, giving a beautiful view, and the shutters and windows are adjustable, allowing the inhabitant to engage with the sea and the hills surrounding the villa.

The house was designed as simple and efficient, with areas of built-in furniture and no wasted space. The main level of the house consists of a large open living room with a sleeping alcove and shower area for guests, a study/boudoir and bedroom, bath, and indoor and outdoor kitchens. The lower level consists of a large covered sitting area, a guest bedroom, housekeeper's quarters, and a toilet.

Gray designed the furniture as well as collaborating with Badovici on its structure. One of her most famous pieces was designed for the house, the E-1027 table. This table consists of two 'telescopic tubes' made from stainless steel supporting a tempered glass top. The height of the table can be adjusted

by sliding to the preferred height and locking in place using the pin and chain. The E-1027 table is still manufactured today. It looks as modern today as it did when it was originally designed by Gray. It proves that Gray was a pioneer of the modern movement in architecture.

Le Corbusier, a famous architect, was quite impressed by the house, and built a summer house nearby. Le Corbusier left his mark on the building in the form of several colorful wall murals.

The house has been in poor repair for years, but plans for its renovation are being prepared by the French government, who have designated it a French National Cultural Monument. As a result the state of France and the city of Roquebrune Cap Martin bought the villa in 1999 and made it secure provisionally. Renovations are still under progress today.

Everything about the E-1027 demonstrates Gray's most fundamental contribution to modern architecture.

(www.e-1027.org)

(wikipedia.com)

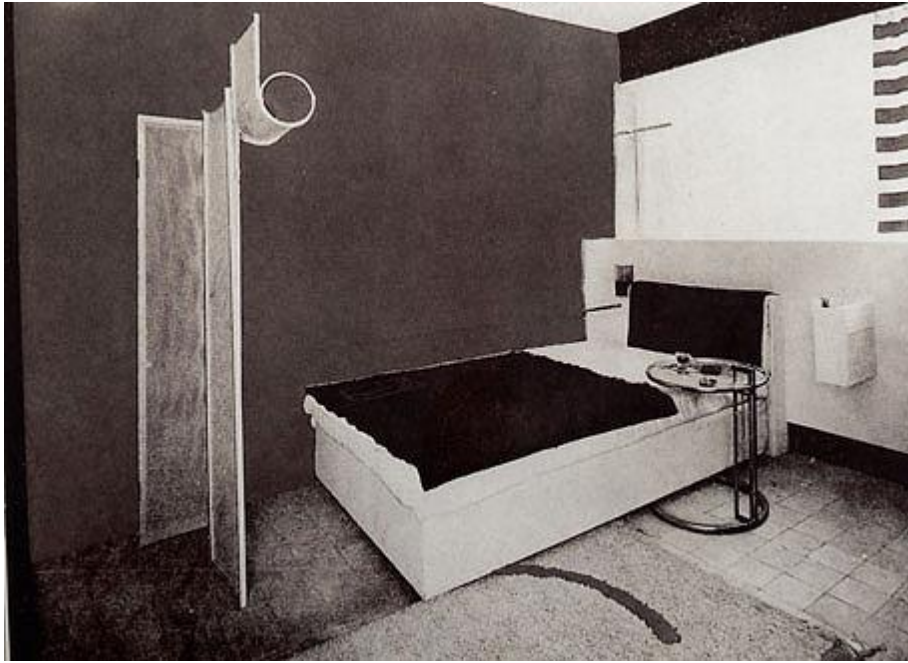
The following images are of the E-1027 house and furniture:



(archiseek.com)







(Google-images.com)

Conclusion

I felt this project gave me a better understanding of how furniture and architecture was demonstrated in the past. I believe I have gained an abundance of knowledge of Eileen Gray even though the information and source of information was limited.

There is no doubt that Gray was a famous Irish figure and had attention to detail when producing modern movements of architecture and furniture.

Today the National Museum of Ireland have a permanent display of Grays work. The Eileen Gray exhibition is on display at the Decorative Arts & history site in Collins Barracks, Dublin. Regarded as one of the most influential 20th Century designers and architects, the exhibition includes such important items as the adjustable chrome table and the non-conformist chair. The exhibition also values Gray on a personal level, including family photographs, her lacquering tools, and personal ephemera. It illustrates an account of her professional development from art student in London and Paris to mature, innovative architect. The exhibition honors the memory of Eileen Gray, modern self-taught architect and designer.

(museum.ie)

References

General information:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eileen_Gray

<http://archiseek.com/2010/gray-eileen-1888-1976/#.UXpcJEIOP4g>

<http://www.e1027.org/index.php?/about/about-friends-of-e1027/>

Dragon Chair Image:

<http://outrageousluxury.com/%E2%80%9Cdragons%E2%80%9D-chair-by-eileen-gray/>

Decorative Panels Image:

<http://www.eileenmoylan.com/2011/03/eileen-gray/>

Tempe a Pailla Image:

<http://membres.multimania.fr/floreportages/eileen/castellar1.jpg>

Museum Details:

<http://www.museum.ie/en/exhibition/eileen-gray-introduction.aspx>

Appendix

From: gillettian92@gmail.com [mailto:gillettian92@gmail.com]
Sent: 20 April 2013 11:00
To: Marketing
Subject: Eileen Gray Pictures

To whom this my concern,

My name is Ian Gillett and I am a full time student at DIT Bolton St. I have been assigned an assignment on Eileen Gray and I find your website most helpful in terms of finding information and images. I was wondering if you minded if I used images from your website in my assignment. They are the ones of the Eileen Gray exhibition in your museum. I will of course reference any information gathered from your website. If you could get back to me it would be much appreciated.

Many Thanks

Ian Gillett

From: Gobel, Lydia
Sent: 21 April 2013 10:29
To: Connolly, Finbarr
Cc: McBride, Aoife
Subject: FW: Eileen Gray Pictures

Hi there,

I am forwarding this message in the hope of your assistance.

Many Thanks

Lydia Goebel

Marketing Intern

Marketing Department

National Museum of Ireland

Collins Barracks

Dublin 7

Ireland

Tel: + 353 1 6486447

Fax: + 353 1 6777450

E-mail: lgobel@museum.ie

Web: www.museum.ie

Hi Ian,

In response to your request below;

Yes you may use the images, of the Eileen Gray exhibition in our museum, that are on our museum website for your assignment on Eileen Gray.

Best wishes with your assignment.

Finbarr,

Finbarr Connolly,

Rights and Reproduction,

East Annexe,

National Museum of Ireland,

Collins Barracks,

Benburb Street,

Dublin, 7.

Ireland

Tel: 00353 1 6486473

Fax: 00353 1 6777909

Email: fconnolly@museum.ie

Sent from Windows Mail