

# [Introduction architect and modernist designer eileen grey.](https://assignbuster.com/introduction-architect-and-modernist-designer-eileen-grey/)

IntroductionIn this essay I will examine the quote ‘ Tocreate one must first question everything’ and in relation to that how two artmovements had its differences and similarities, yet those holds true to its principlesand values to create a distinct style. The quote stated at first are the wordsof this Irish architect and modernist designer Eileen Grey.

She was a prominentfigure in modern architecture during the 20th Century. Eileen Gray beganher career as lacquer artist, then a furniture designer and finally as anarchitect at which the industry was lead mostly by male designers who weremembers of different movements such as De Stijl. But she remained independentduring this period (Espegel, C, 2007). She was known as ‘ mother of modernism’during late 1920’s and early 1930’s when she designed some of her best-knownfurniture designs.

(Barlex, D, 2007, p50) She was neglected for most of hercareer and is now regarded as one of the most influential architect andfurniture designers in early 20th Century. Her works inspired manyartists which later inspired Modernism and Art Decco. (Barlex, D, 2007). Gray was viewed as a self-madearchitect. In her words she said, “ I started really by myself, sort ofmaking plans of buildings”(MacCarthy, 2005). Her architecture grownwithout the training or the custom of the large office.

Many of the famous artistsand architects have tried to teach us for many years is to not once underratethe power of design. Eileen Grey was such artist who was multi-talented andproven to be a game changer in the field of modern art and architecture. To understand the meaning and backgroundbehind this quote I have chosen two modernist art movements Bauhaus and Cubism. These two art movements have impacted art in iconic way which can be reflectedstill now. There are two examples for each of these art forms. In Bauhaus artmovement I will be focusing on Bauhaus Dessau and how it influenced in shapingthe modernist environment. While in Cubism I will be focusing on a painting byworld famous painter Pablo Picasso and one of his iconic painting during hisAfrican Period.

i) Bauhaus Building, Dessau – Bauhaus ArtMovement  “ The ultimate aim of all creativeactivity is the building” Whitford (1993, p. 38) The above quote is by WalterGropius in ‘ The Bauhaus Manifesto’. The word Bauhaus, loosely translated fromGerman, mean House of Construction, or School of Building.

The Bauhaus artschool was founded in 1919 in the city of Weimar by German architect WalterGropius (1883–1969). The Bauhaus building was commissioned by the city ofDessau, a former municipality and currently a town in Germany. The buildingconstruction was begun in autumn 1925, completed within one year and opened inDecember 1926. The entire building occupies an area of about 28, 300 squarefeet, the volume is roughly 1, 15, 000 cubic feet. The furnishing cost of thebuilding was around 126, 200 marks. While the total cost counted to 902, 500 markswhich is approximately $230, 000. 00, which is roughly around twenty cents percubic foot.

Gropius et al. (1999). The reason why I chose Bauhaus Dessau buildingarchitecture as the prime example for this essay is because it qualifies as oneof the earliest modernist architecture while rejecting many of the usualtechniques in that time to construct a building. It was this design of WalterGropius which changed the architecture scene around that time and paved a wayto modern architecture which we are used to now.  The building is consisted of – a) Studio Wingb) Auditorium, stage and dining hall. c) Laboratory Workshopd) Bridge (Administration Offices)e) Technical School Bauhaus building in Dessau has spectacularfeatures which makes it unique with a futuristic message from the past.

Some ofthem are of suspended glass facades, exposed steel gridding and asymmetricallayout, with the three-wing complex makes it modern during this time while whenit was completed in 1926, it was downright alien concept. (Wilder, C, 2016) Bauhaus Building – found the perfect atmosphere fordesigning models for engineering mass production. The main objective of Bauhaus wasa radical idea: to reinvent the physical world to reflect the unity of all thearts. Gropius has described this vision for a blending of art and design in theProclamation of the Bauhaus (1919), which described a utopian craft guildcombining architecture, sculpture, and painting into a single creativeexpression. Gropius developed a craft-based curriculum that would turn outartisans and designers capable of creating useful and beautiful objectsappropriate to this new system of living.

In Bauhaus manifesto Walter has stated thedecoration building was once the honourable purpose of the fine arts, and thefine arts which was essential for great architecture, but today they merely existand are in complete separation where they can be rescued only by mindfulsupport and relationship of all craftsmen. Architects, sculptors and paintersmust come forward and understand the compound character of a building togetheras an object and its various fragments Whitford (1993). During twentieth century architecturalmovements have produced many iconic landmarks buildings with much historical significancewhich is still relevant and discussed up on and while further examining, onecan gain more understandings into modernism of mid twentieth century. In thebook 20th century classics (Sharp. D, 1999)among Bauhaus Dessau and other two Architectural marvels namely United’Habitation, Marseilles and Salk Institute, LA Jolla, California are furtherexplored in-depth.

These three buildings have the same mission and a sense ofurgency that modernism wanted to convey. The artists with such an inclinationfor Bauhaus are called “ Master of Form”. (Architects and Designers, 2016) Bauhaus building as it is known was started building during the autumn of1925 and completed in 1926.

The Bauhaus intends to train architects, sculptorsand painters of all level of achievement and ability as thorough craftsmen orself-determining creative artists, and to find a working community ofoutstanding artist craftsmen and students who knows to create and givespiritual accord to buildings in their entirety from building their basicconstruction to their merging finishing, decoration and furnishing Whitford(1993). Its vital objective was a radical concept: toreimagine the material world to reflect the unity of all the arts. Oneof the distinct feature of this building it expresses the modernist style whilerejecting symmetry and frontispiece façade. (The Museum of Modern Art, 1975, p. 100). Walter Gropius explained this vision for a union of artand design in the Proclamation of the Bauhaus (1919), which defined a utopiancraft guild combining architecture, sculpture, and painting into a singlecreative expression. (The Bauhaus Movement, 2016) Fagus shoe-last factoryAlong with his other works, one fine exampleof Walter Gropius marvellous design was of the Fagus shoe-last factory, Alfred-ander- Leine, 1911, it was designed with Adolf Meyer. It was one of the earliestmodern industrial buildings during that period.

(Whitford, F, 1993) To build BauhausDessau building Walter Gropius may have took inspiration from the design ofFagus shoe factory as we examine further into these two iconic structures. Asboth buildings are used for different purposes, main entrance and window areaof these two looks very similar even they are placed both in different direction. The main difference is that the Fagus shoe-last factory has the presence ofchimney and warehouse next to it, while Bauhaus building doesn’t have it.

Gropius (1919) has stated earlier that they wanted to create a purely organic structure, boldly originating its inner laws, free of fabrications or ornamentation. Thus, we can see the buildingsdesigned by him and his students mostly have followed this concept. ii) Brick Factory at Tortosa – Cubism ArtMovement Cubism is an avant-garde (boundary pushing)art movement which most often considered to be the pivotal art movement duringthe 20th Century (Antliff, 2001, P. 7) One of the primary influence that led toCubism was the representation of three-dimensional form in the late works ofPaul Cézanne.

Cubist painters rejected theold practice of art copying nature and tested techniques of perspective andmodelling. It later led to many other art movements such as futurism, dada, ArtDeco to name a few. During 1907 and 1909 was the early period of cubistmovement with the context of primitivist modernism which was later embraced byfuture cubists and avant-gardists. (Antliff, 2001).  Regarding cubism Picasso once said -“ Whenwe discovered Cubism, we did not have the aim of discovering Cubism. We onlywanted to express what was in us.

The goal I proposed myself in making cubism? To paint and nothing more, with a method linked only to my thought, Neither thegood nor the true; neither the useful nor the useless.” – (Picasso, nd) During Picasso’s African period, in 1909 hepainted Brick Factory at Tortosa (L’Usine, Horta de Ebro) which is an Oil oncanvas painting with dimensions of 62 cm x 51 cm. It is now located in TheState Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia.

It’s considered as Protocubist work of Picasso. While looking at the picture itself you can find itlooks really cubist with little cubes forming into different shapes. At firstyou will notice its location is on a hilltop, dry terrains with no grass fromwhich we understand it’s on a dry land. While examining other shapes you cansee a chimney, factory and small buildings next to it, along with some palmtrees. In this painting the main colours used are bright yellow, green, orangeand light grey. One of the striking feature of this painting is all the cubesare interconnected as there is little or no gap at all. This method of paintingwas started by Picasso and Cézanne, but it was Cézanne who started before himin interlocking these cubes.

It makes the viewer feel that the colours ineach cube moves into each other forming into different shape such as a house, shop factory etc. which makes it an optical phenomenon. Further exploring, youwill notice that the reflections and shadows near the entrance door at thefactory are as solid as the colour of the main objects. (Smarthistory. art, history, conversation, 2009) Factory at Horto De Ebro (Brick Factory atTortosa) again draws greatly from Cézanne both in colour and form.

One of themost noticeable distinguishing is however the way in which Picasso hassuccessfully handle the topographical features of the landscape. The chimneythat look in the background is, in fact, nowhere evident in Horta. Rather itsignifies a chimney used for burning olive waste, situated away from thevillage, Similarly, Picasso has encompassed palm trees in this work, though nosuch trees grew in or near the village. Picasso has simply introduced theseobjects to serve the compositional structure of the work.

Viaduct atL’Estaque  Further into Piccasso’s paintingthere is another painting worth looking into which has similar  attributes of Brick Factory at Tortosa (1909), that is of GeorgesBraqu’s Viaduct at L’Estaque (1908). Thispainting features a bridge and few houses surrounded by trees set in a cloudyday. It was painted just after Cézanne died, Braque went down to standard inalmost a kind of homage and began just to work over Cézanne style in his latepaintings. Analytic cubism was the main technique used in this particularpainting.

Analytic Cubismwas characterized by analysing objects into components and, most importantlyfor this piece of art, in lieu of numerous viewpoints at once. You can see viaduct in manyof Cézanne’s early works. It has also the same pallet and the hatchingbrushwork that has featured in many of Cézanne’s paintings.  The buildings in the foreground seem to in away, crest up and back, so that the viaduct in background and the houses. Itfeels like there’s no middle ground and there are rectangles and trianglesshapes without any circular shape. The colours are very much the colours ofanalytic cubism, grey’s and brown. (Smarthistory. art, history, conversation, 2011) If you look further closely into the painting, you can see few subtleundertones which makes the viewer the puzzled which is also in a way an opticalphenomenon which was previously mentioned in Picasso’s Brick Factory at Tortosa.

While Bauhaus and Cubism may have itssimilarities and differences but when I look into my personal works, I thinkthere are few elements of these art movements that have influenced me, As Iwork in multimedia and graphics I have done my works primarily in 3dvisualization, along with graphic design. In this 3d art work my client askedme to have design an interior of car show room by keeping it simple, with amodern style as they wanted to launch their latest model car into the marketthat year. The influence of Bauhaus can be seen on this particular work as ithas followed the basic thoughts like free of fabrications or ornamentationmaking it simplistic.  ConclusionThe similarities and differences betweenBauhaus Dessau and Brick Factory at Tortosa are very striking, as one canobserve both structures are in different forms, one is an actual building andother is a fictional painting which are conceived by well architect and artist.

Both has their own unique purpose for this world. Both are admired by manypeople around the world. One of the major difference we can notice is wherethey both are based up on, as previously mentioned Brick factory at tortosa wasbased on African primitive setting and the location he chose was of rural sidebut covered in some greenery whereas Bauhaus Dessau building was built in atown centre which arises the conflict of rural and urban themes. Both havedifferent objectives, one is to serve the society with a new art school and theother one is of helping industrialize their rural area, while the other one isa fictional painting., But the message it conveys is what it matters the most. In response to the Eileen gray’s ‘ To createone must first question everything’ quote, which is much relevant today. It is importantin creating a particular artwork before to begin by questioning the rationale behindit, because by questioning only we find answers and even more questions withthe possibility of discovering many unknown facts, this is why it makes an art valuable.

Thereis an impression deep-rooted in the design profession that using a computerearly in the design process is predefining the designed output. However, thisis not true, as this is not connection between computer, pencil or brush. Theseare just tools used in our process. Regardless of the tools we choose, to startour design method, the design is driven and navigated by the mind behind theprocess. So as earlier mentioned in gray’s quote that one must question everythingbefore creation, to question the idea of a drawing, of the course of sketchingand so on.

So, by questioning the idea that one must design and sketch free ofmodern technology. (Engel, 2017)