

Introduction architect
and modernist
designer eileen grey.



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Introduction In this essay I will examine the quote ' To create one must first question everything' and in relation to that how two art movements had its differences and similarities, yet those holds true to its principles and values to create a distinct style. The quote stated at first are the words of this Irish architect and modernist designer Eileen Grey.

She was a prominent figure in modern architecture during the 20th Century. Eileen Gray began her career as lacquer artist, then a furniture designer and finally as an architect at which the industry was lead mostly by male designers who were members of different movements such as De Stijl. But she remained independent during 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-known furniture designs.

(Barlex, D, 2007, p50) She was neglected for most of her career and is now regarded as one of the most influential architect and furniture designers in early 20th Century. Her works inspired many artists which later inspired Modernism and Art Deco. (Barlex, D, 2007). Gray was viewed as a self-made architect. In her words she said, " I started really by myself, sort of making plans of buildings" (MacCarthy, 2005). Her architecture grown without the training or the custom of the large office.

Many of the famous artists and architects have tried to teach us for many years is to not once underestimate the power of design. Eileen Grey was such artist who was multi-talented and proven to be a game changer in the field of modern art and architecture. To understand the meaning and background behind 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 reflected still now. There are two examples for each of these art forms. In Bauhaus art movement I will be focusing on Bauhaus Dessau and how it influenced in shaping the modernist environment. While in Cubism I will be focusing on a painting by world famous painter Pablo Picasso and one of his iconic painting during his African Period.

i) Bauhaus Building, Dessau – Bauhaus Art Movement “ The ultimate aim of all creative activity is the building” Whitford (1993, p. 38) The above quote is by Walter Gropius in ‘ The Bauhaus Manifesto’. The word Bauhaus, loosely translated from German, mean House of Construction, or School of Building.

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

Gropius et al. (1999). The reason why I chose Bauhaus Dessau building architecture as the prime example for this essay is because it qualifies as one of the earliest modernist architecture while rejecting many of the usual techniques in that time to construct a building. It was this design of Walter Gropius which changed the architecture scene around that time and

paved a way to modern architecture which we are used to now. The building is consisted of – a) Studio Wing b) Auditorium, stage and dining hall. c) Laboratory Workshop d) Bridge (Administration Offices) e) Technical School Bauhaus building in Dessau has spectacular features which makes it unique with a futuristic message from the past.

Some of them are of suspended glass facades, exposed steel gridding and asymmetrical layout, with the three-wing complex makes it modern during this time while when it was completed in 1926, it was downright alien concept. (Wilder, C, 2016) Bauhaus Building – found the perfect atmosphere for designing models for engineering mass production. The main objective of Bauhaus was a radical idea: to reinvent the physical world to reflect the unity of all the arts. Gropius has described this vision for a blending of art and design in the Proclamation of the Bauhaus (1919), which described a utopian craft guild combining architecture, sculpture, and painting into a single creative expression. Gropius developed a craft-based curriculum that would turn out artisans and designers capable of creating useful and beautiful objects appropriate to this new system of living.

In Bauhaus manifesto Walter has stated the decoration building was once the honourable purpose of the fine arts, and the fine arts which was essential for great architecture, but today they merely exist and are in complete separation where they can be rescued only by mindful support and relationship of all craftsmen. Architects, sculptors and painters must come forward and understand the compound character of a building together as an object and its various fragments Whitford (1993). During twentieth century architectural movements have produced many iconic landmarks buildings <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-architect-and-modernist-designer-eileen-grey/>

with much historical significance which is still relevant and discussed up on and while further examining, one can gain more understandings into modernism of mid twentieth century. In the book 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 further explored in-depth.

These three buildings have the same mission and a sense of urgency that modernism wanted to convey. The artists with such an inclination for Bauhaus are called " Master of Form". (Architects and Designers, 2016) Bauhaus building as it is known was started building during the autumn of 1925 and completed in 1926.

The Bauhaus intends to train architects, sculptors and painters of all level of achievement and ability as thorough craftsmen or self-determining creative artists, and to find a working community of outstanding artist craftsmen and students who knows to create and gives spiritual accord to buildings in their entirety from building their basic construction to their merging finishing, decoration and furnishing Whitford(1993). Its vital objective was a radical concept: to imagine the material world to reflect the unity of all the arts. One of the distinct feature of this building it expresses the modernist style while rejecting symmetry and frontispiece façade. (The Museum of Modern Art, 1975, p. 100). Walter Gropius explained this vision for a union of art and design in the Proclamation of the Bauhaus (1919), which defined a utopian craft guild combining architecture, sculpture, and painting into a single creative expression. (The Bauhaus Movement, 2016) Fagus shoe-last factory Along with his other works, one fine example of Walter Gropius <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-architect-and-modernist-designer-eileen-grey/>

marvellous design was of the Fagus shoe-last factory, Alfred-ander- Leine, 1911, it was designed with Adolf Meyer. It was one of the earliest modern industrial buildings during that period.

(Whitford, F, 1993) To build Bauhaus Dessau building Walter Gropius may have took inspiration from the design of Fagus shoe factory as we examine further into these two iconic structures. As both buildings are used for different purposes, main entrance and window area of 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 of chimney 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 buildings designed by him and his students mostly have followed this concept. ii) Brick Factory at Tortosa – Cubism Art Movement Cubism is an avant-garde (boundary pushing) art movement which most often considered to be the pivotal art movement during the 20th Century (Antliff, 2001, P. 7) One of the primary influence that led to Cubism was the representation of three-dimensional form in the late works of Paul Cézanne.

Cubist painters rejected the old practice of art copying nature and tested techniques of perspective and modelling. It later led to many other art movements such as futurism, dada, Art Deco to name a few. During 1907 and 1909 was the early period of cubist movement with the context of primitivist modernism which was later embraced by future cubists and avant-gardists.

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(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,

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2009) Factory at Horta De Ebro (Brick Factory at Tortosa) again draws greatly from Cézanne both in colour and form.

One of the most noticeable distinguishing is however the way in which Picasso has successfully handle the topographical features of the landscape. The chimney that look in the background is, in fact, nowhere evident in Horta. Rather it signifies a chimney used for burning olive waste, situated away from the village, Similarly, Picasso has encompassed palm trees in this work, though no such trees grew in or near the village. Picasso has simply introduced these objects to serve the compositional structure of the work.

Viaduct at L'Estaque Further into Picasso's painting there is another painting worth looking into which has similar attributes of Brick Factory at Tortosa (1909), that is of Georges Braque's Viaduct at L'Estaque (1908). This painting features a bridge and few houses surrounded by trees set in a cloudy day. It was painted just after Cézanne died, Braque went down to standard in almost a kind of homage and began just to work over Cézanne style in his late paintings. Analytic cubism was the main technique used in this particular painting.

Analytic Cubism was characterized by analysing objects into components and, most importantly for this piece of art, in lieu of numerous viewpoints at once. You can see viaduct in many of Cézanne's early works. It has also the same pallet and the hatching brushwork 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. It feels like there's no middle ground and there are rectangles and triangles shapes

without any circular shape. The colours are very much the colours of analytic cubism, grey's and brown. (Smarthistory. art, history, conversation, 2011) If you look further closely into the painting, you can see few subtle undertones which makes the viewer the puzzled which is also in a way an optical phenomenon which was previously mentioned in Picasso's Brick Factory at Tortosa.

While Bauhaus and Cubism may have its similarities and differences but when I look into my personal works, I think there are few elements of these art movements that have influenced me, As I work in multimedia and graphics I have done my works primarily in 3d visualization, along with graphic design. In this 3d art work my client asked me to have design an interior of car show room by keeping it simple, with a modern style as they wanted to launch their latest model car into the market that year. The influence of Bauhaus can be seen on this particular work as it has followed the basic thoughts like free of fabrications or ornamentation making it simplistic. Conclusion The similarities and differences between Bauhaus Dessau and Brick Factory at Tortosa are very striking, as one can observe both structures are in different forms, one is an actual building and other 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 many people around the world. One of the major difference we can notice is where they both are based up on, as previously mentioned Brick factory at tortosa was based on African primitive setting and the location he chose was of rural side but covered in some greenery whereas Bauhaus Dessau building was built in a town centre which arises the conflict of rural and urban themes. <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-architect-and-modernist-designer-eileen-grey/>

Both have different objectives, one is to serve the society with a new art school and the other one is of helping industrialize their rural area, while the other one is a fictional painting., But the message it conveys is what it matters the most. In response to the Eileen Gray's 'To create one must first question everything' quote, which is much relevant today. It is important in creating a particular artwork before to begin by questioning the rationale behind it, because by questioning only we find answers and even more questions with the possibility of discovering many unknown facts, this is why it makes an art valuable.

There is an impression deep-rooted in the design profession that using a computer early in the design process is predefining the designed output. However, this is not true, as this is not connection between computer, pencil or brush. These are just tools used in our process. Regardless of the tools we choose, to start our design method, the design is driven and navigated by the mind behind the process. So as earlier mentioned in Gray's quote that one must question everything before creation, to question the idea of a drawing, of the course of sketching and so on.

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