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EILEEN GRAY
PIONEER OF DESIGN

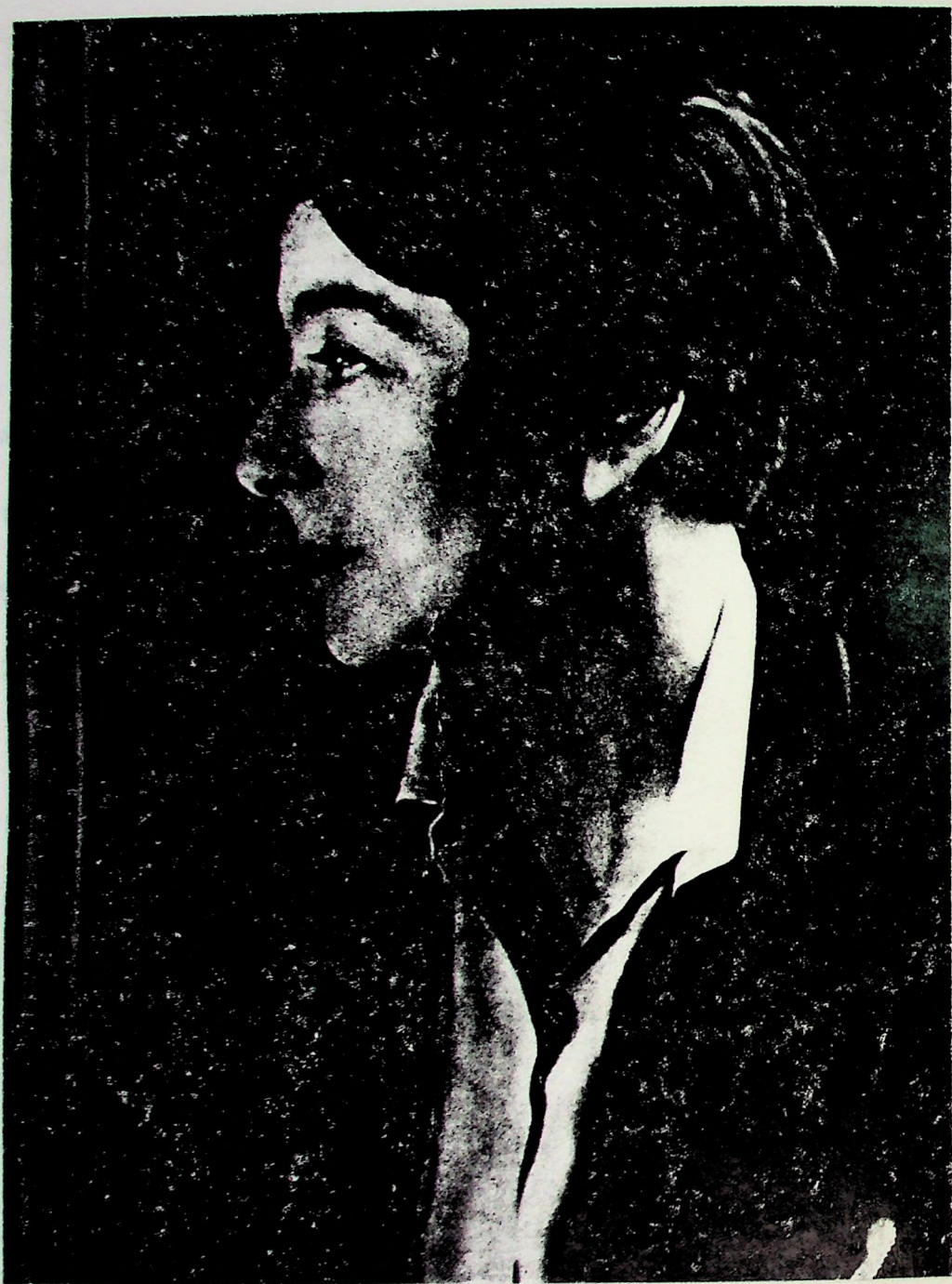


JENNIFER FITZGIBBON

4TH YEAR INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

HISTORY OF ART THESIS

APRIL 1985



A photograph of Eileen Gray in her early twenties.

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Having studied the work of Eileen Gray, it is unbelievable how few designers have heard of her and how someone with such flair and sometimes brilliance can be so unappreciated and undocumented. She had what seems to be a very happy life, always free to do what she wanted; fly a biplane, do carpentry, welding, weaving, drawing and building. She was a woman of many talents with a fresh, inquisitive, objective outlook on her life and her work.

FROM IRELAND TO PARIS

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The artistic side of her character came from her father, James Maclaren Smith, an amateur victorian painter whose work consisted mainly of scenic views of Switzerland and Italy. Eileen Gray could never understand why he spent so much time painting hot landscapes where village walls and surrounding areas looked parched and barren instead of portraying the cool green scenery in Wexford. Her mother spent her days running the family home, "Brownswood" in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, and socialising in London during the Winter. She was of Scots-Irish descent, the grand'daughter of the tenth Earl of Moray, and in 1895 she inherited the title Baroness Gray. Two years later her father, also Scots-Irish, received a royal licence to change his name to Smith-Gray, but the children chose to shorten their surnames to just Gray.

There were three other children all older than Eileen Gray; one sister, the eldest, and two brothers who were always away at school, or so it seemed on reminiscence. She had many governesses who were always chosen for their manners and how they would fit in with the family rather than for what they knew, so she felt that she may not have been very well educated. She remembers summers of riding horses down by the river Slaney and picking armfuls of branches from flowering bushes to

decorate the house. Her mother always used to bring the children to the Horseshow in Dublin where they marvelled at the hunters and showjumpers. All in all, she remembers having quite a happy childhood.

When she was only nine her sister married and her brother-in-law soon took over as head of the household in "Brownswood", probably due to the fathers absence. It was he who had the original house pulled down and a much larger one built in its place in the Scottish Baronial style, which she hated. She always remembered with pleasure the plain, rambling Georgian house set on a terraced hill amid well tended clumps of laurel and rhododendrons, but the new house spoiled the scene for her and deciding to follow in her fathers footsteps she moved away to study drawing formally in London, rarely returning to Ireland (app. A).

Her two years in the Slade School of Art were not of great importance to her work and it does not appear that any of her drawings from this time have survived. She was one of the first women students at this school and whether it was her choice of school or her fathers is not known. But even before her course finished she heard of oriental lacquer and got the opportunity to learn more about the material which was to provide the focus for her career over the next twenty-five years.

It was just chance that wandering around Soho during her lunch hour she "saw a notice in Charles' workshop

in 92 Dean Street, that they repaired screens and things in lacquer. I remembered old lacquer screens and had been fascinated by that material." "I suppose I could never come here and work" she enquired and was told "But you can - of course you can - start Monday if you like", which she did (app. B). She made friends there and corresponded with them for years after she left. She had quite casually decided to do something that was very unusual and that few people knew about, let alone attempted.

The lacquer itself is a resin drawn from a tree peculiar to the Far East - *Rhus Vernicifra* or *Rhus Succedarea*. When collected and left to settle, impurities fall to the bottom leaving a fat, translucent liquid which hardens and becomes brilliant when exposed to air. The direct appeal of lacquer is the richness and depth of its lustrous surface. Black is the foremost tone associated with the medium; a further range of colours can be achieved by the incorporation of vegetable dyes, though the palette is relatively limited. A brownish red named "Tango" in the 1920's is the second most usual colour followed by olive green to yellow. Inlays of Mother-of-Pearl, crushed eggshell, silver and gold foils or powders add variety to the colour range. The resin is applied onto a suitable wood base with a very wide shorthaired brush. To avoid the grain of the wood base showing through and marring the texture, this surface is painstakingly smoothed with pumice, then covered with a fine silk, pasted with a rice gum, and smoothed further with the application of a powdered stone known as *sabi*.

Jean Dunand was a great lacquer worker and a contemporary of Eileen Gray. He was asked about the system he used; "Try

and appreciate what is involved in the preparation of this medium.... Twenty coats are needed, no forty, since each layer must be repeated on the other side lest the wood warp.... In fact it is not forty operations that are needed but a hundred, because after each coat, the surface must be rubbed and between each of the twenty coats there is a drying process lasting four days.... The drying is done in a humid atmosphere in a dark room with constantly running water, and the finest results are achieved during the full moon!" (app. C).

So you can see how oriental in character the process was, and the incredible intricacies involved. This is the craft that Eileen Gray decided she wanted to learn about and practice in the Dean Workshop. She still kept up her classes in the Slade School so it must have been a busy time. Her father was not well and he died in 1900 after several months in Switzerland with his wife where the family visited him often. Eileen Gray stayed in London for two years after his death working in the workshop before deciding that Paris, which she had visited briefly with friends, would be more congenial to her.

HER EARLY WORK

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In 1902 she enrolled in the Academie Colarossi in the Grand Chaumiere for drawing classes and later she did a course at the Academie Julien while living and working in a studio in the Rue Joseph Barras. She still commuted between London and Paris to practise her lacquer techniques and learn all that Charles could teach her. In 1905 she contracted typhoid fever, supposed to be caused by some bad water in Paris. It was so severe she barely survived and to convalesce she went to Algeria where she no doubt first saw the flat roofed white houses that were to influence so many of the young modernists.

In 1907 she found the permanent place she had been looking for; the flat at 21 Rue Bonaparte which was an entire floor in an eighteenth century hotel. She kept up this flat for the rest of her life. Becoming dissatisfied with her drawings she began to design furniture. As she said "Frankly drawings are no use. I wanted to do something useful, so I started with relief screens and panels..." (app. D). By this time she had met and begun to work with Sugawara who was Japanese and the most experienced lacquer technician in Paris.

Her adventurous spirit never stopped doing overtime. She

was fascinated by any new technology that presented itself - whether or not it was well known, tested or approved as being safe. In 1909 she was in the party which accompanied Hubert Latham on his unsuccessful cross channel flight and had already taken her first balloon trips. Tasks in which many men would be slow to participate but as they involved something unknown and different, she revelled in them. Flying was an interest that she nurtured for many years and in the early 1920's she flew on the first airmail service in America from New Mexico to Acapulco.

Between all the escapades with flying, she was working hard on her lacquer work. All through her apprenticeship - first with Charles and later with Sugawara - she had gradually collected and invented recipes for achieving different colours and surface textures with lacquer. In 1913, 14 years after starting to learn about the material, Eileen Gray was confident enough in her work to allow herself to be persuaded to exhibit some of her pieces in the "Salon de la Société des Artistes Décorateurs". One of these was a panel showing three old figures, the center one nude and holding a lotus blossom (app. E). The main advantage of the exhibition was that her work was introduced to the general public and to one man in particular.

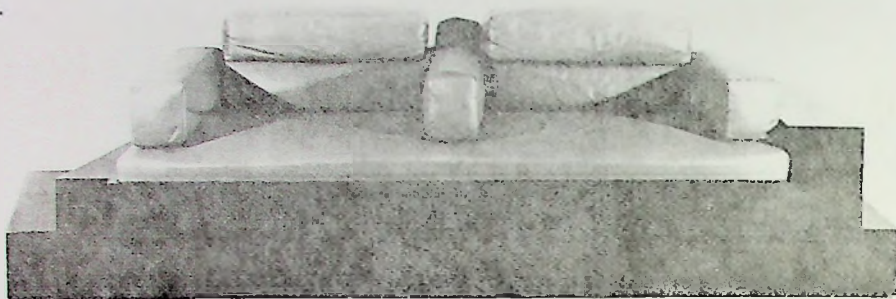
Jacques Doucet was extremely well known in Paris as a leader of fashion and as a great collector of art. In June 1912 he sold his entire collection of 18th century works which included drawings, pastels, sculptures, paintings, furniture and other objets d'art as well as the

mansion he had built to house them. The four day auction realised nearly 14 million francs, most of which went to subsidise a history of art library to be later presented to the nation. He then became a fervent collector of all modern art and his apartment in Neuilly must have glowed with Manet, Degas, Van Gogh, Cézanne, Matisse, Picasso and any other painters he thought worthy of patronage. He furnished the apartment with work by Pierre Emile Legrain, Gustave Miklos, Paul Iribe, Marcel Coard, Ettienne Cournault, Eileen Gray and many others (ill. 1). All of these artists and designers were only just starting their careers at this time and must have badly needed support. It must take a remarkable skill to spot talent in it's early stages of development and a remarkable joy to see it blossom, whereas it may otherwise have floundered through lack of confidence and no initial financial backing.

Eileen Gray made at least two tables for Doucet along with a great many decorated lacquer frames for his painting collection and, most importantly, a four panelled screen - the only piece of her work that she signed and dated. 'Le Destin' screen as it was named is a beautiful piece, nearly schizophrenic in composition. On one side is an abstract design of swirling lines in a whirlpool effect that appears to be coloured with powdered silver on a deep red background (ill. 2). The other most well known side has the same background colour, but depicts an allegorical scene of two nude youths, one gazing in anguish at the burden the other boy carries, which is an old man. The two youths are a flat blue-black colour with a hint of silver in the lines that form their basic outlines and the old man is a ghostly silver grey (ill. 3). There is no attempt to shade the

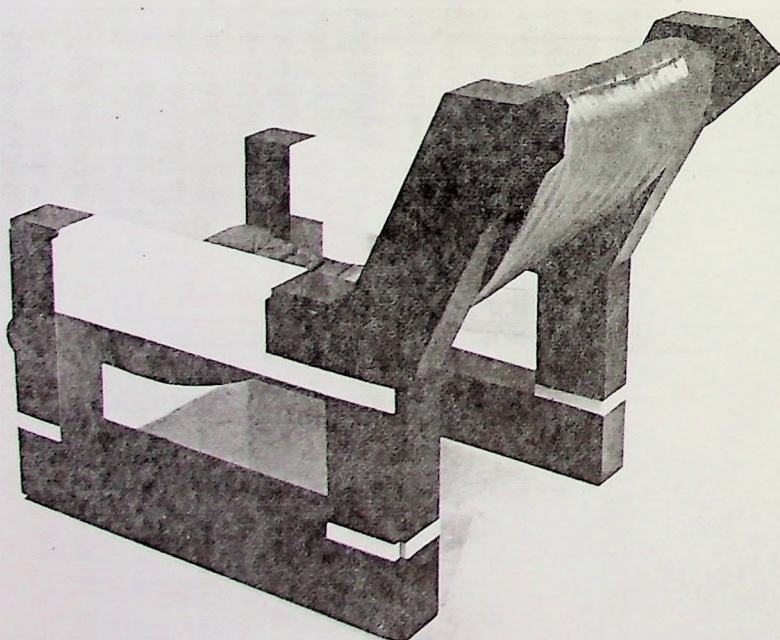
ill. 1

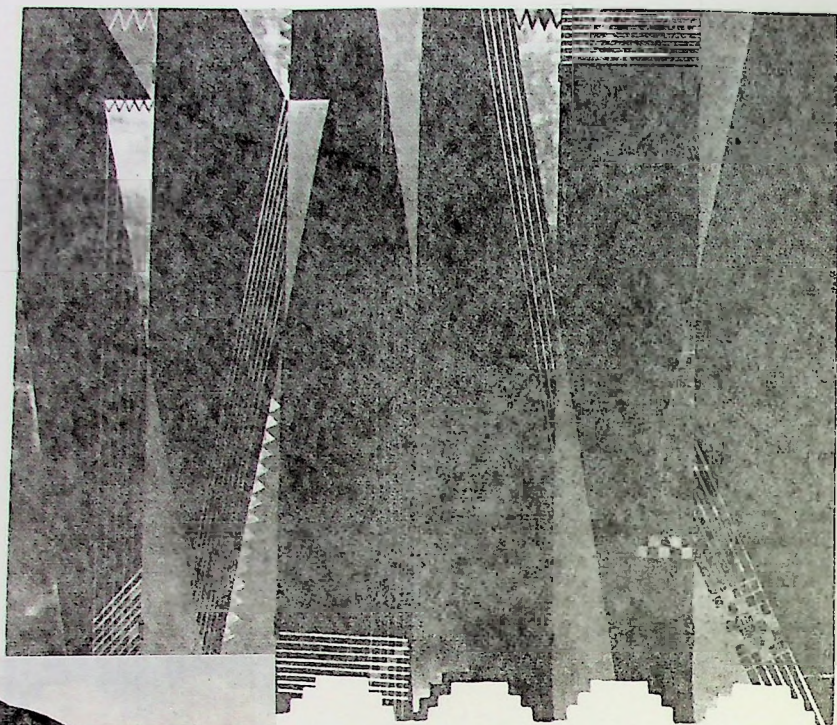
Some works by other artists which might have been in Doucet's apartment with Eileen Gray's furniture.



Pierre - Emile Legrain. Couch.

Pierre - Emile Legrain. Chair.



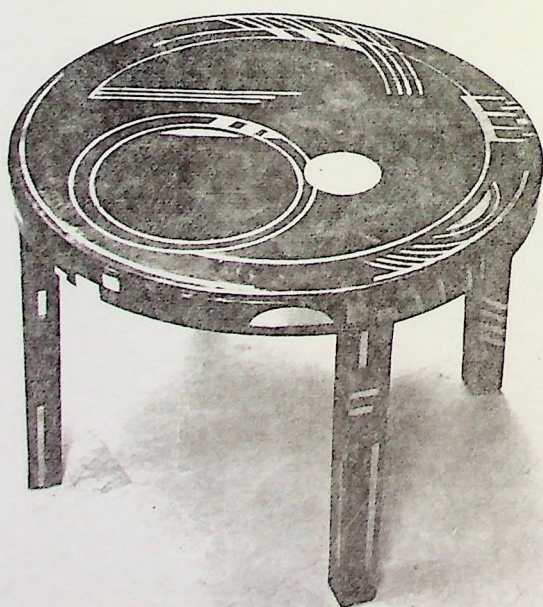


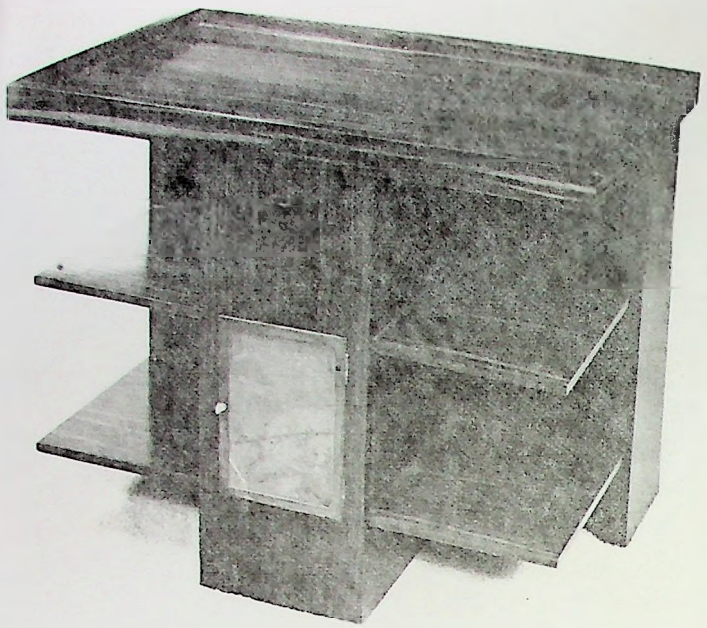
Jean Dunand. Screen.



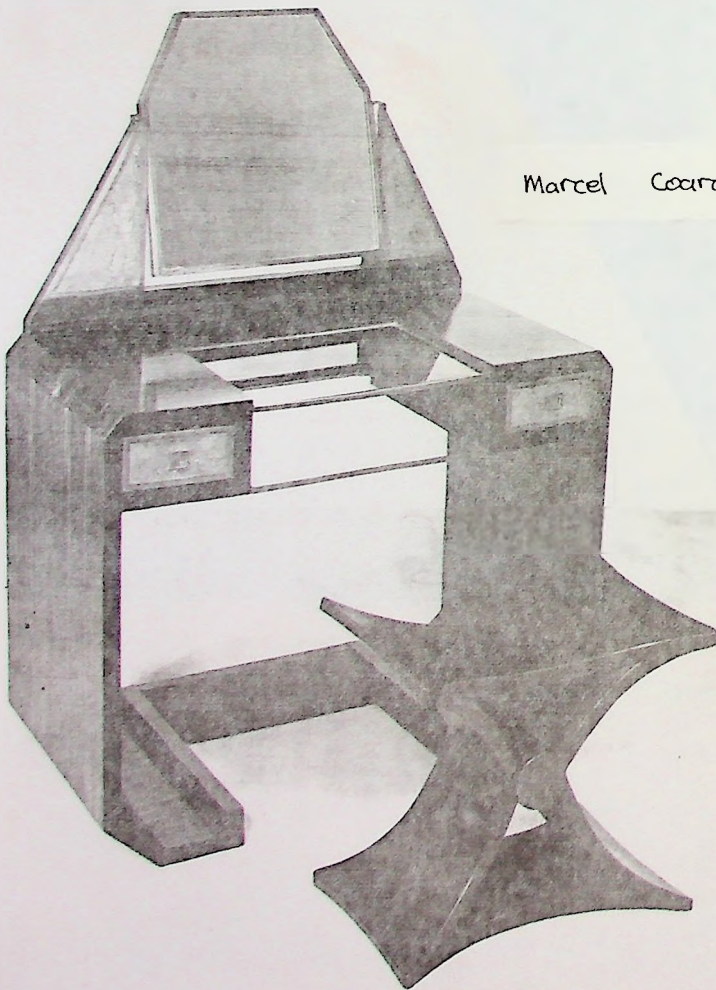
Gustave Miklos. Head.

Jean Dunand. Table.

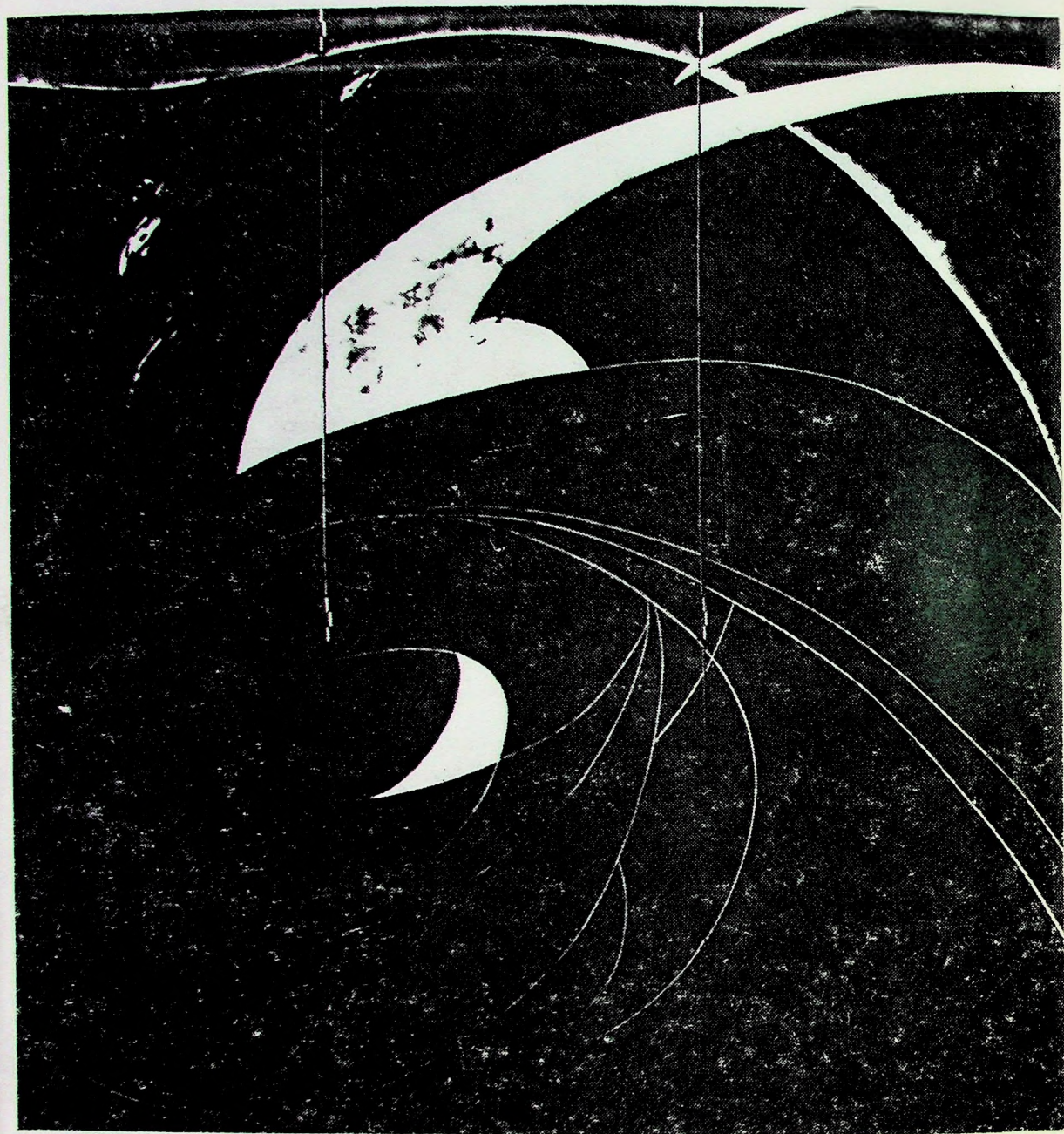




Marcel Coard. Night table.

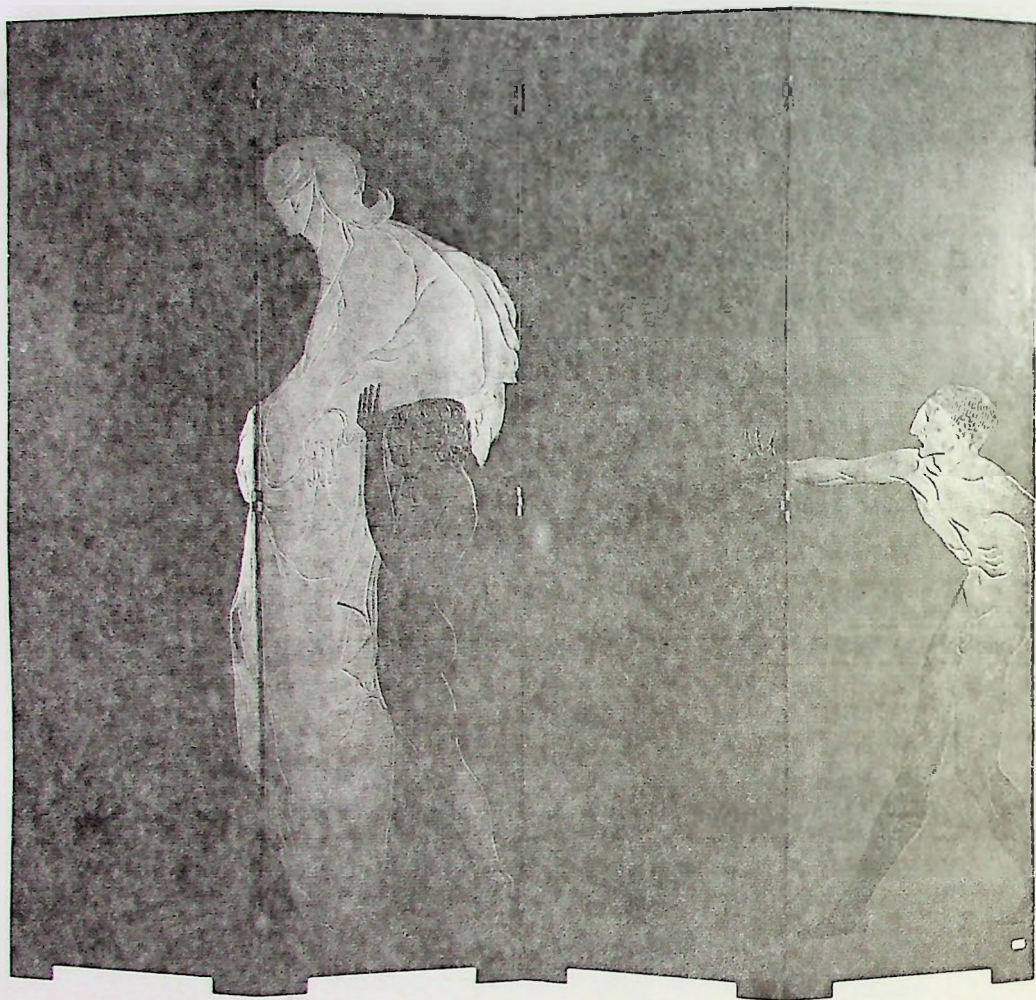


Marcel Coard. Dressing table.



ill. 2

Le Destin screen - back.



ill. 3 Le Destin screen - front.

characters or to build up a three dimensional appearance and there is neither foreground or background, but it does not seem to need anything else. It is both abstract and pictorial and the result is extremely decorative on both sides. The apparent contradictions of styles between the front and back show how Eileen Gray was confident and versatile enough to work in any manner in which she felt inspired.

Of the two tables she is known to have been commissioned to do only one is considered to be very important. It is a low, two-tiered circular table in wood and lacquer with four legs which seem to me to be inspired by temples of the Egyptians or the Incas (ill. 4). The table surfaces are deep black with no decoration except a red and silver cup and ball situated near to the edge of the table top as casually as one might place an ashtray or a bowl to visually break up a surface. They seem to be an after-thought, but the strong visual attractiveness of the piece is inspired by the legs. In black and mottled silver they give it a blocky architectural look, heightened by the play with form and space between the blocks. Although Doucet bought more work from Eileen Gray in later years he actually commissioned very little. In 1910, as well as continuing her lacquer work, she also opened a studio in the Rue Visconti to start manufacturing rugs that she designed and was thus kept very busy.

But in 1914 she encountered an interruption in her work - the first world war. It was fortunate that women were not accepted for flying corps in this war because she would have probably been the first applicant. Instead she moved

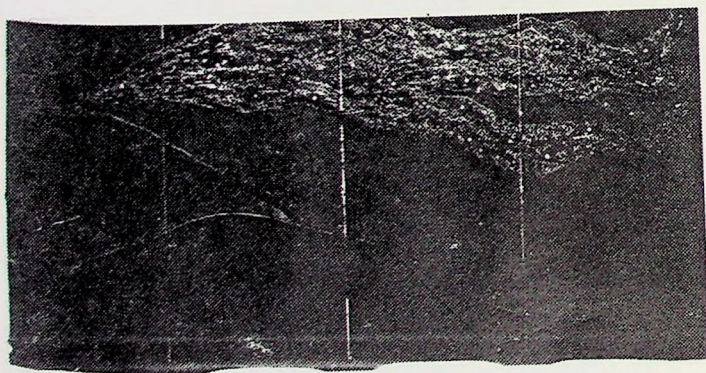
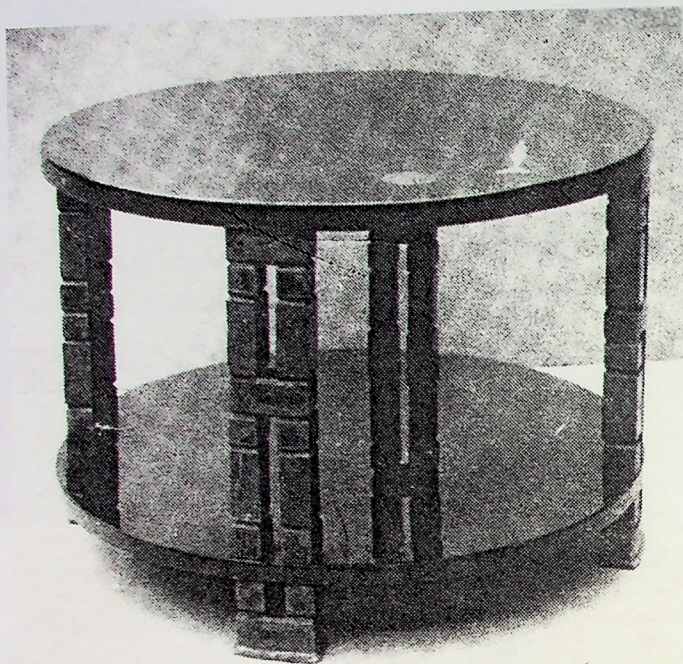
to London with Sugawara and worked as an ambulance driver as well as working hard on her lacquer designs. At this time she also started designing and making rugs in a studio in Cheyne Walk in London and the work done there earned her a sufficiently good reputation for Vogue to devote an article to her (app. F). Five of her designs were illustrated, none of which were very outstanding as great steps forward in her career, but the article got her name more widely known in artistic circles (ill. 5).

She returned to Paris after the cirmistice in 1917 with Sugawara and opened a new atelier in the Rue Bonaparte. Sometime before the war a Madame Mathieu Lévy had appointed Eileen Gray to decorate her apartment in the Rue de Lota in Paris. Better known as Suzanne Talbot, the patron was one of the most successful modistes in Paris (app. G). This assignment officially started in 1919, but several of the designs were likely to have been thought out during the war, and it was to show a noticeable development in her work; from stylized pictorial pieces, through a more fluent abstract style, to an architectural approach to her designs. Among the furniture she designed for the apartment were rugs, lighting fixtures, mirrors and lacquer panels that covered entire walls. Nearly every piece of the apartment furniture had all the characteristics defined later when the word was 'invented' in 1960 as Art Deco.

The serpent armchair and the boat-sofa are eccentric and theatrical in the extreme, a quality probably inspired by Suzanne Talbot's own personality (ill. 6). The chair is upholstered in salmon pink and it's front legs sweep up

ill. 4

Table commissioned by Jacques Doucet.



ill. 5

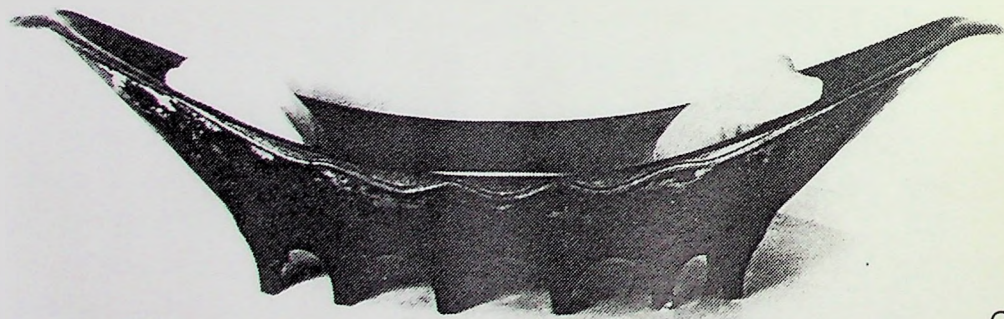
One of the five designs illustrated in Vogue was this four-panel screen in dark blue lacquer with applied silver decoration, called 'The Night'.

ill 6

The serpent armchair - see (ill. 11) at the back of the picture, on the left.



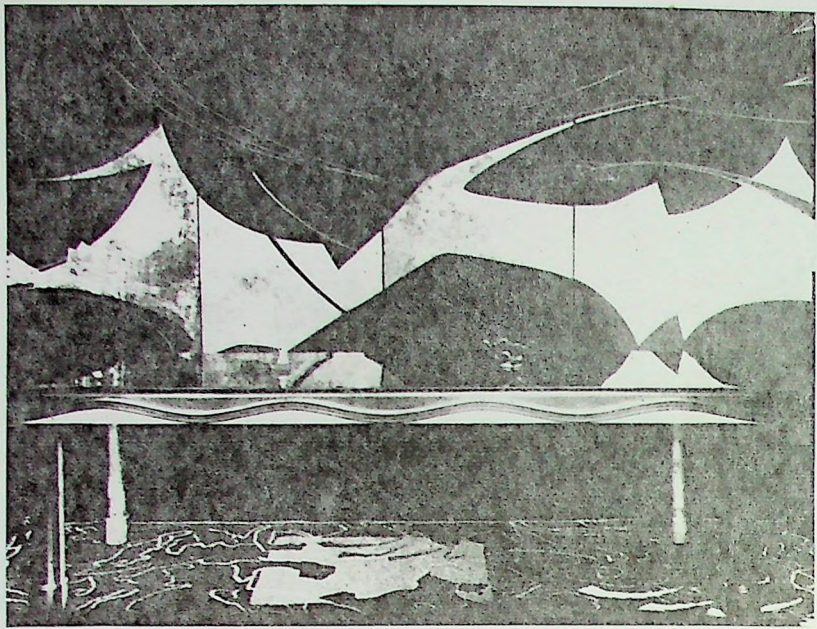
ill. 6 Two views of the chaise longue which is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



and towards the sitter becoming the armrests. These are lacquered in a salmon yellow and carved to resemble serpents. The chaise lounge is also lacquered, a mottled effect of variagated horn colours. Its curves are reminiscent of a gondola - except this one has its own bridges. The twelve legs which support it, six each side, are short with graceful arches between them which are echoed by the scalloped edges of the couch's body.

A heavy looking table with its very rectangular lacquered top, edged with wavy lines and supported on two cylindrical back legs and two square section front ones, is in very acute contrast with the artistic, abstract wall panels and rug as its backdrops (ill. 7). The wall panels continue all the way around the salon, totally encasing the area (ill. 8). One of the walls is a gently curved convex, along which the panels are only from the ceiling down to a long wall hugging bookcase (ill. 9). It is a design which turns its back on contemporary ideas of book storage as books were at that time held in massive heavy closed chests and usually elevated to eye level. The evident horizontal arrangement of this bibliothèque with recessed lines of cream lacquer between dark brown ones accentuates the low height and length of the piece. The back wall of the case is in matt silver lacquer on which are serrations of the shelves. Considering it could have been designed as early as 1915, it is a superbly simple example of modern functional design at its best which has been copied avidly since.

The most exciting area in the apartment is the corridor leading up to the bedroom (ill. 10). The walls are rebuilt



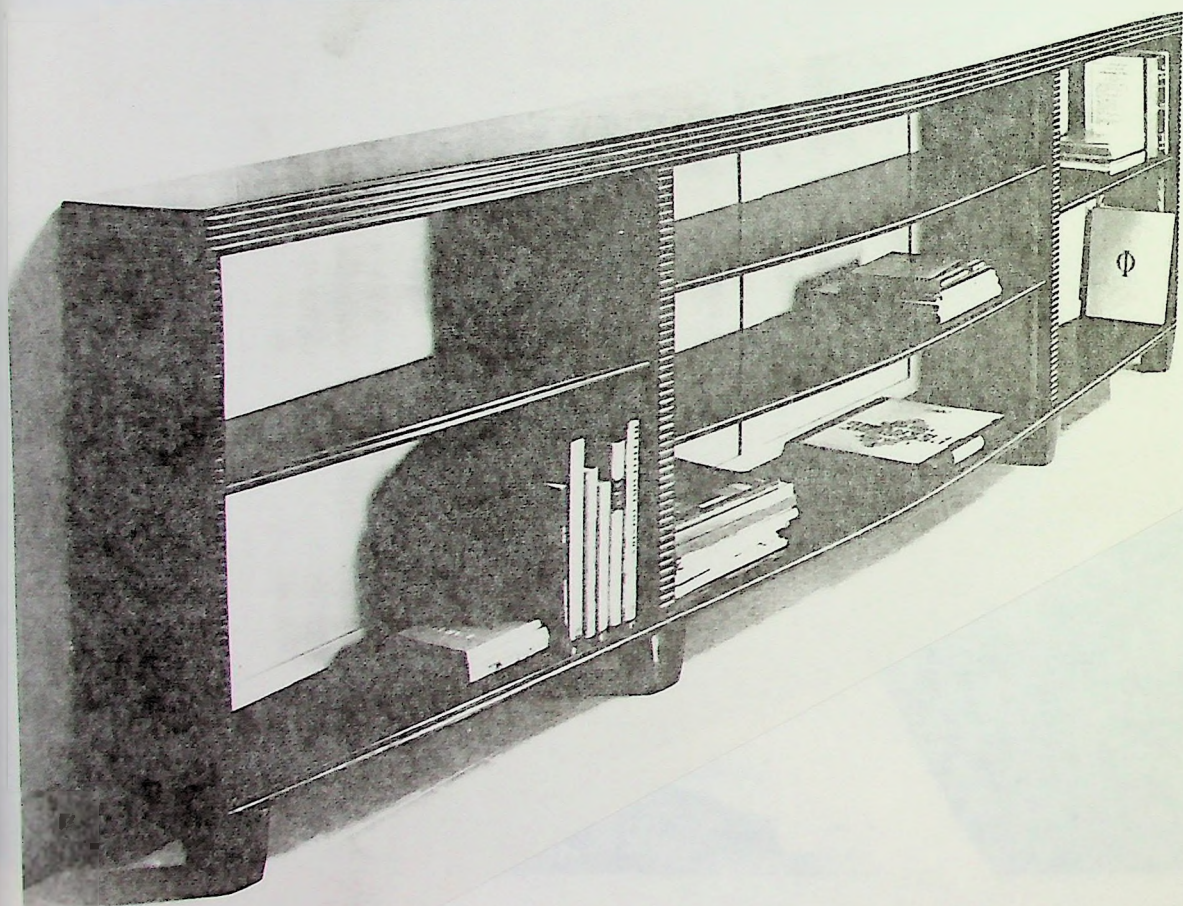
ill. 7

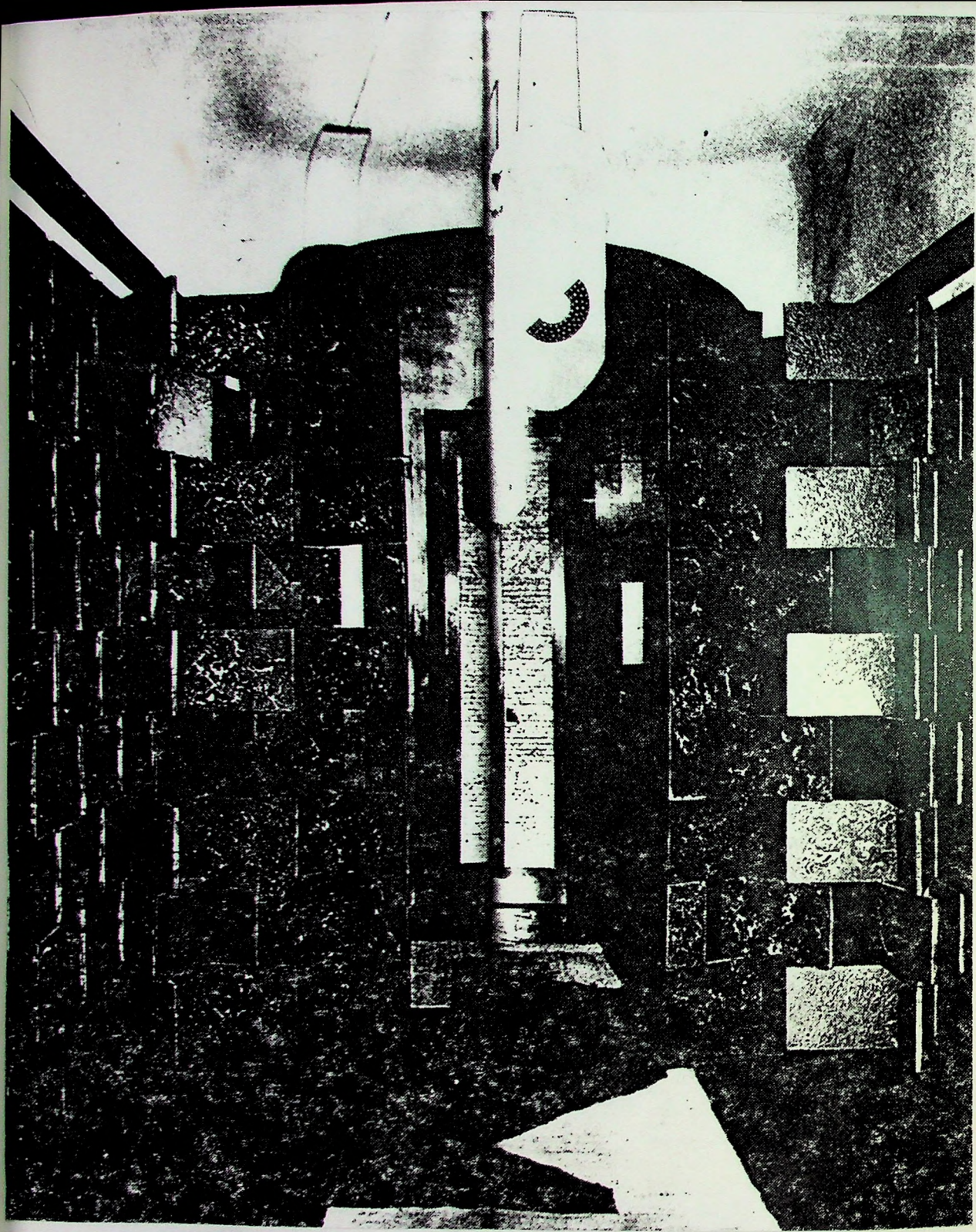
A very varied mixture of decoration and forms. The photocopy doesn't show the square section front legs of the table very well.

ill. 8 A corner of the salon, showing that the design continues uninterrupted around the room.



ill. 9 The curved bookcase, allowing ad hoc arrangement of the shelves.





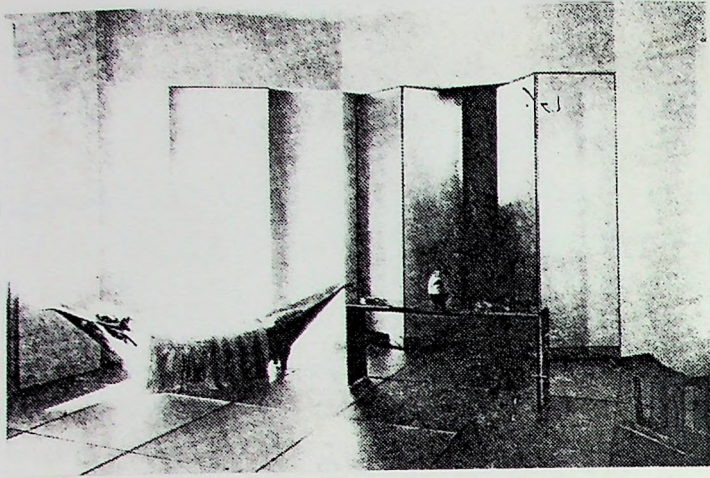
ill. 10

The panelled gallery leading to the bedroom. The light is also by Eileen Gray.

so to speak with 450 lacquered plaques, approximately 9" high, 12" long and just 1/2" thick. The black lacquer is coloured with mottled powdered stone, no sweeping lines or coloured planes; the only decoration is the lines and spaces between the blocks. The effect is very architectural and rigidly geometric. To shorten the apparent length of the hallway, the panels look as though they have been peeled off the walls, twisted haphazardly to alter the sizes and shapes of the spaces between them, and left to guard the entrance to the bedroom. This theme of connected angle-adjustable blocks was one that she developed and re-made into several exciting, freestanding screens.

The apartment was the turning point in the development of Eileen Gray's style. In it we see a move from the very theatrical exuberance that is vaguely reminiscent of the fluency of Art Nouveau - especially in the nearly circular sweep of the serpents, through the more two-dimensional decorative effects of the large wall panels, to the more refined architectural approach to the bedroom gallery walls, the plain silvered screens and the altar-like couch (ill. 11). I have described most of the work done for Suzanne Talbot as Art Deco and indeed the term applies even to the architecturally inspired pieces which show a movement towards a more modernist approach.

The term is open to a lot of confusion and is often used in the wrong context. The phrase is an abbreviation of the "1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes" at which the style was extravagantly displayed. True Art Deco furniture drew its inspiration



ill. 11 The geometric silvered screens slide on tracks in the floor and ceiling. Note also the very plain table in mid-picture.



The couch in question can be seen here against the far wall of this picture. Also to be noticed are the two tube chairs and the serpent-chair in the background. The stool in the foreground is the same one as in the previous photograph, but with an animal skin draped over it.

from the expertise of the cabinet maker in the rich French tradition. After the flowing Art Nouveau era, there was a strong need felt for some sort of rebirth. In the 1920's there was a move towards the unadorned inner beauty of things, a beauty derived from graceful proportions, simplicity and functionalism. The time-scale of this period cannot be rigidly defined, but from 1920 to 1930 is a good guide. Its origins were from the prewar years of 1905 - 1910 when some works of Eileen Gray, Ruhlmann and others were designed, yet they are also thought of as Art Deco. One tenet of the period, that form must follow function, has even to date, never been seriously challenged as an aesthetic guideline. But its second, that decoration must be contained within the piece's fundamental shape, proved its undoing. This meant that only marquetry, carved and cast bas reliefs and parquet panels were permitted, all, of course, in the best materials money could buy.

Opposition grew from architects and designers such as Le Corbusier, Mallet Stevens and others against the Art Deco movement and remarks like that from Ruhlmann; "If only the very richest can afford to pay the price of innovation, they are also the only ones with the power to sponsor it." These retaliators, the new Modernists, believed that true beauty lay in perfect adaptation to usage, and that good design should be for everyone, not just the very rich. They held that quality and mass production were not mutually exclusive which has been the accepted theory in all succeeding 20th century schools of design.

This song became stronger, louder and more voices joined the choir; Eileen Gray's was one. When, in later life, she was challenged with being an Art Deco exponent, she denied

it vehemently. In conversation she recalled her feeling at the time just after the First World War; "My idea was to make things for our time; something which was possible but no-one was doing. We lived in an incredibly outdated environment." (app. H). Her style, at that time, original and therefore difficult to categorise, seemed to be a mixture of Far Eastern and French influences well in advance of her contemporaries. She rejected the past and denied having any kinship with the Art Deco movement which she saw as being based on retrospective tendencies.

How can one view the furniture in Suzanne Talbot's apartment then if not in the light of this supposedly rejected era? In material, craftsmanship and therefore in cost, the furniture, rugs which were unusual for their vegetable dyed colours, light fittings and screens are all to be seen as having all the qualities of Art Deco. Their beauty lay in their proportions, graceful curves and understated, therefore stunning decoration, and they were made in the finest materials for the patronage of the rich. This paradox can be explained by looking at Eileen Grays position and the social climate of the time. She was neither French, nor a man, and she worked in areas of design dominated by men. Being of a private disposition and having no aristocratic or rich family to subsidise her activities, she had to rely on private patronage and expensive items that had good profit margins. It is quite feasible that she could produce objects that are considered as pure Art Deco in retrospect, while at the same time she was tending towards a more purely functional and modernist approach, also providing what her clientele expected of her.

Take for example the bookcase I have already mentioned. The shelf adjustments are quite unique showing a well thought out design, quite ingenious for one who had no design education. This feature showed how she thought about function as well as form, adapting form to follow function. Her treatment of the walls of the apartment is another indication of her feelings. She described the plaster walls hidden behind the panels as having "disgraceful mouldings" when she found them (app. I). So she covered them completely by floor to ceiling wall hangings in the bedroom and by making complete inner walls of those huge lacquered panels in the salon.

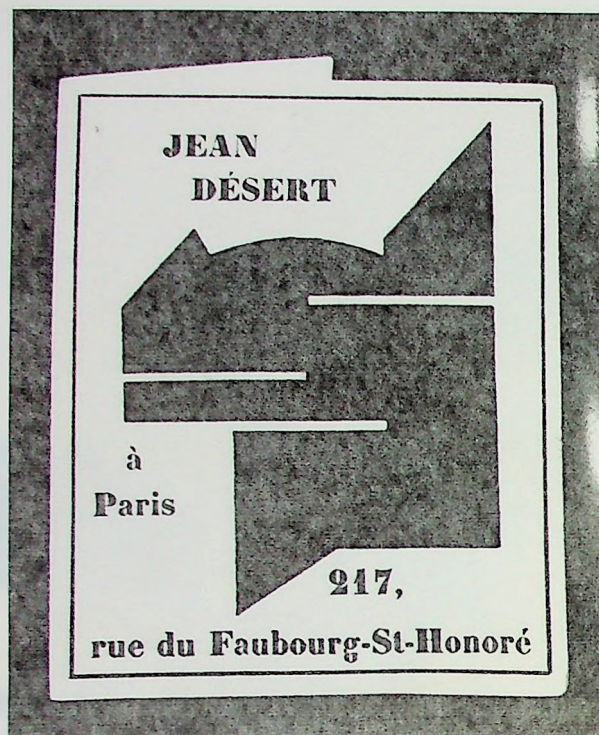
Her decision in the Spring of 1923 to open a gallery in which she could exhibit and sell her work to a wider clientele supports the idea that she wished her designs to be available to more people. In an interview she once said "I would have liked to have produced many copies of each piece but, you know, they (presumably her clientele) seemed not to want that, they seemed to want each piece to be unique and so, of course, it was very expensive. Anyway I couldn't have made many copies on my own. I could only produce the models and hope that they might be duplicated." (app. J). It must be remembered that everything in the apartment was hand made either by the designer or by a selected few craftsmen she had gathered around her over the years. At this time she ran three workshops; one in the Rue Visconti for rugs and carpets; a second in the Rue Bonaparte for furniture and a third at 11 Rue Guënêgaud for the lacquer ware.

Some of the lacquer work was done by a Japanese craftsman

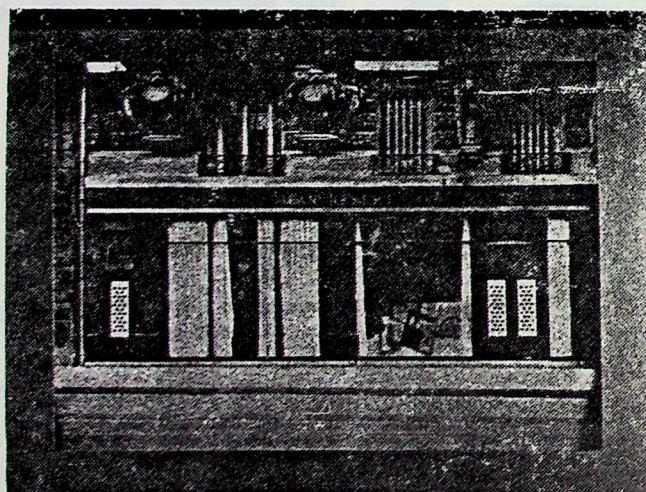
Inagaki, for instance the 450 small brick-like panels lining the gallery in Suzanne Talbot's apartment. Eileen Gray had contracted the disease which the noxious chemicals in the natural lacquer causes in white skin. The Japanese and Indo-Chinese craftsmen that she probably employed (how many is not know) were less susceptible to this infection which becomes a painful slow-curing rash.

The gallery called Jean Désert did at least make it economical for her to produce her designs in small series of four or five. The invitation to the opening of the gallery in 1922, for which she must have been working hard to build up stock, promised "an adventure: an experience with the unheard-of, a soujourn into the never-before-seen. Eileen Gray's designs adhere neither to the rules established by the creators of classic periods nor do they attempt to achieve sensational novelty by imitation of the primitive." (ill. 12). In the stock was offered lacquered furniture, lamps, mirrors, a decoration service, as well as rugs which she designed and had made for her in the workshop she set up especially for that purpose.

In this latter craft she was assisted by an English woman Evelyn Wyld (ill. 13). Originally trained as a cellist, she had first come to France after the outbreak of the war as secretary of the French War Emergency Fund. At the end of the war she had contracted bronchitis while helping to resettle French peasants in the south of France and had to settle there herself. When Eileen Gray invited her to join her in making rugs at the Visconti studio, Evelyn went back to England to learn about materials and techniques. When



ill. 12 The introductory calling card for the gallery and the shop-front.





ill. 13

Evelyn Wyld smoking a cigar, wearing her usual outfit of baggy trousers and a wide shirt; very unfashionable at the time.

she returned bringing back several looms she had bought, she took over the running of the studio and the training of the hired staff.

CONTEMPORARY PARIS

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It should be mentioned at this point what sort of influences were coming together in Paris and Europe in general at this time for we are about to see yet another turn in Eileen Gray's work.

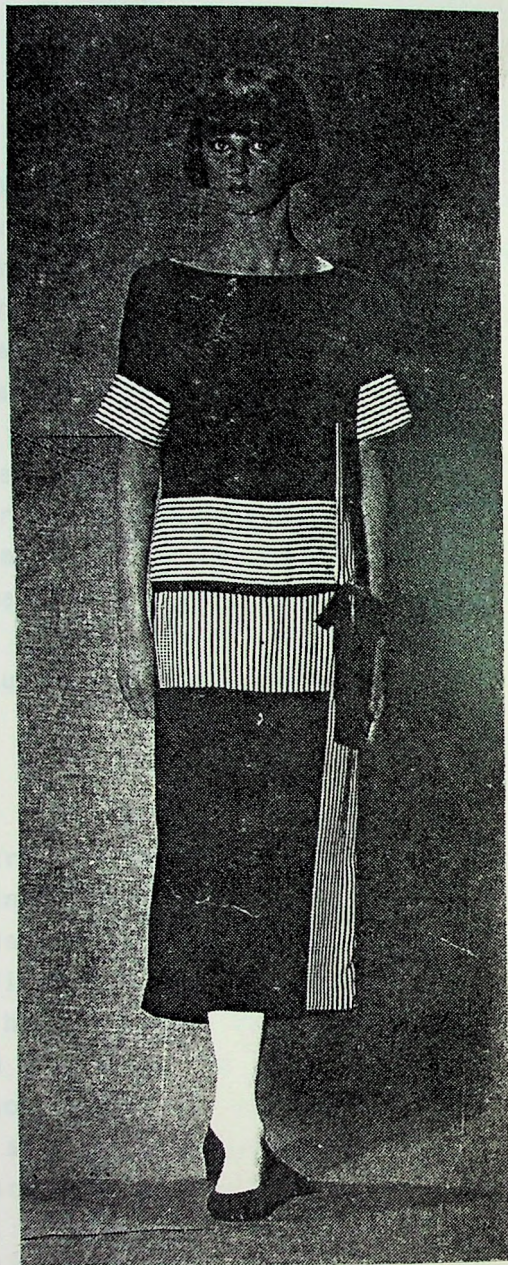
Paris in the 1920's was the Mecca for anyone interested in any aspect of fashion, art, the theatre or interior decoration. So much that had only been started before the war was being developed and re-examined for their form, style and content. In art, Picasso and Braque developed cubism, Diaghilev brought the excitement of colour from the Ballets Russes from the aftermath of the Russian Revolution and the early 1920's, immigrants flooded the city, including the Dadaists from Switzerland. Neoprimitivists - such as Goncharova (ill. 14) and constructivists such as Alexandra Exter and Luibov Popova (ill. 15). The sheer vitality of the community they created attracted others from England, Italy and America who found in Paris, just as Eileen Gray did as early as 1907, an artistic and social freedom lacking in their own countries.

The great artistic meeting places which had flourished in the 1870's and 1880's, the salons and ateliers gave way to a more casual life centered around the cafés and studios, but most artists homes were open for get togethers, as the



ill. 14

Costume design in watercolour by Natalia Goncharova for Le Coq d'Or, 1914. It depicts a Russian woman in a red dress with yellow sleeves.



ill. 15

Left : The "stereotype" dress , red and black , designed by Alexandra Exter in 1922.

Right : Another simple , geometric dress in black and white , designed by Liubov Popova .

physical distances between studios were small. A dinner some evening might end in a discussion between Picasso, Robert Delaunay - painter, Earnest Hemingway - writer and Man Ray - a dadaist film producer. Another evening there may have been an argument between Marie Laurencin - portrait painter and designer, Paul Poiret - who's interior decorating workshop, the Atelier Martine, was in the same Rue de Fauberg-Saint-Honoré as Jean Désert, Eyre de Lanux - furniture designer, Sophie Tauber-Arp and her husband Jean - developers of the rational geometric abstraction of the de Stijl movement; and perhaps many less well known but equally stimulating artists, all sharing their ideas with each other, as well as with couturiers, writers, photographers and film stars.

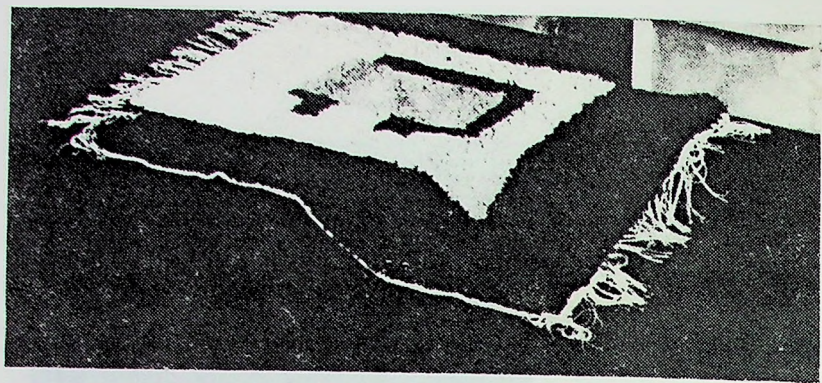
The existence of such a milieu created an environment which led to an extraordinarily rich interplay of ideas and just after the war there were numerous collaborations on cabarets, illustrated books, ballets and interior decoration schemes. In particular it helped create an environment where women could go out on their own and not always have to work with men, who previously had the monopoly in the artistic fields. Women were allowed more social freedom and given the professional respect due to them that women of earlier movements had lacked. If provided, the chances for women like Eileen Gray, Sonia Delaunay, Evelyn Wyld, Chanel, Elsa Schiaparelli, Marie Laurencin, who had come to the applied arts from painting, therefore having little or no formal training in their respective areas, to find commercial success, even fame. Whether in fashion or furniture design, women like those just mentioned all succeeded in bringing a highly individual sense of form and colour to their designs, avoiding theoretical exercises and creating

comfortable, practical designs.

This was the scene in Paris in the 1920's, but Eileen Gray was always a shy "gentle and unassuming" woman who was so self effacing that she never signed her work and never socialised to push its sale. In an era of extroverts, she was a most daring introvert. She did not want to have any sort of public life; private clients, close friends, a gallery that was not named "Eileen Gray" but an anonymous "Jean Désert"; all these things show that only a select few got to know the real Eileen Gray. Was this due to having something to hide? Many interviewers have tried to get her to talk about her personal life, but even our own Maeve 'Blood-from-Stone' Binchy couldn't get any more than a wry smile with "I never told anybody that when people would really have liked to know, but the people you are writing for would be too young to care."

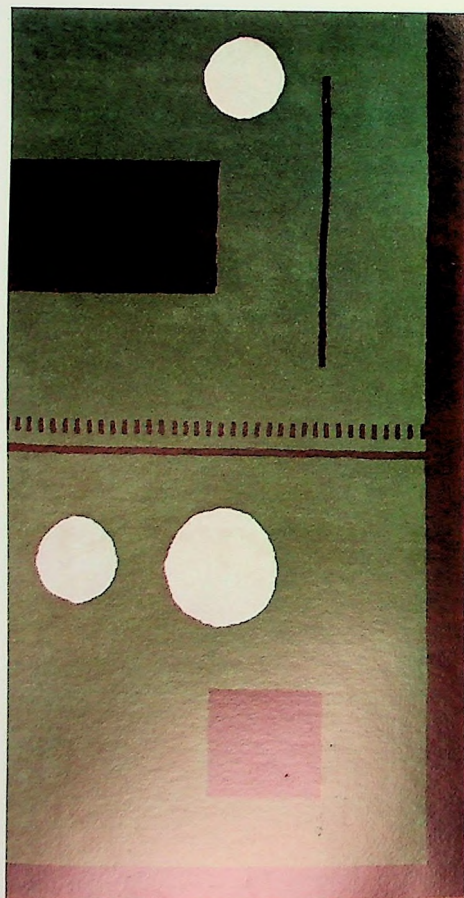
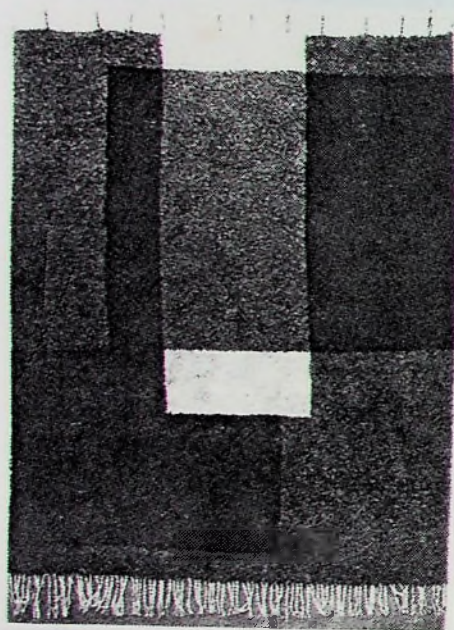
It is a pity that her work was never signed as a lot of it has been lost or is perhaps just unrecognised. She did so much work for Jean Désert that it would be likely that a lot of it has survived, but as she had no particular style that marked her work as her own, it would be hard to trace back.

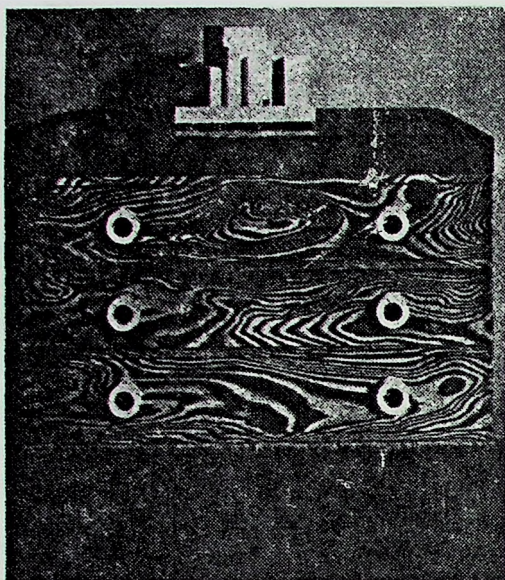
It was her carpets that had a much wider clientele than the lacquer furniture which was much more expensive, so there should be many more rugs around the world that are her designs (ill. 16). There was a rising middle class in Paris in the 1920's, albeit created by a somewhat 'false economy', who through improved communications and advertising, could see what was available and had heard how the 'perfect home' should look. It was in galleries and ateliers that the



Several rugs designed by Eileen Gray for Jean Desert.

ill. 16





Chest of drawers made for Jean Desert in the gallery's early days. The wood on the drawer fronts has been distressed according to a recipe devised by Eileen Gray to give the deep colour difference around the grain. The handles are made of bone and the top is of black lacquer.

fashions and home furniture was bought whenever possible.

From the brief notes made in the stock books, it appears that the majority of Jean Déserts customers were women and a great deal of the gallery's correspondence was addressed to "Monsieur Désert". Eileen Gray has often renounced the suspicion that such a man existed. "Well," she giggled in one interview, "one had to call it something."

There were examples in the gallery of all her areas of design; lacquer screens and furniture, some wooden furniture, lamps, divans, mirrors and hand-woven hangings and carpets from the studios run by Evelyn Wyld. She occasionally showed work by other artists; sculptures by Osip Zadkine and wood engravings by Chana Orloff.

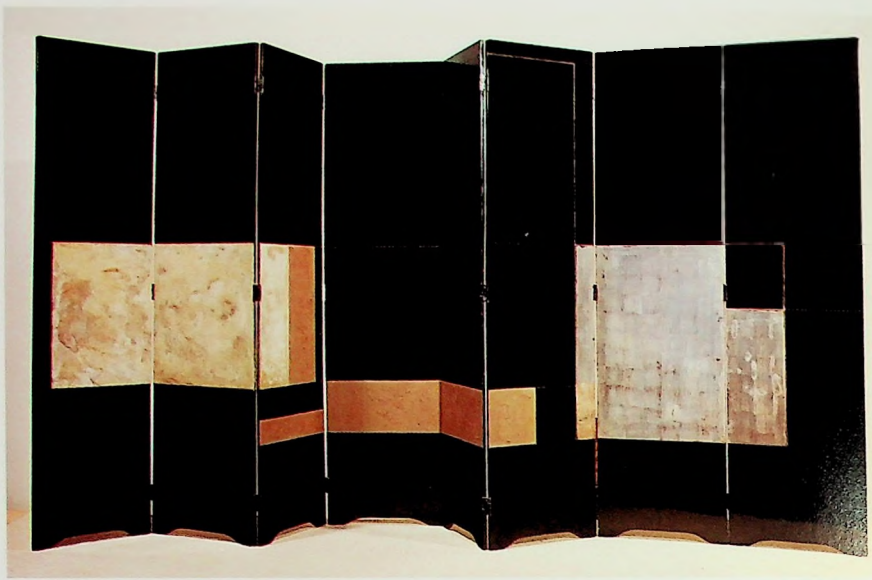
THE TRANSITION

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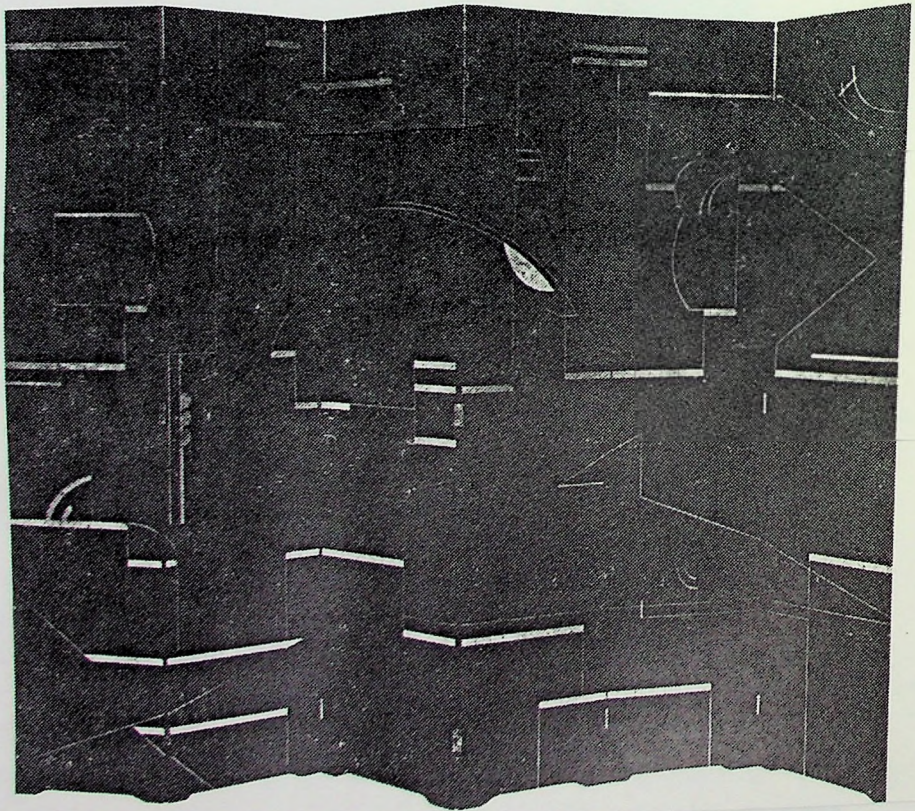
The work that is believed to have been done in the early days of Jean Désert differs greatly from that done for Suzanne Talbot's apartment, which was being done at the same time. Compare the wall panels for the Rue de Lota (ill. 7) with two screens done between 1923 and 1925 (ill. 17). The six panelled black lacquer screen with the abstract linear geometric design has constructivist influences, while the second is a very different arrangement and seems to be influenced by the de Stijl movement. How different again from the sweeping informal flow of the panels shown earlier.

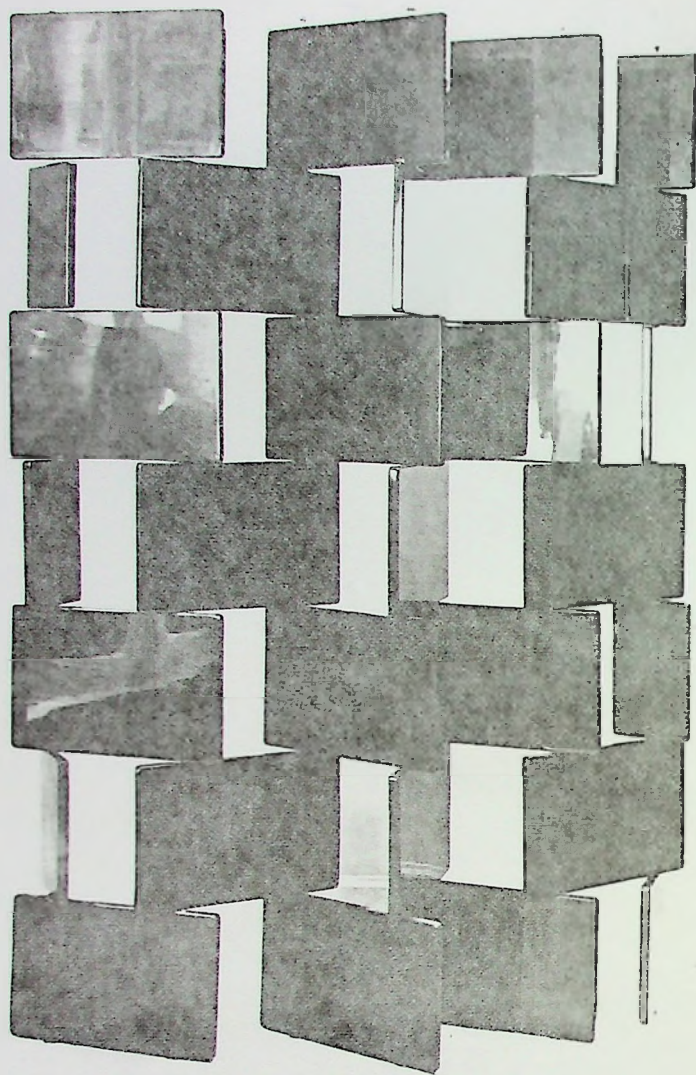
Similar comparisons can be made between rugs made for Talbot and Désert. Compare the sea-current trails on the rug from the former (ill. 7) with the regimentally patched, yet brightly coloured rug done shortly afterwards (ill. 18). Left to her own devices, Eileen Gray's work was tending more and more towards a geometric architectural style.

This move may have been hastened by her contact with leaders of the Dutch de Stijl movement. In 1922 her work was among that shown in an exhibition in Amsterdam of French art from all periods, and it drew both attention and admiration from some of the de Stijl members. Notable among them was Jan Wils who entered into correspondence with her regarding the bad presentation of her work in the exhibition and he asked her permission to rearrange it to

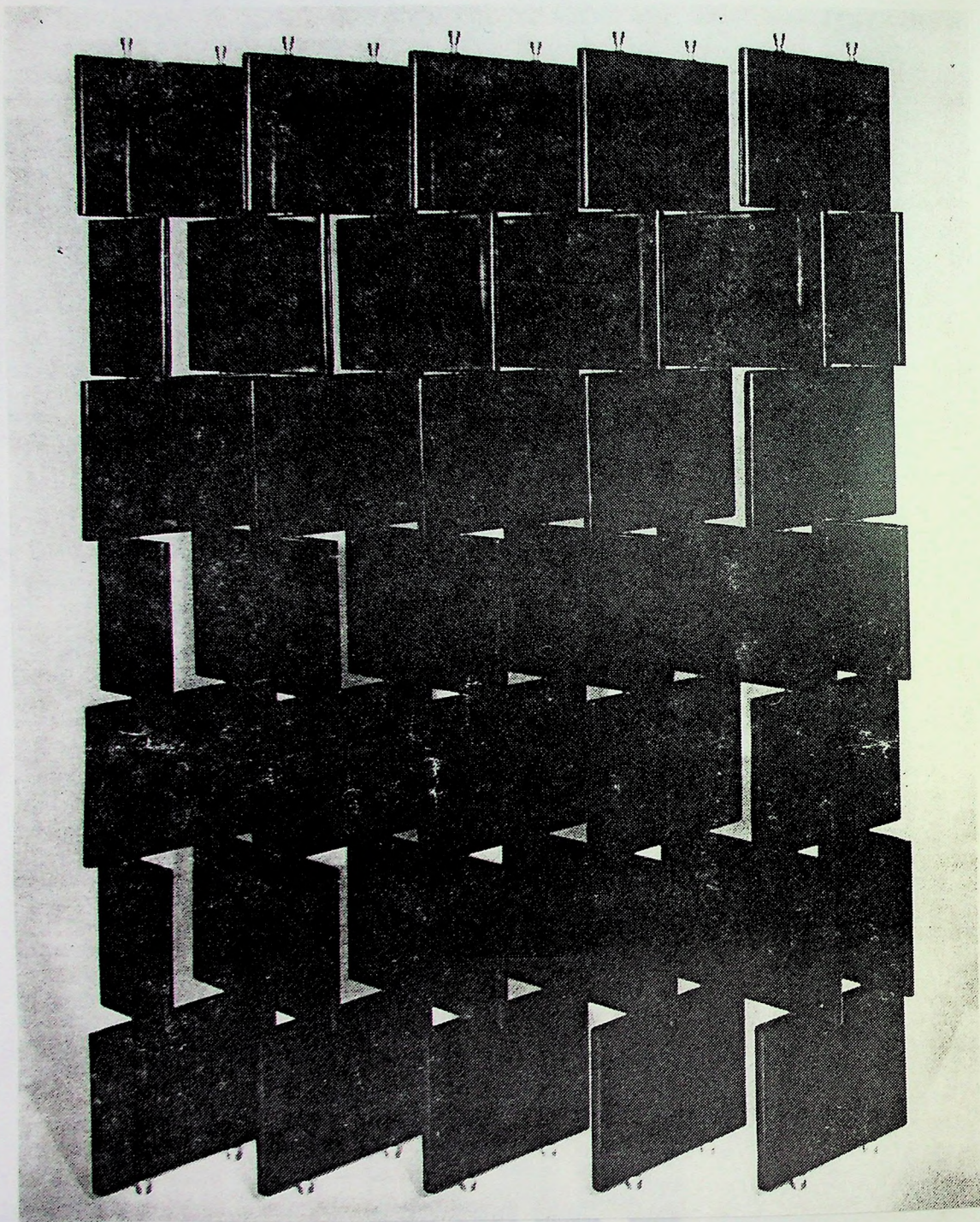


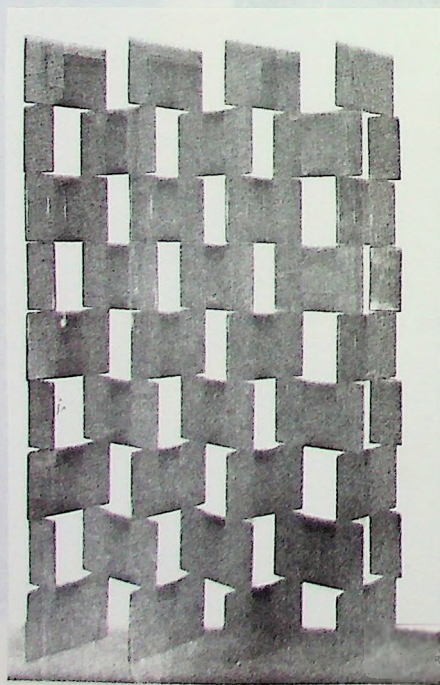
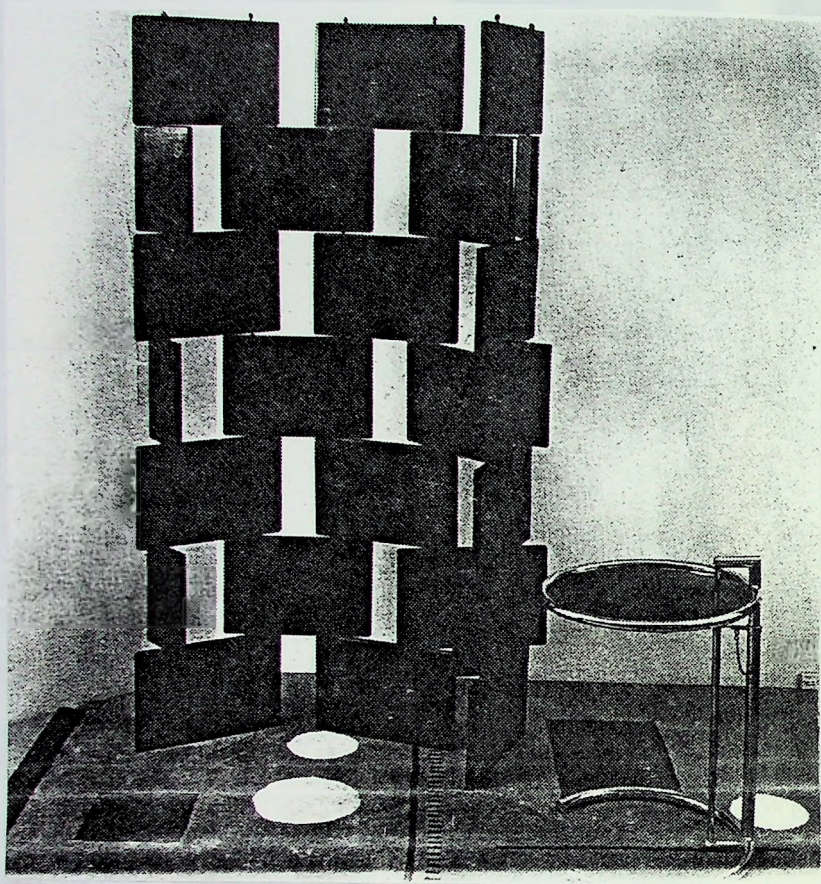
ill. 17 Two lacquer screens done between 1923 and 1925.

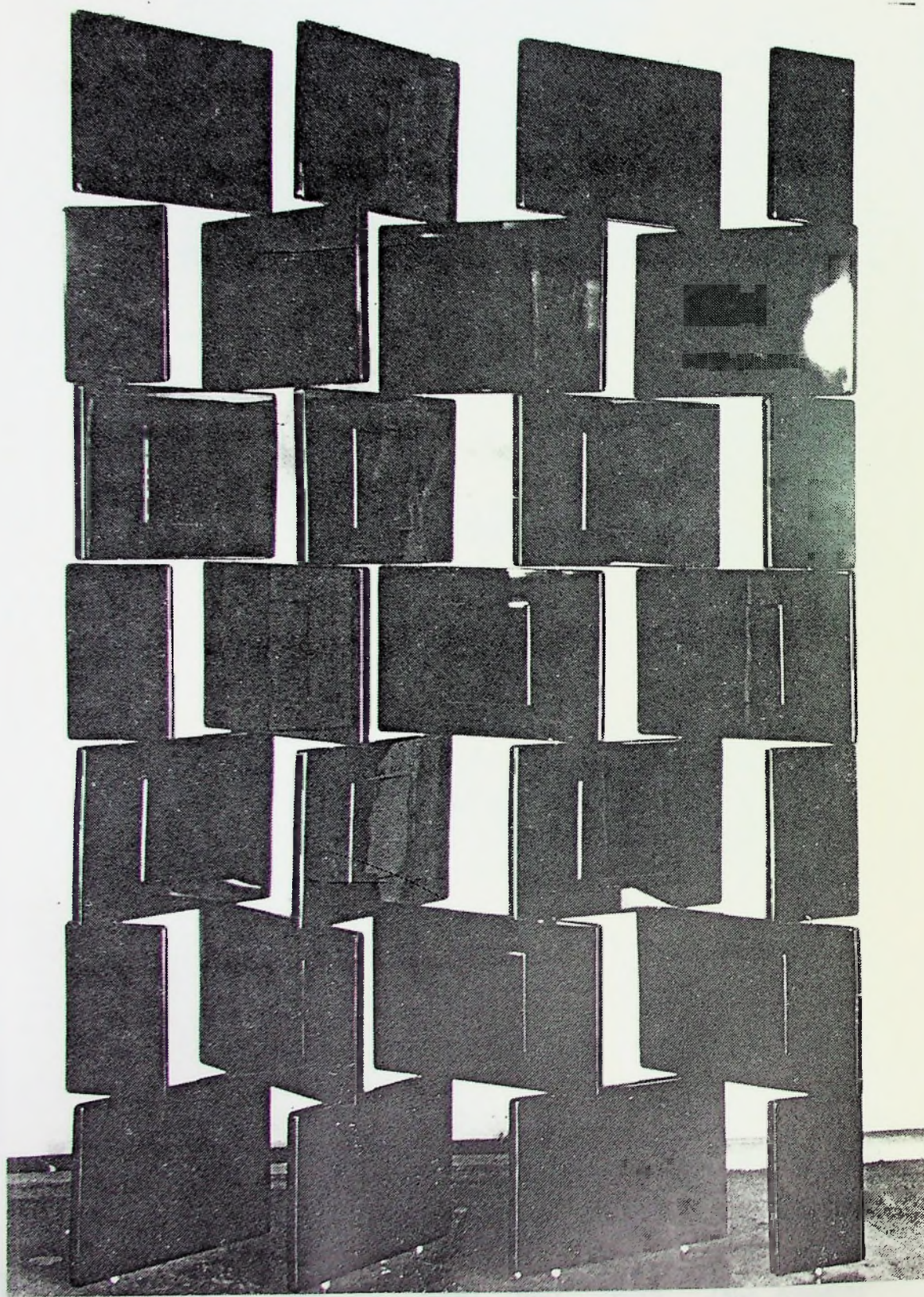


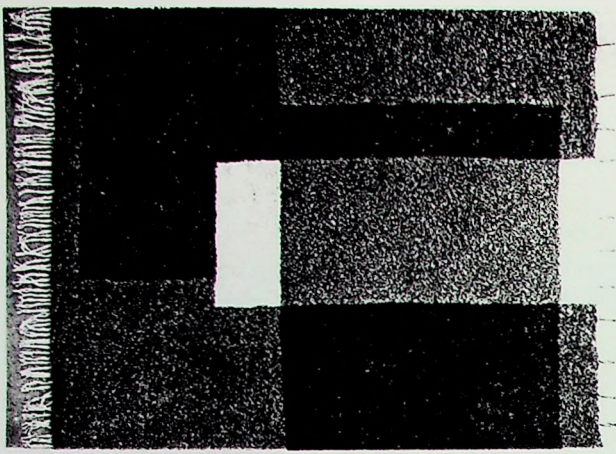


Shown in the following photographs are five screens which came about due to the work done on the bedroom gallery for Mme. Talbot. These were all done at different times probably for Jean Désert. No matter what size they are, or how many panels, the sculptural effect is the same. It can look very regimented if the panels are angled similarly, as in the above illustration, or excitingly haphazard, with none of the panels parallel, like the following screen. Light is caught differently on the faces of the plates, and the deep lacquer throws distorted, reflected images in all directions. These reflections can be further highlighted by raising a central square in the middle of each, of the panels, as she has done with the fifth screen illustrated.

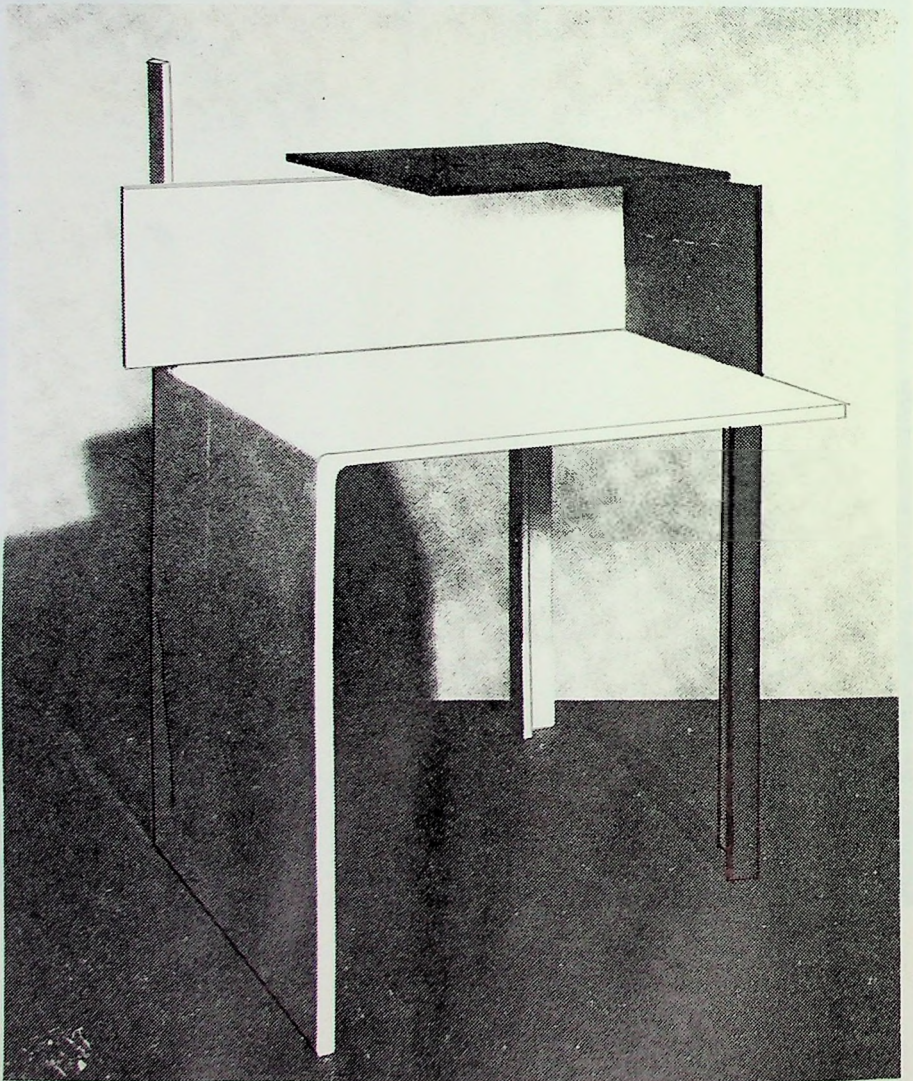




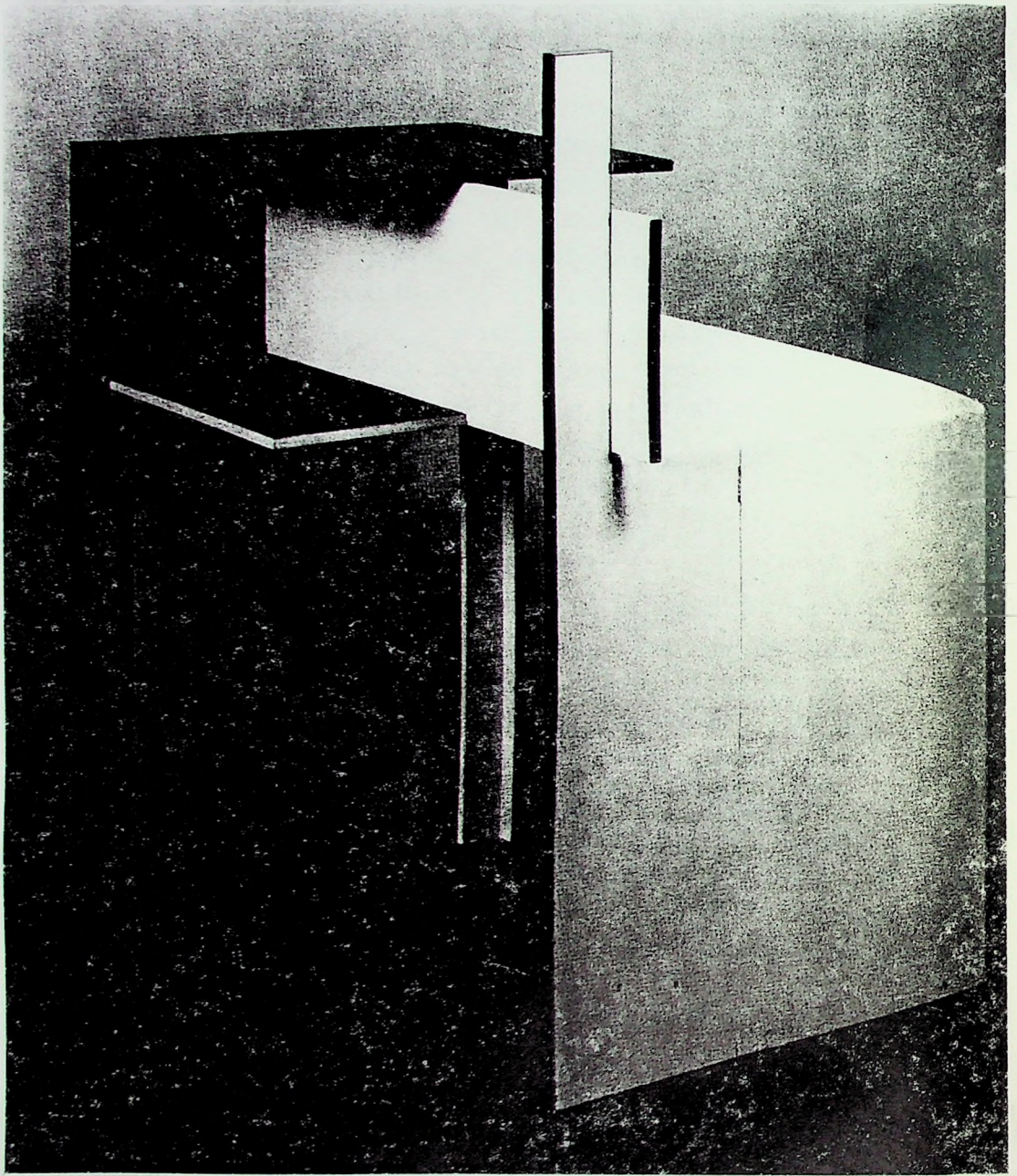




ill. 18 Rug completed in the early days of Jean Desert.



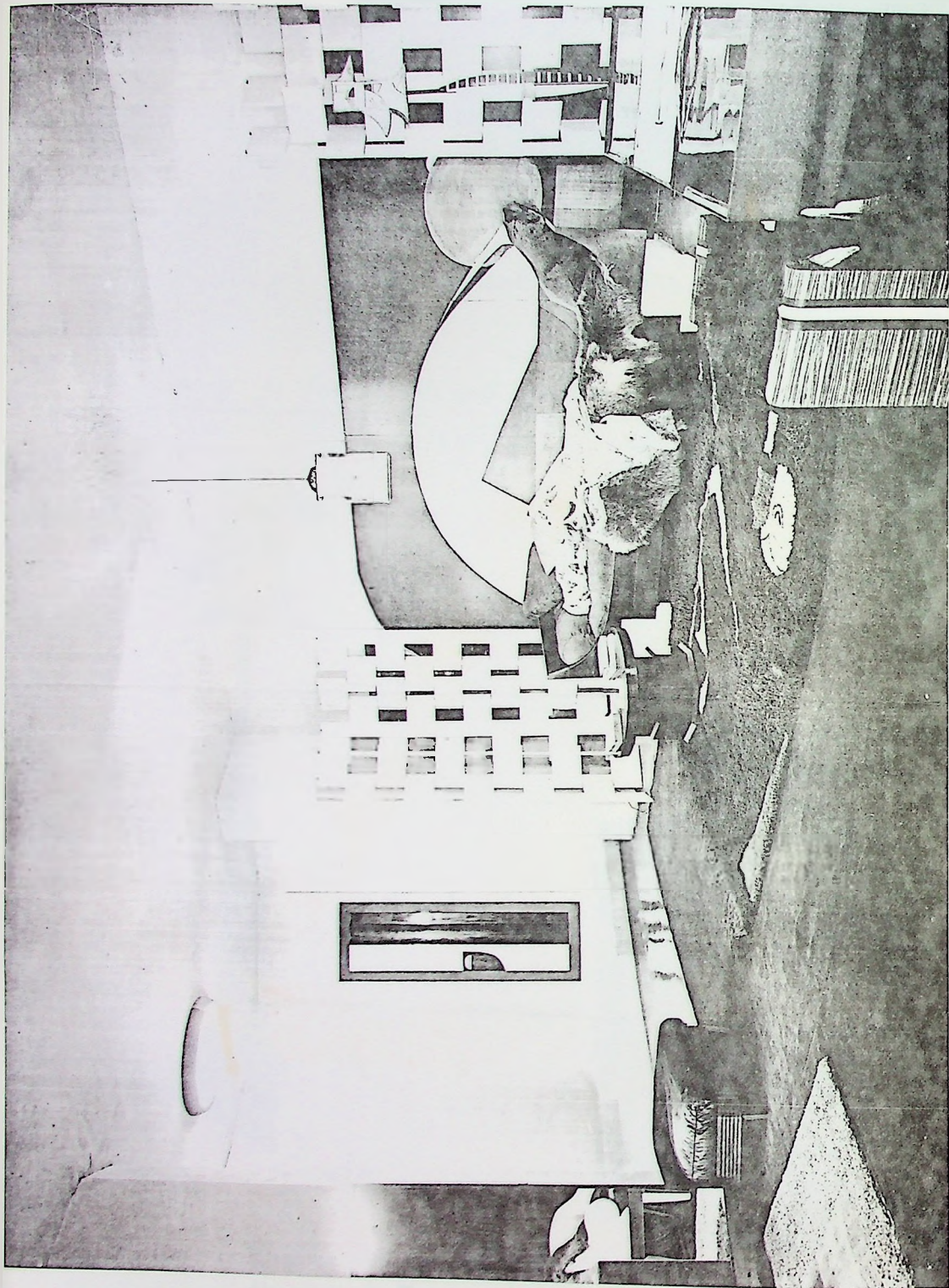
ill. 19 Two views of a table by Eileen Gray. 1922. (Also following page.)



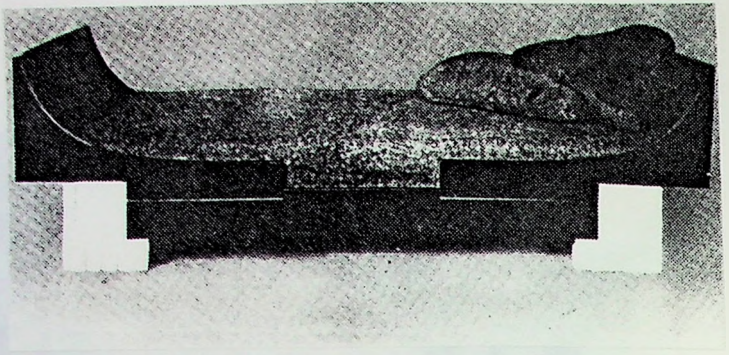
enhance the pieces. It was also in this year that she designed a table which could only have been inspired if she had studied the works of artists and furniture designers in the group (ill. 19). Made in oak and sycamore it is a very pleasing structural sculpture, which seems to pay homage to the pure de Stijl furniture up to that point, as it is a plagiarisation of all their principles. Straight unwielding lines and flat areas that either unexpectedly end short, or extend to hang over the edges of the perpendicular planes. The black and white colours have been used as a tool to magnify the abruptness of the sculpture.

Her exhibit at the 1923 Salon des Artistes Décorateurs, which she obviously put a lot of work into, was an attempt to draw attention to her developing style, more austere and architectural (ill. 20). It may have turned out that the display did more harm than good as it was very badly reviewed. As she later observed it aroused "a concert of abuse." It was to one critic "a chamber of horrors" and another described it as "an effort on which, although I am respectfully aware of the tendencies it incorporates, and in spite of the antipathy which these inspire in me, I prefer to make no announcement."

It certainly is different to the work she had done previously, although it contains some of the pieces she did for Suzanne Talbot, like the writing desk and stool for instance. The day-bed is supported on a brick-like structure and the lines of the back and sides are very geometric, softened only by the cushions and pelts strewn over it (ill. 21). This is framed by large abstract wall panels and two white wood block screens, which are unusual in that they



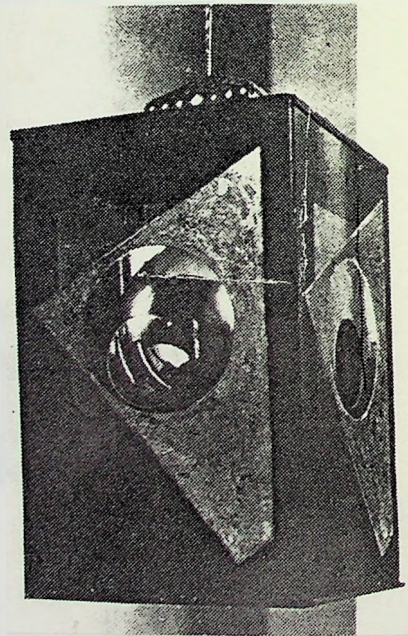
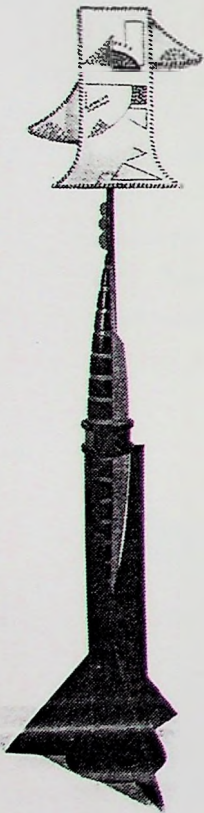
ill. 20 The "bedroom boudoir for Monte Carlo", Eileen Gray's exhibit for the 1923 Salon des Artistes Décorateurs.



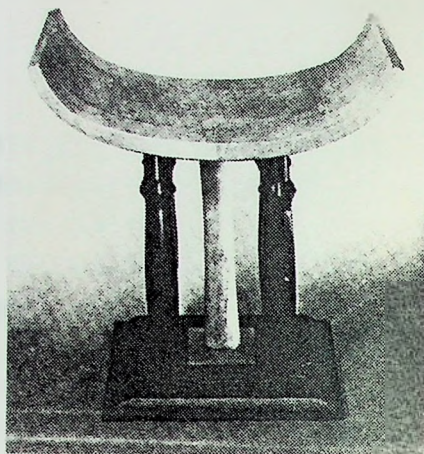
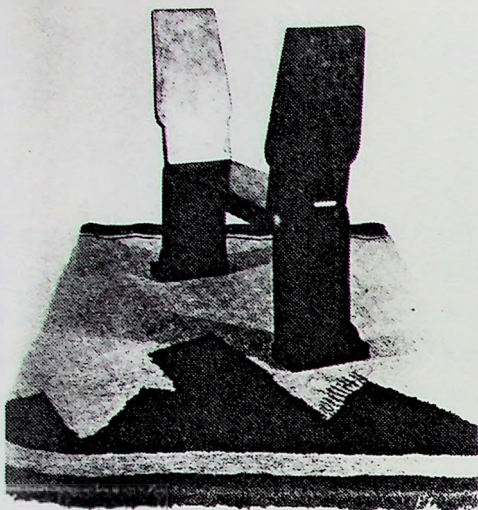
ill. 21

The day-bed from the 1923 exhibit.

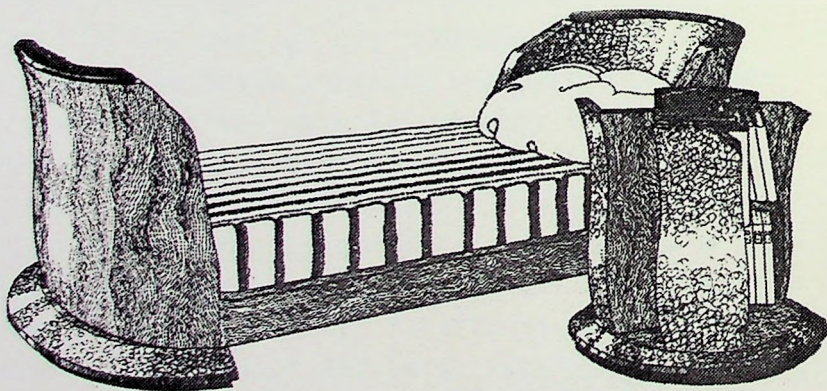
A close-up of the wood and parchment floor lamp.



Hanging lantern exhibited above the couch in the bedroom boudoir. The sides are deep blue glass, the triangular shapes are rough textured silver.



- ill. 22 Two items by Pierre Legrain at the same exhibition.
 Left: bench in stained oak, ebony and gold lacquer.
 Right: The seat of this stool is in galuchat as is the central column, the four feet and base are lacquered. Note how similar the form is to the stool designed by Eileen Gray for Mme Talbot's apartment. (ill. 11)



Chareau: sketch for a day-bed and revolving bookcase in palisander and amourette, exhibited at the Salon in 1923. If this were beside the Monte Carlo room, it would only accentuate how different her exhibit was from accepted fashion.

are painted, not lacquered, as were all previous screens in the same style, indicating that Eileen Gray had realised that its beauty lay in the shape and not so much in the expensive material. The rug in front of the day-bed is dark blue and brown with an abstract design in pale grey. One of the most interesting features of the room is, to my mind, the elevated doorway. To accentuate its importance in the décor, two steps are constructed which lead up to the tall, thin, geometrically patterned door. The only object that doesn't seem to fit in with this interior is the parchment and wood floor lamp to the right of the divan. The African tribal influences do not seem to match the clear geometric forms of the furniture and the other light fittings and it only helps to make the overall area look cluttered.

It was so strange and totally different from the conventional model bedrooms and sittingrooms that surrounded it; even compare the stools by Legrain at the same exhibition with the small stool to the left of the "Bedroom-boudoir for Monte Carlo" as Eileen Grays interior was called (ill. 22). Paradoxically enough it was this strangeness that ensured she got plenty of press coverage, albeit not too complementary, and also in many foreign journals. To what must have been her relief and delight it attracted praise from a leading architect of the Dutch de Stijl movement. J.J.P. Oud wrote a letter saying he was very interested in the room and would like to see more of her work, adding that he had until then "seen very few good modern interiors."

Encouraged and heartened by his interest, and perhaps in her usual manner of not taking that much notice of what society demanded or what people thought, like whether air-

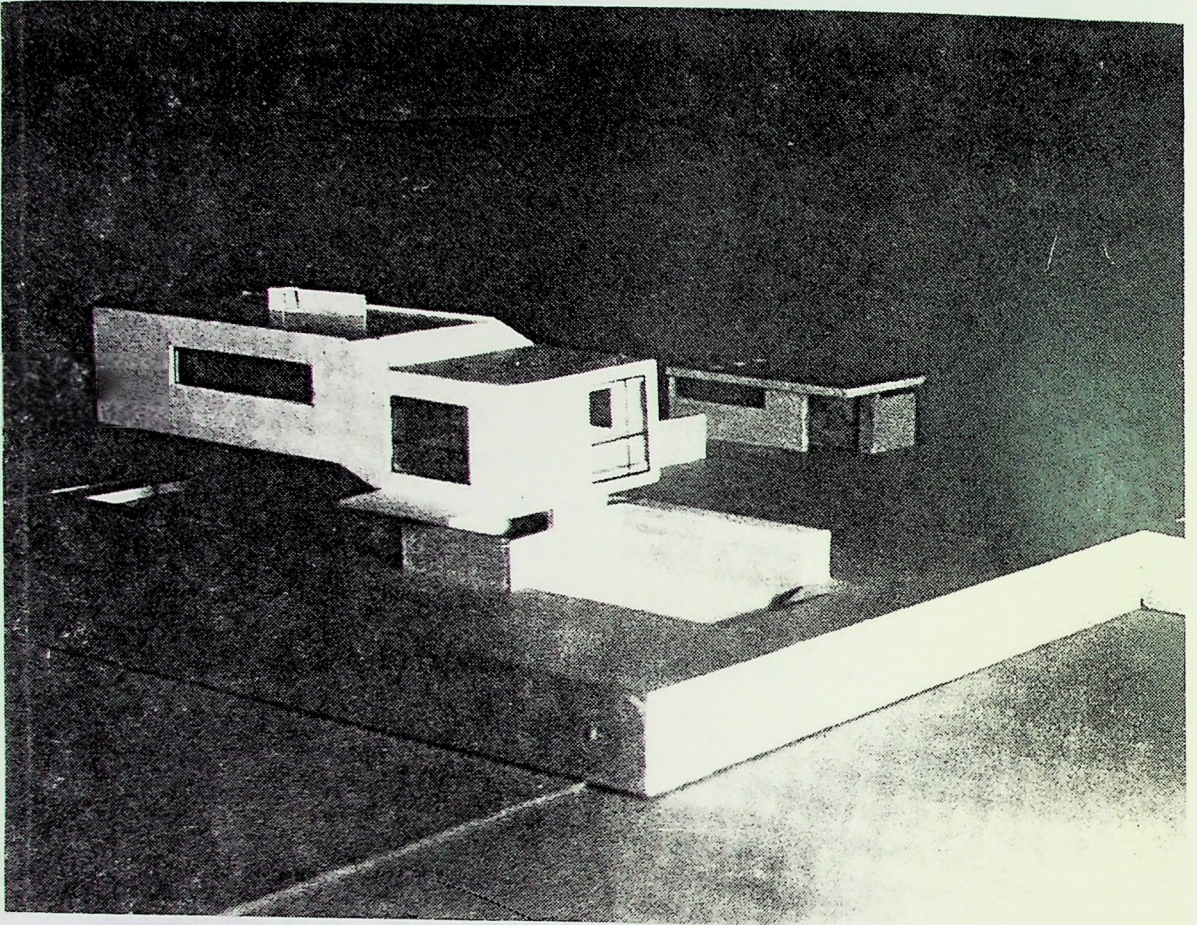
planes were safe or whether being a designer is an acceptable career for a woman, she went ahead and exhibited more work at the Salon d'Automne in the same year. This time her work was viewed alongside designs by Robert Mallet-Stevens and le Corbusier with whom she had become friends. She had maintained correspondence with Oud and Wils and was creating interest among names such as Walter Gropius, van Ravenstein and Frederick Kiesler, all of whom had asked about her. Contact with these leaders in architecture, especially Jan Wils, led to the entire June 1924 issue of the Dutch art journal *Wendingen*, an influential one at the time, being devoted to her work.

THE TURN TO ARCHITECTURE

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Jean Badovici, the editor of another magazine, *l'Architecture Vivante*, wrote the text for the article in *Wendingen* - the introduction of which was written by J.J.P. Oud - and he was to become her greatest friend and adviser in the architectural world. He also wrote other publications on the subject of her work (app. L) and it was he who finally urged Eileen Gray to turn her attention to building. Badovici said "It's all so silly, all this trouble with furniture; and what's furniture after all. It's so trivial. Why don't you do some architecture?" At first she thought this absurd as she had had no training, but neither did she have any furniture design education so she did decide to have a go and started working at it herself. She took a holiday down on the Mediterranean and worked very hard making many drawings, facades and plans. Eileen Gray's first architectural project was of a house for an engineer (ill. 23), but this was only practice for her first and best known house. Indeed she had been making architectural studies since 1924; no doubt the subject was brought to her mind due to the fact that the only praise and appreciation she got for her interiors came from those in the architectural field.

She was beginning to find the work at *Jean Désert* a depressing task, coping with the demands of three workshops and the pressures of trying to find commercial success with a generally unappreciative public. She was probably excited by

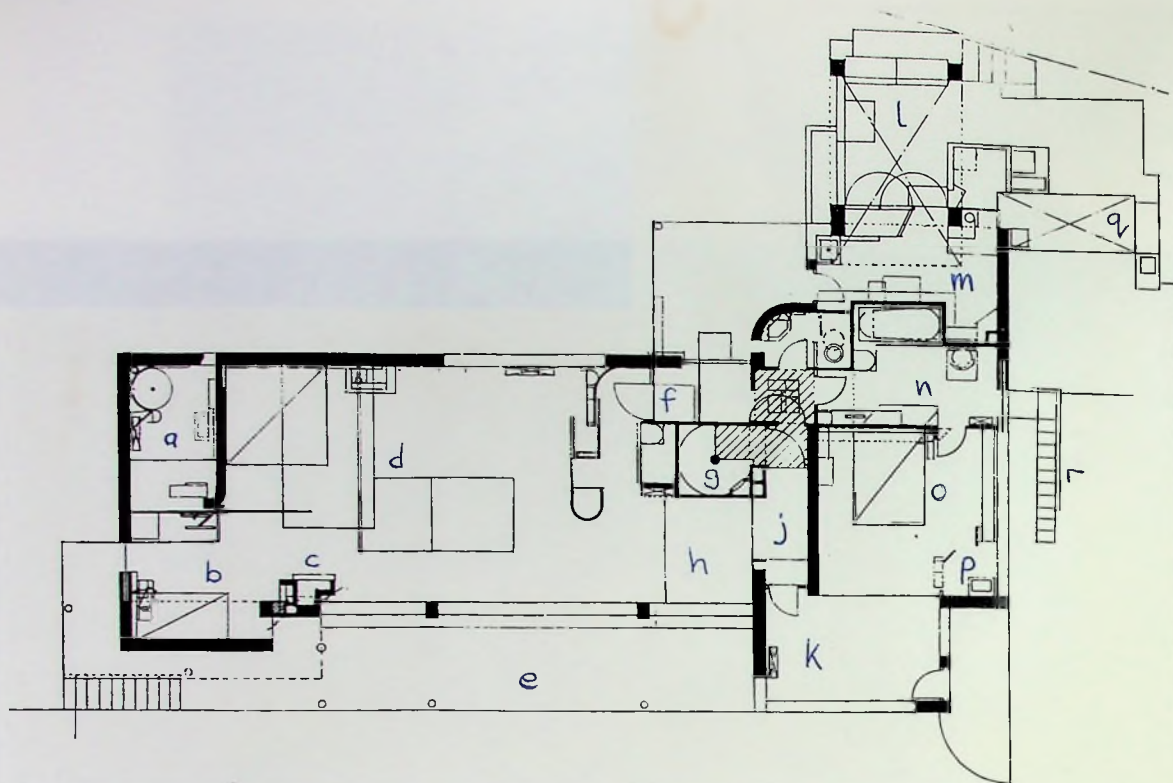


ill. 23 A house for an Engineer, Eileen Gray's first project, developed in the same year as E-1027 was started.

this new area that she could work in. There were no women doing it, so it was not generally acceptable that one should start; it was new to her, the most demanding yet absorbing of occupations and it promised to be yet another medium for her attention to details in design: all these reasons would make the prospect irresistible to her ambitious spirit. So Jean Désert became her shackle, absorbing her energy and time while giving no great satisfaction or enjoyment in return. She lost interest in it and in 1927 started work with her new love, architecture. No doubt due to this, Evelyn Wyld the woman who had helped her so much, left the rug-making studio, the accounts were unkept, and late in 1929 she conducted a reduced price sale - to coincide with the Christmas rush perhaps? - and sold off the remainder of the stock. In 1930 the closure of Jean Désert was made official and Eileen Gray was left to work uninterrupted at her new interest.

During those last years of fading enthusiasm in her gallery she had been designing a house and its furnishings at Roquebrune (ill. 24). She had rented a place at St. Raphael near the site so she could supervise everything. As there were no willing patrons at the time, she decided to build the house for herself, to be sold after its successful completion. The house named E-1027, the significance of which is not known, was intended as a show piece to advertise her and Badovici's abilities, and to attract other jobs. Badovici was not well known as an architect even though he had been trained as one. His reputation was as an editor and writer on architectural matters and only ever built two other houses, both for himself, one at Vezeley and another near the Pont de Sevres in Paris.

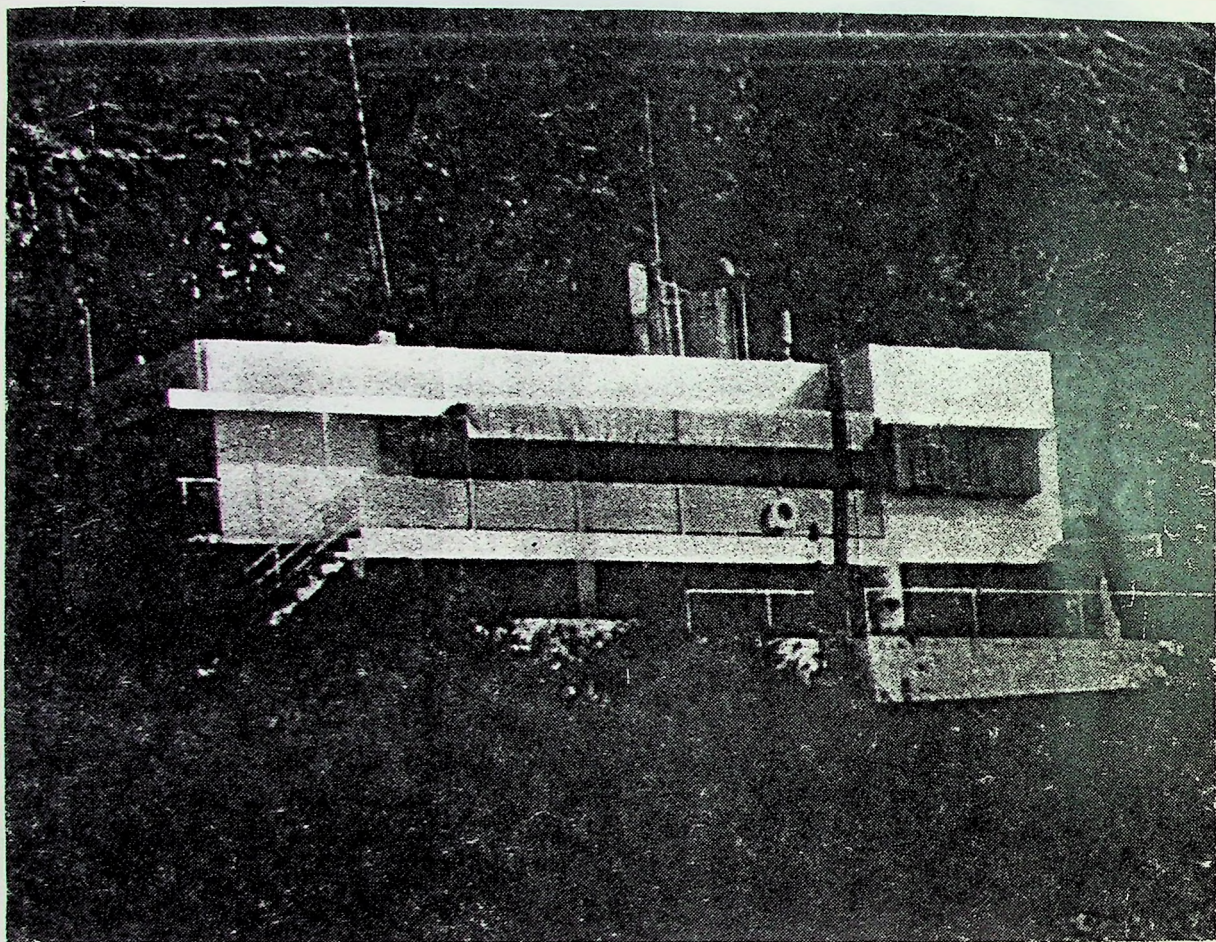
The theme for Roquebrune was that it would be a house for



ill. 24

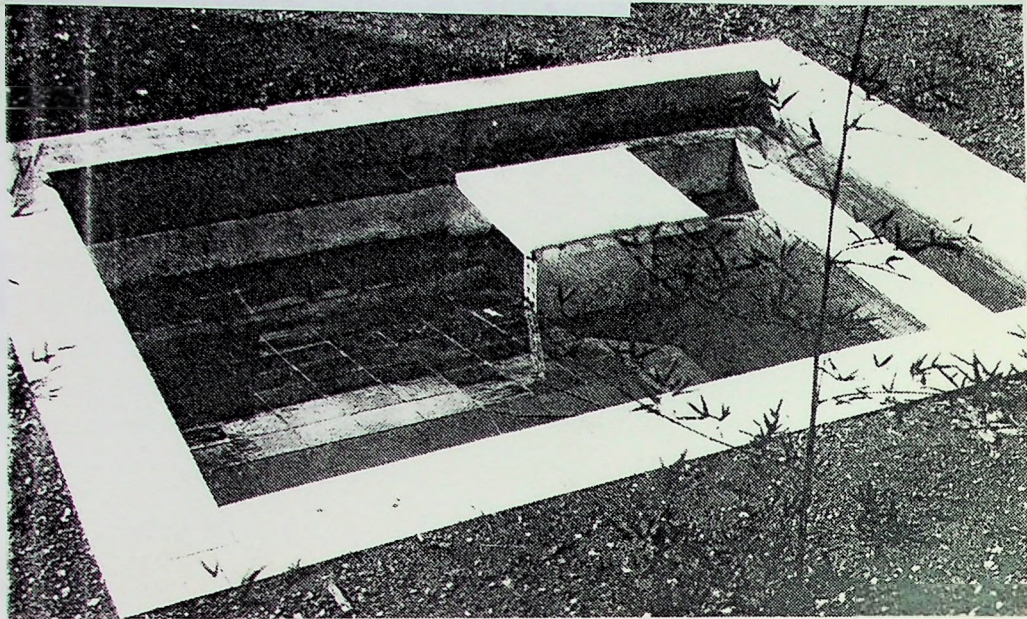
Plan of main floor of E-1027.

- Key:
- a. bathroom with circular shower
 - b. guest alcove (ph. 1 and ill. 26)
 - c. fireplace
 - d. living room (ph. 1, 2, 3 and 4)
 - e. Covered terrace
 - f. main entrance
 - g. stairs to roof terrace and lower ground floor
 - h. dining recess (ph. 3, on right)
 - i. w.c.
 - j. passageway with bar.
 - l. courtyard under water tank
 - m. kitchen
 - n. bathroom (see ph. 9)
 - o. main bedroom (ph. 7)
 - p. bathroom (ph. 8)
 - q. second water tank
 - r. stairs down to garden



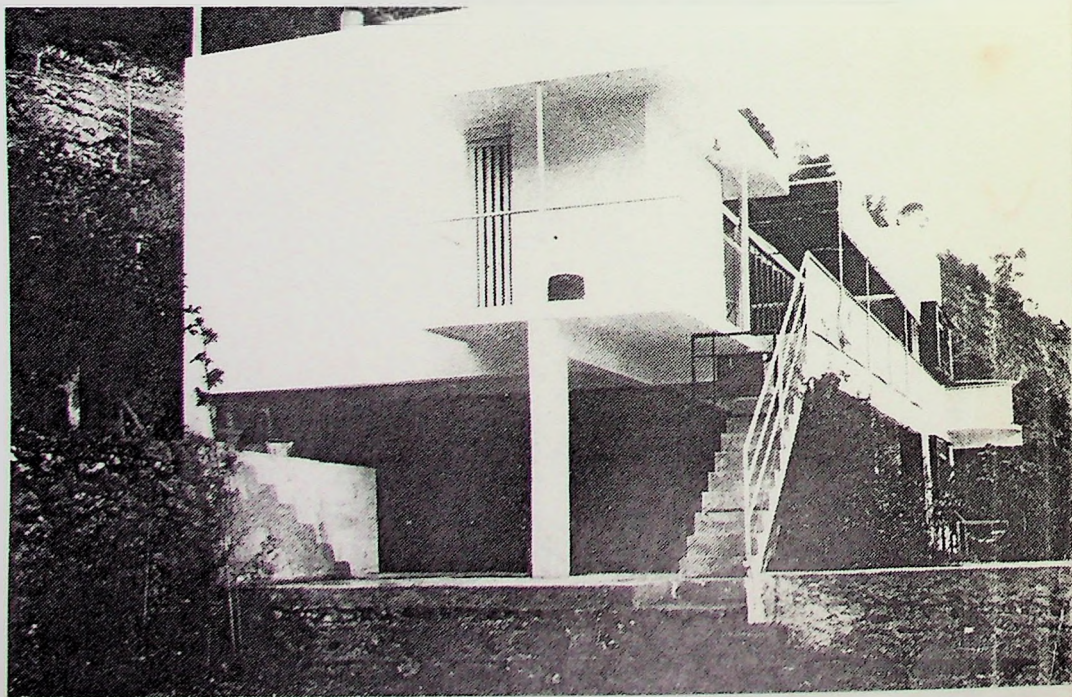
View of Roquebrune from the sea.

Exterior views of E-1027 at Roquebrune.



The sun trap, paved in glazed tiles and containing a built-in table. One section of the floor inclines towards the south.

The west end of the house, looking up from the sun-trap. Note the gate half-way up the stairs. This pivots around the bar which is about a foot in from the left-hand edge of the gate, and is not hinged at the very edge as one would normally expect.



a sportsman, informal and integrated with the environment; able to be opened up to the sun and closed off in bad weather. The heart of the house is a large livingroom for the owner and his guests, but there are plenty of private spaces for each to retire to (ill. 25).



ill. 25

ph. 1



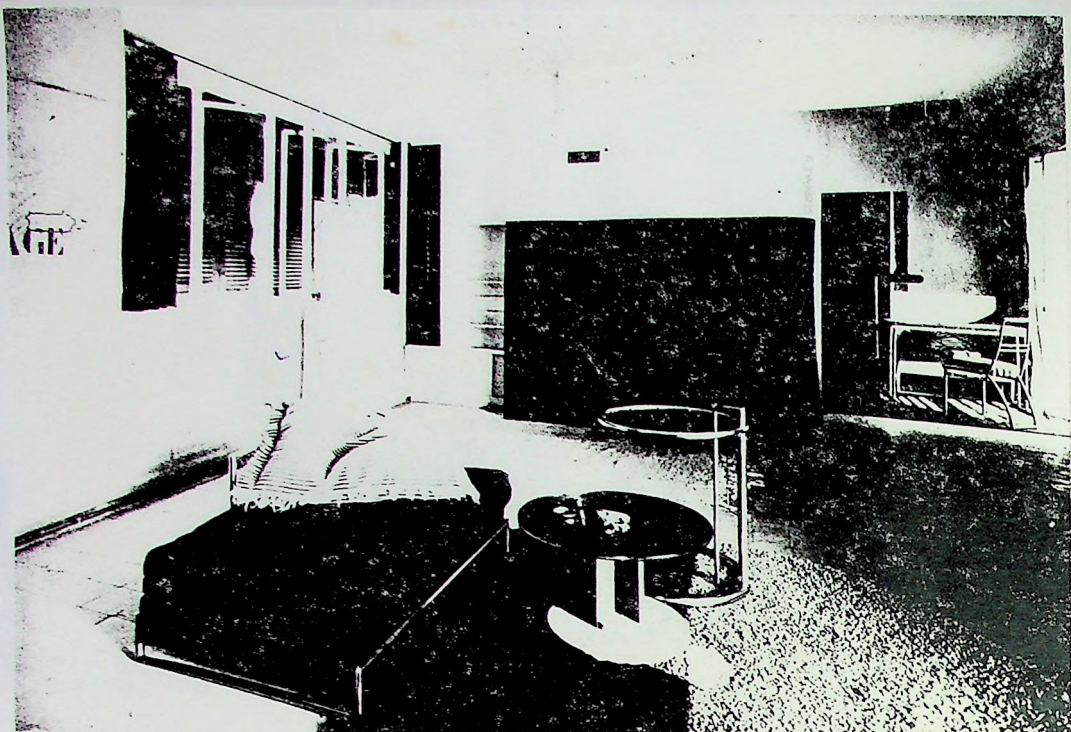
Probably the best known photograph of the interior of E-1027, this shows the main living area as it looked very soon after it was finished. I would say that the painting on the right is by Eileen Gray as the lettering on it, 'au voyage', closely matches that on the cupboards in the guest alcove. All the furniture and rugs are hers and in it are included some of her most famous work which will be discussed later. Note the small table on the left of the divan - a very simple but lovely piece.

ph. 2



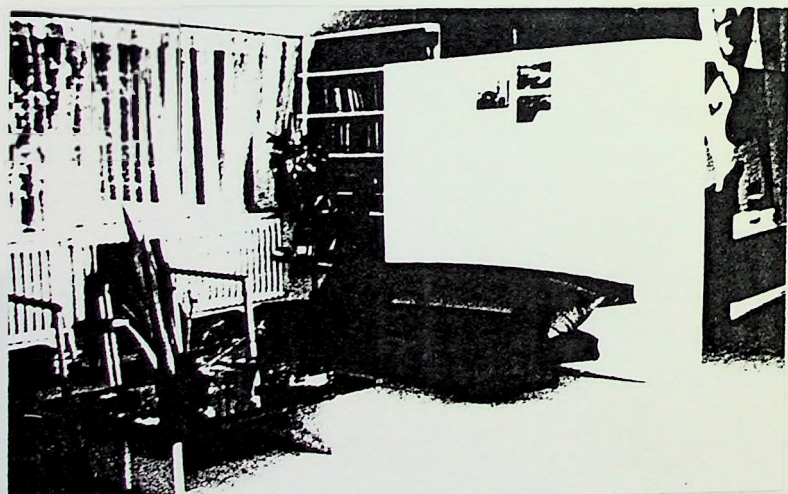
This is a much more recent photograph of the same area of the livingroom in E-1027. The house, now owned by Graham Sutherland, has been changed around, and these two deck chairs are not by Eileen Gray, in my opinion. It shows one of the five murals painted in the house by Le Corbusier during the 2nd world war. The light, top right, is by Gray, a late work, probably mid 1940's. It is a variation on a similar theme of a light fitting designed for her own flat in the Rue Bonaparte in 1919. (see large colour photograph of Eileen Gray in her apartment.)

ph. 3



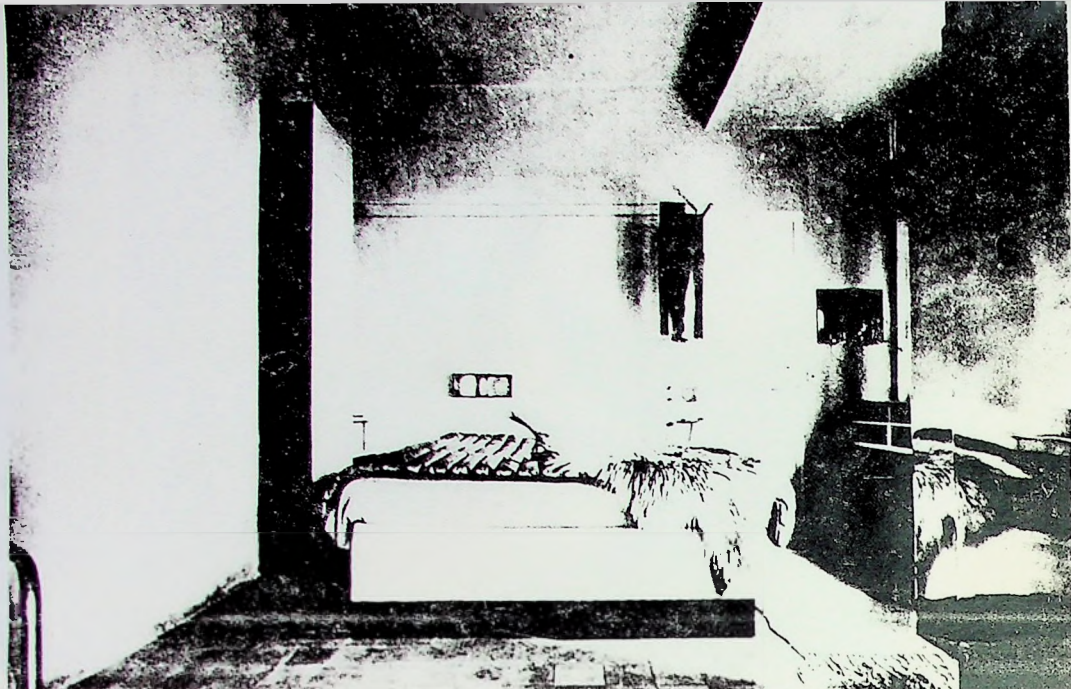
This is an early photograph of the livingroom, and in the background can be seen the dining area. The circular table shown here is a bedside table, originally intended for the guest bedroom on the lower ground floor (ph. 7). Along the wall on the left is the window, with shutters designed by Jean Badovici (ph. 8). They can either slide along tracks, or fold away to adjust the amount of light entering.

ph. 4



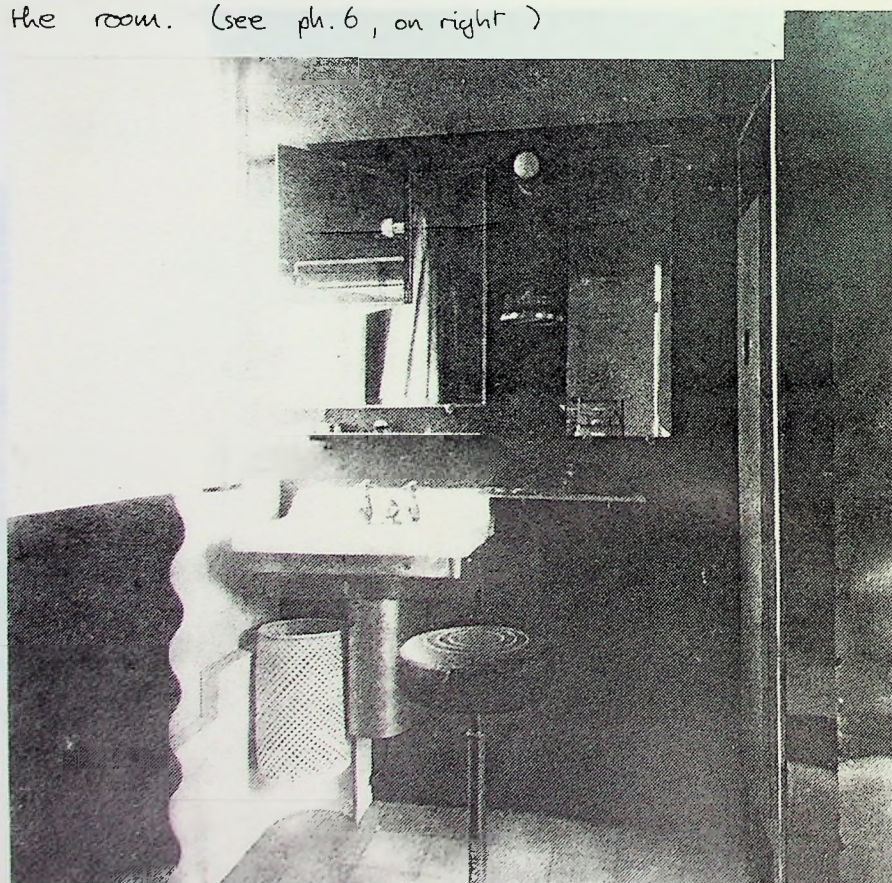
A more recent photograph of the same corner of the living room. The radiator under the windows has been changed and the net curtains certainly alter the appearance of the windows. On the right, behind the cupboard is what must be another painting by Le Corbusier. Probably the only furniture by Eileen Gray in this picture are the two transat chairs against the window.

ph.5

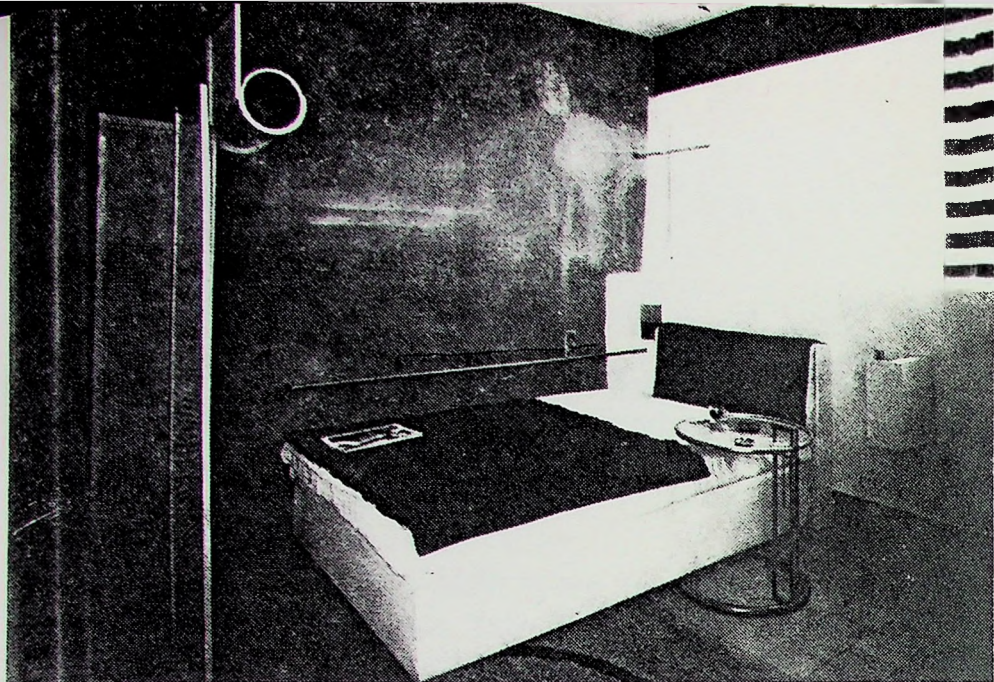


View of the main bedroom. On the very right is the reflective back of the aluminium cupboard which screens the bathroom from the rest of the room. (see ph.6, on right)

ph.6

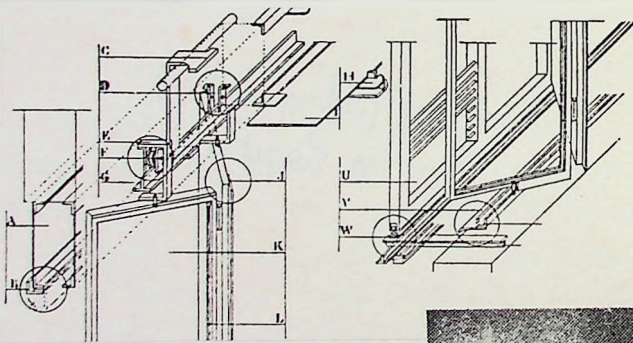
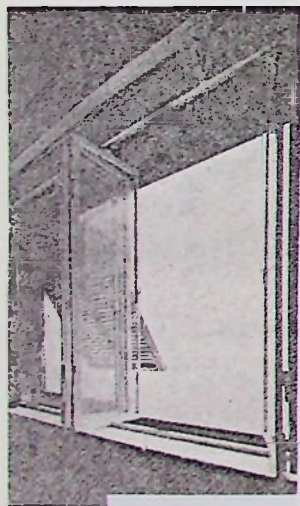


The bathroom off the main bedroom (ph.5) Items of note here are the built-in perforated steel bin, the adjustable wall mirror and the shallow cupboard on the right, also with an adjustable full length mirror on the inside of the door.



ph. 7

The guest bedroom on the lower ground floor. The circular bed-side table could be slid under the bed and the height of the top adjusted to make it comfortable to have breakfast in bed. The cylindrical 'shelf' hanging from the ceiling at the foot of the bed held mosquito netting. Opposite the bed, out of the photograph, is a built-in writing desk (see ill. 28)

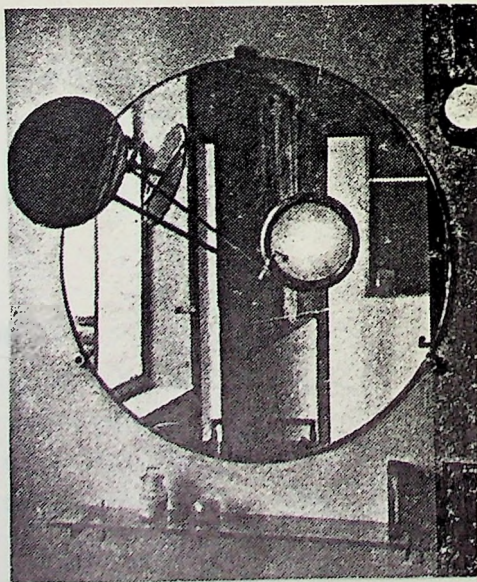


ph. 8

Close-ups of the windows and shutters designed by Badovici

ph.9

Adjustable mirror in main
bathroom of E-1027



THE DESIGN OF E-1027

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In the furniture in E-1027 there is a marked absence of any of her previous Art Deco tendencies. Materials used are wood and metal with upholstery mainly made of woven cloth, leather or animal skins. The house itself is designed as a container for a carefully articulated way of life. Each aspect is carefully worked out in relation to light and space. Eileen Gray did not agree with the open plan arrangements favoured by American architects at that time. She explicitly dissassociated herself from this style which she called "le style camping."

This is rather contradictory to what seems apparent at Roquebrone. Three rooms lead off the main livingroom with no doors inbetween; a dining area, a guest alcove and a bathroom with a circular shower, the latter only seperated by a partition about seven feet high. The main bedroom leads both into a study with no doors or partitions between, and into a bathroom screened only by a cupboard. In general though the house is not open plan as care has been taken to seperate kitchen areas and other rooms where guest or host can take refuge in peace away from the main areas.

It is not so much the building itself which is fascinating as the furniture in it, and Eileen Gray's use of light and shade to create an environment which is adaptable to changes of mood and weather, and has a very relaxed atmosphere while being uncluttered and easy to keep clean and

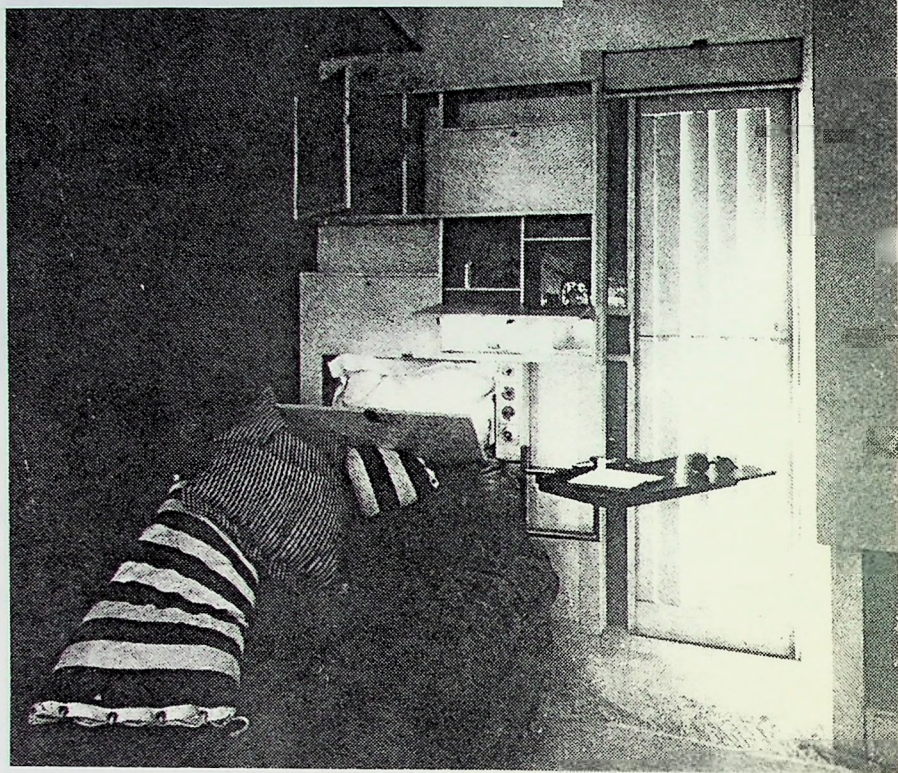
tidy. The entire floor all over the house is laid with tiles and partially covered with rugs, all surfaces are flat and smooth and there is very little open shelving, most storage being provided by closed cupboards so everything can look as though it is in its place.

Some of these individual cupboards are extremely well thought out to allow for the storage of everything that may be needed in a particular room. For instance the cupboards over the divan in the guest alcove contain pillows, tea things, an adjustable reading light, various power points and light switches including a bell - perhaps to call a maid, mosquito nets and ample storage for books and writing material (ill. 26). There is an ingenious pivoting reading table with an adjustable easel to make it possible to read comfortably in bed (ill. 27). These cupboards enable the alcove to be used either as a daytime resting area with all the night things put neatly away, or an extra guest bed at night.

In the ground floor guest room there is a built-in writing desk with drawers and shelves provided for extra incidentals, and again, the desk can be folded up to hide a mess or private documents (ill. 28). In the master bedroom the lavatory is screened by an aluminium and cork cupboard designed to hold all bits and pieces associated with the bathroom: soaps, shaving foams, cosmetics etc. (ill. 29). There are mostly small drawers and shelves in it, some of which look as though they might pivot outwards, and all the handles are simply holes with a metal trim. This is such a great difference from her earlier, ornate, geometric handles (ill. 30). The main doors of the cupboard are not

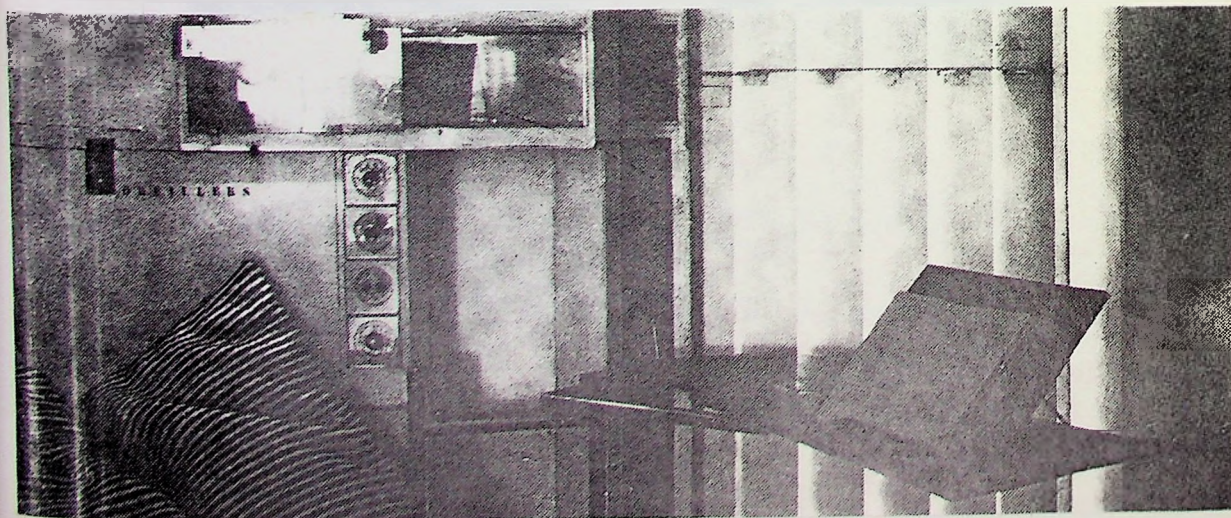
The guest alcove off the livingroom. The door leads out onto a small covered terrace on which a hammock could be hung. The cupboards above the bed have stencilled lettering on them indicating the use for which they are intended OREILLERS is printed on the large cupboard with the pillow in it.

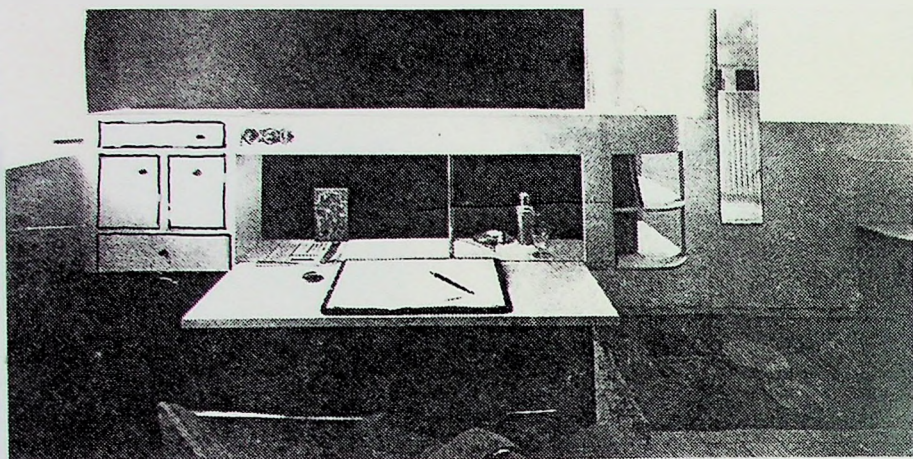
ill. 26



ill. 27

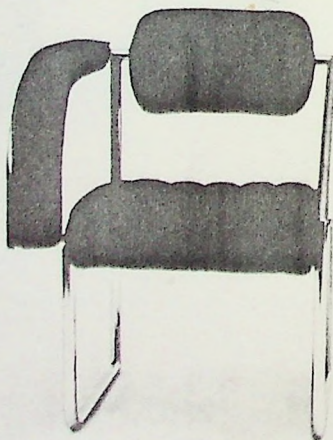
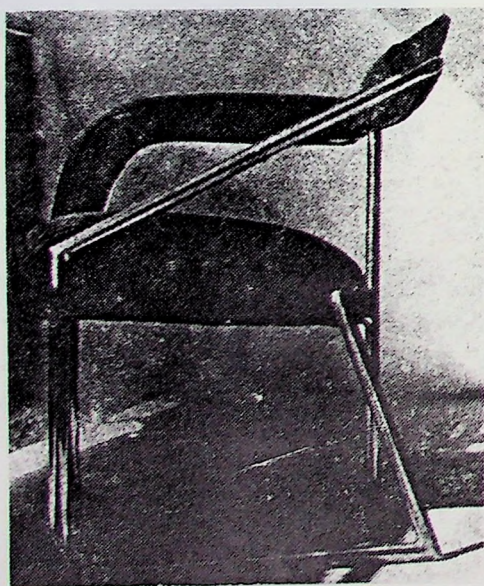
This table is adjustable in height and angle and it even has a locking device so it won't move as you lean on it. Note the built-in light in the cupboard above the bed.

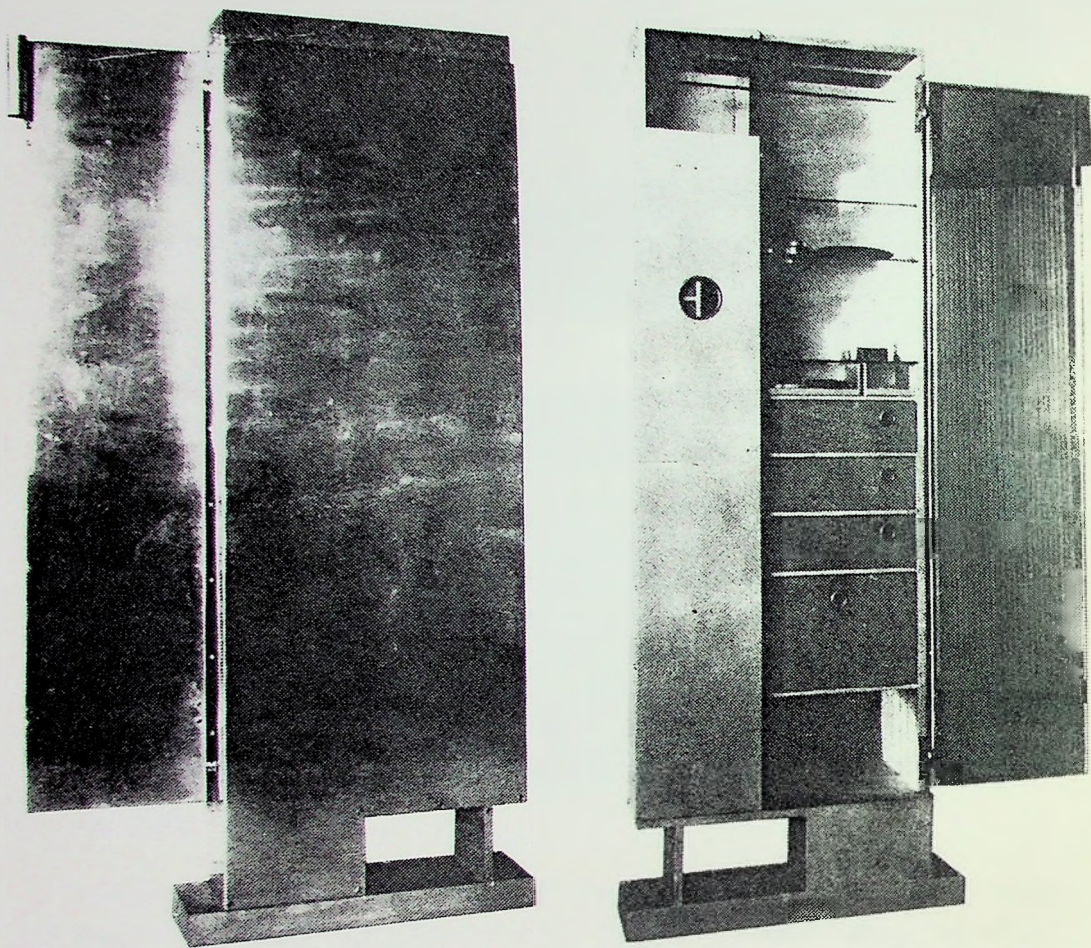




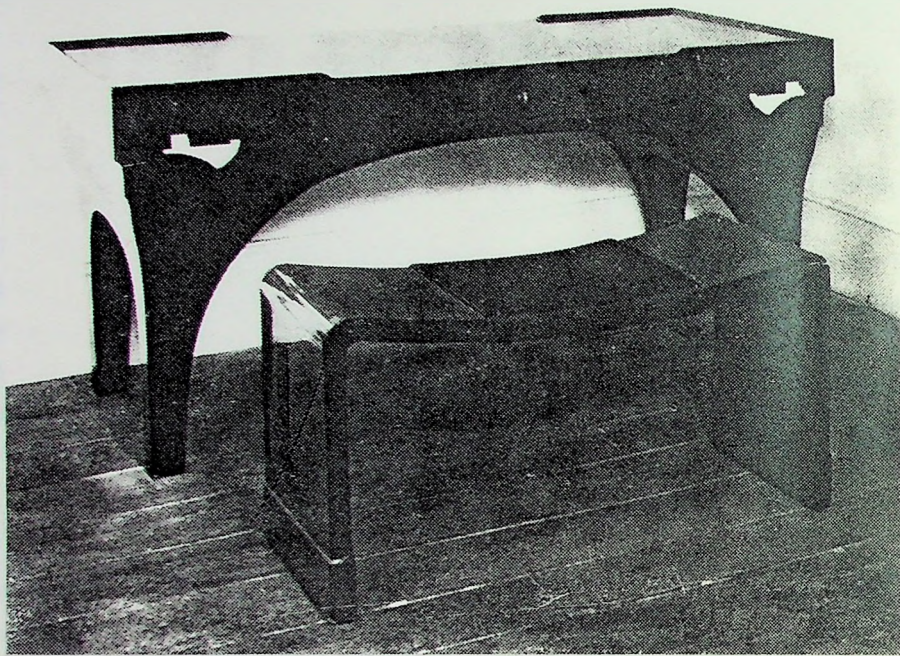
ill. 28

The built-in desk in the guest room. The chair in the foreground is one that she designed to be made from one continuous piece of steel tube, as seen in the two photographs below. She called it the 'non-conformist chair'.





Several views of this cupboard are shown here. On the left is the back, as seen on the right of ph. 5 earlier. On the right is the front. Made of aluminium and cork, it provided plenty of storage space.



ill. 30

Another look at the black lacquer desk and red and black bench exhibited at the 1923 salon. These ivory handles may have been carved by Inagaki, a Japanese craftsman who carved many such handles for Eileen Gray.

the same size in height or width and the treatment of the supports adds to the lack of symmetry. Even the method of opening the doors is different. The tallest door, with a full length mirror inside, is opened by holding on to a length of tubular steel, while the left hand door has a hole in it with a similar metal trim to the drawers inside. It is possible that the mirror door was meant to be left open to form a permanent screen. The base of the cupboard looks as though it is made purposely geometric and is obviously purely decorative as the large block on the right serves no apparent function. The whole is reminiscent of the sculptural table of 1922 in the way that the planes and surfaces continue past the expected point and nothing is symmetrical as one might expect.

One of my favourite pieces of furniture in the house also shows this same feature of de Stijl influence. It is the small table beside the huge divan in the livingroom (ill. 25 ph. 1). It is attractive and functional and still incredibly simple in design. There is more fascinating work than there is space to discuss, so they have been collected together as illustrations (ill. 31).

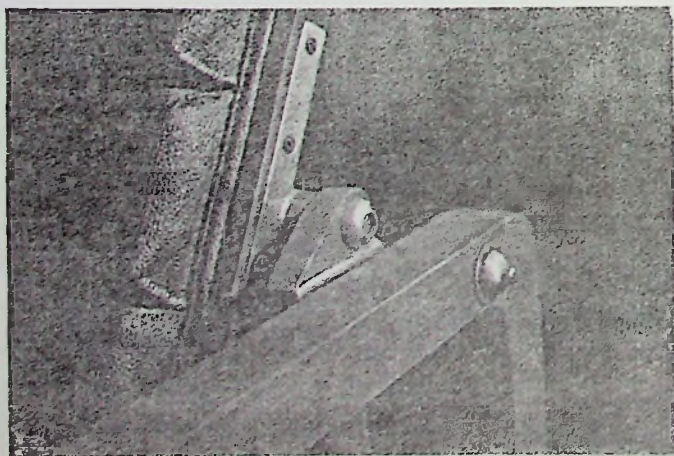
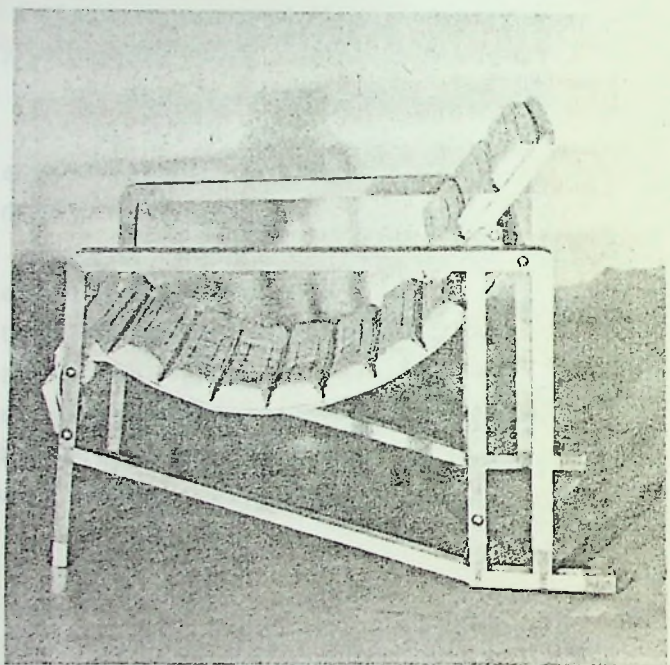
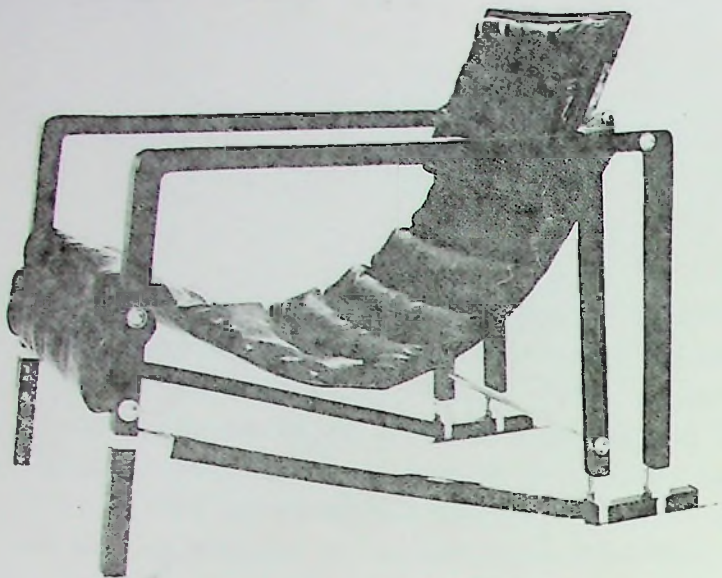
Le Corbusier befriended a fisherman who owned the site adjoining Roquebrune and when this Monsieur Rebutato enlarged his house to include a small bistro, Le Corbusier built himself a small cabin alongside it. He spent much of his spare time there and himself and Eileen Gray became good friends "Yes we were good friends, but we saw so little of each other, you know. He was always travelling... all over the world..." It was from this small house that Le Corbusier went for his fatal swim in 1960. Soon after E-1027



ill. 31

This is perhaps Eileen Gray's most well known work. Called the 'Transatlantic' chair, it was designed about 1924. Made of sycamore and aluminium, the one illustrated here is the prototype, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, but many others exist. "The chair knocks down in moments completely flat, and it is basically a variation on the traditional deck chair, but the separate, self adjustable panel at shoulder height gives an added level of comfort..." (app. M) It exhibits none of the flimsiness that characterizes what I think of as 'knock-down' furniture. She had it made in various colours and textures, some with lacquered wood, some just varnished; the upholstery is either blue, brown or black leather or waxed canvas. Each of the views shown on the following pages is of a different chair, no two are exactly the same.

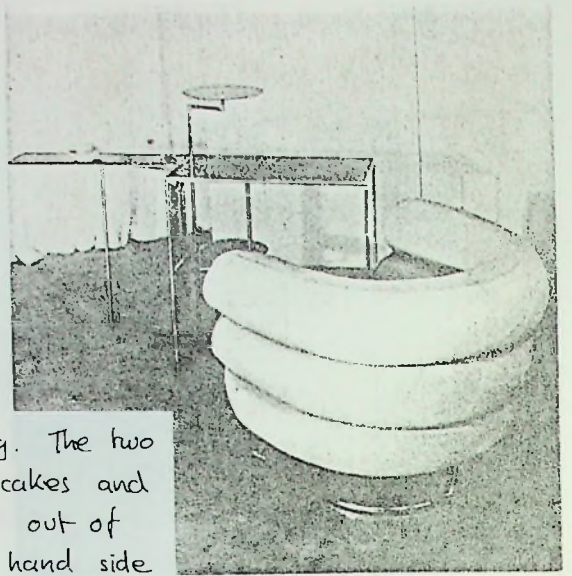




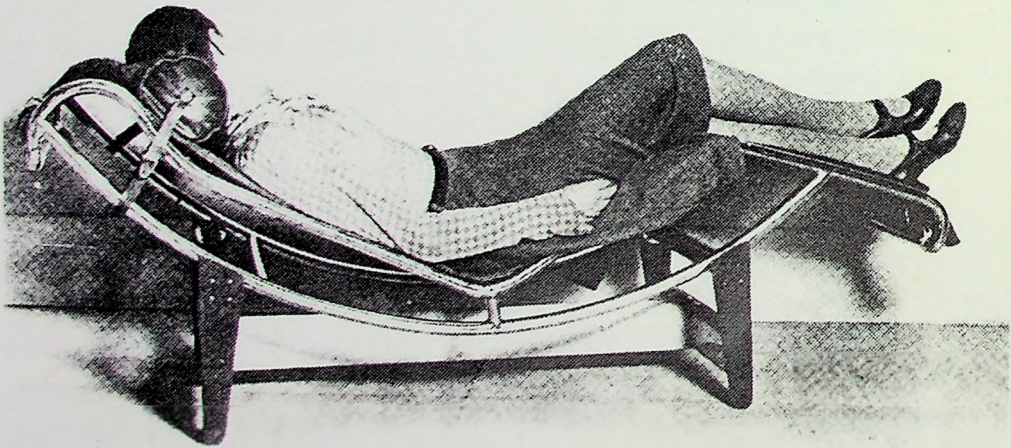
was finished, Badovici bought it and he occupied it during the Second World War. It was then that five murals were painted in the house (ill. 25 ph. 2&4). Le Corbusier did not regard the house as a neutral background for his figurative exercises. There is reason to believe that he kept a copy of a 1929 issue of *l'Architecture Vivante* in which there was an article on E-1027 entitled "Maison en bord de Mer" in his study at the Rue de Sèvres and always regarded the house as an exemplary building (app. D). This publication had a long preface to it entitled "De l'éclecticisme an doute" which took the form of dialogue between Badovici and Eileen Gray. It contains an appeal (unusual for its time) against the over-intellectualising of architecture, for a dramatising of the essential forms. It goes on to say that this dramatisation could be brought about, or at least nearer, if as much attention was paid to the design of interiors as was then paid to exteriors. It is true that up to this time interiors had been largely neglected by leading architects, indeed at the time she designed the house, Le Corbusier was still using Thonet chairs and Club arm-chairs in his buildings.

When Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeaneret remodelled an old building at Ville d'Avray, it was the first of his houses to contain specifically designed furniture, and they employed a great contemporary of Eileen Gray's, Charlotte Perriand. As she herself said: "I would work on the elaboration of a general project with the office, then I took responsibility for doing the equipment. It was necessary to be on site to watch the execution down to the smallest details. So I worked on the conception of pulling together all the projects during that period, especially the domestic ones, as Le Corbusier was then concerned with those problems." In 1928 she declared that "metal plays the

same part in furniture as cement has done in architecture. It is a revolution." It is possible that she had been talking to Eileen Gray, as the latter had been designing tubular steel furniture since 1925. Needless to say, those chairs that Charlotte Perriand "took responsibility for doing" are now attributed solely to Le Corbusier, and the woman behind the man is largely forgotten (ill. 32).



This tea table is very interesting. The two aluminium discs are intended for cakes and biscuits etc. and can be rotated out of the way. It is possible that the left hand side of the table is a flap that can be folded down, and its support slides back in under the wider section of the table. In the same picture is a white leather chair designed in the early 1920's. It has been shown in various photographs of Mme Talbot's apartment (ill. 11), as well as in E-1027 (ill. 25 ph.1)



Charlotte Perriand on the Chaise longue designed by herself
"and Le Corbusier" 1928-1929

BADOVICI'S FLAT

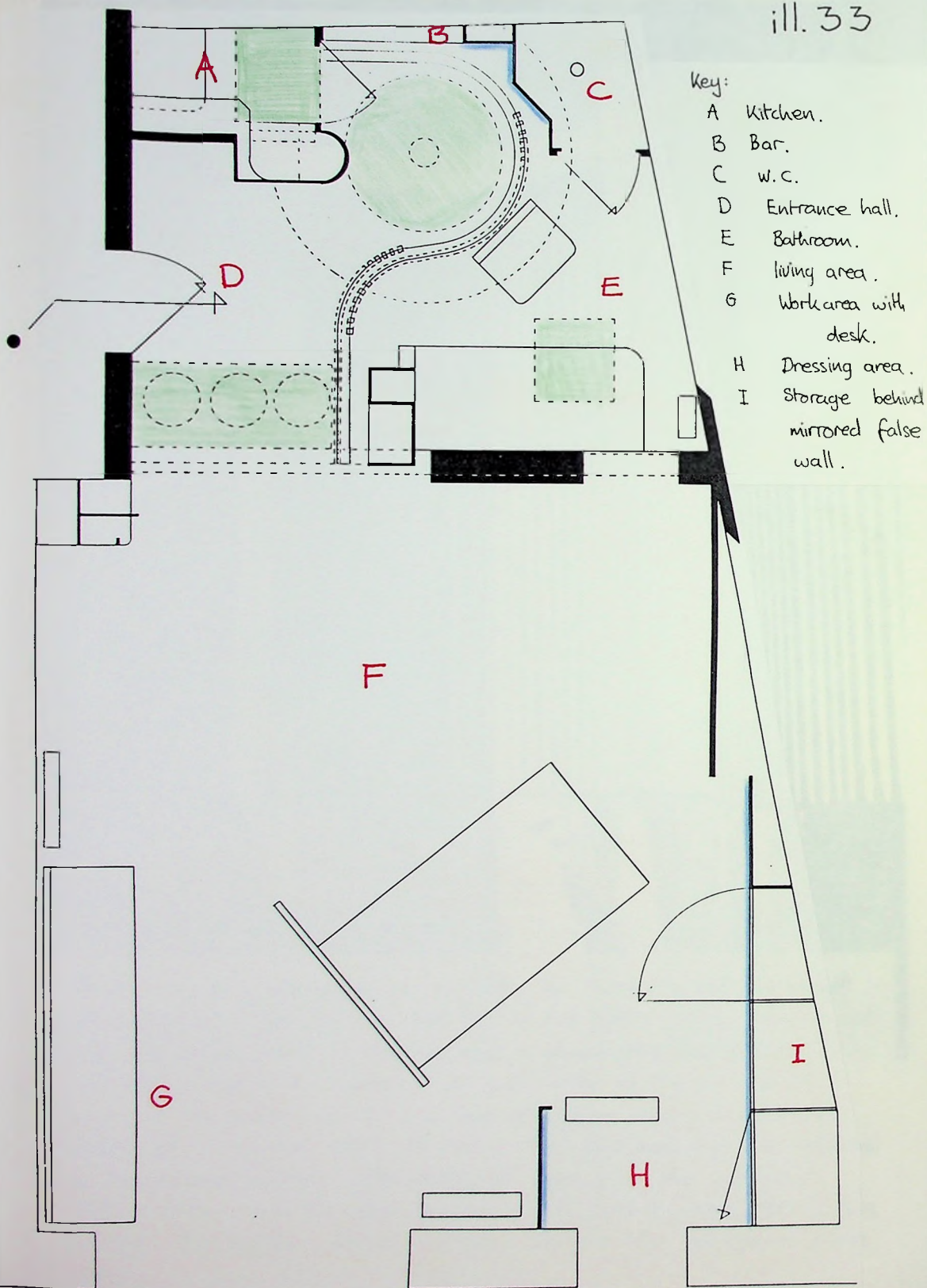
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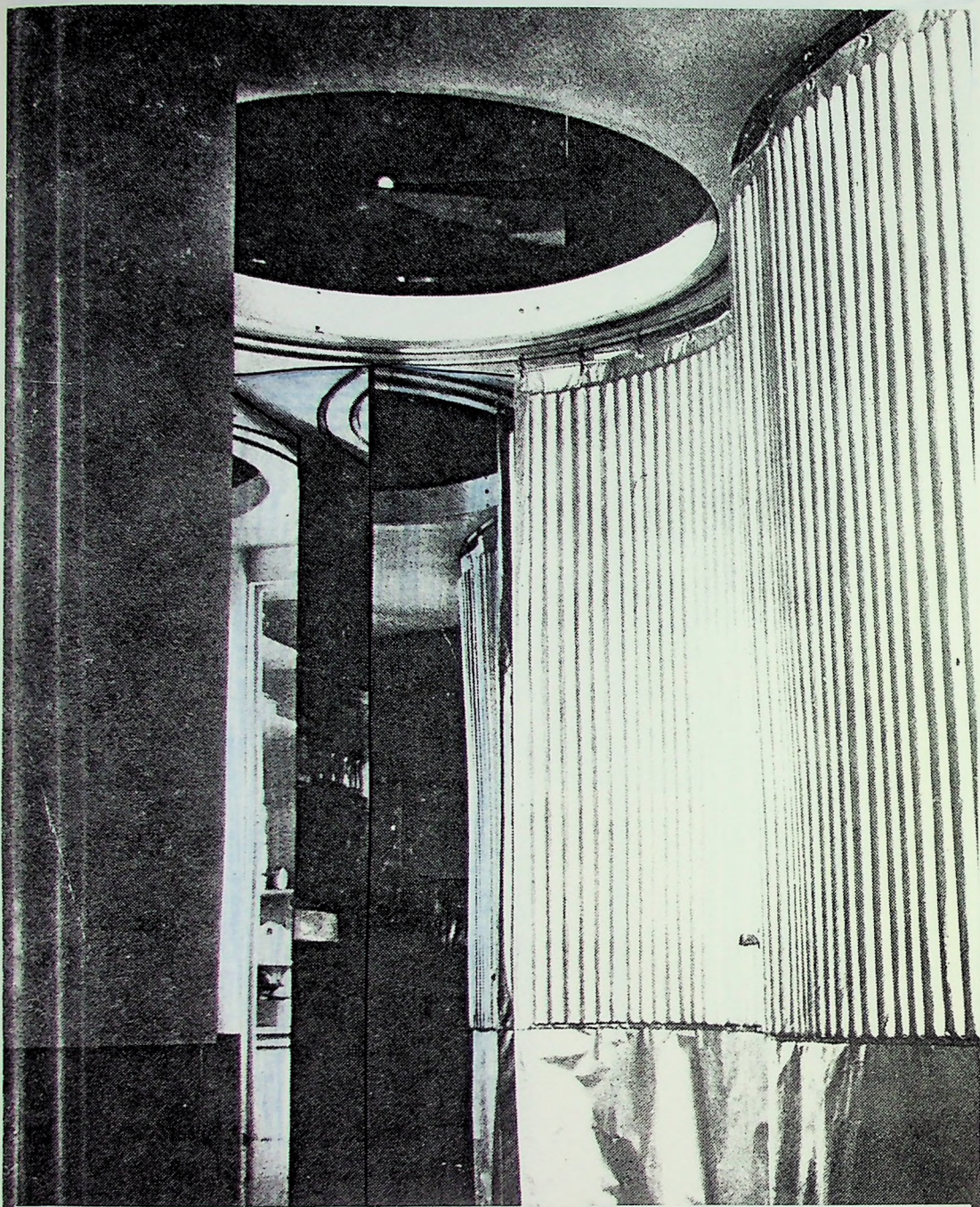
Rocquebrune was not the only work which arose out of Eileen Grays friendship with Jean Badovici. In 1930 he asked her to decorate a studio apartment for him in the Rue Chateaubriand near the Champs Elysées. Before she started, it was a single large room, approximately 5m X 8m - which is a golden section except that one of the walls was inclined at 10° creating a wedge shape (ill. 33). At the thinner end of the room she constructed all the functional and utility rooms - kitchen, bathroom, W.C.; all within the space of approximately 3m X 4m. As space was an important consideration in such a small room, she dropped the ceiling and inserted four storage areas above it, accessible by cleverly designed fold-away stepladders. The different areas in this section were separated or opened up, and more storage space was accessed by sliding a screen between tracks in the floor and in the dropped ceiling (ill. 34). The screen itself was made of wooden slats sewn into a flexible metallic material.

This room has a fantastic collection of materials used in very original ways to make the area seem larger than it is. The dropped ceiling has made the utility areas seem wider; the use of mirrors is extensive, both in the utility areas and a whole half wall in the living area. In the room there are two screens made of painted industrial expanded metal (ill. 35). If one of these were used to separate two areas it would achieve that without making either area seem smaller, or it could reduce visibility in through the window without blocking the light too much. By using

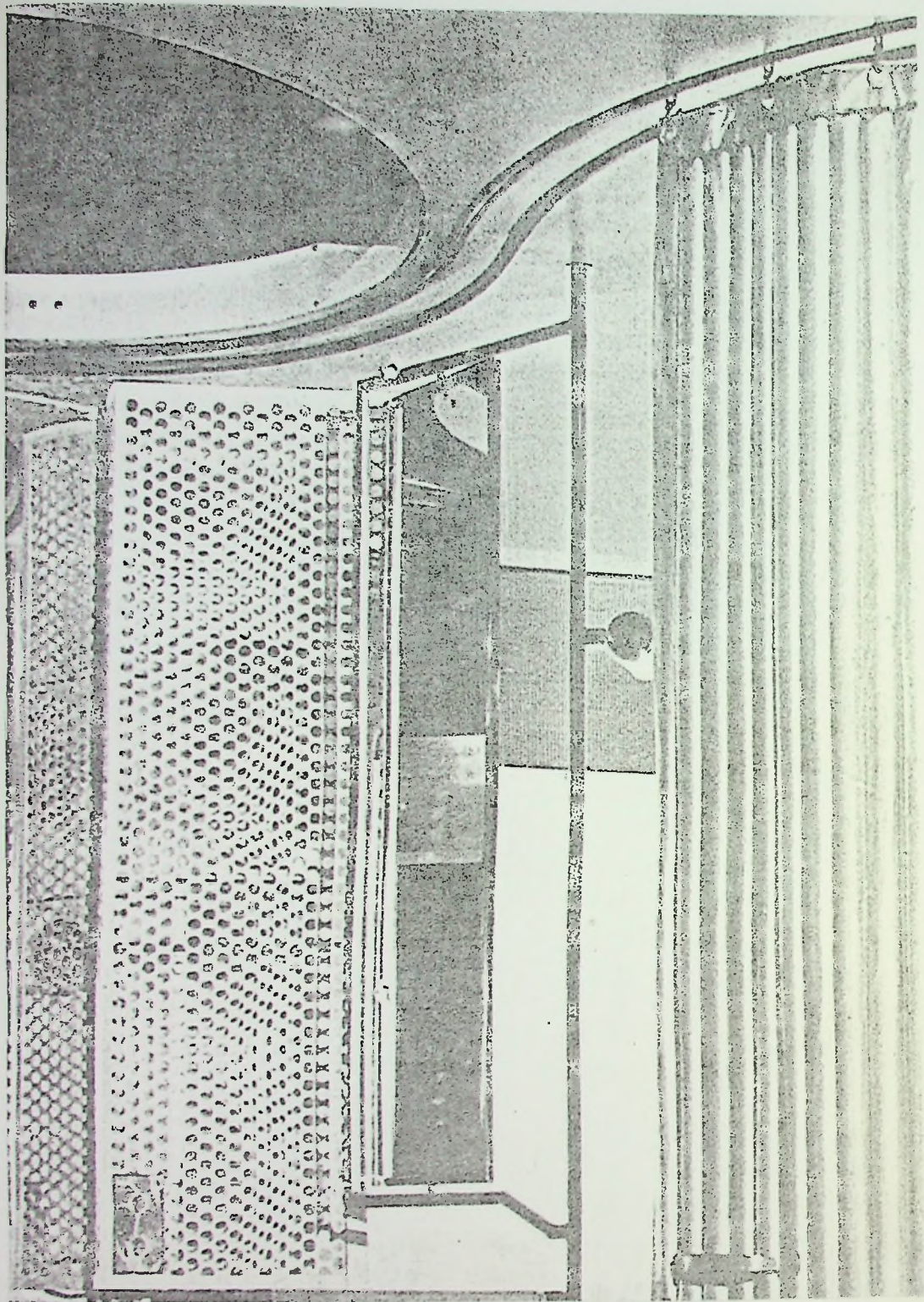
Floor plan of Badovici's flat. Green areas indicate overhead storage in the false ceiling. These are accessed by foldaway ladders and stairs. Blue lines indicate mirrored surfaces.

ill. 33





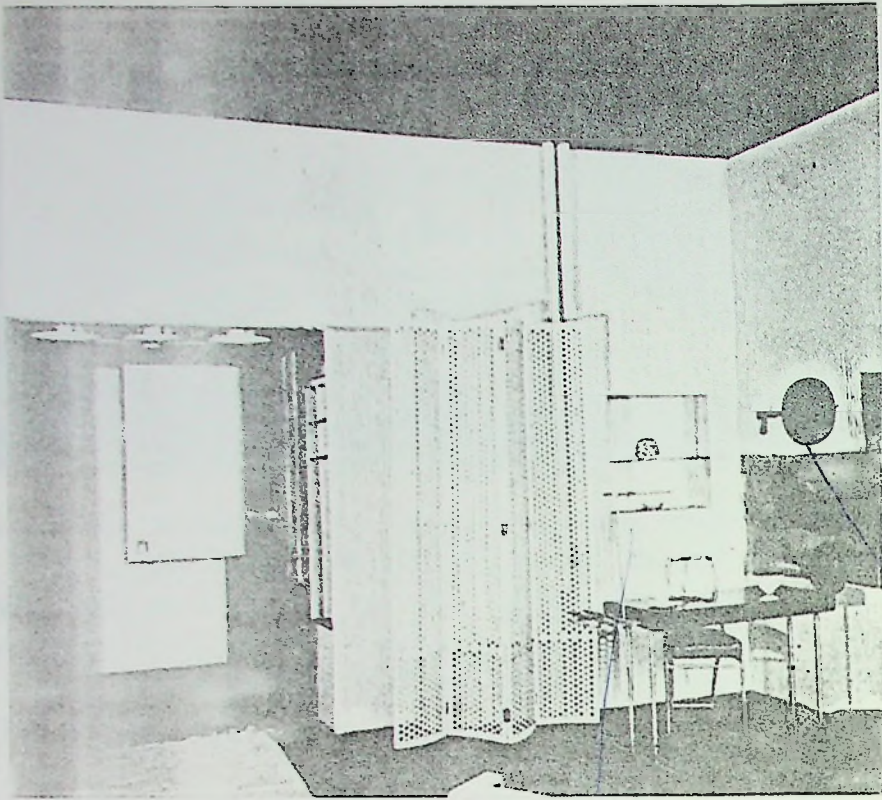
Mirrors are used extensively in the flat. The mirrors in this photograph are shaded blue for clarity. The left of the picture is the kitchen wall, and just to the right of that we see a glimpse into the kitchen reflected in one of the mirrors. A small area of the bar can be seen in the same mirror, a line of glasses can just about be made out; to the right of that, the entrance hall is reflected in the second mirror. This photograph also shows the circular storage area with its glass shelving, but doesn't show the access method. The metallic sliding curtain screens the bathroom from view.



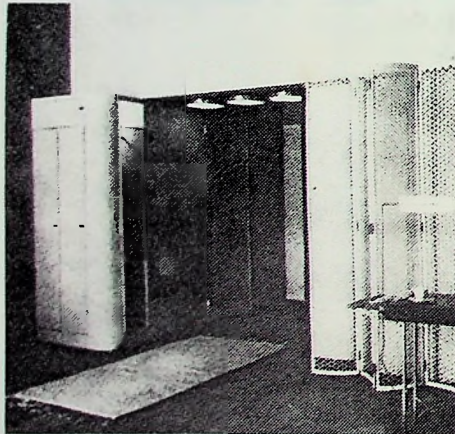
This photograph shows the same view, more or less. It gives us a mere glimpse into the bathroom, showing an adjustable mirror and what seems to be a small light pivoting on a tubular steel support. The purpose of the perforated metal screen is unclear. Note the very plain handle on the sliding screen.

tubular steel Eileen Gray kept the visibility of the floor to a maximum, thus adding to the feeling of space still further and not one bit of space has been wasted. Even the wall which contains the piping has been utilised where possible, with recessed shelves providing a decorative personal display area rather than purely functional storage (ill. 35). The apartment serves not only the necessary aspects of life, but also the various human needs that other more rigidly doctrinaire modern architects of the time have been accused of dismissing. She treats the overall scheme with as much sensitivity to its eventual use as she does with tiny details and utilisation of various materials. Other features of the apartment are pointed out through the illustrations (ill. 36).

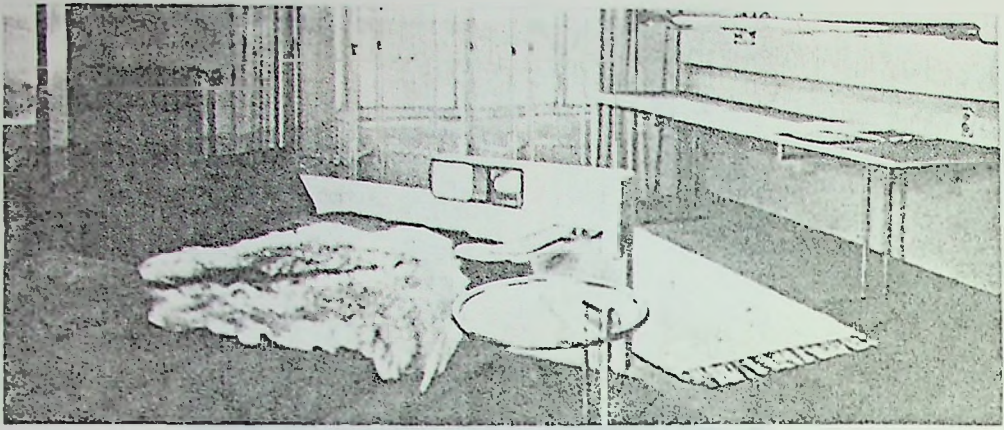
ill. 35



The screen is in the centre of this picture. It is interesting that Eileen Gray did not see fit to hide the piping in the room, but left it showing on the back wall. She has recessed shelving areas into the wall behind the desk for the display of personal items.

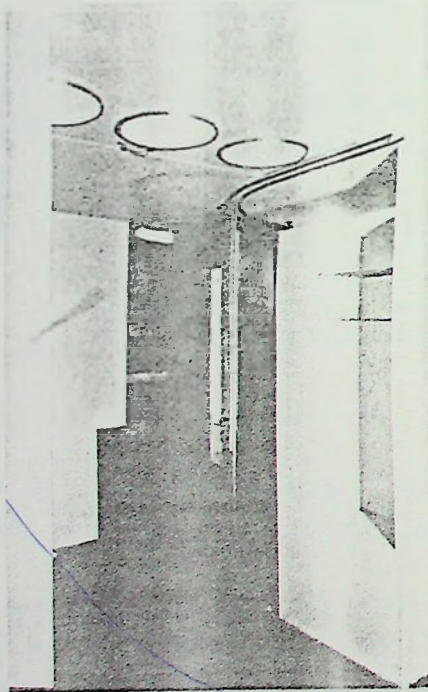


In this view, the integral light on the desk is more obvious than in the last one. Also shown is the small coat cupboard on the left.



The legs of the worktable in this view are a feature shared by the small desk shown in the previous photographs, making the two tables more compatible with each other. The tube lighting system that runs the length of the workbench is a very interesting and original idea that has since been copied. The divan serves both as a couch and a bed and it has a built-in reading light.

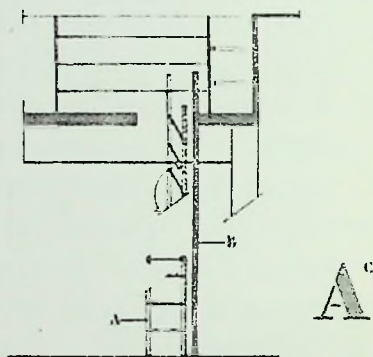
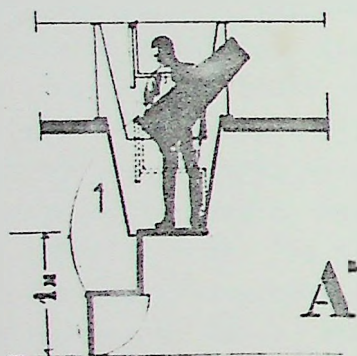
ill. 36



Shown here is the small storage space accessed by sliding away the metal screen. In the dark background, the bar can just be made out. The three lights in the ceiling hide a storage space and the opening handle can be seen - the same type used to move the metal screen.



Another view showing the dressing area reflected in the mirrored cupboards.



These are diagrams of how the storage areas are accessed, although the ladders and foldaway stairs are not shown in any of the photographs.

Left: the method of access for the circular storage area.

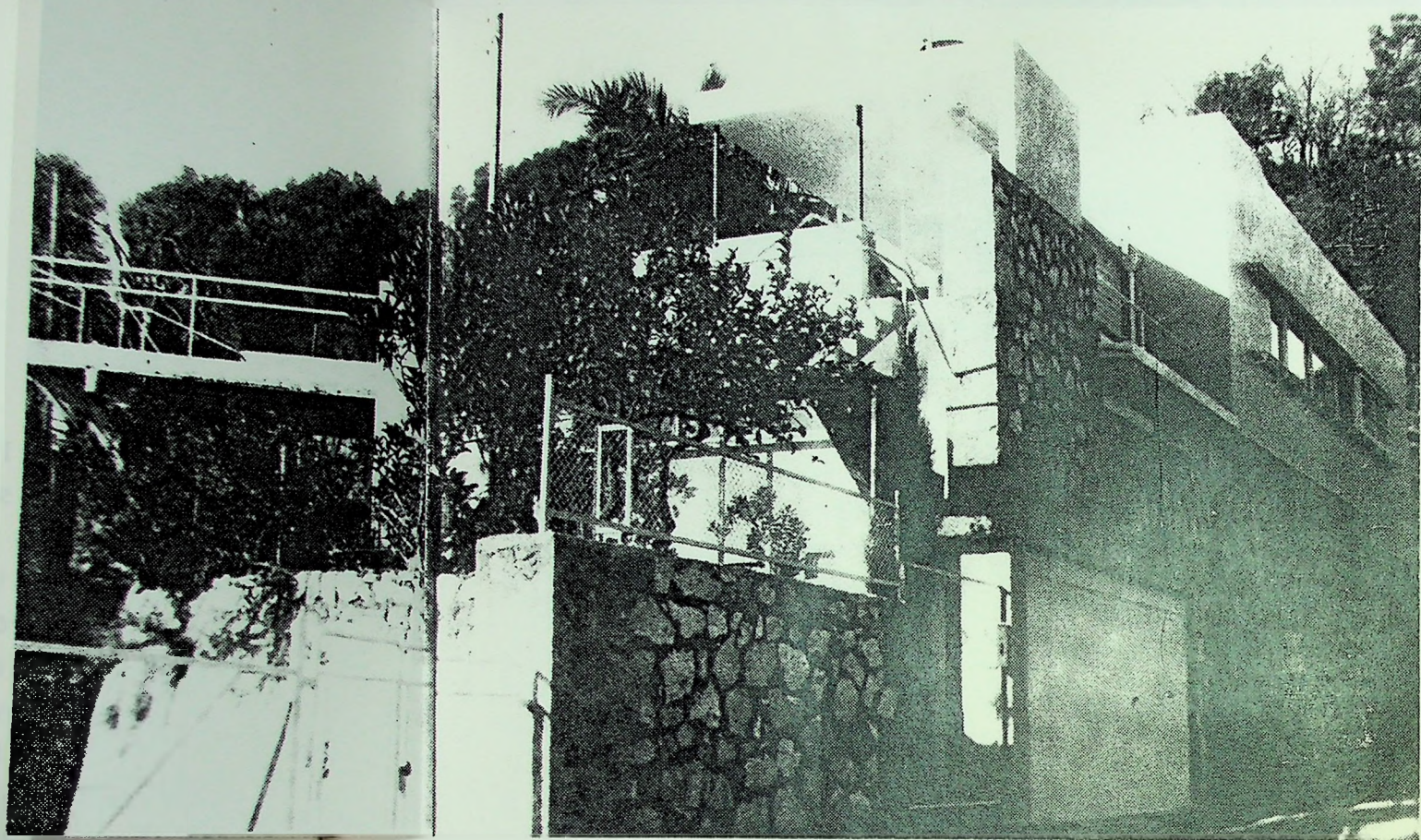
Right: the foldaway ladders used to access the three rectangular storage areas. (all shown in green on the floor plan.)

TEMPE A PAILLA CASTELLAR

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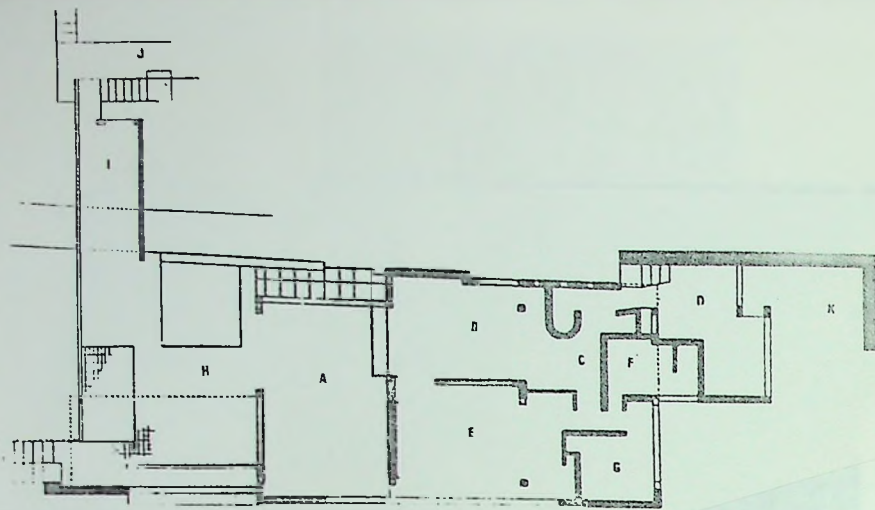
Eileen Grays last executed and remaining architectural project was one she built for her own occupation between 1932 and 1934. The site must have been chosen as a challenge, for it is just as awkward a site as Roquebrune. Situated four miles from Meuton it is steeply sloping toward a road which runs along the east side of the house (ill. 37). Two plusses in favour of the site were firstly the view it commanded of both sea and mountains and secondly that there were three reinforced concrete cisterns already installed. She incorporated these assets into the house beautifully. The views are visible through most of the many large windows and the cisterns were converted into a garage, a storage cellar and a receptacle for holding water collected off the flat roof. The narrow strip of ground she had to build on was sandwiched between the road and a passage leading to another house, and the space for a garden was on the far side of that passage. But the final effect is one of having a house suspended above the surrounding territory, no other houses around to mar the privacy.

While at Roquebrune the piloti rose out of the waterside cliff, at Castellar the smooth concrete walls rise rather irregularly out of a random rubble podium. Reinforced concrete and rough local stone are the main ingredients, with generous helpings of light to make it spacious and airy inside. The studio-livingroom is the largest enclosed space, but huge windows lead out into a partially covered terrace which lends some of its feeling of space to the room inside (ill. 38). On the same floor there is a kitchen, diningroom,



ill. 37 Two views of Tempe a Pailla. Top: As seen from the road. Stretching to the left of the picture is the bridge over the passage leading to the garden. Bottom: A view which shows how steep the hill is that the house is built on.

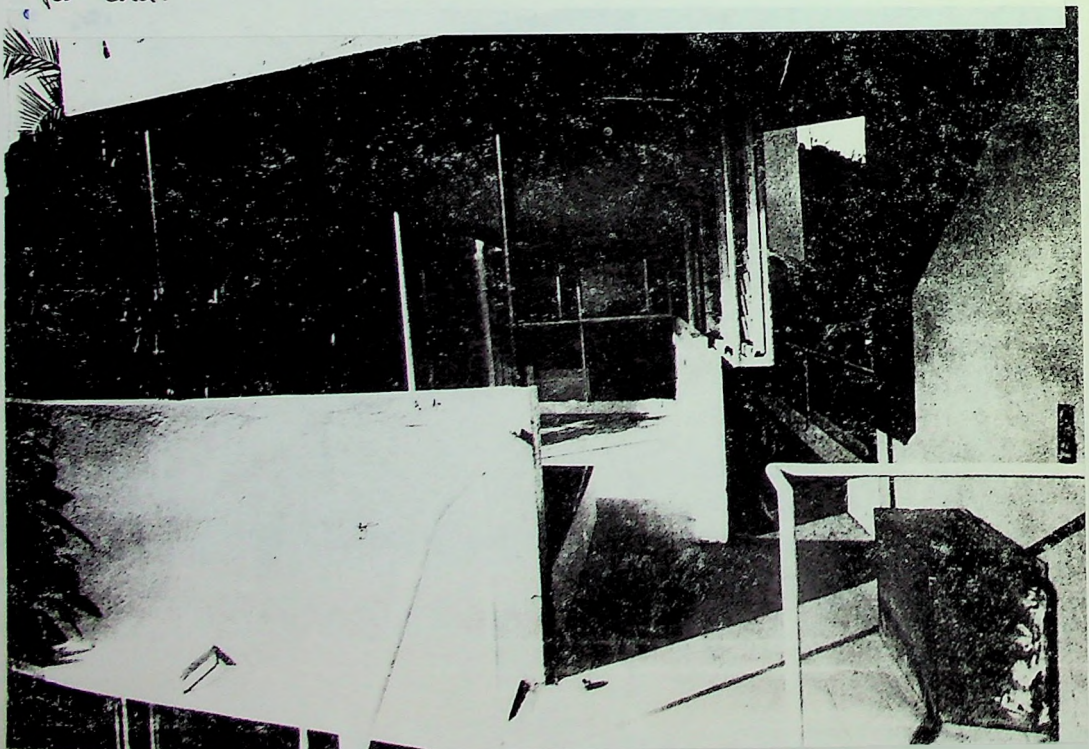




Floor plan of Tempe a Pailla

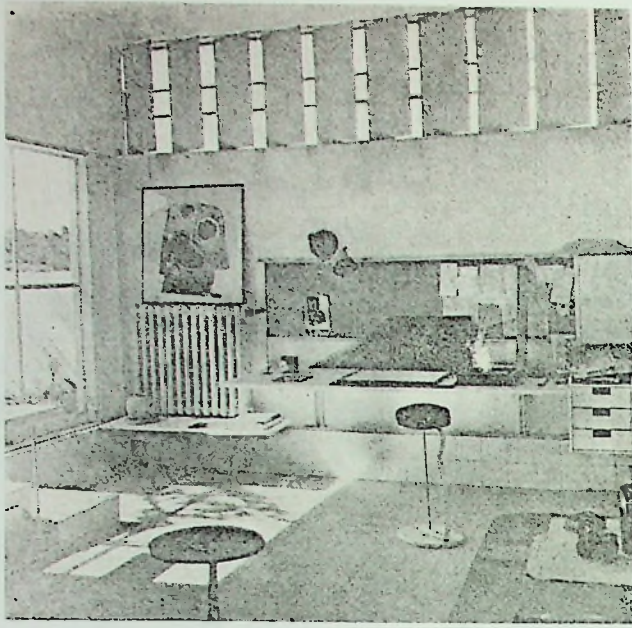
- Key:
- A. studio/living room
 - B. dining room
 - C. service passageway
 - D. kitchen
 - E. bedroom
 - F. bathroom
 - G. guest bedroom
 - H. terrace
 - I. bridge
 - J. passage to garden
 - K. servants' Patio.

A view of the terrace showing the windows of the livingroom at the far end.

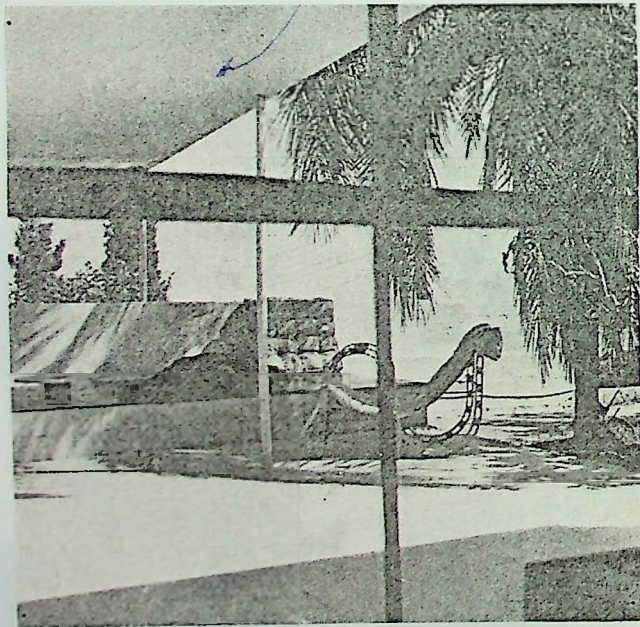




A view from the bridge leading to the garden, looking back towards the terrace, showing the impressive scenery surrounding the house.

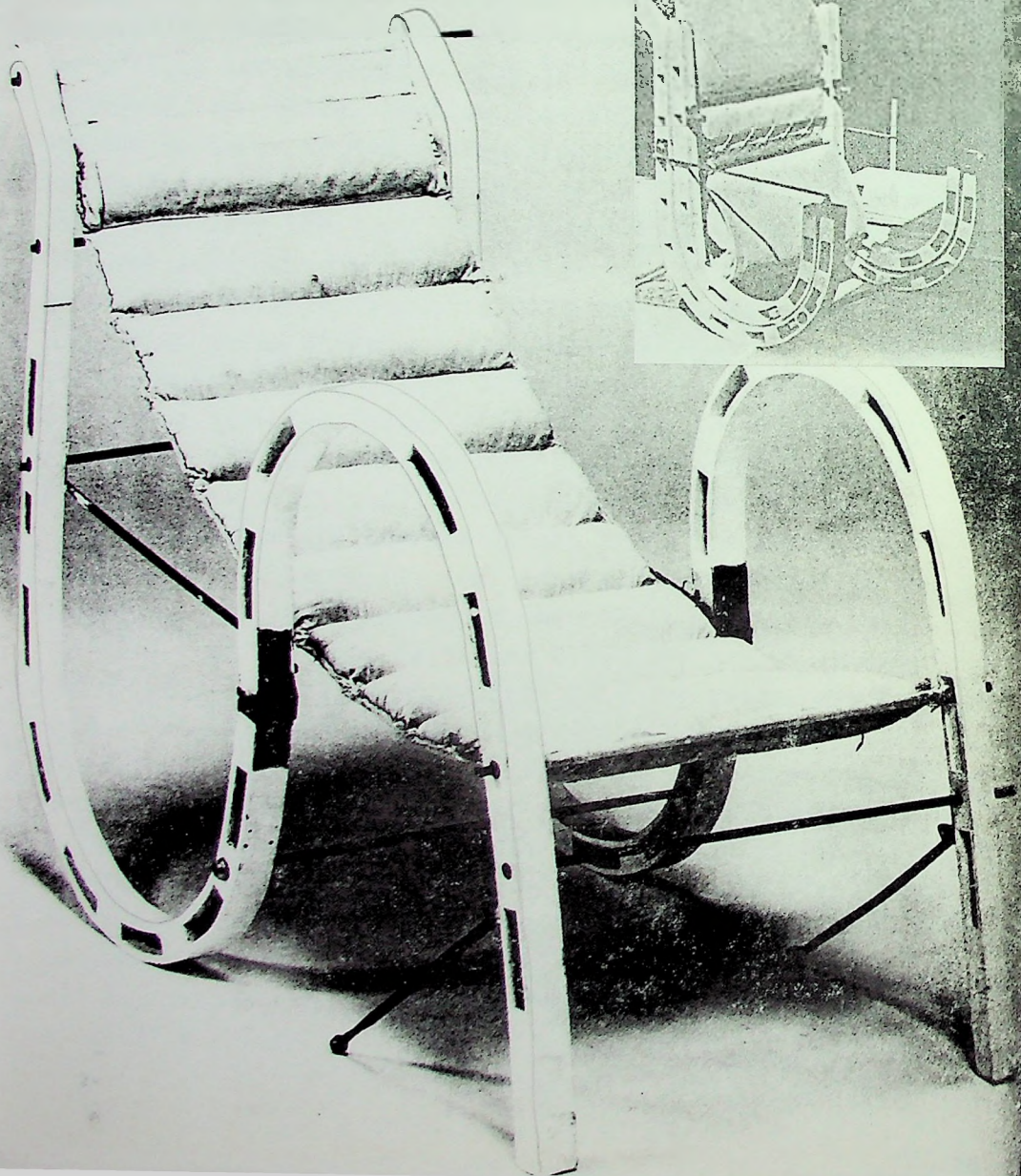


ill. 38 The studio end of the living room, showing how the high windows make the room seem taller than it really is.



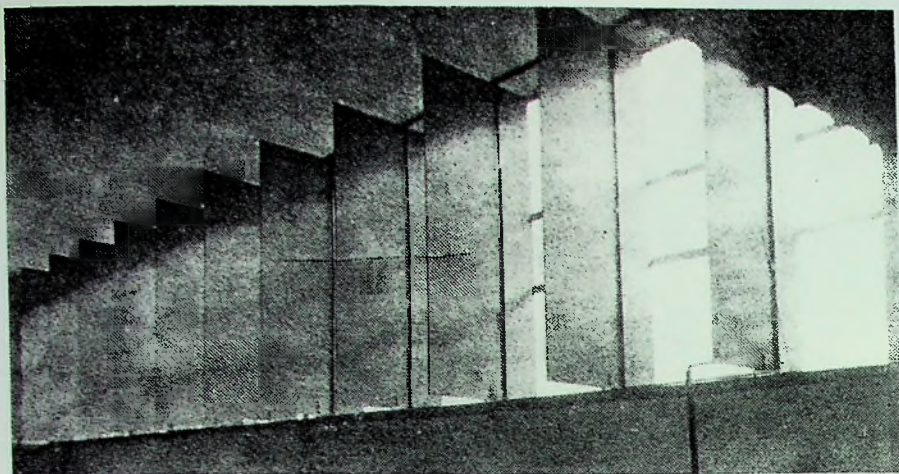
A picture taken through the window of the studio showing how the covered terrace would lend light and space to the room.

Two close-ups of the deck chair shown in the previous photograph. Note how the s-bend supports fold into themselves. The larger photograph shows a later, refined version of the design and there are slight improvements made on the way the thin metal bars are arranged.



bathroom and two bedrooms, and on the lower mezzanine floor there is a guest bedroom and bathroom, and below that again is the garage.

This house in its use of light and shade is much more accomplished than E-1027. Sliding windows, similar to those designed by Badovici, and shutters set in tracks are used for privacy and protection from the glare of the sun throughout the house. Particularly interesting are the louvres in front of the window high above the work area in the studio-livingroom (ill. 39). Adjusted by a handle which hangs down into the room, they rotate so that when open they jut out into the room creating a strong decorative effect, one which accentuates the height of this half of the living area. There are windows along three sides of this room but it seems that those above the divan have been boarded up from the inside (ill.40). This is the same strip of windows visible from the road which continue into the bedroom as well (ill. 37). These shutters are similar to the ones used on the terrace except there are three runners instead of just two (ill. 41). They can be adjusted to be closed, let in light through either the top slats or all the slats, or they can be pushed along the tracks to one side, letting all available light into the rooms. One other type of shutter that Eileen Gray designed consisted of a counter-balanced circular disc which pivoted to adjust the amount of light from a circular skylight in the bedroom (ill. 42). The use of a skylight is necessary as the window in the bedroom, the one visible from the road, faces North East for the view and so the room would rarely be lit up with sunshine. This shows how thoughtfully and thoroughly all the details of this house were considered even before she started to build it.

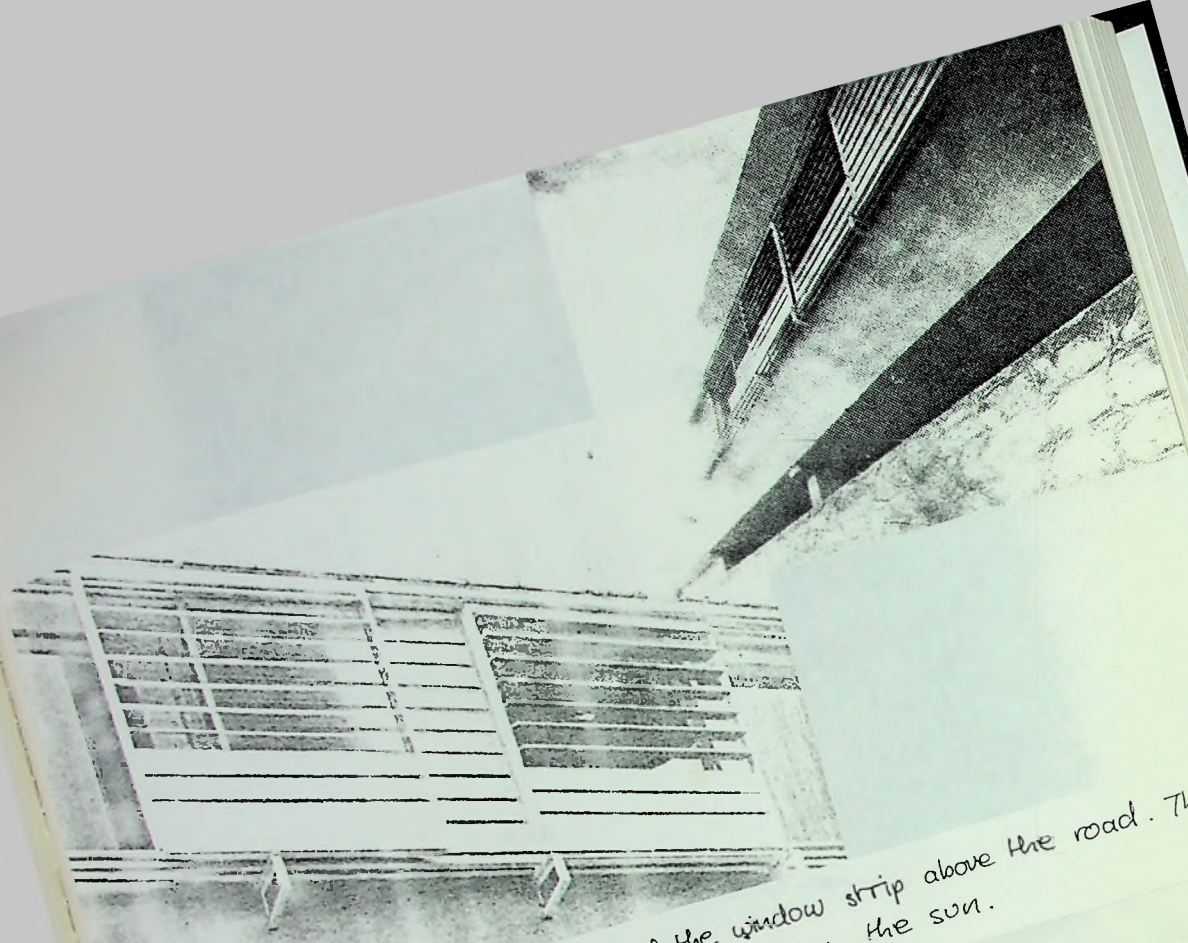


ill. 39 Detail of the window louvers showing the handle which adjusts them.

ill. 40

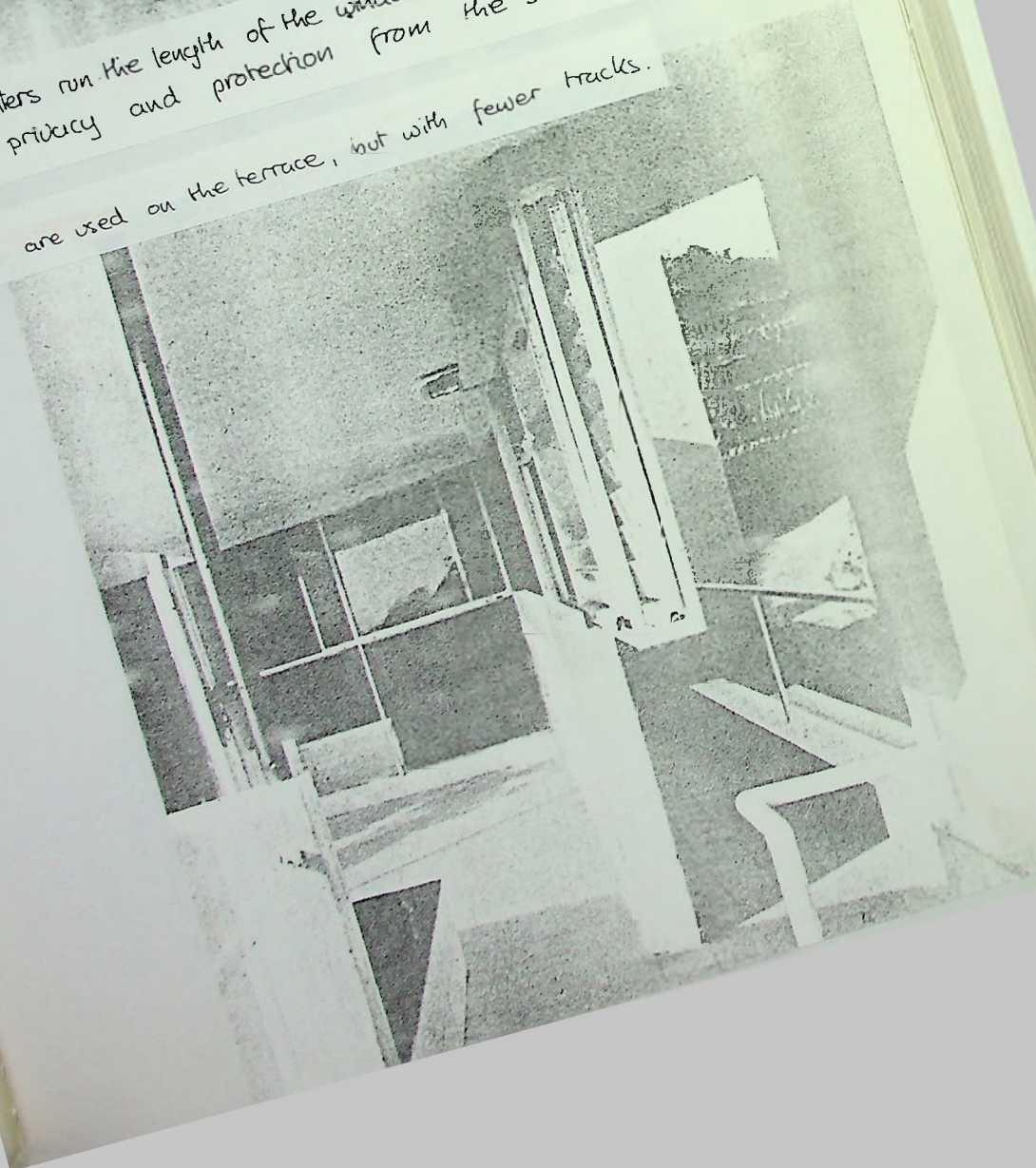
The living end of the room. Behind the rectangle above the radiator is the strip of windows seen from the road. Here also it is apparent how the terrace lends its space to the room.

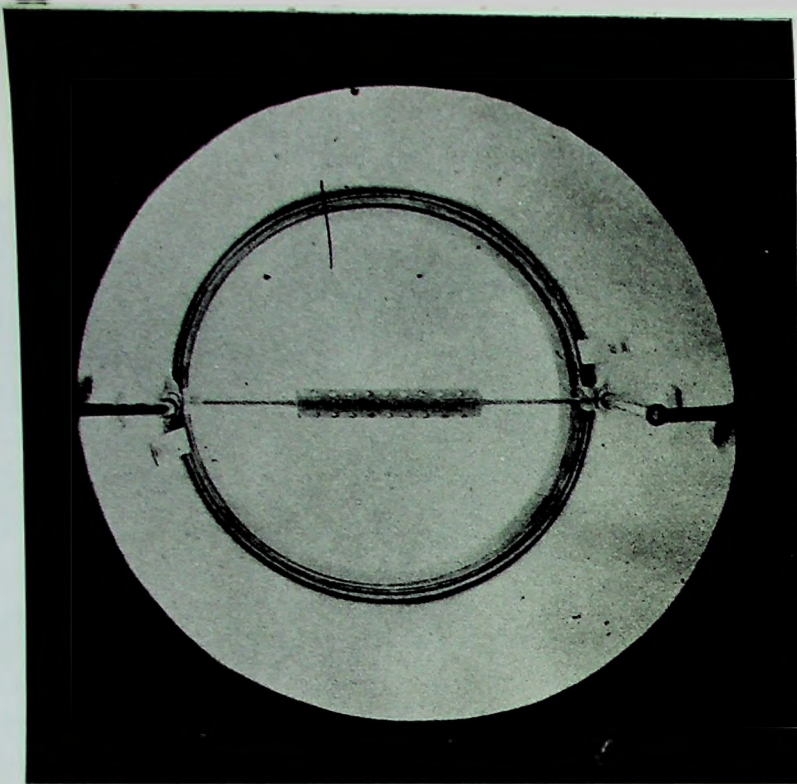




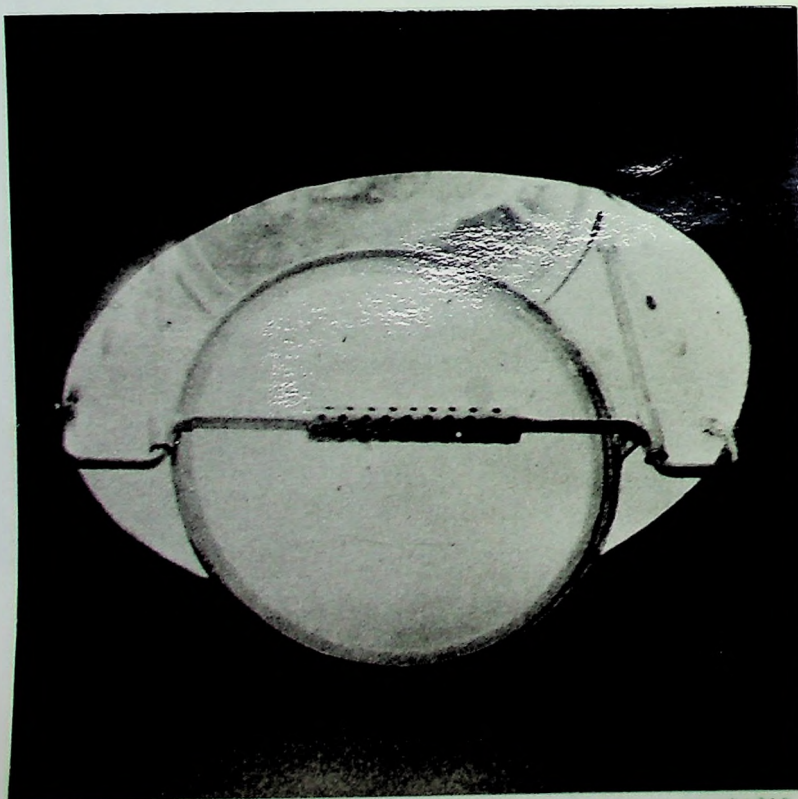
ill. 41 These shutters run the length of the window strip above the road. They provide privacy and protection from the sun.

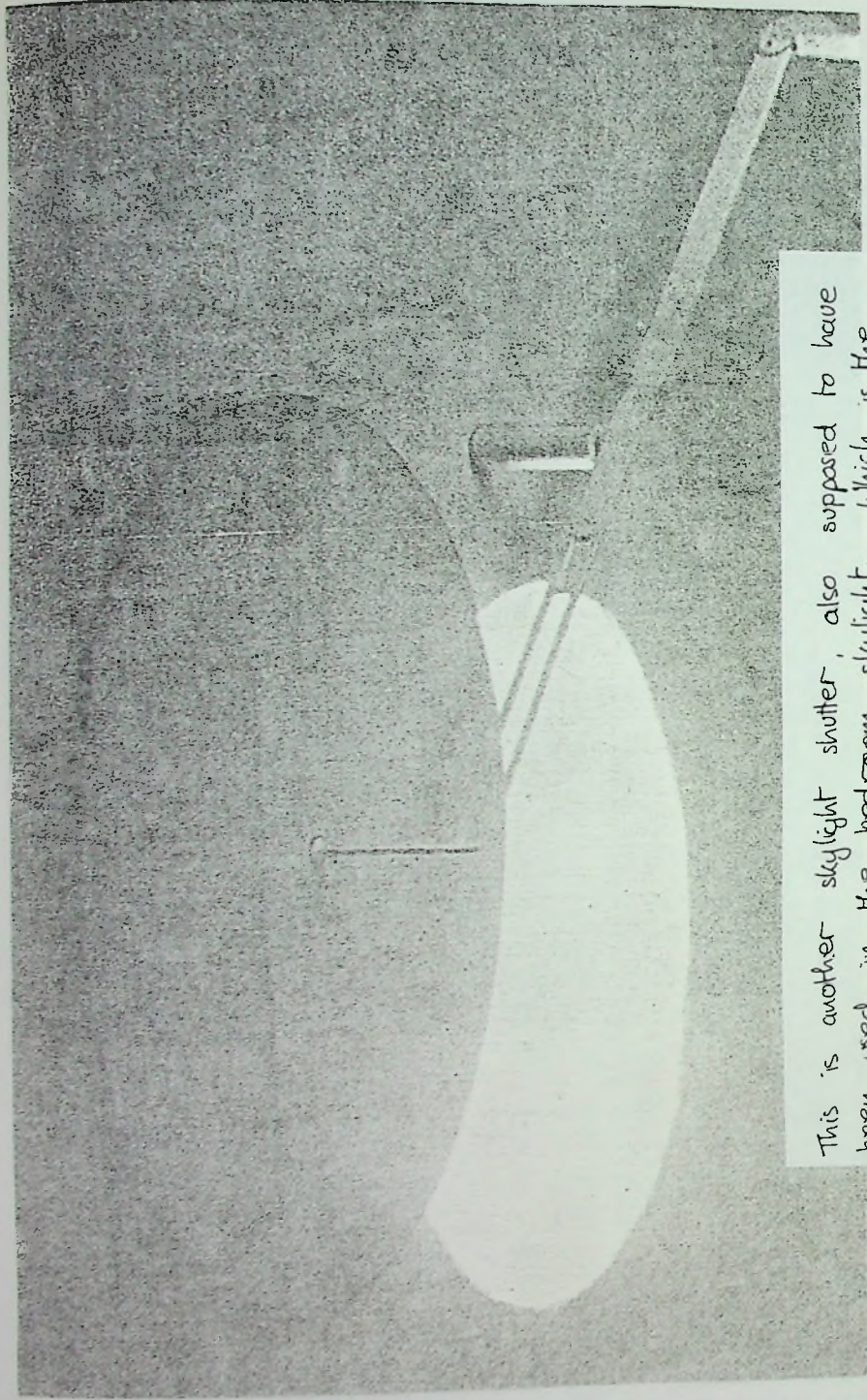
The same shutters are used on the terrace, but with fewer tracks.





- iii. 42 A shutter/reflector supposedly used on the skylight in the bedroom. Top: The shutter has been pushed up to cover the circular skylight, thus greatly reducing the light in the room. Bottom: The skylight is open fully and the shutter is acting as a reflector for added light in the room.





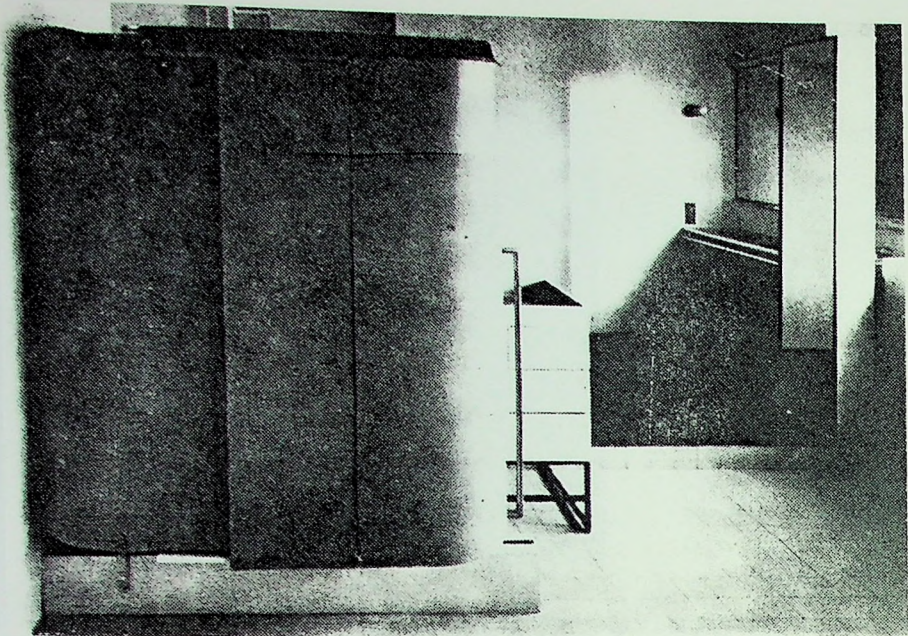
ill. 42

This is another skylight shutter, also supposed to have been used in the bedroom skylight. Which is the right one, is unclear. The first seems better as it is both a shutter and reflector whereas this one is only a shutter. Both designs show how important Eileen Gray considered light in a room to be.

The furnishings in the house are not original as they were looted during the Second World War. Eileen Gray lived in the house up to 1939 when she arranged and furnished a small flat for herself in St. Tropez where she could be safe from the effects of the war. But in 1940 she was exiled as an enemy alien to Lourmarin in the Vaucluse, a village about 200 miles from Castellar. The flat in St. Tropez was destroyed in 1944 and no record of it survives, even in her scrapbooks, and when she arrived back to Castellar after the war, she discovered that it had been occupied by Italian, German and then American troops. The only reason it was still there was because they couldn't take the walls. She attempted to remake the furniture and fix up the house, but due to her failing eyesight she was only able to remake a few of the items.

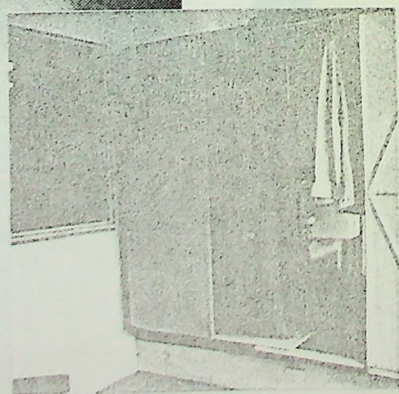
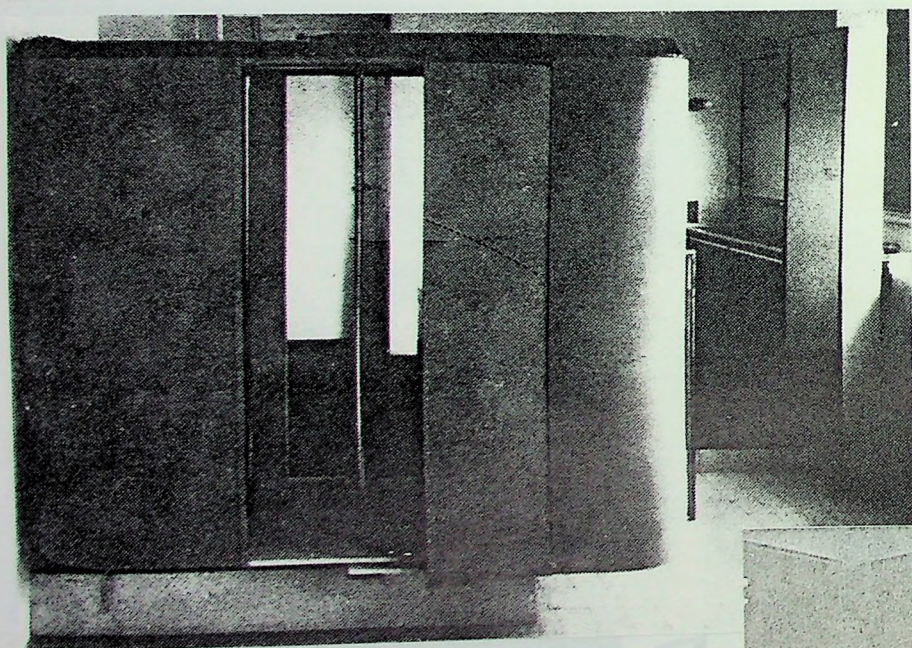
One item of furniture that wasn't looted from the house was the metal wardrobe in the master bedroom (ill. 43). This sliding capsule has the same purpose as the cupboard and mirror in Badovici's flat (ill. 36), which is to define the dressing area and provide clothing storage.

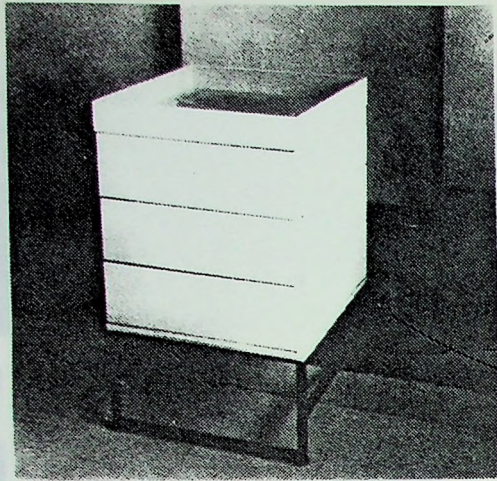
The piece of furniture I prefer to any other in the house is the small chest with drawers that pivot outwards. It is simple and yet sophisticated, and the finalisation of a concept she had developed over the years (ill. 44). It is at once decorative and extremely practical; the ideal way to decide what to wear on a particular day is to be able to see everything you own at a glance. Another very practical, well thought out design is the diningroom table (ill. 45). When eating at it, the table is stationary and not likely to move, but tip it forward an inch or two, and it will glide over the tiled floor without scratching it. Nothing



ill. 43

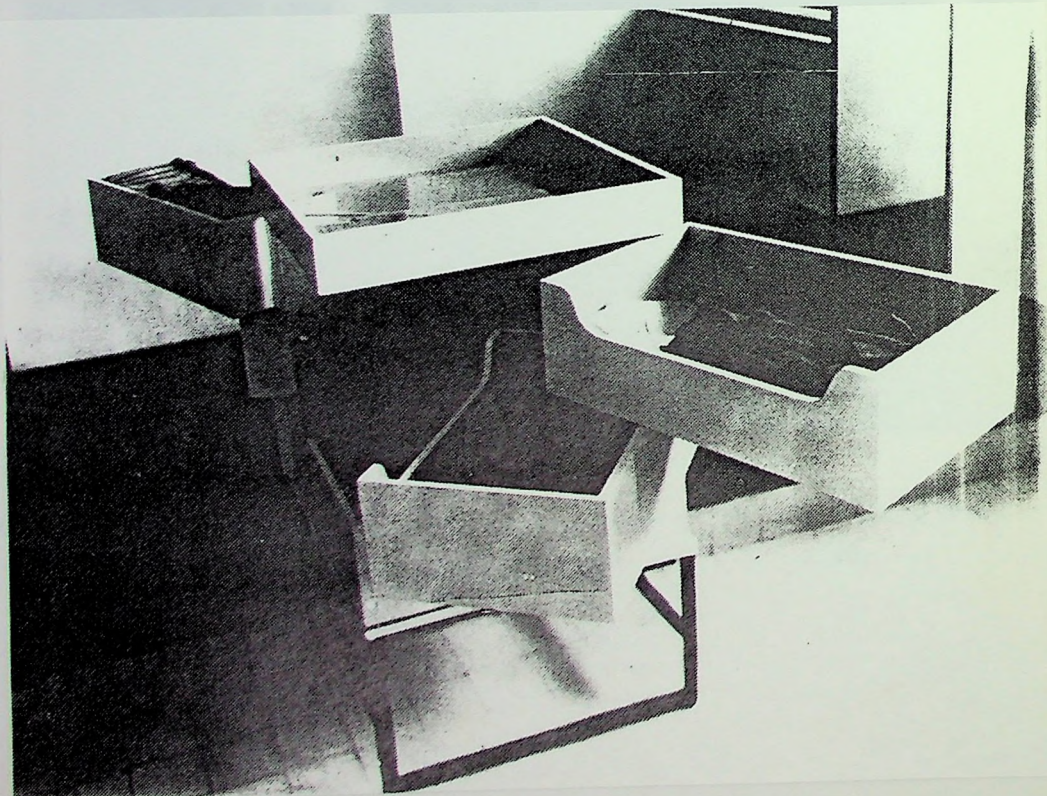
The metal wardrobe in the master bedroom. It moves on tracks and is opened by pulling it laterally. In the small inset, it is shown with the door open, as well as being fully extended.

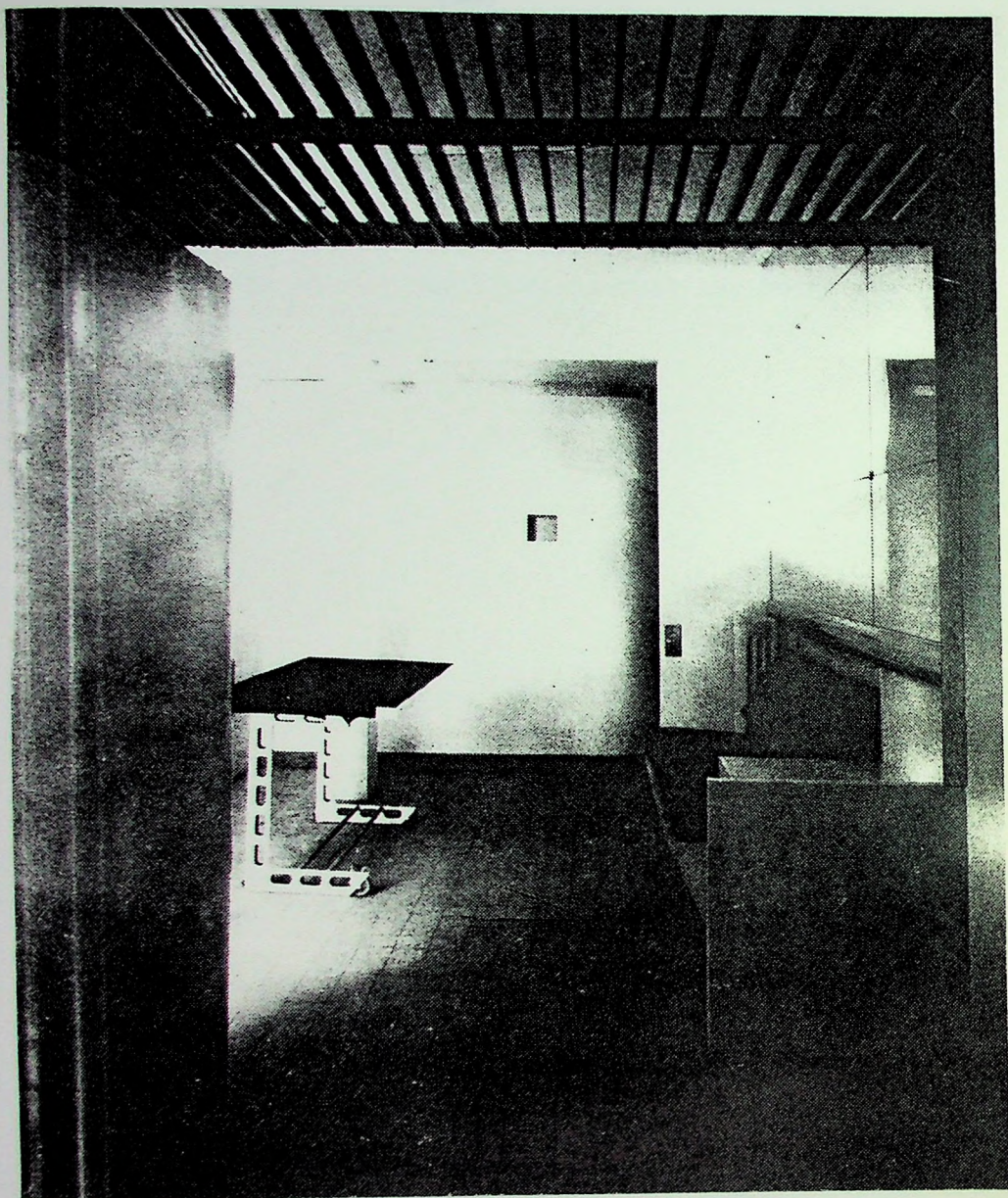




ill. 44

The pivoting chest, shown closed and open, showing how clothes can all be displayed at once. It is obvious how purpose-built this chest is by the fact that the legs have been designed so it sits halfway on a ledge that raises the level of one end of the bedroom.





11.45 The dining room seen from the entrance to the studio/living room, showing the table and the built-in couch.

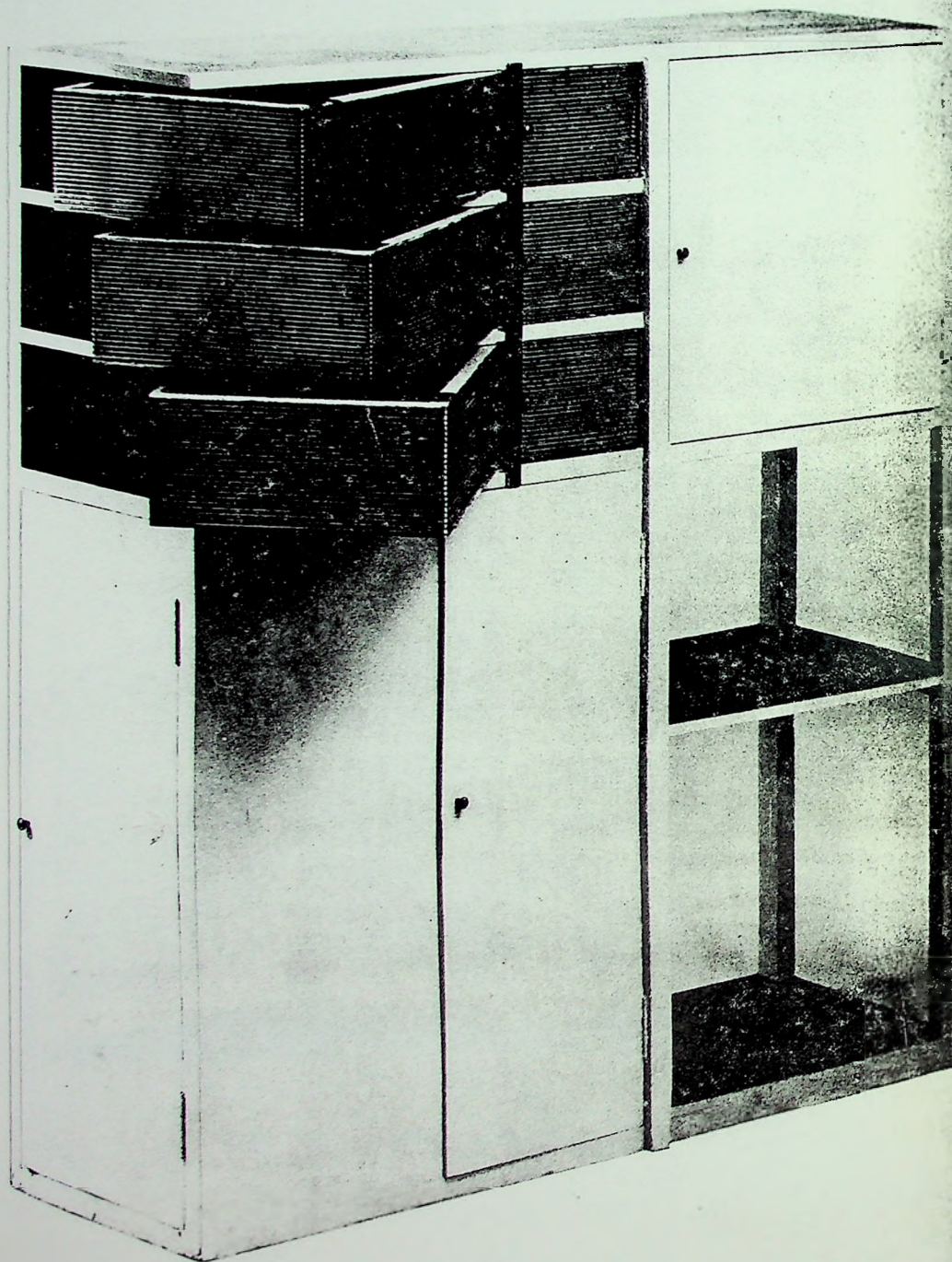
will fall off the table due to the detail of the small rim around the front edge. In the same room, the built-in couch can be pulled forward to reveal the entrance to a storage cellar, which was one of the cisterns that the house was built on.

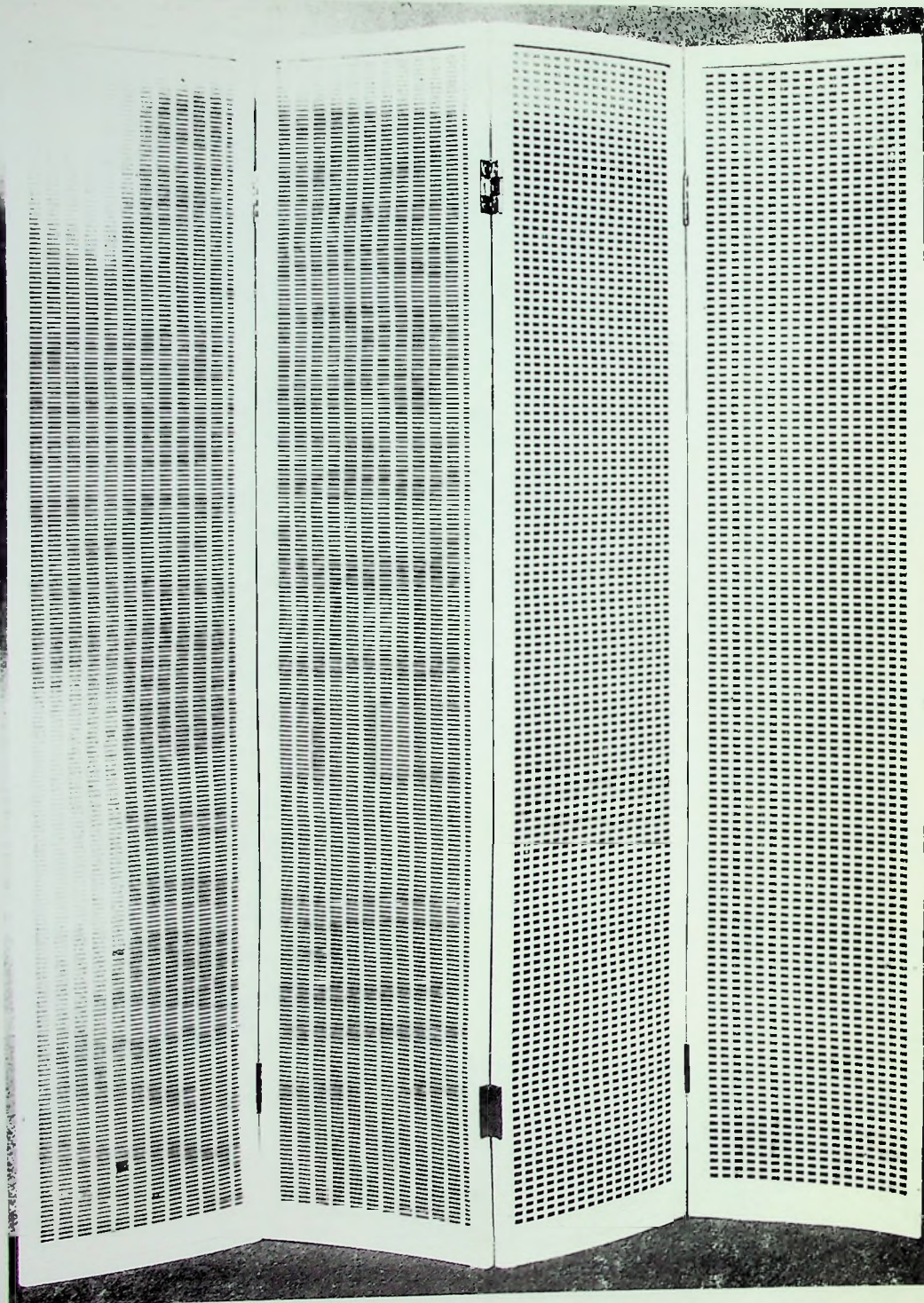
The following photographs are of Eileen Gray's flat in the rue Bonaparte. It must be remembered that she spent most of her life there, constantly designing new things for it.



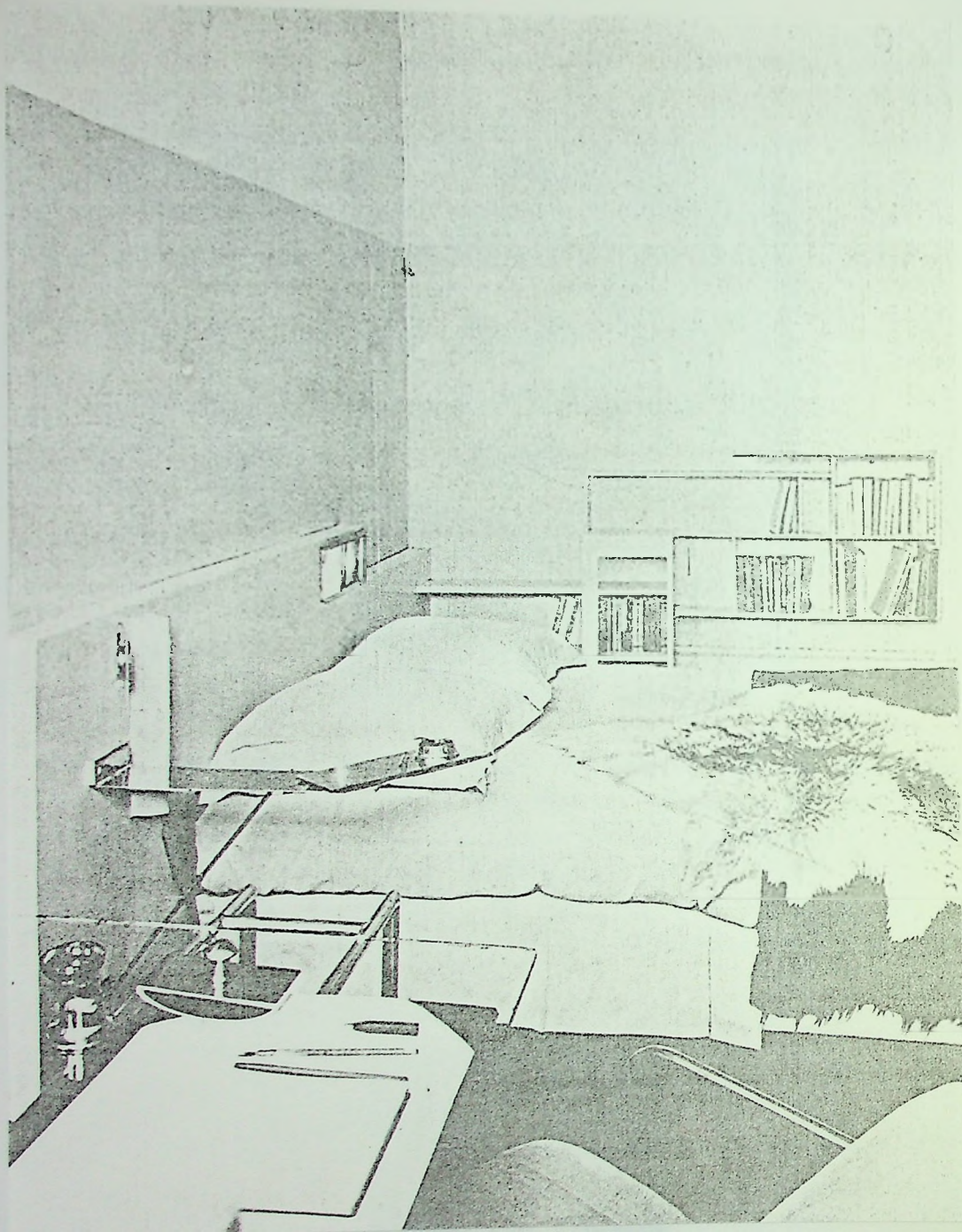
There are several things of interest in this view of the bedroom. The light over the bed is exactly the same as that built in to the divan in Badovici's flat. The cupboard beside the desk is shown in detail in the next photograph, and the one following is a close-up of the screen in front of the window.

Cupboard with pivoting drawers. Note the door on the side as well as the two on the front. 1930-1935 .

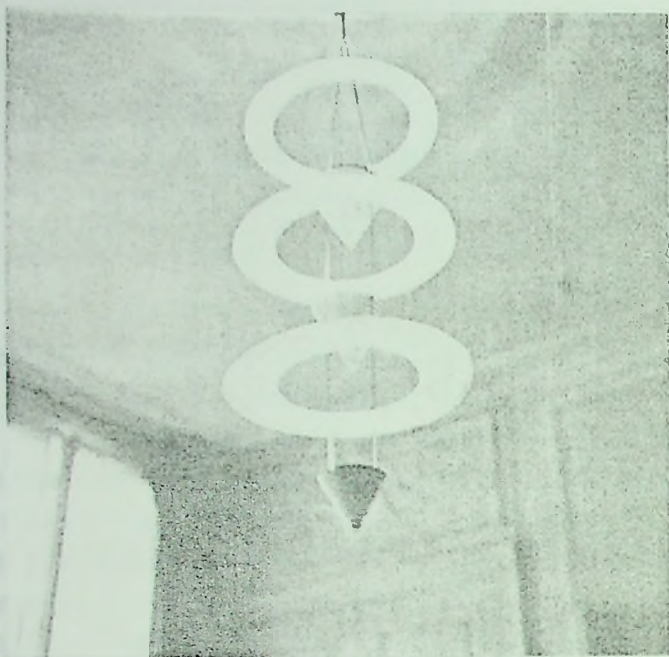




Perforated metal screen . 1930 - 32



This view of the bedroom shows a very interesting shelf unit on the far wall, which I cannot date accurately, but would suggest to be from around 1922-25 as it seems to exhibit similar qualities to the table designed in honour of the de Stijl group (ill. 19)



This is the light fitting shown in colour on the photograph of Eileen Gray in her sittingroom. It was designed originally in 1919 and a variation or development can be seen in the recent photograph of E-1027 (ill 25 ph. 2). A bulb is placed in each of the cone hinged cups and they shine up, to be reflected off the rings.

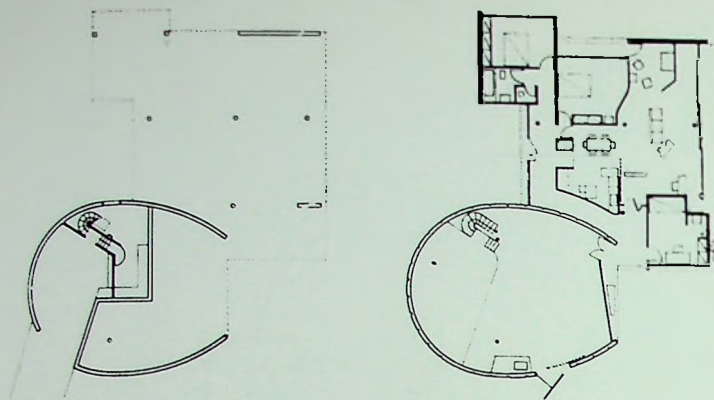


ARCHITECTURAL PROJECTS

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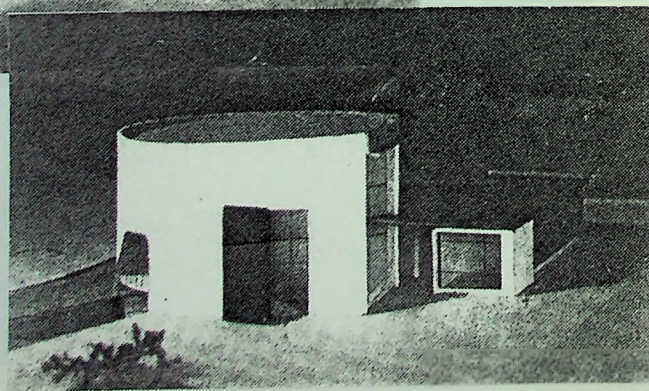
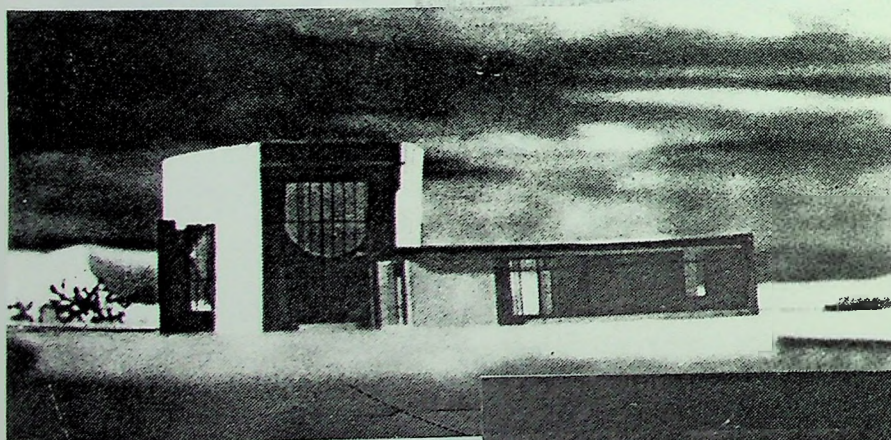
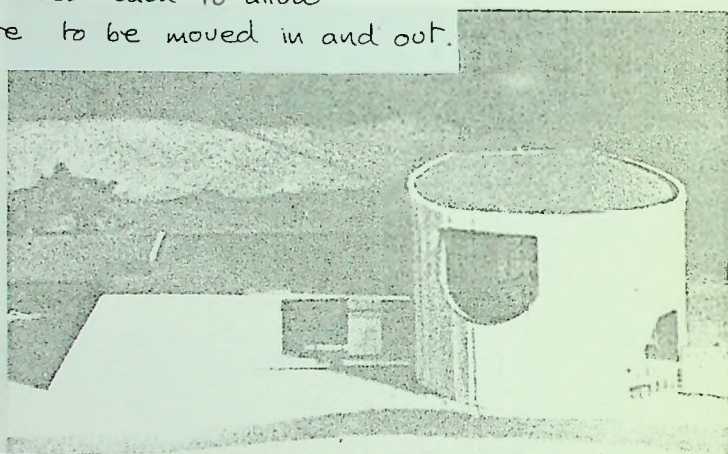
The few architectural designs I have discussed were certainly not her only ideas for buildings. Back in 1924, there was the house for an engineer that she designed as a newcomer to architecture (ill. 23). It was a much simpler structure than the house she and Badovici designed in the same year, but the house at Rocquebrune was just as purpose-built as the engineer's house. In 1933, while Tempe a Pailla was still being built, she designed a building suited to the lives and activities of two sculptures, providing them with workspace for enormous works of art and a means of getting the finished pieces in and out of the studio (ill. 46). All the time her buildings are answers to problems she envisaged that went with certain professions or particular styles of living. In 1937 she designed an elliptical tube house, a prefabricated, small living unit made up of easily transportable sections of shell concrete - a relatively new development in building materials (ill. 47). The units could serve either as summer camps or emergency housing. They were capable of being set up quickly and with a minimum of foundation, either singly or in series. Each unit provided two bedrooms, a living area cum kitchen and a bathroom, and it is one of the earliest examples of designing for minimal living.

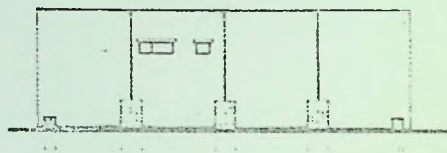
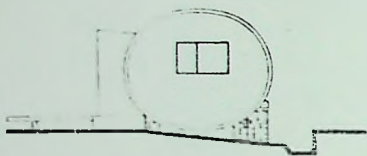
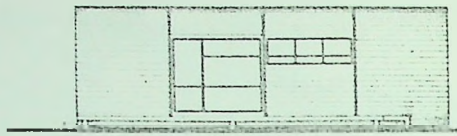
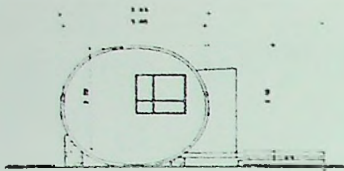
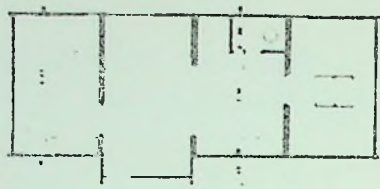
Also in 1937 she broadened her interest in architecture and put forward her plans for a very clompex scheme for a holiday centre, which was intended to be situated beside the sea (ill. 48). She worked this out meticulously, providing



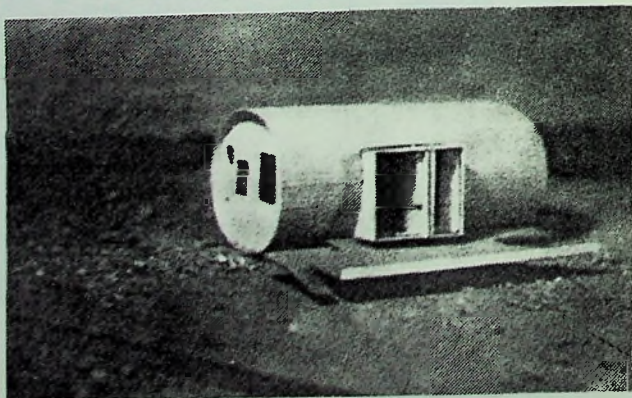
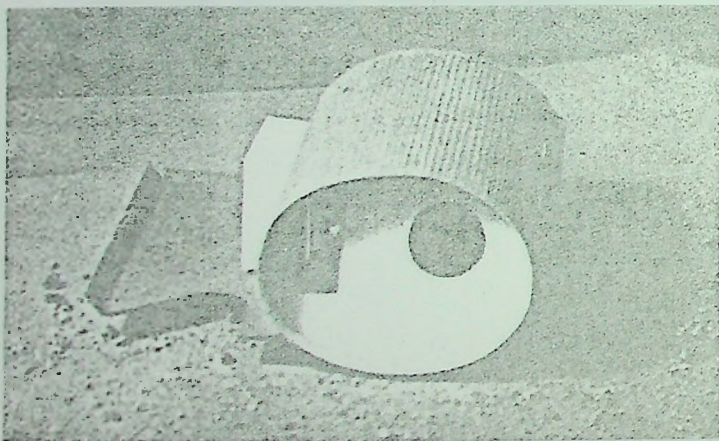
Floor plans and elevations of the sculptors house.
One section of the wall moves back to allow
massive pieces of sculpture to be moved in and out.

ill. 46

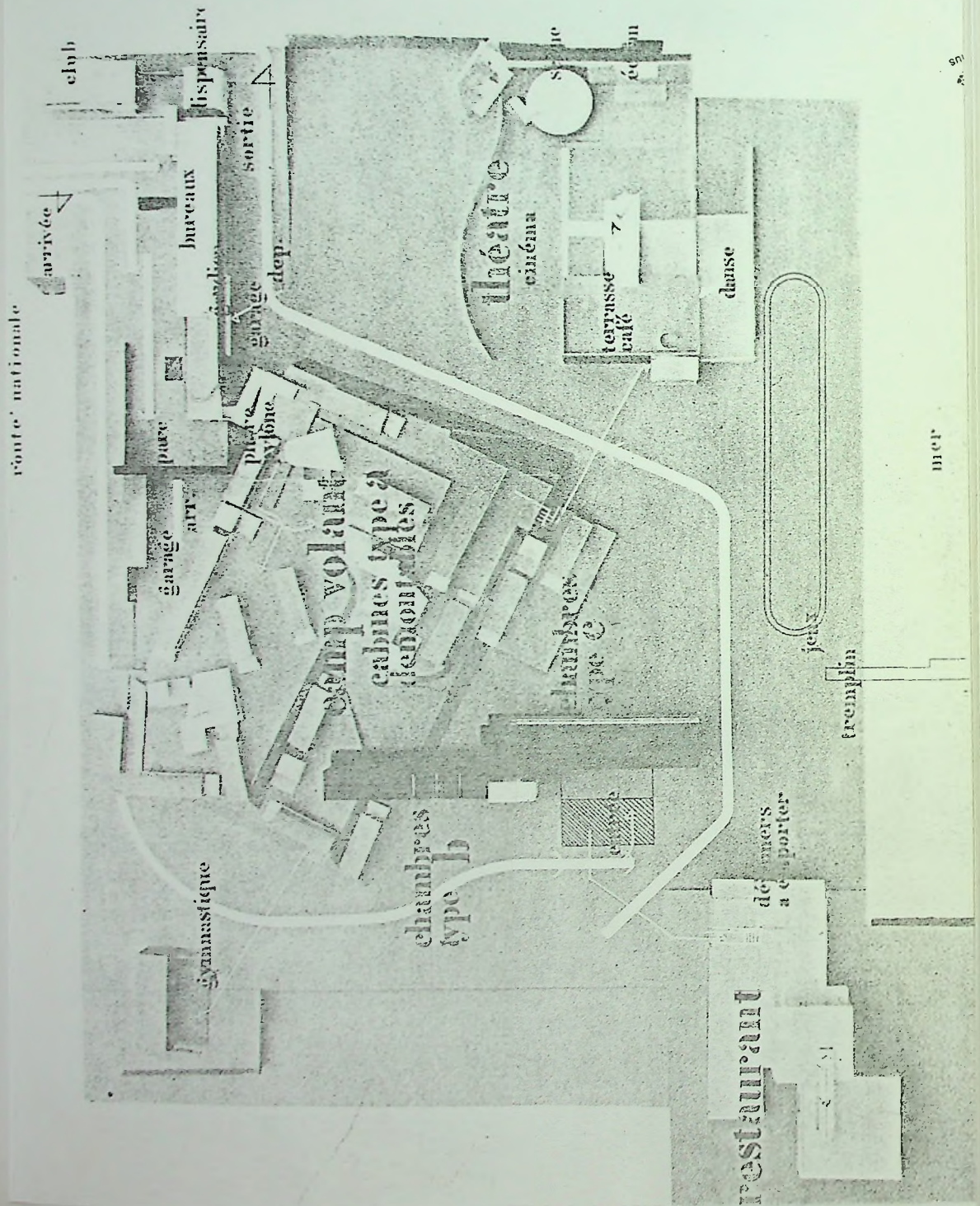


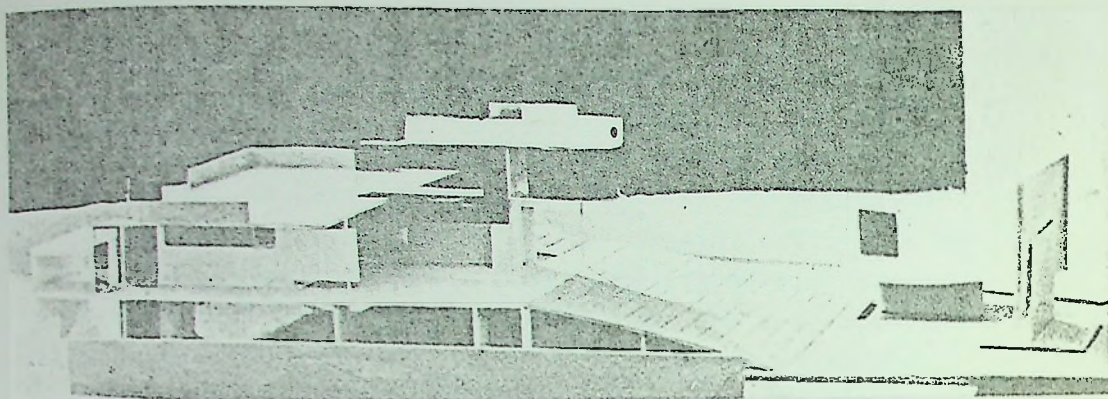


ill. 47 Tube house plans and elevations. Each unit contains two bedrooms, a living area/kitchen and toilet.

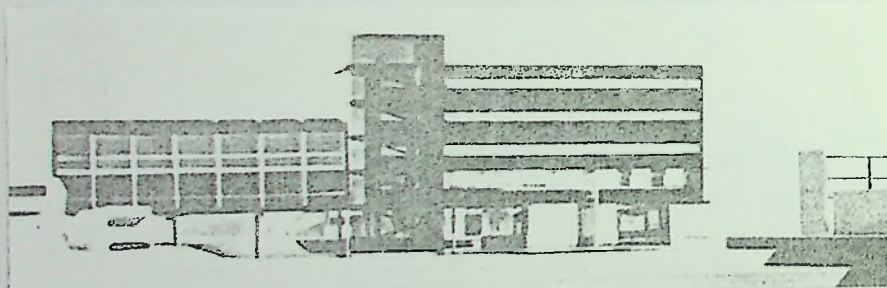


ill. 48 Vacation centre which was exhibited by Le Corbusier in the 1937 Paris Exposition Internationale. The plan indicates the many facilities provided.





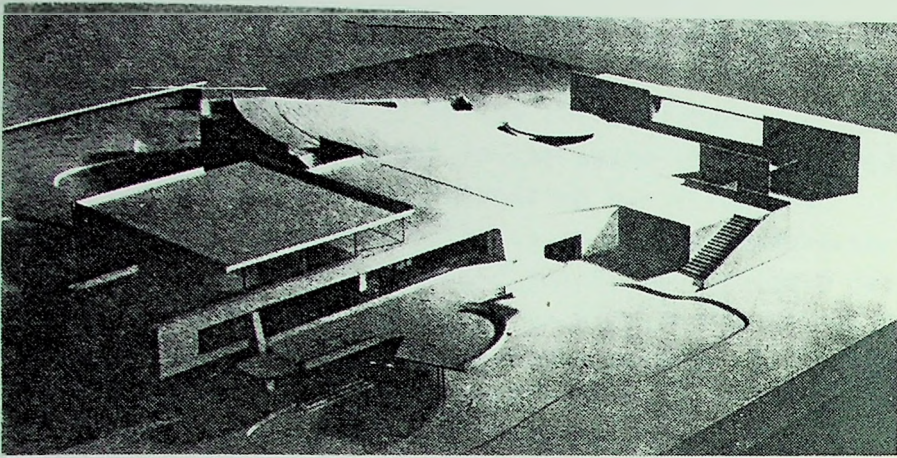
Model of the Theatre.



Model of 'chambres type b' and 'chambres type c', which are the permanent accommodation.

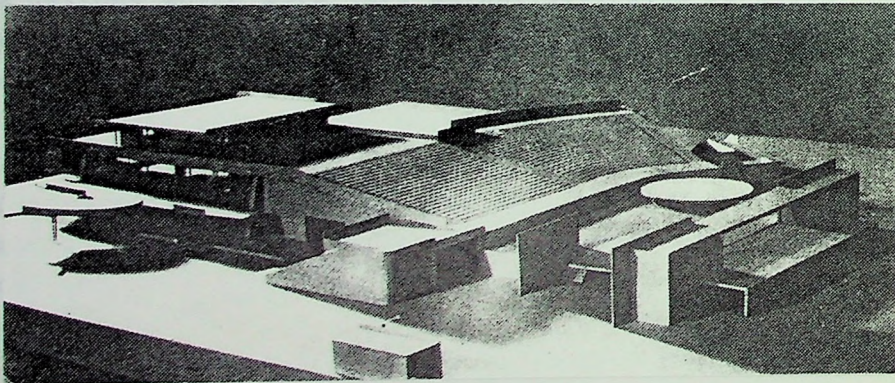
areas for every aspect of running the centre, not just accomodation and entertainment for the holiday makers. A large youth hostel, permanent rooms, dismantleable huts for off season, a theatre, dance hall, and a gymnasium are among the usual facilities provided, but she also incorporated areas for administration buildings, a restaurant that also provides takeaway food, indoor parking space, medical rooms, storerooms for caretakers, a creche area on the beach and a diving pool in the sea. She even considered the fact that it is sometimes difficult to find where you were on the beach when you come out after a swim and she provided a landmark, a lighted beacon which would also get people home safely after a walk on the beach at night! Le Corbusier was so taken with the careful and thorough plans for this centre, he exhibited it in his Pavilion des Temps Nouveau along with his own designs in the 1937 Paris Exposition Internationale.

Between 1946 and 1949 she worked simultaneously on the rebuilding of Castellar and on her last major project. It was a design for a cultural and social centre which included conference rooms, galleries, a library, indoor and outdoor theatres and a restaurant (ill. 49). The sloping roof of the indoor theatre is not only a help to the acoustics, but also provides the tiered seating for the overhead outdoor theatre. The idea for an outdoor theatre is not new, it has been used since the time of ancient Greek theatre, but to incorporate it onto the roof of an indoor one shows how well she thought about the functions of the buildings she designed. Whereas another architect may have decided that the sloping roof was wasted space, Eileen Gray turned it to an advantage.



ill. 49

Various views of the model of the cultural and social centre, Eileen Gray's last architectural project.



It was while she was working on the cultural centre project that her eyesight deteriorated to the point that she could no longer drive her car. She wrapped up her affairs in Castellar and on her return to Paris to the Rue Bonaparte where her career began, she worked mainly on furniture projects experimenting continuously with all the new materials that had come onto the market during or because of the war. One interviewer found her busy designing furniture in plastic tubing and perspex. She did do one other architectural work - to convert an old barn near St. Tropez for her use as a summer-house, but as far as I can gather, she did not design any new pieces of furniture for it.

There was a revival of interest in her life and work when Eileen Gray was in her nineties. Designers, architects and, probably to her amusement, historians became curious about her in the mid 1970's. When sought out, she was happy to show designs which were very enthusiastically received. Due to encouragement from these people, she collected together some of her most original designs, had them made up, and amalgamated an exhibit for the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, for an exhibition called '1925'. Most of her work displayed would not have been typical of 1925 furniture as it would have been too advanced for general acceptance when conceived.

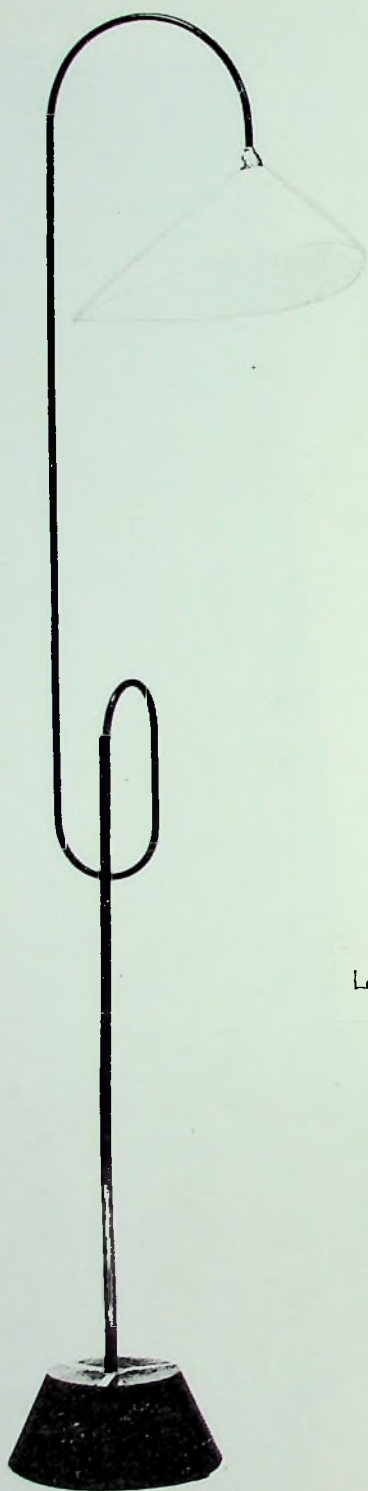
This originality and unconventionalism in her work were the very traits which made it desirable to and appreciated by the modern, younger generation. In August 1972 she was honoured by the Royal Society of Arts by being made a member of the faculty of Royal Designers for Industry. Three years later she was made an honorary fellow of the Royal

Institute of Architecture in Ireland - long overdue recognition of the part this remarkable woman played in design. She died on Sunday, October 31st, 1976.

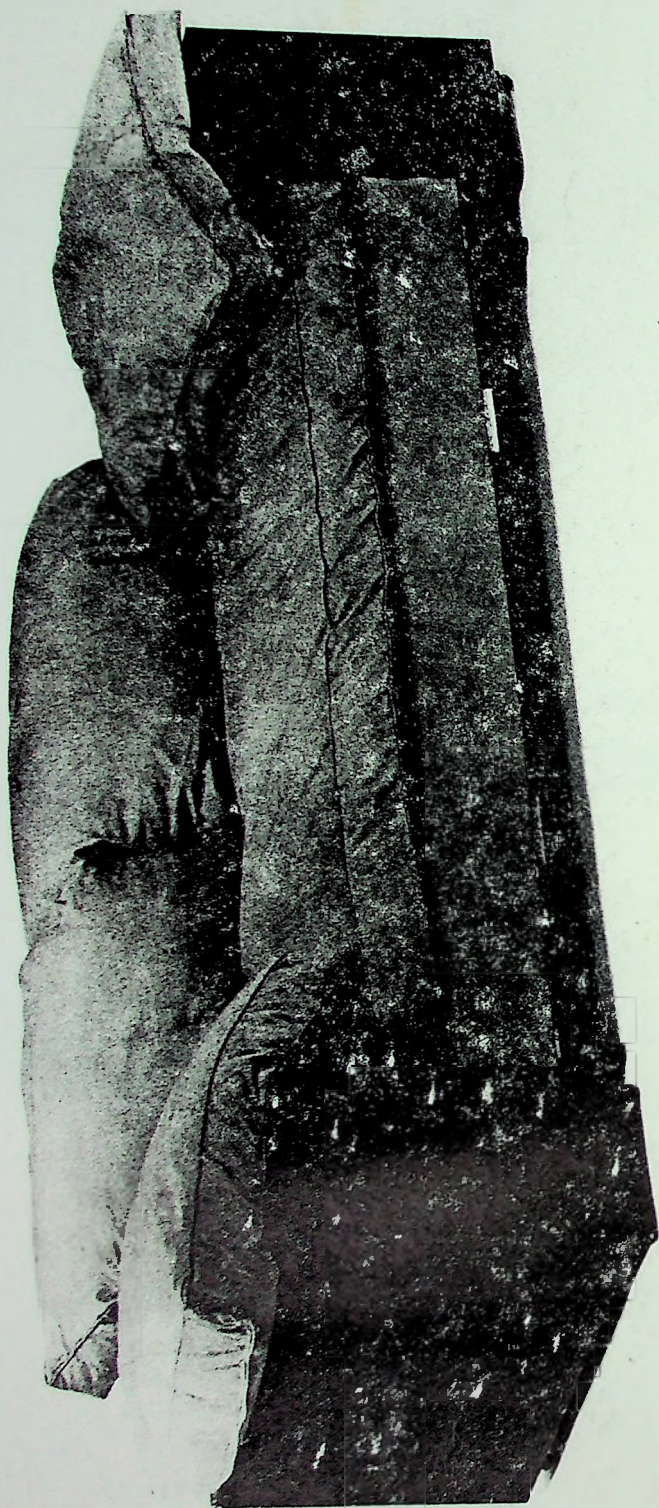
The following are photographs of work that Eileen Gray designed which doesn't fit into any of her houses, or at least isn't known to belong to any of them. All I know are their dates, but they are too interesting to be left out.



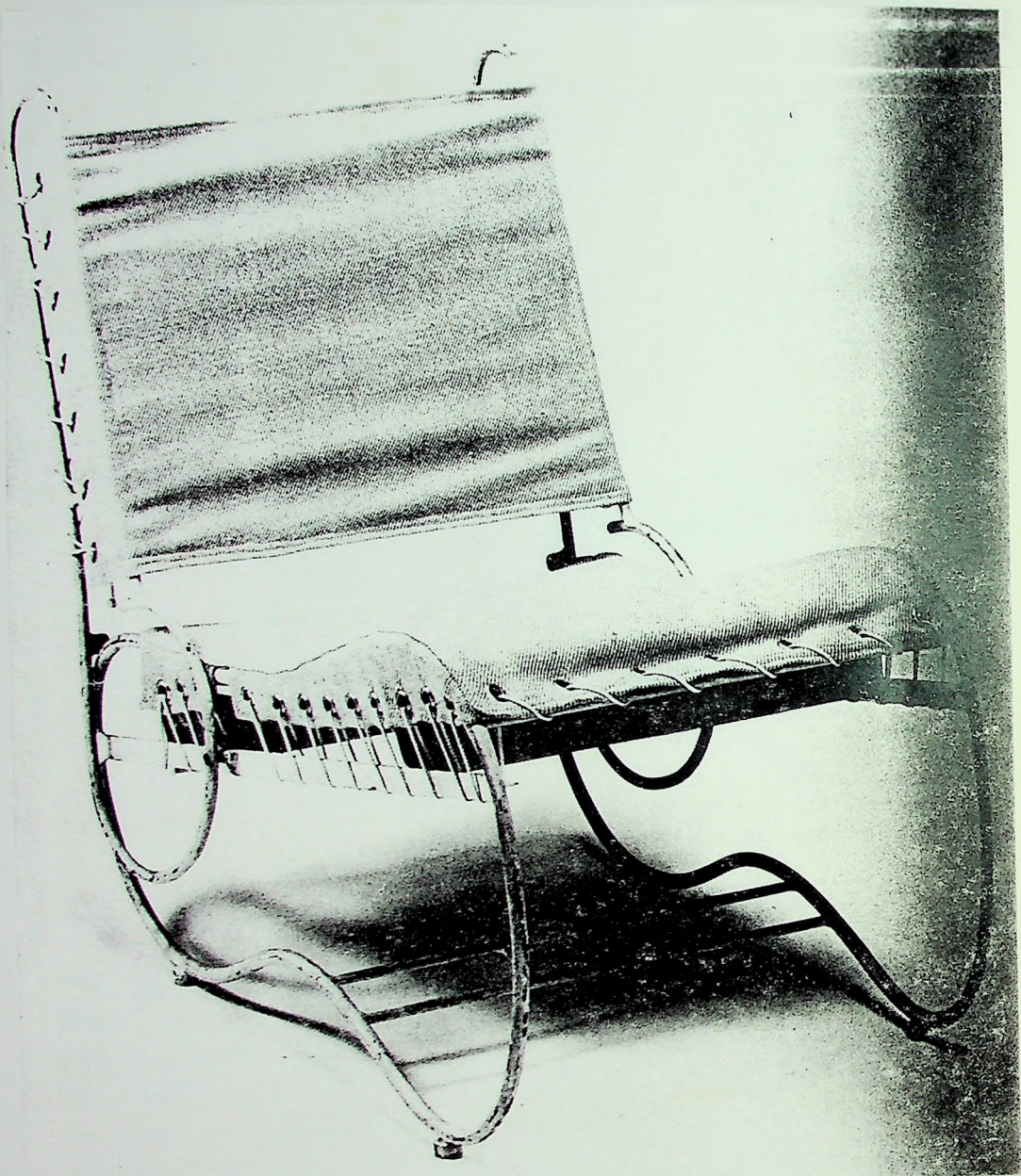
Lounge chair 1938 upholstered in orange cotton and made in wood and metal. This piece folds up in the centre and the legs fold away for easy storage.



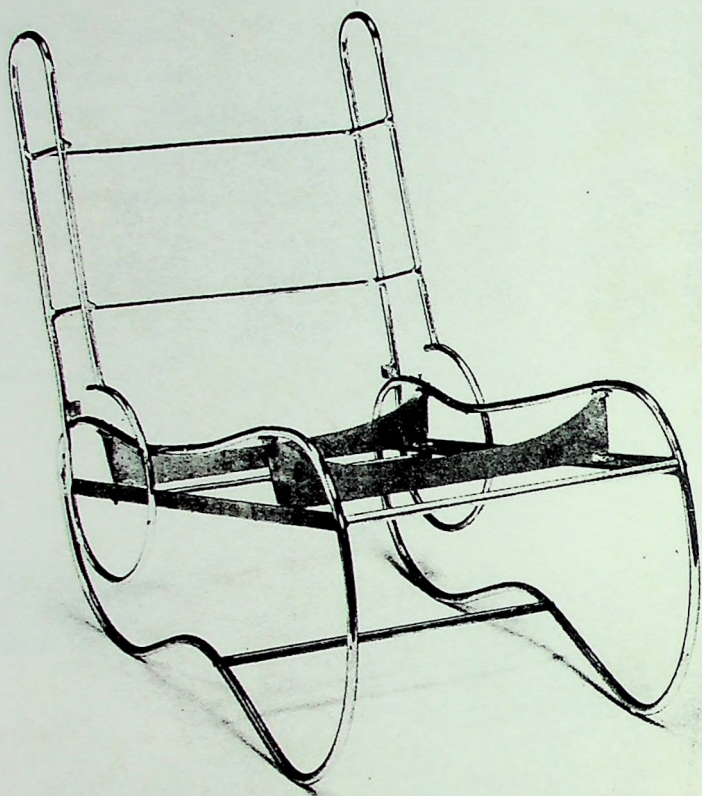
Lamp, 1925.



Sofa 1925. Lacquer base with down-filled cotton cushions, probably made for Jean Désert or her own apartment.

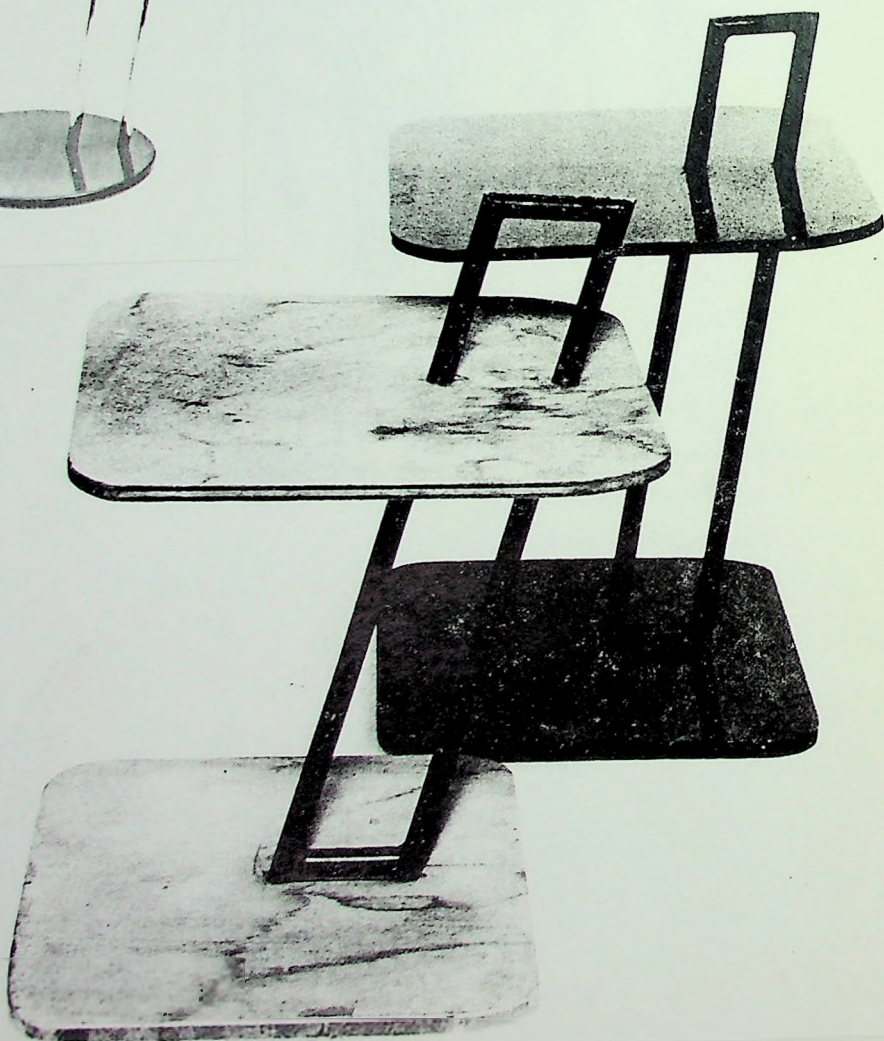
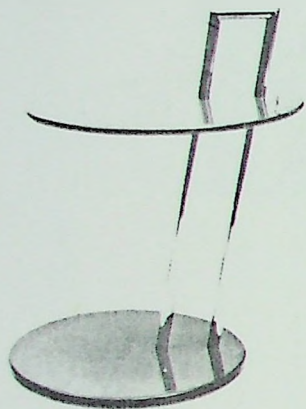


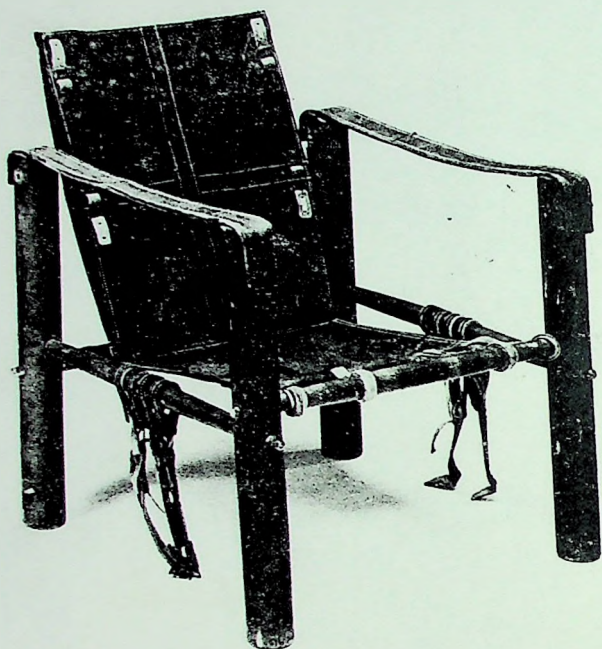
Deck-chair in white painted metal covered in cream coloured linen. The upholstery is easily removable for washing.



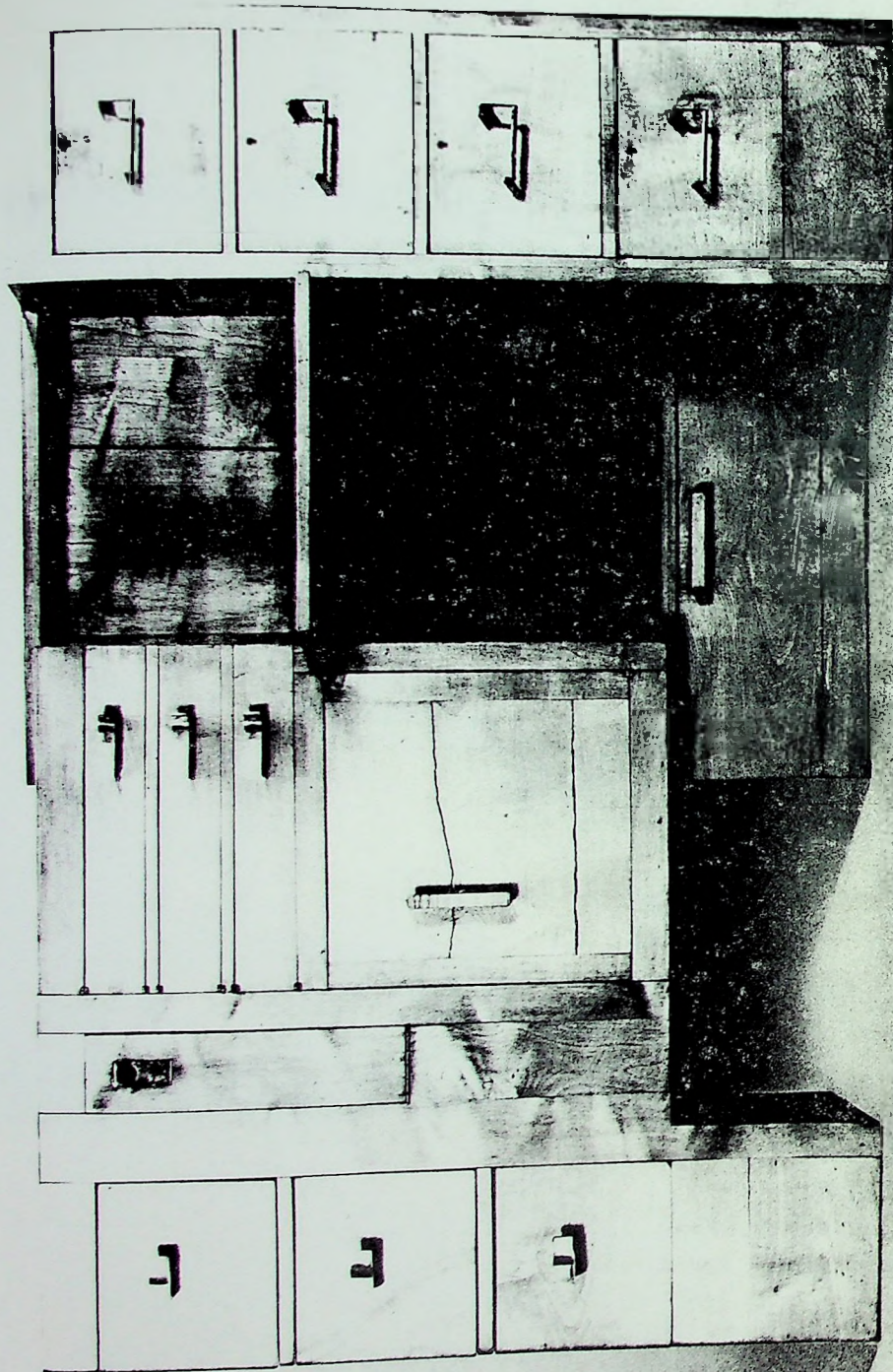
Another chair of similar design but in chromed metal. Both chairs are from 1932 approximately but they are a good example of how Eileen Gray developed and refined her work. Notice how the paint on the first is chipping; she solves this problem by using chrome for the next one. Only one cross-bar is used to join the two legs, near the floor, as this simplifies the manufacture and the appearance. She made the system of tying the material on much simpler also. This is a method of refinement and change that Eileen Gray applied to many of her designs. A second example of this is shown in the next set of photographs.

First seen in (ill. 25 ph.1) this table has undergone the same sort of form refinement seen in the previous chairs. It has been reproduced in many different ways, indeed I think it is possible that the steel and glass bedside table for the guest bedroom in E-1027 could be a development of this theme. In some models the metal uprights are joined at the bottom just above the base, and in the small inset picture, the only join is up at the top to form the handle. The angle of the uprights is different in various models also, as though Eileen Gray was playing with the concept and seeing what shape of table, circular or rectangular, creates the most pleasing form.

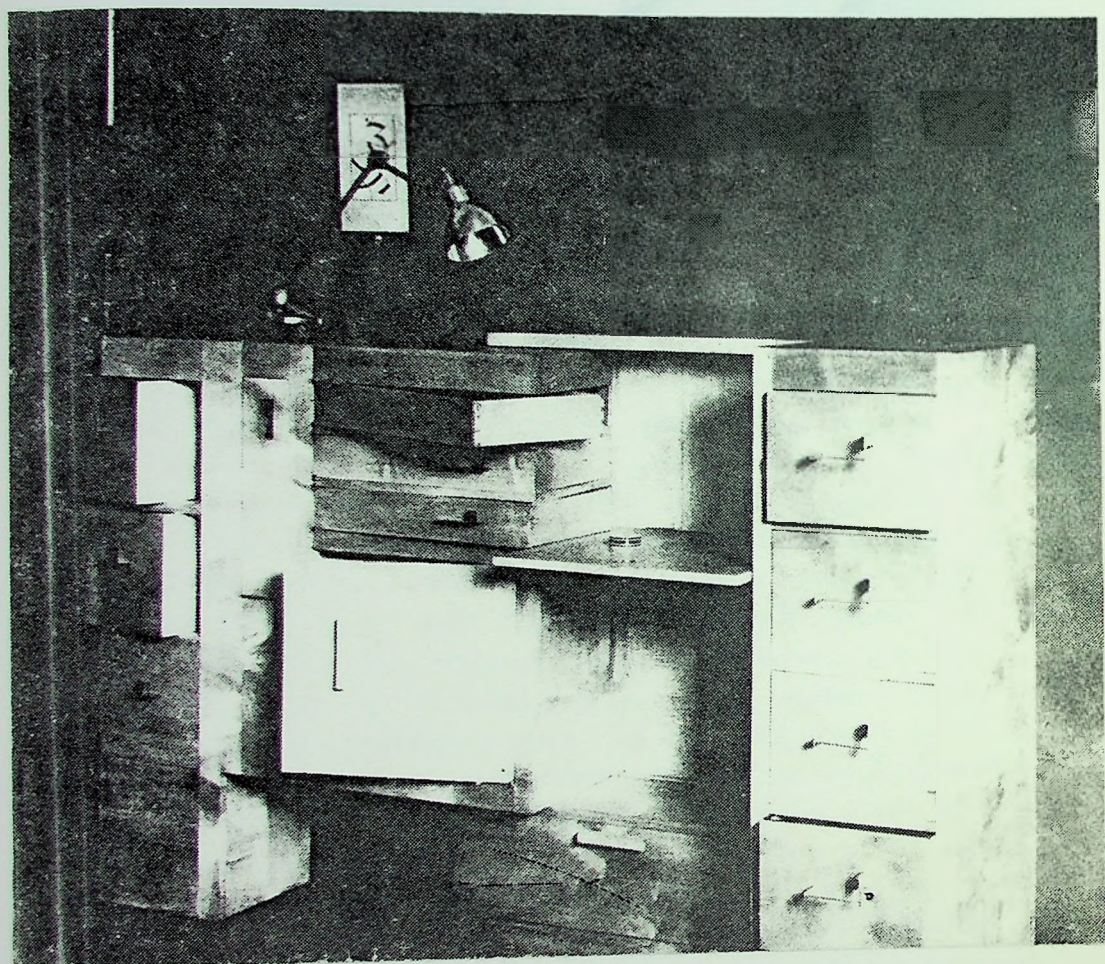


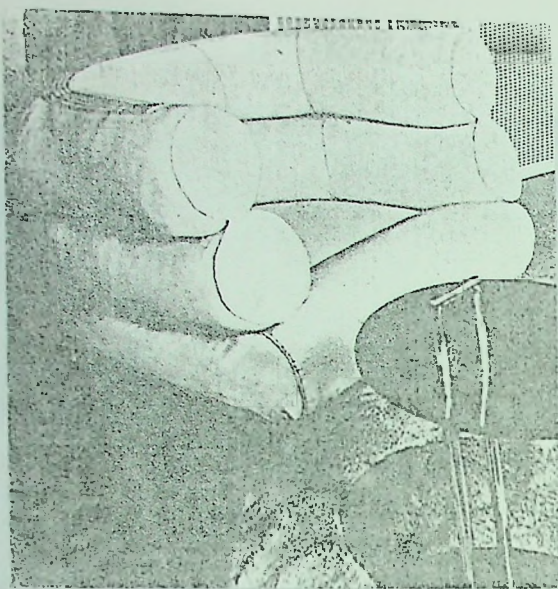


Armchair in painted wood and leather. The legs are wooden cylinders and all horizontal supports are tapered wood, all painted grey, with black leather seat and back.

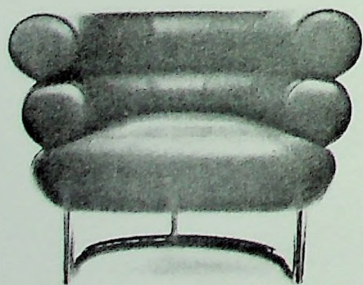


Two views of a large cabinet in sycamore designed for the architect Henri Pacion around 1924. It was one of Eileen Gray's last commissioned works. Some of the drawers pivot, a device first used by her in a coiffeuse exhibited in the 1923 Salon, and one she used on several later occasions.





This is another chair whose original date is obscure. It has been illustrated in scenes from Mme Suzanne Talbot's apartment (ill. 11) as well as in E-1027 (ill. 25 ph. 1) and in the left-hand picture it is shown in her own apartment. On the right is a new version made by a modern manufacturer. Note how this chair too has undergone several refinements. The original, probably designed around 1925-1927 is worked around white leather tubes. (above left) Another one (ill. 25 ph. 1) has a more angled back and the tubes are not so well formed and cylindrical, and it doesn't seem to be made of leather at all. The last modern version has very neat, perfectly round tubes and is in a much darker colour. The design is now called 'Blenheim'.





Her work is still being produced in modern editions by an Italian manufacturer whose retail name in England is Ogetti. Shown above is an advertisement in March 1985 Ideal Homes. This picture shows an interesting light which isn't illustrated anywhere else. It is a beautiful simple fluorescent light fitting, thoughtfully designed, as always, with a foot operated, press-in switch. A light any modern-day Italian designer would be proud of. The prices are (sterling) Table - £296 Light - £232.30. By comparison the Le Corbusier chair is £1,229.



It is a sign of how good, and how timeless a design is when it can be used as an advertisement for something else; something new and modern. I recognised two items of Eileen Gray's work; one in an Italian magazine, the 'transatlantic' chair adding to the sophistication of the screens being advertised, and another in a bathroom accessories catalogue. The two pieces are still associated with 'modern' furniture and up-to-date interiors.

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un elegante sistema di tende a
pannello dipinte o stampate a
mano con disegni attuali in
molteplici varianti di colore
scoprirle e farle vostre può
essere possibile in ogni città
visitando i nostri concessionari.

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CONCLUSION

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To fully appreciate what an unusual character Eileen Gray was, her background and family life must be taken into account. Born into a privileged Anglo-Irish family, she started in a traditional art college. There she learned the skills of drawing and painting which all ladies would need to know to keep them occupied while their husbands managed and ran the lives of those in the household. This was not for her. With energy and courage she mastered the craft of oriental lacquer, getting bored as she developed the medium to its full extent. From there she moved to a new medium - concrete - and continued to experiment in all sorts of materials and colours.

All through her life Eileen Gray hit out at the barriers surrounding women and broke in to areas where men dominated. She flew with men when few of the pilots themselves reckoned it was safe, let alone the women of the day. Even though many women would have driven ambulances during the war due to the shortage of ununiformed men, it still demanded a great deal of male courage. She never stood in the shadow of a male contemporary as other women in architecture did. Charlotte Perriand stood behind Le Corbusier and let him absorb some of the praise that should have been hers, the same as Lilly Reich used Mies Van der Rohe as her frontman. Their talents and achievements are comparable with Eileen Grays in their own right. They admired and learned from those men, but Eileen Gray managed to absorb knowledge from Jean Badovici without getting tangled up in his image. The architectural credits for E-1027 are "Eileen Gray and

Jean Badovici" and not the other way round. Rather than be led, she took the lead.

Even though her viewpoint appears rather feministic, the shy exterior reported by interviewers seems to contradict this, as does the fact that she had very few female friends. Evelyn Wyld and her maid Heloise are the only women who feature in the story of her life, but her male colleagues are numerous; Le Corbusier, Jean Badovici, Sugawara, Osip Zadkine, D. Charles, J.J.P. Oud, Jan Wils, to mention a few. Perhaps the reason she entered the previously all male forts was that she felt more at ease with men than with women who might have found her adventurous nature unsettling. I also have a feeling that the shy side she showed to the press was a face to protect her privacy. Her dynamic, unusual, forward thinking designs contradict a shy retiring character. I would find it hard to believe that someone who gets a thrill flying a biplane would find it hard to make friends. When queried on her life she came out with a statement to the effect that she never let anyone know that before and she certainly wasn't going to start now (app. K). I feel that this is a calculated remark and rather than it having been said on the spur of the moment, it is well designed and very functional. Repeatedly she turns a retiring, shy face to the world when there are none of these qualities in her work.

It is not just her character and work which contradict each other, her work can at first appear to contradict itself. Eileen Gray's career is divided into two very contrasting periods, before and after 1923, but there are themes that

recur: the use of pivoting drawers; the idea of things being able to fold up and out of the way; the way she uses space in a design or a room in the same way she uses form, both part of a whole; the object defines the space, and the space penetrates the object.

These themes tie her career together and illustrate the way her mind and design ideals developed from the lacquer phase through to her architectural one. When she was asked which she preferred doing, designing furniture or buildings, she had to think about it. "Well, both, I think I love doing both. Perhaps architecture if I had to choose. Yes I think architecture..." Eileen Gray always had to be in control of her own situation. She did not particularly enjoy doing work for Jean Désert knowing that what she designed had to sell and, consequently, she lost interest. I do not think she would have been totally happy simply designing buildings as an architect, finishing a house, and then disassociating herself from it to leave the purchasers to worry about the interior environment. She did not just furnish the houses she built merely to have something to sit and lie on. Her interiors were as much a part of the house as the walls themselves. The rooms were designed to suit certain functions and to contain particular items of furniture.

The most innovative thing about Rocquebrune is that it was a designed environment, one suited to her way of life as it was built for her own occupation. The house for two sculptors was just as much an exercise in environmental design as in pure architecture. The walls and windows were important and well considered, but the spaces between them

were even more so; the way the light may fall into a room, the method of blocking off that light where the occupant is going to store their things, hang their clothes, will they have enough privacy when dressing. All these were problems which she solved by addressing them as design considerations which affected the buildings' structure, not simply decisions which should be left to the eventual occupant.

This thoroughness in her design approach is reiterated in her furniture too. The way the deckchairs fold away, even the famous Transatlantic chair is able to be undone and folded in seconds (ill. 31). All her cushion covers are either zipped or tied closed so they are easily removable for washing (ills. 25 ph. 1, 26 & 40). The bathroom cabinet allows for the storage of all the essential bits and pieces that are small enough to get lost in deep drawers, by having drawers of varying depths. The cupboards above the bed in the guest alcove in Racquebrune each had its function and was labelled accordingly.

She enjoyed the control that architecture gave her in creating interiors, environments that indicate the way a person should live to a certain extent and the way certain items of furniture should be used. But in doing so she also designs beautiful pieces of furniture, thoughtfully considered to suit their functions.

Now it seems there are three things which are contradictory about Eileen Gray. Her shyness, her forward-thinking, unusual designs, and her apparent control over the many aspects of the object she is designing, be it something

made of wood, metal, glass or cement. I would find it hard to accept the shy exterior as a real facet of her character and I think it more likely that it was a method of maintaining control of her life.

She said she moved from London to Paris because she found the atmosphere more congenial to her way of thinking. Being more cosmopolitan even at that time than London, it was not so much "Who is your father?" than "Who are you?" and it would have offered more encouragement to a young girl wanting to work at something as unfeminine as lacquer.

She always suited herself both in her career and her private life. She worked hard and diligently to put the ideas in her head into three dimensions, continuously fastidious about details and refinements and always prepared to learn about the qualities of a certain medium if she thought it may provide an outlet for those ideas; first lacquer, then wool, tubular and perforated steel and cement. Not only did Eileen Gray seek out new materials, she used them in different ways that made the end products very original and distinctive. I say this perhaps with reservations where her architecture is concerned. It is her ideology in architectural design which is most interesting, opinions shared by the contemporary leaders in the field like Le Corbusier and Mies Van der Rohe - buildings intended for particular purposes should be designed to fulfil the associated functions. The ways in which she erected the actual structures and manipulated the materials are not innovative, but the results are most certainly distinctive.

Eileen Gray was a most intriguing designer, always on top of recent technology as soon as she learned about it - even in her 80's. Always on the look out for challenges to keep her incredibly active mind in top gear, she has produced work which in the 1970's was rediscovered and seen to be way ahead of its time and very underestimated. Her decision to keep her private life and activities to herself was more important than her need for fame in her own lifetime.

She was by no means a leader of fashion, but I feel she most certainly had an influence on those that were lucky enough to be let into her close circle of friends; Evelyn Wyld's carpet designs, Eyre de Lanux's furniture designs (ill. 50) and, if not influencing Le Corbusier himself, then perhaps his protégé Charlotte Perriand whose tubular steel furniture followed Eileen Gray's own work in that medium by several years. She worked alone within her own ideas and limitations, impressed by some but selectively so.

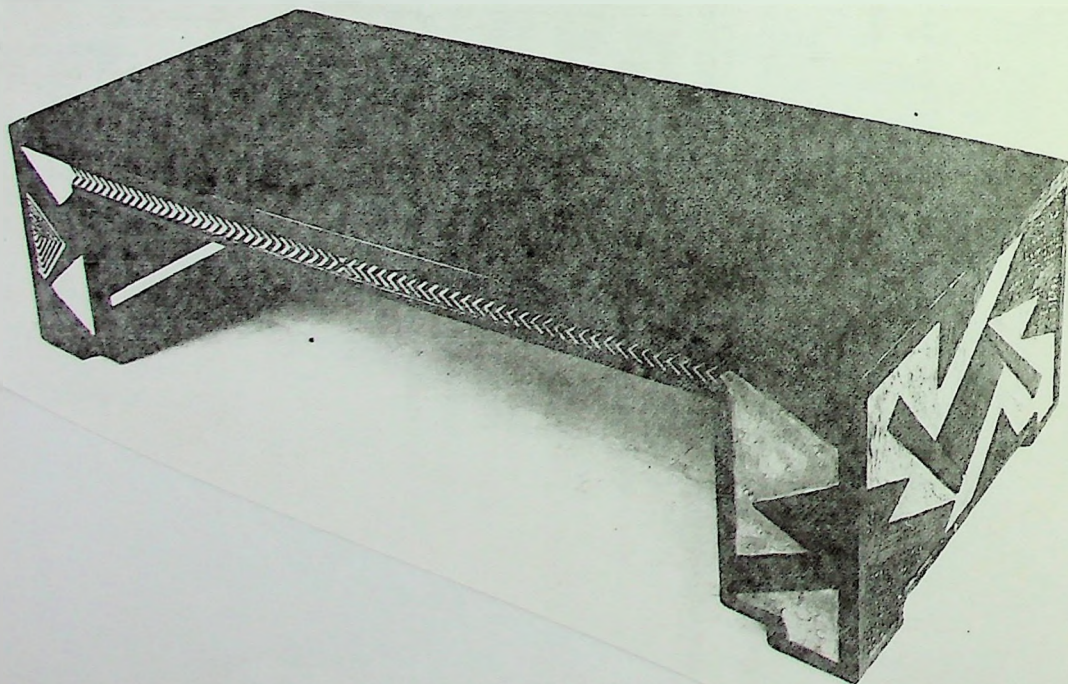
However you estimate the scale of her achievement, her work is unique. Not only for the individual objects, but also because of that extraordinary fusion of formal invention with craftsmans skill which required, at the time she achieved it, a visionary intuition about the possible grafting of invention on manual skill.

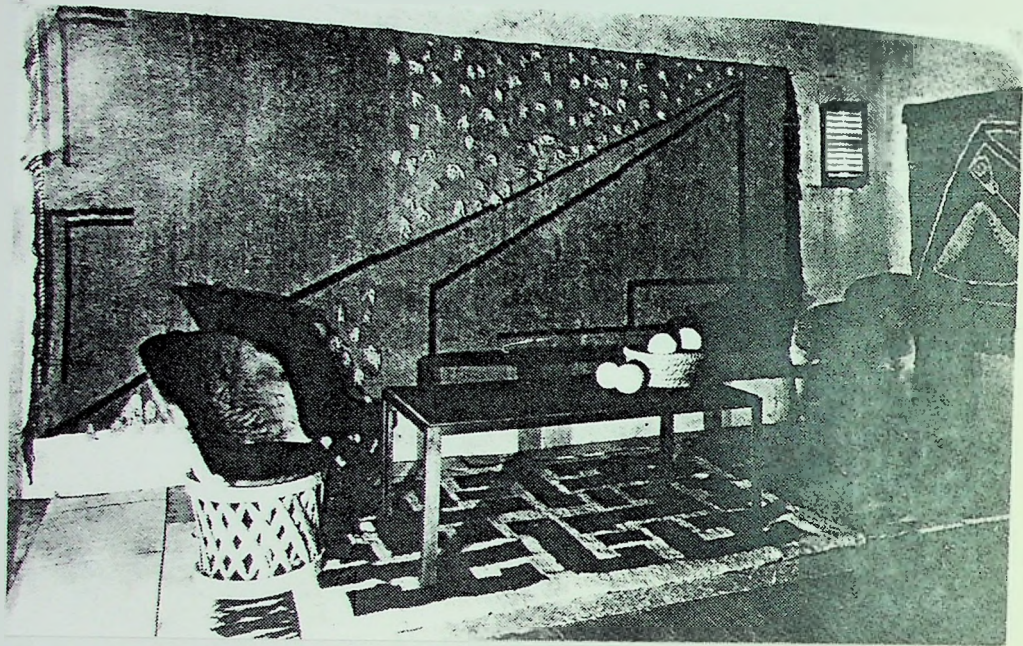
ill. 50



A photograph of Eyre de Lanux, wearing a coat made for her by Sonia Delaunay.

An early lacquer table by Eyre de Lanux.





Evelyn Wyld and Eyre de Lanux's exhibit at the Salon des Artistes - Décorateurs in Paris, 1929. The havana, steel-grey and white rug on the wall and the black and white rug on the floor are by Evelyn Wyld; the steel and slate table and natural oak barrel chairs in pony skin are by Eyre de Lanux. The latter table is a big change from her early work shown in the previous photograph.

APPENDICES.

- A. Interview by Maeve Binchy.
- B. From: "Eileen Gray - Designer"
by J. Stewart Johnson.
- C. From: "The lacquer work of Eileen Gray and Jean Dunand" by Philippe Garner.
- D. From: "Eileen Gray: Pioneer of Design"
by Joseph Rykwert.
- E. Illustrated in "Art and Decoration" March 1913 p.91
- F. Vogue, English Edition, Early August 1917 p.29
- G. The modern interpretation of 'Modiste' would
be 'fashion designer'
- H. 'Art Deco Furniture' by Alistair Duncan
p.97 (see bibliography)
- I. From Eileen Gray's own scrapbooks, which
accompanied photographs of the apartment.
- J. From: "The Sunday Times Supplement" Dec. 1968.
- K. From: "The Irish Times" Nov: 4th 1976 p.9.
- L. Also item in "Interieurs Francais" Paris 1925.
- M. From: "The Connoisseur" Vol. 182 1973.

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