

SELECTISM



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EILEEN GRAY'S CONTROVERSIAL "E1027" CÔTE D'AZUR HOME OPENS TO THE PUBLIC

By Lena Dystant

Legendary Irish architect and designer [Eileen Gray](#) goes under the spotlight once again with the reopening of her historic "E1027" Côte d'Azur home. Completed in 1929, the starkly modernist residence was ahead of its time, pushing the simple, clean line that would soon become the overriding theme in contemporary architecture. An elevated rectangular form placed on a steep slope, Gray's chosen location overlooking the sea had been informed by months of meteorological study; its placement ideal for catching sunlight and avoiding harsh winds.

Friends of E.1027

The layout follows a series of steps and levels designed to maximize views on either side. The exterior and interior predominately white; soft pinks, sea greens and harsh black punctuate and divide the open spaces with surfaces running from matte to high-shine. Furniture, of course, came courtesy of Gray herself who introduced a series of storage units designed as both display and disguise, creating a home for decorative items and hiding the mechanics of the house. Smaller items such as tea trays, side tables and the iconic Michelin Man inspired [Bibendum](#) armchair would go on to become iconic Eileen Gray pieces.

At first glance a rather unassuming home, E1027 was mired in scandal and controversy. Outraged that a woman could build such an accomplished structure, former friend Le Corbusier set about daubing a series of gaudy, explicit, [swastika clad](#) murals around the home, choosing to paint [in the nude](#) as a gesture of both disrespect and machismo. Following Gray's death in 1976, the home would go under the ownership of a nun, the communist state of Romania and in 1996 became the scene of a murder. Plagued by bizarre and disturbing incidents, it would eventually fall into disrepair, vandalized and forgotten. Today, in an effort to celebrate the area's modernist treasures, local businesses and government agencies have joined forces to restore and reopen the house. Both a story stranger than fiction and a monument to a 20th century design legend, Gray's self-described "living organism" has finally been brought back to life.

Plan a visit to E1027 on Côte d'Azur over at [Cap Moderne](#).